

Innovation in Education
(Procedures for Establishment and Review of
Innovation Schools and Innovation School Zones)

A. Review by school accountability committee

Prior to submission of an application to the Board of Education, the innovation school applicant shall submit the application to the school accountability committee for review and comment. If the application is to become an innovation school zone, the applicant shall submit the application to each school accountability committee within the proposed zone for review and comment. The school accountability committee(s) shall have 60 days to review the proposal.

NOTE: This step is optional. However, state law requires applicants to provide evidence that a majority of any school accountability committee(s) support the application to become an innovation school or innovation school zone (see paragraph C.6.b. below.)

B. Date for submission of application

Applications will be accepted prior to August 1st for school(s) beginning the following academic year. However, the Board and the applicant may mutually waive this deadline. Applications are to be submitted to the Board of Education.

C. Contents of the application

In accordance with state law, the application to become an innovation school or innovation school zone shall include:

1. Mission

Provide a statement of the school's mission and why designation as an innovation school or innovation school zone would enhance the school's ability to achieve its mission.

2. Innovations

Describe the innovations the school or school zone would implement. If the application is to become an innovation school, indicate whether the school will operate as a community school, in accordance with the requirements of state law.

3. Affected programs, policies and operational documents

List the programs, policies and operational documents within the school or school zone that would be affected by the identified innovations and the manner in which they would be affected. These may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. the research-based educational program the school or school zone would implement;
- b. the length of school day and school year at the school or school zone;

- c. the student promotion and graduation policies to be implemented at the school or school zone;
- d. the assessment plan for the school or school zone;
- e. the proposed budget for the school or school zone; and
- f. the proposed staffing plan for the school or school zone.

4. Academic performance

Identify the improvements in academic performance the school or school zone expects to achieve in implementing its identified innovations.

5. Cost savings and efficiencies

Provide an estimate of the cost savings and increased efficiencies, if any, the school or school zone expects to achieve in implementing its identified innovations.

6. Support

- a. Provide evidence that a majority of the administrators and teachers employed at each school consent to designation as an innovation school or school zone.
- b. Provide evidence that a majority of the school accountability committee at each school consent to designation as an innovation school or innovation school zone.
- c. Provide a statement of the level of support for designation as an innovation school or innovation school zone, including input from school employees other than teachers and administrators; students and parents of students enrolled in the school(s); and the community surrounding the school(s).
- d. If the application is to become an innovation school zone, the statement of support shall include specific input regarding the selection of schools included in the innovation school zone and input regarding the strategies and procedures that would be used to implement and integrate the innovations within the schools.

7. Waivers

- a. Provide a description of any statutory sections or any regulatory or district policy requirements that would need to be waived for the school or school zone to implement its identified innovations.

NOTE: To obtain a waiver from state law, the district must first obtain designation as a "district of innovation" from the State Board of Education. If approved as a district of innovation, the State Board shall waive statutes or rules specified in the district's innovation plan, except for those statutes or rules that cannot be waived under the Act, if the State Board determines that the waivers would enhance educational opportunity, standards and quality, and are fiscally feasible.

- b. Provide a description of any provision of the collective bargaining agreement(s) in effect for the personnel at the school or school zone that would need to be waived for the school or school zone to implement its identified innovations.

NOTE: To obtain a waiver from any provision of the collective bargaining agreement(s) in effect, the district must first obtain designation as a "district of innovation" from the State Board of Education. If approved as a district of innovation and before any provision of the collective bargaining agreement is waived, sixty percent (60%) of the members of the collective bargaining unit employed at the innovation school or schools must approve the waiver(s) by means of a secret ballot.

8. Additional information

Provide any additional information that supports the request to become an innovation school or innovation school zone. A plan for creating an innovation school zone shall also include:

- a. A description of how innovations in the schools would be integrated to achieve results that would be less likely to be accomplished in each school working alone.
- b. An estimate of the economies of scale that would be achieved by innovations implemented jointly by the schools within the innovation school zone.

D. Submission procedures

No application fee will be charged by the Board.

The applicant must provide two original copies of the completed application printed single-sided on white paper, not stapled.

E. Incomplete application

If the application is incomplete, the Board will request additional information from the applicant and give the applicant a reasonable opportunity to provide additional information to the Board for review. The parties may mutually agree to waive any deadlines during the application process, including extending the deadline for Board consideration of the application.

F. Decision on the application

The Board shall make a decision, by resolution, on the application to become an innovation school or innovation school zone in a regular or special meeting. The Board's decision shall be made within 60 days after receipt of the official application, unless the parties have mutually agreed in writing to extend this deadline.

If the Board denies the plan, it shall provide a written explanation of the basis for its denial.

A new innovation school or innovation school zone may be approved for a period of 3 academic years.

NOTE: The Act does not prescribe a time period for approval, but does require the Board to review the performance of an innovation school or innovation school zone at least once every three years (see paragraph I. below.)

G. Amending the application

If the Board denies the application, the applicant shall have 30 days to amend the application and resubmit it to the Board. The Board will then have 60 days to make a decision on the amended application.

NOTE: The Act requires the Board to make its initial decision within 60 days of receipt of the application, but does not prescribe any other timelines.

If the application is denied again, the Board's decision shall be final and no further appeal or amendments may be submitted.

H. Negotiations

All negotiations between the Board and an approved innovation school or innovation school zone shall be concluded by and all terms agreed upon no later than _____ days after the Board resolution approving the innovation school or innovation school zone.

I. Review

The Board shall review the level of performance of the innovation school or innovation school zone within three years after the Board's approval of the plan and every three years thereafter. The Board's review shall include, but not be limited to, a determination whether the innovation school or innovation school zone is achieving or making adequate progress toward achieving the academic performance results identified in its innovation plan.

If the Board determines the academic performance of students enrolled in the innovation school or innovation school zone is not improving at a sufficient rate, the Board may revoke the innovation status of the school or school zone or remove the underperforming school or schools from the innovation school zone.

The Board reserves the right to request information from an innovation school or innovation school zone and/or to review the performance of an innovation school or

innovation school zone at any time. In addition, the Board reserves the right to revoke the innovation status or remove a school from an innovation school zone at any time and for any reason deemed sufficient by the Board.

J. Revisions to innovation plan

Once approved, the Board may revise the innovation plan in collaboration with the innovation school or innovation school zone. Revisions may include, but not be limited to, reviewing identified waivers of any collective bargaining agreement.

Any revision to the innovation plan shall require the consent of the majority of teachers and administrators employed at the innovation school or innovation school zone as well as the consent of a majority of each school accountability committee. Revision may also require the approval of members of the collective bargaining unit employed at the school(s), in accordance with state law.

Approved: April 9, 2020