

China Spring Independent School District



District of Innovation Plan

2022-2027

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission, in partnership with the community, is to provide individualized learning experiences to prepare students for success in life.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision in China Spring Independent School District is to strive for continuous improvement of our educational system by providing opportunities for all to achieve excellence.

Introduction

The 84th legislature passed House Bill 1842 which permits traditional independent school districts the ability to access flexibilities which had previously been reserved for Texas' open enrollment charter schools. In order for an independent school district to obtain these flexibilities, districts must seek designation as a "District of Innovation (DOI)." On Monday, December 12, 2016, the China Spring ISD Board of Trustees initiated the process by adopting a resolution to pursue a "District of Innovation" designation. The DOI designation was approved, adopted, and implemented in August 2017. On September 22, 2021, the CSISD Collaborative Action Team (CAT) initiated the renewal process for CSISD's DOI for 2022-2027.

District of Innovation Renewal Timeline

September	22	- Introduced intention of DOI renewal to CSISD Collaborative Action Team (CAT) – approved by committee
October	18	- Intention of DOI Renewal presented as information item at regularly scheduled CSISD School Board Meeting
October	27	- Public Hearing and CAT Team approval of DOI Plan
November	1	- Post DOI Plan on CSISD district website and notify TEA
December	8	- Share DOI update with CAT Team
January	17	- Seek DOI Plan approval from CSISD Board of Trustees

District of Innovation Committee Members

Pam Niles	Parent
Stephanie Londenberg	Parent
Stacy Maness	Parent
Wanda Freeze	Parent
Kylie Hipp	Parent
Brittany Ochoa	Parent
Kati Garrett	Parent
Gary Buwalda	Parent/SRO
Kristen Dutschmann	Elementary Principal
Heather Jenkins	Intermediate Principal
Max Rutherford	High School Principal
Rob Rogers	TAG/DAEP Principal
Lisa Howard	Executive Director of Special Programs
Leslie Smith	Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
Jennifer Crook	Assistant Superintendent – Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
Dr. Kevin Pitts	Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Marc Faulkner	Superintendent

TERM OF PLAN

The term of the DOI plan is for five years beginning August 1, 2022 and ending July 31, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If within the term of this plan, other areas of exemptions are considered for flexibility in accordance with HB 1842, the Board will appoint a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions and the district will follow the same process and timeline as it did with the original plan. Any amendment adopted by the board will adhere to the same term as the original plan.

DISTRICT OF INNOVATION EXEMPTIONS:

I. Teacher Certification

Policy - (DBA Legal)

Texas Education Code (TEC) - 21.003(a), .053(a), (b), .0487(d),

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 district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit. A person who desires to teach shall present the person's certificate for filing with a district before the person's contract with a board is binding.

A person employed by a district as an educational diagnostician before September 1, 2008, may continue employment with the district without obtaining a certificate or permit as an educational diagnostician so long as the person is employed by that district.

A person is not required to hold a certificate under Education Code 21.0487 to be employed by a district as a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor.

An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

Proposed

In an effort to provide CSISD students with educational opportunities that best serve our community, decisions pertaining to teacher certification will be handled locally. Current legislation hinders the District's ability to hire teachers in areas that are hard to fill, such as Foreign Language, Dual Credit, Advanced Math and Science, and Career and Technical Education (CTE). The District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and professional development training for such courses in lieu of requirements set forth in law. This exemption directly supports the move from "highly qualified" requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). By obtaining exemptions for teacher certification requirements, the District will have the flexibility to hire internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their certification area. The exemption will also provide the District with the ability to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach courses in those areas if certified teachers are not available.

Innovation Strategies

- a. The District will maintain its current expectations for employee certification. The District will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the District will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.
- b. For grades 5-12, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject.
- c. An individual with experience in the content of an elective course could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or elective course through a local teaching certificate. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Examples: an experienced homebuilder teaching a building trades course, a licensed corrections officer teaching a criminal justice course, or a retired CPA teaching an entry level accounting course.
- d. Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.
- e. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.
- f. Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.

II. Probationary Contracts

Policy - (DCA Legal)

Texas Education Code (TEC) - 21.102

A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year.

A probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the District.

Proposed

All teachers, nurses, counselors, new to the profession will receive a probationary contract for two years minimum and could be offered a third year of probationary. After the probationary period the teacher, if recommended by administration and approved by the board, will be offered a term contract.

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years.

III. School Start Date

Policy – (EB Legal)

Texas Education Code (TEC) - 25.0811

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver of this requirement.

Proposed

In an effort to meet the needs of our stakeholders, this exemption would allow local control in the development of a school calendar that best serves the CSISD community.

Innovation Strategies

- a. Students would begin no earlier than the 3rd Monday of August
- b. An earlier start date would allow for a calendar providing semesters with a more similar number of days of instruction.
- c. The flexibility in the start date provides an opportunity to improve on our goal of increasing the district attendance rate.

IV. Class Size Ratio & Notification of Class Size

Policy – (EEB Legal)

Texas Education Code (TEC) - 25.112; 25.113

A district shall not enroll more than 22 students in a class, kindergarten through fourth grade, except as allowed by the commissioner of education. The limit on class size, kindergarten through grade 4, shall not apply during:

1. The last 12 weeks of the school year; or

2. Any 12-week period of the school year selected by a district, if the district's average daily attendance has been adjusted due to a significant percentage of students who are migratory children under Education Code 42.005(c). A district claiming this exemption must notify the commissioner in writing not later than the 30th day after the first day of the 12-week period.

The commissioner may except a district, on application, from the class size limits above if the limit works an undue hardship on the district. An exception expires at the end of the school year for which it is granted.

A school district seeking an exception shall notify the commissioner and apply for the exception not later than the later of:

1. October 1; or
2. The 30th day after the first school day the district exceeds the limit described above.

A campus or district that is granted an exception from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception. The notice must be in conspicuous bold or underlined print and:

1. Specify the class for which an exception was granted;
2. State the number of children in the class; and
3. Be included in a regular mailing or other communication from the campus or district, such as information sent home with students.

The notice must be provided not later than the 31st day after the first day of the school year or the date the exception is granted, if the exception is granted after the beginning of the school year.

Proposed

Due to our unpredictable and rapid growth of our district, CSISD has been required to file waivers with TEA on a yearly basis to comply with the state mandated class size ratio. While our goal is to maintain classroom settings meeting the 22:1 ratio, sudden increases in student populations require us to exceed that number on occasion. We believe that small class sizes positively impact the learning environment, but the addition of only one or two students does not negatively affect student achievement. This exemption would allow CSISD local control over class size ratios and the ability to place students equally throughout a grade level without the requirement of submitting a waiver to TEA. The exemption to TEC 25.112 would allow CSISD the flexibility to meet the needs of the students and campus without having the bureaucracy of waivers within the Texas Education Agency using up valuable resources that could be better utilized serving our students.

Innovation Strategies

- a. In the event where a K-4th core class exceeds the 22:1 ratio, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees.
- b. In addition, if a K-4th core class reaches a 24:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in that classroom of the situation.

V. Planning and Preparation Time

Policy – (DL Legal)

Texas Education Code (TEC) – 21.404

Guarantees each classroom teacher a planning period. Specifically, each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning period may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity. Based on the Commissioner's interpretation, all conference period assignments must take place when the students are in attendance.

Proposed

In an effort to implement a Collaborative Culture in our District, flexible scheduling is very important. Having flexibility in planning and preparation time helps to create schedules where groups of teachers can serve at-risk (or struggling) students and still have planning time with their grade level and content teams. It is imperative that teachers have time to receive ongoing job-embedded professional development through professional learning communities, and horizontal and vertical planning opportunities. Providing each student with an effective teacher is the number one factor that impacts student achievement. All teachers will have planning and preparation time, but flexibility is requested for:

- a. Collaborative team meetings (i.e. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs))
- b. Participation in meetings that specifically address planning and preparation for both individual and group student instruction and assessment. (i.e. ARDs, 504, Staffings, etc.)

Innovation Strategies

- a. Relief from this provision will allow for the district's teachers to participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) on at least a weekly basis during the work day without compromising instructional time, where they can share best practices, critically examine student data, and plan collaboratively.
- b. PLCs will focus specifically on planning and student assessment, which are clearly defined as components of allowed teacher conference period duties.
- c. Relief of this provision allows flexibility in scheduling to reduce the amount of extended day planning for teachers.