

Chico Independent School District

Local Innovation Plan

2021-2026

Adopted: August 16, 2021

Amendment Board Approved: April 21, 2022



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 PLANNING COMMITTEE 2021-2022

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

TIMELINE

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.

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Proposed CISD Local Innovation Plan presented to the CISD Board of Trustees for consideration and approval.

CISD LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

I. Teacher Certification

(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

(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

(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 (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
(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

(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 teacher 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
(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

(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.

Teacher Contract Days

(DCB Legal, DCB Local) (Ed. Code 21.401)

Currently

Texas Education Code 21.401 currently requires a contract between the District and an educator to be for a minimum 10 month. 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.

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