



District of Innovation Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and obtain an exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On November 14, 2016, Celina Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On December 12, 2016, the Board appointed a twenty-two-member District of Innovation Advisory Committee ("Committee") comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders, including teachers, principals, parents, and administrators. On Tuesday, December 13, 2016, the Committee met to discuss and draft the initial Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). October 20, 2021 and the Committee met to review and consider additions or deletions to the current Local Innovation Plan. The recommendation was to renew the original plan without changes.

On September 3, 2026, a sub-committee met to review and consider additions or deletions to the current Local Innovation Plan for renewal. Recommendations for renewal were approved by Bobcat Council on September 9, 2026 and presented to the Board on October 26, 2026.

II. TERM

The Plan's term is for no more than five years, beginning January 31, 2027, and ending January 31, 2032, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. Suppose within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842. In that case, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

THE LEARNER EXPERIENCE

Love the learner; drive the rigor
Responsible for one's own learning
Interdependent self-managers

Systems - Structure - Scaffolding - Accountability

III. INNOVATIONS

The District proposes flexibility in the following areas:

A. Certification Required

Applicable Provisions from the Texas Education Code: TEC 21.003

Policies that may be affected: DBA (LEGAL), DBA (LOCAL), DK (LEGAL), DK (LOCAL), and DBP (LEGAL)

TEC 21.003 states, “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.” The current certification requirements inhibit the District’s ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career And Technical Education (CATE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, (Art), & Mathematics (STEM/STEAM) courses. In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses and obtain professional certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. The District does not wish to be exempted from any existing laws relating to teacher contracts or teacher benefits.

Innovation: The district maintains its commitment to hire certified professionals and will continue to seek employees with the necessary certifications for teaching and tutoring/intervention positions where required by state law. However, the flexibility in

allowing Celina ISD to make local decisions about teacher certification would provide a better opportunity to offer innovation in course selections for CTE courses as well as hard-to-fill positions and high demand dual credit courses.

B. Uniform School Calendar

Applicable Provisions from the Texas Education Code: TEC 25.0811 and TEC 25.0812

Policies that may be affected: EB (LEGAL) and EB (LOCAL)

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. TEC Section 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Innovation: This flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students, parents, and our local community. This empowers the district to increase college and career readiness and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. By having the flexibility in beginning instruction before the 4th Monday of August, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June. Removing the state required uniform school start date would allow the district the flexibility to start instruction as a shortened school week, easing the transition for students. This will also allow for flexible professional development scheduling for district staff.

C. Probationary Contracts

Applicable Provisions from the Texas Education Code: TEC 21.102(b)

Policies that may be affected: DCA (LEGAL)

Texas Education Code Section 21.102(b) states 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 preceding employment with the district.” Many times this period of time is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end-of-the-year classroom and student data.

Innovation: The 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.

D. Class Size Requirements for Elementary grades

Applicable Provisions from the Texas Education Code: TEC 25.111, TEC 25.112, and TEC 25.113

Policies that may be affected: EEB (LEGAL), BF (LEGAL), and EHAA (LEGAL)

TEC 25.111 requires districts “employ a sufficient number of teachers certified to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for every 20 students in average daily attendance except as provided by section 25.112.” TEC 25.112 prohibits a school district from enrolling more than 22 students for Kindergarten - fourth-grade classes unless a school district receives an exemption through the TEA waiver process. TEC 25.113 requires a district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits as stated within the Code. According to these statutes, districts are required to maintain a 22:1 student to teacher ratio for Kindergarten through fourth grade. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

Innovation: The district seeks to locally monitor and maintain appropriate class size without the necessity of waivers. This exemption allows Celina ISD to utilize a more flexible class size approach based on student needs and time of year. District staffing ratios for Prekindergarten - Fourth grade are based off of a 22:1 student to teacher ratio. This exemption would allow minimal disruption to the learning environment and provide relief from the reporting currently required by state law. Additionally, the exemption affords the district the opportunity to consider other variables in the best interest of students such as, the value of attending a neighborhood school, timing in the school year, available classroom space and/or the need for another teacher or teacher aide.

E. Peace Officers/ Servicemembers

Applicable Provisions from the Texas Education Code: TEC 25.0344

Policies that may be affected: FDA (LEGAL), and FDA (LOCAL)

TEC 25.0344 On request of a peace officer or servicemember who is a parent of or person standing in parental relation to a student, the board of trustees of a school district or the board's designee shall transfer the student to another district campus or to another school district under an agreement under Section 25.035. A transfer under this section must be to the campus or school district, as applicable, selected by the peace officer or servicemember making the request. A school district is not required to provide transportation to a student who transfers to another campus or school district under this section.

Innovation: As a fast-growth school district, Celina ISD is faced with the challenge of adequately staffing and resourcing our campuses. We welcome the opportunity to serve and educate the children of Peace Officers and Servicemembers. In an effort to mitigate any potential enrollment and/or staffing burdens, students of Peace Officers and Servicemembers will be enrolled into the District utilizing our established student transfer process to determine campus placement. Additionally, all transfer students would remain subject to the established Celina ISD student transfer guidelines.

F. Parental Options for Student Retention

Applicable Provisions from the Texas Education Code: TEC 28.02124

Policies that may be affected: FDA (LEGAL), and FDA (LOCAL)

TEC 28.02124 A parent or guardian may elect for a student to:

- (1) repeat prekindergarten;
- (2) enroll in prekindergarten, if the student would have been eligible to enroll in prekindergarten during the previous school year under Section 29.153(b) and the student has not yet enrolled in kindergarten;
- (3) repeat kindergarten;
- (4) enroll in kindergarten, if the student would have been eligible to enroll in kindergarten in the previous school year and has not yet enrolled in first grade; or
- (5) for grades one through eight, repeat the grade in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year.

Innovation: Celina ISD supports a parent's right to determine grade placement in accordance with TEC 28.02124. Additionally, Celina ISD believes students have their educational and developmental needs best served through strong partnerships with parents. Therefore, prior to a parent exercising their right to retention, Celina ISD seeks to require a campus-based Grade Placement Review (GPR) to facilitate the district in partnering with parents/guardians to make the most appropriate academic placement for students.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses and departments. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.