



# HARLANDALE

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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### Harlandale ISD District Innovation Plan

#### VOTING MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Salvador Alegre - Frank Tejada Academy  
Carmen Alvarado - Terrell Wells Middle School  
Renee Blakeney - Harlandale Alternative Center  
Kevin Blanco - Fenley Learning Center  
Manuel Cavazos - STEM Early College High School  
Melissa Consiglio - McCollum High School  
Gabriela Calderon Flores - Morrill Elementary  
Alejandra Galvan - Carroll Bell Elementary  
Juan Hinojosa - Harlandale Middle School  
Jaclyn Imming - Vestal Elementary  
Sarah Ledwig - Bellaire Elementary  
Abigail Lopez - Gilbert Elementary  
Maria Mayhar - Gillette Elementary  
Debra Medellin - Wright Elementary  
Natalie Moreno Martinez - Columbia Heights Elementary  
Terri Norman - Kingsborough Middle School  
Ina Perales - Harlandale High School  
Kristen Rea - Collier Elementary  
Paola Sanchez - Stonewall/Flanders Elementary  
Verena Zink - Leal Middle School

#### Non-voting members of the committee

Tracy Anderson  
Ronnie Cantu  
Melissa Casey  
Jennifer Hill

Michael Littlefield  
Susan Salinas  
Josie Scales

## I. Introduction

House Bill (HB) 1842 passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation (DOI) and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On July 19, 2021, Harlandale Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to form a committee for the adoption of a District of Innovation Plan in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan will seek to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community.

## II. TERM

The term of the Plan is for no more than five years, beginning October 19, 2021 and ending October 19, 2026, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB1842, the Board will appoint 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.

## III. Innovations

- A) Texas Education Code 21.003(a): A person may not be employed as a teacher... by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit as provided by Subchapter B; 21.003(a) . An employee's probationary, continuing, or term contract under this chapter is void if the employee:
- (1) Does not hold a valid certificate or permit issued by SBEC,
  - (2) Fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew; fails to comply with any requirements under Chapter 22 if the failure results in suspension or revocation of the employee's certificate;

### Citation to the District Improvement Plan or LSG Goals for Innovation (A)

Goal 1: Increase in the percentage of students receiving CCMR credit in the Accountability System from 63%\* to 80% by 2025. (Current : 63% SY21- 65%, SY22-70%, SY23-73%, SY24- 76%, SY 25-80% )

GPM 1.1: The % of students enrolled in & on track in a CTE industry-certification program will increase from 6% to 20% by 2025, (Current : 6% SY21- 8%, SY22-10%, SY23-12%, SY24- 16% SY 25-20% )

GPM 1.2: The % of students who passed one or more dual credit or dual enrollment classes will increase from 28% to 50% by 2025.(Current : 28% SY21- 30%, SY22-35%, SY23-40%, SY24- 45%, SY 25-50% )

Rationale for Innovation (A):

Harlandale ISD will continue to improve opportunities to prepare students for college and career readiness. This will include expanding access to CTE Programs of Study aligned with high-wage, high-skilled, and in-demand jobs and expanding access to dual credit Mathematics.

Harlandale ISD is prepared to offer courses, however has historically been unsuccessful in recruiting and retaining certified teachers in certain CTE positions. Individuals with specific skill sets often have industry based credentials and training specific to their area of expertise and are not traditionally certified teacher candidates for all teaching positions. Oftentimes, a teaching position is less pay for the individual and requirements for Educator Preparation Programs (EPP) can prove to be a financial burden, specifically enrolling in an alternative certification program. This has resulted in unfilled positions which negatively impacts students as well as campus, and the district's CCMR accountability rating.

Students who begin a program of study may not be able to complete their program if a course cannot be offered due to staffing. This will impact a student's ability to complete their program of study, impacting opportunities to take and pass an industry based certification and prepare for entry into post secondary education and/or the workforce.

Harlandale ISD would like to expand course offerings to include areas which will continue to be hard to fill and are seen as in demand occupations in the labor market.

This same challenge applies to the teacher of dual credit Mathematics. Instructors often have appropriate advanced degrees in content areas but do not possess a Texas Teacher Certificate. These individuals are eligible to teach at the college level but cannot teach at the high school level. This has a significant impact on courses that can be taught at the campus. It also has a financial impact as we have tiered funding based on if the instructor is a district or college employee. More flexibility would be shown to adjunct faculty members since they meet the college requirements. Finally, this often limits a student's access to in person instruction as many courses taught by the college have transitioned to online.

Finally, American Sign Language teachers have been difficult to recruit and retain. Failure to fill this position continuously impacts a student's ability to complete their modern language graduation requirement.

Harlandale will continue to seek traditionally certified candidates for all teaching positions. However, for those Career and Technical Education courses and dual credit Mathematics for which a traditionally certified, qualified candidate is not identified, the District will develop minimum required qualifications for persons hired for such positions and will also identify required professional development in areas of student management, instructional strategies, curriculum, and parent engagement. Candidates meeting such criteria will be considered for these positions to be appropriately qualified.

#### Teacher Positions Exemption:

Trades and Industrial Education and Health Science Technology Education certificates require work experience. For initial certification, you must meet the requirements for becoming a classroom teacher in Texas. Specific CTE Trade and Industry and Health Science Technology classes such as:

- Health Science
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Law and Public Service

While TEA does not require work experience as the only way to meet minimum requirements, Harlandale ISD will apply the same criteria to these “hard to fill” Career Clusters:

- Architecture & Construction
- Information Technology
- STEM

Only the CTE clusters listed above are being considered for exemption from the Texas Education Code 21.003(a). Clusters are a specific subchapter under Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part 2, Chapter 130. Career Clusters can be defined as distinct, specialized areas of expertise in high-demand occupations that will provide career opportunities for students to explore. There are 14 career clusters in Texas that include: Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications; Business, Marketing, and Finance; Education and Training; Energy; Health Science; Hospitality and Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Law and Public Service; Manufacturing; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math; and, Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

“Hard to fill” is defined as course(s) that have remained unstaffed for a period of more than 30 days.

Link to the TEA website with information on CTE Certification requirements:

<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/certification/career-and-technical-education-cte>

Teachers will be required to meet the minimum Educator Preparation Program (EPP) requirements with the exception of them enrolling into an alternative certification program and passing their respective certification course.

### **Initial Trade and Industrial Education**

To be considered for employment as a teacher you must meet the following requirements:

- Have two to five years of full-time wage-earning experience within the past ten years. (Statement of Qualifications form [PDF, 305.40 KB])
- Hold current licensure, certification, or registration by a state or nationally recognized accrediting agency in any approved occupations for the classes you will be teaching
- Pass the appropriate National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) assessment if licensure, certification, or registration is not based on a recognized test or measurement
- At least two years of eligible military experience may be used in lieu of civilian licensure and wage-earning experience; your educator preparation program will review for eligibility.

### Initial Health Science

To be considered for employment as a teacher you must meet the following requirements:

- Hold an associate or more advanced degree from an institution of higher learning accredited or approved by an accrediting agency recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

- Hold current licensure, certification, or registration by a nationally recognized accrediting agency as a health professions practitioner.
- Two years of full-time wage-earning work experience as a health professions practitioner in a field that is nationally recognized by an accrediting agency. The required work experience must be approved by a certification officer of an approved educator preparation program. (Statement of Qualifications form [PDF, 305.40 KB])
- At least two years of eligible military experience may be used in lieu of civilian licensure and wage-earning experience; your educator preparation program will review for eligibility.

#### Licensure, Certification, or Registration and Accrediting Agencies

- Texas Skills Standards Board (outside source)
- The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) [outside source]
- Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

Courses such as American Sign Language and Dual Credit Mathematics have relatively few certified teachers in the workforce and will also be included in this exemption. Texas Education Agency lists requirements to become a certified teacher.

<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/certification/initial-certification/becoming-a-classroom-teacher-in-texas>

There are five requirements to become a certified teacher.

1. **Obtain a Bachelor's Degree** - You must earn a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
  - The Texas Administrative Code requires that candidates completing a Texas program must have a degree from a university that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board \(THECB\)](#)
  - [U.S. Department of Education Database for Accredited Colleges and Universities](#) (outside source)
  - Health Science Technology and Trades & Industrial Education certifications are exempt from the Bachelor's degree requirement

2. **Complete an Educator Preparation Program** - You must complete an [Approved Educator Preparation Program](#). If you do not hold a degree you must complete a university program. If you hold a degree you may contact an Alternative Certification Program or Post Baccalaureate program .  
[Resources to Help Pay for Educator Preparation](#)
3. **Pass Certification Exams** - You must pass the appropriate teacher certification exams. Contact your program for exam approval.
4. **Submit a State Application** – You must apply to be certified after all requirements are met. Do not apply until you have verified with your program that you are eligible.
5. **Complete Fingerprinting** – All first-time applicants must be fingerprinted as part of a national criminal background check.

For a [Dual Credit mathematics teacher](#) to be considered appropriately qualified, the teacher will meet the following requirements:

1. **Obtain a Master’s Degree in Mathematics** - You must earn a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university.
  - The Texas Administrative Code requires that candidates completing a Texas program must have a degree from a university that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board \(THECB\)](#)
  - [U.S. Department of Education Database for Accredited Colleges and Universities \(outside source\)](#)
2. **Complete Fingerprinting** – All first-time applicants must be fingerprinted as part of a national criminal background check.
3. **Qualify for Adjunct Faculty status** or higher with partnering Institute of Higher Education

For an [American Sign Language teacher](#) to be considered appropriately qualified, the teacher will meet the following requirements:

1. **Obtain a Bachelor’s Degree** - You must earn a bachelor’s degree in American Sign Language or have at least 18 hours in ASL coursework from an accredited college or university.
  - The Texas Administrative Code requires that candidates completing a

Texas program must have a degree from a university that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board \(THECB\)](#)

- [U.S. Department of Education Database for Accredited Colleges and Universities \(outside source\)](#)
  - Health Science Technology and Trades & Industrial Education certifications are exempt from the Bachelor's degree requirement
2. **Complete an Educator Preparation Program** - You must complete an [Approved Educator Preparation Program](#). If you do not hold a degree you must complete a university program. If you hold a degree you may contact an Alternative Certification Program or Post Baccalaureate program .  
[Resources to Help Pay for Educator Preparation](#)
  3. **Complete Fingerprinting** – All first-time applicants must be fingerprinted as part of a national criminal background check.

The District of Innovation exemption listed above will be referenced in the following board policies: DBA(Local), AF(Local), and DK (Local).

#### District Commitments:

Teachers are not required to become certified educators. Those teachers who do seek certification will be reimbursed for expenses incurred for taking the examination and passing the exam.

Per Texas Education Code 21.057, Harlandale ISD will notify parents indicating the teacher is uncertified. Harlandale ISD will also indicate the criteria outlined in the District of Innovation Plan with detailed qualifications of the teacher.

Texas Education Code 21.057: A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall provide written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in that classroom. (Board Policy Ref: DBA Employment Requirements and Restrictions: Credentials and Records)

Professional development plans will focus on the following areas:

1. TEKS and lesson design
2. Trauma Informed Care
3. Parent Engagement
4. Pedagogy and Differentiation
5. Classroom management and classroom culture
6. Specific up to date training in area of teaching
7. Any area of need identified by teacher, campus or district administration, industry partners

*For teachers that are not hired at the beginning of the school year, Teachers will be provided professional development training to include TEKS and lesson design, Trauma Informed Care, Parent Engagement, Pedagogy and Differentiation, and Classroom management and classroom culture (#s 1-5) within 3 months of their first day of work. Other training will be scheduled as it becomes available.*

Teachers hired under this provision will be assigned a mentor for a minimum of two years. Traditionally certified teachers are assigned a mentor for one year.

Teachers will be required to maintain industry credentials in their area of expertise. Per Harlandale I.S.D. Administrative Regulations D- Personal DBA Name/Address Change and Submitting Credentials/Records -2021 the following process will be followed for submitting industry credentials.

### **SUBMITTING VALID CREDENTIALS**

The following procedures are to be followed by all employees for submitting valid credentials:

1. Applicants recommended for employment must provide the District the specific documents required by law as part of the official employee personnel file prior to the first day of work.
2. All employees who have prior service in school systems must submit an original service record (copies will not be accepted). In addition, employees may be granted years of experience for pay purposes for related outside full-time experience. An original letter of service record from the former employee must be submitted for consideration.
3. All employees whose positions require certification or licensure are required to submit official documents. If employees have earned certificates, endorsements or degrees of higher rank since the previous school year, please submit the official document to the Human Resources Department.

a. An official college transcript showing degree earned and date conferred before a salary adjustment can be made.

b. Valid certificate/licensure or endorsement earned.

B) Exemptions (TEC 25.0811) (EB Legal)

Under current Texas statute, “a school district may not begin instruction for a school year before the fourth Monday in August” (TEC 25.0811).

Rationale:

Student data indicates the need for increased instructional time and intentional schedules to reduce the effects of COVID 19 slide or summer slide. A delayed start date may negatively impact student achievement due to lapses of education support.

Staff preferences also include the need to remedy unbalanced semesters, divided semesters with later final exams, delayed start of summer school, and lack of continuity for Dual Credit courses because of differences with colleges and universities.

Calendars align

Surrounding districts all have different start dates based on their individual needs. Harlandale ISD believes the school start date should be determined locally by the District, and on an annual basis, by considering what is best for the students and community.

Having the ability to modify the start date of school allows HISD the flexibility to balance semester days, align high school classes to college courses, ease transitions by beginning school on a shortened week, and having more opportunities to align with other districts that are already districts of innovation.

District Commitment:

- HISD will begin instruction for students no earlier than the second Monday in August. HISD will also commit to ending no later than the 2nd Friday in June. Harlandale ISD is committed to considering the effect of the start date on the families in the District.
- Teacher contract days shall not exceed 187 days.

The District of Innovation exemption listed above will be referenced in the following board policy: EB (LOCAL)