

WILLS POINT DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed by the 84th Legislature, allows districts to seek designation as a District of Innovation in order to pursue flexibilities available to Texas' open-enrollment charter schools.

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- HB 1842 provides WPISD with the opportunity to fulfill our mission according to the needs and resources of our district while maximizing local control
- Continue to expand current programs and to recruit and retain excellent teachers
- To better serve and accommodate the diverse needs of all of our stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and community members
- Flexibility and freedom to be innovative with the kinds of learning experiences afforded students while maintaining accountability for the results
- Increased local control over district operations to improve the quality of services benefiting all stakeholders important educational decisions at the local level

Process

On November 13, 2017, the Board appointed a District of Innovation Committee that is composed of teachers, parents, community members, school administrators, and board members. The committee met on November 27, 2017 to discuss options and determined the exemptions to pursue through the District of Innovation Plan. The committee discussed district goals and flexibilities that would support goal attainment.

District of Innovation Committee Members

On November 13, 2017, the Wills Point ISD Board of Trustees appointed members to serve as the District of Innovation Team.

Scott Caloss	Superintendent
Barbie McMath	Assistant Superintendent of C/I
Jammie Madden	Director of Special Education
Chuck Allen	School Board Member
Jim Lamb	School Board Member
Jeff Russell	High School Principal
Casey Cochran	Junior High Principal
Kim Calvery	Middle School Principal
Melanie Mullin	Intermediate Principal
Kim White	Primary Principal
Todd Staley	High School Teacher
Tammy McEnturff	Junior High Teacher
Christina Miller	Middle School Teacher
Valerie Gray	Intermediate Teacher
Nikki Phillips	Primary Teacher
Nancy Roberts	High School Parent/Business
Jackie Cockerham	Junior High Parent/Business
Monica LaJone	Middle School Parent/Business
Tiffany Suits	Intermediate Parent/Business
Tiffany Genung	Primary Parent/Business
John Young	Co-Curricular
Greg Cranfill	Extra-Curricular
Cheryl Kinney	CTE

Process Timeline

<p>Monday November 6, 2017</p>	<p>Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss preliminary thoughts, possible exemptions, and possible members of the District Innovation Committee. The District of Innovation Committee will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent • Administrative Staff • Principals for Each Campus • One teacher from each campus • Two - five parents and/or community members • Teacher representatives from Co-Curricular, Extra-Curricular and CTE programs
<p>Monday, November 13, 2017</p>	<p>6:30 PM – Special Board Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board approve a resolution to hold a public hearing to discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation • Adjourn <p>6:40 PM Public Hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain and discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation <p>7:00 PM Regular Board Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve a motion to pursue local “District of Innovation” plan • Approve the members of the District of Innovation Committee • Adjourn
<p>Monday, November 27, 2017</p>	<p>4:00 PM Meeting of District of Innovation Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate them about HB 1842 and Districts of Innovation • Discuss possible exemptions • Decide which exemptions to pursue and include in our plan
<p>Monday, December 4, 2017</p>	<p>5:00 PM Meeting of the District of Innovation Committee and District Site-Based Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meeting to consider the final Wills Point ISD District of Innovation Plan
<p>Wednesday, December 6, 2017</p>	<p>Post proposed Wills Point ISD District of Innovation plan on the district website for thirty days</p>
<p>Monday, December 11, 2017</p>	<p>Board will vote to notify Commissioner of Education of intent to vote on the adoption of the proposed District of Innovation Plan</p>
<p>Tuesday, December 12, 2017</p>	<p>Send notification of intent to vote on adoption of proposed plan to Commissioner of Education</p>
<p>Monday, January 22, 2018</p>	<p>7:00 PM Regular Board Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Trustees to approve the District of Innovation Plan
<p>Tuesday, January 23, 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send notification to Commissioner of Education of Board’s approval of District of Innovation Plan • Update all policy changes with TASB

Term of Plan

The term of the District of Innovation Plan, as constituted by the Texas Education Agency, will begin January 22, 2018 and conclude June 30, 2022, unless terminated by the Board of Trustees. The District's Site-Based Committee will monitor the Innovation Plan and will give feedback on the effectiveness of the plan.

WPISD will continue to abide by the Texas Education Code and Board Policies, with the exception of those identified in the Innovation Plan. If additional exemptions should be considered at a later date, the district will reconvene the District of Innovation Committee. This plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed by a majority vote of the District's Site-Based Committee, along with a two-thirds vote by the WPISD Board of Trustees. The Commissioner of Education will be notified in the event that the plan is amended, rescinded, or renewed, and the District Site-Based Committee will review progress of the plan on an annual basis

District Goals

Wills Point ISD has developed five board goals that drive all decisions regarding teaching and learning in the district.

- I. Wills Point ISD will have continuous district-wide academic improvement.
- II. Wills Point ISD will attract, develop, and retain outstanding leadership, instructional, and support personnel.
- III. Wills Point ISD will provide a safe, well-maintained environment that meets current and future needs of all students, faculty, and staff.
- IV. Wills Point ISD will target and balance the financial requirements of the district to meet the academic and operational needs.
- V. Wills Point ISD will develop positive district and community relations through increased communication and involvement.

The District of Innovation Plan is in alignment with the Board's goals.

Innovations

First Day of Instruction

Exemption From: TEC §25.0811

Board Policy: EB LEGAL

Board Goal: I, II

Currently: TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule; however, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August.

Proposal: These laws restrict flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the school district and community. The flexibility to begin instruction earlier in August will enable the district to develop a calendar that best meets the needs of the students in WPISD. An earlier start date allows a better balance between semesters, more instructional days prior to mandatory testing, and a school end date prior to June. By ending earlier, WPISD can support students who need remediation, as well as students who are entering college or trade school. An earlier school start date allows these students to register for summer classes and attend new student orientation meetings without missing instructional time.

Teacher Certification

Exemption From: TEC §21.003, TEC §21.053

Board Policy: DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL

Board Goal: I, II

Currently: **TEC §21.003(a)** states 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. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

TEC §21.053 requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the district before their employment contract will be binding, and prohibits the district from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

Proposal: The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for the position in question. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the area and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question. Wills Point ISD would like the ability to offer employment to non-certified candidates in the CTE area, to better meet the educational needs of our students. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course with approval from the superintendent. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. The employee will be at-will. This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling, and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.