

Cumby ISD
District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842) Renewal
2022-2023 through 2026-2027

(All highlighted areas are changes/additions)

Cumby ISD is using HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, to establish more local control in certain areas; thus being designated as a District of Innovation. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to have some of the same flexibility that public charter schools have been allowed. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A. Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students:
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements, and academic and financial accountability.

Cumby ISD believes this is a great opportunity for our local district to establish plans based on the unique needs of our students and community.

The District of Innovation plan will be updated and renewed and be in effect for the 2022-2023 school year, upon Board approval. This plan will remain in effect for five years, through the 2026-2027 school year, unless amended, rescinded, or renewed earlier by the District Innovation Team and a two-thirds majority vote by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Innovation Team will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the plan. The plan will need to be renewed or modified at some point in a summer before the 2026-2027 school year. The renewal/modification will ensure that the plan does not cause policy changes in mid-year.

District of Innovation Timeline for Cumby ISD (Renewal)

Thursday, January 26th, 2017

6:00 PM, Special Board Meeting

- Board of Trustees to approve resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation.
- Adjourn

6:15 PM, Public Hearing

- Public hearing to explain and discuss possibility of becoming a District of Innovation.

6:30 PM, Regular Meeting

- Approve motion to pursue local, "District of Innovation" plan.
- Board of Trustees approve members of the District Innovation Team.

Wednesday, April 6th, 2022 – District of Innovation Team Meeting

- District Team met to review current plan and updates to current exemptions were presented and discussed.

Thursday, April 14th, 2022 – District of Innovation Team Meeting and Public Hearing

- District Team met to finalize and vote on revisions of updated plan for renewal. Public Hearing held at meeting. Meeting was posted in compliance with Texas Open Meetings Act on Monday, April 11th at 1:00 PM.

Friday, April 15th, 2022 – Proposed District of Innovation Plan Posted

- Proposed revision of the plan is posted online for 30 days and shared with the following organizations: Cumby ISD, Cumby ISD Board, District Team, and Cumby ISD Leadership Team.

Wednesday, April 27th, 2022 – Board Meeting to discuss DOI renewal and revisions

- The Board will have a formal presentation and provide feedback on proposed revisions to the plan.

Wednesday, May 18th, 2022 – DOI Team Meeting

- District Team votes on plan.

Tuesday, May 24th, 2022 – Board Meeting

- Cumby ISD School Board votes on plan.

District Innovation Team

1. Shelly Slaughter	Superintendent
2. Donna George	C&I and Grants Management
3. Melissa Johnson	Data and Instructional Specialist
4. Megan Petty	HS Principal
5. Doug Wicks	Elementary Principal
6. Donna Yarbrough	RTI/Dyslexia/SpEd Coordinator
7. Tom Dracos	Athletic Director
8. Dona Gavlick	Counselor
9. Juliana Osornio	District Nurse
10. Karen Stone	Elementary Teacher
11. Kristen Poe	Junior High Teacher
12. Anita Comer	High School Teacher
13. Terry Ratliff	Community Representatives
14. Bobby Yarbrough (Facilities Co-Chair)	Business/Community Representatives
15. Jennifer Crumpton, Becky McArthur	Parent Representatives
16. Rob Stanley	Higher Education Representative, PJC
17. Savannah Kurn	Adult Student and CTE Representative
18. Kendra Hood	Paraprofessional

(The names highlighted are new members due to people no longer in the district, the positions highlighted are additional positions added to the committee)

PROCESS

On January 26th, 2017, the Cumby Independent School District's Board of Trustees held a special meeting to initiate the process by passing a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning. Following the special meeting, a public hearing was held for public discussion on whether the district should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the district as a District of Innovation. With there being no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the District of Innovation Team, during the regular meeting, to discuss and draft the district Innovation Plan.

Per state statute (§102.1313), the District Innovation Plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a majority vote of the Innovation Council established under the Texas Education Code (TEC), §11.251, and a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Trustees. For the duration of the District of Innovation designation, the superintendent and/or Board of Trustees shall not amend, rescind, or renew the Innovation Plan and/or abolish the District Innovation Team.

The plan will be posted on the district website for 30 days and Cumby ISD will notify the Texas Commissioner of Education of the Board of Trustees' intention to vote on the final District of Innovation Plan on **May 19th, 2022**.

TERM

The District of Innovation Plan became effective in **May 2022** and will remain in effect for five years, through **end of 2026-2027 school year**, unless amended, rescinded, or renewed earlier by the Innovation Council and a two-thirds majority vote by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The District Innovation Team will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the plan. The plan will need to be renewed or modified at some point in a summer before the **2026-2027** school year. The renewal/modification will ensure that the plan does not cause policy changes in mid-year.

EXEMPTIONS

§21.102(b) Teacher Contracts - Probationary; (DCA Legal)

Currently, experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that 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.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers and counselors who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited time period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the staff member's effectiveness. Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers and counselors newly hired in Cumby ISD. This flexibility will give campus administration an additional year to evaluate a teacher and/or provide additional assistance to a teacher, if needed.

Local Guidelines

At the time of contract recommendation consideration, newly hired teachers and counselors with the district, who have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years and have completed their first probationary year with the district, may receive a probationary contract for the second year in order to continue to evaluate the staff member's effectiveness.

§21.003 and §21.053 and §21.057 Teacher Certification; (DBA Legal/Local and DK Legal/Local/Exhibit)

Currently, TEC Sec. 21.003 requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless that 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 Sec. 21.053 mandates that a teacher must present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding and prohibits the District from paying an educator if he or she does not hold a valid certificate at that time.

TEC Sec. 21.057 requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

In the event that the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of his/her certification area, the district must request emergency certification from TEA and/or the State Board of Educator Certification. These requests may be denied. This process is time consuming, burdensome, and it may not allow the district to meet its instructional needs in a timely fashion. With the growing teacher shortage in Texas, this process may prevent the district from being able to hire the best teacher available.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

In order to best serve Cumby ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. This exemption would allow the district to consider part time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition to the teaching profession in Career and Technology and also assist in staffing high need STEM and dual credit course offerings. Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education, and credentials. Often, there are experienced certified teachers in our district that could teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background, and/or experience. Local decisions outside of state certification requirements would allow innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs. Cumby ISD seeks to locally certify, if necessary, teachers in areas of high demand. These areas include, but are not limited to: CTE, Foreign Languages, Fine Arts, Math, Science, ELAR, Social Studies, etc.

For grades **3-12**, in all subject areas, the Campus Principal may submit to the Superintendent a request for a local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach a subject in a related field and/or grade level 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 the individual to teach the proposed subject. The Superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification.

Benefits to Cumby ISD students:

- Allows the district to have more flexibility to hire the best candidate for each position.
- Allows more flexibility in campus scheduling.
- Provides more class offering options.
- Increases opportunities for students to earn recognized industry certification.

Local Guidelines

The district will maintain its current expectations for traditional employee certification and the Board will make a reasonable attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position. However; when this is not reasonably achievable, the Board will have the flexibility to hire staff who are knowledgeable in their teaching area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position. All teachers in Special Education, ESL/Bilingual, and grades PK – 2 will be fully certified. Whenever possible, lesson plans for the “uncertified” teacher will be created in partnership with the certified teachers in the same field. We envision classrooms with multiple formats, in which the “teacher” will become the facilitator in student learning. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The district will not be required to provide parental notification as long as the teacher meets district standards for local certification approval. The Superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees following the assignment. Board minutes will reflect which employees are hired pursuant to a local certification.

§21.203 and §21.352 - 3541 Teacher and Principal Evaluations; (DN Local, DNA Legal/Local, and DNB Legal/Local)

In the 2016-2017 school year, the state has issued a new teacher appraisal system, Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), and for Principals, the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System.

- Principals complete informal walk-throughs on a bi-weekly basis: Principals are evaluated annually on the T-PESS system.

- Teachers and Administrators participate in Internal Harvard Rounds at least once a semester and External Harvard Rounds at least once a year.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

A committee of administrators and teachers would have the option to develop a teacher evaluation system that would be a combination of T-TESS, T-PESS, Harvard Instructional Rounds, and other best practices to develop a local instrument that fits the needs and goals of CISD.

- Cumby ISD will create and utilize a locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tool.
- The instrument will be developed with input from central administration, campus administration, and teachers. It will use staff input, PDAS, T-TESS, T-PESS, Harvard Instructional Rounds, and any other relevant best practice.
- All campus teachers and administrators will be formally evaluated annually.
- All teachers will have an a minimum an annual summative conference and twice a year formative conferences to discuss needed areas and to set personal goals and a staff development plan for the coming year.
- Principals and other members of the Leadership Team will continue to be evaluated annually with the locally developed instrument.
- These locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Cumby ISD.

Local Guidelines

Cumby ISD will ensure rigorous and appropriate evaluation systems are created for teachers and administrators that reflect Cumby ISD's needs and goals. The new instruments will be utilized when complete and approved; until that time, Cumby ISD will continue to use T-TESS and T-PESS.

§21.401 Teacher Contract Days; (DCB Legal/Local)

Current education law in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a 10 month contract equivalent to 187 days. Proposal would reduce teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries. This would be an attempt to better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

This proposed plan:

- Will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers
- Enhance teacher recruitment
- Improve teacher morale
- This plan will provide teachers more flexibility during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

Local Guidelines

Cumby ISD will decide annually the days of service required for educators. Student success, district initiatives, and professional development needs will be considered each year in determination of contracted days. CISD may reduce the number of days of service from a minimum of 187 to a minimum of 182 for educators employed under a 10-month contract with no effect on salaries to increase the daily rate, enhance educator recruitment, and improve morale. This plan will also provide greater opportunity for beneficial staff development specific to the educator's field of study. Any opportunity stipend paid for additional duties and responsibilities will be unaffected by a reduction in contract days. Educators under contracts other than 10-months will be unaffected.

§25.036 Inter-district Transfers; (FDA Local)

Under Texas Education Code 25.001, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

Cumby ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one year commitment by the District. The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. Student behavior warranting suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, expulsion, and attendance will be evaluated. In these rare cases, Cumby ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer commitment.

Local Guidelines

Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer 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. Students not meeting the State’s 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

§25.0811 Uniform School Start Date; (EB Legal/Local)

A district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August unless the district operates a year-round system. A district may not receive a waiver for this requirement.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

This flexibility of start date allows Cumby ISD to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. It also offers the below opportunities:

- An improved balanced instructional calendar which will benefit students as well as teachers. Typically with the current statute, the fall semester is much shorter than the spring semester.
- Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters, which align with our local colleges.
- An early start date permits students at least an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments.
- Students will be afforded opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts and staff will be able to attend summer school classes as well.
- Creates Flexibility for District to pursue other calendar options for identified populations.

Local Guidelines

The district will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will begin.

§25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Credit; (EI Legal/Local and FEC Local/Legal)

Sec. 25.092 (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Districts are required to award class credit based on “seat time” rather than based on content mastery. The District is not allowed to issue class credit or a final grade for a class if a student is not in attendance an arbitrary percentage of the time that a class is offered.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

In order to provide engaging and challenging learning to all students, Cumby ISD needs relief from Section 25.092. Exemption will provide educational advantages to students of Cumby ISD by promoting active learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students; thereby, accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing drop-outs, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. This would also allow the district to establish local criteria regarding student attendance requirements. Cumby ISD will not have to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, and other extenuating circumstances. It will allow CISD administrators to award credit to students because they can show they understand the concepts. The proposed strategy would allow counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum.

Cumby ISD will use this exemption to:

- Provide students with the curriculum, tools, resources, and pedagogy to achieve their full potential by taking ownership of their learning and setting high academic goals.
- Implement resources and training that support blended and personalized learning for both students and teachers.
- Increase blended learning, where instruction is delivered through a combination of time in class and time spent on-line. This strategy will be used to promote active learning and improve student outcomes.
- Not penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities and/or family or medical issues that may prevent the students from meeting the 90% rule, as long as mastery of content can be documented.
- Promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in school activities.

Local Guidelines

Relief from Section 25.092 does not in any way impact or alter 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 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher’s right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

§25.112 and §25.113 Class Size in Kindergarten through 4th grade; (BF Legal and EEB Legal)

Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class. School districts are required to notify each parent in the class section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio and inform them that the waiver has been submitted.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

Benefits of the proposed exemption:

- Schools begin the school year with staff based on projections of student enrollment. Enrollment can increase after the year starts, resulting in teachers and/or students being moved from class to class to meet the 22-to-1 requirement. As a result, student leave behind friends and teacher relationships that have already formed.
- Being exempt from the inflexible 22-to-1 requirement will allow students to remain with the teacher and classmates that they began the year with, fostering continuity and stability which will support increased student achievement.
- Cumby ISD will not be forced to hire new teachers not accounted for in the Local Board’s adopted budget.

Local Guidelines

The District will strive to keep class sizes at 22:1, with the flexibility to go above 22:1, if needed.

- If the student/teacher ratio averaged across a grade level needs to go over 23:1, it must have both the administrator and teacher approval.
- If the student/teacher ratio averaged across a grade level needs to go over 24:1, parents of all students in each affected class, and the School Board, will be notified.

§37.0012 Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator; (FO Legal)

Currently, Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a Campus Behavior Coordinator on each campus. This person is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A, and allows duties imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator to be performed by the campus behavior coordinator.

Proposed Innovative Strategy

To best serve the needs of students and staff at Cumby ISD, we propose the District abstain from designating only one person as the Campus Behavior Coordinator. Embedded in multiple strategies practiced by Cumby ISD, students are helped to become socially and emotionally intelligent individuals. TEC 37.0012 inhibits this learning by placing constraints on campus governance by requiring one person at each campus to be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. It takes control of the discipline plan out of the Principal's hands and does not take in consideration situations where discipline is handled by multiple administrators. Cumby ISD believes in a collaborative approach to discipline, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person. With the exemption, the District can better focus on establishing classroom protocols and utilizing school culture to foster the development of individual responsibility, positive behavioral interventions and supports, while fostering the connection between actions and consequences. This will also encourage the social and emotional development of each student and his or her responsibility toward the community.

- Cumby ISD will restore control and management of maintaining student discipline to the oversight of the campus principal in collaboration with a team.
- The specific duties of the CBC position will be assigned at the district level; the duties may be divided and/or delegated to other administrators as needed. Examples: parent notification of disciplinary action, notice of law enforcement action, restraint reports, corporal punishment, video recordings, etc.

Local Guidelines

Cumby ISD will ensure that the focus for student social and emotional intelligence is centered on leadership development, soft skills development, and character education through collaborative efforts with the school and community as well as through established partnerships.

Following Proposed Amendments to the Cumby ISD District of Innovation Plan; in addition to areas highlighted in current exemptions.

§22.004(i) Group Health Coverage; (CRD Legal)

Current law, Texas Education Code 22.004(i) states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC 22.004(b) after the date a District implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all District employees. This provision also prohibits the District from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverage for its employees and at a lower cost. This provision does not give the District the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees that would be the highest quality for our students.

Proposed Innovation Strategy

This innovation allows the district to procure group health insurance benefits that may better benefit District employees. The District proposes that the DOI plan be amended to exempt the District from the health insurance requirements in TEC 22.004(i).

Benefits to CISD Students:

- Increases the District's competitiveness in hiring
- Enables the District to hire and retain exceptional staff.
- More/better insurance options for CISD staff.

§28.004 Local School Health Advisory Council and Health Education Instruction; (BDF Legal)

Current law, Sec 28.004 of this code requires The Board of Trustees of each school to establish a local School Health Advisory Council to assist the District in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the District's health education instruction. This section requires the establishment of a SHAC and outlines the duties of this council, which restrict District and Board decisions regarding school health matters. The law also requires the SHAC to meet four times per year, and requires notice, audio or video recordings of the meetings, and posting of meetings and minutes on the District's website. The law as currently written, and as applicable when revisions went in to effect on December 2021, are cumbersome and do not fit the needs of the District.

Proposed Innovation Strategy

The goal of exemption is to also allow greater flexibility regarding the makeup and meetings of the Board, and to reduce the administrative burden relating to requirements related to SHAC meetings. SHAC is made up of employees and members of the public, which makes scheduling a meeting particularly challenging. Therefore, exemption from the SHAC meeting requirements under the law will allow for greater flexibility in regard to scheduling meetings and will allow for the meetings to run more efficiently. Further exemption will give the District and Board greater flexibility when making decisions regarding school health matters.

Local Guidelines

- The District will appoint a District Health Coordinator. The District Health Coordinator will collaborate with the District and Campus Improvement Committees to seek feedback regarding health related curriculum, food service, budget, and other related items as needed.
- The District Level Committee serves as the District's SHAC committee, and for that Committee to make recommendations to the Board concerning issues identified in TEC 28.004.
- Final decision making on issues addressed in TEC 5 28.004 rests with the Board.
- CISD will continue to emphasize transparency in the student health process, and will ensure that parents have the necessary access to curriculum and instructional materials.
- The District is not exempt from state curriculum or graduation requirements adopted under Chapter 28.

§37.008 DAEP Teacher Certification Requirements Exemption; (FOCA LEGAL)

The current law requires each school district to provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21.

Proposed Innovation Strategy

Cumby ISD has a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP and often classes will be provided using computer based instruction and or a blended model, it is not necessary to have certified teachers on site. Cumby ISD often does not have certified teachers available when DAEP is needed. The DAEP administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certification as needed.