

Cleveland Independent School District



District of Innovation Plan July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2027

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In the spring of 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1842, providing public school districts the opportunity to become Districts of Innovation (DOI). To qualify, an eligible school district must adopt a five-year plan according to the Texas Education Code.

Districts of Innovation may be exempt from state statutes to:

- Take greater control in decision-making about the educational and instructional design for students
- Have increased autonomy from state mandates that govern educational programming
- Be empowered to innovate and plan differently to support the unique needs of each student

In 2018, Cleveland ISD submitted their plan and was approved to be a District of Innovation by the Texas Education Agency. Cleveland ISD is seeking to renew our District of Innovation status to ensure more local control and meet the needs of our students and community. This plan will be in effect for five years, 2022-2027, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. To ensure the progress and success of the DOI plan, the District Education Improvement Committee (DEIC) will continuously monitor its effectiveness and conduct an annual review upon the completion of each school year. This plan may be amended at any time by the DEIC with the approval of the school board.

Cleveland ISD Mission Statement

The philosophy of the Cleveland Independent School District is to build a community of empowered, lifelong learners, in a way that staff, and community support, can take pride in Cleveland ISD, so that we can develop successful, productive, responsible, and healthy citizens of the world.

District Goals

- Cleveland ISD will provide a student-centered educational environment in which students are expected to meet or exceed state standards in all areas.
- Cleveland ISD's staff of quality professionals will implement a professional learning

community that enhances individual student success.

- Cleveland ISD's parents, community and business partners will strengthen their involvement in our students' education.

District of Innovation Plan

Cleveland ISD will be implementing the following innovations to ensure the unique needs of our students and community are met while fulfilling our mission statement and district goals.

- Teacher Certification Requirements
- Interim Assignment Teacher (IAT)
- First Day of Instruction - Uniform Start Date
- Student-Teacher Ratios for Grades K-4
- Teacher Planning and Preparation Periods
- Minimum Service Required

Innovation: Teacher Certification Requirements

Board Policy: DBA [LEGAL], DK [LEGAL], DK [LOCAL], DK [EXHIBIT]

TEC: §21.003, §21.053,

Currently

Texas Education Code states that a person may not be employed as an educator by an independent school district unless the individual holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district is unable to fill a position with a certified educator, the district must submit a request for emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency, which is then approved or denied. This process is not only burdensome but it also restricts a district's ability to hire experienced industry professionals who have acquired knowledge and skills to support innovative classes and programs unique to the school district.

Proposed

A local certification criteria will be established to identify highly qualified candidates that allows CISD to recruit individuals that may not hold teacher credentials (IATs). Principals seeking to hire a candidate that is not certified must make a request to the Superintendent or designee with all of the individual's credentials. The Superintendent or designee will approve the request if they feel the candidate meets the criteria for local certification and would be an asset to the district. All Bilingual, ESL, and Special Education

teacher candidates must have their SBEC certification.

- Provides more flexibility in our scheduling and class offerings and specifically meets the needs of our students and community.
- Allows the district to hire nontraditional candidates who bring authentic field and industry knowledge and skills, providing students real world learning experiences
- Allows for a diverse pool of candidates for positions with the skills and abilities to impact student achievement in areas of instruction.

Innovation: First Day of Instruction - Uniform Start Date

Board Policy: EB [LEGAL]

TEC: §25.0811

Currently

Students in Texas are not permitted to begin school before the fourth Monday of August. Prior to this rule, districts across the state had the option, through the waiver process, of starting earlier. Several years ago, waivers to begin instruction prior to the fourth Monday were removed with no exceptions. The inability to start prior to the fourth Monday proves problematic in that semesters become imbalanced, it limits the number of instructional days prior to state and national exams, and it does not meet the needs of our local community.

Proposed

Develop a district calendar that fits the local needs of our students and community.

- Instructionally balanced fall and spring semesters.
- Ending the fall semester in December and the spring semester in late May/early June supports college and career readiness efforts.
- Provides instructional time early in the school year to close achievement gaps and improve student learning outcomes, ultimately impacting accountability.

Innovation: Student-Teacher Ratios for Grades K-4

Board Policy: EEB [LEGAL]

TEC: §25.111, §25.112, §25.113

Current

Kindergarten thru fourth grade classes are to be set at a 22:1 ratio according to state law. When class rosters exceed this amount, districts must apply for a waiver from the Texas Education Agency. In addition to the waiver, districts are required to inform parents and guardians when that ratio is greater than 22:1. These waivers are continuously approved by the Texas Education Agency.

Proposed

Cleveland ISD is a fast-growth district, and for the past several years, a class size waiver to TEA has been required. Based on our observations, we believe it is not the number of students but the relationship of the teacher/IAT to students and make-up of the classroom which most directly influence the learning environment. Cleveland ISD values smaller class sizes and intends to remain within the guidelines of the current Education Code. Class sizes are continuously monitored and reviewed by campus principals, the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Schools, and the Department of Human Resources. Communication with parents and guardians would only be provided if the ratio exceeds 25:1. A TEA waiver is not required under the District of Innovation, however, a waiver was filed for the 2022-2-23 school year and the Superintendent will report enrollment to the Board of Trustees.

- Students, families, and teachers are able to build strong relationships throughout the year.
- Teachers are able to continuously address the specific learning needs of their students without interruption.
- Students are able to build strong peer relationships.

Innovation: Teacher Planning and Preparation Periods

Board Policy: DL [LEGAL]

TEC: §21.404

Current

Texas Education Code currently states that all teachers are entitled to a minimum of 450 minutes within a two week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating student's work, and planning. Any planning and preparation period may not be fewer than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During this time, a teacher/IAT may not be required to participate in other school related activities. Rigid planning and preparation time does not provide the flexibility necessary in designing and using planning time to maximize student learning and engagement with content.

Proposed

Cleveland ISD wants the flexibility to design planning and preparation periods that reflect the needs of students and teachers/IATs to ensure the design of an engaging and personalized learning environment.

- Flexibility in designing time for teachers to review student data and design instruction independently, with Professional Learning Communities, and other instructional collaborative teams.
- Flexibility in developing an innovative master schedule.
- Opportunities for professional learning and collaboration regarding instructional design and delivery and meeting the social-emotional needs of students.

Innovation: Minimum Service Required

Board Policy: DC and DEA [LEGAL]

TEC: §21.401

Current

Texas Education Code 21.401(b) states an educator under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposed

With the passage of Texas Education Code 25.081 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes, the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees subject to TEC 21.401. The determination of how many days are required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision. Cleveland ISD will annually evaluate the number of contract days needed for teaching staff in that school year and each successive school year. The number of days will not exceed 187 and will be included in the district's compensation plan.