

Ferris ISD

District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)

2017-18 through 2021-22

Ferris ISD has developed a District of Innovation Plan as authorized by HB 1842 of the 84th Legislature, in order to exercise more effective local control in specific areas.

This plan will be in effect beginning with the 2017-2018 school year and will remain so through the 2021-2022 school year. This plan may be amended at any time by the committee and with approval of the Board of Trustees.

Strategic Plan Committee

District Personnel	Campus Admin.	Counselors	SpEd Reps.	Teachers	Support Staff	Community, Parents
James Hartman	Dr. Kevin Dixon	Kathi Perez	Deann Bolin	Jamey Cospers	Ashley Jones	Laverne Tatum
T.J. Knight	Shnell Jackson	Linda Greenly	Dr. Tyrell White	Carla Rhodes	Lisa Hunter	Crissy Lynch
Dr. Melinda Domain	Mack McCleskey	Danielle Trevino	Paul Nies	Becky Brandon	Donna Shaw	Monica Lemon
Christi Nies	Rhonda Renner	Jennifer Mena		Katie Wilson	Ann Szempruch	Katrina Lippold
Daniel Domain	Chris Hawkins	Shirley Floyd		Mandi Wilson		J.D. Horman
Brenda Rodriguez	Bobbi Cook	Amy Barton		Courtney Jones		Jennifer Dunn
Chief Antonio Perez	Kendra Gajdica	Alisha Lynn		Melissa O'Neil		Michael Smith
Brandon Layne	Lance Keating			Ja'Layna Betik		Quinta Nigo
Ginger Williams	Marla Laudan			Bob Jones		Pamela Roberson
Josh Newman	Melissa Tovar			Emily White		McKeycia Murry*

Dondi Markgraf	Deonna Courtney			Lyndsey Williams		Frank Green
	Dorcas Lotspeich			Lori Hand		Gay Horman
				Marie Kinworthy		
				Kim Graham		
				Michelle Beard		
				Amy Davis		
				Trisha Brightwell		
				Meredith Malloy		
				Tammy Moran		
				Kara Autrey		
				Kristi James		
				Traci Krueger		
				Leslie Bukowski		
				Alma Montero		
				Eric Evans		

District of Innovation Subcommittee

James Hartman
 Dr. Kevin Dixon
 Leslie Bukowski
 Kendra Gajdica
 Donna Shaw
 Amy Davis
 Kathi Perez
 J.D. Horman
 Gay Horman
 Jamey Cospers
 Courtney Jones
 Mandi Wilson

Debrah Harman
 Meredith Malloy

The Ferris ISD Board of Trustees and Ferris ISD Administration will make governance decisions related to the school calendar that best serve the needs of FISD students, staff, and community.

Uniform School Start Date (TEC §25.0811) (EB LEGAL)

Currently

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. Although this has been the rule for many years, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The majority of Texas districts applied for the waiver and sought to begin school earlier. However, recent legislative action took away all waivers and mandated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Innovation

This flexibility of start date allows FISD to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of our students and our local community. This empowers us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. Specifically, flexibility in the school start date creates flexibility for school end date; so students will be able to enroll in college courses that begin in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Removing the uniform start date provision will also allow FISD to start classes using a short week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school; while still being true to community needs for specific local and federal holidays. Additionally, this flexibility creates enhanced professional development opportunities to better meet the needs of our instructional staff.

The Ferris ISD Board of Trustees and Ferris ISD Administration will further our calling to be a “District of Opportunity” by making teacher hiring decisions based on distinct qualifications that meet the specific needs of FISD students and our community.

Teacher certification - General (TEC §21.003) (DK LEGAL)

Currently

In the event that a district cannot secure a certified educator for a specific position, or a teacher accepts an assignment outside of their certification area, the district must submit a request for approval to the Texas Education Agency. The Commissioner of Education receives the request and, within 30 days, either grants or denies the request.

Innovation

Ferris ISD is committed to placing the best teacher available into each child's classroom. As one of our Core Beliefs states, "Given the right opportunity, every student can blossom." In order to provide this "right opportunity" and better serve FISD students, certification decisions will be made locally rather than by an absentee bureaucracy in Austin. The current state teacher certification requirements often inhibit our ability to hire quality instructors for hard-to-fill and/or high demand positions such as dual credit, CTE, STEM, and foreign language. In order to ensure that more students can access the educational benefit of these course offerings, FISD will establish its own local qualification and training requirement for certified teachers, professionals, and industry licensed experts to teach courses in lieu of the current requirements set forth in law. This proposed exemption request directly aligns with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the move away from "highly qualified" requirements. FISD will have the flexibility to employ community college instructors and university professors for dual credit courses; internal and external teaching applicants seeking assignment outside of their traditional certification area; and industry professionals to teach career and technical education courses based on their vocational expertise. The net result of this flexibility will be enriched applicant pools for hard-to-fill and/or high demand positions and, more importantly, enhanced learning opportunities for our students.