

## Columbus ISD District of Innovation

**Introduction:** House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On February 13, 2017, the Columbus Independent School District’s Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Adopt a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations in order to support innovation and local initiatives to improve student learning.

On February 23, 2017 the Columbus ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing on whether the District should pursue the designation as a District of Innovation. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Trustees appointed a committee to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan. This committee is composed of representatives from various stakeholders across the district including teachers, principals, parents, community members and administrators. The committee will meet March 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss and develop the plan. If a majority of their membership approves the plan, it will be posted online for 30 days and will go to the board on April 10, 2017.

**Prerequisite:** To be eligible for designation as a District of Innovation, a school district’s most recent academic performance rating must be at least acceptable. Columbus ISD meets this standard.

**Term:** The term of the District of Innovation Plan, as outlined by the Texas Education Agency, is for five years. The plan will begin with the 2017-2018 academic year and will conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees or the Commissioner of Education in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan.

### Columbus I.S.D. Timeline

TIMELINE	ACTIVITY/TASK
February 13, 2017	<i>CISD Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to initiate District of Innovation Plan (DOI)</i>
February 23, 2017	<i>CISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing regarding District of Innovation</i>
March 7, 2017	<i>DOI Committee Meeting to discuss District of Innovation Plan</i>
March 10, 2017	<i>Post DOI Plan on Columbus ISD website for 30 days</i>
April 10, 2017	<i>Recommend Final Plan to Board of Trustees for Approval</i>

### District of Innovation Planning Committee

Dr. Brian Morris –Superintendent	Scott Leopold – Director of Maintenance and Operations
Dr. Kathy Adair – Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Amber Berger – Director of Federal Programs

Deborah Hayward – Director of Special Education	Jennie Brown – CES Teacher
Judy Hoelscher – CES Teacher	Shana Neisner – CES Assistant Principal
Colleen Walker – CES Teacher	Laura Harris – CES Teacher
Jamie Stewart – CES Teacher	Stephanie Kainer – CJHS Teacher
Jennifer Chester – CJHS Teacher	Kay Divin – CJHS Counselor
Casey Schindler – CJHS Teacher	Robert Russell – CHS Principal
Gary Leopold – CJHS Principal	Jennifer Kohleffel – CHS Teacher
Amy Russell – CHS Teacher	Amy Venghaus – CHS CTE Teacher
Garrett Schindler – CHS Teacher	Stephanie Bates – CAS-NU Teacher
Sheila Prause – CAS-NU Principal	Michael Koehl – CAS Principal
Joel Usher – Parent Representative	Kim Wolbrecht – Parent Representative
Dwight Mazac – Business Representative	Nancy Stiles – Business Representative
Laura Weido – Community Representative	Olga Poncik – Community Representative

**Innovations:**

**First Day of Instruction**

**Innovation Plan Exemption from TEC 25.0811** – Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August.

**Proposal:** This law restricts flexibility in the design of annual calendars that fit the needs of the school district and community. The flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will allow the district to create a calendar that best meets the needs of the students in Columbus ISD. An earlier start date will allow a better balance between semesters while still ending the first semester prior to the holiday break. Flexibility with an earlier start date will also allow more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date prior to June.

**CISD Local Guidelines:** The district will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will begin.