



Texas Education Code Chapter 12A establishes “districts of innovation”, a designation that allows a school district to exempt itself from various state laws.

### **Flexible Calendar:**

#### **Current Law:**

TEC §25.0811

*“ . . . a school district may not begin instruction for students for a year before the fourth Monday in August.”*

#### **Conroe ISD District of Innovation:**

*Students may begin instruction earlier than the fourth Monday in August.*

Starting school prior to the fourth Monday in August allows for a calendar that fits the needs of our community and benefits our students by allowing a more balanced number of days of instruction in the first and second semesters as well as the ability to conclude the semester prior to the winter break.

### **Teacher Certification:**

#### **Current Law:**

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 as provided by Subchapter B.*

Subchapter B establishes the certification requirements for Texas Educators.

#### **Conroe ISD District of Innovation:**

*A person may be employed as a teacher without an appropriate certificate or permit issued by Subchapter B of Texas Education Code Chapter 21, if the person, in the subject matter to be taught, has: (1) relevant work experience, (2) formal training, or education, and (3) licensure, certification or registration.*

The District will use this exemption to fill CTE positions. This benefits the students of the District by providing opportunities for the District to consider qualified industry professionals who may have industry training and certification but may not hold teacher certification.

High school students are able to earn “endorsements” in specific units of study, including business and industry. Many students seek to earn endorsements in areas such as manufacturing, technology, and health services. Finding certified teachers for some CTE positions can be very difficult. An exemption from Texas Education Code §21.003 will allow the District to hire qualified candidates who may not be certified teachers, but who bring authentic field and industry knowledge and skills to the classroom. Such professionals can provide students with not only unparalleled learning experiences, but also real world work experiences, as they typically hold multiple certifications in their area of expertise.

To ensure that this exception is used to obtain the most qualified candidate, the District will implement administrative procedures that require:

- Establishing “local credential guidelines” that will require, in the subject matter to be taught, requisite work experience, formal training and education, and industry licensure, certification, and/or registration.

- Teachers employed under this certification program will receive pedagogy and classroom management training.
- Prior to an offer of employment, the Superintendent will review and approve all candidates that fall under this exception.
- The Superintendent will periodically update the Board on the number of candidates hired under this provision along with the courses they teach.

## Timeline

<b>10/6/2020</b>	<b>Board Information</b> On October 6, 2020 the Conroe ISD Board of Trustees were provided an overview and introduction to District of Innovation.
<b>10/20/2020</b>	<b>Adopting Resolution</b> On October 20, 2020 the Board of Trustees were asked to approve a resolution to explore the opportunity for Conroe ISD to become a District of Innovation
<b>10/20/2020</b>	<b>Public Hearing</b> On October 20, 2020 the Conroe ISD Board of Trustees held a public hearing for public input on the District of Innovation opportunity.
<b>10/20/2020</b>	<b>Appoint Committee</b> On October 20, 2020 the Board of Trustees appointed the District Level Planning and Decision Making Committee (DLPDMC) to develop a District of Innovation Plan.
<b>10/21/2020</b>	<b>Develop a Plan of Innovation</b> The DLPDMC explored and developed a Plan of Innovation.
<b>10/21/2020</b>	<b>DLPDMC Approves District of Innovation</b> On October 21, 2020 the DLPDMC approved a District of Innovation Plan.
<b>10/22/2020</b>	<b>District Plan of Innovation Posted</b> The Conroe ISD District Plan of Innovation was posted on the Conroe ISD website for at least 30 days.
<b>12/15/2020</b>	<b>District of Innovation Plan Approved by Board of Trustees</b> On December 15, 2020 the Board of Trustees met to review and approve the Conroe ISD District of Innovation Plan. A copy of the approved District of Innovation Plan was provided to Texas Education Agency for posting on its website.