



SB 130 Extended Summary
February 25, 2008

“Innovation Schools Act of 2008”

Overview

Allows individual schools and school districts to apply for designation as an Innovation School (single school), District of Innovation (all district schools), or Innovation School Zone (multiple district schools). Those granted innovation status would be exempt from a majority of state statutes and regulations, including in the areas of finance and budgeting, curriculum, length of the school day, and hiring and personnel issues. CSAP testing, NCLB, and participation in PERA could not be waived. Stated intent is to provide more autonomy and flexibility for individual schools and principals to help them better meet the needs of their unique student population.

How It Works

School-Initiated Innovation Plan

- An individual school or a group of schools can develop an Innovation Plan and apply to the local school board to become an Innovation School (single school) or an Innovation School Zone (multiple schools).
- The board must review the Innovation Plan and either approve or reject it within 60 days after receiving it.
 - If a school board rejects the plan, they must provide a written explanation of the rationale for their decision.
 - If its Innovation Plan is rejected, a school(s) may reapply to the school board at any time and for unlimited number of times.
- If the school board approves the Innovation Plan, it may apply to the State Board to receive designation as a District of Innovation.

School Board-Initiated Innovation Plan

- A school board can initiate an Innovation Plan.
- School boards are required to ensure that every school impacted by the Innovation Plan has the chance to participate in the creation of the Plan.
- Any Innovation Plan approved or developed by the local school board must be submitted to the State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education.
 - In submitting the Plan, districts can seek designation as a District of Innovation
- Within 60 days of receipt, State Board of Education must review the proposed Plan and make any suggestions regarding necessary changes or addition.
- Plans must be approved unless they are found to be financially unfeasible or would likely reduce student achievement. Written explanation must be provided if State Board rejects the Plan.
- If its plan is rejected by the State Board, a district may reapply at any time and for an unlimited number of times.

Required Components of Innovation Plans

Every Innovation Plan for a single school, regardless of whether it's developed by a school or school board, must include the following:

- Statement of school's mission & why being granted innovation designation would help achieve the mission
- Description of the innovations the school would implement
- List of programs & policies that would be affected by the identified innovations & description of how they would be affected
- The research-based educational program the school would implement
- Length of school day and year at the school
- Student promotion & graduation policies to be implemented at the school
- The school assessment plan
- Proposed budget
- Proposed staffing plan
- Expected student academic improvements if granted innovation designation
- Estimates of cost savings and increased efficiencies
- Evidence that a majority of administrators, teachers, and School Advisory Council consents to application of Plan
- Statement of the level of support for the plan among students, parents, community members, and other school employees
- Description of statutes, regulations, and district policies that would need to be waived to implement identified innovations
- Description of any provision of the current collective bargaining unit that would need to be waived

A Plan for an Innovation School Zone (multiple schools) must include all the above information and also:

- How proposed innovations will be coordinated to ensure better results than if each school enacted them alone

Suggested Innovations

In creating an Innovation Plan, school boards are encouraged to consider innovations including exit exams, end-of-course exams, student portfolios, measuring the number of students simultaneously earning a H.S. diploma and CTE certificate, teacher recruitment/training/professional development practices, performance evaluations, compensation, and counseling for students as part of transition from H.S. to higher education or workforce,

These are all suggested innovations; none are required to be in an Innovation Plan.

Waivers of Statute and Regulations

If the State Board approves the Innovation Plan, they must waive all identified statutes and regulations in the Plan, with the exception of:

- Prohibition of student participation in secret fraternities & sororities
- PERA
- CSAP testing
- SARs
- NCLB requirements

A district's level of funding under the School Finance Act and categorical funding levels shall not be impacted.

A school board may request new waivers from the State Board once their Plan has been approved, but they must demonstrate that a majority of teachers, administrators, and School Advisory Committee members of the school(s) in question approve the request(s).

Collective Bargaining

- Upon designation by the State Board of Education as a District of Innovation, a district can seek to waive provisions of their collective bargaining agreement. These desired waivers must have been included in the Innovation Plan submitted to and approved by the State Board.
- Conditions for waiving collective bargaining:
 - Approval by at least 60% of the bargaining unit members employed at Innovation Schools in the district.
 - If less than 60% approve, a district may remove that school(s) from its Innovation Plan.
 - Any member of a collective bargaining unit that is employed by an Innovation School may request a transfer to another public school within the district. The school board must make every reasonable effort to accommodate the request.

Review of Innovation Programs

- 3 years after approving an Innovation Plan, and then every 3 years after that, the local school board must review the performance of every district Innovation School to determine whether it's meeting the goals identified in the Plan.
- School board may revise Innovation Plan as necessary with consent of the majority of teachers, administrators, and School Advisory Council members employed at each Innovation School.
- If review finds that Innovation School performance is inadequate, school board may revoke that School's innovation status.

Reporting Requirements

Beginning 3/1/10 and for each year thereafter, the State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education must report to the Governor and to the Senate and House Education Committees a report regarding districts of innovation. Report must include the number of Districts of Innovation and number of Innovation Schools, overview of implemented innovations, academic performance of students served, and recommendations for legislative changes to Innovation Program.