

# Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Fall 2022



Public Schools of North Carolina  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction

- **What is a Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS)?**
  - North Carolina's Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS), including early colleges, middle colleges, career academies, and other innovative schools, are small public high schools, usually located on the campus of a community college or university, that expand students' opportunities through high quality instructional programming, blending high school course work with college course work or career preparation.
  - Cooperative Innovative High Schools target students who are at risk of dropping out of high school, first-generation college students, and/or students who would benefit from accelerated learning opportunities, including students traditionally underrepresented in higher education.
- **How many CIHS are there in North Carolina?**
  - Currently, there are a total of 134 CIHS in North Carolina. These schools represent different state initiatives focused on innovation in high schools over the years.
    - 118 partner with community colleges
    - 11 partner with UNC institutions
    - 5 partner with independent colleges
- **How are CIHS funded?**
  - Like other public schools in North Carolina, CIHS receive state funding based on Average Daily Membership. Higher education partners receive reimbursement for tuition: Full Time Equivalencies (FTEs) for community colleges; UNC System tuition rates by DPI for UNC System and independent colleges and universities.
  - Additional supplemental funding (PRC 055) for CIHS was revised by the Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2017. Appropriated supplemental funding for CIHS aligns to the economic tier designation for the region where the CIHS is located. Most CIHS receive some appropriated supplemental funding.
- **How are CIHS connected to Career College Promise?**
  - CIHS programs are one of three pathways of Career and College Promise (CCP). CCP provides dual enrollment opportunities for NC's high school students through three structured pathways: College Transfer, Career and Technical Education and CIHS.
  - The CCP Leadership Team, which includes members from NCDPI and the NC Community Colleges System, aligns CCP work across the two agencies. The team provides regular support sessions to bring together community college staff and LEA staff who work with all CCP programs to review policies, improve programming, and share best practices. The team also hosts technical assistance webinars for LEA and college staff applying to open new CIHS and additional support based on the needs from the field.
- **How are CIHS evaluated, and by whom?**
  - "Success shall be measured by high school retention rates, high school completion rates, high school dropout rates, certification and associate degree completion,

admission to four-year institutions, post-graduation employment in career or study-related fields, and employer satisfaction of employees who participated in and graduated from the schools.” The Boards shall jointly report by January 15 of each year to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the evaluation of these schools.” (N.C.G.A. § 115C-238.55).

- **How can my child attend a CIHS?**
  - Prospective students interested in attending a CIHS and parents or guardians should contact the CIHS directly to find out how to apply.
  - Prospective students should attend presentations to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at their middle school by CIHS staff to learn about CIHS opportunities.
  - Prospective students should talk with their school counselor about their interest in attending a CIHS.
  - Prospective students and families are encouraged to visit the CIHS they are considering.
  
- **How can my school district add a CIHS?**
  - CIHS are partnerships between one school district and one higher education partner. School districts interested in creating a CIHS should approach a college or university about becoming the higher education partner for the new CIHS.
  - If the district and higher education partner decide to apply to open a new CIHS, they should submit a letter of intent to apply to the Office of Advanced Learning at NCDPI: <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/cihs/applicants/>.
  - Letters of intent are submitted in June of each year.
  
- **Can a charter school become a CIHS?**
  - No. The statute authorizing the creation of a cooperative innovative high school program, N.C.G.S. 115C-238.50, only allows local boards of education to create one. Under N.C.G.S. 115C-238.50A(3a) and 115C-5(5), a local board of education is defined as a city board of education, county board of education, or a city-county board of education. A charter school is not authorized to create a cooperative innovative high school program because it does not meet the definition of a local board of education, and thus fails to meet the baseline criteria.
  
- **What office of NCDPI supports CIHS?**
  - The Office of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education supports CIHS programs. NCDPI is part of the official Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) which oversees CIHS, by legislation (N.C.G.A. § 115C-238.51A).
  - The NC Community College System Office, the UNC General Administration, and the NC Independent Colleges and Universities also serve on the JAC.
  
- **How does NCDPI support CIHS?**
  - Provides technical assistance to ensure fidelity to the governing legislation (N.C.G.A. § 115C-238.50-.55).
  - Develops and implements policy to support CIHS effectiveness and innovation;
  - Facilitates the CIHS application process;
  - Allocates and manages budget and finances with public school districts;
  - Partners with the NC Community Colleges System Office, UNC General Administration and NC Independent Colleges and Universities to lead CIHS programming; and
  - Supports CIHS as innovative public high schools.

- **What other areas does the Office of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education support?**
  - The major work streams of the Office of Advanced Learning focus on:
    - Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted students and programming,
    - Advanced Math Legislation,
    - Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge International Education
    - Honors programming,
    - Credit by Demonstrated Mastery,
    - NC Governors School, and
    - Career and College Promise (CCP) and Cooperative Innovative High Schools.