



**Crowley Independent School District
District of Innovation Plan**

August 4, 2023

Introduction

The Crowley Independent School District has completed the process of developing a new District of Innovation Plan, and this proposed plan was posted district website for 30 days for public review and input.

On May 25, 2023, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution to initiate the process to become a District of Innovation.

On June 8, 2023, the Board of Trustees conducted a public hearing to consider whether the district should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the district as a district of innovation and appointed an Innovation Plan committee to write the plan.

The District of Innovation Plan is also being reviewed by the District-Wide Educational Improvement Council (DWEIC) and a public meeting was held on July 18, 2023 to consider the final version of the proposed and voted unanimously to approve the plan.

The plan was then presented to the Crowley ISD Board of Trustees on July 27, 2023 and the Board took action to unanimously approve the plan.

Background

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The allowable exemptions are for those sections of code that do not apply to charter or private schools in an attempt to allow for more flexibility and local control for innovative programming.

To obtain exemptions, the District must create a Local Innovation Plan detailing the code requirements that inhibit the goals of the District and the benefits to the District expected from the exemption.

The Crowley ISD Board of Trustees approved the first District of Innovation Plan on March 30, 2017 and approved amendments to the plan On May 31, 2018 and May 27, 2021.

The proposed District of Innovation Plan being considered for renewal is guided by and aligned with Crowley Independent School District's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan.

Mission Statement

Crowley ISD provides students with excellence in education so that all students achieve their full potential.

Vision Statement

Crowley ISD will provide all students with a world-class, high-quality education where students are inspired to succeed in the global community.

Vision 2025 Strategic Goals

- **Goal 1: Thriving Students**
All Crowley ISD students will be equipped to thrive today and in the future.
- **Goal 2: Engaged Community**
Crowley ISD will partner with families and the community to meet the needs of all students.
- **Goal 3: Empowered Staff**
Crowley ISD will empower all staff to provide a quality education for all students.

District of Innovation Plan Renewal

Crowley ISD is working closely with the Board of Trustees, the Policy Review Committee and the DWEIC to considered all areas available for local innovation and created a plan in the best interests of the District and its students that centers around the following areas:

1: First and Last Day of School

§25.0811 First Day of Instruction (a) A school district may not begin instruction before the 4th Monday in August, unless the school operates year-round, or if district has more than 190,000 students: the days are financed by local funds, or the campus is under comprehensive reform, or the majority of the students at the campus(es) are educationally disadvantaged.

§25.0812 Last Day of Instruction (b) A school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

- ❖ **Rationale for the Exemption:** Restricting school start date to the 4th Monday in August limits instructional time and operationally challenges the District because the 75,600 instructional minutes must be calendared between the 4th Monday in August and generally late May.

❖ **Benefit of Exemption for CISD:** Flexibility of the school calendar would offer the District the following advantages:

1. Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules
2. Alignment of calendar with TCC, Dual Credit, Advanced Placement exams and STAAR/EOC timelines
3. Ensure hour/seat time requirements for certification courses
4. Provide flexibility for innovative educational models, including but not limited to summer programming for identified populations
5. Provide flexibility in developing the school calendar
6. Provide flexibility for professional development opportunities

❖ **Local Guidelines:** The district will have the flexibility to designate the first day of school each year. The calendar exemption does not affect the number of contract days for teachers which will remain the same.

2: Teacher Certification and Required Field-based Experience

TEC §21.003 Certification Required 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 school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

TEC §21.051 Required Field-based Experience Before a school district may employ a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, the candidate must complete at least 15 hours of field-based experience in which the candidate is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities under supervision at a public school campus accredited or approved for the purpose by the agency or a private school recognized or approved for the purpose by the agency.

❖ **Rationale for the Exemption**

- The teacher certification requirements enacted in these statutes inhibit the District's ability to hire highly-skilled individuals to teach career and technical education (CTE) courses and other non-traditional, industry-based courses.
- The availability of certified individuals to teach these CTE and other nontraditional, industry-based courses is limited.
- This exemption would allow the District to hire teachers for hard-to-fill positions in CTE and other non-traditional, industry-based courses.

❖ **Benefit of Exemption for CISD**

- This exemption would provide the District flexibility to fill positions in CTE and other non-traditional, industry-based courses by hiring qualified professionals in certain trades and vocations if certified teachers are not available.

❖ **Local Guidelines**

- Local qualifications and training requirements would be established.
- Requests to fill a CTE teaching position with a non-certified teacher in CTE courses or other non-traditional, industry-based courses would be submitted to the superintendent or designee for approval.
- The written request must outline the reason for the request and document what credentials the applicant possesses which would qualify this individual and would be submitted by the principal to the superintendent or designee for approval.

3: Kindergarten Start Age

TEC §29.151 Free Kindergarten The board of trustees of each school district shall establish and maintain one or more kindergartens for the training of children residing in the district who are at least five years of age on September 1 of the school year.

❖ **Rationale for the Exemption**

- Children mature and demonstrate readiness for school at varying rates, and their social/emotional development can be affected by a wide range of factors.
- The September 1 deadline for entering public kindergarten does not provide the flexibility needed for the District to serve students who are ready for school slightly earlier than the established date.
- Parents/guardians of students who are ready for kindergarten curriculum and learning environments are enrolling their children in private kindergarten or other educational institutions.

❖ **Benefit of Exemption for CISD**

- This exemption provides students who are equipped academically and socially to begin instruction in kindergarten programs without penalizing them because of age.
- This will provide the flexibility to enroll sooner and immerse students in an academic learning environment that provides a strong foundation in early literacy and growth development.
- Students who are ready for school can develop a strong foundation of literacy and numeracy to prevent potential gaps in achievement and accelerate their learning.

❖ **Local Guidelines**

- The District will operate a local committee to develop and recommend a local criteria for kindergarten readiness and the creation of the Early Kindergarten Start program to the Superintendent and Board of Trustees.