

# CCISD District of Innovation Plan

Committee Voted 1/25/18

**Forward:** On September 25, 2017, the Calhoun County Board of Trustees voted to establish a committee to investigate the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation. Becoming a District of Innovation would allow CCISD to set aside identified Texas Education Codes that serve as impediments to CCISD serving our community most effectively. 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. . .” Each campus elected a faculty representative. Each campus nominated a community / parent representative. District and Board representatives served as facilitators or non-voting members.

## CCISD District of Innovation Committee:

Representing:	Members:
ATHL	Whitaker, Kellie
BRD Representative: Non Voting	Robles, Dominic
CHS ADMIN	Amason, Nicole
CHS Parent/ Community Representative	Bonuz, Sarita
CHS Teacher Representative	Wooldridge, Connie
Co-Facilitator: Non Voting	Hernandez, Maggie
Co-Facilitator: Non Voting	Taylor, Kelly
Executive Staff: Non Voting	Cowley, James/ Nichols, Larry
HJM ADMIN	O'Donnell, Tiffany
HJM Parent/ Community Representative	Carlyle, Danielle
HJM Teacher Representative	Cano, Irene
HOPE/ FLEX Parent/ Community Representative	James, Kim
HOPE/ FLEX Teacher Representative	Vera, Nick
JR Parent/ Community Representative	Dimak, Tanya
JR Teacher Representative	Dawdy, Debbie
POC ADMIN	Wehmeyer, Kelly
POC Parent/ Community Representative	Stryker, Candice
POC Teacher Representative	Dawson, Lia
SEA Parent/ Community Representative	Brumfield, Jason
SEA Teacher Representative	Derosia, Billie
SPEC PROG	Bethany, Jeana
TRAV ADMIN	Sides, Jim
TRAV Parent/ Community Representative	Williamson, Kelli
TRAV Teacher Representative	Ochoa, Roxanne

**The committee agrees that the areas below must be addressed to better serve students, teachers, and the Calhoun County community through a District of Innovation Plan:**

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1. More flexibility to create school calendars that meet the needs of students, teachers, and the community.
2. Greater flexibility for providing teacher planning days during the school year or on late arrival/early dismissal days.
3. Greater flexibility for creating tutorial time if needed through late arrival or early dismissal days.
4. Honor 187 contract days for teachers while increasing number of learning days for students.
5. More flexibility for current staff to request courses or grade levels in which they have expertise.
6. Strategies to address the critical teacher shortage in Texas that disproportionately impacts rural districts.

## **Uniform School Start Date:** **(EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.0811)**

**Currently:** TEA dictates a uniform start date. CCISD must follow TEC:§25.0811 First Day of Instruction- States that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. CCISD would benefit from greater flexibility than TEC:§25.0811 allows. Keeping a uniform start date creates an imbalance in numbers of days each semester, places most professional development days before knowledge about students is acquired and does not allow for all district curriculum to be taught prior to state testing.

**Proposed:** The committee agrees that CCISD students would benefit from starting school no earlier than the second Monday in August to ensure:

1. Better balance between first and second semester.
2. Flexibility for annual calendars to address variances in dates as well as honor community needs.
3. Additional days of instruction so that the district curriculum is taught prior to the state assessment.
4. The scheduling of semester exams in December and May resulting in a close of school date that supports student remediation efforts.
5. The possibility of a Wednesday start date to facilitate a smooth student transition to a new school year.
6. 187 contract days for teachers to include possibility of planning time, professional development and students assistance /enrichment throughout the school year.

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The Board of Trustees will continue to review all annual calendars to ensure an instructionally sound calendar is approved for each school year. The Board approved school calendar will be posted annually on the district website.

The committee agrees that teachers would return no earlier than the first Monday in August. For teachers, a flexible calendar would allow for scheduled professional development days during the school year to meet the needs of current students. Additionally, a flexible calendar would allow the district more options to develop a yearly calendar that meets the needs of the Calhoun County community through district holidays, planning days as well as start and release days. The Board of Trustees will continue to approve all annual calendars to ensure a sound professional development plan for teachers is embedded throughout the school year.

The committee asserts that this flexibility is needed so that the Calhoun County school district can create the best possible calendar for our community without a mandatory uniform state start date.

## **What might a start date look like under a District of Innovation Calendar?**

### **EXAMPLE: August 2018**

New Teacher Orientation: August 6-7

Staff Development: August 8-10

Meet The Teacher: August 13

Work Day: August 14

School Start Date: August 15

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## **Minimum Minutes of Instruction and School Day Length:** **(EC LEGAL & EB LEGAL) (Ed. Code 25.081, and 25.082)**

**Currently:** House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amends the Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with language requiring districts and charter schools to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction or 7 hours each day (including intermissions and recess). The bill also allows school districts and charter schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.

**Proposed:** The flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction will assist with personalizing learning to better meet individual student needs. It also has the added benefit of allowing the possibility of an altered length of a school day, which may include, for example, a later start/early release time. A late start or early dismissal will accommodate additional professional development/collaboration opportunities for teachers to perfect their craft, deepen their content knowledge and analyze student data. Additionally, this flexibility would afford the district the option of creating tutorial or enrichment opportunities for students as needed. As more rigorous state standards are taught and assessed, it is critical that the 187 day teacher contract allows for an increase in number of minutes for student instruction, teacher planning time and tutorials/enrichment opportunities on late arrival or early release days.

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## **Teacher Certification: Retain current faculty and staff while recruiting for vacancies**

**(DBA LEGAL, DBA LOCAL, DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL) (Ed. Code 21.003, 21.053, 21.057, and 19 TAC Chapter 231)**

**Currently:** TEA acknowledges both an immediate and future teacher shortages. Immediate shortages are posted on the TEA website as well as the Calhoun County website. Future shortages are anticipated state-wide in many areas. In rural areas, shortages are magnified by a pay scale, housing shortages and fewer numbers of applicants eligible to teach with state required certifications. In order to address the current and anticipated teacher shortage, the committee agrees that TEA codes referenced above must be set aside. Greater flexibility is needed to maximize the flexibility for scheduling current CCISD employees and greater ability to recruit qualified and capable new employees for our students.

### [The Texas Rural School Task Force States:](#)

*“The teacher shortage in Texas has been described as the “biggest threat” to public schools in the state (Aragon, 2016). The RSTF agreed that rural schools may feel this challenge more intensely than those in suburban or urban settings (Player, 2015). Issues such as the proximity to a larger or more urban community, the lack of available of housing, social amenities, spousal employment opportunities, and the competitiveness of larger surrounding school districts all contribute to the difficulty in recruiting teachers, particularly for hard-to-staff positions.”*

The task force recommendation in Teacher Recruitment – Recommendation 5 is as follows: *Broaden the pool of potential teachers by exploring the potential for flexibility in certification to include non-certified but qualified personnel to teach CTE courses, for certified personnel to teach outside of their field, and for retired teachers to return to full-time teaching more easily.”*

[https://tea.texas.gov/Texas\\_Educators/Educator\\_Initiatives\\_and\\_Performance/Rural\\_Schools\\_Task\\_Force/](https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Educator_Initiatives_and_Performance/Rural_Schools_Task_Force/)

**Proposed:** Current CCISD employees would be able to request to teach in an area outside of their state certification if a vacant position could not be filled within ten days of a public posting of the opening. In order for local certification to be granted, the following procedure must be followed:

**CCISD Current employees applying for a position outside of current certification:**

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1. A position must be posted for a minimum of ten days with no certified applicants recommended.
2. The current employee writes a written request to teach out of his/her certification field identifying qualifications for the vacant position.
3. The principal both interviews the employee for the vacancy determining the qualifications present and submits a written recommendation to the superintendent.
4. The superintendent approves the request.
5. The Board of Trustees approves local certification.
6. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

## **New applicants enrolled in a teacher certification program:**

1. A position must be posted for a minimum of ten days with no certified applicants recommended.
2. Applicants without completed state certification must be currently enrolled in a Texas Teacher Certification program and have relevant experience or expertise.
3. Principal interviews applicant and provides a written recommendation to the superintendent for employment and sponsorship while acquiring probationary state certification.
4. The superintendent approves the request. The superintendent also supports a new teacher mentor program to include a teacher mentor and professional development to help with the sponsorship during the alternative certification process.
5. The Board of Trustees approves the local certification and sponsorship for one school year.
6. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

## **Applicants from business or industry - CTE or Advanced High School Courses:**

In order to best serve CCISD students, allow more flexibility in scheduling and class offerings, and enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need, certification issues will be handled locally. The district's exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow CCISD to consider part-time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition into the teaching profession in Career and Technology and assist in staffing high need STEM and dual credit course offerings. The educational benefits of such course offerings will enable CCISD students to be college, career, and/or military ready. The District shall establish local criteria for training and locally certifying individuals rather than adhere strictly to mandates outlined in Section 21.053. In doing so, parental notification under Section 21.057 would no longer be necessary.

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This exemption directly supports the move from “highly qualified” requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

1. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or grade level out of his/her field. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses qualifying him/her to teach the subject.
2. The principal may submit a request to the superintendent for local certification that will allow a non-certified yet highly qualified professional to teach OR a certified educator to teach a subject in a related field for which he/she is not credentialed by the state. The principal must specify the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses qualifying him/her to teach the subject.
3. The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification. The superintendent also supports a new teacher mentor program to include a teacher mentor and professional development to help with the sponsorship during the school year.
4. The Board of Trustees approves the local certification and sponsorship for one school year.
5. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

## Resources Utilized

[TEA Districts of Innovation](#) webpage and plans published by Districts of Innovation throughout Texas.

Texas Association of School Boards [FAQ](#)

TEA [Overview District of Innovation](#)

Faculty and Staff Surveys