

Nueces Canyon CISD

District of Innovation Plan

May 16, 2022 – May 16, 2027



Renewal of the Nueces Canyon CISD Innovation Plan

During the renewal process for the District of Innovation Plan, the entire NCCISD staff, parents, and a community member served on the district of innovation committee and determined to renew the current plan as it stands. The DOI committee voted to approve the final draft on February 14, 2022. The proposed plan will be posted on the NCCISD website on February 15, 2022. The commissioner of education will be notified via email that NCCISD is planning to renew the plan. The board of trustees approved the final plan on April 18, 2022.

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations, in order to prepare them for success and lifelong learning.

District of Innovation Committee

| Member Name | Representation | Campus |
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| | | |
| Naphtali Fletcher | Principal | NCJH/HS |
| Dottie DeLeon | Principal | NC Elementary |
| Brandon Powers | Teacher | NCJH/HS |
| Kelly Berry | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Jennifer Luce | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Jeremy Whipkey | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Kaitlin Thompson | Instructional Aid | NCJH/HS |
| Christi Collins | Teacher | NC JH/HS |
| Laura Calhoun - Guerrero | Teacher | NC JH/HS |
| Gracie Falcon | Secretary | NC Elementary |
| Micah Vernor | Instructional Aid | NC Elementary |
| Carroll Vernor | Teacher | NC JH/HS |
| Lenise Johnson | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Granvel Holmes | Teacher | NC JH/HS |
| Julia Segura | Custodial | NCJH/HS |
| Rhonda Bishop | Custodial | NCJH/HS |
| Rosa Tobar | Teacher | NCJH/HS |
| Debra Vogel | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Sandra Fairchild | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Freddy Falcon | Band Director | District |
| Brittani Briggs | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Sarah Abbott | Instructional Aid | NC Elementary |
| Shelli Carnes | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Jamie Suttles | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Shawna Moore | Teacher | NC JH/HS |
| Stephen Smith | Maintenance Director | District |
| Ashley Staudt | Instructional Aid | NC Elementary |
| Billye Smith | Business Manager | District |
| Cynthia Cox | Library | NCJH / HS |
| Cristy McRorey | Health and Wellness | District |
| Richard Kramer | Teacher | NCJH/HS |
| Irish Plant | Teacher | NCJH/HS |
| Charlotte Schexnider | Library | NC Elementary |
| Hailey Luce | Instructional Aid | NC Elementary |

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| Tena Hunger | Webmaster, Dual Credit | NCJH/HS |
| Diana Sweeten | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Wilma Redding | Cafeteria | District |
| Martina Sanchez | Cafeteria | District |
| Cecilia Luna | Cafeteria | District |
| Toby Kramer | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Melissa Aguirre | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Elsie Irwin | Secretary | NCJH/HS |
| Brandy Sweeten | Teacher | NC Elementary |
| Nancy Luce | PEIMS / TSDS | District |
| Gena Fleming | Parent | |
| Lindsey Keich | Parent | |
| Meagan Smith | Parent | |
| Christina Upchurch | Parent | |
| Kathy Hicks | Community Member | |
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Overview: House Bill 1842 passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas public school districts to modify state requirements at the local level to better meet the needs of their unique student populations in order to prepare them for success and lifelong learning. As a District of Innovation, Nueces Canyon CISD wishes to continue to implement an Innovation Plan with increased flexibility and freedom necessary to personalize learning experiences. As a District of Innovation, Nueces Canyon CISD will continue to utilize the opportunity to enact maximum local control and design local policies as needed to best meet the needs of our students, employees, and community.

Term: The current District of Innovation Plan will expire on May 15, 2022 so this renewal is being pursued to become effective May 16, 2022 and will remain in effect for five years, through May 16, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees of Nueces Canyon CISD in accordance with the law. The District of Innovation Planning Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the plan.

I. **Teacher Contract Days (TEC 21.401) DC (LEGAL)** *(Renewed and Remains Unchanged)*

State law requires educators that are employed on a 10 month contract to work a minimum of 187 days.

Proposed Professional Development Flexibility:

- Teacher Days: 182
- 5 days before school starts
- One day at the end of each 6-weeks(except the 5th and 6th six weeks)
- One day at the end of the year

Rationale for Exemption

With the passage of HB 2610 and TEC 25.081 which changed the required instructional days to minutes, the law did not address the contract days for 10 month employees. The number of days required for teachers should be a local decision. Our District will know what areas of staff development are needed for our educational institution and how many days it will take for that training. **Teacher salaries will not be reduced by this action.**

Areas that will be considered priorities:

- I. Class Room Management-win/win Discipline
- II. Student Centered Engagement
- III. Authentic Student Engagement
- IV. High Order Thinking
- V. Technology
- VI. Inclusion Strategies
- VII. Data Driven Decisions
- VIII. Academic RTI
- IX. High Yield Instructional Strategies

Required Training-On-Line

- I. Blood Borne Pathogens
- II. HIPPA
- III. Employee Code of Conduct
- IV. Internet Safety
- V. Anti-Bullying
- VI. Child Abuse

II. **Uniform Start Date (TEC 25.0811) (EB LEGAL)** *(Renewed and Remains Unchanged)*

Texas Legislators require that students may not begin school before the fourth Monday of August. Districts once had the opportunity to apply for a waiver to start the school calendar earlier, but because of advocacy and resistance from Texas tourism groups these waivers no longer exist. These groups argue that an earlier school start date is detrimental to the Texas Summer tourism business. In order to maximize the tourism business, the current law now prohibits schools from starting before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposed Flexibility:

NCCISD may begin school earlier in August than the fourth Monday.

Rationale for Exemption

The school calendar should reflect the values in the community it serves. Flexibility to start school earlier in August would allow NCCISD to balance the number of instructional days per semester, maximize instruction before standardized testing, and maximize professional development. An earlier school start time would allow our students who take dual credit classes from the local college to begin on the first day of the college semester. Removing the uniform start date would also allow an easier transition for all students with a possible shortened first week.

III. **Certifications (TEC 21.003) (DK LEGAL), (DK LOCAL), (DK EXHIBIT)** *(Renewed and Remains Unchanged)*

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. There is a lot of unnecessary paperwork involved in the process.

Proposed Flexibility:

The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow an individual with at least a bachelor's degree or a certified teacher to instruct students out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses in which would qualify this individual to teach this subject. The board of trustees would have the final approval.

An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if he/she feels the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The employee will be at-will.

Under federal law, the district cannot waive bilingual/ESL or special education certifications. Special education and bilingual/ESL teachers must continue to be SBEC certified.

Rationale for Exemption

In order to best serve Nueces Canyon CISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally. Rural districts face unique challenges in obtaining and retaining qualified staff to meet the educational needs of students. This proposal is a critical component for our district to be able to provide more flexibility in scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings. Local teaching permits / certifications will allow the district principal, superintendent, and board

of trustees to work within approved guidelines to creatively meet critical district educational objectives and student needs.

IV. Class Size and Parental Notification (TEC 25.112, and 25.113), (EEB LEGAL) *(Renewed and Remains Unchanged)*

The Texas Education Code requires districts to maintain 22 students or less in kindergarten through 4th-grade classes. A school district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for each class that exceeds this limit. These waivers are rarely rejected by TEA, making the process primarily for awareness purposes and to preserve a more personal instructional environment. State law also requires districts to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and the class size falls below the 22:1 ratio, thus negating the notice or causing parents and staff unnecessary concern.

Proposed Flexibility:

In accordance with TEC §25.112, Nueces Canyon CISD will make every effort to begin each school year with enough teachers to establish a student-to-teacher ratio of 22:1 per K-4 classroom. Also consistent with TEC §25.113, if, after consideration of the factors outlined below, any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will inform the Board of Trustees.

If, during the school year, a K-4 classroom exceeds 22:1, the administration, with the collaborative effort of the classroom teacher, will have 15 school days to consider:

- The subject/age to be taught, the teaching methodology to be used and any need for individual instruction in the class;
- Available space and resources;
- Whether another teacher should be hired (thus creating a new classroom);
- Whether a teaching assistant could be added to the class; or
- Whether keeping the class intact is more advantageous than separating students, in which case the class size may slightly exceed 22:1.

Once a plan of action has been determined, it will be presented to the Board of Trustees. Upon acceptance from the Board, the plan will be implemented.

In the event a K-4 classroom reaches 25:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.

A TEA waiver will no longer be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio, although the Board of Trustees will be notified.

The goal of the district is continue to maintain the 22:1 ratio and exercise this flexibility on a case-by-case basis.