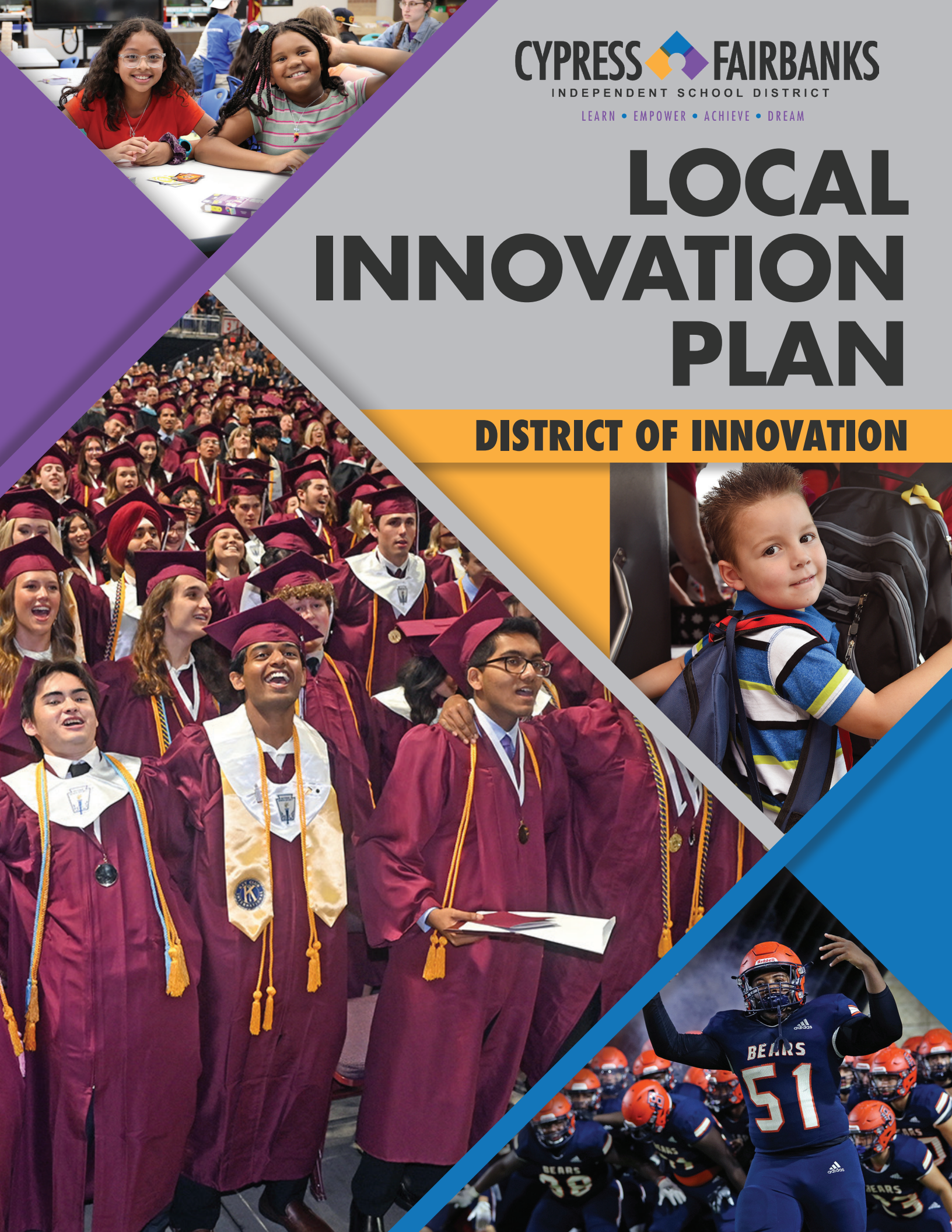


# LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

## DISTRICT OF INNOVATION



## INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code that are available to open charter enrollment schools.

On October 9, 2023, the Cypress-Fairbanks ISD School Board approved a resolution to initiate the process of becoming a District of Innovation, held a public hearing on Districts of Innovation and agreed to have the members of the Districtwide Educational Improvement Council (DEIC) serve as the District of Innovation Committee. The committee met on October 19, 2023, November 2, 2023, and November 14, 2023. The proposed plan was posted on the district website for 30 days from November 17, 2023 to December 16, 2023, and a public meeting was held on December 14, 2023, for stakeholders to give feedback on the proposed plan.

## A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Plan's comprehensive educational program is guided by and aligned with the Vision Statement, Mission Statement, and District Goals of Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District.

- Vision Statement
  - Learn. Empower. Achieve. Dream. LEAD
- Mission Statement:
  - We will maximize every student's potential through rigorous and relevant learning experiences preparing students to be 21st-century global leaders.
- District Goals
  - Goal 1 - Academic Achievement: The district will ensure academic performance and achievement levels reflect excellence in learning and attainment of both high expectations and high standards for all students.
  - Goal 2 - Safe and Healthy Environment: The district will provide a safe, disciplined, and healthy environment conducive to student learning.
  - Goal 3 - Human Capital: The district will recruit, develop, and retain highly qualified and effective personnel reflective of our student demographics.
  - Goal 4 - Communications and Community Relations: The district will foster a culture of trust by providing accurate, timely, and interactive communication to all stakeholders and by encouraging parents and the community at-large to be involved in our schools.
  - Goal 5 - Financial and Technology Management: The district shall exercise fiscal responsibility to maintain financial strength and provide the financial resources for the educational program and support needs.
  - Goal 6 - Operations Management: The district shall ensure that the facilities adequately support the educational program and other operations.

# INNOVATIONS

## First Day of Instruction

**Current Law:** According to Texas Education Code §25.0811 school districts are prohibited from beginning instruction for students prior to the fourth Monday in August.

**Benefit of Exemption:** A flexible calendar empowers the district Calendar Committee to meet the needs of the local community, personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instruction time per semester. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for staff.

**Local Guidelines:** The district Calendar Committee, consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, and community/business partners, will continue their process of developing a proposed instructional calendar. This exemption will allow the committee to consider an alternate start date before the fourth Monday in August. This proposed instructional calendar will then be taken to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

## Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certification

**Current Law:** According to Texas Education Code §21.003, a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern, teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit.

**Benefit of Exemption:** *This exemption will expedite the approval process for hiring a CTE teacher.*

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD is committed to providing students with the highest level of academic instruction possible. The district's goal will be to continue hiring certified teachers. Flexibility is needed in areas where it is difficult to find highly experienced candidates with the required teacher certification. Currently, when the district cannot locate a Texas certified teacher for a CTE position, the district must submit a request to the Board for a local School District Teaching Permit, with submission to TEA. Cypress-Fairbanks ISD would prefer decisions regarding local permit CTE certification to be handled locally and approved by the Superintendent of Schools or designee.

**Local Guidelines:** If approved, the Superintendent of Schools or designee, in collaboration with campus leaders and the Curriculum & Instruction and Human Resources departments, will certify candidates that meet local credential guidelines. The Superintendent or designee will notify the Board of Trustees regarding the names and qualifications of these individuals. These local credential guidelines have been developed by a district-level committee of stakeholders, including:

- a) Curriculum and Instruction staff
- b) Professional Development staff
- c) Human Resources staff

This committee was charged with developing and recommending local certification criteria for hiring professionals from technical fields for noncore Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, including items such as related experience, qualifications, industry certifications and/or licensure, and other relevant areas.

To recommend a candidate for hire under the local School District Teaching permit, the secondary principal will coordinate with the CTE department and Human Resources for completion of the internal application of the teaching permit for noncore academic CTE courses, statement of qualifications, and approval of required professional development and observation hours. The Superintendent of Schools or designee will approve the local School District Teaching permit and notify the Board of Trustees.



## Local Permit – Certified Teacher with Flexibility for Teaching Outside of Content or Outside of Grade Band

**Current Law:** According to Texas Education Code §21.003, a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern, teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit.

**Benefit of Exemption:** *This exemption will permit the district to allow certified teachers to provide instruction in classes outside of their content area or grade span.* The district's goal is to continue hiring certified teachers. Flexibility is needed in areas where a certified teacher can teach outside of a specific content or grade band.

**Local Guidelines (Proposed):** If approved, the Superintendent of Schools or designee will certify that teachers meet initial TEA certification requirements prior to a local permit being issued under this provision.

If a certified teacher is needed to teach outside of their certification area, the teacher will meet the TEA emergency permit or temporary classroom assignment permit requirements prior to a local permit being issued. If a certified teacher is needed to teach outside of their grade band or content certification, the certified teacher will meet criteria identified by Human Resources prior to the issuance of a local permit. A permit may be issued for only one of the criteria. The teacher may not be issued a permit for both outside of content and outside of grade band simultaneously. A teacher must have the flexibility to decline to teach outside of content certification or outside of grade band without repercussions, termination, or forced transfer.

For certified teachers seeking to teach outside their grade band, this will be limited to elementary and middle school assignments (ex. – Core Subjects EC-4 could be issued a local permit to teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade; Math 7-12 could be issued a permit to teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade math).

To recommend for hire/transfer a candidate under the local certification criteria, the principal must submit their request in writing (to the Human Resources department) and include the following: (1) reason for the request, (2) efforts made to hire a fully certified teacher, (3) credentials and/or experience that qualify this candidate for the position, and (4) professional development and mentoring support that will be provided to the candidate.

## Out of State Certification

**Current Law:** According to Texas Education Code §21.053, it is required that an individual's teaching certificate must be filed with the hiring district before the individual's contract is binding and prohibits a district from paying a non-certified individual for teaching or work done prior to the effective date of the issuance of a valid certificate.

**Benefit of Exemption:** *This exemption will expedite the approval process for hiring teachers certified out-of-state.* The district's goal will be to continue hiring certified teachers. If a teacher holds an out-of-state standard certification and is seeking certification in Texas, he/she must apply for a review of credentials and eligibility for potential test exemptions by TEA. Once the review process is completed by TEA, the teacher is notified of the results, and if eligible, a one-year permit is granted by TEA. Flexibility is needed in areas where an out-of-state certified teacher has applied for a review of credentials and awaiting review from TEA.

**Local Guidelines:** During the review process, the Superintendent of Schools or designee will issue a local permit to hire the out-of-state teacher as a teacher of record. The out-of-state certified educator will need to complete the TEA review process and complete the requirements to obtain their standard Texas certification.