



Wolfe City ISD

District of Innovation

Wolfe City ISD 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾
**Making Tracks for
the Future!**

Wolfe City ISD Innovation Committee Members

District Administration

Vernon Richardson	Superintendent
Sheila Gardner	Director of Curriculum & Technology

Elementary School

Randi Jones	Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
Kimberly Thacker	Kindergarten Teacher
Amy Cox	First Grade Teacher
Liz Myrick	Second Grade Teacher
Lindsay Richardson	Third Grade Teacher
Christina Davis	Fourth Grade Teacher
Lisa Wilson	Fifth Grade Teacher / Testing Coordinator
Jodi Card	SPED Teacher
Angela Anderson	Reading Lab Teacher
Sharon Duncan	GT / Computer Technology Teacher
Dona Gavlick	Counselor
Brent Fitzgerald	Principal
Casey Hale	Parent

Middle School

Dona Gavlick	Counselor
Amber Northcutt	Teacher/Testing Coordinator
Alissa Davis	Teacher/Mentor
Lisa Tisdale	Teacher/Technology
Danielle Cagle	Parent
Melanie Williams	Principal

High School

Dona Gavlick	Counselor
Billy Eldridge	SPED Teacher/Testing Coordinator
Alayne Aikens	English Teacher
Paula Fitzgerald	Business and CTE Teacher
Rose Gardner	Science Teacher
Jess Merritt	Social Studies Teacher
Jamie Moore	CTE Teacher
Mike Hammonds	Parent
Boyd Roberts	Community Member
Carrie Roberts	Community Member
Chris Sheets	Principal

Overview

House Bill 1842, passed in 2015 in the 84th Session of the Texas Legislature, in part amended Chapter 12A of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to create Districts of Innovation. The designation allows school districts to be exempt from certain sections of the TEC, providing more flexibilities and control in locally meeting the needs of students and the communities served. Traditional independent school districts now have many of the flexibilities available to open enrollment charter schools. In order to have these opportunities, a district must adopt an innovation plan as set forth in Texas Education Code 12A. Wolfe City ISD has the opportunity to design a plan according to the needs and resources of our district while maximizing local control.

Terms

By law, the term of the designation as a District of Innovation may not exceed five years. The term of the Wolfe City Innovation Plan begins on February 1, 2017, and ends on February 1, 2022, unless rescinded or renewed by the Board in accordance with law, or terminated by the Commissioner of Education. The plan may be amended, rescinded or renewed by a majority vote of the district-level committee along with a two-thirds majority vote of the Board. An amendment to the Plan does not change/extend the date of the term of designation as an innovation district; exemptions that were already formally approved are not required to be reviewed. The District must notify TEA within five business days of rescission of the plan and provide a date (not to be later than the start of the following school year) at which time it will be in compliance with all sections of the TEC. During renewal, all sections of the plan and exemptions shall be reviewed and the adoption process must be followed. The District shall notify the Commissioner of any actions taken to amend, rescind or renew the Plan along with the associated TEC exemptions. The Committee will annually review the plan, unless the Board determines a review must be done prior to the annual review, to ensure that the recommendations are continuing to meet the needs of the District as intended. As part of the annual review process, the membership of the Committee will be renewed and/or modified by a majority vote of the Board. Outside of the annual review/renewal process, if a member of the Committee is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the Board may appoint a replacement by majority vote.

Potential Benefits

- Local Control – Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- Customization – Wolfe City ISD can create an innovation plan that is specific to our District.
- Autonomy – Districts must submit a District of Innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.
- Flexibility – Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices in areas that may include:
 - School Start Date
 - Teacher Certification for Career and Technology Education
 - Teacher Contracts (Reduce to 185 days)
 - Other Identified Areas

Action Items

1. First Day of Instruction

TEC Code Requiring Exemption

TEC Sec. 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August. TEC Sec. 25.0811 allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

(TEC 25.0811) (EB (LEGAL), (LOCAL))

District Innovative Strategy for First Day of Instruction

Improve student success through the flexibility in the calendar by having the option to set the calendar locally. This strategy will allow first and second semesters to be closer in the number of days of instruction and creating more instructional time before STAAR/EOC exams. More balanced semesters will also align with college semesters as well as allow more opportunities for summer school, internships and industrial certifications. In addition, starting earlier will also accommodate new and innovative education programs during summer. The possibility exists for calendars to be set individually for each campus if the educational need arises as well.

2. Teacher Contract Days

TEC Code Requiring Exemption

TEC 21.401 requires a teacher who is on a 10-month contract to work a minimum of 187 days.

(TEC 21.401) (DCB (LEGAL), DCB (LOCAL))

District Innovative Strategy for Teacher Contract Days

In an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students, the district would have the option to reduce the amount of contract days with no effect on teacher salaries.

3. Teacher Certification

TEC Code Requiring Exemption

TEC Sec. 21.003 requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. TEC Sec. 21.053 mandates a teacher must present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding and prohibits the District from paying an educator if he or she does not hold a valid certificate at the time. TEC Sec. 21.057 requires that a school district provide parental notification if the district assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year. (TEC 21.003) (DK (LEGAL), DK (LOCAL), DK (EXHIBIT), DBA (LEGAL), and DBA (LOCAL), (TEC 21.053), (TEC 21.057)

District Innovative Strategy for Teacher Certification for Non-CTE Subjects Grades 6-12

In order to best serve Wolfe City ISD students by allowing more flexibility in scheduling and more course offerings, decisions on certification will be handled locally. For grades 6-12, in all subjects except Special Education and ESL/Bilingual, the campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for a local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a field outside of their current certification for which he/she is not certified. All teachers at grades PK-5 will be fully certified.

District Innovative Strategy for Teacher Certification for CTE Subjects Grades 6-12

The current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach **(A) Career and Technical Education (CTE)** and **(B) Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics (STEM) courses**. In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses and promote students' ability to obtain professional certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements for such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. In addition, if teacher meets the applicable local certification requirements, the teacher will not be required to present certification before being hired. Flexibility to establish its own CTE teacher certification requirements affords the District the following advantages:

- Industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses.
- Greater number of CTE course offerings resulting in more opportunities for students.
- Realistic requirements for professionals transitioning from industry to teaching.
- Ability to employ part-time professionals to teach CTE courses. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the individual possesses that would qualify the individual to teach the proposed CTE subject. The Superintendent must approve all requests.

As long as a teacher meets the applicable Non-CTE or CTE requirements above, the district will not be required to provide parental notification.

Timeline

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

6:30p.m. Special Board Meeting

WCISD School Board approved resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of pursuing a District of Innovation designation.

6:35 p.m. Regular School Board Meeting – Public Hearing

Information was provided related to possibly becoming a District of Innovation.

- WCISD School Board approved a motion to pursue a local District of Innovation plan.
- WCISD School Board approved the current members of the District Improvement Committee (DEIC) to be the District of Innovation Committee.

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

3:45p.m. District of Innovation Committee Meeting

Superintendent gave an overview of the District of Innovation Draft Planning Document. The committee approved the initial plan to go forward with the designation of District of Innovation.

Friday, February 3, 2017

Posting of District of Innovation Plans

Plans will be posted on the website for 30 days. The Commissioner of Education will be notified of WCISD Board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed local innovation plan.

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Public Hearing with the District of Innovation Committee

The Public Hearing will include a vote on the proposed Plan.

No Earlier Than Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Regular School Board Meeting

Board will consider approval of the Wolfe City ISD District of Innovation plan

No Earlier Than Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Policy Changes Updated with TASB

The Commissioner of Education will be notified of the approval of the District of Innovation Plan and the mandated form will be filed in accordance with 19 TAC 102.1307(d).

Summary

It is noted that through the annual review process, further innovations and exemptions may be needed to advance the work of the District in meeting the needs of students, and amendments may be necessary. As other districts across the state pursue this process and implement plans through this provision for additional flexibilities and more local control, new ideas for innovation may emerge that have great applicability in WCISD. We hope that through the natural course of having more autonomy and freedom to think innovatively that all students across the state will be able to take advantage of these key learnings.