

O'Donnell ISD



District of Innovation Plan

Final Approval Pending Board Action on 07.14.2026

O'Donnell ISD District of Innovation Plan

Renewed Plan, Posted June 11, 2026

Introduction

The District of Innovation (DOI) concept, established by House Bill 1842 during the 84th Texas Legislature, allows traditional independent school districts to access many of the same flexibilities available to Texas open-enrollment charter schools.

Renewing the O'Donnell ISD District of Innovation Plan will provide the district with the local control and flexibility needed to better serve students, support staff, and meet the unique needs of our rural community. The plan allows O'Donnell ISD to make decisions locally while maintaining compliance with state and federal accountability requirements.

Through this renewal, O'Donnell ISD remains committed to providing innovative educational opportunities, strengthening student success, and using district resources in the most effective and efficient manner.

District of Innovation Team – All Meetings Are Open to public

Blake Nichols
Tanner Bales
Frances Enriquez
Tonya Graham
Melissa Clark
Donna Forbis
Mandy Nichols
Brooke James
Bailey Barton
Brenna Mikes
Lisa Alcala

Superintendent
Secondary Principal
Elementary Principal
Counselor
Business Manager
CATE Teacher
Secondary Staff/UIL
Elementary Staff
Special Education Staff
Elementary Parent
Secondary Parent

District of Innovation Timeline – Activities lead by Superintendent

January 20, 2017 – Discussion with Administration Team
January 26, 2017 – Discussion with Board of Trustees
February 8, 2017 – Initial meeting of the District of Innovation Team
February 9, 2017 – District of Innovation Team meeting
February 10, 2017 – District of Innovation Team meeting
February 15, 2017 – Review of plan by District of Innovation Team
February 16, 2017 – Board of Trustees approved resolution to hold a public hearing regarding becoming a District of Innovation; public hearing conducted
February 17, 2017 – DOI plan posted on district website for 30-day public review (TEC §12A.005(a)(1))
March 27, 2017 – Public meeting and District of Innovation Team meeting
March 30, 2017 – Public hearing and Board meeting to consider and approve DOI plan
April 24, 2017 – Notification of proposed plan submitted to TEA
May 16, 2017 – District vote on proposed plan
June 25, 2020 – Amendment approved for health insurance provisions
January 12, 2021 – DOI Team discussion regarding renewal of OISD DOI plan
February 8, 2021 – Review of recommended changes and renewal updates by DOI Team
February 18, 2021 – Board of Trustees approved resolution to hold public hearing for DOI renewal
February 26, 2021 – TEA notified of DOI renewal/revision process
July 29, 2021 – Board of Trustees approved revised DOI plan
August 3, 2021 – Final revised plan posted on district website and submitted to TEA
June 2023 – Amended DOI approved by Board of Trustees; TEA notified; updated plan posted on district website
July 2025 – DOI committee membership updated and revised plan posted on district website
May 21, 2026 – District of Innovation committee meeting to discuss renewal of DOI plan.
June 2, 2026 - District of Innovation Committee meeting to discuss revised DOI Plan
June 9, 2026 - District of Innovation Committee meeting to hold public hearing on finalized version of new DOI Plan
June 11, 2026 – New DOI plan posted on O'Donnell ISD website for 30 days.
June 16, 2026 – New DOI plan presented and discussed with Board of Trustees.
July 14, 2026 – Board of Trustees will vote on New DOI plan.

Term

The O'Donnell ISD adoption of the renewal of the O'Donnell ISD District of Innovation Plan will be voted on at the July 14 Regular Board of Trustees meeting. As outlined by the Texas Education Agency, the term of the Innovation Plan is five years. If approved, the District of Innovation Plan will be in place from July 14, 2026 through July 14, 2031, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with law. The District Innovation Team will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend any suggested modifications to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

District of Innovation Goals – O'Donnell ISD

Goal 1: Recruit, Support, and Retain High-Quality Staff

O'Donnell ISD will create flexible employment practices and innovative staffing strategies that strengthen recruitment, improve retention, support employee morale, and attract highly qualified educators and professionals to serve district students.

Goal 2: Increase Student Opportunities and Educational Excellence

O'Donnell ISD will provide innovative learning opportunities that expand student access to rigorous academics, Career and Technical Education, extracurricular experiences, and personalized pathways that prepare students for postsecondary success.

Goal 3: Maximize Local Control and Operational Efficiency

O'Donnell ISD will utilize local decision-making authority to design systems, calendars, and programs that efficiently use district resources, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and respond to the unique needs of students, staff, and the O'Donnell community.

Innovations

O'Donnell ISD, in conjunction with the District of Innovation Team proposed the following flexibilities with the TEC to provide the best educational opportunities for students at O'Donnell ISD.

Teacher Certifications (DK Legal), (DK Local) (TEC §§21.003, 21.0032, 21.051, 21.053)

Current Law

State law requires educators to hold the appropriate certification for their assigned teaching field unless otherwise authorized by law or permit. Districts that assign an uncertified or inappropriately certified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days must provide written notice to parents. House Bill 2 (89th Texas Legislature) requires districts to adopt and implement a plan to reduce the use of uncertified teachers by the 2029–2030 school year.

Rationale for Exemption

O'Donnell ISD seeks flexibility in certification requirements to address staffing shortages, expand course offerings, and recruit qualified individuals with industry experience or specialized expertise. While the district has adopted and will implement its House Bill 2 Teacher Certification Compliance Plan, local flexibility allows the district to continue providing high-quality instruction when certified applicants are unavailable. This exemption supports Career and Technical Education (CTE), hard-to-fill teaching assignments, and other specialized instructional needs while maintaining local oversight and accountability.

Innovation Strategies

- Maintain a preference for hiring appropriately certified educators whenever available.
- Implement and maintain the district's House Bill 2 Teacher Certification Compliance Plan to reduce uncertified teachers by the 2029–2030 school year.
- Allow the superintendent to locally approve certified teachers to teach outside their certification field based on documented instructional need.
- Require campus principals to submit written justification and documentation of an employee's qualifications before requesting an exception.
- Permit qualified industry professionals or individuals with specialized expertise to teach CTE or other specialized courses through a local teaching certificate or classroom instructor assignment.
- Allow qualified classroom instructors to serve in grades K–12, excluding Pre-Kindergarten, Special Education, and ESL/Bilingual assignments, when certified applicants are unavailable.

- Place classroom instructors on the district's classroom instructor salary schedule until they obtain a Statement of Eligibility or meet Texas certification requirements.
- Provide required parent notification when students are assigned to an uncertified classroom instructor in accordance with state and federal law.
- Report all locally approved certification exceptions to the Board of Trustees prior to implementation.
- Support employees in obtaining Texas certification when applicable.

Benefits

- Addresses teacher shortages while maintaining instructional continuity.
- Expands CTE and specialized course offerings.
- Increases local flexibility in staffing decisions.
- Supports recruitment of skilled professionals with industry experience.
- Reduces delays associated with state certification exception processes.
- Maintains accountability through superintendent approval, board oversight, and parent notification.
- Supports compliance with House Bill 2 while preserving local control.

Teacher Contract Days (DCB Legal), (DCB Local), (DEA Legal) (TEC §21.401)

Current Law

Texas Education Code §21.401 defines a teacher contract as a 187-day, ten-month contract.

Rationale for Exemption

State law requires 75,600 instructional minutes for students but does not provide flexibility in teacher contract days. This limits O'Donnell ISD's ability to align staff calendars with student schedules and impacts local control, recruitment, retention, and operational efficiency.

Innovation Strategies

- Establish a teacher calendar with fewer than 187 contract days while meeting all instructional minute requirements.
- Review contract days annually through the calendar planning process with stakeholder input.
- Maintain compensation while reducing contract days.
- Align teacher schedules with student instructional calendars to improve efficiency.
- *Use flexibility to support recruitment, retention, and staff morale.*

Benefits

- Improves recruitment and retention
- Increases staff morale and work-life balance
- Enhances local control over calendar decisions
- Aligns staffing with instructional needs
- Maintains compliance with state requirements

School Start Date (EB Legal) (EB Local) (TEC 25.0811, 25.0812)

Current Law

Texas Education Code §21.401 establishes a 187-day, ten-month teacher contract year.

Rationale for Exemption

State law requires 75,600 instructional minutes for students but provides no flexibility in teacher contract days, limiting O'Donnell ISD's ability to align calendars, manage staffing efficiently, and support recruitment and retention.

Innovation Strategies

- Allow fewer than 187 teacher contract days while meeting all instructional minute requirements.
- Review and set calendars annually with stakeholder input.
- Maintain teacher compensation while adjusting contract days.
- Align staff calendars with student instructional schedules.

Benefits

- Improves recruitment and retention
- Increases staff morale
- Strengthens local control
- Improves calendar efficiency
- Maintains state compliance

Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (TEC 25.092)

Current Law

State law requires students to attend at least 90% of class days to earn credit or a final grade.

Rationale for Exemption

The 90% rule bases credit on seat time rather than mastery, limiting flexibility and potentially penalizing students for absences due to extracurricular activities, illness, or other extenuating circumstances. O'Donnell ISD seeks flexibility to emphasize learning and content mastery while maintaining academic rigor.

Innovation Strategies

- Award credit based on demonstrated mastery of course standards.
 - Maintain attendance monitoring and compulsory attendance compliance.
 - Allow consideration of extenuating circumstances in credit decisions.
 - Provide alternative methods for students to demonstrate mastery.
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- Support participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

- Use interventions and recovery options for at-risk students.
- Preserve teacher authority in grading decisions.

Benefits

- Focuses on mastery-based learning
- Increases flexibility for students and staff
- Supports student engagement and participation
- Reduces barriers to graduation
- Maintains academic rigor and teacher authority

Inter- District Transfers (FDA Legal) (FDA Local) (TEC 25.036)

Current Law

Texas Education Code allows districts to accept nonresident transfer students, with transfers generally interpreted as one-year agreements.

Rationale for Exemption

O'Donnell ISD seeks local control over student transfers to ensure enrollment decisions support educational quality, district resources, and student success. Flexibility allows the district to evaluate capacity, staffing, programs, and student performance when considering transfers.

Innovation Strategies

- Require annual transfer applications for all nonresident students.
- Evaluate transfers based on capacity, staffing, academics, discipline, and attendance.
- Consider parent/guardian support and cooperation with district expectations.
- Require transfer students to comply with all district policies and attendance requirements.
- Allow superintendent authority to revoke transfers for disciplinary issues, attendance concerns, or failure to meet expectations.
- Reconsider transfers when family cooperation with the district is not maintained.
- Maintain administrative authority for all approval and revocation decisions under local policy.

Benefits

- Maintains local control of enrollment
- Protects instructional quality and resources
- Supports positive school culture
- Improves staffing and capacity management
- Encourages strong family-district partnerships
- Aligns enrollment decisions with student success

Site Based Decision Making (TEC 11.251, 11.252, 11.253, 11.255)/School Health Advisory Council (TEC 28.004) (BQ Legal) (BQA Legal) (BQA Local)

Current Law

Texas Education Code Chapter 11 requires districts to implement site-based decision-making processes and maintain a School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to provide input on district planning and student health initiatives.

Rationale for Exemption

O'Donnell ISD seeks flexibility from required committee structures to reduce duplication, streamline decision-making, and better align stakeholder input with district priorities. While stakeholder involvement remains important, local structures can more efficiently support district needs and student success.

Innovation Strategies

- Establish a Superintendent's Advisory Council (SAC) to replace SBDM and SHAC structures.
- Include district and community stakeholders to provide input on district priorities and student success.
- Review district data to support planning and improvement efforts.
- Meet at least twice annually.
- Use recommendations to guide planning, staffing, and resource allocation.
- Maintain opportunities for stakeholder engagement through local processes.

Benefits

- Reduces duplication of committees and meetings
- Improves efficiency and decision-making
- Increases focus on student achievement
- Streamlines stakeholder input
- Supports local control and flexibility
- Maintains community involvement

Depository Contracts (TEC 45.205 and 45.206)

Current Law

Texas Education Code requires school districts to select a depository bank through a competitive bid or RFP process and limits contract terms and renewals.

Rationale for Exemption

As a small rural district, O'Donnell ISD has limited banking options. Requiring frequent rebidding creates unnecessary administrative burden when existing banking services remain competitive and meet district needs. Flexibility would allow the district to extend depository agreements when it is in the best interest of the district.

Innovation Strategies

- Allow extension of existing depository contracts when pricing and service remain competitive.
- Periodically evaluate banking performance and service quality.
- Use competitive bidding, when necessary, based on district needs.
- Superintendent recommends contract actions to the Board for approval.
- Maintain fiscal oversight and responsible stewardship of funds.
- Ensure continuity of banking and payroll services.

Benefits

- Reduces administrative workload
- Maintains stable banking operations
- Supports efficient financial management
- Preserves flexibility in a rural banking market
- Allows focus on instructional and district priorities



O'DONNELL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES RENEWING THE O'DONNELL ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of O'Donnell Independent School District has complied with the requirements of Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code for the renewal of the District of Innovation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the proposed renewal plan was developed through the District of Innovation Committee process, made available for public review for the required period, and presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of O'Donnell Independent School District hereby approves the renewal of the O'Donnell ISD District of Innovation Plan for the period of **July 14, 2026, through July 14, 2031.**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent is authorized to take all necessary actions to implement the renewed plan and submit all required documentation to the Texas Education Agency.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees of O'Donnell Independent School District on this 14th day of July, 2026.

President, OISD School Board

Secretary, OISD School Board