



# **District Plan to Address Uncertified Teachers**

## **Purpose and Context**

The Willis Independent School District currently employs approximately 50 non-certified teachers under the District of Innovation (DOI) exemption. These educators are degreed professionals who are actively working toward certification but have not yet obtained an Intern Certificate through SBEC-approved pathways.

House Bill 2 (HB 2) of the 89th Texas Legislature establishes new statutory certification requirements for core academic teachers:

- Elementary core teachers must be fully certified by the 2026–2027 school year.
- Secondary core teachers must be fully certified by the 2027–2028 school year.

HB 2 allows districts to apply for a waiver extending compliance deadlines to the 2029–2030 school year. Prior to submitting a waiver application, districts must develop a formal plan outlining how they will meet certification requirements within a reasonable timeline.

This plan documents WISD’s strategy to come into full compliance with HB 2 requirements before the start of the 2029–2030 academic year, while supporting current employees and strengthening future certified teacher pipelines.

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## **Guiding Principles**

WISD’s approach is guided by the following principles:

- Maintain instructional continuity and stability for students
- Support and retain effective non-certified teachers already serving students
- Ensure full statutory compliance within required timelines
- Build sustainable pipelines of certified teachers for future staffing needs



## **Current Landscape and Data Review**

WISD will use the following data sources to inform and monitor progress:

- Newly Certified and New Teacher Hires Dashboard
- Uncertified Teachers by District/School System Report
- Internal HR certification tracking data

These data sources will be reviewed annually to monitor trends by grade level, subject area, and campus, and to adjust strategies as needed.

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## **Certification Compliance Timeline**

WISD will pursue a phased reduction of uncertified teachers to ensure full compliance prior to the 2029–2030 school year.

### **Targeted Annual Reduction Goals**

<b>End of School Year</b>	<b>Target Outcome</b>
<b>2026–2027</b>	Reduce total uncertified teachers by at least 40%, with priority on elementary core positions being fully certified
<b>2027–2028</b>	All remaining elementary core teachers fully certified; overall reduction of 65% from baseline
<b>2028–2029</b>	Majority of secondary core teachers certified; overall reduction of 85% from baseline
<b>2029–2030</b>	100% compliance with HB 2 certification requirements

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## Willis ISD Human Resources

612 N. Campbell, Willis, TX, 77378  
Phone 936.856.1215

# Strategies to Support Current Uncertified Teachers

## 1. Individual Certification Plans

Each uncertified teacher will have an individualized certification plan that includes:

- Identified certification pathway and required exams
- Target dates for Intern Certificate, probationary certificate, and standard certification
- Assigned campus or district mentor

Progress will be monitored each semester by Human Resources and IT&L in collaboration with campus administrators.

## 2. Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Partnership

WISD will formally partner with at least one SBEC-approved Educator Preparation Program (EPP) to support uncertified teachers. These partners include Texas Teachers of Tomorrow, iTeach, Sam Houston State University, among others. This partnership will provide:

- Streamlined enrollment and advising for WISD teachers
- Structured timelines aligned with district compliance goals
- Ongoing communication between the EPP and district HR staff

## 3. Financial and Logistical Support

To reduce barriers to certification, WISD will explore and implement support strategies such as:

- Reimbursement or stipends for certification exams and EPP fees (as funding allows)
- On-campus or virtual exam preparation support
- Access to study resources and professional development aligned to certification areas

## 4. Mentoring and Instructional Support

Uncertified teachers will receive:

- Targeted mentoring from certified, experienced educators
- Ongoing instructional coaching to support classroom effectiveness while certification is in progress



## **Recruitment and Future Pipeline Strategies**

### **1. Certified-First Hiring Practices**

Beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, WISD will prioritize the hiring of fully certified teachers for all core academic positions. Use of DOI exemptions will be limited and strategic.

### **2. Grow-Your-Own Programs**

WISD will continue to expand internal pipelines, including:

- Partnerships with EPPs and universities include Sam Houston State University and Grand Canyon University, along with Lone Star College
- Support for paraprofessionals, substitutes, and instructional aides pursuing certification
- Targeted recruitment of local candidates committed to long-term service in the district

### **3. Strategic Staffing and Workforce Planning**

HR will conduct annual staffing analyses to:

- Anticipate certification needs by grade level and subject
- Align recruitment efforts with projected vacancies
- Reduce reliance on uncertified teachers over time

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## **Monitoring, Accountability, and Reporting**

- HR will provide annual progress reports to district leadership summarizing certification status and progress toward targets.
  - Data from state dashboards and internal systems will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with HB 2 requirements.
  - Adjustments to strategies will be made as needed to maintain progress toward full compliance.
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### Conclusion

Through targeted annual goals, strong support systems for current employees, strategic recruitment practices, and formal EPP partnerships, Willis ISD is committed to meeting HB 2 certification requirements before the start of the 2029–2030 academic year. This plan ensures compliance while valuing and supporting the educators currently serving WISD students.