

Nueces Canyon CISD

District of Innovation Plan

May 15, 2017 – May 15, 2022



Planning Committee

Member Name	Representation	Campus
Nevarez, Kathy	Teacher	NCJH/HS
Renfro, Bambi	Teacher	NCJH/HS
Hunger, Tena	Library / Technology	NCJH/HS
Chavez, Melanie	Teacher	NCJH/HS
Carnes, Shelli	Teacher	NCJH/HS
Hicks, Kathy	Teacher	NCJH/HS
DeLaRosa, Diana	Teacher	NC Elementary
Moore, Shawna	Teacher	NC Elementary
Rollison, Trudy	Teacher	NC Elementary
Hicks, April	Teacher	NC Elementary
Valenzuela, Jana	Library	NC Elementary
Fairchild, Sandra	Teacher	NC Elementary
Johnson, Lenise	Teacher	NC Elementary
Bullard, Karen	Teacher	NC Elementary
Harmon, Luci	Principal	District
Powers, Kristi	Superintendent	District
Lacey, Chris	Community Member	

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 implement an Innovation Plan with increased flexibility and freedom necessary to personalize learning experiences. As a District of Innovation, Nueces Canyon CISD intends 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 District of Innovation Plan will become effective May 15, 2017 and will remain in effect for five years, through May 15, 2022, 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.

Timeline

Timeline	Activity/Task
February 8, 2017	NCCISD campus meetings held to identify what a District of Innovation is and discuss advantages / disadvantages of becoming a District of Innovation
February 14, 2017	SBDM Meeting - Innovation Planning Meeting – tentatively using SBDM as DOI Committee until board approval
February 14, 2017	SBDM / District Innovation Committee votes to initiate District of Innovation process
February 20, 2017	NCCISD Board of Trustees passes a resolution to begin District of Innovation (DOI) Plan
February 20, 2017	NCCISD Board of Trustees approves the District of Innovation Committee
February 20, 2017	NCCISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing on the District of Innovation
February 23, 2017	Second Planning Meeting of the DOI Committee
March 6, 2017	Third Planning Meeting of the DOI Committee
March 27, 2017	Fourth Planning Meeting of the DOI Committee - District of Innovation Plan approved by DOI committee
March 28, 2017	District of Innovation Plan posted on NCCISD webpage
May 15, 2017	District of Innovation Plan to be voted on by the NCCISD Board of Trustees

I. Teacher Contract Days (TEC 21.401) DC (LEGAL)

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)**

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)**

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 or special education certifications.

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)

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.