



## **District Of Innovation (DOI) 2024-2029**

*Approval by DOIC: March 20, 2024*  
*Posted Online: March 21, 2024*  
*Approval by VVISED Board: April 15, 2024*

### **Introduction**

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, permits Texas public districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC). During 2019, the Van Vleck Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. In Spring 2024, the District Improvement Plan Committee and the Board approved the Local District of Innovation Plan. The term of the current plan ends May 31, 2029.

Local Innovation Plans must be renewed every five years to maintain a District of Innovation Status. In Spring 2024, Van Vleck ISD began the process to review and renew the current District of Innovation Plan. Based on direction provided by the Board and input from various stakeholders, the Local Innovation Committee proposed this plan.

### **Term**

The term of the plan is for five years, beginning April 15, 2024 and ending May 31, 2029, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the terms of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

Van Vleck ISD District of Innovation Renewal Timeline	
March 20, 2024	Local Innovation Committee met to review plan and renewal process
March 21 2024	Renewed plan posted to Van Vleck ISD website for 30 days prior to school board approval
April 15, 2024	Van Vleck ISD Board of Trustees approved the renewed local innovation plan.
April 16, 2024	The renewed plan was provided as a link of the current local plan to the Texas Education Agency

**I. Transfer Policy:**

*Exemption from TEC §25.036  
 Related Board Policies: FDA (Legal/Local)*

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. A transfer agreement under this section shall be filed and preserved as a receiving district record for audit purposes of the agency.

**Innovative Strategies:**

1. VVISD campus administration and Transfer Committee would be allowed to review and possibly rescind a student’s transfer at any time during the school year.

**II. Probationary Contracts:**

*Exemption from TEC §21.102  
 Related Board Policies: DCA (Legal)*

For experienced teachers, new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one-year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to the District’s receipt of state assessment results.

**Innovative Strategies:**

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, Van Vleck ISD would like the option to extend a second year probationary contract if needed. All other teachers hired in the District may remain on probationary status

for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC §21.102 (c).

### **III. Certification – General:**

*Exemption from TEC §21.003, §21.053, & §21.057*

*Related Board Policies: DBA (Legal/Local); DK (Legal/Local)*

TEC §21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

#### **Innovative Strategies:**

1. The campus administration may submit to the Superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The campus administration must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.
2. The current certification requirement severely limits the district's options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses, including CTE and STEM related courses. In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses, and obtain industrial certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements instead of the requirements set forth in TEC §21.003(a). The district does not wish to be exempted from any existing laws relating to teacher contracts or teacher benefits. This exemption will allow the district to:
  - a. Consider part time professionals to teach courses
  - b. Provide an opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession
  - c. Increase the number of CTE and STEM type courses available
  - d. Grant trade related professionals the ability to teach related courses
3. The Superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees as soon as practical.
4. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.
5. All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the TEKS for the course to be taught. Qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as: professional work experience, formal training and education, relevant industry license, certification, or registration; or any combination of these deemed sufficient by the Superintendent and Board of Trustees.
6. The district will ensure criminal background checks are completed as required by the State Board of Education (SBEC).
7. Van Vleck ISD does ensure that **TEC §21.003 will be followed with regard to special education, bilingual/ESL, and prekindergarten must continue to be SBEC certified.**

#### **IV. School Calendar - School Start and End Date, Need for Local Control:**

*Exemption from TEC §25.0811; TEC §25.0812  
Related Board Policies: EB (Legal/Local)*

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of the annual academic calendars to fit the needs of the community or the desires of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

#### ***Innovative Strategies: while meeting the overall 79,440 minutes required***

1. Relief from the statute will allow Van Vleck ISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minutes' requirement, rather than days.
2. Alignment of the district calendar with local colleges, advanced placement exams, and STAAR timelines.
3. Provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar to be responsive to community needs.

#### **V. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade:**

*Exemption from: TEC §25.092  
Relevant Board Policies: FEC (Legal/Local)*

TEC 25.092 restricts the District from issuing class credit or a final grade if a student is not in attendance the required "seat time", referred to as the 90% rule. This requirement is an arbitrary percentage, where school districts award credit based on seat time rather than demonstrated mastery of learning.

#### ***Innovative Strategies:***

1. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility. Van Vleck ISD will pursue blended learning opportunities where instruction is delivered through a combination of time in class and time spent learning online.
2. This exemption will also allow the District not to penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities. Relief granted from TEC 25.092 does not constitute any substantive exemption from compulsory attendance or UIL rules, nor does it limit or modify a teacher's ability to assign or determine grades in accordance with TEC §28.0214 and 28.0216.

#### **VI. Removal of Unwanted Visitors**

*Exemption from: TEC §37.105  
Relevant Board Policies: GKA (Legal/Local)*

TEC.37.105 REMOVAL OF UNWANTED VISITORS - requires that any parent, visitor, or guest who is behaving in a manner inappropriate for a school setting must be given a verbal warning prior to (1) being ejected from the event or (2) refused entry to an event. A school administrator, school resource officer, or school district peace officer of a school district may refuse to allow a person to enter or may eject a person from property under

the district's control if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request. The guest must also be given notice of how to appeal the ejection.

**Innovation Strategies:**

- Van Vleck ISD requests relief from TEC 37.105 to ensure the safety and security of the district and its patrons.
- Relief would allow designated staff members the authority to immediately remove anyone whose behavior is inappropriate without a prior verbal warning.

**VII. Mandatory DAEP Placement for Vaping (HB114)**

*Exemption from: TEC 37.006 (a)(2)(c-2)*

*Relevant Board Policies: FOCA (Legal), FOC (Legal), & FNCD (Legal)*

TEC 37.006 (a)(2)(c-2) (e-cigarettes) HB114 MANDATORY DAEP PLACEMENT FOR EVERY VAPE - makes offenses involving the possession and/or use of vapes and paraphernalia a mandatory DAEP offense. School districts will be required to place all students who are caught in possession of and/or using vapes of any kind in DAEP.

**Innovative Strategies:**

- Van Vleck ISD requests relief from the requirements of TEC 37.006(a)(2)(c-2) (e-cigarettes) HB 114 as compliance will place an undue burden on the district;
- As a small district, VVUSD does not have the additional personnel which would be required to supervise and instruct a potential influx of students in DAEP;
- VVUSD believes only severe misbehaviors should require mandatory placement in DAEP;
- VVUSD believes a student's disciplinary history, rather than a one-time vaping violation, should determine removal from the classroom and placement in DAEP; and
- Relief from the mandates of HB 114 would allow the campus principal, with the approval of the principal, to utilize alternate forms of disciplinary action:
- **Consequences:**
  - **First Offense – Written Warning and ISS for 3 days**
  - **Second Offense – Complaint signed by a Justice of the Peace and DAEP:**
    - **VVJH Students – 20 days**
    - **VVHS Students – 30 days**

**Notes**

- **All students having offenses involving the possession and/or use of VAPES and paraphernalia must attend an Anti-Vaping Program approved by the VVUSD Police and Counseling departments.**
- **The Van Vleck ISD Student Code of Conduct will be followed if students possess Vapes with THC or other illegal substance(s).**

## **VIII. Threat Assessment**

*Exemption from: TEC 37.115 (f-1)*

*Relevant Board Policies: FFB (Legal/Local)*

TEC 37.115 (f-1) HB 473 THREAT ASSESSMENT HB 473 - currently states that before a team may conduct a threat assessment of a student, the team must notify the parent of or person standing in parental relation to the student regarding the assessment. The team shall provide an opportunity for the parent or person to participate in the assessment, in person or remotely.

### **Innovative Strategies:**

- Van Vleck ISD would like to be exempt from having the parent attend the threat assessment meeting if there is a circumstance where the parent is a perpetrator or if there are several students involved in a situation. The district would rather notify the parent before the meeting and then tell them the outcome. This protects sensitive information about other students or staff that may be discussed during the assessment itself. The statute for exemption is TEC 37.115 (f-1).

## **IX. Counselor Work Time**

*Exemption from: TEC 33.006*

*Relevant Board Policies: DP (Legal/Local)*

TEC 33.006 subsections (d) – (h) – COUNSELOR WORK TIME - places restrictions on the duties that can be fulfilled by school counselors, requires policy adoption and annual review by the school board, and limits contracting options with counselors in the district

### **Innovative Strategies:**

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- Van Vleck ISD desires to maintain flexibility in its school counseling and guidance program by requesting relief from the requirement of the TEC 33.006 (d) that a counselor must spend 80% of the total work time on duties identified by statute.
- In addition, VVUSD wishes to remove restrictions imposed by subsections (e) – (h) which are related to policy adoption, annual review, and counselor employment contracts;
- VVUSD believes that these changes will help the district better meet the everchanging needs of its students by allowing VVUSD counselors to fulfill other important roles throughout the district, including but not limited to, scheduling and student assessment; and
- VVUSD counselors will continue to focus on the district's counselor program and its goals; however, restrictions which mandate time tracking/logging as required under the 80/20 duty requirement are inefficient use of said counselor's time. The logging/tracking requirement also impedes the district's ability to utilize the counseling staff in a variety of roles which would, as currently written, not best serve the needs of the students and the community.

Local Innovation Committee Members for Renewal Plan

Member	Role
Alford, Karen	VVE Teacher
Blackmon, Gayle	Assistant Superintendent
Blackmon, Robert	Director of Operations
Bludau, Kami	AP VVJH
Brown, Marsha	AP VVE
Button, Kari	Director of Curriculum & Federal Programs
Casey, Jami	VVJH Teacher
Champion, Kristi	Director of Business Operations
Dement, Christie	Superintendent
Garcia, Shannon	AP VVHS
Gullett, Matthew	Tenaris Industry Representative
Hackworth, Amy	PEIMS/State Testing
Hackworth, Pat	Superintendent's Secretary
Hood, Brandon	Principal VVJH
Kucera, Kristie	Community Member/Former Parent
Maxey, Shanna	Parent
Rawlings, Kelly	Teacher
Rolf, Kim	VVE Teacher
Sliva, Leanne	VVHS Teacher
Stovall, Kathy	VVHS Teacher
Ward, Stephanie	Federal Programs Coordinator
Weathers, Michelle	VVJH Counselor
Wesselski, Fred	VV Chief of Police