

Comanche ISD

District of Innovation Plan

August 2022-July 2027

During the 84th Legislative session HB 1842 was created to give public school district some local control in certain areas. Comanche ISD is opting to use HB 1842 to establish a District of Innovation Plan to help Comanche ISD students, staff, parents, and the community.

Beginning August 1, 2022 Comanche ISD will exercise this authority to exempt itself from the following State requirements for a five-year period. This plan may be amended by the District of Innovation committee with the approval from the Board of Trustees.

Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102)(TEC 21.102 (c)) (DCA LEGAL)

Current law: 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.

Plan: The period of time referenced above is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. Teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to state assessment results. Therefore, at the discretion of the district, Comanche ISD may issue a probationary contract to an employee that meets the criteria of teaching in a Texas public school for five of the previous eight years.

Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size (TEC 25.112a-g) (TEC 25.113a-b) (EEB LEGAL)

Current law: TEC §25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes.

Plan: Although this will not be a Comanche ISD best practice, we plan to use the flexibility of having more than 22 students in a classroom without applying for a waiver when students move into the district. This will allow Comanche ISD time to remedy the overcrowded classroom in a timely manner.

Uniform School Calendar (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812) (EB LEGAL) (EB LOCAL)

Current law: Texas Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. Texas Education Code Section 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Plan: Flexibility of the beginning and ending of school dates allows the district to better meet the needs of the students, staff, and community of Comanche ISD. This exemption allows for student holidays to be put in place where some of our populations travel.

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Certification Required (TEC 21.003) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL) TEC 21.003

Current law: Texas Education code states that “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 as provided by Subchapter B.”

Plan: The current certification requirements inhibit the district’s ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CATE). Comanche ISD plans to hire persons with industry experience or a 2-year degree in the event a certified teacher cannot be secured for a CTE position.

Due to current teacher shortages, the hiring of persons with a 4-year degree who are NOT appropriately certified through SBEC may be necessary in a variety of teaching fields. If a candidate fitting this description is hired, it is the responsibility of the candidate to show verification of enrollment in an alternative teaching certification program during the first semester of employment. Furthermore, the candidate must be certified within one calendar year of employment. Thus, transferring the certificate of employment from being carried locally to being carried by the certifying program. This type of exception will not be granted positions that are governed by federal guidelines, such as Special Education or Bilingual teachers. Comanche ISD plans to hire certified teachers when they are available and proven to be a viable candidate.

The campus principal and superintendent will do extensive research on each person’s expertise and credentials, and only as a last resort, recommend to the school board the individual be hired on a local certificate rather than a contract.

Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade (TEC 25.092)

Current law: TEC 25.092 regulates the seat time for class credit.

Plan: With innovative ways for students to learn through virtual classroom opportunities, we will seek an exemption from the 90% “seat time” attendance rule as set forth in this code. This will lift barriers for learners who wish to engage in service-learning opportunities and for learners to have time to pursue potential career passions.

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Student Discipline Provisions (FO LEGAL & LOCAL) (Ed. Code 37.0012)

Current law: Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Plan: We plan to use a collaborative approach to student discipline. We plan to use flexibility in allowing multiple people on each campus with expertise in emotional support, social support, and conscious discipline to implement and maintain student discipline.

Contract Service Days (TEC §21.401)

Current law: State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Plan: Comanche ISD plans to reduce the number of teacher days from 187 to 183 with no effect on annual teacher salaries. With teacher retention and recruitment a high priority, we feel this will give our current teachers a morale boost and encourage professional recruitment for Comanche ISD.

Inter-district Transfers (FDA Legal, Local) (Ed. Code 25.036)

Current law: a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in a district. A transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year. Comanche ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (local) requiring non-resident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, and attendance are also evaluated.

Plan: Comanche ISD is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Comanche ISD seeks exemption from the one year transfer. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. Additionally, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.