



Wylie Independent School District
District of Innovation Plan
2022 - 2027

I. Introduction

The District of Innovation (DOI) is a concept passed by the 84th Texas Legislature through House Bill (HB) 1842 that gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to open enrollment charter schools, including exemptions from many requirements mandated in the Texas Education Code.

As a District of Innovation, Wylie ISD 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;
- power to innovate and think differently.

HB 1842 does not allow for exemptions from statutes including curriculum and graduation requirements or academic and financial accountability.

II. Our Process

On November 17, 2016, the Wylie Independent School District's Board of Trustees ("Board") passed a Resolution to explore the development of a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community. On December 8, 2016, the Superintendent appointed a 22-member District of Innovation Committee ("Committee") composed of diverse leaders representing a cross-section of the District's stakeholders including teachers, principals, parents, community members, and administrators. The Committee met on December 14, 2016 and January 25, 2017 to discuss and draft the Local Innovation Plan ("Plan"). The District-Wide Educational Improvement Committee met on January 26, 2017 to review and approve the proposed District of Innovation Plan. The WISD Board of Trustees approved the Plan at its meeting on March 20, 2017.

The term of the Plan was for five years, beginning March 20, 2017 and ending March 20, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the term of this Plan, other areas of operations were to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board would appoint a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment to the



Plan. Any amendment adopted by the Board would not extend the term of this Plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

On October 29, 2021, a notification was provided to the Board to review the Plan and notify the board that the Plan would expire on March 20, 2022. The Plan was then presented to the District Wide Educational Improvement Committee (DWEIC) on December 2, 2021 for study and review.

Wylie ISD's DWEIC Members are as follows:

Amanda Cooper	Kathryn Ozols	Jordan Lee
Andie Doty	Angela Waters	Rich Frei
Tiffany Montez	Kandice Sarles	Ali Tyler
Stephanie Spicer	Cassandra Padgett	Susie Echols
Zachary Neu	Krystle Shepherd	Dusty Holley
Tammie Sullivan	Nicole Osimiri	Elizabeth Cox
Lori Robertson	Princess Netherly	Cristina Araiza
Kimberly Campbell	Richard Reid	Emma Dugas
Brooke Emerson	Meagan Wendt	Jessica Branch
Maricela Helm	Shaynon Crawford	

On January 24, 2022 the plan, along with the recommendation of the DWEIC committee, was presented to the school board as an information item. It is the DWEIC's recommendation that the original plan be renewed for five additional years with no changes.

2023 Amendment

In April 2023, an amendment was presented to the 2022-2023 DWEIC committee which added the exemption for not yet certified administrators, counselors and hard-to-fill teaching positions.

The members on the committee include:



Amy Southern	Zachary Neu	Todd Dixon
Sarah Miller	Stephanie Spicer	Just Strauch
Freddy Lopez	Krystle Shepherd	David Morales
Liz Damien	Jillian Palomino	Cassy Chappell
Maria Oviedo	Kathryn Ozols	Shaynon Crawford
Ffion Zarcaro	Hugo Valdez	Elizabeth Knapp
Austin Cooper	Liz Cox	Crystal Harrelson
Karrie George	Leslie Coble	Tracy Halligan
Alyshia Zimmerman	Tammie Sullivan	Jill Vasquez
Chantelle McMurrian	Devron Philo	Richard Reid
Rhonda Blackburn	Emma Dugas	Nicole Osimiri
Raelyn Scoggins	Katie Myers	Laura Salander
Jessica Branch		

A majority approved the amendment, and it was then presented to the Board on Monday, April 15, 2023.

III. Term

The term of the Plan is for five years, beginning March 20, 2022 and ending March 20, 2027, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with the law. If, within the term of the Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will appoint a committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

IV. Areas of Innovation

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provisions, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.



School Start and End Date

Exemption from: TEC §25.0811; TEC §25.0812

Related Board Policies: EB LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process 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.

Previously, districts had the option of applying to TEA for a waiver to start earlier, even as early as the 2nd Monday in August. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

Innovation Strategies

Relief from the statute will allow WISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minutes requirement, rather than days.

- Relief from the statute will enable WISD to align the district calendar with local universities, Advanced Placement exams, and STAAR timelines.
- Relief from the statute will provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar in order to be responsive to community needs.

Instructional Minutes / Length of Instructional Day / Early Release Days

Exemption from: TEC 25.081 Relevant Board Policies: 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 intermissions 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

- Although all students will still be required to receive 75,600 minutes of instruction, the flexibility to adjust when those minutes of instruction are accrued will allow WISD to more effectively meet the needs of our students taking dual credit course offerings by affording the district the ability to match the days and times met with the cooperating college offerings.
- This exemption will also allow WISD to alter the length of the school day or school year in the cases of inclement weather.

Probationary Contracts

Exemption from: TEC 21.102(b)

Relevant Board Policies: DCA LEGAL

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

For experienced teachers new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one-year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to District receipt of state assessment results.

Innovation Strategies

- 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 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 21.102(c).

Educator Certifications

Exemption from: TEC §21.003

Relevant Board Policies: DBA LEGAL; DK 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. This system is burdensome and does not take into account the unique financial and/or instructional needs of the district.

Innovation Strategy

- The current state teacher certification requirements could potentially inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach only specialized Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. In order to enable more students to obtain the educational benefit of specialized CTE course offerings, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach CTE courses in lieu of the certification requirements set forth in law. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements for only specialized CTE course offerings, the District will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, business professionals or certified teaching professionals seeking assignments outside of their certification area. This innovation has the potential to enrich applicant pools in specialized CTE course offerings and afford more students the opportunity to take courses if state certified teachers are not available to teach those courses.
- Employees hired under this exemption will be supported and mentored toward their attainment of credentials required for state teacher certification. Before examining the employment of non-certified personnel, all efforts will be made to hire state certified teachers. The current state teacher certification requirements could potentially inhibit the district's ability to hire teachers to teach in high-demand areas, hard-to-fill courses, certified teachers to teach courses outside of their certification area, or to hire an uncertified person, when that person is the best individual for the job. While this may be rare, there are professionals from various academic or vocational fields that can be the best



choice for a teaching position – even if they are not yet certified to teach. The exemption would allow the district to hire otherwise qualified individuals whose experience and expertise in lieu of certification have been demonstrated and verified as conditions of employment. This innovation has the potential to enrich applicant pools in specialized course offerings and afford more students the opportunity to take courses if state certified teachers are not available. This exemption would not be used for special education or bilingual/ESL teaching positions.

- Administrators and counselors hired under this exemption will be named Dean of Students and Counselor Interns, respectively. They will assume the roles of campus administrators or counselors as determined by the district job description. This exemption allows the district to hire an administrator or counselor who exemplifies the values of the district and the needs of the campus who may not yet be fully certified. The district will only hire individuals that have made significant progress in their certification program and are expected to be fully certified within 18 months of being hired.

Grievance Policy

Exemption from: TEC §26.011 (a) & (c), §26A.001, §26A.002, §26A.003

Relevant Board Policies: DGBA, FNG, and GF

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

According to Texas Education Codes Sections 26.011(a) & (c), 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003 the Board of Trustees of each school district must adopt a grievance procedure that complies with Chapter 26A under which the Board shall address each grievance that the Board receives concerning a violation of a right guaranteed by this chapter, of a board of trustees policy, or of a provision of this title. This legislation resulting from the 89th Regular Legislative Session specifically expands the timelines for parent grievances to be filed from 15 days to 60-90 days.

Innovation Strategy

Wylie ISD has and will continue to adhere to an established grievance policy with procedures and timelines as outlined in its local Board's policies DGBA, FNG and GF. Such policies ensure thorough documentation of each step in the grievance process and provides adequate time for complaints to be filed, and for complaints to be heard.



All records related to grievances, including submitted forms, communications, investigations, findings, resolutions, and any corrective actions are systematically maintained at the district level to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal and policy standards. The District is committed to monitoring the legality and appropriateness of every decision and action taken. The District is further committed to hearing, reviewing, and attempting to resolve all complaints, as well as to taking corrective action, where appropriate. Wylie ISD's long-standing grievance policies will ensure that all such complaints are carefully reviewed and that district responses are in alignment with state and federal regulations, as well as all other local board policies.

Wylie ISD follows established grievance procedures as outlined in district policy, specifically in relation to the timelines for filing an appeal prior to Texas Education Code §26A.002 and for hearing such complaints. The district believes that a requirement for complaints to be submitted within 15 district business days from the date the grievant either knows, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action that is the subject of the grievance ensures prompt attention and resolution of concerns. In cases where the grievant does not receive the requested relief at the prior grievance level, or if the response deadline has passed without a reply, the parent may proceed by requesting a conference with the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee to appeal the previous decision. This appeal must be submitted in writing, using the district provided form, within ten (10) district business days of receiving the written response from Level One or Level Two. If no written response is provided, the appeal must be submitted within ten (10) days following the deadline for the response at the applicable level.

District's current grievance policies also provide for a Level Three grievance to the board of trustees, except for grievances related to extracurricular activities. Accuracy of information and access to individuals that are needed to provide necessary information surrounding an issue could be compromised after 60 to 90 days. It is imperative that grievances and complaints are filed in a timely manner to ensure the best prompt Response.

Wylie ISD therefore requests relief from the timelines, processes and procedures imposed by 26.011(a) & (c), 26A.001, 26A.002, 26A.003 and will maintain its current



grievance forms, processes and procedures for all grievants.

Out-of-District Transfer Policy

Exemption from: TEC §25.036 (a)

Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

According to Texas Education Code 25.036, a school may accept transfer students who are not otherwise entitled to enroll in the district. A transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Innovation Strategy

Exemption from TEC 25.036 allows Wylie ISD to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting out-of-district transfer applicants. Nonresident students who have been accepted as an out-of-district transfer may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent designee at any time during the year if the student is assigned disciplinary consequences such as suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. Additionally, students not meeting the 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of their transfer status.

Wylie ISD therefore requests relief from the processes and procedures imposed by 25.036 (a).

Instructional Planning and Syllabus

Exemption From: TEC § 26.0062

Manner in which the statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

Texas Education Code TEC § 26.0062 requires the Board to adopt a policy to make available on the District's internet website at the beginning of each semester an instructional plan or course syllabus for each class offered in the District for each semester. Further, the policy requires each teacher to provide before the beginning of each semester a copy of the teacher's instructional plan or course syllabus for each class for which the teacher provides instruction to (1) district administration and (2) the parents of each student enrolled in the class and provide for additional copies of an



instructional plan or course syllabus to a parent of a student enrolled in the class on the parent's request.

Innovation Strategy

Wylie ISD provides an instructional plan for each core course offered for all grade levels on our district website. The teachers in Wylie ISD maintain consistent feedback with parents regarding expectations, dates, and timelines for their classrooms. With course offerings above 800 total courses, the specific timeline specified in law places additional administrative burdens that impact District and campus preparations for the semester. If a teacher of a non-core course receives a request from a parent for a copy of the instructional plan or course syllabus for a class in which their student is enrolled, the District will respond to such a request.

Wylie ISD, therefore, requests relief from the timelines, processes, and procedures imposed by *TEC § 26.0062* and will maintain its current processes and procedures for providing instructional plans and syllabi.

Parent Conferences

Exemption From: TEC § 28.022(a)(1)

Manner in which the statute inhibits the goals of the plan:

Texas Education Code § 28.022(a)(1) requires the Wylie ISD Board of Trustees to adopt a policy that provides for at least two opportunities for an in-person conference during the school year between each parent of a child enrolled in the district and the child's teachers.

Innovation Strategy

Prior to the 2025 Legislative Session, State law required the board of trustees of each school district to adopt a policy that provides for a conference between parents and teachers. Wylie ISD establishes partnerships with parents and has a practice of offering at least one parent/teacher conference during the school year. Additionally, teachers utilize student data to drive additional requested conference time with parents. Those requests are initiated by the teacher as needed in all grade levels.



Each campus welcomes parents to schedule conferences with any staff members, as appropriate, to address any concerns they have regarding their child's education. Wylie ISD believes the number of in-person parent/teacher conferences required each year is best left to the discretion of the local Board of Trustees, the District's Superintendent, and/or campus principals, in collaboration with parents. Additionally, parent conferences are available at any time upon request.

Wylie ISD, therefore, requests relief from the timelines, processes, and procedures imposed by *TEC § 28.022(a)(1)* and will maintain its current processes and procedures for parent conferences.

V. Implementation

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campuses and departments. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.

