

***Chico Independent School District***

***Local Innovation Plan***

***2021-2026***

***Adopted: August 16, 2021***

***Amendment Board Approved: April 21, 2022***

***Amendment Board Approved: March 25, 2024***



***A Commitment to Excellence***

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## INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to amend certain state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations. Chico ISD (CISD) intends to follow the Texas Education Code in all other areas. CISD's local Innovation Plan is comprehensive and touches numerous areas in the TEC, and because CISD seeks to maximize local control of educational decisions for students, CISD seeks exemption from the permissible provisions of the TEC included and explained in this Local Innovation Plan. CISD's Local Innovation Plan will renew with the 2021-2022 school year and conclude at the end of the 2025-2026 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the CISD Board of Trustees in accordance with HB1842 Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

On June 21, 2021, the Chico ISD District of Innovation Committee met to review the District of Innovation Plan. Amendments to the plan were recommended by the District of Innovation Committee to be presented to the CISD Board at its regular meeting on June 21, 2021 giving permission to notify the commissioner of its intent to vote on adoption of the proposed plan.

## CISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION COMMITTEE 2016

- Mr. Don Elsom, Superintendent
- Mr. Maury Martin, Special Program Director
- Mr. Randy Brawner, Principal
- Mrs. Karen Woodruff, Dean of Instruction
- Ms. Karen Decker, Principal
- Mrs. Pam Williams, Counselor
- Mr. John Mosley, SRO
- Mrs. Tina Elsom, Teacher
- Mrs. Debbie Spradlin, Teacher
- Mrs. Melissa Carter, Teacher
- Mrs. Lisa McDaniel, Teacher
- Ms. Tammy Buckner, Teacher
- Mr. Brent Hand, Teacher
- Mrs. Greta McDaniel, Community Member
- Mrs. Cyd Bailey, Parent
- Mrs. Michelle Slonaker, Community Member

## **CISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION RENEWAL COMMITTEE 2021**

- Mr. Randy Brawner, Superintendent
- Mrs. Deneise Walker, Administrative Assistant
- Ms. Karen Decker, Principal
- Ms. Chantelle Hood, Teacher
- Mrs. Mercy Stanfield, Parent
- Mr. Monte Sewell, Principal
- Ms. Tammy Buckner, Teacher
- Mrs. Jennifer Miller, Parent
- Mrs. Breann Cox, Principal
- Mrs. Mary Pace, Teacher
- Mrs. Thea Heflin, Parent
- Mr. Randy Miller, Athletic Director
- Mr. Brent Hand, Curriculum/Safety Director
- Ms. Tema Shelton, Community Member

## **CISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION AMENDMENT COMMITTEE 2022**

- Mr. Randy Brawner, Superintendent
- Mrs. Deneise Walker, Administrative Assistant
- Ms. Karen Decker, Principal
- Ms. Chantelle Hood, Teacher
- Mrs. Mercy Stanfield, Parent
- Mr. Monte Sewell, Principal
- Ms. Tammy Buckner, Teacher
- Mrs. Jennifer Miller, Parent
- Mrs. Breann Cox, Principal
- Mrs. Mary Pace, Teacher
- Mrs. Thea Heflin, Parent
- Mr. Randy Miller, Athletic Director
- Mr. Brent Hand, Curriculum/Safety Director
- Ms. Tema Shelton, Community Member

## **CISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION AMEMENT COMMITTEE 2024**

- Mr. Randy Brawner, Superintendent
- Mrs. Deneise Walker, Administrative Assistant
- Ms. Karen Decker, CES Principal
- Mrs. Jamie Gunstanson, CES Midlevel Management Intern
- Mrs. Belinda Bowyer, CES Teacher
- Mr. Phillip Liebel, CES Parent
- Mrs. Heather Stephens, CMS Principal
- Ms. Tammy Buckner, CMS Teacher
- Mrs. Labressa Howell, CMS Parent
- Mrs. Breann Cox, CHS Principal
- Mr. Shane Hedrick, CHS CTE Teacher
- Ms. Tammie Richey, CHS Teacher
- Ms. Thea Heflin, CHS Parent
- Mr. Jason Sanders, Athletic Director
- Mr. Brent Hand, Curriculum/Safety Director
- Mrs. Lisa McDaniel, Special Program Director
- Mrs. Sheri Payne, Technology Director
- Mr. Jerry Stanfield, Community Member

## TIMELINE

December 15, 2016

Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation (TEC 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003). Board voted 7-0 to continue the process.

January 16, 2017

Board approval of Resolution that will begin the decision process (TEC 12A.001(c)(1). Board approval of District of Innovation Committee (DIC) (TEC12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003)

February 10, 2017

First meeting of DIC

February 16, 2017

Second meeting of DIC

February 20, 2017

Report on the progress of the committee to board. Draft plan presented and discussed.

February 22, 2017

Campus meetings to present the draft plan to the staff for their input and to discuss specific exemptions from the TEC as it related to HB 1842. Updates and revisions applied from this meeting to DOI.

February 28, 2017

Meeting of DOI. Vote taken for approval of final plan, with finalized updates and revisions made and submitted to Superintendent.

March 6, 2017

Posted information about CISD DOI to district website

March 8, 2017

District Staff Meeting to inform all staff and gain approval of finalized plan

March 9, 2017

District of Innovation Committee meets to approve final copy. All members viewed and signed in unanimous agreement the finalized DOI plan. DOI Committee Member's Signature document uploaded to final documents. Presentation to the Chico Board of Trustees pending.

March 20, 2017

Board votes to give notice of its intent to vote on a plan to become a district of innovation to TEA



March 21, 2017

Proposed Chico ISD District of Innovation Plan posted to  
[www.chicoisdtx.net](http://www.chicoisdtx.net)

April 17, 2017

Board of Trustees votes on the CISD proposed District of Innovation Plan  
(Final vote 7-0) (TEC 12A.005(b))

April 18, 2017

District of Innovation Plan along with the TEA form relating to the specific  
TEC exemptions in the plan is submitted to TEA and the Commissioner

June 10, 2021

District of Innovation Planning Committee met to discuss the Local  
Innovation Plan procedures and possible areas of need to be addressed in a  
Local Innovation Plan for CISD.

June 21, 2021

District Advisory Committee conducts a public meeting to consider final  
version of the CISD Local Innovation Plan

June 21, 2021

Board to grant approval to notify the Texas Commissioner of Education of  
intent to vote on adopting CISD's final Local Innovation Plan.

June 22, 2021

Proposed CISD District of Innovation Plan posted on the CISD website.  
Notice of Intent emailed to TEA and the Commissioner.

August 16, 2021

Proposed CISD Local Innovation Plan presented to the CISD Board of  
Trustees for consideration and approval. (Approved 6-0)

August 17, 2021

TEA and the Commissioner notified of Board of Trustee approval of DOI  
Plan. A copy of the plan was posted on the district website.

April 21, 2022

Chico ISD Board of Trustees approved the Amendment to the DOI Plan and  
authorized notification to TEA and the Commissioner.

April 22, 2022

TEA and the Commissioner notified of the Chico ISD Board approving the  
DOI Amendment

February 2, 2024

District of Innovation Amendment Committee met to discuss the addition of  
Removal of Unruly Visitors, SHAC, Retire/Rehire Minimum Salary,  
Nicotine E-Cigarettes and School Counselor Responsibilities to the Chico

## ISD Plan

March 22 , 2024

District of Innovation Committee hosts a Public Meeting to consider the final version of the proposed plan and approve the plan by a majority vote of the committee members.

March 25 , 2024

The Chico ISD Board of Trustees meet to discuss and approve the proposed DOI plan.

March 26 ,2024

The district notifies the commissioner of approval of the plan along with a list of approved TEC exemptions.

March 26, 2024

A copy of the local innovation plan is posted on the district website.

March 26, 2024

The district provided a copy (link) of the current innovation plan to the TEA for posting on the agency website.

## CISD LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

### I. **Teacher Certification** *(adopted 4/17/2017)*

*(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (TEC 21.003, 21.053, 21.057)*

#### **Currently**

*TEC 21.003 states 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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board for Educator Certification for an emergency certification. TEA then approves or denies this request.*

*TEC 21.053 states a teacher must present his/her certificate to the District before an employment contract will be binding. This prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.*

*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 instructional days.*

#### **Proposed**

This exemption from the current state teacher certification requirements that inhibit the CISD's ability to hire teachers for hard-to-fill teaching positions will allow the district to establish local qualification and training requirements. This will enrich applicant pools in specific content areas if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses. In addition, this exemption will afford the District the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

#### **Local Guidelines**

1. CISD will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and is committed to hiring individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question. 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.
2. In core classes, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject and/or grade level out of their field, however, Special Education and Bilingual Teachers must be certified in those areas. The applicant must have a bachelor's degree with a minimum of 12 college hours in the subject they will teach.
3. In elective classes, including CTE classes, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow an individual to teach a subject or specific course. The principal must specify credentials, work experience, or life experience the individual possesses that would qualify them to teach the proposed subject.
4. Teachers teaching outside of their certification area will be provided teacher mentoring, increased observations and feedback, professional development, or other supports.
5. The superintendent will report this action to the Board at the first board meeting following the assignment.

## **II. Probationary Contracts** (adopted 4/17/2017) (DCA LEGAL) (TEC 21.102(b))

### **Currently**

*TEC 21.102(b) states a 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.*

### **Proposed**

This exemption from probationary contracts being limited to one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher or administrator in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district will allow CISD extended time for the evaluation and training of new personnel. CISD is committed to effectively managing teacher contracts and this exemption will provide the district with the flexibility to keep all professional employees new to the district on probationary contracts for a maximum permissible period of three school years.

### **Local Guidelines**

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

**III. Minimum Minutes of Instruction** (adopted 4/17/2017)  
(EB LEGAL/LOCAL, EC LEGAL/LOCAL) (TEC 25.081, TEC 25.082)

**Currently**

*TEC 25.081 strikes language requiring 180 days of instruction and requires districts and charter schools to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction (including intermissions and recess). The bill also allows school districts and charter schools to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.*

**Proposed**

This exemption will provide CISD the flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction will assist with personalizing learning to better meet individual student needs. It also has the added benefit of allowing the possibility of an altered length of a school day, which may include, for example, a later start/early release time to accommodate additional professional development/collaboration opportunities professional and support staff in our district.

**Local Guidelines**

1. CISD will gather input from the DAC and campus principals/staff to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with required instructional minutes requirement.
2. The proposed calendar will be posted for public comment prior to Board approval. The board adopted calendar will comply with the 75,600 state required minutes but will maintain the ability to add additional minutes, if necessary, due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.

#### **IV. Uniform School Start Date** *(adopted 4/17/2017)* *(EB LEGAL) (TEC 25.0811)*

##### **Currently**

*TEC 25.0811 states a school district may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. However, for many years districts had the option of applying for a waiver to adopt an earlier start date.*

##### **Proposed**

This exemption will allow CISD the flexibility to make a local decision on each school year start date to best meet the needs of the students and local community. This empowers CISD to personalize learning, increase college, career and military readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. In addition, by having the flexibility in the start and end of the school year, students will be able to enroll in college courses that start in early June, thereby increasing college, career and military readiness.

##### **Local Guidelines**

1. CISD will gather input from the DAC and campus principals/staff to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with required instructional minutes requirements.
2. The start date of each school year will be determined with input from the staff and community. The start date may occur on or after the second Monday of August based on input.
3. Alignment of the district calendar with neighboring districts, dual credit college partners, and STAAR timelines will be considered.
4. The proposed calendar will be posted to public comment prior to Board approval.

**V. 90 Percent Attendance Rule** (Renewal- Adopted 8/16/2021)  
(FEC LOCAL) (TEC 25.092)

**Currently**

*TEC 25.092 currently requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days in order to earn credit. School Attendance Committees may consider extenuating circumstances in order to reinstate credit or provide opportunities for students to make up time. .*

**Proposed**

The exemption from the 90 percent attendance rule will not penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances.

The requested exemption from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or change existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

**Local Guidelines**

1. CISD will continue to encourage students to be in attendance for a minimum of 90% of the instructional time during a given semester.
2. When considering percentage of attendance, the principal and counselor will not consider school-sponsored extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances such as religious exemptions or serious illness.
3. If the student otherwise is present for less than 90% of instruction, the school will convene an Attendance Committee in order to consider a plan for recovery of time and/or credit as specified in TEC 25.092.

**VI. Class Size Ratio** *(Renewal- Adopted 8/16/2021)*  
*(EEB LEGAL) (TEC 25.112) (TEC 25.113)*

**Currently**

*TEC 25.112 requires Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.*

*TEC 25.113 requires a letter is sent home to parents in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.*

**Proposed**

This exemption allows CISD the time to staff campuses with effective teachers by granting local control over class size ratios. Small class sizes enable effective teachers to provide more individualized attention to each student.

**Local Guidelines**

1. CISD will make every attempt to 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.
2. In the event that any class size in grades K-4 reaches a ratio greater than 22:1 during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board. 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 the individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.
3. In the event that any class size in grades K-4 reaches a ratio of 24:1 or greater during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board. The Board will take action to reduce the student to teach ratio for that grade level.
4. A TEA waiver request will not be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
5. Parents of students in K-4 classrooms that exceed a ratio of 22:1 will continue to be notified as per TEC 25.113.



**VII. Student Discipline Provisions** (Renewal- Adopted 8/16/2021)  
(FO LEGAL/LOCAL) (TEC 37.0012)

**Currently**

*TEC 37.0012 requires the designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and providing notice of disciplinary actions to parents.*

**Proposed**

Campus principals and assistant principals already serve in this capacity. Naming an additional Campus Behavior Coordinators would not benefit the district.

**Local Guidelines**

1. CISD will maintain administrative staff on each campus to handle the duties outlined in TEC 37.0012 for the Campus Behavior Coordinator. The Board will make local decisions as to the ratio of administrators to the number of students on each campus.
2. Campus administrators will be charged with the duties of maintaining student discipline and contacting parents of disciplinary action as outlined in TEC 37.0012.

**VIII. Interdistrict Transfers** (Renewal- Adopted 8/16/2021)  
(FDA LOCAL) (TEC 25.036)

***Currently***

TEC 25.036 states that students attending a district through an interdistrict transfer may apply for transfer annually. This is interpreted that the interdistrict transfer must be for a term of one school year.

***Proposed***

On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Chico ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment.

***Local Guidelines***

1. CISD will continue to accept transfers as space and local policy allows.
2. An interdistrict transfer student may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion.
3. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

**IX. Teacher Contract Days** *(Amendment Adopted 4/21/2022)*  
*(DCB LEGAL, DCB Local) (Ed. Code 21.401)*

***Currently***

TEC 21.401 currently requires a contract between the District and an educator to be for a minimum of 10 months. Additionally, an educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

***Proposed***

This proposal reduces teacher contract days from 187 with no effect on teacher salaries. This stems from an attempt to provide flexibility to better align teacher service days to instructional days.

***Local Guidelines***

1. This proposal will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
2. This proposal should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts.
3. This proposal will significantly improve teacher morale.
4. This proposal will provide teachers with more opportunities during the year to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

**X. Removal of Unruly Visitors** *(Amendment Adopted 3/25/2024)*  
*(GKA LEGAL) (TEC 37.105)*

***Currently***

TEC 37.105, applies to ejecting unruly visitors from campuses and school events.

In 2017, the Texas Legislature changed the law on how school administrators can eject unruly guests from school events. This applies to parents and community members, not students. Under the law, the guest must be given a warning before he or she is ejected. Upon ejection, the guest must also be given notice of how he/she can appeal the ejection.

***Proposed***

This exemption seeks to allow designated staff members the authority to remove parents or visitors whose behavior is deemed inappropriate without warning or written notice.

## **XI. School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) Meetings** *(Amendment Adopted 3/25/2024)*

*(BDF LEGAL) (Ed. Code 28.004(d-1))*

### ***Currently***

TEC 28.001(d-1), (a) The board of trustees of each school district shall establish a local school health advisory council to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the district's health education instruction. (b) A school district must consider the recommendations of the local school health advisory council before changing the district's health education curriculum or instruction.

Texas Education Code Section 28.004 further requires the health advisory council to meet at least four times each year and establishes numerous health requirements for curriculum.

### ***Proposed***

Because of the size of the District, this plan exempts the District from the entire statutory provisions above that requires the Board to establish a local school health advisory council. The District will implement this innovation as follows:

- The District level committee will form a subcommittee of at least five (5) District stakeholders to serve as members of the subcommittee. Stakeholders may include parents, teachers, school nurse(s), counselors, administrators, and other community members, as needed. The subcommittee may develop regulations governing how meetings are conducted and who will serve as chair and co-chair, if appropriate.
- The subcommittee will be tasked with considering and making recommendations regarding the District's health education curriculum or instruction.
- The subcommittee will meet a minimum of twice per year – once in the Fall and once in the Spring.
- Following each meeting, the subcommittee will inform and make any recommendations to the District level committee.
- The District level committee will include the subcommittee's recommendations in its District Improvement Plan presented to the Board.
- This exemption directly supports the District's commitment to health education and instruction.

## **XII. Retire/Rehire Minimum Salary** *(Amendment Adopted 3/25/2024)*

*(DEA LEGAL) (Ed. Code 21.402)*

### ***Currently***

TEC 21.402, Districts must pay a retired teacher a salary based upon the TEA minimum salary pay scale. “Teacher” refers to a classroom teacher, full-time speech pathologist, full-time librarian, full-time counselor, and full-time school nurse.

Texas Education Code Section 21.402 further requires the district to pay a TRS surcharge. Therefore, a retire/rehire employee comes with a great financial burden.

### ***Proposed***

Chico ISD would like the option of hiring an experienced, well-vetted employee without an extra strain on the budget. Chico ISD would like the flexibility to hire eligible retired teachers at a negotiated salary that may be below the TEA minimum pay scale. The District would continue to pay the required surcharge.

### **XIII. Nicotine e-Cigarettes** *(Amendment Adopted 3/25/2024)*

*(DEA LEGAL) (Ed. Code 37.006 (C-2))*

#### ***Currently***

TEC 37.006 (C-2), requires districts to remove a student from class and place in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) provided by Section 37.008 if the student possesses, uses, sells, gives, or delivers to another person an e-cigarette, as defined by Section 161.081, Health and Safety Code.

#### ***Innovation Plan***

Chico ISD would like to make decisions regarding possession of nicotine e-cigarettes locally and based on the needs of the campus and students.

The district seeks to prioritize student education in all subject areas and provide instruction on the harmful effects of nicotine and general wellness. Under the provisions of the statute, students would be mandatorily placed at the DAEP for possessing an e-cigarette (vape) containing nicotine. However, a student possessing an actual cigarette containing nicotine would face other, lesser consequences under the student code of conduct.

The district believes that students possessing a nicotine e-cigarette (vape) would be best served by providing educational support regarding nicotine's harmful effects and appropriate consequences rather than removing the student to the DAEP. The removal of students to the DAEP, a much more restricting setting, is done cautiously. Our primary goal is to keep students at their assigned campuses with the teachers and staff who know them best and provide the necessary support.

#### ***Proposed***

Chico ISD wholly supports efforts to fight the rising use of e-cigarettes and vapes. However, we believe the District can more effectively combat these habits through proactive educational techniques and disciplinary options than mandatory DAEP placements.

The district believes students possessing e-cigarettes containing nicotine would be best supported by providing additional wellness education and remaining on the campus with appropriate consequences. The district is not requesting exempt provisions under Section 37.006, which require mandatory removal to DAEP for possessing controlled substances such as marijuana and THC.

#### **XIV. School Counselor Responsibilities** *(Amendment Adopted 3/25/2024)*

*(DP LEGAL, DP LOCAL) (Ed. Code 33.006)*

##### ***Currently***

TEC 33.006 requires school districts to adopt a policy that requires school counselors to allocate at least 80 percent of their total work time on duties that are components of a counseling program. According to this provision, the administration of assessment instruments or providing other assistance in connection with assessment instruments is not considered as time spent on counseling.

##### ***Innovation Plan***

Chico ISD would like to make any decision regarding counselor duties and allocation of work times to be locally determined based on student and staffing needs. This flexibility is needed to accomplish campus and district goals.

##### ***Proposed***

Chico ISD will delegate job duties based on student needs, current staffing, and campus goals.