

Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD 2022-2027 District of Innovation Plan

Introduction

House Bill 1842, created and passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session in spring of 2015, provides a unique opportunity for Texas public school districts to exempt themselves from some parts of the Texas Education Code. In order to do this, a public school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

As a District of Innovation, Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- greater local control as the decision-makers over the educational and instructional model for students;
- increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- the ability to innovate and think differently.

HB 1842 does not allow exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

Continuous Improvement:

The Local Innovation Plan is guided by and aligned with the Board's Vision, Mission, Strategic Priorities, and Goals for the District as follows:

Mission Statement:

The mission of Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD is to educate and equip all learners with knowledge, skills, and experiences to be successful in life.

Vision Statement:

Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Creating Opportunities for All

COCISD Goals:

1. All students will achieve high standards in all academic programs.
2. Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD will improve parent and family engagement through effective communication and developing partnerships.
3. Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD will foster a positive, safe, and drug-free learning environment that supports academic achievement.
4. Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD will actively recruit, retain & train fully certified and effective staff, as well as provide sustained high-quality professional development.
5. Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD will ensure fiscal responsibility through sound and transparent practices with our financial resources.

District of Innovation Process and Timeline

Jun. 2021	At the Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Board meeting, the Board approved the resolution to become designated as a District of Innovation. TEC 12A.001(c)(1)
Sept. 2021	<p>The Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD staff was surveyed to solicit feedback on the possibility of becoming a district of innovation.</p> <p>A Public Hearing was held at the Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Board meeting to inform the public of the plan to become a District of Innovation. TEC 12A.002(a)</p>
Oct. 2021	Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Board appointed the District Effectiveness Improvement Committee to develop the COCISD District of Innovation Plan. The District Effectiveness Improvement Committee met to discuss the District of Innovation Plan components. TEC 12A.002(b)(2) and TEC 12A.003
Nov. 2021	The COCISD District of Innovation Plan is posted on the Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD website @ https://www.cocisd.org/ for 30 days TEC 12A.005 (a)(1)
Dec. 2021	A copy of the COCISD District of Innovation Plan is sent to the Commissioner of Education for the State of Texas TEC 12A.005 (a)(2)
Jan. 2022	<p>The District Effectiveness Improvement Committee will hold a public meeting to vote and pass the District of Innovation Plan by a majority vote. TEC 12A.005 (a)(3)</p> <p>The Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Board approves the final District of Innovation Plan by a 2/3 majority vote. TEC 12A.005 (b)</p>
Feb. 2022	<p>Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD notifies the commissioner of approval of the plan along with a list of approved TEC exemptions by completing the appropriate TEA form. 19 TAC 102.1307(d)</p> <p>Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD post and maintains the plan online in prominent location. TEC 12A.0071 (a)</p> <p>Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD sends the plan to the agency within 15 days of adoption. TEC 12A.0071 (b)</p>
Sept. 15, 2022	The District Effectiveness Improvement Committee will hold a public meeting to vote and pass the amended 2022-2027 District of Innovation Plan by a majority vote. The plan was amended to include Bank Depository Contract and Teacher Contract Days.
Sept. 26, 2022	<p>The Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Board approves the amended District of Innovation Plan by a 2/3 majority vote. TEC 12A.005 (b)</p> <p>Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD maintains the plan, which is posted on the Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD website @ https://www.cocisd.org/. TEC 12A.0071 (a)</p>
Sept. 28, 2022	Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD sends the plan to the agency within 15 days of adoption. TEC 12A.0071 (b)

Flexible School Calendar

First Day of Instruction: TEC Code Requiring Exemption: TEC 25.0811: A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposed: To allow for a school calendar that is tailored around the needs of Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD students, we would like to consider a flexible calendar option that may include an earlier start date which also emphasizes the importance of maximizing instructional time, instructional rigor, and high-quality Tier-1 instruction. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the district to improve quality instruction by balancing the amount of instructional time each semester, allowing teachers to plan, pace, and deliver instruction before and after the Christmas Break. This change will also afford more time to teach semester courses at the secondary level. In addition, by having the flexibility to start and end the school year earlier, students will be able to enroll in college courses and/or trade school courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college and career readiness. Adjusting the start date will provide additional instructional days before Fall & Spring STAAR/EOC exams. This flexibility would also allow the school year to end before June 1st which would allow for a longer summer school session for students needing accelerated instruction before STAAR EOC exam administrations, adequately address HB 4545 requirements, and afford students seeking credit recovery during the summer with additional instructional time.

Benefit of Exemption for COCISD:

- Schools will have the flexibility to start school weeks earlier than the fourth Monday in August, for either the entire District or individual campuses.
- Starting earlier will balance the two semesters, set exams before Christmas Break, and create more instructional time before (Fall, Spring, Summer) STAAR/EOC exams.
- The balanced semesters will align with college semesters as well, allowing more opportunities for summer school, internships, and industry-based certification opportunities.
- Starting school earlier will also accommodate new and innovative educational models such as summer bridge programming.

Certification Required

TEC Code Requiring Exemption: TEC 21.003 requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a certified teacher cannot be hired for a position or a teacher is assigned to a subject outside his/her certification, the district must submit an emergency certification/exception/waiver to TEA.

Proposed: The District will maintain its current expectation for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the vacant position.

Many of the career pathways set forth by HB 5 require very specialized certification. The current laws limit the District's ability to hire teachers for hard-to-fill, high-demand career and technical courses when quality certified teachers are not available. COCISD will continue to require **all** special education and bilingual/ESL teachers to be SBEC certified

The District will continue to make every attempt to hire individuals with the appropriate certification. The District may locally grant exceptions to certification requirements to best meet the needs of COCISD students. For example, but not limited to, an individual with a four-year degree, experience in a Career & Technical Education (CTE) field, or experience in the education field could be eligible to teach an industry recognized skill or content course through a local teaching certificate. Individuals hired through local certification will be required to attend a minimum of 24 hours on basic instructional training as certification options are explored.

Benefit of Exemption for COCISD:

- The statutory certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses.
- Local Qualifications will allow the district to: Recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real-world experience
- The District will establish Local Criteria, such as years of experience, qualifications, and industry certifications, to qualify for a local (district) teaching certificate.
- The Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Principals will submit candidates to the Superintendent with credentials.
- The Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD Principals will submit a written request for approval to fill a teaching position to the Superintendent:
 1. For a certified teacher to teach a subject area out of his/her certified field.
 2. For a degreed, non-certified professional with career/industry experience to teach a CTE subject within his/her area of expertise.
 3. For an individual who holds a Bachelor's or Higher degree to teach in any non-CTE content area classroom.
 4. For a non-degreed individual with experience in education/instruction.

*The Superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interest of the district to certify the individual. The Superintendent will notify the Board prior to beginning employment.

Teacher Contract Days

Exemption from: TEC Section 21.401 – Current education law defines a teacher contract as a 10 month contract equivalent to 187 days.

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. Coldspring-Oakhurst CISD 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.

Benefit of exemption for COCISD:

- The proposal would better align the number of teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.
- Reduces teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries.
- The proposal would increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
- The proposal would enhance teacher recruitment.
- The proposal would improve teacher moral.

Bank Depository Contract

Exemption from: TEC Section 45.205, 45.206 - Current Texas Education code requires that a school district must renew its depository contract every two years. The two-year contract term begins and ends in odd-numbered years. In accordance with the Texas Education Code, the District must use a uniform bid or proposal blank in the form prescribed by the State Board of Education.

Proposed

The District is seeking an exemption from TEC 45.205 and 45.206 to allow the District's banking contract to be extended beyond the allowable contract term, if the District determines contract-pricing remains competitive and there is no operations or financial reason to send the District's banking services out for bid. This exemption lessens the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP). The District will only go out for bid if it is determined that contract-pricing is not competitive and there is an operational or financial reason to send the District's banking services out for bid. The District will continue with two year contracts for our banking depository.