

Charlotte Independent School District



**District of Innovation Plan
2021-2022 to 2025-2026
Revised 8/19/2025**

**AMENDMENTS ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AUGUST 20, 2025**

Background

During the 84th Texas Legislative Session in the Spring of 2015, House Bill 1841 was passed, which provides the opportunity for Texas public school districts to pursue the designation of District of Innovation (DOI) for five years, provided the District continues to meet performance requirements in both academics and finance. This provides local districts the opportunity to seek exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to afford more flexibility and local control for innovative programming.

Districts of Innovation may be exempt from a multitude of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision maker over the educational and instructional model for students;
- Increase freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently

Due to the passage of legislation from the 89th Regular Legislative Session which impacted areas of exemption under the Plan, the District determined that it was necessary to amend the Plan. The amendments will not extend the current term of the Plan which is for five (5) years, beginning May 12, 2021, and ending _____, 2026, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with law. If within the term of this Plan, other areas of operation are to be considered for flexibility the District will initiate the amendment process in accordance with law and TEA requirements. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan

Process to become a District of Innovation

The Board of Trustees approved a resolution to become a District of Innovation on March 10th, 2021. A public hearing on becoming a District of Innovation was held, and the Board of Trustees appointed the District Advisory Committee to develop the Innovation Plan.

The District Advisory Committee met on March 19, 2021, and composed a District of Innovation Plan based on district needs.

The proposed District of Innovation Plan will be posted on March 22 - April 30, 2021, on the district website for the required 30 days, and Charlotte ISD will notify the Commissioner of intent to adopt the District of Innovation Plan.

On May 3, 2021, the District Advisory Committee will hold a public meeting to consider the final plan and vote on the plan.

The Board of Trustees will vote on the adoption of the District of Innovation Plan on May 12, 2021.

The District of Innovation Plan will be posted on the district website on May 6, 2021, if approved by the Board.

The District of Innovation Plan was amended on July 28, 2022.

- Section Amended: **Innovation:** Teacher Certification

The District of Innovation Plan was amended on August 30, 2023

- Section Amended: **Innovation:** Teacher Certification/Parent Notification and Class Size

August __, 2025 Reconvened the district-level committee to review Amendments to the plan and voted to approve the amendments to the plan.

August __, 2025 School Board Approved and Adopted the Amended DOI plan by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the board.

The District of Innovation Plan was amended on _____, 2025.

- Sections Amended: Grievance Policies, Local School Library Advisory Council, and Acquisition of Library Materials

Term

Under current law, the plan may have a term of up to five years, and it may be amended, rescinded, or renewed during that time period. The Charlotte ISD Innovation Plan will begin with the 2021-2022 school year and conclude at the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

Charlotte Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

The Charlotte ISD District of Innovation Committee members, comprised of the District Advisory Committee, developed the Local Innovative Plan. Three exemptions are included in the Charlotte ISD Innovation Plan, which will be in effect beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and conclude at the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

Innovation: First Day of Instruction (School Start Date)

Current Statute: Texas Education Code Section 25.0811: A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposed Innovation: The Charlotte ISD District of Innovation Committee has determined a school calendar that offers the option to begin the first day of instruction prior to the fourth Monday in August (as currently required by the TED) will provide the District the ability to effectively meet the instructional needs of all students. Such a calendar will better prepare our students for college and career readiness by aligning start/end dates with local colleges in partnerships with the District and all more instructional time for students before state assessments.

Innovation: Probationary Contracts

Current Statute: Texas Education Code Section 21.102(b) states that a probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.

Proposed Innovation: The Charlotte ISD District of Innovation Committee has determined experienced employees, subject to Chapter 21, that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, are subject to a probationary contract issued for up to two years from the last date of district employment. Partial years will not qualify toward the two-year requirement. This will allow the district more time to sufficiently evaluate staff members' effectiveness.

Innovation: Teacher Certification

Current Statute: Texas Education Code Section TEC §21.003, TEC §21.044, §21.053 AND §21.057 requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a district unless the person holds an appropriate certification or permit issued by the appropriate state agency.

Proposed Innovation: The Charlotte ISD District of Innovation Committee has determined decisions on certification for teachers in the Career and Technical Education courses, and to hire teachers to teach outside of their field/grade level in situations where vacancies are not filled. It is the intent of the District to limit the use of this exemption and the District will

always seek to hire certified and highly qualified teachers. All special education and ESL teachers will continue to be SBEC certified. The District will move to establish its own local criteria/qualifications for hard-to-fill positions. The district will not be required to provide parental notification as long as the teacher meets district standards for local certification approval. The Board of Trustees must approve all assignments of teachers who do not have proper certification annually as recommended by the superintendent. This will allow more flexibility in course offerings for our students and alleviate some difficulty in filling teaching assignments in areas that have historically been difficult to fill due to our rural area.

Local Guidance:

- The campus principal must submit the request and reason for the request to the superintendent to allow a certified teacher to teach outside of their field or grade level along with any documentation or credentials the certified teacher possess that qualifies them to teach the subject.
- The campus principal must submit the request and reason for the request to the superintendent for local certification for uncertified individuals along with any documentation or credentials the individual possesses that qualify them to teach the subject.
- The superintendent will approve or deny requests for local certification and will submit approved requests to the Board of Trustees for approval prior to the individual beginning employment.
- Uncertified teachers will be provided with a teacher mentor, and have increased observation feedback, professional development, instructional resources, and other supports.

Innovation: Class Size

Current Statute: Texas Education Code §25.111-13, §25.112(A-G), §25.113(A-B)

A 22 to 1 student/teacher ratio is required by State law for Kindergarten to 4th grade classes. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency, and the district must notify parents of waivers to class size limits.

Proposed Innovation: While the district intends to keep a 22:1 ratio for the past several years, a class size waiver to TEA has been required. Based on our observations, we believe that a local solution to class size adjustments should be made without submitting waivers to TEA. Charlotte ISD will continuously monitor enrollment at the elementary campuses. In the event a class size exceeds 22:1 ratio a waiver will not be submitted but the Superintendent will provide the Board of Trustees with updated enrollment numbers and action plans.

Innovation: Grievance Policies

According to Texas Education Codes 26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003, t The Texas Education Code requires the Board of trustees of each school district to adopt a grievance procedure that complies with Chapter 26A under which the board shall address each grievance that the board receives concerning a violation of a right guaranteed by this chapter, of a board of trustees policy, or of a provision of this title.

Proposed Innovation:

Charlotte ISD has and will continue to adhere to an established grievance policy with procedures and timelines as outlined in its local Board's policies DGBA, FNG and GF. Such policies ensure thorough documentation of each step in the grievance process and provides adequate time for complaints to be filed, and for complaints to be heard. All records related to grievances, including submitted forms, communications, investigations, findings, resolutions, and any corrective actions are systematically maintained at the district level to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal and policy standards. The District is committed to monitoring the legality and appropriateness of every decision and action taken. The District is further committed to hearing, reviewing, and attempting to resolve all complaints, as well as to taking corrective action, where appropriate. Charlotte ISD's long-standing grievance policy will ensure that all such complaints are carefully reviewed and that district responses are in alignment with state and federal regulations, as well as all other local board policies.

Charlotte ISD follows established grievance procedures as outlined in district policy, specifically in relation to the timelines for filing an appeal prior to Texas Education Code §26.002 and for hearing such complaints. The district believes that a requirement for complaints to be submitted within 15 district business days from the date the grievant either knows, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action that is the subject of the grievance ensures prompt attention and resolution of concerns. In cases where the grievant does not receive the requested relief at the prior grievance level, or if the response deadline has passed without a reply, the parent may proceed by requesting a conference with the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to appeal the previous decision. This appeal must be submitted in writing, using the district-provided form, within ten (10) district business days of receiving the written response from Level One or Level Two. If no written response is provided, the appeal must be submitted within ten (10) days following the deadline for the response at the applicable level. The District's current grievance policies also provide for a Level Three grievance to the board of trustees, except for grievances related to extracurricular activities. Accuracy of information and access to individuals that are needed to provide necessary information surrounding an issue could be compromised after 60 to 90 days. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed in a timely manner to ensure the best prompt response.

Charlotte therefore requests relief from the timelines, processes and procedures imposed by **26.011, 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003** and will maintain its current grievance forms, processes and procedures for all grievants including parents and students.

Innovation: Local School Library Advisory Council (TEC § 33.025(b))

Charlotte ISD encourages and supports all campus efforts to involve District parents and community members as active participants in the education of its students.

Current Law:

Current law requires the school district to establish a School Library Advisory Council at any campus where either 10% of parents or 50 parents (whichever is fewer) submit a written request for such a council. The council must include at least five members, with a majority being parents of currently enrolled students who are not employed by the district. The council is tasked with reviewing library materials, providing input on the selection and removal of resources, making recommendations to ensure materials are age-appropriate and aligned with community values, reviewing all books and other material objected to by any District parent, and advising on such objections. The law also requires districts to notify parents of their right to request council formation and to maintain transparency through open meetings, public records, and timely reporting of council activities and decisions.

Proposed Innovation:

Charlotte ISD requests to be exempted from Texas Education Code §33.025(b), which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents. While the newly required councils are not required to be formed until such a petition is received, once the petition is received, the Board will be statutorily required to create these councils. Should that occur, the council(s) will not be optional for the District. Accordingly, Charlotte ISD seeks to be exempt from Texas Education Code §33.025 (b), which mandates the creation of a School Library Advisory Council upon petition by 10% of parents or 50 parents. Charlotte ISD already has strong, board-approved procedures in place for selecting, reviewing, and reconsidering library materials—led by certified librarians and educators and aligned with state-mandated requirements and guidance from the Texas Education Agency. Creating such advisory councils risks undermining the professional judgment of educators and librarians, introduces the judgment of non-certified individuals, introduces potential for politicization of instructional resources, and could very easily lead to inconsistency across campuses. Furthermore, the statute presents an administrative burden, requiring staff time and resources that would be better directed toward student learning and support. Charlotte ISD's existing processes already allow for meaningful parental review and involvement, including access to their child's library checkout records if requested, formal challenge procedures, and transparency in material selection. In addition, concerned individuals may also speak with teachers, administration, and/or the school board through District complaint processes and/or during the open forum of any regularly scheduled board meeting. The District remains committed to ensuring age-appropriate and educationally sound resources while maintaining an efficient and effective oversight structure that includes educator expertise and parent input, without the disruption and/or duplication caused by the statutory requirements in §33.025(b).

Innovation: Acquisition of Library Materials

(TEC § 33.026)

Current Law:

Current law outlines specific procedures school districts must follow before acquiring library materials. The law requires that materials be reviewed and approved in advance by a certified school librarian and be verified for compliance with age-appropriateness, educational suitability, and community standards. Additionally, it mandates a multi-step vetting process, documentation of acquisition decisions, and the public posting of selected materials before they are made available to students.

Proposed Innovation:

Charlotte ISD requests to be exempt from this statutory provision because the District already has robust, board-approved policies, implemented by certified librarians in place that govern the acquisition of library materials in a manner that ensures transparency, appropriateness, and educational value. While the newly required councils are not required to be formed until a petition is received, once the petition is received, the Board will be statutorily required to create these councils. Should that occur, the council(s) will not be optional for the District. Accordingly, Charlotte ISD seeks to be exempt from Texas Education Code §33.026 (d), which outlines the duties of the local school library advisory council. These policies and procedures are fully compliant with the standards required by Texas law and guidance from the Texas Education Agency. The statutory process under §33.026 introduces redundant and restrictive requirements that may delay access to timely instructional and enrichment resources. It also places bureaucratic barriers in front of trained library professionals who are certified to select age-appropriate, curriculum-aligned materials, that are consistent with standards set by Texas law. Additionally, the public pre-approval requirement undermines the expertise of certified school educators and creates delay and roadblocks in getting library materials to students who benefit from them. Furthermore, the mandated documentation process creates an administrative burden that consumes time and resources better allocated to instructional support. While Charlotte ISD fully supports transparency and parental engagement in the school library process, the rigid requirements of TEC §33.026 are unnecessary and duplicative of local safeguards already in place. This exemption allows Charlotte ISD to preserve instructional flexibility, uphold librarian professionalism, and provide students with timely access to enriching and appropriate materials—without compromising accountability or community trust.