

Chico Independent School District

P.O. Box 95
Chico, TX 76431
940-644-2220



Chico ISD

District of Innovation Plan

2017-2022

Introduction: During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 passed allowing Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation which would allow them to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Chico ISD is exercising this opportunity in order to gain more local control and will request the following exemptions from the Texas Education Code.

Term: Chico ISD's Innovation Plan will begin on April 24, 2017 and will conclude on April 24, 2022 unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Chico ISD Board of Trustees in accordance with HB 1842. If at any time within this 5 year plan other areas of exemptions are to be considered the Board of Trustees will nominate a new committee to consider new exemptions. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term as the original plan.

INNOVATIONS:

Goal 1:

School start date (TEC 25.08 11a)(EB LEGAL)

Statutes that relate to this goal:

- *TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction prior to the 4th Monday in August.*
- *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 the community interests in this matter.

Innovation Strategies:

- This exemption will allow Chico ISD the flexibility to make a local decision on each school year start date to best meet the needs of the students and local community.
- Chico ISD will seek a start date that closely mirrors that of neighboring districts with which we share services.
- An earlier start date will allow Chico ISD to end the semester prior to winter break aligning with Weatherford College enabling CISD students the flexibility to explore more post-secondary opportunities.
- An earlier start date will also allow CISD flexibility during the school year to provide teachers and students with needed training and tutorials.
- The earlier start date will also allow the district to schedule more parent involvement activities during the school year.
- An earlier start date allows for more instructional days prior to state mandated testing days.

Goal 2:

Length of Teacher Contracts (TEC 21.401)

Statutes that relate to this goal:

- *TEC 21.401 States that a teacher contract as a 10 month contract equivalent to 187 working days.*

Innovation Strategies:

- A reduction in the contract days of teachers at the current salary schedule would make Chico ISD salaries more competitive enhancing teacher recruitment efforts.
- A reduction in contract days will allow employees the flexibility during the summer months to seek out beneficial professional development opportunities.

Goal 3:

Length of School Day (TEC 25.082a) (SAAH 3.8.1)

Statutes that relate to this goal:

- *TEC 25.082a states that a school day must last a minimum of 7 hours each day including recess and intermissions.*
- *SAAH 3.8.1 states that a school day must be a minimum of 420 minutes including recess and intermissions. All school districts are currently subject to this requirement.*
- *The current rules allow no flexibility in the design of district and campus schedules.*

Innovation Strategies:

- The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to allow each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each campus. This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.
- This exemption has the added benefit of allowing for the possibility of an altered length of school day which may include for example a later start or an earlier release to accommodate professional development/collaboration opportunities for professional and support staff in our district.
- The exemption will also allow for flexibility in the length of certain school days in order to provide students with needed individualized instruction.
- This exemption will also allow the district flexibility in the length of certain school days to provide time for teachers to collaborate and conference with parents for the benefit of our students.

Goal 4:

Certification—General (TEC 21.003a)(DEA LEGAL)(DEA LOCAL)

Statutes that relate to this goal:

- *TEC 21.003a 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 as provided by Subchapter E.*

Innovation Strategies:

- This district understands the importance of hiring highly qualified teachers and instructors and it will make every effort to hire teachers and instructors who meet the highly qualified status as outlined by the State Board for Educator Certification. We believe that this exemption will allow us to tap into the potential primarily for more Career Readiness instructors and to fill high need positions that a person may have the skills for but lacks the Certification as issued by SBEC.
- The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach a subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations that create the need for this assignment should also be noted. This exemption will allow the district to establish local qualifications and training requirements for employees.
- This exemption will also allow the district to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, foreign languages, etc) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.

- This exemption will also allow the district to consider part time experienced professionals to teach courses on a contract basis. This should offer our students increased opportunity to pursue Career Technology Education and Science Technology Engineering Art and Mathematics classes and pursue trades.

Goal 5:

Teacher Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102b)

Statutes that relate to this goal:

- **(TEC 21.102b)** *currently states that a probationary contract may be renewed for an employee for a period of two additional school years. It gives an exception for those teachers who have been employed by a school district for 5 of the 8 years immediately preceding employment by the district.*

Innovation Strategies:

- The exemption from this mandate will allow that all new employees will be eligible to serve the probationary period of up to three years allowing the district more time to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance.
- The exemption from this mandate will allow administrators more time to collect objective data relating to student performance.
- This exemption will allow administrators the discretion to place any Chapter 21 employee on a probationary contract of up to three years if deemed necessary by the administration. A fourth year could be added if it is deemed necessary by the administration and it is agreed to by the employee.