



Gladewater Independent School District



District of Innovation Plan

NOTE: This plan has been drafted by a committee appointed by the Gladewater ISD Board of Trustees. The board may not take formal action to approve this plan until it has been posted on the GISD website for a minimum of 30 days. GISD will not operate as a district of innovation under this plan until the board gives formal approval and all timelines and state requirements for such plans have been met.

Gladewater ISD as a District of Innovation

Districts of Innovation and Exemptions from Provisions of the Texas Education Code under House Bill 1842

Gladewater ISD will continue to follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas except for the specific exemptions outlined in this plan. If at some point it is decided that changes or additional exemptions should be considered, the district will reconvene the District of Innovation Planning committee to explore possible revisions as per Districts of Innovation guidelines in the TEC.

As we look to the future of Gladewater ISD, we must be positioned to maximize opportunities and minimize the barriers that could otherwise preclude us from doing our best work on our students' behalf. House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the unique needs of their student populations in order to prepare them for success and lifelong learning. As a District of Innovation, Gladewater ISD will have greater flexibility and freedom to make important educational decisions for our students at the local level.

In undertaking the creation of this plan for innovation, the Gladewater ISD Board of Trustees, in accordance with the Texas Education Code, held a public hearing before appointing the District-wide Educational Improvement Council to act as the innovation plan committee and to develop a local plan of innovation for Gladewater ISD.

The Innovation Plan Committee/District-wide Educational Improvement Council members are:

Sedric G. Clark - Superintendent
Jimmy C. Lightfoot - Facilitator
Glenda Hickey - Chief Financial Officer
Amy Maberry - Literacy Coordinator
Derrick Floyd - Assistant Principal
Renee Byers - Assistant Principal
Kathy Cates - Counselor
Nicole Ferrel - High School Teacher
Katelyn James - High School Teacher
Bethany Ledbetter - High School Teacher

Candy Keller - Middle School Teacher
Carla Templeman - Middle School Teacher
Emily Brown - Elementary Teacher
Beth Choice - Elementary Teacher
Ramonda Hawley - Elementary Teacher
Allison Taylor - Elementary Teacher
Jamie Cook - Parent
Robert Johnson - Parent
Todd Clifton - Community/Business

Term of Plan

This plan will be in effect upon approval by the Gladewater ISD Board of Trustees and notification of the plan to the Texas Education Agency through July 31, 2023. This plan may be amended or terminated at any time by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Texas Education Code.

District of Innovation Timelines

November 13, 2017	Adopt Board Resolution to pursue District of Innovation.
December 11, 2017	Public Hearing concerning District of Innovation.
December 11, 2017	Appoint District of Innovation Committee.
February 22, 2018	Provide Board with proposed Plan of Innovation for review.
February 22, 2018	Post proposed Plan on district website for at least 30 days.
February 26, 2018	Board approval to notify the Texas Education Commissioner of the board's intent to vote on a Plan of Innovation.
Date to be determined	Public meeting of the DEIC to approve the Plan of Innovation
Date to be determined	Board approval of District of Innovation Plan

Uniform School Start Date

(TEC 25.0811)

Currently

Students may not begin a school year before the 4th Monday of August each year. This had been the rule for many years, however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday. Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this waiver practice stopped because they believed it was hurting their summer tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Proposed

Gladewater ISD will determine its own start date for school each year. This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of students, educators, and the local community.

Regardless of the start date in any given year, Gladewater ISD teachers and instructional staff will not report earlier than August 1st. Furthermore, Gladewater ISD will not propose or adopt a calendar with less than the required number of operational and/or instructional minutes as set forth by the TEC.

Local benefits of an earlier start date:

- The number of instructional days in the first and second semesters will be more balanced.
- A greater number of instructional days prior to state standardized assessments.
- The ability to end the first semester before Christmas break. It is difficult for students to return to school after a two-week break and immediately take semester exams or cumulative assessments.
- Flexibility to begin the school year with a short week, which eases the transition for students, their families, and faculty.
- The ability for students to enroll in college courses that begin in early June (Summer I), thereby increasing college readiness.

Teacher Certification

(TEC 21.003, 21.053, 21.057)

Currently

Currently TEC 21.003(a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC 21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Proposed

Gladewater ISD will continue to seek traditionally certified candidates for all teaching and administrative positions. With a local waiver, a non-certified professional can teach non-core subjects as needed. This would require the submission of credentials and superintendent approval.

For Dual Credit, CTE, or fine art courses for which a traditionally certified candidate is not identified, the District will recruit instructors with an appropriate Master's degree (dual credit) or industry certification/experience in the field of need (CTE/fine art). Gladewater ISD can extend the employee a one year local certificate approved by the superintendent. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The District will develop minimum required qualifications for persons hired for such positions and also will identify required professional development in the areas of student management, instructional strategies, curriculum, and more as determined by the supervising administrator. After thoroughly vetting candidates for hire, Gladewater ISD will consider the instructors hired for these positions to be appropriately qualified and will not provide additional special notification to parents of students in their classes that the instructor does not hold a traditional teaching certificate.

Once a candidate has been found to fit these requirements, the principal will submit the written request to the superintendent with all of the individual's credentials for teaching in the specified field or class. The superintendent will then approve the request at his/her discretion if he/she feels the individual could be an asset to students and to the campus and district. The superintendent will then report the hiring to the Board of Trustees for standard board approval prior to the individual beginning employment.

This innovation will allow Gladewater ISD to consider broader applicant pools and to broaden the district's course offerings. It will also allow Gladewater ISD to fill hard-to-staff positions while maintaining a high quality of instruction.

This exemption will **not** apply to administrators, nor will it apply to teachers in core curricular positions (math, science, social studies, reading/English). Gladewater ISD will continue to require these professionals to hold proper certification so as to best serve our students.