



Reading Academies

CHALLENGE

Literacy is the foundation of a child's education, and in NISD, literacy has been an annual performance objective for many years. We have invested a significant amount of funding and training to design a strong reading program to meet the needs of our PK-3 students and our results demonstrate its effectiveness. House Bill 3 instituted required Reading Academies for teachers across the state. While this is admirable and could be a benefit to many, our training model embraces the same concepts in a manner that meets the needs of our teachers and students.

LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS

Northwest ISD and school districts should be allowed to continue successful practices. Districts should have local control over professional development and be allowed to develop and deliver training in a manner that supports local district goals, including how the components of the Reading Academy are presented to staff.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Why NISD's Professional Learning is Preferred

With a district-wide focus on literacy, Northwest ISD teachers have been trained in a strong reading program which has proven effective for our students. Through immersion and coaching, NISD training already provides teachers with the foundational understandings of the Science of Teaching Reading, the new required training implemented under House Bill 3.

If NISD were able to test out of the training requirement, it would prevent the district from spending unnecessary district funds from an already stretched budget. Saving the money from the required Reading Academies would also allow us to meet the personal learning needs of our teachers. Local control of the professional development allows for coaching opportunities specific to teachers' needs and allows the district to take concepts deeper when appropriate or provide additional support when needed.

By having district-led training, NISD is able to support teachers in the curriculum resources used to teach reading while reinforcing and connecting the concepts to the curriculum and the instruction within their classrooms. Professional learning allows for on-the-job learning for teachers by modeling instruction and connecting it directly to the resources teachers have access to in our district.

Estimated Reading Academy Cost – \$107,000

(Currently required with the implementation of House Bill 3.)

Cost to train current NISD staff.

- Cohort Leader Salary – \$75,000 (teacher salary plus the extra days they will have to work to support teachers over the summer)

- Region 11 Fee - \$10,000
- Administrator training cost through Region 11 - \$18,000 (this training is different than what teachers receive)
- Dual Language training through Region 11 - \$4,000 (this is different than what English teachers receive)

Annual Cost after training initial NISD staff – \$85,000

(Currently required with the implementation of House Bill 3.)

- Cohort Leader Salary – \$75,000 (teacher salary plus the extra days they will have to work to support teachers over the summer)
- Region 11 Fee - \$10,000

Training Time and Concerns

- TEA reports that the training takes 60-80 hours for teachers to complete in a year.
- TEA only requires 150 hours of Continuing Professional Education every 5 years. This far surpasses that.
- Teachers that would be required to do this academy teach subjects other than reading. The excessive amount of PD does not allow time for teachers to do other professional learning courses such as math, science, technology, classroom management, etc.
- The required hours also do not allow for time for teachers to do other PD to meet their personal and professional goals that are part of TEA evaluation system.

Training Content

The content in the reading academies is good content, but the course is supposed to be self-paced which it is not. Current participants are asked not to move on from the suggested pace and assignments are not graded before the suggested pace. It is important to remember that teachers (just like students) have different needs, education, and experiences that should entitle them to differentiated professional learning.