

Cayuga Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

2022 – 2027



In an effort to better meet the needs of Cayuga ISD's students, this District of Innovation plan was developed in accordance with the Texas Education Code, specifically Chapter 12A. The elements of this plan are related to the provision of a comprehensive educational program. The plan also identifies requirements of the Texas Education Code that inhibit Cayuga ISD's goals and from which the district seeks exemption.

Cayuga ISD's initial District of Innovation plan was implemented on July 1, 2017. It expired on June 30, 2022. This updated plan was implemented on July 1, 2022 and will expire on June 30, 2027.

CISD's local innovation plan may be amended, rescinded or renewed if approved by the District-Wide Improvement Council and the Board in the same manner that it was adopted. If, within the term of this plan, other innovative strategies are proposed, the Board will authorize a committee to consider and recommend additional exemptions. Any amendments approved by the Board will be in effect for the same term as the current plan.

With the approval of CISD's District-Wide Improvement Council and Board of Trustees, this 2022-2027 District of Innovation plan was amended on October 27, 2025.

Cayuga Independent School District

Board of Trustees

Tim West	Josh Hinshaw	David Link
John Paul Kelley	Clint Satterwhite	
Daniel Sims	Adam Krumnow	

District-Wide Improvement Council / District of Innovation Committee

Tracie Campbell	Christie Smith
Carla Henigan	Johanna Link
Autumn Brown	Riley Wyatt
Jenni Scheppler	Amy Kelley
Jill Hamil	Kimberly Hillhouse
Zach Williams	Kenyetta Jenkins
Cody Smith	Tami Conrad
Magen Humphreys	Kellie Gatewood
Jacob Magee	Joey Fitzgerald

Timeline for Renewal, Adoption, Implementation & Revision of Cayuga ISD's 2022-2027 District of Innovation Plan

December 15, 2021 - The District-Wide Improvement Council discussed the need for Cayuga ISD's District of Innovation Plan to be updated and renewed. Relevant Texas Education Code exemptions were discussed by the DWIC membership prior to the proposed plan being posted on CISD's website.

January 12, 2022 - The proposed 2022-2027 District of Innovation Plan was posted on CISD's website.

February 28, 2022 - During their regular monthly meeting, the Board of Trustees and administration discussed revision and renewal of Cayuga ISD's District of Innovation plan. The discussion included the list of proposed Texas Education Code exemptions to be included in the updated plan. The Board unanimously approved a motion related to notifying the Texas Education Agency's Commissioner of Education of their intent to vote on adoption of the proposed 2022-2027 DOI plan.

March 7, 2022 - The DWIC / District of Innovation Plan Renewal Committee held a public meeting to consider the final version of the plan to be recommended to the Board of Trustees. The content of the proposed plan was unanimously approved by the DWIC / DOI Plan Renewal Committee. Texas Education Agency Commissioner Morath and TEA's Accreditation Division were informed of the Cayuga ISD Board's intent to vote on revising and renewing the DOI plan.

March 28, 2022 - The CISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the 2022-2027 DOI Plan as recommended by the DWIC / DOI Plan Renewal Committee.

March 31, 2022 - The Commissioner of Education was notified of the CISD Board's approval of the Plan.

July 1, 2022 - Implementation of the 2022-2027 District of Innovation Plan will begin. As needed, relevant district policies will be revised.

March 27, 2023 - The District of Innovation Plan was amended to include an exemption related to Chapter 37, Subchapter C of the Texas Education Code, entitled "Discipline, Law and Order."

July 31, 2025 - The Texas Education Agency provided written guidance to schools regarding recently passed state legislation, including certain new laws and relevant Texas Education Code provisions that schools can no longer exempt themselves from in their District of Innovation Plans.

September 3, 2025 - A District Leadership meeting was held that included a majority of the DWIC membership. Based on TEA's recent guidance, the need to revise CISD's District of Innovation Plan was discussed.

October 1, 2025 - Cayuga ISD's District-Wide Improvement Council unanimously approved revisions to the 2022-2027 DOI Plan primarily related to recent state legislation impacting Chapters 33 and 37 of the Texas Education Code.

October 27, 2025 - The CISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the DWIC's recommended revisions to the 2022-2027 DOI Plan.

Cayuga Independent School District

Term of District of Innovation Plan: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2027

DOI Plan applies to:

- ✓ Entire District
- Campus N/A
- Other Department N/A

Cayuga ISD's District of Innovation Plan includes certain exemptions from the following portions of the Texas Education Code.

Chapter 21 – Educators

Subchapter A – General Provisions

- ✓ §21.003(a) Certification Required

Subchapter B – Certification of Educators

- ✓ §21.053(a-b) Presentation and Recording of Certificates

Subchapter C – Probationary Contracts

- ✓ §21.102(b) Terms and Renewal

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Subchapter B – Assignments and Transfers

- ✓ §25.036(a) Transfer of Student

Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance

- ✓ §25.0811(a) First Day of Instruction

Chapter 28 – Courses of Study; Advancement

Subchapter A – Essential Knowledge and Skills

- ✓ §28.004(d) Local School Health Advisory Council

Chapter 33 – Service Programs and Extracurricular Activities

Subchapter B – Libraries

- ✓ §33.026(a-f) Acquisition of Library Materials

Chapter 45 – School District Funds

Subchapter G – School District Depositories

✓ §45.205(a-b) Term of Contract

Relevant Provisions of the Texas Education Code

As a District of Innovation, Cayuga Independent School District will be exempted from the following provisions of the Texas Education Code.

1. Certification Required; Presentation and Recording of Certificates

§TEC 21.003(a)

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...

§TEC 21.053(a-b)

A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding.

An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

2. Probationary Contracts

§TEC 21.102(b)

...the probationary period 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 by the district.

3. Transfer of Student

§TEC 25.036(a)

Any child...may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or other person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.

4. First Day of Instruction

§TEC 25.0811(a)

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

5. Local School Health Advisory Council, Health Education Instruction

§TEC 28.004(d)

The local school health advisory council shall meet at least four times each year.

6. Acquisition of Library Materials

§TEC 33.026(a-f)

The board of trustees of a school district shall adopt a policy for the acquisition of library materials, including procedures for the procurement of library materials and the receipt of donated library materials...

7. School District Depositories; Term of Contract

§TEC 45.205(a-b)

...the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years...

A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for three additional two-year terms.

Cayuga ISD's Innovative Strategies

1. Certification Required; Presentation and Recording of Certificates

§TEC 21.003(a)

§TEC 21.053(a-b)

FOR NON-CTE SUBJECTS

Decisions regarding teacher certification will be made by Cayuga ISD's Board and administration. Such decisions will be made locally in order to better serve CISD's students, including the opportunity to provide more course offerings for the students. This strategy will also allow for more flexibility in teacher assignments and campus schedules. For grades six through twelve, in all subjects except Special Education and ESL/Bilingual, the campus principal may submit a request to the superintendent to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a field related to the faculty member's current certification and/or education but for which the teacher is not certified.

RELATED FIELDS

English: Reading, Speech, Journalism, any other course accepted by the SBOE for graduation credit in English

Social Studies: History, Government, Economics, Political Science, any other course accepted by the SBOE for graduation credit in Social Studies

Science: Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Biology, Earth Science, Physics, Chemistry, any other course accepted by the SBOE for graduation credit in Science

Fine Arts: Art, Music, Theater Arts, Dance, any other course accepted by the SBOE for graduation credit in Fine Arts

Mathematics: Engineering, Statistics, Accounting, any other course accepted by the SBOE for graduation credit in Mathematics

The principal shall specify in writing the basis for the request and document the certified teacher's credentials that qualify the faculty member to teach the requested subject in a related field. The superintendent will decide whether or not to approve such requests.

FOR CTE SUBJECTS

The district will establish local qualifications and criteria for teachers of CTE courses. By establishing its own CTE teacher qualifications and criteria, Cayuga ISD will receive the following benefits: the ability to employ teachers who are industry certified and experienced in their vocation, the opportunity to offer more CTE courses and the increased possibility of recruiting and employing part-time teachers for CTE courses.

In making recommendations for teachers of CTE subjects, the principal shall specify in writing the basis for such recommendations and document the candidates' credentials that qualify the recommended individuals to teach CTE courses. Prior to such candidates' employment by the district, the superintendent will decide whether or not to recommend them to the Board of Trustees. If approved by the Board, such staff members will be employed on an at-will basis.

As with all district employees, the criminal history of candidates for CTE teaching positions will be checked prior to being recommended to the Board. In considering such applicants, efforts will also be made to verify the candidates have sufficient education and experience to effectively teach the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the courses they are to be assigned. Faculty members hired using these "District of Innovation" procedures will receive training in instructional delivery methods, classroom management training, meeting the needs of Special Education students and the state curriculum (TEKS) for their assigned course(s). During their first year of employment, they will receive some form of mentoring.

2. Probationary Contracts

§TEC 21.102(b)

This innovative strategy will apply to teachers who have taught in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding their initial employment by Cayuga ISD. This strategy will allow CISD to renew the probationary contract of such an experienced teacher for one additional year, for a maximum of two school years.

In some cases, one year of employment is insufficient to fully determine even an experienced teacher's effectiveness. This innovative strategy will provide Cayuga ISD with another employment option in addition to the options of offering term contracts to such faculty members or non-renewing their probationary contracts. Another benefit of this initiative is that it will provide additional time for the district to mentor teachers prior to hiring them under term contracts. This strategy will also allow experienced teachers the option of accepting another year of employment by the district under a probationary contract in addition to the option of seeking other employment opportunities prior to the deadline for teacher resignations.

3. Transfer of Student

§TEC 25.036(a)

Cayuga ISD accepts many transfer students. Almost all of them are remarkable students who make us very proud. Cayuga ISD would like to exercise the flexibility to revoke a student transfer in the event that the individual does not uphold our standards.

4. First Day of Instruction

§TEC 25.0811(a)

The first day of instruction for Cayuga ISD students will typically occur prior to the fourth Monday in August. This innovative strategy will allow Cayuga ISD to make decisions about the school's calendar at the local level and on an annual basis. It will result in grading periods and semesters that are more balanced. This initiative will also be helpful to the district in maintaining its practice of concluding the fall semester prior to the Christmas holidays. Another benefit of this strategy is that it will result in more school days and minutes of instruction occurring prior to the state assessments.

5. Local School Health Advisory Council, Health Education Instruction

§TEC 28.004(d)

In a small, rural school district such as Cayuga ISD, faculty members often serve in multiple roles, including committee memberships. In addition, the members of the SHAC in a small school tend to have more personal relationships and awareness of student needs. Both of these factors support Cayuga ISD's determination to exempt itself from the expectation of four SHAC meetings to be held each year. Instead, on an annual basis, CISD's SHAC will meet only frequently enough to effectively and efficiently tend to its assigned responsibilities.

6. Acquisition of Library Materials

§TEC 33.026(a-f)

The Cayuga ISD Board of Trustees has authorized the Superintendent and the District Librarian to ensure compliance with Section 33.021 of the Texas Education Code regarding library standards. The Board has also authorized the Superintendent and District Librarian to acquire library materials, both purchased and donated, that serve the best interests of Cayuga ISD's students and are aligned with the morals and values of our community.

7. School District Depositories; Term of Contract

§TEC 45.205(a)

Cayuga ISD is a small, rural school district that requires only basic depository services. No banks are located within CISD's attendance zone. In the past, when CISD has solicited bids for depository proposals from area banks, the school has received only very limited bids for the provision of such services. This innovative strategy will allow CISD to maintain a relationship with its current depository and avoid the difficulties associated with changing banks. CISD will solicit bids for depository services only when it is determined by the Board and administration that it would be advantageous for the district.

