

**TEXAS EDUCATION CODE**

**State Laws Pertaining to**

**District and Campus  
Advisory Councils**

§ 7.056. WAIVERS AND EXEMPTIONS. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (e), a school campus or district may apply to the commissioner for a waiver of a requirement, restriction, or prohibition imposed by this code or rule of the board or commissioner.

(b) A school campus or district seeking a waiver must submit a written application to the commissioner not later than the 31st day before the campus or district intends to take action requiring a waiver. The application must include:

(1) a written plan approved by the board of trustees of the district that states the achievement objectives of the campus or district and the inhibition imposed on those objectives by the requirement, restriction, or prohibition; and

(2) written comments from the campus- or district-level committee established under Section 11.251.

(c) If the commissioner objects to an application for a waiver, the commissioner must notify the school campus or district in writing that the application is denied not later than the 30th day after the date on which the application is received. If the commissioner does not notify the school campus or district of an objection within that time, the application is considered granted.

(d) A waiver granted under this section is effective for the period stated in the application, which may not exceed three years. A school campus or district for which a requirement, restriction, or prohibition is waived under this section for a period of three years may receive an exemption from that requirement, restriction, or prohibition at the end of that period if the campus or district has fulfilled the achievement objectives stated in the application. The exemption remains in effect until the commissioner determines that achievement levels of the campus or district have declined.

(e) Except as provided by Subsection (f), a school campus or district may not receive an exemption or waiver under this section from:

(1) a prohibition on conduct that constitutes a criminal offense;

(2) a requirement imposed by federal law or rule, including a requirement for special education or bilingual education programs; or

(3) a requirement, restriction, or prohibition relating to:

(A) essential knowledge or skills under Section 28.002 or minimum graduation requirements under Section 28.025;

(B) public school accountability as provided by Subchapters B, C, D, and G, Chapter 39;

(C) extracurricular activities under Section 33.081;

(D) health and safety under Chapter 38;

(E) purchasing under Subchapter B, Chapter 44;

(F) elementary school class size limits, except as provided by Section 25.112;

(G) removal of a disruptive student from the classroom under Subchapter A, Chapter 37;

(H) at-risk programs under Subchapter C, Chapter 29;

(I) prekindergarten programs under Subchapter E, Chapter 29;

(J) educator rights and benefits under

Subchapters A, C, D, E, F, G, and I, Chapter 21, or under Subchapter A, Chapter 22;

(K) special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29; or

(L) bilingual education programs under Subchapter B, Chapter 29.

(f) A school district or campus that is required to develop and implement a student achievement improvement plan under Section 39.131 or 39.132 may receive an exemption or waiver under this section from any law or rule other than:

(1) a prohibition on conduct that constitutes a criminal offense;

(2) a requirement imposed by federal law or rule;

(3) a requirement, restriction, or prohibition imposed by state law or rule relating to:

(A) public school accountability as provided by Subchapters B, C, D, and G, Chapter 39; or

(B) educator rights and benefits under Subchapters A, C, D, E, F, G, and I, Chapter 21, or under Subchapter A, Chapter 22; or

(4) textbook selection under Chapter 31.

(g) In a manner consistent with waiver authority granted to the commissioner by the United States Department of Education, the commissioner may grant a waiver of a state law or rule required by federal law, including Subchapter A, B, or C, Chapter 29. Before exercising any waiver authority under this subsection, the commissioner shall notify the Legislative Budget Board and the office of budget and planning in the governor's office.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 342, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

SUBCHAPTER F. DISTRICT-LEVEL AND SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

§ 11.251. PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

PROCESS. (a) The board of trustees of each independent school district shall ensure that a district improvement plan and improvement plans for each campus are developed, reviewed, and revised annually for the purpose of improving the performance of all students. The board shall annually approve district and campus performance objectives and shall ensure that the district and campus plans:

(1) are mutually supportive to accomplish the identified objectives; and

(2) at a minimum, support the state goals and objectives under Chapter 4.

(b) The board shall adopt a policy to establish a district- and campus-level planning and decision-making process that will involve the professional staff of the district, parents, and community members in establishing and reviewing the district's and campuses' educational plans, goals, performance objectives, and major classroom instructional programs. The board shall establish a procedure under which meetings are held regularly by district- and campus-level planning and decision-making committees that include representative professional staff, parents of students enrolled in the district, business representatives, and community members. The committees shall include a business representative without regard to whether the representative resides in the district or whether the business the person represents is located in the district. The board, or the board's designee, shall periodically meet with the district-level committee to review the district-level committee's deliberations.

(c) For purposes of establishing the composition of committees under this section:

(1) a person who stands in parental relation to a student is considered a parent;

(2) a parent who is an employee of the school district is not considered a parent representative on the committee;

(3) a parent is not considered a representative of community members on the committee; and

(4) community members must reside in the district and must be at least 18 years of age.

(d) The board shall also ensure that an administrative procedure is provided to clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teachers, district-level committee members, and campus-level committee members in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The board shall ensure that the district-level planning and decision-making committee will be actively involved in establishing the administrative procedure that defines the respective roles and responsibilities pertaining to planning and decision-making at the district and campus levels.

(e) The board shall adopt a procedure, consistent with Section 21.407(a), for the professional staff in the district to nominate and elect the professional staff representatives who shall meet with the board or the board designee as required under this section. At least two-thirds of the elected professional staff representatives must be classroom teachers. The remaining staff

representatives shall include both campus- and district-level professional staff members. Board policy must provide procedures for:

(1) the selection of parents to the district-level and campus-level committees; and

(2) the selection of community members and business representatives to serve on the district-level committee in a manner that provides for appropriate representation of the community's diversity.

(f) The district policy must provide that all pertinent federal planning requirements are addressed through the district- and campus-level planning process.

(g) This section does not:

(1) prohibit the board from conducting meetings with teachers or groups of teachers other than the meetings described by this section;

(2) prohibit the board from establishing policies providing avenues for input from others, including students or paraprofessional staff, in district- or campus-level planning and decision-making;

(3) limit or affect the power of the board to govern the public schools; or

(4) create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 61, § 1, eff. May 16, 2003.

§ 11.252. DISTRICT-LEVEL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING. (a) Each school district shall have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually, in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee established under Section 11.251. The purpose of the district improvement plan is to guide district and campus staff in the improvement of student performance for all student groups in order to attain state standards in respect to the academic excellence indicators adopted under Section 39.051. The district improvement plan must include provisions for:

(1) a comprehensive needs assessment addressing district student performance on the academic excellence indicators, and other appropriate measures of performance, that are disaggregated by all student groups served by the district, including categories of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, and populations served by special programs, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;

(2) measurable district performance objectives for all appropriate academic excellence indicators for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, and other measures of student performance that may be identified through the comprehensive needs assessment;

(3) strategies for improvement of student performance that include:

(A) instructional methods for addressing the needs of student groups not achieving their full potential;

(B) methods for addressing the needs of students for special programs, such as suicide prevention, conflict resolution, violence prevention, or dyslexia treatment programs;

(C) dropout reduction;

(D) integration of technology in instructional and administrative programs;

(E) discipline management;

(F) staff development for professional staff of the district;

(G) career education to assist students in developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for a broad range of career opportunities; and

(H) accelerated education;

(4) strategies for providing to middle school, junior high school, and high school students, those students' teachers and counselors, and those students' parents information about:

(A) higher education admissions and financial aid opportunities;

(B) the TEXAS grant program and the Teach for Texas grant program established under Chapter 56;

(C) the need for students to make informed curriculum choices to be prepared for success beyond high school; and

(D) sources of information on higher education admissions and financial aid;

(5) resources needed to implement identified strategies;

(6) staff responsible for ensuring the accomplishment of each strategy;

(7) timelines for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of each improvement strategy; and

(8) formative evaluation criteria for determining periodically whether strategies are resulting in intended improvement of student performance.

(b) A district's plan for the improvement of student performance is not filed with the agency, but the district must make the plan available to the agency on request.

(c) In a district that has only one campus, the district- and campus-level committees may be one committee and the district and campus plans may be one plan.

(d) At least every two years, each district shall evaluate the effectiveness of the district's decision-making and planning policies, procedures, and staff development activities related to district- and campus-level decision-making and planning to ensure that they are effectively structured to positively impact student performance.

(d-1) Expired.

(e) The district-level committee established under Section 11.251 shall hold at least one public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual district performance report from the agency for the purpose of discussing the performance of the district and the district performance objectives. District policy and procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the district-level committee. This section does

not create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

(f) A superintendent shall regularly consult the district-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the district educational program.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1202, § 2, eff. June 18, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1590, § 6, eff. June 19, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1261, § 7, eff. June 15, 2001.

§ 11.253. CAMPUS PLANNING AND SITE-BASED DECISION-MAKING. (a) Each school district shall maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance for all students.

(b) Each district's policy and procedures shall establish campus-level planning and decision-making committees as provided for through the procedures provided by Sections 11.251(b)-(e).

(c) Each school year, the principal of each school campus, with the assistance of the campus-level committee, shall develop, review, and revise the campus improvement plan for the purpose of improving student performance for all student populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, with respect to the academic excellence indicators adopted under Section 39.051 and any other appropriate performance measures for special needs populations.

(d) Each campus improvement plan must:

(1) assess the academic achievement for each student in the school using the academic excellence indicator system as described by Section 39.051;

(2) set the campus performance objectives based on the academic excellence indicator system, including objectives for special needs populations, including students in special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;

(3) identify how the campus goals will be met for each student;

(4) determine the resources needed to implement the plan;

(5) identify staff needed to implement the plan;

(6) set timelines for reaching the goals;

(7) measure progress toward the performance objectives periodically to ensure that the plan is resulting in academic improvement;

(8) include goals and methods for violence prevention and intervention on campus; and

(9) provide for a program to encourage parental involvement at the campus.

(e) In accordance with the administrative procedures established under Section 11.251(b), the campus-level committee shall be involved in decisions in the areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing patterns, staff development, and school organization. The campus-level committee must approve the portions of the campus plan addressing campus staff development needs.

(f) This section does not create a new cause of action or require collective bargaining.

(g) Each campus-level committee shall hold at least one

public meeting per year. The required meeting shall be held after receipt of the annual campus rating from the agency to discuss the performance of the campus and the campus performance objectives. District policy and campus procedures must be established to ensure that systematic communications measures are in place to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input, and to provide information to those persons regarding the recommendations of the campus-level committees.

(h) A principal shall regularly consult the campus-level committee in the planning, operation, supervision, and evaluation of the campus educational program.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 510, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1202, § 3, eff. June 18, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1365, § 1, eff. June 19, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1420, § 4.003, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

§ 11.254. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. (a) The commissioner shall oversee the provision of training and technical support to all districts and campuses in respect to planning and site-based decision-making through one or more sources, including regional education service centers, for school board trustees, superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, and other members of school committees.

(b) The agency shall conduct an annual statewide survey of the types of district- and campus-level decision-making and planning structures that exist, the extent of involvement of various stakeholders in district- and campus-level planning and decision-making, and the perceptions of those persons of the quality and effectiveness of decisions related to their impact on student performance.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

§ 11.255. DROPOUT PREVENTION REVIEW. (a) Each district-level planning and decision-making committee and each campus-level planning and decision-making committee for a junior, middle, or high school campus shall analyze information related to dropout prevention, including:

(1) the results of the audit of dropout records required by Section 39. 055;

(2) campus information related to graduation rates, dropout rates, high school equivalency certificate rates, and the percentage of students who remain in high school more than four years after entering grade level 9;

(3) the number of students who enter a high school equivalency certificate program and:

(A) do not complete the program;  
(B) complete the program but do not take the high school equivalency examination; or

(C) complete the program and take the high school equivalency examination but do not obtain a high school equivalency certificate;

(4) for students enrolled in grade levels 9 and 10,

information related to academic credit hours earned, retention rates, and placements in alternative education programs and expulsions under Chapter 37; and

(5) the results of an evaluation of each school-based dropout prevention program in the district.

(b) Each district-level planning and decision-making committee and each campus-level planning and decision-making committee shall use the information reviewed under this section in developing district or campus improvement plans under this subchapter.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1201, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

§ 21.352. LOCAL ROLE. (a) In appraising teachers, each school district shall use:

- (1) the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner; or
- (2) an appraisal process and performance criteria:
  - (A) developed by the district- and campus-level committees established under Section 11.251;
  - (B) containing the items described by Sections 21.351(a)(1) and (2); and
  - (C) adopted by the board of trustees.

(b) The board of trustees may reject an appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the district- and campus-level committees but may not modify the process or criteria.

(c) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, appraisal must be done at least once during each school year. A teacher may be appraised less frequently if the teacher agrees in writing and the teacher's most recent evaluation rated the teacher as at least proficient, or the equivalent, and did not identify any area of deficiency. A teacher who is appraised less frequently than annually must be appraised at least once during each period of five school years. The district shall maintain a written copy of the evaluation of each teacher's performance in the teacher's personnel file. Each teacher is entitled to receive a written copy of the evaluation on its completion. After receiving a written copy of the evaluation, a teacher is entitled to a second appraisal by a different appraiser or to submit a written rebuttal to the evaluation to be attached to the evaluation in the teacher's personnel file. The evaluation and any rebuttal may be given to another school district at which the teacher has applied for employment at the request of that district.

(d) A teacher may be given advance notice of the date or time of an appraisal, but advance notice is not required.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 244, § 2, eff. June 18, 2003.

§ 21.357. PERFORMANCE INCENTIVES. (a) The commissioner shall design an objective system to evaluate principals that:

- (1) is based on types of information available as of January 1, 1995, through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and the state's public school accountability system;
- (2) focuses on gain at a principal's campus and includes a statistical analysis comparing current campus performance to previous performance; and
- (3) does not include subjective items.

(b) From funds appropriated for that purpose, the commissioner may award performance incentives to principals identified through the evaluation system as high-performing. Based on available appropriations, for each fiscal year, a performance incentive may not exceed:

- (1) \$5,000, for a principal ranked in the top quartile; or
- (2) \$2,500, for a principal ranked in the second quartile.

(c) A performance incentive awarded to a principal under this section must be distributed to the principal's school and used in the manner determined by the campus-level committee established under Section 11.253 in accordance with the requirements of Section 39.094(a).

(d) The commissioner shall develop a study on establishing an incentive grant program for all classes of educators, to be reported to the legislature no later than December 1, 1998. The study shall focus on developing objective methods for the issuance of grants in the areas of student performance, continuing education, and professional duties performed by teachers in addition to classroom duties.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 824, § 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

§ 21.451. STAFF DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS. (a) The staff development provided by a school district must be:

(1) conducted in accordance with standards developed by the district; and

(2) designed to improve education in the district.

(b) The staff development must be predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives established under Section 11.253, and developed and approved by the campus-level committee established under Section 11.251.

(c) A school district may use district-wide staff development developed and approved through the district-level decision process under Section 11.251.

(d) The staff development may:

(1) include training in:

(A) technology;

(B) conflict resolution; and

(C) discipline strategies, including classroom management, district discipline policies, and the student code of conduct adopted under Section 37.001 and Chapter 37;

(2) include training that:

(A) relates to instruction of students with disabilities; and

(B) is designed for educators who work primarily outside the area of special education; and

(3) include instruction as to what is permissible under law, including opinions of the United States Supreme Court, regarding prayer in public school.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 396, § 2.06, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 766, § 1, eff. June 13, 2001; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 495, § 1.

§ 37.001. STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT. (a) The board of trustees of an independent school district shall, with the advice of its district-level committee established under Subchapter F, Chapter 11, adopt a student code of conduct for the district. The student code of conduct must be posted and prominently displayed at each school campus or made available for review at the office of the campus principal. In addition to establishing standards for student conduct, the student code of conduct must:

(1) specify the circumstances, in accordance with this subchapter, under which a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or disciplinary alternative education program;

(2) specify conditions that authorize or require a principal or other appropriate administrator to transfer a student to a disciplinary alternative education program;

(3) outline conditions under which a student may be suspended as provided by Section 37.005 or expelled as provided by Section 37.007;

(4) specify whether consideration is given to self-defense as a factor in a decision to order suspension, removal to a disciplinary alternative education program, or expulsion;

(5) provide guidelines for setting the length of a term of:

(A) a removal under Section 37.006; and

(B) an expulsion under Section 37.007; and

(6) address the notification of a student's parent or guardian of a violation of the student code of conduct committed by the student that results in suspension, removal to a disciplinary alternative education program, or expulsion.

(b) Repealed by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1055, § 30.

(c) Once the student code of conduct is promulgated, any change or amendment must be approved by the board of trustees.

(d) Each school year, a school district shall provide parents notice of and information regarding the student code of conduct.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.  
Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1015, § 2, eff. June 19, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1055, § 4, 30, eff. June 20, 2003.

§ 39.094. USE OF AWARDS. (a) In determining the use of a monetary award received under this subchapter, a school or district shall give priority to academic enhancement purposes. The award may not be used for any purpose related to athletics, and it may not be used to substitute for or replace funds already in the regular budget for a school or district.

(b) The campus-level committee established under Section 11.253 shall determine the use of the funds awarded to a school under this subchapter. The professional staff of the district shall determine the use of the funds awarded to the school district under this subchapter.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, § 1, eff. May 30, 1995.