

Crosby ISD Local Innovation Plan

Introduction

The purpose of the Districts of Innovation designation is to return local control to School Districts across the State of Texas. This control provides exemptions from certain laws and policies that inhibit the district from making decisions based on local goals and student needs. In order to qualify, the district must be in satisfactory Academic and Financial standing, as assessed by the State of Texas Educational Accountability Systems.

H.B. 1842 (84th Session of the Texas Legislature) in part amended Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to create [Districts of Innovations](#). Districts are eligible for designation if certain performance requirements are met and the district follows certain procedures for adoption as outlined in Statute. The designation provides the district will be exempt from certain sections of the TEC that inhibit the goals of the district as outlined in the locally adopted Innovation Plan.

The term of the designation as a district of innovation may not exceed 5 years. (Source: Texas Education Agency, General Information, Districts of Innovation)

The District of Innovation designation does not provide immunity from all established laws and procedures, as established by the Texas Education Code and Texas Administrative Code, but does provide relief from restrictions in many areas.

This plan will be in effect from January 2017 through January 2022.

Crosby Independent School District
Tradition...With a Future

Local Innovation Plan Committee Members

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| Eva Laird | Elementary School Teacher |
| Claudia Alfred Long | Middle School Teacher |
| Andrea McArthur | High School Teacher |
| Rebekah Carter | Student (Crosby High School) |
| Amy Leos | High School Counselor |
| Lakittah Eagleton | Middle School Counselor |
| Christy Tisdom | Elementary Administrator |
| Becky Domingue | PEIMS Specialist |
| Angie Darbonne | High School Administrator |
| Holli Pharis | Middle School Administrator |
| Nikki Blanchat | Director of Career and College Readiness |
| Dr. Robert Tatman | Director of Certification |
| Tamara Meigh | ELA Curriculum Coordinator |
| Sherri Long | Executive Director of Elementary Education |
| Todd Hicks | Executive Director of Secondary Education |
| Karen Grey | Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources |
| Tara Shuttlesworth | Community Representative |
| Alex Pena | Community Representative |
| Hannah Vaughn | Community Representative |

Mission

The Mission of the Crosby Independent School District is to produce literate, responsible citizens capable of learning and applying academic and social skills successfully in any life setting.

District Philosophy

Crosby ISD recognizes that the provision of a quality PK - 12 education is the foundation of meaningful post-secondary accomplishments as well as life-long learning. The district is committed to academic communities that are staffed by high quality professionals that have the opportunity to work together to plan lessons that are a complement to a creative and rigorous curriculum aligned to state standards, both vertically and horizontally. We believe in a supportive environment that fosters confidence, inspires thinking and ignites passion, leading to innovative classroom experiences. Educational excellence and student success are achieved through a collaborative process that acknowledges the significance of an involved community. Building and maintaining strong community partnerships, along with establishing positive relationships among all stakeholders, is integral to the support of the highest levels of teaching and learning.

Teacher Certification for Dual Credit and Career and Technical Educators

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| TEC 21.003 | Teacher Certification Required |
| TEC 21.051 | Rules Regarding Field-Based Experience |
| TEC 21.057 | Parental Notification |

According to Texas Education Code Section 21.003, 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. Section 21.051 imposes the requirement that before a district can hire a “teacher of record,” the candidate must complete 15 hours of field-based experience under supervision, and Section 21.057 requires parental notification when an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive days.

Innovative Actions

Crosby ISD is committed to providing students with the highest level of academic instruction possible. Locating certified teachers in certain Career and Technical and Dual Credit fields is challenging, and at times, impossible. By obtaining exemption from existing certification requirements, Crosby ISD will establish local qualifications, which will allow the district to hire teachers with experience in various Career and Technology fields including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) as well as Dual Credit subject areas. This provision will provide the district flexibility in hiring professionals from technical fields, college instructors, and internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their certification areas. This exemption also applies to the associated requirements of field experience and parental notification and negates the need to request approval from the Commissioner of Education.

**These actions apply to CTE (including STEM) and Dual Credit certification areas only.*

Instructional Calendar

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| TEC 25.0811 | First Day of Instruction |
| TEC 25.0812 | Last Day of School |

Current code states that students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August and may not end the school year prior to May 15. For many years this was the rule, however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday. However, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts not begin until the 4th Monday in August, without exception.

Innovative Actions

This flexibility of start date and end date of the school year allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This flexibility bridges the discrepancy between the number of instructional days in the fall and spring semesters, providing alignment and balance of instructional timeframes. Having the ability to adjust school start and end dates will also support the creation of a timely and relevant staff development program.

Minutes of Instruction/Length of the School Day

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| TEC 25.081 | Minutes of Instruction |
| TEC 25.082(a) | Seven Hour School Day |

Current code addresses the required minutes of instruction and length of the school day by imposing a 420 minute or seven hours of instruction per day minimum. This limits the district's ability to creatively plan teacher and student schedules that support a philosophy that is founded on a vision of ingenuity. These constraints also impact collaboration with local colleges as related to dual credit opportunities and being able to offer students a wide and flexible variety of classroom and other educational experiences. The limits also restrict the potential high quality professional growth of faculty and staff. The district does not wish to be exempted from the 75,600 minutes of instruction per school year requirement.

Innovative Actions

Exemptions from length of the school day mandates will afford Crosby ISD the ability to design schedules that adjust (lengthen or shorten) the school day in order to increase the time available for students to spend with teachers as well as expand inventive learning structures. Alleviation will also provide vital time for professional development and teacher collaboration. Crafting personalized student schedules that offer opportunities to attend dual credit college classes at college campuses will maintain strong partnerships and permit alternate attendance times for applicable students. This will also allow for flexible bell schedules and frameworks when considering the organization of learning environments, intervention and enrichment for students. Professional development, along with forming and sustaining professional learning communities through the ability to craft morning or afternoon collaboration times for faculty and staff, is central to meeting the district goals. These actions will favorably impact student achievement through their focus on data, determined needs, collective inquiry and reflection on classroom practice.

Innovative Curriculum and Instructional Methods

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| TEC 25.083(b) | School Day Interruptions |
| TEC 25.092 | Minimum Attendance Requirements |

Students across Crosby ISD have individual needs throughout their educational career. A portion of our responsibility is to tailor instruction to students in a manner that meets their needs to the maximum extent possible. Texas Education Code 25.083(b) is related to guidelines for school day interruptions and limits the amount of time students can be removed from a class for remedial tutorial to ten percent. Section 25.092 stipulates that a student in any grade level 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 that the class is offered.

Innovative Actions

The foundational purpose of education in Crosby ISD is to provide challenging, meaningful instruction in each classroom. However, a contradiction in policy and practice arises from the policies referenced above. The State of Texas requires all students to pass STAAR Reading and Math assessments during their 5th and 8th grade years (Student Success Initiative) and 5 End of Course (EOC) assessments to be eligible for graduation. Students that either fail to meet the passing standard or show a trend (based on data) towards not passing one or more of the high stakes tests are required to receive intense remediation. Therefore, in specific situations, students need the assistance of instructional specialists during the school day. Exemption from the policies referenced above will provide students the opportunity to register for classes of their choice, while at the same time receiving the necessary supplemental instruction needed for academic success. The exemption will provide Crosby ISD the opportunity to ensure that our students are prepared for transition to subsequent grade levels, and ultimately to obtain eligibility for high school graduation.

**These actions in no way alter policies related to compulsory attendance requirements.*

Class Size and Notice of Class Size

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| TEC 25.111 | Student/Teacher Ratios |
| TEC 25.112 | Class Size |

Current state law requires districts to employ a sufficient number of certified teachers to maintain an average ratio of not less than one teacher for 20 students in average daily attendance and a classroom ratio of 22 students to one teacher in certain elementary classrooms. When an individual classroom in kindergarten through fourth grade exceeds the 22:1 ratio, the district must submit a request for class size exception (waiver). In addition to the waiver request, it is required that a letter be sent to each parent of a student in the classroom that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them that the waiver has been submitted and that the class exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Innovative Actions

Crosby ISD is committed to maintaining appropriate classroom teacher to student ratios, recognizing the significance of the relationship between class size and learning. The district will continue to make thoughtful hiring decisions based on the required teacher to student ratios, while monitoring classroom sizes and making all related notification decisions at the local level, negating the need to file a TEA waiver that has historically not been denied. As the district continues to grow and evolve, these class size exemptions will also allow

flexibility in the following areas as Crosby ISD continues to seek ways in which to provide the best learning environments for all students: scheduling students and teachers, balancing individual classroom enrollments and hiring timelines. In the event that a kindergarten through fourth grade classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio, the Crosby ISD Board of Trustees will be informed and written notification will be provided to parents.

Exemptions from TEC Mandates and Modification to the Innovation Plan

The intent of the District of Innovation provision is to allow districts to make local decisions regarding the best ways to provide the highest quality education possible to all students.

Crosby ISD reserves the right to modify the District of Innovation plan as needed as the district continues to grow and evolve, through both population and culture. Future District of Innovation plan exemption modifications will be determined by the district's local committee and approved by a 2/3 vote of the Crosby ISD Board of Trustees.

Conclusion

Crosby ISD's District of Innovation plan is designed to support the district philosophy through providing expanded opportunities to focus on distinct areas of identified student and faculty need. Specific plans of implementation will be developed as appropriate by campuses and departments in collaboration with the district's existing strategic planning process. The plan will be continuously monitored and reviewed at the local level.