

Cuero Independent School District



Board Approved

June 23, 2022

Cuero ISD

District of Innovation Plan

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th 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 reduce the extra administrative or operational burdens placed on public schools. 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 District of Innovation Plan will become effective in 2022-2023 school year and will remain in effect for five years, through the 2026-2027 years, unless terminated or amended by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The DPOC will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

Committee Membership

First Name	Last Name	Member Category
Micah	Dyer	Superintendent
Pam	Longbotham	Assistant Superintendent
Kim	Fleener	Campus Principal
Courtney	Kubesch	Community
Courtney	Moore	Business
Jessica	Wyatt	Teacher
Jaime	Dyer	Parent

TIMELINE

Timeline	Activity/Task
2017	Current DOI Plan is posted on the Cuero ISD website.
January 21, 2022	Cabinet members discuss the need to update the DOI.
April 7, 2022	DOI Advisory Committee reviews current plan and proposes update..
April 8, 2022	Superintendent advised Board of Trustees of DOI renewal timeline.
April 11, 2022	Post proposed District of Innovation Plan on Cuero ISD website
June 6,2022	Notify the Commissioner of Education in writing that the school board intends to amend and renew the DOI. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include intended adoption date of June 23, ● Include a hotlink to the district website showing the proposed plan
	At the June 23, 2022 Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District committee holds a public meeting and approves the final version of the DOI plan by majority vote just prior to the Board Meeting. ● Board adopts the new DOI plan
June 27, 2022	2nd Required Notification: Notify the Commissioner of Education in writing that the Board of Trustees has adopted the amended, renewed DOI Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include the adoption date of June 23, 2022 ● Include a hotlink to the Cuero ISD website showing the new plan. ● Attach updated checklist of exemptions for all sections of education code
June 27, 2022	Final Cuero ISD DOI Plan is posted to the Cuero ISD website.

INNOVATIONS

Uniform School Start Date (TEC 25.0811) ***Renewed and Remains Unchanged***

Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposed

This flexibility of a start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and community. This flexibility of the start date offers:

- The first and second semesters to be more equal in the number of days of instruction.
- An early start date permits students additional time prior to state assessments in December.
- Students participating in Dual Enrollment opportunities will work with balanced semesters

Local guidelines

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

TEC 21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, education diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B. TEC 21.057 requires district to provide written notice to parents when an inappropriately or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year.

Texas Education Code Sections 21.003, 21.053, and 21.055, as well as 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 231, limits the ability to hire teachers in highly specialized or hard-to-fill areas.

Teacher Certification ***Renewed and Modified***

Dual Credit, Career and Technical Education Instructors, and Hard-to-Fill Areas (TEC §21.003; TEC §21.053; TEC §21.057)

TEC 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aid, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor 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. This system is burdensome and does not consider the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC 21.053 requires a teacher to present his/her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, and 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 consecutive instructional days.

Proposed

In order to best serve Cuero ISD students, decisions on certifications will be handled at the district level. Due to a limited applicant pool and teacher shortage, this exemption will allow greater flexibility in staffing..

Cuero ISD will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the position in question; however, where that is not reasonably possible due to shortages of applicants and difficult to fill positions, 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.

Local Guidelines

- Cuero ISD will continue to seek and hire highly effective educators to deliver quality instruction to its students. Primarily certified teachers will be sought before District Teaching Permitted (local certification) teachers are employed.
- To best serve Cuero ISD students, all decisions on teacher certification and assignments will be managed locally
- Notification of District Teaching Permits shall not be necessary to submit to the state.
- A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency
- An individual with certain qualifications who is not certified as a teacher can be eligible to teach in hard to fill positions including, but not limited to, TEA approved shortage areas such as special education, mathematics, science, Languages Other than English (LOTE), Career & Technical Education (CTE), etc.

- A person seeking District Teaching Permit (local certification) should have the abilities and related knowledge/experience to fulfill the requirements of the position.
- . The campus principal must submit to the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's designee of schools a formal request to allow a certified teacher to teach subjects in a related/non-related field 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 this individual to teach the subject/field of study.
- The principal must submit to the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's designee a formal request for any District Teaching Permit outlining all the individual's credentials/qualifications and the reason it is needed.
- · Cuero ISD will allow District Teaching Permits based on skills and experiences outside the traditional teacher certification pathway such as submission into alternative certification programs.
- · Emergency or financial situations creating the need for teacher assignments should also be recognized.
- Qualifications that may be considered include but are not limited to: Professional work experience Formal training and education Active professional relevant industry certification or registration Combination of work experience, training and education Demonstration of successful experience working with students
- The Superintendent or his/her designee will then approve the request if they believe the individual possesses the knowledge, skills and experience required of the position and feel the individual could be an asset to students.
- Determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis. · The Superintendent will notify the Board prior to beginning employment for any teacher operating under a District Teaching Permit. · Before issuing a school district teaching permit to an individual, the district would ensure that the individual completed the criminal background check in compliance with the State Board of Education (SBEC) rules.
- An employee working under a District Teaching Permit will not receive a contract but will work on an at-will basis and may have a separate pay scale from state certified teachers. · A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, notification, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.
- · An employee working under a District Teaching Permit will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers.
- · An employee working under a District Teaching Permit will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.

- All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course(s) to be taught.
- When possible, lesson plans for the uncertified teacher will be created in partnership with certified teachers in the same field. • A mentor teacher will be assigned to the individual who is granted a District Teaching Permit for the first three years.
- **Special Education, Bilingual, and ESL teachers must be SBEC certified.**

Submitting Waivers for Kindergarten-Grade 4 Class Size (TEC 25.112, 25.113) - *Renewed and Remains Unchanged*

Kindergarten-Grade 4 classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the class that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them that the waiver has been submitted.

Proposed

While Cuero ISD believes that a small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe that it has a negative effect when one or two students are added. It may not be the number of the students in the class but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influences the learning environment. Being exempt from the 22:1 ratio requirement will allow students to remain with the teacher and classmates that they began the year with, enabling continuity and stability that will support increased student achievement.

Local Guidelines

- Cuero ISD will attempt to keep K-Grade 4 classrooms to the 22:1 ratio. In the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
- A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-Grade 4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Teacher Contracts (TEC 21.401) *Renewed and Remains Unchanged*

Texas Education Code requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposed

Cuero ISD seeks flexibility in the minimum 187 days of service requirement.

Local Guidelines

Teacher contracts will more closely align with the 75,600 instructional minutes required for students and also include staff development/work days. This flexibility will afford Cuero ISD to create a climate that values the individual's time and empowers the ability to leverage that time in what will be a focus on student outcomes. **Professional employees will not receive a reduction in pay for any reduction in their workload due to this change.** This proposal may enhance teacher recruitment and also impact and improve teacher morale.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Cuero ISD Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.