ALDINE ISD
District of Innovation

Aldine District of Innovation Plan

Approved by the Aldine ISD Board of Trustees
May 17, 2017



ALDINEISD

Producing the Nation's Best!

Board of Trustees

Dr. Viola Garcia, President

Rose Avalos, Vice President

Steve Mead, Secretary

Paul Shanklin, Assistant Secretary

Patricia Ann Bourgeois, Member

Connie Esparza, Member

Dr. Kimberley Booker, Member

District Administration

Dr. Wanda Bamberg, Superintendent

Dr. Archie Blanson, Deputy Superintendent

Dr. Tamika Alford-Stephens, Assistant Superintendent of Finance

Dr. Selina Chapa, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Kaye DeWalt, Assistant Superintendent & General Counsel

Abel Garza, Assistant Superintendent of Community & Governmental Relations

Ken Knippel, Assistant Superintendent of Administration

Dr. Sara Ptomey, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Todd Davis, School Assistant Superintendent for High Schools

Mable Holt, School Assistant Superintendent for Middle Schools

Ann Stockwell, School Assistant Superintendent for Intermediate Schools

Dr. Linda Rodriguez, School Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools Region 1

Pat Wade, School Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools Region 2

Dr. Janet Ray, School Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools Region 3

I. Introduction

The 84th Legislative Session produced House Bill 1842, which included the District of Innovation (DoI) concept. This bill gives traditional independent school districts some of the flexibilities available to current open-enrollment charter schools. The bill calls for a plan created by a district/community/parent team to implement innovations to improve the delivery of district services. The bill allows districts to be exempt from specific laws while implementing the innovations. One benefit of becoming a District of Innovation is increased local control to decide which flexibilities should be used in the implementation of the innovations. The plan must be approved by the local Board of Trustees.

In October 2016, the Aldine ISD Board of Trustees approved a resolution, which directed District leadership to study the District of Innovation process for possible implementation in Aldine ISD. The Aldine senior leadership team, consisting of the Superintendent's Cabinet, reviewed the law, process and the work of school districts around the state to determine the relevance of developing a plan for Aldine. Also, considered in this study was Aldine's partnership with YES Prep Schools. Aldine and YES Prep share buildings, transportation, and services but limitations and flexibilities found in the systems are quite evident. If Aldine ISD becomes a District of Innovation, Aldine could take advantage of some of the flexibilities currently employed by YES Prep.

This opportunity was considered timely by the Board and District leadership because the plan could be aligned to guide work in implementing the 2015 $798 million bond referendum and work on Strategic Design.

In November 2016, the Board appointed a group of 47 parents, grandparents, community members, campus and district staff members to begin the work of the District of Innovation Committee. Cabinet members continued to work with the committee through research and plan development.

II. Timeline

October 18, 2016	Adopt Resolution
November 15, 2016	Appoint Committee
October 11, 2016 December 8, 2016 January 17, 2017 February 21, 2017	Develop District of Innovation Plan
March 9, 2017	Notify State of Intent to Vote
March 10, 2017	Post Plan for 30-day Public Feedback
May 16, 2017	Vertical Educational Advisory Committee holds open meeting for Plan Approval by Majority vote
May 16, 2017	Vote by Board of Trustees

III. Length of Plan

The Aldine ISD Innovation Plan may have a term of up to five years beginning April 2017. Aldine ISD will continually monitor the plan's effectiveness and will recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications. The District of Innovation Plan may be amended, rescinded or revised by the Board of Trustees.

IV. Comprehensive Educational Plan

As required by Texas Education Code 11.1511, the Board of Trustees adopts comprehensive goals, which are documented in the District and Campus Improvement Plans. The District of Innovation committee established a framework of innovative strategies that support the district improvement plan and directly impact the local initiatives to prepare each student academically and socially to be a critical thinker, problem-solver, and responsible and productive citizen. Prior to the implementation of any exemption, the internal committee will seek approval from the Board of Trustees to determine the need for the exemption, develop parameters and address changes to any impacted board policy.

A. Aldine ISD Vision

Producing the Nation's Best!

B. Aldine ISD Mission

We exist to prepare each student academically and socially to be a:

- critical thinker
- problem-solver
- responsible and productive citizen

C. District of Improvement Plan Goals

Goal 1: Aldine ISD Will Improve and Sustain Growth in Student Achievement
Goal 2: Aldine ISD Will Provide a Safe and Secure Learning Environment for Students and Staff
Goal 3: Aldine ISD Will Increase Student, Staff, Parent and Community Satisfaction in All Campuses, Facilities and Departments
Goal 4: Aldine ISD Will Maintain Fiscal Solvency by Applying Sound Financial Principles and Practices
Goal 5: Aldine ISD Will Manage District Operations and Assets in an Efficient Manner

D. Aldine Board of Trustees' Core Beliefs and Commitments

1. **We believe each student can learn at or above grade level and will have equal opportunity to do so.**
We will provide equal access to a quality education regardless of ethnicity, family income, gender, native language, special needs or area of residence. We will allocate resources to ensure equity for each student to reach his or her full potential.

2. **We believe Aldine ISD can achieve higher levels of performance through clearly defined goals that set high expectations for student achievement.**
We will eliminate the achievement gaps between and within student groups.

3. **We believe in the value of parents as the first and best teachers and that the community must actively participate in the development of all children.**
We will improve educational outcomes for our students by garnering support from parents, grandparents, caregivers, businesses, elected and appointed officials, civic and faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, medical and social service agencies, along with the District leaders, staff and students.

4. **We believe in the value of each employee, in his or her personal and professional growth, and in empowering each one to be accountable to make decisions aligned with the vision of the school district.**
We will treat each employee with fairness, empower each employee to focus on high performance, and hold each employee accountable for results that contribute to student achievement.

5. **We believe all environments should be supportive, safe, and secure.**
We will ensure that the learning and work environments are safe and secure so that each student and staff member will achieve high levels of performance.

Aldine District of Innovation Committee

Facilitators – Mitzi Clark Richardson and Sean Haley, engage2learn

Danita Anderson Parent	**Robin Dickson** Parent	**Jinx Kerr** Community Member & Grandparent	**Shirley Portier-Reed** Community Member & Great-Grandparent
Marivel Andrade Parent	**Tamara Furniz** Parent	**David Lindeen** Community Member & Grandparent	**Regina Price** Parent
Zulaida Aparicio Parent/Clerk	**Mayra Garcia** Teacher	**Roberta Lindeen** Community Member & Grandparent	**Mariana Sanchez** Community Member
Virginia Bazan Parent	**Nancy Gauthier** Program Director	**Irma Lugo** Teacher/VEAC	**Ann Louise Schleeter** Teacher
Glennora Benjamin-John Parent	**Scott Groen** Teacher	**Jarvez Lugo** Parent	**Nicole Scott** Teacher
SaMour Bradford Parent	**Annie Harris** Teacher	**Raudel Macias** Parent	**Lelis Simmons** Teacher/VEAC
Christina Burrggraf Teacher	**Tricia Hill-Thomas** Parent	**Mirella Macias** Parent	**Dametra Skinner** Program Director
Gioconda Bustillo Parent	**Nick Hoffman** Administrator	**Jennifer Merryman** Principal	**Alton Smith** Community Member
Andrea Cain Principal	**Khristina Hogan** Teacher	**Natalie Owens** Parent	**Donna Smith** Parent
Carolyn Carrier Teacher/VEAC	**Candis Houston** Teacher	**Dulce Palomo** Parent	**Kindra Wessel** Parent
Brandon Carroll Principal	**Amber Johnson** Parent	**Malinda Parsee** Clerk	**Phyllis Woods** Teacher/VEAC
T.J. Davis Parent	**Marine Jones** Community Member	**Herman Piete** Parent	

V. Call to Action

During the first DoI Committee meeting in January 2017, the group reviewed the Board's vision, mission, and goals and created a Call to Action that encapsulated the Committee's highest hopes for our students:

All students will be fully prepared academically and socially to be successful in the current and future job market to enhance the global community.

VI. Strategies

1. We will offer different opportunities of exposure to integrate technological applications in real-world settings.
2. We will provide community resources and partnerships to expose and train students in multiple career opportunities.
3. We will create customized education plans to facilitate student engagement through flexible learning experiences.
4. We will empower students to actively participate in their own learning with focused projects and ensure the fidelity of teaching by evaluating their teachers.
5. We will evaluate and then sustain all programs and initiatives that are proven to positively impact student and/or staff potential.
6. We will align resources to support effective communication and engagement of parents, staff and community to support student success.
7. We will improve educator capacity by fostering innovative and collaborative thinking.

VII. Innovations

The DoI Committee and the internal team then worked to align strategies with innovations that would address and support the Call to Action with the allowed exemptions. The innovations fell into two major categories: Flexible Instructional Schedules and Teacher Capacity.

Flexible Instructional Schedules

i. Minimum Minutes of Instruction

Aldine ISD seeks to develop a calendar that includes three additional days for teacher professional development. This can be accomplished through the development of daily instructional schedules that exceed the minimum minutes of instruction requirements. In addition, adjusting the school calendar will provide the opportunity to have early release days, allowing time for training and for collaborative planning in grade-level and content-area groups. Embedded professional collaboration allows teachers to have continual training for TEKS analysis and best instructional practice study and training. Any early release days will have a minimum of 4 instructional hours.

Exemption:

TEC 25.081 states (a) Except as authorized under Subsection (b) of this section, Section 25.084, or Section 29.0821, for each school year, each school district must operate so that the district provides for at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses for students.

ii. First Day of Instruction

Aldine ISD seeks the opportunity to run the same schedule as our public school charter partner-YES Prep. YES Prep resides in two Aldine campuses: Hoffman Middle School and Eisenhower High School. YES Prep begins the school year by starting one week earlier than Aldine ISD schools. The district runs separate instructional schedules and transportation schedules on those two campuses to meet YES Prep needs while Aldine adheres to the current law. Aldine ISD will develop and implement flexible instructional schedules to meet students' needs as individuals and as student groups.

An earlier start date will also allow the district to align the calendars with another partner-Lone Star College. The district calendar will align our dual credit classes with the college schedule. This option would also allow the district to balance the semester schedules and improve the instructional program.

Exemption:
TEC 25.0811 states a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

iii. Class Size Waiver

Aldine ISD is seeking autonomy to address class size with innovative strategies and report class sizes greater than 22:1 to the Board of Trustees. Aldine supports the concept of appropriate class size to deliver quality instruction and the district seeks to recruit and hire the number of teachers needed to meet the 22:1 requirement for grades K-4. Over the years, Aldine ISD has sought waivers for classrooms with more than 22 students being served in a single classroom. Students in the elementary grades are often served in various groupings and settings throughout the day. Teachers are trained in flexible grouping and small group instruction in order to differentiate to meet students' needs. By providing this exemption, the Board of Trustees would have local control over class size ratios.

Exemption:
TEC 25.112 states (a) Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade classroom.

iv. Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

Aldine ISD seeks the opportunity to allow students who are academically proficient and meet the content requirements of a course to demonstrate mastery and receive course credit if students have not attended 90 percent of the days classes are offered. Aldine is a Title I school district with a vast majority of students classified as economically disadvantaged. Many parents and students experience hardships, which create challenges with school attendance. Exemption from this requirement will provide additional opportunities for students to obtain and recover credits which would reduce the dropout rate and increase the graduation rates.

Exemption:
TEC 25.092 provides conditions for credit or a final grade for a class based on student attendance for at least 90 percent of the days a class is offered. The law also provides provisions for students who are in attendance at least 75 percent of the days a class is offered, in that he or she may be given credit or a final grade if the student completes a plan approved by the principal that meets the instructional requirements of the class.

Teacher Capacity

i. Teacher Certification

To supply the needed teachers for all programs, the District would like the opportunity to expand the candidates that will be recruited and trained for Aldine ISD students. The District will determine the areas and programs for this opportunity based on staffing needs.

The District seeks flexibility to hire professionals in trades and vocations where skilled craftsmen are not certified teachers as the District expands Career and Technology Education courses at each high school and the new CTE High School. Aldine ISD will provide local qualifications and training requirements for professionals and experts to teach courses in lieu of traditional state requirements.

All other teachers would not be exempt from TEC 21.003, and the Aldine ISD Board of Trustees would monitor the implementation of this exemption.

Exemption:
TEC 21.003 mandates that districts that wish to hire an uncertified staff member must submit a request to TEA and wait on approval or denial. Section 21.0031 provides that an employee's probationary, continuing or term contract is void for failure to maintain certification in certain circumstances. Section 21.051 provides that before a school district may employ a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, the candidate must complete at least 15 hours of field-based experience in which the candidate is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities.

ii. Teacher Appraisal System

Aldine seeks to continue use of a locally developed teacher appraisal system called INVEST. Aldine developed INVEST to differentiate performance and maximize student learning. This system, which has been implemented since 2013, was developed with teacher and administrator input with the goal of significantly improving the quality of instruction for all students. The system is designed to evaluate how teaching is facilitating student learning, and it better differentiates the quality of teacher practice. During the 2016-2017 school year, teachers received an additional stipend for being Highly Effective in their classroom practices. The system is also designed to recognize and eventually reward teachers for student growth.

Exemption:
TEC 21.352 states in appraising teachers, each school district shall use: (1) the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner.

TEC 21.353 states a teacher who directs extracurricular activities in addition to performing classroom teaching duties shall be appraised only on the basis of classroom teaching performance and not on performance in connection with the extracurricular activities.