

# Colmesneil

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



### Local Innovation Plan 2017-2021

HB 1842, of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session,  
allows Texas districts to qualify as a District of Innovation.  
Districts of Innovation are able to gain local control of certain operations  
that are currently under the control of the Texas Education Agency.

# TIMELINE OF EVENTS

## **Tuesday, March 7, 2017 – 9:30am, Superintendent Office**

Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss preliminary thoughts and to begin identifying possible members of the District of Innovation Committee

## **Monday, March 13, 2017 – 9:00am, Superintendent Office**

Meeting with administrative staff to further discuss the designation and to identify possible member of the District of Innovation Committee

## **Tuesday, March 21, 2017 – 7:00pm**

Board of Trustees approval of a resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to be designated a District of Innovation (TEC 12A.001 (c)(1))

## **Monday, March 27, 2017 – 6:30 pm**

Public hearing to explain the process of becoming a District of Innovation and to hear from the community (TEC 12A.002 (b)(2), 12A.003)

Board of Trustee approval to pursue the designation of District of Innovation, and the appointment of a committee to develop a plan (TEC 12A.002 (b)(2), 12A.003)

## **Thursday, March 30, 2016 – 3:30pm, CHS Library**

Initial meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

## **Thursday, April 6, 2017 – 3:30pm, CHS Library**

Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

## **Friday, April 7, 2017 – 8:00am**

Draft District of Innovation Plan posted to the CISD website for 30 days (TEC 12A.005 (a)(1))

## **Friday, April 7, 2017 – 10:00am**

Commissioner notified of Board's intent to vote on the District of Innovation Plan

## **Monday, April 17, 2017 – 3:30 CHS Library**

District Leadership Team Public Meeting (TEC 12A.005(a)(3))

Approval of Final Plan by District Leadership Team

## **Tuesday, April 18, 2017 – 11:00am**

Finalized District of Innovation Plan posted to the CISD website for 30 days (TEC 12A.005 (a)(1))

## **Monday, May 22, 2017 – 7:00pm, CISD High School Library**

Board approval of the District of Innovation Plan by at least a 2/3 majority (TEC 12A.005 (a)(1))

District of Innovation Plan sent to Commissioner (TEC 12A.005 (a)(2))

# DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE

## NAME

## COMMITTEE POSITION

Twyla Darder	Board of Trustees Representative
Angela Matterson	Superintendent
Walter McAlpin	Principal, High School
Pamela Bruton	HS Assistant Principal / Counselor
Yvette Carlton	Elementary Principal
Kathy Gobert	Director of Technology
Charisse Gregory	Teacher, High School
Katie Mouton	Teacher, High School
Erika Myers	Teacher, Elementary
Shonda Lindsey	Teacher, Elementary
Susan Adaway	Teacher, Elementary
Lydia Jackson	Parent / Community Member
Mandy Patillo	Parent / Community Member
Dena Settlocker	Parent / Community Member
Michele Marshall	Health / SHAC Representative

# CISD INNOVATION PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code.

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Flexibility:** Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from certain mandates including the uniform school start date and required minutes of instruction.
- **Local control:** Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Autonomy:** Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

On March 21, 2017, the Colmesneil Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to explore the development of a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On March 27, 2017, the Board appointed a 14-member District of Innovation Committee ("Committee") comprised of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators. The Committee met on March 30, 2017, and April 6, 2017, to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). The Committee met again on April 17, 2017, to conduct a public forum and accept input on the proposed District of Innovation Plan. Based on the input received from the community, the Committee made adjustments to the plan, and then approved the plan by a unanimous vote. The CISD Board of Trustees will consider the Plan at its meeting on May 22, 2017.

## TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning July 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2021, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board will not extend the term of this Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

## **AREAS OF INNOVATION**

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

### **1. School Start and End Date**

*Exemption from: TEC §25.0811; TEC §25.0812*

*Related Board Policies: EB LEGAL*

#### ***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan***

*TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.*

*Previously, districts had the option of applying to TEA for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.*

#### **Innovation Strategies**

- a. Relief from the statute will allow CISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minutes requirement, rather than days.
- b. Alignment of the district calendar with advanced placement exams, and STAAR timelines.
- c. Provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar in order to be responsive to community needs.

### **2. Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size Reporting Requirement**

*Exemption from: TEC 25.112; TEC 25.113*

*Related Board Policies: EEB LEGAL/LOCAL*

#### ***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan***

*TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. This is a bureaucratic step that serves no purpose.*

*TEC 25.113 requires school districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. In many cases, the class has returned to a smaller student to teacher ratio before the waiver is even approved negating the need for this notice.*

**Innovation Strategies:**

a. CISD believes in a low student to teacher ratio in all of its classrooms. The District has a goal of 22:1 in K-4 and 24:1 in 5-12. CISD will begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of at least 22:1 or less in each K-4 homeroom class. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees. Decisions regarding appropriate student to teacher ratios will be made at the local level, taking into consideration the age and grade level of the students, the subject matter of the class, the needs of individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.

b. A TEA waiver request will not be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

c. Parents of students in K-4 classrooms that exceed a ratio of 22:1 will continued to be notified as per TEC 25.113.

**3. Teacher Certification**

*Exemption from: TEC §21.003; TEC §21.053; TEC §21.055; TEC §21.057*

*Relevant Board Policies: DBA LEGAL/LOCAL; DK LEGAL/LOCAL*

***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan***

*TEC 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.*

*In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board for Educator Certification. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.*

*TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.*

*TEC 21.055 states that if a teacher is not certified, the District may issue a teaching permit to employ the individual. This process requires notice to the Commissioner and its usefulness is extremely limited. Additionally, the language of this section could be construed to prohibit the issuance of a local teaching certificate.*

*TEC 21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days.*

### **Innovation Strategies**

a. The District will maintain its current expectations for employee certification. The District will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the District will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

b. For grades 5-12, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow an already certified teacher to teach a course or grade level for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject.

c. An individual with experience in the content of an elective course could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or elective course through a local teaching certificate. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials or life experience the teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Examples: an experienced homebuilder teaching a building trades course, a licensed corrections officer teaching a criminal justice course, or a retired CPA teaching an entry level accounting course. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will and subject to the teacher evaluation system in place for certified staff.

d. Whenever possible, instructional planning for the uncertified teacher's course will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. Uncertified teachers will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development or instructional resources, or other supports.

e. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following the assignment.

f. Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.

### **4. Probationary Contracts**

*Exemption from: TEC 21.102(b)*

*Relevant Board Policies: DCA LEGAL*

#### ***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan***

*For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.*

### **Innovation Strategies**

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. All other teachers hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC 21.102(c).

## **5. Professional Development / Mentor Teachers**

*Exemption from: TEC 21.451; TEC 21.458*

*Relevant Board Policies: DEAA LEGAL*

### ***Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan***

*TEC 21.451 prescribes staff development requirements for educators. These requirements impede the District's ability to provide timely professional development to employees based on newly emerging issues, data, and student needs.*

*TEC 21.458 sets eligibility requirements for teacher mentors and mentees. This provision states that the district may only assign a mentor to a teacher with less than two years of teaching experience, despite the fact that a teacher at any level of experience may benefit from a mentor-mentee relationship. The District needs the flexibility to assign mentors to more experienced teachers in need of assistance. The statute also sets eligibility requirements for mentor teachers, which limits the available pool of mentor teachers.*

### **Innovation Strategies**

- a. The District will exercise local discretion in determining the areas of need, content, duration, and frequency for professional development for its instructional and non-instructional staff.
- b. The District will exercise local discretion in assigning teachers to serve as mentors based on a variety of factors, including experience, knowledge, and areas of instruction targeted for improvement or innovation.