



Education Law & Policy Brief Journal

Districts of Innovation: A Policy Brief of the Latest Effort to Re/Empower Local Control of Texas Public Schools

Lynn Hemmer & Scott Elliff
Department of Educational Leadership Curriculum & Instruction, Texas
A&M University- Corpus Christi

Local school boards have long been considered “a key mechanism in the mutually dependent relationship between education and democracy” (Resnick & Bryant, 2008, pg. 2), so much so that local control of public schools is valued by over half of Americans who believe that control authority should rest with locally-elected school boards (Bushaw & Calderon, 2016). Yet, through decades of standards, accountability and test-reforms championed as a means for schools to achieve equity and improve student and teacher performance, local school boards gradually yielded policy-making discretion to federal and state legislatures, businesses, and bureaucracies (Erickson, 2014; Fusarelli, 2009; Hadderman, 1988).

Editors



Professor and Associate
Dean for Academic
Affairs, Educational
Administration &
Human Resource
Development



Professor and
Department Head,
Educational
Administration &
Human Resource
Development



Ph.D. in Educational
Administration,
Preparing Academic
Leaders Program
Coordinator

The Purpose and the Research Questions

In 2015, the Texas Legislature returned some power to local school boards, albeit only to certain school districts. Passed by the 84th Legislature in House Bill 1842, traditional independent school districts, so long as they have an acceptable academic accountability rating, may now pursue a District of Innovation (DOI) designation, thus affording them flexibility by way of specific exemptions from administrative regulations and statutory provisions.

To date, popular exemptions claimed by the over 650 districts with a DOI designation are those pertaining to first day of instruction (637), teacher certification (558), probationary contract period (307), class size (285), teacher contracts (232), length of instructional day (198) and designation of campus behavior coordinators (133) (Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2017). Other exemptions claimed by fewer districts include those pertaining to teacher preparation and planning time, interdistrict student transfers, discipline alternative education programs, staff development, and school district depositories.

While the list above is not inclusive of all exemptions available to districts, given the freedom and flexibility of exemption choices, conventional wisdom holds that school boards will regain some local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for their students.

Current research on student achievement acknowledges or analyzes existing local control flexibility typically through the lens of school and/or community reform efforts (e.g. Bulkley & Henig, 2015; Vasquez Heilig, Ward, Weisman, & Cole, 2014). However, to date, there has been little discussion as to whether specific waiver mechanisms, such as a DOI designation, presents a real opportunity for districts to foster improved academic outcomes for students or how the success of the DOI initiative will be determined so that “best practices” can be applied to other districts in the state and beyond.

While policy studies are typically segmented into stages of the policy process such as implementation, analysis and evaluation (Fowler, 2013), this policy brief takes a particular look at policy by providing a critical synthesis product of the inauguration of the DOI designation in Texas. There certainly is an urge to jump to study policy implementation, analysis or evaluation; however, the DOI designation in Texas is new and still too embryonic to undergo a full evaluation at this time. In time, there will be a need to determine fully the effectiveness of DOI as a matter of policy. For that, the overall strategy for policy implementation should take analysis and evaluation into consideration. Such analysis will require development of multiple measures to gauge the impact of the DOI designation on academic improvement at both the micro (classroom, campus, and district) level, as well as the macro (state system) level (McLaughlin, 1987). For now, this policy brief offers a first look at the different manifestations of DOI designations that may occur across school districts against a backdrop of the historical trend of local control in Texas.

The Ebb and Flow between State and Local Control in Texas

To better understand the nuances surrounding school districts adopting a DOI designation, it is important to understand how local control has changed over time amidst an array school reform initiatives. Following Brent Edwards and DeMatthews' (2014) lead in which they characterized broad trends in education decentralization in the United States in the post-WWII period, we provide an historical account of the local control trend and trajectory in Texas. This historical account, by its very nature, does more than tell us about shifts in local control, it provides a context from which to explore the manifestation of DOI designations within the contested arena between local and state agendas.

Shifts in decision-making and control of public schools have been a dynamic factor in Texas since the 19th century. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2004), following the Civil War, the Reconstruction-era Constitution of 1869 provided the most highly-centralized framework ever imposed for public schools in Texas, vesting statewide power in a state superintendent appointed by the governor and a three-member State Board of Education comprised of the governor, state superintendent, and comptroller. Just nine years later, this highly centralized governance apparatus was abolished entirely. Over the next 70 years, various structures for local and state governance of public schools were implemented, culminating in the adoption of the sweeping Gilmer-Akin Act in 1949, which established the TEA, an elected State Board of Education, and an appointed Commissioner of Education.

Following the adoption of the Gilmer-Akin Act, the Texas Education Code (TEC) was revised and modified during nearly every subsequent legislative session. In 1995, the 74th Legislature passed Senate Bill 1, constituting a complete rewrite of the TEC. As a result, many state regulations pertaining to public education were eliminated or transferred to local school boards, and local control was further increased through the establishment of the charter school and home rule provisions (TEA, 2004). Within just a few years, partly in response to the requirements of the No Child

Tipping Point

This policy brief covers three areas of research: (a) the ebb and flow over time between state and local control, specifically in Texas; (b) the emergence of the innovation designation; and (c) the deregulation of traditional school districts. Next, Texas school district evidence related to the DOI designation is explored, highlighting how districts rationalize using these exemptions to improve the technical core of the profession—teaching and learning. Finally, practice implications and policy recommendations are presented.

Left Behind Act of 2001, the Texas Legislature steadily returned to the state level much of the decision making and control related to public schools in order to meet federal mandates for assessment, accountability, and teacher certification.

This shift of authority for public schools in Texas from local communities to Austin, the State Capital, eventually resulted in a strong push-back from educators and parents as the 21st century dawned. In 2006, the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA), SHW Group (one of the nation's leading architecture, engineering and planning firms dedicated to the design of learning environments) and 35 public school superintendents representing a student population of 1.2 million, convened as the Public Education Visioning Institute, and described as "a community of learners to create a new vision for public education in Texas" (TASA, 2008, pg. 1). Working over a 21-month period, the resulting *Creating a New Vision for Public Education Texas: A Work in Progress for Conversation and Further Development* was published with the intent to "frame issues that will eventually lead to strategic actions at the local level and in governmental capitols" (p. 3). Among the major conceptual themes of the document was *Saying No to Remote Control*. This section of the report highlights how federal and state education policy had resulted in such an uneven balance of power:

The shift in power in setting education policy from the local community to the state and federal government has resulted in a system where schools feel more accountable to the Legislature than to their students and their communities. The school district's role has been relegated to one of compliance, and the local community has been denied the opportunity to make the more important decisions and choices regarding the education of the children and youth who live there. A more balanced

SAYING NO TO REMOTE CONTROL

The shift in power in setting education policy from the local community to the state and federal government has resulted in a system where schools feel more accountable to the Legislature than to their students and their communities.

(Texas Association of School Administrators, 2008)

and reinvigorated state-local partnership is needed to create the type of schools that can best provide the learning experiences to help students succeed in today's world (pg. 3).

As a direct result of the work underpinning *Creating a New Vision for Public Schools in Texas*, Senate Bill 1557 of the 82nd Legislature established the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium to inform the Governor, the Legislature, and Commissioner of Education concerning methods for transforming Texas public schools through the development of new learning standards, assessments, and accountability systems. Among four principles identified in the work of the Consortium was organizational transformation and a restoration of local control. The Consortium has since grown to include 85 associate districts.

In 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842, establishing the DOI designation. This designation represents the most recent opportunity for Texas school boards to assert more control locally and, ostensibly, for districts to benefit from deregulation in the same manner as Texas' open enrollment charter schools. According to the TEA, the DOI designation exempts a district from certain regulations in the Code that "inhibit the goals of the district as outlined in the innovation plan" (TEA website, 2017, first para).

Emergence of Innovation Designation

Across the United States, the rise of innovation designations for schools and districts is well documented. For instance, as part of the 2010 Race to Top Initiative, Hawaii's Zones of School Innovation targeted support for struggling schools in rural or remote, hard-to-staff areas that served the largest population of native Hawaiian and economically-disadvantaged students in the state. In 2011, the Washington Legislature established an application process to create a program titled Innovation Schools and Zones to encourage districts to create new programs, with a primary focus on the arts, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (A-STEM). Kentucky, in 2012, enacted House Bill 37 to provide districts the opportunity to apply to the Kentucky Board of Education for exemption from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions, allowing these districts to experiment with performance-based learning, expanded learning time, and integrating technology.

However, in many ways, the designation of innovation has little precise meaning or ascertainable value in itself, especially when surrounded by a free market political-economic environment. Accounts of earlier educational reform efforts (circa 1980s) indicate that policy makers embraced innovation by focusing on decentralizing the

the decision-making process as a means to improve the quality of education (Hansen, 1988; Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Despite governmental education agencies clearly identifying the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and thus relying on “the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means through which improvement might be stimulated and sustained” (Malen, Ogawa, & Kranz, 1990, pg. 290), by the 1990s, local authority was being eroded with the advent of a nationwide commitment to standards-based-reform.

In an accountability era that required states to develop content and performance standards for K-12 schools, innovation became more closely associated with corrective actions when a school or district failed to meet adequate yearly progress goals. Prescriptive activities, under a guise of innovation, allowed schools to use federal funds to pay for tutoring or other supplemental educational services, replace key school staff (teachers and/or administrators), implement new curricula, or reopen as a charter school.

Fast forward to a time when public education is expected to advance 21st century goals that include mastery of information, embedded knowledge and understanding, and the advanced use of technology in society, all while mired in political and economic issues and challenges of governance. As a result, descriptions of innovation emerged based on what was happening in a specific geographical area/location, though not necessarily in context

of education. Katz and Wagner (2014) from the Brookings Institute, described innovative districts as “geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators and accelerators. They are also physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired and offer mixed use housing, office, and retail” (pg. 1), creating urbanized, vibrant environments. Certainly, educational institutions are included as part of what Katz and Wagner call the innovation ecosystem – “a synergistic relationship between people, firms and place that facilitates idea generation and accelerates commercialization” (pg. 10); however, there is no mention of the role regulation and administrative exemptions have in innovation.

It appears that while educational policy makers at the state level have capitalized on the positive connotation the term innovation carries, in a practical sense it has come to mean different things to different states in terms of function when connected to public education. Certainly, the designation of DOI may serve as an incentive for school districts to market themselves as forward thinking, all the while providing the state a pass for any consequences if a district fails in its efforts. With mixed messages about intent, clear policy integration mechanism concerning DOIs in education have effectively transferred the meaning of innovation to that of a derivative of policy deregulation.

Deregulation in Public Education: *What is the Compelling Case?*

The level (federal, state, or local) where decision-making and control are concentrated in the public education arena largely influence deregulation. Efforts to deregulate public schools over the past several decades have mimicked similar actions in other governmental and nongovernmental entities, such as transportation and telecommunications. As decision-making and control have shifted from federal and state governments to local communities, structures such as charter schools, vouchers, and alternative certification for teachers have emerged. Such policy changes were made possible largely due to a political and economic environment that supports deregulation, decentralization, and marketplace competition (Dorsey & Plucker, 2016).

A chicken-or-egg question arises out of the processes, limitations, and opportunities presented by the “earned autonomy” nature of the DOI designation: Does deregulation spur academic improvement, or is academic improvement a precondition for the “reward” of deregulation?

First, to be eligible for the DOI designation in Texas, a district must have already met state accountability standards. Districts rated “needs improvement” under the current accountability system are ineligible for exemption from regulations that otherwise might have been identified as impediments to innovation and, presumably, improvement.

Second, the list of Code requirements eligible for consideration is limited to issues that are largely organizational or structural in nature (calendar, class size, purchasing requirements, and the like), and specifically excludes items that directly impact student performance, most notably curriculum and assessment.

Some have noted that the designation has little to do with spurring innovation and that a better term might be “District of Exemption” (Corpus Christi Caller Times, May 2, 2017). As an example, the late-August uniform start date was established for reasons having little to do with teaching or learning. The requirement was imposed by the Texas Legislature in 2006 as a compromise to appease the state tourism industry after heavy lobbying and a state comptroller report which estimated that Texas lost \$790 million annually in economic benefit by ringing the school bell too early August (Ayala, 2015). The exemption from the uniform start date is, however, one of the most sought exemptions for the DOI designation, cited as a means to provide more instructional time before the fixed dates for annual state assessment in the spring.

Finally, the value of deregulation as a means to improve academic outcomes for students is worthy of consideration. Results of a wide range of studies have been mixed and largely inconclusive, especially research concerned with charter schools—the leading example of public school deregulation. Charter school

research is highly partisan. Take for instance the 2004 American Federation of Teachers' (AFT) report by Nelson, Rosenberg, and Van Meter, which claimed that some charter schools underperformed in math and reading when compared to traditional public schools. Given AFT's opposition to the charter school reform, these findings were challenged by preeminent school choice researcher/advocates, such as the pro-choice Center for Educational Reform (Scott & Villavicencio, 2009).

Despite the ensuing debate and the mixed messages being sent about charter school achievement research, Scott and Villavicencio reminded us that in 2008 both the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates used expanding charter schools as a political platform. In sum, politics is among the factors influencing the outcome of studies to date on the effects of deregulation in public education. According to Dorsey and Plucker (2016) and Saltman (2014), arriving at specific research-based conclusions about the effectiveness of deregulation efforts has proven difficult, given the politically charged environment in which those efforts have been implemented, along with the difficulty of determining the effects of specific reforms.

The Nature of Linkages between Exemptions and Rationales

The exemption provisions provided by the DOI designation lie at the nexus of educational policy, broader socio-economic aims, and local control objectives. These provisions are critical to ensure consideration of local control in its proper context, and to prevent governmental overreach. Each school district seeking a DOI designation prioritizes rules and regulations that potentially may conflict with or hinder district goals and objectives. Chosen exemptions may be the result of a particular or peculiar situation, requiring district jurisdiction to regulate the conduct.

As noted above, TEC §25.0811, which prohibits school districts from beginning instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August, is the most widely used exemption thus far. As documented in local innovation plans, districts typically rationalize this exemption as a means to align calendars and school start dates with local partners such as community colleges, universities, and technology training centers, as well as with the state assessment calendar. For instance, in addition to other benefits, Dallas ISD (2017) claimed that by beginning the school earlier may allow for an "opportunity for students to take advantage of the full array of summer dual-credit offerings at institutions of higher education" (pg. 4). Other districts focused on seeking the opportunity to provide a more balanced instructional calendar and opportunities for re-teaching and remediation in advance of the fixed dates each spring for state assessments.

The Nature of Linkages between Exemptions and Rationales (*Contd.*)

For example, Presidio ISD's (2017) plan includes the statement that "by having the flexibility in beginning instruction earlier than the 4th Monday of August, students will be able to have a semester that is more conducive to learning the required curriculum, has more balanced days of instruction, and allows for better preparation for graduation requirements" (pg. 7).

To a lesser degree, districts have sought exemptions from other requirements in the Code. The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) (2017) shows that fewer than 50 school districts thus far have claimed exemptions from Chapter 37, Discipline, Law and Order, specifically TEC, §37.001, Student Code of Conduct. These exemptions include allowing school districts to expel students from the discipline alternative education program (DAEP) for persistent misbehavior and to provide flexible grouping of students at the DAEP. Current law limits expulsion of students while at the DAEP to those with serious misbehavior; yet districts are claiming persistent misbehavior is detrimental to the learning environment and, as such, have DOI plans calling for the ability to expel students in the DAEP for persistent misbehavior. Only one district, Lamesa ISD (2017), offered expelled students a way to remain engaged in the education system by providing the students the opportunity to attend Saturday school for the term of expulsion to gain or maintain as many credits as possible during the period of expulsion.

Current law also requires separation of students less than 10 years of age from older students at the DAEP. For the DOI designation, some districts rationalize the use of flexible groupings when all grade levels are assigned to DAEP, such as elementary students with junior high students, or junior high students with high school students, and/or combining in-school suspension with DAEP assignments, all in attempts to better utilize existing staff and facilities.

Implications

In one sense, the emergence of the designation of DOI for public school districts reflects the economic, demographic, and political changes associated with a competitive marketplace. For instance, one result of two decades of federal and state policies promoting charter schools is the perception that charter schools have a competitive advantage over traditional public schools. By design, they are exempt from many of the regulations and procedures that traditional schools must follow. The U.S. Department of Education (2004) even went so far as to identify the chartering of schools as an important new opportunity for education innovation.

Implications (*Contd.*)

Questions then arise as to how and why Texas education policy makers embraced the DOI designation to mean state-supported local control over budget, governance, and scheduling for traditional public school districts, thus mirroring similar flexibility provided already to charter schools. In recent years, there has been legislative initiative to uncap the number of charter schools in Texas, as well as division over school choice. The legislated DOI designation may be an acknowledgement of the unfair practice allowing some public schools and districts (charters) to operate freely from stringent regulations, while not allowing others (traditional) the same opportunity. In fact, the passage of the law followed closely on the heels of a failed, two-year effort by the Dallas ISD to achieve “home rule” status enacted via SB 1 in 1995 (Raise Your Hand Texas, 2017). The home rule law allows school districts to restructure and to create a charter that would provide for a new governance and managements structure for a school district, approved by a supermajority of district voters (TEC, Chapter 12). Interestingly, Dallas ISD’s DOI plan includes only two exemptions: school start date and teacher certification (2017).

Even with a move to level the regulation playing field, not all Texas districts have the right to pursue a DOI designation; those that have yet to meet accountability performance standards are excluded. According to the TEA (2016) school district accountability information, 57 districts rated improvement

To date, data collection regarding which districts are seeking a DOI designation and which exemptions are being claimed is being conducted by the TEA and TASB. However, there are no processes in place for evaluating the effectiveness of any of these innovative exemptions, or any substantive collection of lessons learned that could inform future policy and practice. In fact, other than the TEA accepting a DOI plan developed in accordance with statutory process requirements, and collecting data on the types of exemptions sought, the TEA is not involved in determining effectiveness of the plans. The Agency’s primary involvement is that the Commissioner of Education may revoke the DOI designation if the district’s accountability rating falls below the acceptable performance standard for two consecutive years. If a district fails three years in a row, the Commissioner must revoke the DOI designation.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

Our recommendations are three-fold:

- Make the DOI designation available to those districts that are in the most need of new ideas and less stringent regulations, such as districts with campuses designated as priority schools and schools in need of improvement. Penalizing low performing schools with continued stringent regulations does little to promote or create conditions that foster change and improved academics. When the opportunity to operate under the same po-

Policy and Practice Recommendations (*Conts.*)

Policy is not afforded to all districts, this practice lends itself “forms of racism, classism and ableism” (Gutierrez & Waitoller, 2017, pg. 6). As such, we appeal to policymakers to expand the opportunity for a DOI designation to include low performing school participation. After years of punitive reform initiatives (e.g. reconstitutions, restructuring), these schools need equal access to policy opportunity and support. Following this policy recommendation, districts with schools in need of improvement typically undergo a thorough analysis and develop a plan for improvement that includes a comprehensive package of interventions. This analysis should also identify regulations that prevent these districts from trying bold and transformative initiatives.

- Develop a more thorough analysis of the exemptions sought by DOIs--beyond simple counting and cataloging. This is imperative. In practice, such analysis should go beyond simply ensuring that districts maintained an acceptable accountability rating while designated as DOI. Analysis should include a what works, not just in terms of improved academics, but especially as it relates to the instrumental aspect of the policy. While continuing a “hands-off” regulatory position and assuring the primacy of local control, the TEA should evaluate the effectiveness of the exemptions and innovations sought as an opportunity to learn how specific measures actually impact teaching and learning across the state. Only then can the term “innovation” be used legitimately to describe the actions taken by districts who are seeking exemptions from statutory requirements.
- Ensure that any DOI exemption will not curtail the rights of teachers, students and/or parents. Concerning to us is the vagueness to which some districts have rationalized the necessity of a particular exemption and the lack of oversight regarding local innovation plans. We recommend that TEA should begin plan monitoring during the initial years of DOI designation. It is essential to know how plan methods are being implemented before checking whether anticipated outcomes are being achieved. Responses to the exemption grab (to date more than 650 districts utilize the DOI designation) make clear the need for some oversight, if not a policy monitoring effort. As a case in point, TEC, §21.401 states that a contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service. An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service. Several local innovation plans (e.g. Dimmitt ISD, Godley ISD) seek to reduce the teacher contract days. While some plans (e.g. Gunter ISD, Harts Bluff ISD) explain that the daily rate of teacher salaries will increase so that yearly salaries are not affected, others do not (e.g. Godley ISD, Normangee ISD). A good faith reason should not be the driver for allowing an exemption. The absence of a formal mechanism to track exemption rationales and practice can lead to ambiguity and perhaps the erosion of the rights of students, teachers and parents.

References

- Ayala, E. (2015, January 4). Texas school start date debate pits educators against tourism industry. *Dallas Morning News*. Retrieved from <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2015/01/04/texas-school-start-date-debate-pits-educators-against-tourism-industry>.
- Brent Edwards Jr., D., & DeMatthews, D. (2014). Historical Trends in Educational Decentralization in the United States and Developing Countries: A Periodization and Comparison in the Post-WWII Context. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(40), 1-36.
- Bulkley, K. E., & Henig, J. R. (2015). Local Politics and Portfolio Management Models: National Reform Ideas and Local Control. *Peabody Journal of Education* (0161956X), 90(1), 53-83.
- Bushaw, W. & Calderon, V. (2014). *PDK / Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools*. Retrieved from <http://pdkpoll2015.pdkintl.org/>.
- Editorial Board. (2017, May 2). The innovation CCISD needs is cooperation. *Corpus Christi Caller Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.caller.com/story/opinion/editorials/2017/05/02/innovation-ccisd-needs-working-together-common-good/101198778/>.
- Dallas Independent School District (2017). *District of innovation plan*. Retrieved from https://www.dallasisd.org/cms/lib/TX01001475/Centricity/Domain/17157/Local_Innovation_Plan_Final.pdf.
- Dimmitt Independent School District (2017). *Local innovation plan*. Retrieved from http://www.dimmittisd.net/vnews/display.v/ART/58418922e32fe?in_archive=1.
- Dorsey, D. T., & Plucker, J. A. (2016). Deregulation and the American education marketplace. *Peabody Journal of Education* 91(4), 424-440.
- Erickson, F. (2014). Scaling down: A modest proposal for practice - based Policy Research in Teaching. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 22(9), 1-9.
- Fusarelli, B. C. (2009). *The rising state: How state power is transforming our nation's schools*. Albany, New York: SUNY Press.
- Fowler, F. C. (2013). *Policy studies for educational leaders: An introduction* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Godley Independent School District (2017). *District of innovation plan*. Retrieved from <http://www.godleyisd.net/page.cfm?p=2619>.
- Gunter Independent School District (2017). *District of Innovation Plan*. Retrieved from http://www.gunterisd.org/cms/lib6/TX01917909/Centricity/Domain/544/GunterISD_DOIFinalPlan_12.12.16.pdf.

- Gutierrez, R. R., & Waitoller, F. R. (2017). Introduction to the special issue: Restructuring and resisting education reforms in Chicago's public schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(53), 1-11.
- Hadderman, M. L., & ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, E. O. (1988). *State vs. Local Control of Schools. ERIC Digest Series Number 24*.
- Hansen, K. H. (1988). Decentralizing education decision making: A policy framework. *The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory: Education Policy*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED301971.pdf>.
- Harts Bluff Independent School District (2017). *District of innovation plan*. Retrieved from https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/379/district_of_innovation-_harts_bluff_isd_approved_.pdf.
- Katz, B. & Wagner, J. (2014). The rise of innovation districts: A new geography of innovation in America. *Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings*. Retrieved from <https://c24215cec6c97b637db6-9c0895f07c3474f6636f95b6bf3db172.ssl.cf1.rackcdn.com/content/metro-innovation-districts/~media/programs/metro/images/innovation/innovationdistricts1.pdf>.
- Lamesa Independent School District (2017). *District of innovation plan*. Retrieved from http://www.lamesaisd.net/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=131106&type=d&pREC_ID=1151368.
- Malen, B., Ogawa, R. T., & Kranz, J. (1990). What do we know about site-based management: A case study of the literature—A call for research.” In W. H. Clune & J. F. White (Eds), *Choice and control in American education: The practice of choice, decentralization and school restructuring, Vol 2*, (pp. 289–342). London: Falmer Press.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1987). Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 171-178.
- Nelson, H., Rosenberg, B. & Van Meter, N. (2004). *Charter school achievement on the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress*. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.
- Normangee Independent School District (2017). *District innovation plan*. Retrieved from http://www.normangeeisd.org/262546_4.
- Presidio Independent School District (2017). *Local innovation plan, 2017-2018*. Retrieved from <http://www.presidio-isd.net/district-notice>.
- Raise Your Hand Texas (2017). *Local autonomy*. Retrieved from <http://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/advocacy/key-issues/local-autonomy/>.
- Resnick, M. A. & Bryant, A. L. (2008). School boards and the power of the public. In J. I. ad, R. Soder, & B. McDaniel (Eds), *Education and the making of a democratic people* (pp. 161-180). New York: Paradigm Publishers.
- Rosenberg, M. (2016, September / October). Mission: School transformation-collaboration is turning vision into reality. *Texas School Business*, LXIII(7), 14-15.
- Saltman, K. J. (2014). Neoliberalism and corporate school reform: Failure and creative destruction. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 36(4), 249-259.

- Scott, J. & Villavicencio, A. (2009). School context and charter school achievement: A framework for understanding the performance “Black Box”. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 84(2), 227-243. DOI: 10.1080/01619560902810161.
- Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) (2008). *Creating a new vision for public education in Texas: A work in progress for conversation and further development*. Retrieved from <https://www.tasanet.org/cms/lib/TX01923126/Centricity/Domain/111/workinprogress.pdf>.
- Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) (2017). *District of innovation*. Retrieved from <https://www.tasb.org/Services/Legal-Services/TASB-School-Law-eSource/Governance/Districts-of-Innovation.aspx>.
- Texas Education Agency Division of Communications (2004). *Sesquicentennial Handbook*. Texas Education Agency: Austin, Texas.
- Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2016). Texas accountability rating system. Retrieved from <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/account/index.html>.
- Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2017). *Districts of innovation*. Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/District_Initiatives/Districts_of_Innovation/.
- Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering towards utopia, a century of public school reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- U.S. Department of Education (2004). Successful charter schools. *Office of Innovation and Improvement*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/charter/report.pdf>.
- Vasquez Heilig, J., Ward, D. R., Weisman, E., & Cole, H. (2014). Community-based school finance and accountability: A new era for local control in education policy? *Urban Education*, 49(8), 871-894.

Education Law & Policy Brief Journal
Education Leadership Research Center (ELRC)
Texas A&M University

411 Harrington Tower, TAMU 4226
College Station, TX 77843-4226