



Woodsboro ISD
District of Innovation Plan
2022-2027

Woodsboro ISD Board of Trustees	
Robbie Blaschke	Board President
Mandy Nixon	Vice President
Michelle McCleskey	Secretary
Steven Franks	Board Member
Joseph Gonzales	Board Member
Douglas Tatom	Board Member
Libby Myers	Board Member

WISD District of Innovation Committee Members	
David Segers	Superintendent
Manda Lesak	Secondary Principal/ Parent
Leslie Garza	Elementary Principal/ Parent
KaSteene Harris	Technology Director
Jonathon Lesak	Athletic Director/Parent
Melissa Segers	Instructional Coach
Kevin Hall	Special Education
Kathy Doell	Special Education
Carmen Speis	Counselor/ 504
Crystal Escobar	Teacher/ ESL
Kathy Albert	Teacher
Vickie Grey	Teacher
Chantel Schulz	CCMR/ CTE/Homeless/Foster Care
Erin Allen	Paraprofessional/Parent

	Parent
	Business Owner
	Community Member

Woodsboro ISD Board of Trustees met on Monday December 19th, 2016 in a regular scheduled board meeting to consider Woodsboro ISD becoming a District of Innovation. The Woodsboro ISD Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution to consider developing a District Innovation Plan. The board also appointed the district's site based decision making committee to research and develop a District Innovation Plan.

Introduction:

HB 1842 was passed during the 84th Texas legislative Session in Spring 2015, and provides Texas public school districts the opportunity to be designated as a District of Innovation. To access these flexibilities, a school district must adopt an innovation plan, as set forth in Texas Education Code Chapter 12A.

Districts of Innovation may be exempted from a number of state statutes and will have:

- Greater local control as the decision makers over the educational and instructional model for students
- Increased freedom and flexibility, with accountability, relative to state mandates that govern educational programming; and
- Empowerment to innovate and think differently.

Districts are not exempt from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements and academic and financial accountability.

Mission

The Board of Trustees, administration, staff, and community are committed to providing the facilities, materials, personnel, and proper environment necessary for all students to

reach their maximum level of academic achievement, responsible citizenship, emotional, and social maturity.

It is the responsibility of all the people of this school district to take an active part in assuring that the goals, objectives, and activities of the Woodsboro Independent School District are met.

Term

The District of Innovation Plan will become effective in April 2022 and will remain in effect for five years, through April 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The district site based decision making team will monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board of Trustees any suggested modifications to the Plan.

Texas Education Code Exemptions/Innovations

To achieve the District's Mission and to meet the District's goals, Woodsboro ISD needs the flexibility to exert local control to modify: first day of instruction, teacher contract days, teacher certifications, teacher planning time, class size, post secondary & military excused absences, CBC coordinator, DAEP grouping, DAEP Certified teacher, probationary contracts, student transfers, professional development, and length of school day.

Woodsboro ISD intends to investigate ALL permitted exemption categories as specified by the District of Innovation legislation (TAC 102) of 2015. The following items identify exemptions immediately sought. Woodsboro ISD reserves the right to examine and approve changes in all additional areas identified by statute or Commissioner rules.

1. School Start and End Date

Exemption from: TEC 25.0811; TEC 25.0812

Related Board Policy(s): EB (LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

Innovation Strategies:

This exemption allows Woodsboro ISD to: balance instructional days each semester while aligning the semester with local colleges, eases the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school, while providing

flexible professional development opportunities for staff while adding an additional week of instruction prior to state assessments.

2. **Teacher Certification**

Exemption from: TEC 21.003, 21.053, 21.055, 21.057 (TEC 21.003a) (DK LEGAL)

Related Board Policy(s): DBA (LOCAL); DK (LOCAL/LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 21.003 states that a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor 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 for Educator Certification.

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.

TEC 21.055 states that if a teacher is not certified, the District may issue a teaching permit to employ the individual. This process requires notice to the Commissioner and its usefulness is extremely limited. Additionally, the language of this section could be construed to prohibit the issuance of a local teaching certificate.

TEC 21.057 requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days.

Innovation Strategies:

Woodsboro ISD seeks the ability to locally certify educators in areas of high demand, to better meet the educational needs of our students. The LEA will maintain its current expectations for employee certification, however, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in high demand areas and equipped to perform the duties of the position in question. Teaching candidates who hold out of content, subject, or out of state certifications, as well as, experts in industry, and college teachers will be eligible to hold high demand positions. These areas include, but are not limited to: CTE, LOTE, Technology, English, Social Studies, Science, and Math.

Process for Issuing Local Teaching Permits

1. The campus principal will make a written request to the Superintendent to hire a non-certified applicant. The issuance of a local teaching permit must specify in writing the reason for the request and detail the experience and skills the applicant possesses that qualify the individual to teach the proposed subject. Any non-certified applicant in core content areas (English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies) must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree.
2. All non-certified hires will be required to attend professional development in classroom management.
3. Any non-certified teacher will be required to meet the requirements of background checks, reference checks, etc. Non-certified teachers will be on a one-year, non-Chapter 21 contract. Non-certified teachers will be subject to the same appraisal process as SBEC certified teachers. Local teaching permits will be issued on a term of one school year and will require re-evaluation prior to renewal.
4. The superintendent will notify the Board of Trustees when a non-certified individual is hired and will be issued a local teaching permit. In doing so, parental notification of "inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers" under Sec. 21.057 would no longer be necessary.

3. Kindergarten - Grade 4 Class Size Reporting Requirement

Exemption from: TEC 25.112; 25.113

Related Board Policy(s): EEB (LEGAL/LOCAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. TEC 25.113 requires school districts to notify parents of waivers or exemptions to class size limits.

Innovation Strategies:

- A. WISD believes in a low student to teacher ratio in all of its classrooms. The District has a goal of 22:1 in K-4. In the event any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees. Decisions regarding appropriate student to teacher ratios will be made at the local level, taking into consideration the age and grade level of the students, the subject matter of the class, the needs of individual teachers and student groups, and the availability of additional instructional staff members.
- B. A TEA waiver request will not be filed when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
- C. Parents of students in K-4 classrooms that exceed a ratio of 22:1 will not continue to be notified as per TEC 25.113.

4. Length of School Day

Exemption from: TEC 25.081(e)

Related Board Policy(s): EB (LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 25.081 requires that a school district provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction each school year, including intermission and recess. School districts must seek a waiver of this requirement from TEA in order to provide fewer than the required number of instructional minutes in the case of natural disaster or calamity. This requirement restricts the District in the development of the academic calendar, including the scheduling of early release days and staff development days. TEC 25.081(e) references a day of instruction as 420 minutes

Innovation Strategies:

Exemption from the 420 minute day requirement would allow Woodsboro ISD the

flexibility needed to give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.

Early release days would be planned and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Woodsboro ISD Board of Trustees and published to all stakeholders in advance of the school year.

Exempting from the 420 daily minute requirement while maintaining the 75,600 instructional minute requirement would give a significant amount of local control over scheduling (above and beyond the 6 day maximum as needed) without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time.

The opportunity to be exempt from the 7 hour day requirement will allow the district to create more flexibility within the daily schedule for students and staff.

5. Post- Secondary & Military Excused Absences

Exemption from: TEC 25.087 (b-2, 5, 6) TEC 25.087

Related Board Policy(s): FEA (LEGAL) Attendance: Compulsory Attendance
FEA (LOCAL) Attendance: Compulsory Attendance

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

(b-2) A school district may excuse a student from attending school to visit an institution of higher education accredited by a generally recognized accrediting organization during the student's junior and senior years of high school for the purpose of determining the student's interest in attending the institution of higher education, provided that:

(1) the district may not excuse for this purpose more than two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year; and

(2) the district adopts:

(A) a policy to determine when an absence will be excused for this purpose; and

(B) a procedure to verify the student's visit at the institution of higher education.

(b-5) A school district shall excuse a student who is 17 years of age or older from attending school to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard, provided that:

(1) the district may not excuse for this purpose more than four days of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school; and

(2) the district verifies the student's activities related to pursuing enlistment in a branch of the armed services or the Texas National Guard.

(b-6) Each school district shall adopt procedures to verify a student's activities as described by Subsection (b-5).

Innovation Strategies:

Woodsboro ISD is requesting to expand age requirements and increase the excused absence threshold for post-secondary visits. This will allow students to gain a greater understanding of the steps needed to achieve college/career goals at an earlier age. In addition, the flexibility of additional days would provide students more opportunities or additional travel time for long-distance/out of state visits.

1. Woodsboro ISD will broaden its college and career readiness emphasis by allowing students in grades 9-12 to visit colleges, trade schools, or universities of interest. Students will still be required to submit verification of such visits in accordance with administrative regulations.

2. Woodsboro ISD will waive the two-day excused absences limit per year and adopt a policy allowing seniors to miss 4 days per year, juniors to miss 3 days per year, sophomores to miss 2 days per year and freshman to miss 1 day per year to visit colleges, trade schools, or universities of interest.

3. Woodsboro ISD will waive the four-day total limit on students seeking to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard. A newly adopted policy will allow classified juniors and seniors meeting the 17-year-old age requirement, four excused absences per year to pursue interest in the military. Students will still be required to submit verification of such visits in accordance with administrative regulations.

6. Designation of a campus Behavior Coordinator (CBC)

Exemptions from: TEC 37.0012

Related Board Policy(s): FO (LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

(a) A person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The person designated may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal.

(b) The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of this subchapter.

(c) Except as provided by this chapter, the specific duties of the campus behavior coordinator may be established by campus or district policy. Unless otherwise provided by campus or district policy:

(1) a duty imposed on a campus principal or other campus administrator under this subchapter shall be performed by the campus behavior coordinator; and

(2) a power granted to a campus principal or other campus administrator under this subchapter may be exercised by the campus behavior coordinator.

(d) The campus behavior coordinator shall promptly notify a student's parent or guardian as provided by this subsection if under this subchapter the student is placed into in-school or out-of-school suspension, placed in a disciplinary alternative education program, expelled, or placed in a juvenile justice alternative education program or is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer. A campus behavior coordinator must comply with this subsection by:

(1) promptly contacting the parent or guardian by telephone or in person; and

(2) making a good faith effort to provide written notice of the disciplinary action to the student, on the day the action is taken, for delivery to the student's parent or guardian.

(e) If a parent or guardian entitled to notice under Subsection (d) has not been reached by telephone or in person by 5 p.m. of the first business day after the day the disciplinary action is taken, a campus behavior coordinator shall mail written notice of the action to the parent or guardian at the parent's or guardian's last known address.

(f) If a campus behavior coordinator is unable or not available to promptly provide notice under Subsection (d), the principal or other designee shall provide the notice.

Innovation Strategies:

Through engagement in a collaborative arrangement, the campus will have greater latitude to serve the student behavior and discipline management needs of the entire student population without the limitations brought about by having a solitary administrator serving this function.

7. Teacher Planning and Preparation Time

Exemptions from: TEC 21.404

Related Board Policy(s): DL (LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

Each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.

Innovation Strategies:

All teachers would be guaranteed 450 total minutes within each two-week period (minimum of 30 consecutive minutes daily) for instructional preparation, conferences, and evaluating students' work and planning. Scheduling is a critical component in allowing for vertical, horizontal, and cross-campus collaboration. Flexibility in planning and preparation time daily allotments would allow for opportunities for increased collaboration between educators. The District would create procedures to provide the adequate time educators need to plan, but it would allow for innovative scheduling for things such as Professional Learning Communities.

8. **DAEP Grouping**

Exemptions from: TEC 37.006

Related Board Policy(s): FOC (LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

(f) Subject to Section 37.007(e), a student who is younger than 10 years of age shall be removed from class and placed in a disciplinary alternative education program under Section 37.008 if the student engages in conduct described by Section 37.007. An elementary school student may not be placed in a disciplinary alternative education program with any other student who is not an elementary school student.

Innovation Strategies:

Due to the significantly small enrollment of elementary students in the DAEP and limited staff, students will be better served by allowing flexible grouping with certain older students. To provide the most effective learning environment for students in DAEP, Woodsboro ISD DAEP will use flexible grouping to accommodate learning within upper elementary and lower secondary grade levels, as appropriate. The classroom teacher will continue to differentiate instruction to meet all student needs.

9. **DAEP Requirement of a Certified Teacher**

Exemptions from: TEC 37.008

Related Board Policy(s): FOC (LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 37.008 requires students who are placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Educational Program (DAEP) to be separate from their regular instructional setting, be under the supervision of a certified teacher and not be allowed to be with other students who are not in the program.

Innovation Strategies:

Woodsboro ISD seeks the flexibility that would come from utilizing non-certified para -professionals to provide continuous supervision to DAEP students. If this should happen, the non-certified paraprofessional will be trained in behavior management techniques and a certified teacher will assist the DAEP instructor for at least 60 minutes per day for classroom instruction.

This exemption will also allow students who are in other disciplinary instructional arrangements such as In School Suspension or Time-Out to be housed with DAEP students and supervised by the same DAEP personnel.

10. Probationary Contracts

Exemptions from: TEC 21.102(b)

Related Board Policy(s): DCA (LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

Innovation Strategies:

In order to provide the most qualified teachers, the District seeks flexibility in extending Probationary Contracts for all teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired to the District effective May 2022. The District feels one year is not sufficient to truly evaluate new hires to the District.

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two years. All other teachers new to the profession with less than five years of experience, hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC Sec. 21.102(c).

11. Inter - District Transfers

Exemptions from: TEC 25.036

Related Board Policy(s): FDA (LOCAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.

Innovation Strategies:

a. Woodsboro ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the district. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the district. The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applications for the following circumstances:

- If student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion
- Student attendance falls below the TEA truancy standard,
- Academic achievement is not satisfactory

b. Nonresident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

12. Professional Development / MentorTeachers

Exemption from: TEC 21.451; TEC 21.458

Related Board Policy(s): DEAA (LEGAL)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 21.451 prescribes staff development requirements for educators. These requirements impede the District's ability to provide timely professional development to employees based on newly emerging issues, data, and student needs.

TEC 21.458 sets eligibility requirements for teacher mentors and mentees. This provision states that the district may only assign a mentor to a teacher with less than two years of teaching experience, despite the fact that a teacher at any level of experience may benefit from a mentor-mentee relationship. The District needs the flexibility to assign mentors to more experienced teachers in need of assistance. The statute also sets eligibility requirements for mentor teachers, which limits the available pool of mentor teachers.

Innovation Strategies

a. The District will exercise local discretion in determining the areas of need, content, duration, and frequency for professional development for its instructional and non instructional staff.

b. The District will exercise local discretion in assigning teachers to serve as mentors based on a variety of factors, including experience, knowledge, and areas of instruction targeted for improvement or innovation.