

WALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

District of Innovation

What is a District of Innovation?

The District of Innovation concept, passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to Texas open-enrollment charter schools.

What can a District of Innovation do?

Potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

Local Control: Districts decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.

Customization: Districts can create an innovation plan for a level of the school, grade level, or a single campus.

Autonomy: Districts must submit a district of innovation plan to the commissioner of education, but approval is not required.

Flexibility: Districts will have the flexibility to implement practices similar to charter schools, including exemptions from mandates such as:

District of Innovation Committee Members:

Russell Dacy-Superintendent

Jamie Glass-Elementary Counselor

Ryan Snowden-High School Principal

Kim Jordan-Parent

Jamie Dudley-Elementary Principal

Tyler Warren-Teacher

Matt Rivers-Middle School Principal

Robin Hirt -Teacher

Brent McCasland-Parent

Ivy Pickens-Teacher

Tammy Barnes-Middle School Teacher

Chelsea Benson-High School Counselor

Kysha Tanner-Middle School Counselor

The DOI Plan

Innovation Goal #1 School Start Date (TEC 25.0811a)

Currently:

State law states that a school district may not begin classes before the fourth Monday in August.

Innovation Strategy regarding school start date

This exemption will allow Wall ISD the following flexibility:

1. Wall ISD will utilize this flexibility to create a calendar that best suits the needs of the students, staff, and parents of Wall ISD.
2. Wall ISD will consider building a calendar with a school start date set for no earlier than the 3rd Monday in August.
3. Wall ISD will utilize this flexibility to develop a calendar that will balance the first and semester out in total number of days for each semester.

Innovation Goal #2

Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.102)

Currently:

State law currently states that 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 Strategy regarding school start date

This exemption will allow Wall ISD the following flexibility:

1. Wall ISD will promote an environment that ensures that each teacher is providing instruction at the highest level. This exemption will allow district administrators more time to provide professional development and strategies for teachers new to the district. In most cases, one year is not adequate to ensure that a new teacher is maximizing student learning.
2. This exemption will allow Wall ISD to issue a probationary contract to any new teacher in the district for a maximum of 3 years.

Innovation Goal #3

Teacher Certifications (TEC 21.003(a))

Innovation Goal #3

Teacher Certification (TEC 21.003, 21.053, 21.057)

Sec. 21.003. Certification Required. (a) A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

Sec 21.053. Presentation and Recording of Certificates. (a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding.

(b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

Sec. 21.057. Parental Notification. (a) A school district that assigns an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher to the same classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days during the same school year shall be provided written notice of the assignment to a parent or guardian of each student in the classroom.

(b) The superintendent of the school district shall provide the notice required by Subsection (a) not later than the 30th instructional day after the date of the assignment of the inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers.

[c] The school district shall:

(1) make a good-faith effort to ensure that the notice required by this section is provided in a bilingual form to any parent or guardian whose primary language is not English.

(2) retain a copy of any notice provided under this section; and

(3) make information relating to teacher certification available to the public upon request.

(d) For purposes of this section, "inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher":

(1) includes:

(A) an individual serving on an emergency certificate issued under Section 21.041(b)(2); or

(B) an individual who does not hold any certificate or permit issued under this chapter and is not employed as specified by Subdivision (2) (E); and

(2) does not include an individual

who is a certified teacher assigned to teach a classes or classes outside his or her area of certification, as determined by rules proposed by the board in specifying the certificate required for each assignment.

(A) serving on a certificate issued due to a hearing impairment under Section 21.048;

(B) serving on a certificate issued pursuant to enrollment in an approved alternative certification program under Section 21.049;

(C) certified by another state or country and serving on a certificate issued under Section 21.052;

(D) serving on a school district teaching permit issued under Section 21.055;

(E) employed under a waiver granted by the commissioner pursuant to Section 7.056.

Innovation Strategy

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, Wall ISD would like the ability to make decisions locally regarding teacher certifications.

- a. The district may allow a certified teacher to teach subject(s) out of their certified field if the certified teacher possesses credentials that would qualify the individual to teach the subject(s).
- b. The district will have the flexibility to hire individuals with experience and who are knowledgeable in a CTE field and/or hold an industrial certification to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate.
- c. The district will also have the flexibility to hire individuals who are native speakers with qualified experience to teach a bilingual education course or languages other than English through a local teaching certification.
- d. Noncertified individuals hired by the district to teach courses in a core subject, such as Mathematics, English, History, or Science, will be placed on a local plan outlining and monitoring progress toward completion of a teacher certification in the assigned teaching area or field.
- e. Additionally, Wall ISD will notify parents if a locally certified teacher is employed for their child's class. This process will allow more flexibility in our scheduling, and provide more options for our students in class offerings leading to industry recognized certifications.

Innovation Goal #4

Class-size Ratios (TEC 25.112)

Currently:

State law states a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a Kindergarten through 4th grade classroom.

State law states that a campus or district that granted an exception under Section 25.112 from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception. (TEC 25.113).

This exemption will allow Wall ISD the following flexibility:

Wall ISD believes that small class size is a vital part of maximizing student success. Wall ISD will continue to strive to maintain class ratios below the 22-1 threshold. Wall ISD will only use this exemption when all other options have been exhausted.

1. In the event that a 1-4 classroom exceeds the 22-1 ratio, the superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
2. A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4 classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

Innovation Goal #5

Contract Service Days (TEC 25.401 (b))

Sec. 21.401. Minimum Service Required

(b) An educator employed under an 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service

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Rationale for Exemption

State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

With the passage of 25.801 which changed the required days of instruction to minutes, the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. The determination of how many days are required to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision based on the accomplishment of the standard of instructional time. Determination by the district to reduce the number of teacher contract days from 187 days of service will have no effect on teacher salaries.

Innovation Strategy

Wall ISD will be able to reduce the number of contract service days for employees without reducing the salaries associated with the position.

This will benefit the district, community, and students, the Board of Trustees will follow the guidelines established under the law.