



DISTRICT OF **INNOVATION** → **PLAN**

2022 - 2027
Amended June 27, 2023

REACHING THE FUTURE BY DRIVING EXCELLENCE, **ONE STUDENT AT A TIME.**



SHARED VISION

DIVERSE
COMMUNITY

EXCEPTIONAL
EDUCATION

GISD
GARLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Trustees



Linda Griffin
President
Place 3



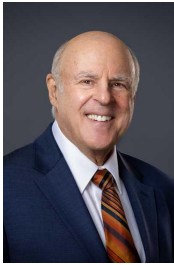
Robert Selders, Jr.
Vice President
Place 6



Johnny Beach
Secretary
Place 2



Daphne Stanley
Assistant Secretary
Place 4



Larry H. Glick
Trustee
Place 1



Jamie Miller
Trustee
Place 5



Wes Johnson
Trustee
Place 7

District Leadership



Dr. Ricardo Lopez
Superintendent



Dr. Susana Russell
Chief Leadership
Officer



Dr. Jason Adams
Chief Academic
Officer



Darrell Dodd
Chief Financial Officer



Lisa Ray
General Counsel

Superintendent's Cabinet

Dr. Kimberly Caddell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Gradyne Brown, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Dr. Shelley Garrett, Assistant Superintendent of Safety & Operations

Matthew Yeager, Assistant Superintendent of Technology

Local Innovation Committee: 2022-2023

Districtwide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC)

Alina Isbell, Teacher Representative, Herfurth Elementary

April Alaniz, Teacher Representative, Classical Center at Brandenburg

Christine Adame, Teacher Representative, Rowlett Elementary

April Alaniz, Teacher Representative, Classical Center at Brandenburg

Amy Angel, Teacher Representative, Centerville Elementary

Juan Barajas, Teacher Representative, Back Elementary

William Barber, Parent Representative

Katherine Bearden, Teacher Representative, Webb Middle School

Jessica Benitez, Teacher Representative, Montclair Elementary

Cameron Blaise, Teacher Representative, Austin Academy

Iris Bocanegra, Teacher Representative, Bradfield Elementary

Da'on Boulanger-Chatman, Teacher Representative, Lakeview Centennial HS

John Caldarera, Teacher Representative, Dorsey Elementary

Judy Campbell, District Representative

Justin Campbell, Business Representative

Taylor Carn, Teacher Representative, Coyle Middle School

Melissa Carpenter, Teacher Representative, Liberty Grove Elementary

Amy Clark, Teacher Representative, Hudson Middle School

Cathy Clifford, District Representative

Julie Coleman, Teacher Representative, Coyle Middle School

Kenneth Connelly, Teacher Representative, Naaman Forest HS

Eleazar Cordero-Valdez, Teacher Representative, Nita Pearson Elementary

Cristina Coronado, Teacher Representative, Jackson Technology Center

Donna Covington, Teacher Representative, South Garland HS

Lynn Daniel, District Representative

Coebie Davis, Teacher Representative, Walnut Glen Academy

Joshua Diamond, Community Representative

Crystal Dyll, Teacher Representative, Garland HS

Austin Escobedo, Teacher Representative, Hickman Elementary

Frederick Farrell, Teacher Representative, Glen Couch Elementary

John Firley, Teacher Representative, Shorehaven Elementary

Michael Floyd, Teacher Representative, Club Hill Elementary

Michael Gallops, Community Representative

Fernando Garcia, Teacher Representative, Watson Technology Center

Jessica Garza, Teacher Representative, George Washington Carver Elementary	Laura Johnson, Teacher Representative, Toler Elementary
Dawit Gebremedhin, Teacher Representative, Williams Elementary	Tiffany Karns, Teacher Representative, Rowlett HS
Bethany Godinez, Teacher Representative, Shugart Elementary	Emily Kelley, Teacher Representative, Cooper Elementary
Hannah Graham, Teacher Representative, Sam Houston Middle School	Elizabeth Kiertscher, District Representative
Kenia Green, Teacher Representative, Ethridge Elementary	Abraham Leal, Teacher Representative, Spring Creek Elementary
Jon Grossman, Teacher Representative, Garland AEC	Sherese Lightfoot, District Representative
Deanna Guinaugh, Teacher Representative, Daugherty Elementary	Edgar Macarty, Teacher Representative, Abbett Elementary
Lester Hampton, Teacher Representative, Jackson Technology Center	Martha Mann, Teacher Representative, Handley Elementary
Sarah Harmon, Teacher Representative, Naaman Forest HS	Juana Martinez, Teacher Representative, Weaver Elementary
Jennifer Hendricks, Teacher Representative, Sellers Middle School	Patti Mastroleoo, Teacher Representative, Kimberlin Academy
Sarah Honza, Teacher Representative, Beaver Technology Center	Heather Medlock, Teacher Representative, Caldwell Elementary
Mitzi Howard, Teacher Representative, Armstrong Elementary	Reyna Montanoo, Teacher Representative, Memorial Pathway Academy
Mitzi Howard, Teacher Representative, Steadham Elementary	Clarissa Montoya, Teacher Representative, Luna Elementary
Eva Hummel, Business Representative	Patricia Mount, Teacher Representative, Northlake Elementary
James Iorio, District Representative	Mary B. Mullins, Teacher Representative, Roach Elementary
April Izard, Teacher Representative, Roach Elementary	Alex Opland, Teacher Representative, Shugart Elementary
Mark Jackson, Teacher Representative, Lyle Middle School	Peter Osborne, Teacher Representative, O'Banion Middle School
Blake James, Teacher Representative, Lister Elementary	April Parker, Teacher Representative, Park Crest Elementary

Rebecca Parscale, Teacher Representative,
Classical Center at Vial

Laura Reitzammer, Teacher Representative,
Ethridge Elementary

Michelle Robles, Teacher Representative,
Parsons PreKindergarten Center

Connie Rodriguez, District Representative

Maria Rodriguez Pereda, Teacher
Representative, Heather Glen

Anita Roland, Teacher Representative,
Shorehaven Elementary

Madison Russell, Teacher Representative,
Sellers Middle School

Blake Savage, Teacher Representative, Sewell
Elementary

Nicole Scott, Parent Representative

Shannon SESCO, Teacher Representative,
Beaver Technology Center

Dawn Shaw, Teacher Representative, Memorial
Pathway Academy

Mary Shelton, District Representative

Denise Shupe, Teacher Representative, Sachse
HS

Dylan Simpson, Teacher Representative, Toler
Elementary

Joey Snelson, Teacher Representative, Davis
Elementary

Alison Staples, Teacher Representative,
Lakeview Centennial HS

Tiffany Steele, Parent Representative

Becky Sweet, District Representative

Kennedy Taheri, Teacher Representative,
Freeman Elementary

Anaelisa Torres, Teacher Representative,
Golden Meadows Elementary

Brian Torres, Teacher Representative, South
Garland HS

Kenneth Vahrenkamp, Teacher Representative,
Bussey Middle School

Samantha Ward, Teacher Representative,
Bullock Elementary

Kristen Weeks, Teacher Representative,
Schrade Middle School

Xelina Welsh, District Representative

Cherie Wilcox, Teacher Representative,
Southgate Elementary

Kalli Willis, Teacher Representative, Keeley
Elementary

Katie Wiseman, Teacher Representative,
Stephens Elementary

Tim Wood, Teacher Representative, Hillside
Academy

Angela Wrinkle, Teacher Representative,
Hudson Middle School

Karen Zurita, Teacher Representative, Cisneros
PreKindergarten Center

I. Introduction

The 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842 in 2015, providing public school districts the opportunity to become Districts of Innovation, giving public schools some of the flexibility that charter and open-enrollment schools in the state currently have. To qualify, an eligible school district must adopt a five-year innovation plan according to the Texas Education Code.

Why would Garland ISD want to become a District of Innovation? The goal is to gain greater local control in decision-making to benefit our students and staff, to have increased autonomy from state mandates that govern educational programming, and to be empowered to innovate. Innovation does not necessarily mean ambitious new initiatives beyond the school district's current strategic plan. Instead, this plan allows Garland ISD the privilege and the flexibility to exercise more creative local control over existing quality programs without some of the statutory constraints in place now. Districts are not exempt from statutes that address curriculum, assessment, and graduation requirements nor are they exempt from academic and financial accountability.

This plan is specific to the exemptions as outlined. The district will follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. For the past five years, Garland ISD has implemented six exemptions, two of which are no longer applicable and obsolete due to changes in law and or policies. The current local innovation plan expires on April 11, 2022. The term of the district's designation shall not exceed five calendar years; thus the district would be expected to return to compliance with all specified areas of the Texas Education Code §102.1315 (issued under the Texas Education Code, §§12A.001-12A.009) and nullify all current exemptions.

Garland ISD recognizes that an approved renewal term would last for an additional five years; however, it reserves the right to amend the local innovation plan as needed. If granted a renewal, the district would organize a dedicated Local Innovation Committee to explore the possibilities of implementing additional allowable exemptions and amending the existing intervention plan.

II. Innovation Plan Timeline: Current & Amendment

Step	Date Completed
Board Consideration for Local Innovation Committee	Jan. 11, 2022: Discussion to use DEIC Committee for District of Innovation Renewal Process
Board resolution to approve Local Innovation Committee and Intent to Renew District of Innovation plan renewal	Jan. 25, 2022: Board of Trustees Meeting; action required to approve Local Innovation Committee and intent to pursue District of Innovation Plan renewal process
Local Innovation Committee (DEIC) Special Meeting	Feb. 2, 2022: public meeting to review the existing plan and discuss the obsolete exemptions and public comments; receive public comments on the existing plan and vote to renew the plan
Renewal Plan posted online for 30 days	Feb. 11, 2022: final plan posted on District website till Mar. 12
Commissioner notified	Feb. 11, 2022: Notice of Intent to Renew sent to TEA
Board approval for adoption	Mar. 22, 2022: two-thirds or more vote to approve
Notice of Adoption sent to Commissioner	Mar. 23, 2022: notice of Adoption Renewal sent to TEA
Post Renewal Plan on District Website	Mar. 23, 2022: post approved plan on the District website; send TEA a copy of the link posting.
Plan amendments were considered	Fall 2022 - Spring 2023
Local Innovation Committee (DEIC) Public Meeting	May 24, 2023: public meeting to review the existing plan and review proposed amendments; receive public comments on amendments and committee vote to approve amendments
Amended Plan posted	May 17, 2023
Board approval for adoption of amended plan	June 27, 2023
Notice of Adoption sent to Commissioner	July 19, 2023
Post Plan on District Website	July 19, 2023

III. Term of Plan

As outlined by the Texas Education Agency, the term of the Innovation Plan is five years. The plan, as amended, will commence with the adoption at the **June 27, 2023** Board of Trustees Regular Meeting and conclude on March 22, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Educational Improvement Committee (DEIC), in conjunction with the district leadership, will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications, as needed.

IV. A Comprehensive Educational Program

An exceptional education has long been the focus of our district. Our top responsibility is to provide a rigorous, innovative educational experience that prepares all students for college and careers, along with developing meaningful relationships between schools, families, and the community in a safe and secure environment.

◆ Mission Statement

The Garland Independent School District exists as a **DIVERSE COMMUNITY** with a **SHARED VISION** that serves to provide an **EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION** to ALL of its students.

◆ Vision Statement

Reaching the future by driving excellence, one student at a time.

◆ Values

- We believe every student can learn.
- We know every student deserves our best.
- We value and celebrate all cultures.
- We respect all students, families, staff and communities.
- We demonstrate ethical behavior.

Education Transforms Lives

Based on the District's mission, vision and values, the Garland ISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent Dr. López have created specific objectives to establish and define district academic targets.

◆ Goal and objectives through 2025-26

Goal statement: Garland ISD will ensure ALL students graduate prepared for college, careers, and life by increasing student performance measures, postsecondary readiness, and graduation rates and decreasing student management incidences.

Eight objectives have been identified to achieve this goal. See our [Strategic Goal site](#).

- Objective A: Early Literacy

-
- Objective B: English Language Acquisition
 - Objective C: Scientific Understanding
 - Objective D: Mathematical Proficiency
 - Objective E: Post-secondary Readiness (SAT Exams)
 - Objective F: Post-secondary Readiness (AP Exams)
 - Objective G: Student Management
 - Objective H: Graduation Outcomes

The work of the board and the district will continue as departments and campuses collaborate to develop action plans and data reporting steps. As these efforts advance and data points are collected, updates will be provided and shared so that progress on key performance indicators can be monitored.

V. Innovations

Certain requirements of the Texas Education Code inhibit the District's ability to fully meet our local needs. Therefore, GISD seeks exemption from the following permissible provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) as allowed in the statute:

- Campus Behavior Coordinator Provisions
- Grade 7 Reading Instrument
- Local Class Size PreK-4th grade
- Loss of Credit - 90 Percent Attendance Rule
- Mentor Teachers
- Out-of-School Suspension for Students Below Grade 3
- Probationary Contracts
- Relief from Term of Depository Contract
- School Start Date
- Teacher Appraisal System
- Teacher Certification
- Teacher Planning Time
- Transfer of Student
- Unauthorized Persons: Refusal of Entry, Ejection from School Property

1. Campus Behavior Coordinator Provisions {TEC §37.0012, FO(LEGAL), FO(LOCAL)}

Current Statute:

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Innovation/Flexibility:

The shared responsibility of discipline among campus principals and assistant principals will minimize the loss of instructional time and ensure the safety of all students as well as provide

increased opportunities to build relational capacity with parents and students. All campus administrators engage in comprehensive professional learning to support the implementation of the GarlandISD Discipline Management Plan and Student Code of Conduct. In addition, assigning existing professionals the responsibility of maintaining discipline and for notifying parents of disciplinary removals and/or arrests is a much more cost-effective means of fulfilling the duties of the campus behavior coordinator.

2. Grade 7 Reading Instrument {TEC §28.006(c-1), EKC(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

The Texas Education Code states that school districts shall administer a reading instrument at the beginning of seventh grade to each student who did not demonstrate reading proficiency, i.e., passing standard, on the 6th grade STAAR Reading assessment. Statute requires that the assessment instrument be adopted in accordance with the commissioner's recommendations.

Innovation/Flexibility:

Due to the impact of COVID, the Commissioner and TEA authorized the use of a *Grade 7 Reading Instruments Guidance and Instructions Waiver* during 2020-21, 2021-2022 and 2022-23, allowing districts to administer an alternate reading diagnostic instrument approved by the local board of trustees in order to best meet student needs. This ability to request use of an alternate diagnostic reading instrument for approval is permitted through GISD Board Policy EKC-LEGAL.

Garland ISD has invested money, time and training on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth Reading. The MAP Growth Reading assessment meets the four criteria identified in GISD Board Policy EKC-LEGAL for alternate grade 7 reading diagnostics: a) based on published scientific reading research; b) age and grade-level appropriate, valid and reliable; c) identify student skills in the area of word analysis, fluency and comprehension; and d) assist teacher with individualized instructional decision-making. Furthermore, we have determined that the data reporting and instructional impact of this assessment surpasses the capabilities of the assessment tools identified on the Commissioner's reading diagnostic list. Furthermore, utilization of the MAP Growth Reading assessment as the Grade 7 diagnostic reading assessment instrument provides a longitudinal view of student performance across time, as GISD has committed to MAP Growth Reading administration in grades K-8 since 2015.

3. Local Class Size PreK-4th Grade {TEC §25.112, TEC§25.113, EEB(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. That limitation does not apply during:

- 1) any 12-week period of the school year selected by the district, in the case of a district whose average daily attendance is adjusted under Section 48.005 (Average Daily Attendance)(c); or
- 2) the last 12 weeks of any school year in the case of any other district.

A campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112 (Class Size)(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception. The notice must be in conspicuous bold or underlined print and:

- 1) specify the class for which an exception from the limit imposed by Section 25.112 (Class Size)(a) was granted;
- 2) state the number of children in the class for which the exception was granted; and
- 3) be included in a regular mailing or other communication from the campus or district, such as information sent home with students.

Innovation/Flexibility:

The district seeks to locally monitor and maintain appropriate class sizes without the necessity of waivers. This exemption allows Garland ISD to utilize a more flexible class size approach based on student needs and the time of year. Garland ISD staffing ratios for Prekindergarten - Fourth grade are based on a 22:1 student-to-teacher ratio. Additional teacher allocations for Prekindergarten through Fourth Grade will be considered once a grade level reaches a student-to-teacher ratio of 24:1. This exemption would allow minimal disruption to the learning

4. Loss of Credit - 90 Percent Attendance Rule {TEC §25.092, FEC(LEGAL), FEC(LOCAL)}

Current Statute:

Under Texas Education Code 25.092, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. In addition, a student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class.

Proposed Innovation/Flexibility:

The current law does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, all absences are considered. With the increase of additional complex social needs, mental health issues, and limitations of school and public transportation there has been a decrease in attendance and increase of students reaching the 90% threshold. This has resulted in an increasing amount of time spent organizing recovery efforts, tracking attendance, and making adjustments to grades.

Flexibility with regard to minimum attendance for class credit or final grade allows the district innovative options for assessing student mastery and individualizing instruction based on the needs of the student. Flexibility will alleviate some of the overwhelming tasks that staff now face in maintaining compliance for the rule as is. Time and resources spent by staff members and students fulfilling seat time requirements are better used in intervention and enrichment efforts. Students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, who could otherwise demonstrate mastery, would not be penalized or experience delays in advancement. The district team of representatives will determine appropriate methods for assessing or otherwise determining whether the content of a course has been mastered. Campus teams will review student attendance and grades to determine mastery.

Garland ISD will develop a team with representatives from the Student Services, MTSS, and Counseling departments, along with campus leadership to redefine attendance thresholds for credit loss and define ways for students that show mastery of the content to gain credit.

5. Mentor Teachers {TEC §21.458, TAC §153.1011, DEAA(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

TEC§21.458 states that each school district may assign a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned. The rules concerning mentor teacher qualifications include: a) teach in the same school, if practical; b) teach the same subject/grade, if practical; and c) agree to be a mentor for at least one school year. Additional mentor teacher requirements include: a) completion of a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner; b) completion of mentor training program provided by the district; c) demonstration of at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance; and d) demonstration of interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills.

Innovation/Flexibility:

Due to the severe teacher shortages, Garland ISD employs many new teachers each year. It is very important that mentors be effective classroom teachers who can support new teachers in their first years in the profession. Being exempt from this requirement would increase the pool of teachers from which the district could draw for our mentoring program. While the district will make every attempt to ensure that mentors assigned to the necessary teachers have the required three completed years of teaching experience, the district reserves the right and flexibility to designate exceptional teachers with less than three years of experience to serve as mentors for novice teachers.

Furthermore, an exemption from these requirements would allow for teachers with more than two years of experience to be assigned a mentor that excels in areas that are targeted for improvement or innovation, such as project-based learning, personalized learning or small group instruction.

In order to meet our significant need for mentor teachers, the district also seeks to develop our own robust mentoring program based on best practice that more appropriately meets the needs and interests of our students and staff.

6. Out-of-School Suspension for Students Below Grade 3 {TEC §37.005, FO(LEGAL), FOB(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

Currently, under Texas Education Code 37.005, a student who is enrolled in a grade level below grade 3 may not be placed in out-of-school suspension, unless while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, the student engages in:

-
- Conduct that contains the elements of an offense related to weapons under Penal Code 46.02 or 46.05;
 - Conduct that contains the elements of a violent offense related under Penal Code 22.01, 22.001, 22.02, 22.021; or
 - Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of an amount of:
 - Marijuana or a controlled substance, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 481, or by 21 USC Section 801 et seq.;
 - A dangerous drug, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 483, o
 - An alcoholic beverage, as defined by Alcoholic Beverage Code 1.04.

Innovation/Flexibility:

To best serve the students of Garland ISD and provide a high-quality learning environment for all students, the District proposes that school administrators be able to exercise professional judgment and place students of any grade level in out-of-school suspension when they deem it necessary for safety and to maintain an orderly learning environment for all students.

Specifically, the District seeks the flexibility to authorize school administrators to suspend students out-of-school below grade 3 when necessary.

- This flexibility will allow for school-based decision making and allow administrators to more effectively ensure the safety and security of all students and staff.
- Criteria will be developed to identify situations that would initiate a suspension, and the superintendent's designee will provide oversight.
- The Superintendent/designee will report to the Board after the end of each school year the number of students in grade PreK through fifth grade placed in out of school suspension.

The District currently monitors the suspensions of all students, regardless of grade level, to ensure the Student Code of Conduct is applied appropriately across the District. Should an exemption from TEC §37.005 be granted, the District would continue to monitor the suspensions of all students, which would now include students in grades below 3, to ensure that suspensions are appropriate.

The benefits of the proposed innovation are to allow for school-based decision making, assist in maintaining an orderly environment for all students, and allow school administrators to ensure the safety and security of all students more effectively.

7. Probationary Contracts {TEC §21.102(b), DCA(LEGAL), DFAB(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

Probationary Contracts - Manner in which law inhibits GISD: TEC §21.102(b) states that a probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.

Innovation/Flexibility:

Due to the unique nature of GISD, including our initiatives and processes, this period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-year classroom and student data. Upon exemption from TEC §21.102(b), all new contract employees will be subject to the probationary period set out in TEC §21.102(c), in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee’s performance.

8. Relief from Term of Depository Contract {TEC §45.205, TEC §45.206, BDAE(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

TEC §45.205. TERM OF CONTRACT. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified.

(b) A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for three additional two-year terms. The contract may be modified for each two-year extension if both parties mutually agree to the terms. An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206.

(c) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

Innovation/Flexibility:

GISD is seeking an exemption from TEC 45.205 and 45.206 to allow the District's banking contract to be extended beyond the allowable contract term and to ensure that its resources are concentrated on student achievement and campus operations are not disrupted. At least once every two years, the District will evaluate the performance of the current depository bank. Should the district determine that the contracted services are provided effectively and the quality of service is acceptable, the district will seek to negotiate terms to extend the contract for one additional two-year period. If the District determines contract-pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the District’s banking services out for bid. This exemption lessens the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there is a limited number of banking institutions available to bid on the District’s business.

The District will only go out for bid if it is determined that contract-pricing is not competitive and there is an operational or financial reason to send the District’s banking services out for bid. The District will continue with two year contracts for our banking depository.

9. School Start Date {TEC§25.0811a, EB(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

The Texas Education Code states a school district may not begin student instruction before the fourth Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to begin earlier, even as early as the second Monday in August. The start-date waiver was eventually removed when the legislature determined school districts should begin the first semester no earlier than the fourth Monday of August, with no exceptions. The current process allows no flexibility in the design and balancing of instructional semesters to meet the needs of students or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees, who

represent community interests.

Innovation/Flexibility:

Garland ISD will determine the local starting date of the first semester in its annual calendar creation process. The annual calendar will be submitted to the Board of Trustees – in accordance with district policy, procedure and practice.

10. Teacher and Administrator Appraisals {TEC§21.352, TEC§21.3541, DNA(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS), are implemented in Garland ISD. While these systems are designed to meet the needs of the entire state, these systems also require state standardized test scores to be used as the primary evaluation measure for both teachers and administrators. This will prove challenging and possibly inequitable when determining what measure will be used for teachers who do not teach core content, state-tested subjects.

Innovation/Flexibility:

The district has invested time and training into using the T-TESS and T-PESS appraisal system. We propose that we continue to utilize T-TESS and T-PESS, without the value-added measure, as it is currently being used. This change would improve equity and team building, in addition to teacher retention.

11. Teacher Certification {TEC§21.003, TEC§21.0031, TEC§21.051, TEC§21.053, DBA(LEGAL), DK(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

In the event, a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. Parents must be notified in writing whenever a teacher does not have the required certification.

Innovation/Flexibility:

Garland ISD will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. However, when that is not reasonably possible, GISD will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the subject area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question, as permitted by law. Garland ISD seeks the ability to locally certify teachers in areas of high demand in order to better meet the educational needs of our students. Teachers with industry certifications and qualified experience could be eligible to teach a course through a local teaching certification. This process will allow more flexibility in our rapidly evolving hiring landscape, and will strategically enable GISD to staff campuses in areas where teacher shortages are prevalent due to applicants with certification/credentialing issues. This flexibility will allow Garland ISD to provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications and give us the ability to rely less on substitute

teachers in high-need assignments where there is a scarcity of traditionally credentialed teacher applicants.

12. Teacher Planning Time {TEC §21.404, DL(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

TEC§21.404 states that teachers are entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two week period for planning and preparation for teaching, conferencing with parents, and evaluating student work. During a planning and preparation period, teachers may not be required to participate in activities not specified in statute. Additionally, a planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day.

Innovation/Flexibility:

Under the current statute, teachers cannot voluntarily relinquish their planning period. Garland ISD seeks the ability to allow teachers to voluntarily relinquish their 45-minute planning period for teaching activities (examples include, but are not limited to, teaching an additional section/course or participating in student intervention activities) or non-teaching activities (attending an ARD or a PLC). Any teacher who voluntarily relinquishes planning time to engage in teaching or non-teaching activities should sign a “memorandum of understanding” acknowledging that any reduction in the protected 450 minutes of planning and preparation time has been agreed upon by the teacher.

13. Transfer of Student {TEC §25.036, FDA(LEGAL)}

Current Statute:

- (a) Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.
- (b) A transfer agreement under this section shall be filed and preserved as a receiving district record for audit purposes of the agency.

Local Policy:

Garland ISD maintains a student transfer policy under Board Policy (Local), which requires that all nonresident students who wish to transfer must file a transfer application each school year with the Superintendent or designee. Transfers shall be granted for one regular school year at a time. A transfer student shall be notified in the written transfer agreement that he or she must follow all rules and regulations of the District. Violation of the terms of the agreement may result in a transfer request not being approved the following year.

A full-time employee who does not reside in the District may request that his or her child or grandchild be admitted into District schools by filing an application with the Superintendent or designee. A transfer shall be granted on a tuition-free basis for as long as the employee continues to be employed by the District, subject to this policy and provisions of the applicable guidelines. Upon the parent's, grandparent's, or guardian's separation from employment from

the District for any reason, the transfer shall be revoked, and the student shall no longer be eligible to attend District schools unless the student resides in the District. A full-time employee may request transfer status for his or her child or grandchild immediately upon employment or any time during the school year. Application timelines and placement of a child of a nonresident employee shall be in accordance with administrative guidelines. A child of a nonresident employee eligible to enroll under this provision shall participate in the choice period under the Freedom of Choice plan. As long as a student is continuously enrolled at a campus, the student may continue to attend the same campus in subsequent grades, even if the campus later becomes closed. Children or grandchildren of nonresident employees must participate in the choice process when transferring from prekindergarten to kindergarten, from fifth to sixth grade, and from eighth to ninth grade. A school transfer for a child of a nonresident employee shall be decided by the same provisions as all other students.

Innovation/Flexibility:

Garland ISD seeks the flexibility to revoke a student's transfer status during the school year based on the student's failure to meet the expectations for behavior and attendance. The Superintendent or designee may revoke a student's transfer status at any time during the school year for the following circumstances:

- Student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion; and/or
- Student attendance falls below the TEA truancy standard

Relief from the code governing this policy would allow Garland ISD to focus on educating resident students as well as transfer students who come to the district to receive quality instruction that meet the district's expectations for behavior, attendance, and academic efforts. Garland ISD will ensure ALL students graduate prepared for college, careers, and life.

14. Unauthorized Persons: Refusal to Entry, Ejection from School Property {TEC §37.105, GKA(LEGAL), GKA(LOCAL), FNG(LEGAL), FNG(LOCAL)}

Current Statute:

TEC 37.105 requires a school district to issue a verbal warning to a disruptive or threatening person that their behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of, entry to, or ejection from a school facility if their behaviors persist. Additionally, districts are required to provide to individuals at the time of their removal, written information explaining the district's process for appealing the decision to remove the individual. Finally, the statute requires districts to post the provisions of this statute as well as the appeal process on every campus website.

Innovation/Flexibility:

Garland ISD will be exempt from the portions of TEC 37.105 described above. It is not always practicable to keep detailed records of every verbal warning given to an individual who is behaving in such a way as to elicit a verbal warning. Often, stopping to gather the necessary information could further escalate the situation, rather than de-escalate. Additionally, in many circumstances, the administrator addressing the unruly individual may not be able to document the event immediately. Because verbal warnings only lead to ejection if the

individual continues to act improperly immediately after the verbal warning, documenting those that do not lead to ejection is unnecessary and overly burdensome. Similarly, given the volatility of situations in which an individual is ejected from school property, it is rarely feasible to provide the individual with a written copy of the district's appeals process. These processes are readily available on the District's website together with all other information regarding complaints. Finally, posting this information on campus websites is duplicative and unnecessary as all information regarding complaints and appeals is available in a single location on the District's main website which is frequented by District stakeholder

V. Adoption of Plan

Garland ISD has met all of the process requirements outlined by the TEA and the Commissioner of Education to renew the designation as a District of Innovation per TEA's DOI Amendment & Renewal guidelines.

The Notice of Intent to amend the DOI plan was sent to the TEA Commissioner on **July 19, 2023**. This included the intended adoption date and the location of the posted Local Innovation Plan. Notification on DOI plan amendments is not required.

A copy of the proposed Local Innovation Plan 2022 renewal was posted on the District's website for the required 30 days followed by approval by the Board of Trustees (**from February 11 - March 12, 2022**).

The local Innovation Plan amendments were approved by the DEIC Committee by majority in vote, with the opportunity for committee and public comment, during the **May 25, 2023** meeting. The Local Innovation Plan renewal was originally approved by the Garland ISD Board of Trustees on the twenty-second day of March 2022.

The amended Local Innovation Plan was approved by the Garland ISD Board of Trustees on the **27th day of June, 2023**. The Notice of Adoption of Amendment was sent to the TEA Commissioner on **July 19, 2023**. This included: 1) the adoption date, 2) a link to the final adopted/renewed plan on the district's website (landing page), and an attachment containing an updated checklist of exemptions reflecting all sections of code from which the district is exempt [Figure: 19 TAC §102.1307(d)].

The most current version of the Garland ISD District of Innovation plan, as adopted and/or amended can be accessed at <https://garlandisd.net/about/district-initiatives/district-innovation>.