

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

2021-2026



Designed in accordance with Texas HB 1842

A District of Innovation is a concept passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, effective immediately, that gives traditional school districts the following:

- Greater Local Control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students
- Increased Freedom and Flexibility with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming, and
- It will empower districts to be Innovative and Think Differently.

San Angelo ISD District of Innovation Plan 2021-2026

San Angelo ISD is committed to the mission of our district, "To engage all students in a relevant and inspiring education that produces future ready graduates." In meeting the expectations of our community in accomplishing our mission, SAISD has engaged in the work of true accountability in building a Community Based Accountability System (CBAS).

PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS – TEC 11.251

DISTRICT-LEVEL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING – TEC 11.252 and

CAMPUS-LEVEL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING – TEC 11.253

San Angelo ISD is requesting exemption from TEC 11.251, TEC 11.252 and TEC 11.253 PLANNING and DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, DISTRICT-LEVEL PLANNING and DECISION-MAKING, and CAMPUS-LEVEL PLANNING and DECISION-MAKING. It is San Angelo ISD's expectation to "invite deeper participation and gather input in decision-making through reoccurring engagement opportunities that connect students, parents, teachers/staff, and community members. The requirements in content and format of the district improvement plan have shifted an otherwise important planning process into a bureaucratic process that detracts from the importance of thoughtful planning and implementation. As a learning organization, San Angelo ISD is committed to deepening clarity and impact of strategic direction by collectively measuring progress, identifying future explorations, and cultivating collaboration and engagement. The strategic work will be accomplished through the Community Based Accountability System (CBAS) process that is covered out at the district and campus levels.

San Angelo has a history of involving teachers, administrators, parents, community members and students in the decision-making process. We are committed to maintaining that same level of engagement with our stakeholders. It is our intent to align our District Improvement Plan to the vision, mission, beliefs and goals that these same stakeholders have developed and embraced as the key drivers for our district planning and decision-making structure. TEC 11.252 and TEC 11.253 of a compliance nature will no longer be implemented and will be replaced by relevant components of the San Angelo ISD Strategic Plan.

The Advisory Council has developed the process of the district and campus CBAS, centered around the pillars of true accountability, which include:

- Student Achievement
- Student Readiness
- Engaged, Well-Rounded Students
- Professional Learning/Effective Staff
- Community Engagement and Partnerships
- Systems and Operations
- Safety and Well Being

Local Innovation Strategies:

To assure both collaboration and collective ownership while accomplishing alignment between the San Angelo ISD Strategic Plan and District Improvement Plan, we will take the following steps:

1. Review district performance data from a wide variety of sources, including but not limited to: state, district, campus and classroom assessments that align to the Learner Profile and High Priority Learning Standards; data that informs the district about the physical, mental and emotional wellness of students; and multiple measures that reflect community engagement, value and perception about the progress of the district.
2. Identify strengths and weaknesses in student and programmatic performance.
3. Through local sources, including but not limited to the District/Campus Performance Committee, develop annual plans for improvement that align to the district's vision, mission, beliefs, goals, and Learner Profile.
4. Report to the Board of Trustees the status of district's Strategic Plan and future actions steps to continue our efforts in achieving the district's vision, mission, and beliefs.
5. Adapt teaching and programs driven by student needs based on an ongoing review of student performance data, both academic and behavioral.
6. Provide regular reports to the community on the status of the school district and campuses through a Community Based Accountability System.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION – TEC 21.003; TEC 21.057

San Angelo ISD is requesting an exemption from TEC 21.003 (a). **CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.**

(a) 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 the position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. TEC 21.057 PARENTAL NOTIFICATION requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns an inappropriate certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

Local Innovation Strategies:

1. San Angelo ISD will continue to seek highly effective certified educators for teaching positions and maintain its expectations for employee certification. The district will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and are fully equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question based on local certification criteria. Qualification for local certification could include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Professional work experience
 - b. Formal training/education in the content area
 - c. Active/relevant professional industry certification
 - d. A combination of work experience, training, and education

- e. Demonstration of successful experience working with students
- 2. In order to best serve students, providing opportunities for greater flexibility to fill positions in subject areas that are "hard to fill" will allow the district to employ high quality educators that might not ordinarily qualify under the traditional teacher certification pathway.
- 3. An individual with experience in the content of an elective course could be eligible to teach in career and technical education (CTE) to ensure:
 - a. engaging and challenging learning
 - b. expanding the opportunity in the development of post high school plans
 - c. improvement in workforce skills
 - d. expansion of dual credit programs
- 4. Individuals hired under this exemption will be provided with district identified or district developed training, resources, and support.
- 5. The superintendent or his/her designee will approve the employment if the individual possesses the knowledge, skills and experience required of the position and feel the individual could be an asset to students by providing quality instruction.
- 6. All decisions on teacher certification and assignments will be handled locally and notification of District Teaching Permits will not be necessary.
- 7. If San Angelo ISD assigns a non-certified teacher to a specific classroom, written notice will be provided of the assignment to the parents or guardians of each student in that classroom according to Board Policy DK.

PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS – TEC 21.102

San Angelo ISD is requesting an exemption from TEC 21.102 (b). PROBATIONARY CONTRACT. ...except that the probationary period 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 by the district.

Local Innovation Strategies:

- 1. San Angelo ISD is seeking a two-year probationary period for all experienced teachers new to the district in order to:
 - a. better evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom and/or
 - b. provide an opportunity for professional growth as needed.

GROUP HEALTH BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES – TEC 22.004

San Angelo ISD is requesting exemption from TEC 22.004 GROUP HEALTH BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees at a lower cost. This provision does not give the district the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees.

Local Innovation Strategies:

1. San Angelo ISD is seeking the option to offer additional benefits to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs

TRANSFER OF A STUDENT – TEC 25.036

San Angelo ISD is requesting an exemption from TEC 25.036 TRANSFER BETWEEN DISTRICTS OR COUNTIES (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. TEC 25.036 TRANSFER OF STUDENT has been interpreted to require a transfer to be for a period of one school year.

Local Innovation Strategies:

1. San Angelo ISD is seeking exemption to require all students to follow district transfer requirements regardless of inter/intra district transfer requests, based on consistent policies for all students.

FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION – TEC 25.0811

San Angelo ISD is requesting an exemption from TEC 25.0811a. FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) ...a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Local Innovation Strategies:

1. Relief from the statute will allow San Angelo ISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minutes required, rather than days.
2. It would allow the first and second semester to be somewhat balanced, which is critical in semester courses.
3. Alignment of the district calendar with local universities would afford students and staff the opportunity to enroll in summer college sessions.
4. San Angelo ISD will determine, on an annual basis, the local starting date of the first semester, not to precede August 15th in any given year.
5. The annual calendar will be submitted and approved by the board of trustees.

Note: The calendar exemption does not affect the number of contract days for teachers, which will remain the same. (Refer to San Angelo ISD Board Policy EB)

MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE – TEC 25.092

San Angelo ISD is requesting an exemption from TEC 25.092 MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE. The Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade requirement is also referred to as the "90% rule". Currently, state law requires students to attend class 90% of the school days the class is offered to earn credit. The law requires the District to award class credit to students based on "seat time" and traditional reporting methods, rather than based on mastery of the learning that students may demonstrate in ways that reflect choice, acceleration, and personalized pacing.

San Angelo ISD believes the district can maintain a minimum attendance percentage for traditional classes, while allowing for flexibility in students demonstrating mastery of content through an innovative system and a more flexible pace in other classes or situations. Awarding a student credit or a final grade for a class should be based on content-based mastery and that there are unique situations where a student's lack of attendance for 90% of the days the course or class is offered should not always be a barrier to receiving course credit. In these unique situations, credit by mastery will improve student achievement, student test scores, and overall college and career readiness. Relief from TEC Section 25.092 will not change or impact TEC Section 25.085 about compulsory attendance; TEC Section 28.0214 in regard to finality of a grade by a teacher; and TEC Section 28.0216 regarding the district's grading policy.

Local Innovation Strategies:

1. San Angelo will utilize representative committees, such as the Curriculum Advisory Council, to develop specific systems for innovative approaches to earn course credits.
2. Examine different formats and instructional strategies, such as online coursework, blended coursework, dual enrollment, performance tasks, community-based learning, independent study, mentorships, and credit recovery for optimum student engagement.
3. Examine non-traditional opportunities and assessment mechanisms for students to demonstrate mastery of High Priority Learning Standards at all grade levels as practicable.
4. Design and activate personalized learning experiences focused on the Learner Profile and High Priority Learning Standards.
5. Use Schoology, our Learning Management System that allows teachers to design and customize learning experiences for students.
6. Provide appropriate resources to monitor and facilitate appropriate subject-based acceleration and personalized learning, considering learning styles and preferences.
7. Deploy a professional learning system that is personalized and cultivates continuous learning.
8. Examine and implement multiple measures of assessment to monitor student growth and engagement in learning.

CLASS SIZE – TEC 25.112; TEC 25.113

San Angelo ISD is requesting an exemption from TEC 25.112 CLASS SIZE. ...a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. TEC 25.113 NOTICE OF CLASS SIZE. A campus or district that is granted an exception...shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or the person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.

Local Innovation Strategies:

1. San Angelo ISD recognizes that smaller classes are beneficial and will continue to use the 22:1 student/teacher ratio for Kindergarten-4th grade in projecting the number of staff needed for future school years.
2. If all classes in a particular grade level reach the 22:1 ratio, the district will determine if it best suits the district/campus/grade level to enroll the student at another campus, allow the current campus to exceed the 22:1 limit, or hire an additional classroom teacher to compensate for the additional students.
3. If all classes on a particular grade level (K-4) reach the 24:1 ratio, the district will determine if an additional section should be added, additional instructional support, or enrollment for that grade level on that particular campus closed and students enrolled at an alternative campus.
4. The San Angelo ISD Board of Trustees will be informed at the next convenient meeting when a grade level exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
5. When a K-4 grade level average exceed the 22:1 ratio for 30 consecutive days, parents will be notified.

DESIGNATION OF CAMPUS BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR – TEC 37.0012

Due to the size of campuses, San Angelo ISD is requesting an exemption from TEC 37.0012 DESIGNATION OF CAMPUS BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR. A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the Campus Behavior Coordinator.

Local Innovation Strategies:

1. San Angelo ISD will maintain all the duties and responsibilities outlined for a Campus Behavior Coordinator and will allow the role to be fulfilled by more than one administrator on campuses.