

As is set forth in Policy 1005, Innovating for Achievement, Tacoma School District No. 10 supports creative and bold innovations that enhance school performance and student achievement as an essential part of meeting the benchmarks of its strategic plan. We encourage well-founded, data-driven and prudent innovations that offer choices for different learning styles so that all children will achieve academic excellence.”

As set forth in Policy 2010, the Board of Directors of the Tacoma School District shall strive to be on the leading edge of innovation among public schools in Washington. As identified in RCW 28A.300.550, innovation schools:

- (a) Provide students and parents with a diverse array of educational options;
- (b) Promote active and meaningful parent and community involvement and partnership with local schools;
- (c) Serve as laboratories for educational experimentation and innovation;
- (d) Respond and adapt to different styles, approaches, and objectives of learning;
- (e) Hold students and educators to high expectations and standards; and
- (f) Encourage and facilitate bold, creative, and innovative educational ideas.

Innovations approved of by the Board pursuant to Policy 2010 Innovation School Designation/Adoption. Tacoma Innovation Schools are afforded an extremely high degree of flexibility and autonomy. The flexibility and autonomy provided to Tacoma Innovation Schools by the Board is a comparable to the flexibility and autonomy provided to Charter Schools in Washington pursuant to Chapter 28A.710 RCW. This creative approach to learning and curriculum delivery comes with a rigorous system of accountability as outlined in Policy 1005, Innovating for Achievement. The clear intent of Tacoma Innovation Schools initiative is to provide school-level flexibility and autonomy in the following ways:

- The initiative provides teachers and principals with the flexibility to innovate and make decisions about staffing, curriculum, and learning opportunities to improve student achievement and outcomes as measured by the Board Adopted Performance matrix;
- The innovative schools to be have more flexibility in curricular decisions, budgeting, and hiring practices, as well as to offer more customized learning experiences for students.
- Pursuant to Chapter 28A.630 RCW and RCW 28A.300.550, innovative schools can request to be exempt from all other state statutes and rules applicable to school districts and school district boards of directors, for the purpose of allowing flexibility to innovate in areas such as scheduling, personnel, funding, and educational programs in order to improve student outcomes and academic achievement.

Innovation Schools: Areas of Autonomy and Flexibility

The following are the areas of autonomy and flexibility included in the Tacoma Innovation School model, and examples of strategies that applicants establishing Innovation Schools can consider when designing their initial prospectuses and innovation plans.

1. Curriculum and Assessment: Curriculum and assessment practices are structured to best meet students' learning needs. While acknowledging that Tacoma Innovation Schools are expected to administer all required state- and district-required assessments, these schools have the flexibility to best determine which school-based curricula and assessment practices will prepare students for state and district assessments. This could include:
 - School directed curriculum requirements; and
 - School directed professional development offerings.

2. Staffing: All staff members will remain employees of the District and will continue to be members of applicable bargaining units (for example, teachers will continue to be members of the Tacoma Education Association). The freedom to manage staff members as needed in order to create a unified school community, subject to approval by two-thirds of the existing teachers in an existing school applying to become an innovation school or negotiation of waivers/modifications to the collective bargaining agreement in a new school being established as an innovation school. This could include:
 - Establishing staffing patterns and creating job descriptions that best meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students;
 - Hiring staff that best fit the needs of the school, which may include exemptions from the existing displacement or reduction in force processes; and
 - All employees must maintain the appropriate certification for the assignment.

3. Budget: A per pupil financial allocation in which the school has complete discretion to spend funding in the manner that provides the best programs and services to students and their families. This could include:
 - A per pupil allocation, the sum of which is made up of specific funding components as defined by regulation; or
 - A specific dollar amount funding enhancement that is used to provide programming as a supplement to a current school or program funding model.

4. District Policies: The freedom to create a school's programs and policies, while being mindful of state and federal requirements. Each Tacoma Innovation School will request waivers in writing from any Board Policy that may be an inhibitor to their

ability to serve students. The Board of Directors will review these waivers a regular basis (aligned with the review of the schools performance).

5. Professional Development: Professional development activities are set according to the needs of the students, staff, and faculty of the school. This could include:
 - Modifying or transforming the structure and/or content of professional development activities to meet the specific needs of the school's student population, regardless of the district's professional development activities; and
 - Restructuring the daily schedule in order to fully integrate professional development into the daily collaboration of teachers within the school.
6. Facilities: Decisions about school district facilities are driven by the needs of the curriculum and instruction so as to maximize student achievement. Any modifications approved by the Board must meet all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. This could include:
 - The leasing and purchasing of non-traditional architectural space such as re-purposed warehouse and industrial space; and
 - Utilizing community resources and space.

Innovation Schools: Areas of Accountability

As set forth in the “Creativity and Accountability” section of Policy 1005, Innovating for Achievement, areas of accountability are built into the school plan so as to “ensure that the innovations are achieving their identified outcomes.” Areas of accountability will include:

- Compliance with the Board Adopted Innovation Performance Matrix; and
- Ensuring equitable access to programs for all student across the district

Cross References:	Policy 0100 Policy 0105 Policy 2010 Policy 2090	Commitment to Strategic Planning Innovating for Achievement Innovation School Designation/Adoption Instruction: Program Evaluation
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Legal References:	RCW 28A.320 RCW 28A.230 RCW 28A.300.550 Chapter 28A.630 RCW	Provisions Applicable to all Districts Compulsory Coursework and Activities Innovation Schools
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