



District of Innovation Proposed Plan

In accordance with Texas HB 1842, the District of Innovation Committee recommends the following plan to be in effect from 2017-2022.

## Committee Members

Jennifer Faulkenbery	Teacher
Letitia Pert	Community Member
Angelica Perkins	Teacher
James (Jim) Price	Community Member
Lisa Martischnig	Teacher
Alan Rainey	Community Member
Roberto Rodriguez	Community Member
Amy Simmons	Teacher
Matthew Capps	Dean of West College of Education, MSU
Tracey Goodman	Teacher
Diann Taylor	Retired Administrator
Carol Sales	Interim CEO of the Arts Council, Wichita Falls Inc.
Jared Jacobs	Teacher
Denise Williams	Retired WFISD
Krista Kaspar	Teacher
Sarah Chisum	Teacher
Bethlyn Eby	Teacher
Ferran Kaspar	Teacher
Michael Tayntor	Teacher
Lisa Kowalick	Teacher
Larry Fox	Teacher
Stephanie Robles	Assistant Principal
Shannon Cunningham	Assistant Principal
Angela Vaughn	Counselor
Debby Patterson	Director of School Administration

## District of Innovation Timeline

Oct 17, 2016	Board of Trustees approved resolution to develop an innovation plan
Nov 1, 2016	Board of Trustees held a public hearing in accordance with the statute
Nov 1, 2016	Board of Trustees appointed a committee of volunteers to develop a local Innovation plan
Nov 10, 2016	District of Innovation Committee held initial meeting
Nov 15, 2016	District of Innovation Committee held follow-up meeting
Nov 21, 2016	District of Innovation Committee held follow-up meeting
Dec 5, 2016	District of Innovation Committee held follow-up meeting
Jan 2, 2017	District of Innovation Committee held follow-up meeting
Jan 9, 2017	District of Innovation Committee held final meeting
Jan 12, 2017	District Action Committee reviewed District of Innovation proposal

## District of Innovation Plan

Wichita Falls Independent School District prides itself on providing a high-quality education, for all of our students, while always looking to our future in areas to improve. This is evident in our Core Beliefs that state our commitment to:

- Providing equal access to a quality education for every child that enters our District regardless of race, sex, ethnicity or socio-economic status.
- Doing everything possible to ensure student success, by not accepting excuses for anything less.
- Creating schools that provide a high-quality foundation in academics and strong support for emotional needs and character development.
- Providing a rigorous, relevant college preparatory curriculum as well as high-quality career and technology programs.
- Allocating resources to ensure equity for all students to reach their full potential.
- Providing students, the opportunity to perform to their full potential and ensuring that there is no discernable difference between the achievement levels of students by race, gender, or economic status.
- Basing academic decisions on quality research and reliable, pertinent data.
- Ensuring that quality instruction takes priority over all other functions.
- Providing a safe and secure environment for our students and staff.
- Maintaining the integrity of all support systems.
- Operating a workplace where all employees are valued while striving to be the employer of choice.
- Ensuring that every classroom has a caring and effective teacher.
- Ensuring that campus and district administrators demonstrate strong leadership and management skills.
- Holding all employees accountable for student success and student well-being.
- Encouraging and actively promoting engagement opportunities for all students and their families.
- Partnering with community members, businesses and institutions to enhance student achievement.

This is also evident of our new state-of-the-art CTE center, opening in 2017, and our commitment to incorporating technology into our classes by offering a unique Chromebook program and initiatives to incorporate “bring your own devices” in all of our campuses this year.

WFISD also enjoys a strong relationship with the community it serves. As such, the idea of flexibility and local control offered through this designation was a welcome reprieve.

With a focus on what is best for the students of WFISD, the District of Innovation Committee has developed the following recommendations, with an emphasis on research-based ideas, to be used for planning purposes as the district moves forward. The recommendations are broken

down into three categories: Learning Environment, Scheduling, and Staffing. The requirements of the Education Code that inhibit the goals of our recommendations, from which the district will be exempt upon adoption, are listed below each section. The recommendations are not part of the plan; rather they are a culmination of discussions at our meetings which we pass on to be explored further at the district level site-based meetings. A more detailed description of each exemption follows the recommendations. The DOI Committee is aware that these recommendations and suggestions are not necessarily inhibited from being done due to current state mandates.

## 1. Changes to our Learning Environment that can benefit the students of WFISD.

- a. Develop or adopt a college readiness type program such as Upward Bound or S.A.I.
- b. Increase the enrollment of pre-k students in our district by offering a paid option for those who do not currently qualify.
- c. Increase community support options for our schools to include online options for our community supporters to engage our students as well as one day per semester to offer community-wide service projects.
- d. Create a pilot for a project-based learning school/program within a school or look into bringing back the Magnet program to build more engaging and relevant 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills for our students.

Exemptions required to achieve the following goals:

1. Minimum Minutes of Instruction (Ed. Code 25.081)
2. 90 Percent Attendance Rule (Ed. Code 25.902)

## 2. Changes to our Scheduling that can benefit the students of WFISD.

- a. Allow district to adjust start date to create a more balanced calendar.
- b. Allow individual campuses to have the freedom to:
  1. adjust elementary start times based on neighborhood/student needs.
  2. increase recess times for students in pre-k-2.
  3. extend C.T.E. program to include night/summer classes.
  4. create additional options for credit recovery classes.
- c. Set a later start time for secondary schools.
- d. Transition back to 7 period school days at middle and/or high school level.

Exemptions required to achieve the following goals:

1. Minimum Minutes of Instruction (Ed. Code 25.081)
2. Uniform School Start Date (Ed. Code 25.0811)

### 3. Changes to Staffing that can benefit the students of WFISD.

- a. Campus-based behavior teams will develop and maintain a behavior/discipline plan that includes parents and students.
- b. Create incentive plan to improve high-quality teacher retention at our campuses that serve large at-risk student populations.
- c. Hire experts for hard-to-fill positions for the CTE center and Bilingual/Foreign Language programs.
- d. Create our own district-based professional appraisal system.

Exemptions required to achieve the following goals:

1. Student Discipline Provisions (Ed. Code 37.0012)
2. Teacher Certifications (Ed. Code 21.003)
3. Teacher Appraisal System (Ed. Codes 21.203 & 21.352)

#### *Exemption Detail*

#### Uniform School Start Date (ED. Code 25.0811)

##### **Currently**

State law provides that students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August.

##### **Proposed**

This flexibility of start date allows the district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and local community. This empowers us to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, and balance the amount of instructional time per semester. This will also allow for more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff. WFISD will not start school earlier than August 15<sup>th</sup> for students and August 8<sup>th</sup> for teachers, not including new teacher training.

#### Student Discipline Provisions (Ed. Code 37.0012)

##### **Currently**

Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

**Proposed**

The proposal is for the District to abstain from the state requirement that each school has a designated campus behavior coordinator. WFISD's approach to discipline is becoming more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person. Exemption from this requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration regarding student discipline.

**Minimum Minutes of Instruction (Ed. Code 25.081)****Currently**

For each school year, each district must operate so that the district provides for at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recess.

**Proposed***preK-12 Exemption*

The flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction will assist with personalizing learning to better meet individual needs. It also has the added benefit of allowing the possibility of an altered length of a school day, which may include a later start/early release time which will accommodate additional professional development/collaboration opportunities. While we will make every effort to meet the required goal of 75,600 minutes, we may reach this total in a more creative way without being confined to either 420 minutes or 7 hours of instruction every day.

**90 Percent Attendance Rule (Ed. Code 25.092)****Currently**

State law now requires students attend class 90 percent of the school days on a district calendar to earn credit. The law requires districts to award course credit to students based on the time a student is present in a classroom for instruction, rather than mastery of content and subject proficiency.

**Proposed**

The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery. Flexibility in the abstaining from the requirement means the district won't have to penalize students who miss class time due to dual-credit courses or other extenuating circumstances.

## Teacher Appraisal System (Ed. Codes 21.203 & 21.352)

### **Currently**

The state has issued a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS). The domains within these systems are developed by the State to meet the needs of the entire State of Texas.

### **Proposed**

A committee of district and campus administrators and teachers will convene to determine the best fit instrument to support the work of our WFISD students. As we move forward with the implementation of the growth indicators for students, our professional staff will also set goals in coordination with these efforts, including multiple observations, goal setting and tracking, and student growth progress toward learning objectives, as evaluation measures on teacher and administrator appraisals.

## Teacher Certifications (Ed. Code 21.003)

### **Currently**

State Law requires 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**

The statutory certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses, and hard to fill positions in the Bilingual and Foreign Language programs. Local qualifications will allow the district to recruit teachers from the field, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience.

Local Guidelines:

\*The District will establish Local Criteria, such as years of experience, qualifications, and industry certifications, to qualify for a local (district) teaching certificate.

\*Principals, along with the CTE, Bilingual, and/or Foreign Language departments, will submit candidates to the Superintendent with credentials. The Superintendent will determine whether it is in the best interest of the district to certify the individual. The Superintendent will notify the Board before beginning employment.

\*WFISD may provide a minimum of 20 hours of classroom management training for uncertified CTE, Bilingual, or Foreign Language teachers who are approved to teach.

## Summary

The focus of the District of Innovation Committee has been our approximately 14,000 students. We believe that the exemptions outlined above align with WFISD's strategic plans and the recommendations to the site based committee will enable WFISD to be better positioned to leverage increased flexibility to make the best decisions for our children here in Wichita Falls. While many of the "innovations" listed are not truly innovative in a sense that they are new, they do allow us to change something to make it better.

The activation of the above exemptions from the Texas Education Code will require the revision of several WFISD policies. WFISD will implement these changes through our District Advisory Council.

Changes can be made at any time to this District of Innovation Plan by petitioning the School Board and starting the District of Innovation process all over again.

On January 11, 2017, we, the members of the District of Innovation Committee, have agreed to the terms outlined in the plan above. To complete the process, we ask for the following:

1. The plan is placed on the WFISD's website for at least 30 days.
2. The WFISD Board of Trustees will notify the Texas Commissioner of Education of the WFISD Board's intention to vote on the proposed plan.
3. The plan is to be sent to the district's site-based committee for consideration to include a public hearing and a vote to adopt the plan by a majority of its members.
4. After the 30-day period for the plan to be viewed online, sent to TEA, and adoption through the district's site-based committee, the Board of Trustees to adopt the plan through an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the board.

Upon completion of the steps outlined above, we will be designated as a District of Innovation for up to 5 years.

- 1) Jennifer Faulkenbery
- 2) Letitia Pert
- 3) Angelica Perkins
- 4) James (Jim) Price
- 5) Lisa Martischnig
- 6) Alan Rainey
- 7) Roberto Rodriguez
- 8) Amy Simmons
- 9) Matthew Capps
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- 12) Carol Sales
- 13) Jared Jacobs
- 14) Denise Williams
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