# PALO PINTO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



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## LOCALLY DEVELOPED

# DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

**June 1, 2027-May 31, 2032**

## Introduction

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 was passed allowing Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation. This designation allows school districts to obtain exemptions from specific provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC). Districts of Innovation provide opportunities for greater local control, increased flexibility governing educational programming, and empowerment to innovate and think differently. Palo Pinto ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and flexibility toward improving the overall educational experience and success for the benefit of our students and community. Careful consideration was given to the selection of the exemptions contained within this plan. All were chosen to provide opportunities for Palo Pinto ISD to personalize and enhance learning for students. This plan is specific to the exemptions as outlined. The district intends to follow the TEC in all other areas. Any revisions or changes to the innovation plan that may arise will be brought before the Local Innovation Committee/District Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Committee to explore the request. If the committee determines that a revision is needed, the innovation plan will then be taken back to the Palo Pinto ISD Board of Trustees for approval with the revisions. Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the TEC "that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan…". Therefore, PPISD seeks exemption from the included permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute and presented in this plan.

## Local Advisory Committee for Initial Drafting and Approval

Eric J. Cederstrom, Superintendent
Teresa Mahan, Principal
Iris Burkett, Teacher
Jan Hinkson, Teacher
Natalie Rogers, Teacher
Crystal Bean, Teacher
Danita Erwin, PTO President

## Local Advisory Committee for Renewal 1 (June 2022) Drafting and Approval

Wendell Barker, Superintendent
Natalie Rogers, Principal
Sarah Connelly, Teacher
Trina Toalson, Teacher
Glenda Valencia, Teacher
Kelly Korkmas, Parent
Brian Nierman, Parent
Ann Reagan, Community Representative
Melissa Potter, Community Representative
Beth Henderson, Business Representative
Lynette Babcock, Business Representative

## Local Advisory Committee for Renewal 2 (June 2027) Drafting and Approval

Wendell Barker, Superintendent

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Robin Facteau, Principal
Jennifer Nierman, Teacher
Gayle Dallas, Teacher
Aaron Watts, Teacher
Kerri Walker, Parent
Ashley Martinez, Parent
Sarah Connelly, Community Representative
Tina Lamb, Community Representative
Kayme McIntosh, Business Representative
Lynette Babcock, Business Representative

**Implementation and Duration**

The Palo Pinto ISD Local District of Innovation Plan initially began with the 2017-18 school year through the 2021-22 school year. By requirement, the plan and designation may not exceed five years. Accordingly, the plan was/will be amended and/or reapproved, following all requirements for Open Meetings Act, on the following dates for the following terms:

| Board Approval Date | Beginning of Plan Term | Ending of Plan Term |
|---|---|---|
| June 14, 2022 | 2022-2023 school year<br>(June 1, 2022) | 2026-2027 school year<br>(May 31, 2027) |
| June 8, 2027 | 2027-2028 school year<br>(June 1, 2027) | 2031-2032 school year<br>(May 31, 2032) |

Further, the plan may be amended at any time by the District SBDM Team with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

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# PALO PINTO ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION TIMELINE

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|---|---|
| January 18, 2017 | Board Resolution regarding District of Innovation |
| February 15, 2017 | Public hearing and appointment of committee composition |
| February 20, 2017 | Committee meets |
| February 24, 2017 | Committee meets |
| March 3, 2017 | Committee confirms draft |
| March 7, 2017 | Committee reports to board on recommendations |
| March 9, 2017 | Post plan to website for minimum of 30 days prior to Board Adoption |
| April 10, 2017 | District of Innovation presented to District SBDM, open to public |
| April 18, 2017 | Board final approval of District of Innovation |
| | Paperwork submitted to TEA |
| March 1, 2022 | Amended/proposed plan for renewal posted on district webpage for public comment minimum of 30 days prior to Board approval; Commissioner notification of **intent to renew** via an e-mail including link to the proposed plan available on a district's website & intended adoption date sent to the commissioner's inbox at commissioner@tea.texas.gov and with a cc to accred@tea.texas.gov. |
| April 7, 2022 | District SBDM committee **conducted**/will conduct a properly posted public comment meeting to review the plan, allow public comment per OMA guidelines, and approve amended plan by majority vote, as needed, to be presented to the Board. |
| June 14, 2022 | Board **approved**/will approve plan by 2/3 affirmative vote as written for the next term of renewal; District should ensure board actions/minutes reflect that there are new exemptions, if applicable, in the plan; Superintendent **notified**/will notify TEA (within 15 days of Board approval) of **adoption of renewal** via an e-mail providing the adoption date, amendments made (list of TEC sections added or removed), the link to the landing page of the final plan available on a district's website, and attachment of updated checklist (form) of exemptions sent to the commissioner's inbox at commissioner@tea.texas.gov and with a cc to accred@tea.texas.gov. District will notify TASB Policy Service to ensure the DOI plan and policies align. |

Resources for renewal:
https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/districts-of-innovation-amendment-and-renewal.pdf

https://www.tasb.org/services/legal-services/tasb-school-law-esource/governance/districts-of-innovation/documents/renewing-a-district-of-innovation-plan.pdf

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|---|---|
| March 1, 2027 | Amended/proposed plan for renewal posted on district webpage for public comment minimum of 30 days prior to Board approval; *The following is no longer required for renewal per TEC §102.1313(a)(3)--* Commissioner notification of **intent to renew** via an e-mail including link to the proposed plan available on a district's website & intended adoption date sent to accred@tea.texas.gov and with a cc to the commissioner's inbox at commissioner@tea.texas.gov. |
| April 6, 2027 | District SBDM committee conducted/**will conduct** a properly posted public comment meeting to review the plan, allow public comment per OMA guidelines, and approve proposed/amended plan by majority vote, as needed, to be presented to the Board. |
| June 8, 2027 | Board approved/**will approve** plan by 2/3 affirmative vote as written for the next term of renewal; District should ensure board actions/minutes reflect that there are new exemptions, if applicable, in the plan; Superintendent notified/**will notify** TEA/Commissioner (within 15 days of Board approval) of **adoption of renewal** via an e-mail providing the adoption date, amendments made (list of TEC sections added or removed), the link to the landing page of the final plan available on a district's website, and attachment of updated checklist (form) of exemptions sent to accred@tea.texas.gov with a cc to the commissioner's inbox at commissioner@tea.texas.gov. District will notify TASB Policy Service to ensure the DOI plan and policies align. |

Resources for Renewal

TEA Districts of Innovation webpage: https://tea.texas.gov/school-and-district-information/district-initiatives/districts-innovation

Commissioner's Rules: https://tea.texas.gov/laws-and-rules/commissioner-rules-tac/coe-tac-currently-effect/ch102jj.pdf

DOI Checklist/Figure 19 TAC §102.1307(d): https://tea.texas.gov/laws-and-rules/commissioner-rules-tac/coe-adopted/25-12-figure-19-0102-1307-1.pdf

DOI Amendment & Renewal: https://tea.texas.gov/school-and-district-information/district-initiatives/districts-of-innovation-amendment-and-renewal-10.pdf

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# CHAPTER 21 - EDUCATORS

## PROBATIONARY CONTRACTS

- **Probationary Contract**

| **Texas Education Code** | **Board Policy** |
|---|---|
| **TEC §21.102: Probationary Contract** | **DCA (LEGAL)** |

**Innovation:**

- Current Law
  - Current law requires experienced teachers new to the district with five years of experience within the last eight years as a public school teacher be employed on the maximum of a one year probationary contract.
- Rationale for Innovation
  - A one year probationary period may not be sufficient time to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to district receipt of state assessment and other qualifying factors.
- Innovation Strategy
  - For experienced teachers, counselors and nurses new to the district that have been employed as such in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, an eligible probationary employee may be issued a second probationary contract for a total of two possible probationary contracts. All other eligible employees new to the profession or with less than five years of experience will not be affected by this innovation strategy.

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# CHAPTER 21 - EDUCATORS

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- **Teacher Mentors**

| **Texas Education Code** | **Board Policy** |
|---|---|
| **TEC §21.458: Teacher Mentors** | **DEAA (LEGAL)** |

**Innovation:**

- Current Law
  - Texas Education Code 21.458 requires that teacher mentors have three or more years of experience in the field along with trainings approved by the commissioner.
- Rationale for Innovation & Innovative Strategy
  - PPISD works hard to recruit and maintain appropriate staffing in an incredibly competitive market in which teacher shortages are not uncommon. Exemption from these requirements allows for any teacher in need of mentor assistance or support to be assigned a mentor. In addition, mentors being exempt from the qualifications described in Subsection (b) will increase the pool of teachers from which the district could draw for these targeted mentoring programs.

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# CHAPTER 25 – ADMISSION, TRANSFER, ATTENDANCE

## OPERATION OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- **First Day of Instruction/Last Day of School**

| **Texas Education Code** | **Board Policy** |
|---|---|
| **TEC §25.0811: First Day of Instruction**<br>**TEC §25.0812: Last Day of School** | **EB** |

**Innovation:**

- Current Law
  - State law prohibits school districts from starting classes before the fourth Monday in August and ending classes before May 15.
- Rationale for Innovation
  - The flexibility in the start/end dates allows Palo Pinto ISD to annually determine, at the local level, what start and end dates best meet the needs of the students and the community. This flexibility allows for: consideration of local needs regarding instructional time per semester with more instructional options, personalized learning, more balanced instructional time per semester, more instructional time prior to the state assessments administered toward the end of the school year, the district calendar to be more efficient following mandatory testing, and more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff. With the required 75,600 minutes instructional requirement, PPISD may be able to finish the school year prior to May 15.
- Innovation Strategy
  - Palo Pinto ISD will have flexibility to determine the first/last day of instruction on an annual basis that best meets the needs of the community.

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# CHAPTER 25 – ADMISSION, TRANSFER, ATTENDANCE

## OPERATION OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- **School Day Interruptions**

| **Texas Education Code** | **Board Policy** |
|---|---|
| **TEC §25.083: School Day Interruptions** | **EC SERIES** |

**Innovation:**

- Current Law
  - The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting interruptions of classes during the school day for nonacademic activities such as announcements and sales promotions. At a minimum, the policy must limit announcements other than emergency announcements to once during the school day.
- Rationale for Innovation and Innovation Strategy
  - Exempting the district from the restrictions in TEC §25.083(a) will allow the district the flexibility to make necessary, albeit nonemergency, announcements throughout the day on an as needed basis. While the district keeps school day announcements to a minimum, there are occasions where announcements are necessary to communicate variations to district policies, procedures, or regulations. For example, the district may need to make nonemergency announcements regarding pick-up/drop-off locations, health and safety protocols, and/or extracurricular/cocurricular activity changes.

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# CHAPTER 26A –GRIEVANCE POLICY

- **Grievance Policy (Annual Grievance Reporting)**

***This exemption will not become effective until 6/8/2027, the date of Board approval.**

| **Texas Education Code** | **Board Policy** |
|---|---|
| **TEC §26A.001(g): Grievance Policy/Annual Grievance Reporting** | **FNG**<br>**DGBA** |

**Innovation:**

- Current Law
  - Texas Education Code §26A.001(g) requires school districts to annually submit a report to the Texas Education Agency regarding grievances filed during the preceding year. The report must include the resolution of each grievance and any corrective action taken.
- Rationale for Innovation
  - Palo Pinto ISD is a small rural school district with limited administrative personnel and resources. The additional state reporting requirement creates an administrative burden that requires time and resources that could otherwise be directed toward district operations and student needs. Local flexibility in grievance reporting will allow the district to maintain its focus on resolving concerns at the local level while reducing unnecessary administrative requirements.
- Innovation Strategy
  - Palo Pinto ISD seeks exemption from Texas Education Code §26A.001(g), specifically the requirement to annually submit grievance data to the Texas Education Agency. The district will continue to maintain and follow its locally adopted grievance procedures and address grievances in accordance with applicable district policies and state and federal law. This exemption will allow the district to retain local control over its grievance processes without the additional requirement of submitting annual grievance data to the state.

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# CHAPTER 45 – SCHOOL DISTRICT FUNDS

## SCHOOL DISTRICT DEPOSITORIES

- **Depository Contract**

| **Texas Education Code** | **Board Policy** |
|---|---|
| **Subchapter G**<br>**TEC §45.205: Term of Contract**<br>**TEC §45.206: Bid or Request for Proposal Notices; Bid and Proposal Forms**<br>**TEC §45.207: Award of Contract**<br>**TEC §45.208: Depository Contract; Bond**<br>**TEC §45.209: Investment of District Funds** | **BDAE** |

**Innovation:**

- Current Law
  - TEC Subchapter G §45.205 states (A) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. (B) A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for three additional two-year-terms. An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206. (C) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.
- Rationale for Innovation
  - The exemption from current statutes would allow the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 8 year allowable contract term if the district determines current contract pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out to bid. This exemption would lessen the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing Request for Proposals (RFP) or bid(s) when there are no other banking institutions within district boundaries available to bid on the district's business. The time saved by the superintendent and the board of trustees by not having to deal with this ministerial duty every two years will allow the superintendent and the board more time for studying and planning for student progress, instructional strategies, and innovative options for the district educational goals. In addition, this fosters goodwill in our rural community and is convenient for our employees to have a local banking option in our small town.
- Innovation Strategy
  - The District is seeking exemption from current statutes that would allow the District's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 8 year allowable contract term if the district determines current contract pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send

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| | the district's banking services out to bid. The District will only send depository services out to bid if the district determines contract pricing becomes uncompetitive or there is some operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out for bid. With this exemption in place, none of the additional requirements related to the bid or request for proposal detailed in §45.206 through §45.209 would be applicable. |

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# CHAPTER 25 – ADMISSION, TRANSFER, ATTENDANCE

## ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS

- **Transfer of Student**

| **Texas Education Code** | **Board Policy** |
|---|---|
| **TEC §25.036: Transfer of Student** | **FDA** |

**Innovation:**

- Current Law
  - Palo Pinto ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA LOCAL requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file an application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff and the student's disciplinary history, academic records, and attendance records are evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the District. Violation of the terms of the agreement may result in a transfer request not being approved the following year.
- Rationale for Innovation
  - §TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of transfer as a one-year commitment by the District. Palo Pinto ISD believes that local control should be given to the District based on circumstances, such as in-district student enrollment growth within a school year, disruption of learning by transfer students not adhering to transfer criteria, the morale of staff, etc., and in the best interests of the district, its staff, its students, and its community.
- Innovation Strategy
  - The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applications. The District will reserve the right to revoke/rescind the transfer of a student at any time during the year based on established District criteria. The campus principal will refer requests to rescind transfer students to the superintendent who will make the final decision to retain or rescind a transfer student.

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# Figure: 19 TAC §102.1307(d)

## Innovation District

A local innovation plan must be developed for a school district before the district may be designated as an Innovation District. A local plan must provide for a comprehensive educational program for the district as set out in Texas Education Code (TEC) §12A.003.

A local innovation plan must identify requirements imposed by the TEC that inhibit the goals of the plan from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. The local innovation plan should specify the manner in which a particular statute inhibits one or more goals of the plan.

**INSTRUCTIONS**:

Please use the form below to check the statutes specifically identified in your district's local innovation plan as inhibiting a goal of the plan.

- Ensure all sections of the checklist are completed.
- Indicate specific (mm/dd/yy) beginning and ending dates that do not exceed five calendar years.
    - When filling out a checklist for an amendment to the plan: Indicate the term of the plan as originally adopted or renewed (whichever is most recent).
- Check/include only the numerical sections of code specifically cited in the adopted plan
- Check/include only sections of TEC on the checklist.
- When filling out a checklist for an amendment to or renewal of the plan: Include all previously and newly adopted exemptions. Exclude all exemptions that were removed from the plan.
- If there is a specific section of code in the adopted plan but no checkbox for it on the checklist, manually add it to the "Other" section located on the bottom of the final page of the checklist.

Checking a specific statute does not necessarily indicate eligibility for an exemption from all subsections of the statute. The form below provides a reporting mechanism to fulfill the reporting requirements of the statute. Entire sections of code may not be eligible for exemption and each district should consult its legal counsel in developing its innovation plan.

Exemptions claimed for an Innovation District apply only to the specific provision of the Texas Education Code (TEC) cited, which may or may not be governed by a separate legal requirement. The exemption does not relieve the district of any requirement imposed by other state or federal law or a duty imposed under federal regulation, grant compliance, agency rule applicable to a charter school or a local legal requirement. Each district should consult its legal counsel to ensure adoption of necessary local policies to ensure compliance with all applicable legal requirements.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of exemptions.

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**Board action**: ☐New Plan ☐Amendment ☒Renewal

**Board action adoption date**: 6/8/2027

**District Name**: Palo Pinto Independent School District **CDN**: 182906

**Term of Plan**: June 1, 2027 to May 31, 2032

**Plan applies to**: ☒Entire District
☐Campus (list) _____
☐Other (please describe) _____

**Submitted by (name)**: Wendell Barker **Title**: Superintendent **Date of Submission**: 6/8/2027

**Chapter 11 – School Districts**

**Subchapter D. Powers and Duties of Board of Trustees of Independent School Districts**

- ☐ §11.1511 (b)(5), (14) Specific Powers and Duties of Board
- ☐ §11.162 School Uniforms

**Subchapter F. District-Level and Site Based Decision-Making**

- ☐ §11.251 Planning and Decision-Making Process
- ☐ §11.252 District-Level Planning and Decision-Making
- ☐ §11.253 Campus Planning and Site-Based Decision-Making
- ☐ §11.255 Dropout Prevention Review

**Chapter 21 – Educators**

**Subchapter A – General Provisions**

- ☐ §21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts
- ☐ §21.003 Certification Required
- ☐ §21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void

**Subchapter B** – Certification of Educators

- ☐ §21.051 Rules Regarding Field-Based Experience and Options for Field Experience and Internships.
- ☐ §21.053 Presentation and Recording of Certificates

**Subchapter C** – Probationary Contracts

- ☒ §21.102 (Probationary Contract)

**Subchapter H** – Appraisals and Incentives

- ☐ §21.352 Local Role
- ☐ §21.353 Appraisal on Basis of Classroom Teaching Performance
- ☐ §21.354 Appraisal of Certain Administrators
- ☐ §21.3541 Appraisal and Professional Development System for Principals

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**Subchapter I** – Duties and Benefits

- ☐ §21.401 Minimum Service Required
- ☐ §21.402 Minimum Salary Schedule for Certain Professional Staff
- ☐ §21.4021 Furloughs
- ☐ §21.4022 Required Process for Development of Furlough Program or Other Salary Reduction Proposal
- ☐ §21.403 Placement on Minimum Salary Schedule
- ☐ §21.4031 Professional Staff Service Records
- ☐ §21.4032 Reductions in Salaries of Classroom Teachers and Administrators
- ☐ §21.404 Planning and Preparation Time
- ☐ §21.405 Duty-Free Lunch
- ☐ §21.406 Denial of Compensation Based On Absence for Religious Observance Prohibited
- ☐ §21.407 Requiring or Coercing Teachers to Join Groups, Clubs, Committees, or Organizations: Political Affairs
- ☐ §21.408 Right To Join or Not To Join Professional Association
- ☐ §21.409 Leave Of Absence for Temporary Disability
- ☐ §21.415 Employment Contracts

**Subchapter J** – Staff Development

- ☐ §21.451 Staff Development Requirements
- ☐ §21.452 Developmental Leaves of Absence
- ☒ §21.458 Mentors

**Chapter 22 – School District Employees and Volunteers**

**Subchapter A – Rights, Duties, and Benefits**

- ☐ §22.001 Salary Deductions for Professional or Other Dues
- ☐ §22.002 Assignment, Transfer, or Pledge of Compensation
- ☐ §22.003 Minimum Personal Leave Program
- ☐ §22.006 Discrimination Based on Jury Service Prohibited
- ☐ §22.007 Incentives for Early Retirement
- ☐ §22.011 Requiring or Coercing Employees to Make Charitable Contributions

**Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance**

**Subchapter C** – Operation of Schools and School Attendance

- ☒ §25.0811 First Day of Instruction
- ☒ §25.0812 Last Day of School
- ☒ §25.083 School Day Interruptions
- ☐ §25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

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**Subchapter D** – Student/Teacher Ratios; Class Size

- ☐ §25.111 Student/Teacher Ratios
- ☐ §25.112 Class Size
- ☐ §25.113 Notice of Class Size
- ☐ §25.114 Student/Teacher Ratios in Physical Education Classes; Class Size

**Chapter 44 –Fiscal Management**

**Subchapter B** – Purchases; Contracts

- ☐ §44.031 Purchasing Contracts
- ☐ §44.0331 Management Fees Under Certain Cooperative Purchasing Contracts
- ☐ §44.0352 Competitive Sealed Proposals
- ☐ §44.042 Preference to Texas and United States Products
- ☐ §44.043 Right To Work
- ☐ §44.047 Purchase or Lease of Automated External Defibrillator

**Subchapter Z** – Miscellaneous Provisions

- ☐ §44.901 Energy Savings Performance Contracts
- ☐ §44.902 Long-Range Energy Plan to Reduce Consumption of Electric Energy
- ☐ §44.908 Expenditure of Local Funds

**Chapter 45 – School District Funds**

**Subchapter G** – School District Depositories

- ☒ §45.205 Term of Contract
- ☒ §45.206 Bid Or Request for Proposal Notices; Bid and Proposal Forms
- ☒ §45.207 Award of Contract
- ☒ §45.208 Depository Contract; Bond
- ☒ §45.209 Investment of District Funds

**Other**

An adopted exemption from Texas Education Code for which there is no corresponding checkbox above must be added to this section.

**Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance**

- ☒ §25.036 Transfer of Student

**Chapter 26A – Grievance Policy**

- ☒ §26A.001 Grievance Policy (Annual Grievance Reporting)

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