



CROWLEY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

# **District of Innovation Plan 2017-2018**

Crowley Independent School District's *District of Innovation Advisory Committee* consist of the following members:

Shelley Alvine	Educator
Nancy Donahoo	Educator
Michael Frank	Educator
Sherry Gore	Educator
Christy Johnson-Cleveland	Educator
Mike Mundt	Educator
Amanda Pate	Educator
Nicole Pryor	Educator
Candra Rogers	Educator
Chris Sample	Educator
Gayle Samuels	Educator
Stefani Allen	Campus Administrator
Kimberly Buckhalton	Campus Administrator
Deidra Castro	Campus Administrator
Dr. Kim Scoggins	Campus Administrator
Pam Berry	District Administrator
Dr. David Priddy	District Administrator
Amber Townsend	District Administrator
Gary Grassia	Board Member
Mia Hall	Board Member
Ryan Ray	Board Member
Tamara Sanford	United Educators Association Rep
Bonnie Barksdale	Parent/Community Member
Dr. Stacy Burrell	Parent/Community Member
Liz Pinon	Parent/Community Member
Precious Poullard	Parent/Community Member
Chaka Powers	Parent/Community Member
Dr. Ernest Thomas	Parent/Community Member
Todd Treat	Parent/Community Member
Natosha Tucker	Parent/Community Member

## INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, allows Texas public schools with sufficient academic ratings to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. The allowable exemptions are for those sections of code that do not apply to charter or private schools in an attempt to allow for more flexibility and local control for innovative programming.

To obtain exemptions, the District must create a Local Innovation Plan detailing the code requirements that inhibit the goals of the District and the benefits to the District expected from the exemption.

## TERM

The five-year plan will begin with the 2017-2018 school year and terminate at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless amended, rescinded or renewed by the Innovation Committee and the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. Any recommended plan changes will be posted to the District website for 30 days and require the approval of the Innovation Committee, DWEIC and the Board of Trustees.

The Innovation Committee will review the plan annually to confirm consistent alignment with the needs of the District.

## TIMELINE

### December 1, 2016- 6:00pm Board Meeting

- Board approved Resolution for district to consider designation as a District of Innovation
- Posted notice of Public Hearing to consider whether district should develop an Innovation Plan

### December 15, 2016- 6:00pm Board Meeting

- Public Hearing held at Board Meeting

### December 15, 2016- 6:00pm Board Meeting

- Board appointed Innovation Advisory Committee

### February 6, 2017-4:30pm CISD Board Room

- Innovation Committee meeting held February 6, 2017

## *Timeline (cont'd)*

### February 7, 2017-4:30pm CISD Board Room

- DWEIC Committee meeting held February 7, 2017

### February 20, 2017-4:30pm CISD Board Room

- Innovation Committee meeting held February 20, 2017

## STRATEGIC PLAN

The local innovation plan is guided by and aligned with Crowley Independent School District's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan.

### Mission Statement

Crowley ISD provides students with excellence in education so that all students achieve their full potential.

### Vision Statement

Crowley ISD will provide all students with a world-class, high-quality education where students are inspired to succeed in the global community.

### Strategic Planning Goals

- Improve Student Achievement for All
- Provide Safe, Secure and Nurturing Environment
- Support Parent and Community Partnerships
- Provide a Quality Workforce in a Positive Work Environment
- Ensure Effective and Efficient Use of Resources

## INNOVATION PLAN

The CISD School Board and the Local Innovation Committee considered all areas available for local innovation and created a plan in the best interests of the District and its students that centers around the following areas:

## **First and Last Day of School**

TEC Code: Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance

**§25.0811 First Day of Instruction** (a) A school district may not begin instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August, unless the school operates year-round, or if district has more than 190,000 students: the days are financed by local funds, or the campus is under comprehensive reform, or the majority of the students at the campus(es) are educationally disadvantaged.

**§25.0812 Last Day of Instruction** (b) A school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

### **❖ Rationale for the Exemption:**

Restricting school start date to the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August operationally challenges CISD because the 75,600 instructional minutes must be calendared between the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August and generally late May due to constraints of the venue contract for HS graduation.

### **❖ Benefit of Exemption for CISD:**

Flexibility of the school calendar would offer the District the following advantages:

1. Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules
2. Alignment of calendar with TCC, Dual Credit, Advanced Placement exams and STAAR/EOC timelines
3. Ensure hour/seat time requirements for certification courses
4. Provide flexibility for innovative educational models, including but not limited to summer programming for identified populations
5. Provide flexibility to the Calendar Committee in developing the school calendar
6. Provide flexibility for professional development opportunities

### **❖ Local Guidelines:**

The district will have the flexibility to designate the first day of school each year. The calendar exemption does not affect the number of contract days for teachers which will remain the same.

## **Implementation**

CISD Local 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. Adjustment to the Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.



**District of Innovation Amendments**  
*Approved – May 31, 2018*

## **Background**

The Crowley ISD Board of Trustees chose to explore possible exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) through the District of Innovation Process. This opportunity is designed to allow the district flexibility in creating new opportunities to help us meet our mission of providing students with excellence in education so that all students achieve their full potential.

In a resolution passed by the School Board on December 1, 2016, Trustees voted unanimously (6-0) to initiate the process to consider becoming a District of Innovation.

An advisory committee appointed by the school board approved a District of Innovation Plan on February 20, 2017. That plan was posted online for 30 days before going to the school board for final approval on March 30, 2017.

The five-year plan began with the 2017-18 school year and will terminate at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless amended, rescinded or renewed by the advisory committee and school board. Any recommended plan changes will be posted to the district website for 30 days and require the approval of the advisory committee, DWEIC and school board.

The advisory committee met April 10, 2018 to review the current plan and proposed the following amendments:

## **Amendments**

1. Teacher Certification and Required Field-Based Experience (*page 3*)
2. Kindergarten Start Age (*page 4*)

The amendments were also reviewed by DWEIC and posted online on April 27, 2018 for 30 days to allow for input from parents, staff, students and community members.

The amendments were approved unanimously by the school board on May 31, 2018.

## Current District of Innovation Plan

Approved March 30, 2017

Available online at [www.crowleyisdtx.org/DistrictOfInnovation](http://www.crowleyisdtx.org/DistrictOfInnovation)

### **First and Last Day of School**

**§25.0811 First Day of Instruction** (a) A school district may not begin instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August, unless the school operates year-round, or if district has more than 190,000 students: the days are financed by local funds, or the campus is under comprehensive reform, or the majority of the students at the campus(es) are educationally disadvantaged.

**§25.0812 Last Day of Instruction** (b) A school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

#### ❖ **Rationale for the Exemption:**

Restricting school start date to the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August operationally challenges CISD because the 75,600 instructional minutes must be calendared between the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in August and generally late May due to constraints of the venue contract for HS graduation.

#### ❖ **Benefit of Exemption for CISD:**

Flexibility of the school calendar would offer the District the following advantages:

1. Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules
2. Alignment of calendar with TCC, Dual Credit, Advanced Placement exams and STAAR/EOC timelines
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#### ❖ **Local Guidelines:**

The district will have the flexibility to designate the first day of school each year. The calendar exemption does not affect the number of contract days for teachers which will remain the same.

## Amendments

Approved May 31, 2018

1. Teacher Certification and Required Field-based Experience
2. Kindergarten Start Age

### **1. Teacher Certification and Required Field-based Experience**

***TEC §21.003 Certification Required*** 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.

***TEC §21.051 Required Field-based Experience*** Before a school district may employ a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, the candidate must complete at least 15 hours of field-based experience in which the candidate is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities under supervision at a public school campus accredited or approved for the purpose by the agency or a private school recognized or approved for the purpose by the agency.

#### **❖ Rationale for the Exemption**

- The teacher certification requirements enacted in these statutes inhibit the District's ability to hire highly-skilled individuals to teach career and technical education (CTE) courses and other non-traditional, industry-based courses.
- The availability of certified individuals to teach these CTE and other non-traditional, industry-based courses is limited.
- This exemption would allow the District to hire teachers for hard-to-fill positions in CTE and other non-traditional, industry-based courses.

#### **❖ Benefit of Exemption for CISD**

- This exemption would provide the District flexibility to fill positions in CTE and other non-traditional, industry-based courses by hiring qualified professionals in certain trades and vocations if certified teachers are not available.

#### **❖ Local Guidelines**

- Local qualifications and training requirements would be established.
- Requests to fill a CTE teaching position with a non-certified teacher in CTE courses or other non-traditional, industry based courses would be submitted to the superintendent or designee for approval.
- The written request must outline the reason for the request and document what credentials the applicant possesses which would qualify this individual and would be submitted by the principal to the superintendent or designee for approval.



## **2. Kindergarten Start Age**

***TEC §29.151 Free Kindergarten*** The board of trustees of each school district shall establish and maintain one or more kindergartens for the training of children residing in the district who are at least five years of age on September 1 of the school year.

### **❖ Rationale for the Exemption**

- Children mature and demonstrate readiness for school at varying rates, and their social/emotional development can be affected by a wide range of factors.
- The September 1 deadline for entering public kindergarten does not provide the flexibility needed for the District to serve students who are ready for school slightly earlier than the established date.
- Parents/guardians of students who are ready for kindergarten curriculum and learning environments are enrolling their children in private kindergarten or other educational institutions.

### **❖ Benefit of Exemption for CISD**

- This exemption provides students who are equipped academically and socially to begin instruction in kindergarten programs without penalizing them because of age.
- This will provide the flexibility to enroll sooner and immerse students in an academic learning environment that provides a strong foundation in early literacy and growth development.
- Students who are ready for school can develop a strong foundation of literacy and numeracy to prevent potential gaps in achievement and accelerate their learning.

### **❖ Local Guidelines**

- The District will establish a local committee to develop and recommend a local criteria for kindergarten readiness and the creation of the Early Kindergarten Start program to the Superintendent and Board of Trustees.



## District of Innovation Amendment

*Approved – May 27, 2021*

### **Background**

The Crowley ISD Board of Trustees chose to explore possible exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) through the District of Innovation Process. This opportunity is designed to allow the district flexibility in creating new opportunities to help us meet our mission of providing students with excellence in education so that all students achieve their full potential.

In a resolution passed by the School Board on December 1, 2016, Trustees voted unanimously (6-0) to initiate the process to consider becoming a District of Innovation.

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Through this amendment, we seek to obtain broader exemption from T.E.C. §22.004(i), which precludes a school district from providing an alternative uniform group health coverage program after the school district implements coverages under Chapter 1579.

### **Amendment**

1. T.E.C. §22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to T.E.C. §12A.004 or the list of Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309. Therefore, in order to have the option to offer additional benefits options to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs, the district hereby amends the District of Innovation Plan to exempt the district from the health insurance requirements in T.E.C. §22.004(i).

The amendment was reviewed by the committee May 11, 2021 and posted online April 27, 2021 for 30 days to allow for input from parents, staff, students and community members.

The amendment was approved unanimously by the school board on May 27, 2021 (7-0).