



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Maurice "Mo" Green, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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TO LEA Superintendents
Chief Academic Officers

FROM Sneha Shah Coltrane, Senior Director
Advanced Learning and Gifted Education

DATE May 14, 2025

COOPERATIVE INNOVATIVE HIGH SCHOOL (CIHS) APPLICATIONS: 2025 TIMELINE FOR SUBMISSION

The Innovative Education Initiatives Act encourages Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to partner with their local postsecondary educational institution to establish a Cooperative Innovative High School. The purpose of these schools is to target first-generation college students, students who are at risk of dropping out of high school and students who would benefit from accelerated learning opportunities, and to expand students' opportunities for educational success through high quality, dual enrollment instructional programming. Districts interested in creating such a school must apply in partnership with an institution of higher education to develop a CIHS.

Important Consideration

NC Session Law 2020-64 established that the State Board of Education may only conditionally approve up to three applications for CIHS that request additional funds to open in a school year. The State Board may prioritize conditional approval of applications for cooperative innovative high schools located in local school administrative units that do not already operate a CIHS.

Submission of a Letter of Intent: Due June 18, 2025

All LEAs and their higher education partners seeking to develop a CIHS must submit a Letter of Intent by using the electronic form at [CIHS Letter of Intent](#) by **June 18, 2025**. This Letter of Intent notifies the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), which consists of representatives from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), the North Carolina Community Colleges System, the University of North Carolina System, and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, of the intent to submit an application. **This step is required for all applicants**, including any existing CIHS now seeking supplemental funding. The purpose of the Letter of Intent is to activate application support from the JAC and NCDPI. This assistance will be provided as a service to application partners.

Technical Assistance for Application Development:

The JAC is committed to providing you support in the development of your application. Depending on the number of Letters of Intent we receive, a CIHS Applicant Orientation will be held **July 9, 2025**. We encourage all application partners to attend this session to learn more about the application process and to discuss the critical components of a CIHS. Further technical assistance will also be available throughout the application development phase

OFFICE OF ADVANCED LEARNING & GIFTED EDUCATION ACADEMIC POLICY

Sneha Shah-Coltrane, *Senior Director* | sneha.shahcoltrane@dpi.nc.gov
6301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699 | (984) 236-2737

Submission of Applications:

Applications to develop a CIHS are due to NCDPI by **October 10, 2025**. Applications must follow the electronic template that will be provided by July 2.

Selection of Cooperative Innovative High School Programs:

The JAC will review the applications and recommend to the appropriate Governing Boards those programs that meet the requirements and achieve the purposes set out in G. S. 115C-238.50. This process continues with final General Assembly approvals, typically through summer 2026.

If you are interested in applying to develop a CIHS in your district and would like to discuss this opportunity or have questions, please contact isaac.lake@dpi.nc.gov.

As always, we appreciate your efforts to personalize learning and to ensure every student has multiple opportunities to determine his or her pathway to the future.

IL/SSC

c: North Carolina Community College System
University of North Carolina System
North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities