

District of Innovation


December 2023

What is a district of innovation?

Passed into law in 2015 when the 84th Texas Legislature created the Texas Education Code Chapter 12A, Districts of Innovation.

District of innovation plans seek to remove legal requirement barriers for school districts.

968 districts with a current plan.



Why are we
considering
this now?



Increased Local
Control

Remain Competitive



What cannot be exempted?

Elected board of trustees

Powers and duties of school boards, superintendents
and principals

PEIMS

Criminal history record checks

Curriculum and graduation requirements

Bilingual education

Special education

Prekindergarten

Suspension of K-2 students

Academic accountability, including state assessments

Financial accountability and related reporting

Reporting of improper relationships between
employees and students

Open meetings

Public records

Certain purchasing requirements and
conflicts of interest

Health insurance alternatives

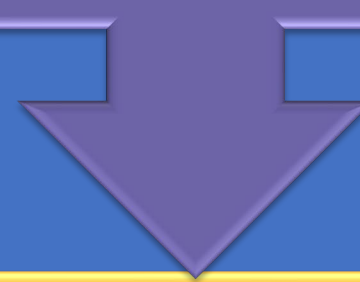
Nepotism

Civil immunity under TEC Chapter 22,
subchapter B

Other state and federal laws outside of the
Texas Education Code

How long is a plan in effect?

The plan may have a term up to 5 years.



Plans may be amended or renewed based on the following:

Majority vote of the DEIC

Two-thirds majority vote of the board

Notice to TEA of the exemptions and approval dates

What is the proposed timeline?



LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

- **First Day of Instruction**

Flexibility for calendar committee

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certification**

Expedite approval process for hiring CTE teachers

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

Certified teachers can teach outside of their content area or grade span –teacher may decline

- **Out of State Certification**

Expedite approval process for hiring teachers certified out-of-state

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.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certification (Cont'd)

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 Permit –Certified Teacher with Flexibility for Teaching Outside of Content or Outside of Grade Band (Cont'd)

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 5th grade; Math 7-12 could be issued a permit to teach 6th 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.

Can additional exceptions be added?

Plans may be amended or renewed based on the following:

**Majority
vote of
the DEIC**

**Two-thirds
majority vote
of the board**

**Notice to
TEA of the
exemptions
and
approval
dates**

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