



Goose Creek CISD
District of Innovation
Plan
2024–2029

Amended June 2026

About Goose Creek CISD

Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District (“Goose Creek CISD” or the “District”) serves approximately 24,000 students in Baytown and Highlands across approximately 134 square miles. The District is comprised of approximately 30 schools, including several high schools, junior schools, elementary schools, and a virtual school serving students in grades 4–12.

Goose Creek CISD’s District of Innovation plan is designed to facilitate the following goals and values:

Mission Statement

“Developing the Whole Child”

Goose Creek CISD develops and enhances each learner’s intellectual, social, and emotional well-being facilitated by a highly qualified team committed to Growth, Community, Collaboration, Innovation, Success, and Determination.

Vision

We empower every student with knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a global community.

Core Values

Goose Creek CISD is committed to:

1. Preparing all students for college and career readiness with the ability to build collaborative relationships, lead dynamically, communicate skillfully, and think critically.
2. Providing a safe and secure environment for all students and staff, including physical, social, and emotional development and support.
3. Building partnerships with families and the community to support our schools in a meaningful way.
4. Creating a culture of mutual respect, dignity, and transparency to build trust with each other and those we serve.
5. Providing every student with equitable access to high-quality instruction, supports, facilities, and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resource allocation.

Strategic Plan

GOAL 1: Increase Academic Achievement

GOAL 2: Strengthen Community Partnerships

GOAL 3: Deliver Operational Excellence

GOAL 4: Develop Organizational Excellence

GOAL 5: Provide Excellence in Financial Management

I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Texas Legislative Session, and codified at Texas Education Code 12A, provides public school districts the opportunity to seek designation as a District of Innovation (“DOI”) to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. As a DOI, a school district’s board of trustees gains greater local control in its decision-making. DOI districts are also better positioned to be innovative and forward-thinking while continuing to comply with the state’s fiscal, instructional, and academic accountability requirements.

II. PROCESS

In 2019, Goose Creek CISD became a DOI and exempted itself from several provisions in the Texas Education Code. Goose Creek CISD amended its DOI plan in May 2021, June 2022, and August 2023. Because the maximum term of a DOI is 5 years, Goose Creek CISD reviewed and renewed its DOI plan in May 2024. The District amended its renewed DOI plan in May 2026 and June 2026.

The DOI Committee (the “Committee”) is comprised of members from the Instructional Leadership Council (“ILC”), which includes Goose Creek CISD stakeholders such as educators, administrators, parents, and community members. The DOI Committee meets to propose amendments or propose an updated plan for renewal by voting on provisions to keep, add, or remove. Approved renewed plans are posted on the Goose Creek CISD website for 30 days as required by law. Additionally, the DOI Committee posts notices and holds public meetings at which the DOI Committee votes to approve the DOI plan or amendments thereto. The renewed DOI plan or amendments are subsequently presented to the Goose Creek CISD Board of Trustees and require approval by at least two-thirds of the Board Members. Goose Creek CISD notifies the Commissioner of Education when it renews or amends its DOI plan. The current version of Goose Creek CISD’s DOI plan is posted on the District’s website.

III. TERM

Texas Education Code § 12A.006 and 19 Texas Administrative Code § 102.1311 specify that the term of a DOI plan cannot exceed five calendar years. In accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code § 102.1313(a)(3), the District renewed its DOI plan within six months subsequent to the original DOI plan’s expiration. The renewed plan’s term is February 5, 2024 through February 5, 2029.

IV. AMENDMENTS

The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan. If, within the term of the plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842 or Texas Education Code 12A, the Committee will consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. The plan is amendable by a majority vote of the District Committee and Board of Trustees. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. Goose Creek CISD will not implement two separate plans at any one time.

V. COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The following DOI plan allows Goose Creek CISD to create an innovative and comprehensive educational program for its students, parents, and staff that includes innovative curriculum and instructional methods, local control and governance of its campuses, modifications to the school year, and other innovations prescribed by the Goose Creek CISD Board of Trustees.

VI. INNOVATIONS

First Day of Instruction

Texas Education Code § 25.0811 prohibits a school district from beginning instruction for students prior to the fourth Monday in August.

Local Innovation: Goose Creek CISD will have the flexibility to start school before the fourth Monday in August, but no earlier than the second Monday in August.

Benefit of Exemption: The ability to adjust the school calendar based on the District's needs allows for more balanced semesters, more instructional time before testing, and increased instructional time for remediation.

Board Policies: EB

Teacher Certification

Texas Education Code § 21.003 prohibits a person from being 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.

Texas Education Code § 21.0031 imposes the requirement that an employee's probationary or term contract is void if the employee does not hold a valid certificate or permit issued by SBEC. Further, if the school district has knowledge that an employee's contract is void under this section, the school district may terminate, suspend, or retain the employee at will.

Texas Education Code § 21.051 imposes the requirement that before a school district can hire a "teacher of record," the candidate must complete 15 hours of field-based experience under supervision.

Texas Education Code § 21.053 requires 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

Local Innovation: Goose Creek CISD is committed to providing students with the highest level of academic instruction possible. Currently, in the event the District cannot locate a certified teacher for a position, or a teacher is assigned to a subject outside of his/her certification, the District must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency ("TEA") and wait for approval or denial to be issued from the Commissioner of Education.

Goose Creek CISD's decisions regarding certification will be handled locally and approved by the Superintendent of Schools and/or the Superintendent's designee.

Goose Creek CISD may hire uncertified individuals as follows:

1. For Career and Technical Education (CTE) (including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)) and Dual Credit certification areas.

NOTE: Any teacher who teaches a CTE course that meets graduation requirements for English language arts, reading, science, mathematics, or fine arts must possess at least a bachelor's degree.

2. For certified teachers to teach outside of their certification area or grade level cluster in hard-to-fill positions or as determined to be in the best interest of the District.
3. For a teacher who is fully certified in another state, they may be considered a certified teacher in Goose Creek CISD for one year on a probationary status, with the option of extended at the discretion of the District.

4. For a teacher who is fully certified in another country, they may be considered a certified teacher in Goose Creek CISD for one year on probationary status, with the option of extending at the discretion of the District.
5. For a teacher applicant who is in the process of obtaining certification, they may be hired in an at-will capacity and paid as a teacher before the effective date of the issuance of a valid certificate.
6. For a teacher applicant who holds a degree in a closely related field but does not yet have a teaching certification, he/she may be hired in an at-will capacity and paid at a rate lower rate until the individual obtains certification.

This innovation does not apply to individuals employed as Special Education, Bilingual, English as a Second Language (“ESL”), or Prekindergarten teachers. Special Education, Bilingual, ESL, and Prekindergarten teacher must be certified by the State Board for Educator Certification (“SBEC”). Additionally, this innovation does not alter any certification requirements set forth by grant or voluntary state programs in which the District participates or certification requirements that exist outside of the Texas Education Code. District administration will develop administrative regulations to provide further processes and procedures related to the hiring of uncertified individuals through this plan.

Benefit of Exemption: The goal of Goose Creek CISD will be to continue to hire certified teachers; however, flexibility is needed in areas that are difficult to find highly effective candidates with the required teacher certification. This provision will provide Goose Creek CISD flexibility in hiring professionals from technical fields, college instructors, degreed but not yet certified, applicants seeking assignments outside of their certification areas, or applicants with out-of-state or out-of-country certifications. This exemption also applies to the associated requirements of field experience and parental notification and negates the need to request approval from the Commissioner of Education.

Board Policies: DBA,

Phase Out Plan: Goose Creek CISD has implemented a phase-out plan regarding this provision to ensure that all teachers are appropriately certified by the start of the 2029–2030 school year. For additional details regarding this phase out plan, please see “Goose Creek CISD: Teacher DOI Phase Out Plan” attached hereto as Exhibit 1.

Probationary Contracts

Texas Education Code § 21.102(b) allows for a probationary contract to be renewed for two additional one-year periods, except that a probationary contract 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 proceeding employment by the district.

Local Innovation: All teachers new to Goose Creek CISD will be placed on a one-year probationary contract for three consecutive years before being offered a term or continuing contract.

Benefit of Exemption: Extending probationary contracts for teachers new to Goose Creek CISD provides campus administration ample time to evaluate the employee's proficiency and determine whether the employee is the best fit for the campus and/or District. It also gives time to provide additional support and training to a teacher before deciding if the teacher should receive a term or continuing contract.

Board Policies: DCA

Class Size Waivers and Notification

Texas Education Code § 25.111 requires that class sizes not exceed a ratio of not less than 1 teacher for every 20 students in average daily attendance.

Texas Education Code § 25.112 prohibits more than 22 students from being enrolled in Pre-K through 4th grade without express authorization from the Commissioner of Education.

Texas Education Code § 25.113 requires notification to parents of each student in a class where the district obtained an exemption from the class size restriction.

Local Innovation: To best serve the needs of Goose Creek CISD students and staff, Goose Creek CISD will continue to maintain the 22:1 student-to-teacher ratio in PK through 4th grades and will continue to follow the process of thoughtful planning, assignments of teachers to the schools with growing student enrollment, reviewing staffing ratios, and making decisions in the best interests of students while taking into consideration the financial capacity of the District. However, the District will no longer submit annual class size waivers for approval by TEA.

Goose Creek CISD will provide parents with written notification of class size requirements and procedures at the beginning of each year. If a PK-4th grade core content classroom exceeds a 22:1 ratio for at least 5 school days, the Superintendent will report the circumstances to the Board of Trustees. If a K-4th grade core classroom ratio reaches 24:1, the campus will contact the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation. Goose Creek CISD will make every effort to provide support through balancing of sections, “freezing” enrollment in the affected grade level, transferring teachers/staff from other campuses, and/or any other measures as appropriate.

Benefit of Exemption: When a class exceeds the statutory class size limit, the District must complete a waiver with TEA. These waivers are rarely rejected by TEA, making the process of applying for a waiver no more than an administrative step of putting TEA on notice. The exemption allows for local flexibility and decision-making without the administrative burden.

Board Policies: EEB

Teacher Planning and Preparation Time

Texas Education Code § 21.404 requires each teacher to be provided at least 450 minutes within a two-week period for instructional preparation time, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. The statute further prohibits a classroom teacher from being required to participate in any other activity during this planning and preparation time.

Local Innovation: Goose Creek CISD is committed to maintaining and honoring the planning and preparation time requirements outlined in Texas Education Code § 21.404; however, it seeks an exemption from the restriction on teachers being able to voluntarily give up their planning time. The Commissioner of Education's interpretation of this section in the Education Code currently allows a teacher to voluntarily give up planning and preparation time for non-teaching activities (e.g., staff development training) as long as attendance at the activity is not mandatory. However, the Commissioner interprets this section to prevent teachers from voluntarily waiving their planning and preparation time for teaching activities. Goose Creek CISD would like to allow teachers the option to take on other assignments during their planning and preparation time to address the District's needs during that time.

Teachers in Goose Creek CISD will be allowed to give up their planning time under the following conditions:

1. The teacher must voluntarily agree to give up their planning time and take on an additional assignment/class in writing.
2. This decision must be made voluntarily by the teacher and a teacher may not be coerced or forced into giving up their conference period for an additional teaching assignment.
3. Any teacher who chooses to give up their planning and preparation time must receive additional pay for this added assignment/class.
4. Any teacher who chooses not to give up their conference time MAY NOT be punished or penalized for this decision in any way.

Benefit of Exemption: Exemption from this provision, to the extent it prevents teachers from voluntarily waiving planning and preparation time, will allow teachers to earn extra compensation and will provide the District more flexibility for covering vacancies and ensuring students are instructed by qualified staff.

Board Policies: DL

School Day Interruptions

Texas Education Code § 25.083(b) limits the ability of a district to remove a student from regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation if, as a result of the removal, the student would miss more than 10 percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless a parent otherwise provides written consent.

Local Innovation: Goose Creek CISD will allow for a waiver of the ten percent cap as determined necessary and appropriate for each student's individual circumstances and needs.

Benefit of Exemption: While the District recognizes the importance of keeping students in regularly scheduled classes, this restriction imposes limitations on otherwise critical support and teaching necessary for students who may be struggling or in need of more individualized support and assistance. Exempting out of this provision allows for more individualized decision-making based on student needs.

Board Policies: EC

Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grades (90% Rule)

Texas Education Code § 25.092 prohibits students from receiving credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A district must convene attendance committees and create principal plans for students who do not meet this threshold.

Local Innovation: Goose Creek CISD will develop administrative regulations addressing expected student attendance for purpose of earning class and course credit and how students can make up credit when attendance is not at expected levels.

Benefit of Exemption: Goose Creek CISD needs the flexibility to award class credit to students based on content mastery rather than seat time. The District does not wish to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, field-based experiences, distance learning activities, or other extenuating circumstances. Freedom from the minimum attendance required rule will allow the District to implement the best and most appropriate methods for recovery of missed classes.

Board Policies: FEC

Open Enrollment

Texas Education Code § 25.036(a) states that any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1st of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.

Local Innovation: Goose Creek CISD would like to allow the District the discretion at any point in the school year to revoke a transfer prior to the end of the school year due to any violation of the terms of the agreement, falsification of any transfer documentation information, failure to meet any factors for transfer acceptance, and/or in the best interests of the District. Alternatively, if the transfer is not revoked before the end of the school year, such circumstances may prevent the student from being approved for transfer the following school year.

In approving transfers, the Superintendent or designee shall consider available space, instructional needs and staffing, financial costs, safety, academic performance, the student's disciplinary and behavioral history, the student's attendance and tardy records, and other special considerations.

Benefit of Exemption: The District believes that this requirement restricts Goose Creek CISD's flexibility to respond to changing student needs and unforeseen circumstances. Maintaining an open enrollment policy expands Goose Creek CISD's impact within surrounding communities, enables the District to serve additional students, helps offset declining enrollment trends, provides opportunities for increased state funding, and enables the District to maximize and expand specialized academic programs. The one-year commitment in accepting transfer students, however, restricts the District's ability to respond to exceptional or changing circumstances that were unforeseen at the time of the student's application and acceptance. To allow Goose Creek CISD the flexibility to respond to these situations, the District would like to be exempt from this section.

Board Policies: FDA

Grievance Policies

Texas Education Code Section 26.001(a) requires school districts to adopt grievance processes that comply with the requirements set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 26A. Texas Education Code Sections 26A.001, 26A.002, and 26A.003, among other things, significantly extend the timelines provided for under prior grievance policies, allow grievants to amend their complaints and supplement the record at any point in the grievance process, require decisions to be issued on the merits of a complaint despite procedural issues with the complaint, and alter the procedures for Level 3 hearings before the Board.

Local Innovation: The District seeks to implement its prior grievance policies, including but not limited to exemption from the following provisions:

- Texas Education Code § 26A.002(1)(A) states that parents have 90 calendar days to file a complaint, or 30 calendar days from when they received paperwork (the later of), or if they did not engage in informal process, 60 calendar days.
 - Because these extended timelines discourage prompt complaints and inhibit and the District's ability to quickly resolve concerns, the District will revert to the previous policy of allowing 15 District business days to file a grievance under all grievance policies.
- Texas Education Code § 26A.001(e)(5) allows grievants to supplement the record with additional documents or add additional claims after the Level 1 hearing.
 - Because these additions complicate the investigative process and prolong resolution of complaints, the District will revert to the previous policy of not allowing additional documents or claims to be added after the Level 1 hearing unless their existence was unknown to the grievant at the time.
- Texas Education Code § 26A.001(e)(9) requires districts to issue a decision on the merits of the concern raised in the grievance, despite any procedural errors.
 - Because this approach introduces ambiguity into the grievance process without any clear benefit to the grievant as to the granting of requested relief, the District will revert to its prior policy of requiring grievants to comply with all procedural requirements and allowing for dismissal of complaints that are procedurally defunct.
- Texas Education Code § 26A.002(2)(B) requires hearing officers to issue a written decision within 20 calendar days after the Level 1 or Level 2 hearing. Texas Education Code 26A.002(1)(B) provides grievants 20 calendar days to file an appeal of a Level 1 or Level 2 decision.
 - For consistency in application of the grievance policies, the District will utilize business days instead of calendar days in calculating appeal and response deadlines.
- Texas Education Code § 26A.002(3)(A) requires the Board to hold a Level 3 hearing within 60 calendar days after the date on which the previous decision was made.

- Because this approach limits flexibility in scheduling, the District will revert to its prior policy of allowing the Board of Trustees to determine when it holds Level 3 hearings, within reason.
- Texas Education Code § 26A.002(3)(B) requires the Board to issue a Level 3 decision within 30 calendar days after the Level 3 hearing.
 - Because this approach limits flexibility, the District will revert to its prior policy requiring a decision from the Board not later than the next regular Board meeting after the Level Three hearing.

Benefit of Exemption: Goose Creek CISD believes its prior grievance policies effectively resolved complaints. The District would like to revert to policies used to address grievances, including those filed by employees, parents, students, and community members, prior to the changes adopted during the 89th Regular Legislative Session.

Board Policies: GF, DGBA, and FNG

2025–2026 Instructional Leadership Council/DOI Committee

ILC MEMBER	CAMPUS
Susan Jackson	Administration Building - Facilitator
Ginger McKay	Federal Programs
Dr. Norma Martinez	Director C&I - Secondary
Sarah Flusche	Director C&I - Elementary
Mariana Bailey	Alamo Elementary
Jisalyn Sigee	Ashbel Smith Elementary
Kylee Choate	Austin Elementary
Kim Hotchkiss	Bañuelos Elementary
Justin Hillson	Baytown Jr.
Aniyah Davis-Alix	Bowie Elementary
Heather Phillips	Carver Elementary
Meagan Downs	Cedar Bayou Jr.
Lana Gaunce / Mackenzie Osgood	Clark Elementary
Ashley Ballard / Cynthia Adame	Crockett Elementary
Angelique Vazquez	DeZavala Elementary
Mariam Williams-Augustin	E.F. Green JH

Jennifer Martin	Gentry Jr.
Keesha Luna	Goose Creek Memorial
Rachael Lancon	Harlem Elementary
Yessenia Elizarraras	Highlands Elementary
Robert Richard	Highlands Jr.
Rosalba Lopez / Jessica Brown	Hopper Primary
John Langlois	Horace Mann Jr.
Lindsey Antonini	Impact Early College High School
Kay Potts	Lee High School
Kelsey Roark / Leah Woods	Liles
Alicia Brooks / Kirk Calma	PEH
Kirsty Williams	Pumphrey
John Waterstreet	POINT
Kristin Whitfield	San Jacinto Elementary
Selvira Rahmanovic	Sterling High School
Jennifer Laubach	Stuart Career Tech High School
Melissa Contreras	Travis Elementary
Tamie Land / Tina Robinson	Victoria Walker Elementary
Amparo Martinez Jesse Hardin Dr. Michelle Yzquierdo	Community Representatives
Leslie Garcia	Business Representative
James Husband	Assessment & Accountability Representative
Earnest Brooks	HS Principal Representative
Evelyn Mexas	Counselor Representative
Dr. Keri Launius	Elementary Principal Representative
Earnest Brooks	Secondary Principal Representative
Melanie Christensen	Librarian Representative