

Clarendon CISD
District of Innovation Plan



**District of Innovation Plan
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INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, during Regular Session 2015, permits eligible Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code.

The adoption of this plan seeks to increase CCISD's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community by making educational decisions at the local level, which is the most effective way to support the innovation plan in our district.

LOCAL GUIDELINES

The District of Innovation Committee created this plan to provide the increased flexibility needed to enact the District Improvement Plan. Careful consideration was given to the selection of the exemptions contained within this plan. All were chosen to provide opportunities for Clarendon CISD to personalize and enhance learning for students.

This plan is specific to the exemptions as outlined. The district intends to follow the Texas Education Code (TEC) in all other areas. Any revisions or changes to the innovation plan that may arise will be brought before the District of Innovation Committee to explore the request. If the committee determines that a revision is needed, the innovation plan will then be taken back to the School Board for approval with the revisions.

Under HB 1842, districts may identify certain requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) "that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan..." The District Improvement Plan calls for innovative practices and opportunities for our students, and therefore CCISD seeks exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

- Uniform School Start Date
- Minimum Minutes of Instruction & Length of School Day
- Teacher Certification
- Contract Service Days
- Alternative Group Coverage Program (Added and Approved June 8, 2020)

TIMELINE

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|---|---|
| Board Resolution | December 12, 2016 |
| Public Hearing | December 12, 2016 |
| Appoint Innovative Plan Committee | December 12, 2016 |
| Develop Innovation Plan | January 11 & 25; February 15, 2017 |
| District Improvement Committee Approval-Public Hearing | February 15, 2017 |
| 30 Day Public Review (Website Posting) | February 17-March 18, 2017 |
| Board Action to Notify TEA Commissioner of Board Vote | February 16, 2017 |
| Board Action for Final Approval | March 28, 2017 |
| Notification of Approval to TEA Commissioner, Publish | March 29, 2017 |

TERM

The term of this Plan is for five years, beginning March 29, 2017, and ending March 29, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with TEC §12A.006 and §12A.008. The Committee will annually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modification to the Plan on or before August 1st of each year of implementation. Following adoption by the Board of Trustees, the Clarendon CISD District of Innovation Plan for District of Innovation designation will be reported to the Texas Education Agency.

INNOVATIONS

Uniform School Start Date – Calendar

(EB LEGAL) (TX Ed. Code 25.0811) (TX Ed. Code 25.0812)

Currently

Texas Education Code §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. Texas Education Code §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15th.

Proposed

It is the intent of Clarendon CISD to build and operate a calendar that best serves the instructional needs of our students and meets the needs of our community. The flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets these needs. This plan will allow a more balanced number of instructional days per semester and more instructional days prior to the state assessments given in early May.

The instructional calendar will not begin school any earlier than the 2nd Monday in August.

Minimum Minutes of Instruction and Length of School Day

(EC LEGAL & EB LEGAL) (TX Ed. Code 25.081) (TX Ed. Code 25.082)

Currently

House Bill 2610 signed into law during the Regular Session of the 84th Legislature in 2015 permits school districts to operate a full school year as defined by 75,600 minutes. Section §25.081 (e) of the bill defines a full instructional day as 420 total minutes.

Proposed

Exemption from the 7-hour/420-minute school day requirement would allow CCISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule whenever it is locally determined as beneficial to the district and its stakeholders to accommodate the unique needs of our students. The district would not be restricted to 6 early release days which is the maximum that can be requested under the existing early release waiver process. Exempting the district from the 7- hour school day requirement would give the district a significant amount of local control over scheduling without the fear of a loss of state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with the daily minute requirements.

The flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction will assist with personalizing learning to better meet individual needs. It also has the added benefit of allowing the possibility of an altered length of a school day, which may include a later start/early release time which will accommodate additional professional development/collaboration opportunities.

CCISD does not intend to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, while recognizing the certainty of unforeseen circumstances, early release days will be planned ahead of time and noted on the district calendar which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published and distributed to stakeholders in advance of the school year and continuously published using school media.

CCISD will meet or exceed the 75,600 minutes/year of instruction but will use these minutes with the flexibility outlined in the plan to account for the maximum instructional time while limiting the impact on parents and community.

Teacher Certification

(DBA LEGAL, DBA LOCAL, DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (TX Ed. Code 21.003)

Currently

Texas Education Code Section §21.003 (a) states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate of permit issued as provided by Subchapter B. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

Proposed CCISD's goal is to hire fully certified, highly qualified professionals to instruct our students and will continue to relentlessly pursue this goal. However, the current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Math, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM), Foreign Language, History, and English Language Arts courses.

In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of such course offerings, the district seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the district will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area for full and/or part time course loads. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas and afford more students the opportunity to take dual credit courses on campus, for example, if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

The principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a teacher to teach subject(s) out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the teacher possesses which would qualify this individual to teach this subject.

The Superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interest of the district to certify the individual. The Superintendent will notify the Board before beginning the assignment. The current process of hiring those eligible for Chapter 21 contracts will not change.

The District will establish Local Criteria, such as years of experience, qualifications, industry certifications, demonstration of successful working experience with students, and equal or similar out of state certification to qualify for a local (district) teaching certificate.

In addition, this exemption will afford the district the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations, ie...CTE courses (such as

welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.), if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses, or their quality of expertise would benefit the students in that area.

The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. The employee will be at-will.

Furthermore,

- Notifications of district teaching permits (local certification) shall not be necessary.
- Teacher certification waivers, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.
- Any employee hired under the local district teaching permit must comply with the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements outlined in the CCISD School Board policy for Personnel.
- Any employee hired under the local district teaching permit will be assigned a mentor teacher.
- Any employee hired under the local district teaching permit must be appraised according to the same teacher appraisal system outlined in district policies DNA and DNB (LOCAL).

The District would also like to honor candidates with Bachelor's degrees and certifications from bordering states as fully certified teachers eligible for a Texas Probationary teaching contract in our District and remain eligible for the period of time outlined in District policy DCA (LEGAL) for Probationary Certificate. This provision would mirror the DCA (LEGAL) policy term of one year with the District's option to extend two additional years.

Contract Service Days

(DC LEGAL, DCB LEGAL, DCB LOCAL, DEA LEGAL) (TX Ed. Code 21.401)

Currently

TEC §21.401 (b) states that an educator under a 10-month contract must provide 187 days of service.

Proposed

With the passage of §25.081 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. The determination of how many days are required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision, given the district does not reduce the annual pay of the employee's contract.

To allow flexibility in the contractual days for certified personnel, CCISD will:

- maintain the current salary schedule for all certified employees.
- consider annually the certified salary schedules as part of the regular budgeting process by the board.
- evaluate the number of contract days needed for certified staff in that school year and shall set the number of calendar work days, with the objective of reducing the days from 187 to not less than 182. The administrative staff will also annually determine the number of professional development days required and when or where they will be fulfilled on the calendar.
- not reduce the annual salary of certified staff, except in accordance with TEC§21.4021 (Furloughs) which the district is not seeking exemption.

AMENDMENT: Added and Approved on June 8, 2020 by Clarendon CISD Board of Trustees

Alternative Group Coverage Program
(Texas Education Code 22.004(i))

AMENDMENT TO CURRENT LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provision, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commission of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

Texas Education Code §22.004(i) Inhibits the Goals of the Local Innovation Plan

TEC §22.004(i) Group Health Benefits for School Employees states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC §22.004(b) after the date a district implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all district employees. This provision also prohibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees at a lower cost. This provision does not give the district the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees.

Exemption from Texas Education Code §22.004(i)

TEC §22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to TEC §12A.004 or the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309. Therefore, in order to have the option to offer additional benefits options to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs, the District proposes that the District of Innovation Plan be amended to exempt the district from the health insurance requirements in TEC §22.004(i).

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jarod Bellar, Superintendent
Larry Jeffers, High School Principal
Travis Victory, Jr High Principal
Mike Word, Elementary Principal
Jen Bellar, Federal Programs Director
Jenae Ashbrook, Counselor
Clint Conkin, Athletic Director
Buffie Smith, Librarian
Jenifer Pigg, JH ELAR Teacher
BJ Owens, 4th Grade Teacher
Tammie Johnston, Parent
Tanya Bell, Parent