

**Commerce ISD
District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)**

Name	Appointment
Charlie Alderman	Superintendent
Patricia Tremmel, Ed. D.	Assistant Superintendent
Diane Stegall	Commerce Elementary Principal
Lisa Palazzetti	A.C. Williams Principal
Shenequa Miller, Ed. D.	Commerce Middle School Principal
Steve Drummond	Commerce High School Principal
Amber Wagner	Elementary Teacher
Meagan Heath	Intermediate Teacher
Nick Smith	Middle School Teacher
Christi Coplin	High School Teacher
Bonnie Hunter	Parent/Business Representative
Amber Weaver	Parent/Business Owner
Kathy Myers	Director of Health Services

I. 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. On October 17, 2016, the Commerce 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 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 December 15, 2016 the Board appointed a 13- member District of Innovation District Advisory 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 January 4, 2017, and discussed and drafted the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan").

II. TERM

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning in 2017 and ending 2022, 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 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.

III. INNOVATIONS

The District proposes flexibility in the following areas:

A. Certification Required (TEC 21.003) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL) TEC 21.003

Texas Education code states that "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, Arts, & Mathematics (STEAM) courses.

Innovation Strategies:

In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses and obtain professional certifications, the District seeks to

- a. 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.
- b. Flexibility to establish its own teacher certification requirements. This affords the District the following advantages: Industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses. Greater number of CATE course offerings resulting in more opportunities for students. Realistic requirements for professionals transitioning from industry to teaching.
- c. Ability to employ part-time professionals to teach specialty courses.
- d. Identify required professional development for persons with industry experience in the areas of student management, instructional strategies, curriculum, and parent engagement.

B. Uniform School Calendar (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812) (EB LEGAL) (EB LOCAL)

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

Innovation Strategies:

Local control of the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages:

- a. Allows for a calendar that fits the local needs of our community.
- b. Allows the first and second semesters to be closer in the number of days of instruction.
- c. The goal is to improve the district attendance rate and student success through the flexibility in the calendar.

C. Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size (TEC 25.112a-g) (TEC 25.113a-b) (EEB LEGAL)

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 – 4 th Grade classes.

Innovation Strategies:

- a. CISD will begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per 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 and to the parents of the affected students.
- b. In the event that two or more K-4 th core classrooms reach 23:1 during the first grading period of the year, another teacher will be hired. If a K-4 core classroom reaches 23:1 after that time, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation. A teacher may be hired at any time during the school year if the campus principal and superintendent agree that it is in the best interest of the students to do so.
- c. A TEA waiver will not be filed when a K-4th classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

D. Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102) (DCA LEGAL)

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.

This time period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to state assessment results.

Innovation Strategies

- a. 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 from the last date of district employment.

E. Teacher and Principal Evaluation (DNA LEGAL, DNA LOCAL)(Ed. Code 21.203, 21.352, 213541)

Currently The state of Texas has used the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) teacher appraisal system since 1997. The state is issuing a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, that will be called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). The state has also developed a principal evaluation system, the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS.)

Innovation Strategies:

- a. CISD will have the option of a mutual consent of the teacher and the certified appraiser, the required 45 minutes of observation can be conducted in a shorter time segments. The time segments must aggregate to at least 45 minutes.
- b. CISD will develop a teacher evaluation system that would be a combination of PDAS, T-TESS, and other best practices to develop a local instrument that fits the needs and goals of CISD.
- c. CISD will develop a Principal evaluation system that would be a combination of T-PESS and PDAS, and other best practices to develop a local instrument that fits the needs and goals of CISD.
- d. CISD will have the option of local control to appraise less frequently than annually.
- e. These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Commerce ISD.

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.

District of Innovation Timeline

Tuesday, October 9th, 2016- Superintendent's Office

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

Monday, October 17, 2016- 7:00p.m., Board Room

Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation (TEC12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003)

Board approval of Resolution that will begin the decision process (TEC 12A.001 (c)(1))

Thursday, December 15, 2016- 7:00p.m., Board Room

Board approval of members of District of Innovation Committee (TEC 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003)

Wednesday, January 4, 2017- 5:00 p.m., – PD Room

First meeting of the District of Innovation Committee.

Tuesday, January 10, 2017 – 7:00p.m., Board Room

Informational Report to the Board on “Draft” plan of DOI

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

Posting of Draft Plan on District website for at least 30 days (TEC 12A.005(a)(1))

Notify the Commissioner of intent to adopt plan (TEC 12A.005(a)(2))

Monday, March 23, 2017 - 7:00 p.m.,Board Room

Board of Trustees considers to adopt the DOI plan

TBD

CISD District of Innovation Plan discussed at campus faculty meetings