



# Como – Pickton CISD

*LEARNING TODAY...LEADING TOMORROW*

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## *District of Innovation Plan*

2020 – 2021 through 2024 - 2025

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## INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1842 was passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas legislative session in Spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation (DOI). 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 requirements, graduation requirements, academic accountability, and financial accountability.

## COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Como-Pickton CISD District of Innovation Plan is founded on and aligned to the district's vision, mission, core beliefs, and strategic goals.

### Vision

The vision of Como-Pickton CISD is to develop every child to be a life-long learner, enabling them to be effective communicators, complex thinkers, and productive citizens qualified to meet the uncertainties of the future.

### Mission

The mission of Como-Pickton Consolidated Independent School District, in partnership with the home and community, is to provide excellence in education through relevant learning opportunities that will prepare students to achieve personal fulfillment and to become responsible, productive members of society.

### Core Beliefs

- Through challenging and engaging instruction, all students can become successful learners.
- As models for students, CPCISD personnel should engage in life-long learning opportunities, measured by the achievement of personal and professional goals.
- Students are accountable for their own learning and actions; parents are accountable for their children; and the district is accountable to the community.
- Students should have access to a quality education provided by CPCISD in a community that supports a diverse population.
- The collaboration and inclusion of students, parents, staff, and community in the decision-making process is vital to the success of CPCISD and should be actively fostered.

### 2020 – 2021 Strategic Goals

- Goal 1: All students will make individual progress towards the highest standards of academic proficiency.
- Goal 2: To improve the learning environment, CPCISD will provide certified instructors producing creative lesson designs emphasizing critical thinking and application, while meeting the social and emotional needs of all students.
- Goal 3: CPCISD will partner with all stakeholders to create a value-added educational system that creates an atmosphere of learning and an environment in which all students can flourish.
- Goal 4: All students will be taught by certified professional staff.

## PROCESS

On December 12, 2016, the Como-Pickton CISD Board of Trustees initiated the process by passing a *Resolution to Consider Designation as a District of Innovation* in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning.

On January 9, 2017, the Como-Pickton CISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for discussion on whether the district should develop a local innovation plan. With there being no objection from the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed the District of Innovation Advisory Committee to discuss and draft the plan. This committee represents various stakeholder groups across the district. The committee met on the dates outlined below.

The proposed renewal plan will be posted on the district website for at least 30 days beginning December 8, 2020. Como-Pickton CISD will notify the Texas Commissioner of Education of the district's proposed District of Innovation Plan and that the plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for consideration on December 14, 2020.

## TERM

If approved by the CPCISD Board of Trustees, the District of Innovation Plan will become effective January 2021 and will remain in effect through the end of the 2024 – 2025 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The district Site Based Decision Making Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the plan.

## TIMELINE

Timeline	Activity/Task
December 12, 2016	Board of Trustees passed Resolution to Consider Designation as a District of Innovation
January 9, 2017	Board of Trustees held public hearing and appointed advisory committee to draft plan
January 16, 2017	Initial meeting of advisory committee to discuss District of Innovation Plan
January 30, 2017	Meeting of advisory committee to continue work on District of Innovation Plan
February 13, 2017	Meeting of advisory committee to finalize District of Innovation Plan
February 14, 2017	Post District of Innovation Plan to CPCISD website
March 20, 2017	Meeting of advisory committee to consider approval of District of Innovation Plan
March 23, 2017	Board of Trustees meeting to consider approval of District of Innovation Plan
February 26, 2018	Site Based Decision Making Committee meeting to consider revision of District of Innovation Plan
March 22, 2018	Site Based Decision Making Committee meeting to approve revised District of Innovation Plan
April 9, 2018	Board of Trustees meeting to consider approval of revised District of Innovation Plan
October 15, 2020	Meeting of advisory committee to discuss District of Innovation Plan and possible renewal.
November 5, 2020	Meeting of advisory committee to work on and finalize a draft renewal of District of Innovation Plan
November 9, 2020	Post District of Innovation Plan Renewal to CPCISD website
December 10, 2020	Meeting of advisory committee to consider approval of District of Innovation Plan Renewal
December 14, 2020	Board of Trustees meeting to consider approval of District of Innovation Plan Renewal

## RENEWAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Name	Position Represented
Tina Lavender	Parent
Chasity Daniel	Parent
Jean Murray	Community
Mary Doss	Community
Nina Hankins	Business
Katie Koon	Business

Allison Thompson	Special Education Teacher
Debra Hollingsworth	Elementary Teacher
Katy Carr	Junior High Teacher
Alan Folsom	High School Teacher
Jordan Cruz	Paraprofessional
Lou Colvin	District-level Non-teaching Professional Staff
Carrie Williams	Campus Based Non-teaching Professional Staff
Jana Andrews	Administrator

## INNOVATIONS

The purpose of the innovation plan is to achieve the district's vision and mission, to align the district's practices and operations, and to meet the expectations of the strategic goals. The district requires local flexibility in the areas addressed in order to support each student in attaining the skills needed to succeed in the college/career pathway of their choice. The innovation plan ensures a system aligned to the needs of our graduates as they enter the post-secondary world.

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**TEC §25.0811** *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.*

### Rationale for innovation

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. It also offers the following direct benefits to students:

- An improved balance in the instructional calendar between fall and spring semesters, and among six weeks periods, which allows teachers to better pace and deliver instruction.
- Students participating in dual enrollment opportunities will work with a more balanced semester, which more closely aligns with local colleges.
- Permits students additional instructional days prior to state assessments.
- Students and staff will be afforded more opportunities to enroll in summer college sessions with finalized official transcripts.
- Improved flexibility to build in required instructional minutes based on local needs (e.g. COVID-19 response).

### Innovative strategies

CPCISD will start class no earlier than the first Monday in August in order to better balance the days between semesters and among six weeks reporting periods. Should the proposed calendar specify a start date prior to the second Monday in August, the calendar committee will garner input from students' parents before finalizing the calendar.

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**TEC§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 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 their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board for Educator Certification.*

### Rationale for innovation

House Bill 5 has added significant support for the need to expand college and career opportunities for students. However, the current certification requirements inhibit the district's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, such as welding, health sciences, architecture, and construction.

Additionally, in the event that the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of his or 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.

Flexibility to establish its own teacher certification requirements for instructors directly benefits students in the following ways:

- Expert industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses
- Greater number of course offerings resulting in more opportunities for students
- Greater opportunity for students to obtain professional certifications
- Innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs
- Added flexibility to hire the best candidate for each position

The district does not wish to be exempted from any existing statutes relating to certified teacher contracts or teacher benefits.

#### Innovative strategies

The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification. The district will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certification and skills for the position available; however, where that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the teaching position in question. The district's Board of Trustees would be able to issue an innovation permit for an individual teaching courses based on qualifications certified by the superintendent. The individual qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as:

- Professional work experience
- Formal training and education
- Relevant industry license, certification, or registration
- Combination of work experience, training, and education
- Demonstration of successful experience working with students

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. Special education and bilingual teachers will continue to be required to hold appropriate state teaching certificates.

Before issuing an innovation 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. This would require the superintendent to certify to the Board of Trustees that the individual has undergone a criminal history background check and is capable of proper classroom management. In addition, the individual would be required to obtain classroom management training.

The issued innovation permit would only be valid in the Como-Pickton CISD. An employee working under an innovation permit will not receive a contract but will work on an at-will basis. The employee will adhere to the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements of all certified teachers. The employee will be appraised under the same teacher appraisal system as required of all certified teachers.

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**TEC §21.102** *For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period 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.*

### Rationale for innovation

A one year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of end of year classroom and student data. This flexibility directly benefits students by improving recruitment and retention practices of quality teachers.

### Innovative strategies

For experienced teachers new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years.

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**TEC §21.401** *Defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.*

### Rationale for innovation

House Bill 2610, passed by the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas legislature, amends the Texas Education Code §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing this language with language requiring districts to operate for a minimum of 75,600 minutes (including intermissions and recess). The law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. A reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make CPCISD salaries more competitive with area schools by increasing the daily rate the district pays teachers. This flexibility directly benefits students by improving recruitment and retention practices of quality teachers.

### Innovative strategies

This plan reduces teacher contract days from 187 to 185 with no effect on teacher salaries. On an annual basis, the Board of Trustees will review the effectiveness and benefit of reduction of teacher contract days.

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**TEC §22.004(i)** *Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a district participating in the uniform group coverage program established under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code, may not make group health coverage available to its employees under this section after the date on which the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code, is implemented.*

### Rationale for innovation

The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to meet the needs of all Como-Pickton CISD employees. This provision inhibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for employees and at a lower cost. This flexibility directly benefits students by improving recruitment and retention practices of quality teachers.

### Innovative strategies

Increased local control of the group health benefits plan allows the district to be responsive to employee and community needs.

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## **COMMENTS**

If you have any comments regarding the Como-Pickton CISD District of Innovation Plan, we want to hear from you. Please call or email us your thoughts:

Jana Andrews, Assistant Superintendent

(903)488-8802

[andrewsj@cpcisd.net](mailto:andrewsj@cpcisd.net)