

**Van ISD**  
**District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)**  
**2016-2017**

Van ISD is utilizing HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, in order to have more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have always been allowed. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to tailor plans based on the needs of our students and community. This plan will be in effect for the 2016-2017 school year through the 2020-2021 school year. This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with approval of the Board of Trustees.

**District of Innovation Committee**

1. Don Dunn	Superintendent
2. Donna Wallace	Director of Curriculum and Accountability
3. Danny Morrow	Director of Business and Personnel
4. Rexanne Thomas	Director of Special Programs
5. Jeff Hutchins	Van High School Principal
6. Jason Johnson	Van Junior High School Principal
7. Shelby Davidson	Van Middle School Principal
8. Marty Moore	Van Intermediate School Principal
9. Jonnie Smith	J.E. Rhodes Elementary School Principal
10. Mandy Rollison	Van High School Teacher
11. Amy Moffatt	Van Junior High School Teacher
12. Christie Multhaup	Van Middle School Teacher
13. Megan Cunningham	Van Intermediate School Teacher
14. Stacey Hightower	J.E. Rhodes Elementary School Teacher
15. Wade Cox	Van High School Parent
16. Melissa Rust	Van Junior High School Parent
17. Candice Meyers	Van Middle School Parent
18. Stacey Anderson	Van Intermediate School Parent
19. Kelly Diaz	J.E. Rhodes Elementary School Parent

# Van Independent School District

## District of Innovation Timeline

Monday, March 28	<p>Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss preliminary thoughts, possible exemptions, and possible members of the District Innovation Committee. The District of Innovation Committee will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent</li> <li>• Administrative Staff</li> <li>• Principals from Each Campus</li> <li>• One teacher from each campus</li> <li>• Two – five parents and/or community members</li> </ul>
Monday, April 18	<p>6:00 p.m. - Special Board Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board approved a resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation</li> <li>• Adjourn</li> </ul> <p>6:15 p.m. - Public Hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain and discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation.</li> </ul> <p>6:30 p.m. - Regular Board Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved a motion to pursue local “District of Innovation” plan</li> <li>• Approve the members of the District of Innovation Committee</li> <li>• Adjourn</li> </ul>
Monday, May 2	<p>4:00 p.m. - Meeting of the District of Innovation Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate them about HB 1842 and Districts of Innovation</li> <li>• Discuss possible exemptions</li> <li>• Decide which exemptions to pursue and include in our plan</li> </ul>
Tuesday, May 17	<p>4:00 p.m. - Meeting of the District Advisory Committee and the District of Innovation Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public meeting to consider the final Van ISD District of Innovation Plan</li> <li>• Plan was approved by a unanimous vote (44-0) by the District Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
Thursday, May 19	<p>Post proposed Van ISD District of Innovation plan on the district website for thirty days.</p>
Monday, May 23	<p>Board will vote to notify Commissioner of Education of intent to vote on the adoption of the proposed District of Innovation Plan.</p>
Tuesday, May 24	<p>Send notification to Commissioner of Education.</p>
Monday, June 20	<p>6:00 p.m. - Regular Board Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Trustees to approve the District of Innovation plan.</li> </ul>
Tuesday, June 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send notification to Commissioner of Education of Board’s approval of District of Innovation Plan.</li> <li>• Update all policy changes with TASB</li> </ul>
❖ If approved, plan will be in effect for up to five years.	

## **1. School Start Date**

(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

### **Currently**

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule, however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday.

The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

### **Proposed**

To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our community, we would like to consider moving the mandatory start date back one week which would better benefit our students.

- a. Students will begin no earlier than the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of August.
- b. Teachers will begin no earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of August.
- c. This will allow the first and second semesters to be closer in the number of days of instruction.
- d. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.

## **2. Submitting Waivers for Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size**

(EEB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)

### **Currently**

Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose.

Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

### **Proposed**

While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of the students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

- a. VISD will attempt to keep all K-4<sup>th</sup> core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- b. In the event a K-4<sup>th</sup> core classroom reaches 25:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4<sup>th</sup> classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
- d. This gives CISD the flexibility without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency.

### **3. Teacher certification**

(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (Ed. Code 21.003, 21.057)

#### **Currently**

In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. There is a lot of bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork involved in the process.

#### **Proposed**

In order to best serve VISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

- a. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach this subject.
- b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will.
- c. This will allow more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.

## **4. Probationary Contracts**

*(DCA Legal) (TEC 21.102)*

### **Currently**

A probationary contract may not exceed one year for new teachers to our district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district. Under this circumstance, the district must either give the teacher a term contract or terminate their contract after their first year in the district.

### **Proposed**

Van ISD would like to have the ability to renew the probationary contract one additional one-year period, for a maximum of two school years, for all teachers that are new to the district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of eight years preceding employment by the District.