



**Colorado Independent School District
District of Innovation Plan
2017-2018**

The 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school district to become Districts of Innovation and thus permitting exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In an effort to transform systemic improvement to better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all 21st century stakeholders, including student, staff, parents and community members, Colorado ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation. This distinction allows the District increased local control over District operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders.

A resolution to initiate the process of Colorado ISD becoming a District of Innovation was adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 16, 2016. At such time, a District of Innovation Team was established and charged with creating a cohesive local innovative plan to improve the outcomes of all stakeholders. The District Innovation Team considered multiple data points in an effort to construct a local innovation plan to bring about systemic change to Colorado ISD.

The Colorado ISD District Local Innovation Plan is for five years, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year and ending the 2021-2022 school year. The Local Innovation Plan may be terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees at any time in accordance with the law. The District of Innovation will monitor the effectiveness of the Local Innovation Plan and provide updates and/or necessary modifications to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.

Timeline

Timeline	Activity/Task	Due Date
December	Board Meeting-Colorado ISD Board of Trustees discusses rules and process for being an Innovation District	December 16, 2016
	Board Meeting – Board votes to adopt Resolution to initiate consideration for being an Innovation District	December 16,2016
	Board Meeting – Colorado ISD Board holds Public Hearing, appoints the District Innovation Team to develop a Local Innovation Plan	December 16, 2016
January	CISD District Innovation Team meets to develop the plan for the school district	January 4, 2016
	District Level Advisory Committee meets to Review /Reject/Approve the Local Innovation Plan as presented by the District Innovation Team	January 5, 2016
	Board Meeting – Colorado ISD Board votes to Reject/Approve Innovation Plan as presented by the CISD District Innovation Team and DLAC and notify the Commissioner of its intention to proceed or not to proceed.	January 9, 2016
	Post the CISD District Innovation Plan on the CISD District Website for 30 Days	January 10, 2016
February	CISD District Innovation Team hosts public meeting to consider final version of CISD Innovation Plan.	February 13, 2016
	Board Meeting – Colorado ISD Board votes to Reject/Approve the Final Local Innovation Plan.	February 13, 2016
	Colorado ISD sends approved plan to Commissioner of Education for final approval.	February 14, 2016

District Innovation Team

Reggy Spencer, Superintendent
 Denise Farmer, Assistant Superintendent
 Mark Merrell, Colorado High School Principal
 Rebecca Russell, YCC Grant Director
 Robby Russell, Colorado Middle School Principal
 Melinda Alexander, Colorado Elementary Principal
 Daryl Williams, Wallace High School Principal
 Pam Alvarez, Technology Director
 Dan Gainey, Athletic Director
 Shelia Redwine, Business Manager
 Sally Neff, Board Member
 Kay Shields. Teacher
 Mandy Barkley, Parent
 Cliff Shiller, Community Member
 Brianna Stephens, Student
 Akimas Clarrett, Student

Texas Education Code Exemptions

District staff in conjunction with the Local Innovation Committee reviewed the subchapters of the Texas Education Code to determine which permissible exemptions currently inhibit the district from maximizing the educational opportunities of the students who attend Colorado ISD.

- 1. *First Day of Instruction***- States that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday in August (TEC 25.0811)

Innovation Strategy – Flexible Calendar

The flexibility of the start date would allow the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, to meet the needs of the students, the school, and the community. In addition, this flexibility would allow the district to better align its starting date with the starting date of our local area colleges in which the district uses for dual credit courses. Another benefit of exempting this restriction is it allows the school to look at starting classes as a short week which can ease the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school. Additionally, the ability to change the school start date can also help to better balance the amount of days in each semester.

- 2. *Class Size and Student-Teacher Ratios*** – State law requires districts to maintain an average student-teacher ratio at most of 20-1 for average daily attendance. For Physical education, the student-teacher ratio cannot be greater than 45 to 1. In Kindergarten through grade four the class student-teacher ratio must not exceed 22 to 1. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must file a waiver with the agency. When a class exceeds the limits, the district is also required to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. (TEC 25.111, 25.112, 25.113, 25.114)

Innovation Strategy – Flexible Class Sizes and Student -Teacher Ratios

CISD believes that in certain circumstances small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, in many cases master teachers, who are highly trained in student engagement strategies, are equally effective with larger class size environments. Many times it is not the number of students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment. Colorado ISD will attempt to keep all the core K-4 classrooms to a 22:1 ratio and Physical Education classes to a 45:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the Superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees. In addition, Colorado ISD would not have to file a TEA waiver when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio. While it is often cited that smaller class sizes improve academic performance, this decision would give Colorado ISD more flexibility on what is the appropriate classroom size and teacher ratio.

- 3. Teacher Certification** – State law states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. 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 request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and or State Board of Educator Certification. (TEC 21.003, 21.004, 21.053, 21.057)

Innovation Strategy – Flexible Scheduling and Additional Class Offerings

The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand, dual credit, as well as career and technical courses. To best serve Colorado ISD students, decisions on certification would be handled locally. The campus principals would submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject(s) out of their certified field. The principal would provide reasoning for the request and documentation of credentials that the certified teacher possesses which qualify this person to teach this subject. In addition, an individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a CTE course through a local teaching certificate. The principals would submit the request to the Superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The Superintendent would then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to the students. The Superintendent would then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning employment. Local teaching certificates would require an employment agreement rather than a contract. This process would allow Colorado ISD more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.