

# **WELLINGTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## District of Innovation Plan

### **District of Innovation Plan Committee Members**

- Kurt Ashmore - Superintendent
- Dian Souder – Business Manager
- Lloyd Bohannon
- Holly Johnson
- Wade Williams
- Jermaine Cantu – HS Principal
- Renessa Klink
- Rachelle Sumrall
- Megan Wischkaemper
- Lana Tillman
- Dane Richardson – Elem. Principal
- Deidre Kane
- Joe Jones
- Justin Mixon
- Jeff Anderson
- Dianna Bohannon
- Tim Webb – JH Principal
- Linda Castillo - Parent

### **Introduction**

House Bill 1842, passed the 84th Texas Legislature, during Regular Session 2015, permits eligible Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In accordance with 19 TAC § 102.1303 On November 14, 2016, the Wellington Independent School District's Board of Trustees (to be known as "Board") passed a Resolution to Initiate the Process of Designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of students and the community.

On December 12, 2016, the Board appointed the members of the Districtwide Educational Improvement Committee as the District of Innovation Plan Committee ("Committee") comprised of district administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. The Committee met on January 3, 2017 to discuss and draft this District of Innovation Plan ("Plan").

### **Term**

The term of this Plan is for five years, beginning February 14, 2017, and ending December 31, 2021, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board in accordance with TEC §12A.006 and §12A.008. The Committee will annually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modification to the Plan on or before August 1st of each year of implementation. Following adoption by the Board of Trustees, the Wellington ISD District of Innovation Plan for District of Innovation designation will be reported to the Texas Education Agency.

## Innovations

The district proposes flexibility in the following areas:

### **Teacher Certification**

#### ***(TEC §21.003) (DBA LEGAL) (DBA LOCAL)***

*Texas Education Code Section §21.003 (a) states that 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 of permit issued as provided by Subchapter B. 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 form the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.*

The current certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technical Education (CATE) and Science, Math, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM), Foreign Language, History, and English Language Arts courses. The District would also like to honor candidates with Bachelor's degrees and certifications from bordering states as fully certified teachers eligible for a Texas Probationary teaching contract in our District and remain eligible for the period of time outlined in District policy DCA (LEGAL) for Probationary Certificate. This provision would mirror the DCA (LEGAL) policy term of one year with the District's option to extend two additional years.

### **Our plan:**

To allow flexibility for hiring certified personnel, Wellington ISD will

- Make all decisions on teacher certification and assignments locally.
- Notifications of district teaching permits (local certification) shall not be necessary.
- The campus principal may submit in writing to the Superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not fully certified in Texas according to SBEC guidelines.
  - Notification must include the reason for the request and document which qualifying credentials the teacher holds, justifying the out of certification assignment.
- The campus principal may consider the following criteria as minimum qualifications for eligibility to contractually hire certified personnel under a district teaching permit:
  - Professional work experience in related field exceeding 5 years
  - Formal training, professional work certification, or registration in related field
  - Combination of work experience, training, and education
  - Demonstration of successful working experience with students
  - Equal or similar out of state certification
- Teacher certification waivers, state permit applications, notifications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency or other district stakeholders.
- Any employee hired under this local district teaching permit must comply with the same professional standards, ethics, and requirements outlined in the Wellington ISD School Board policy for Personnel located in "Section D."
- Any employee hired under the local district teaching permit must be appraised according to the same teacher appraisal system outlined in district policies DNA and DNB (LOCAL).

## **Calendar**

***(TEC §25.0811) (TEC §25.0812) ( EB LEGAL)***

*Texas Education Code §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. Texas Education Code §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15th.*

*House Bill 2610 signed into law during the Regular Session of the 84th Legislature in 2015 permits school districts to operate a full school year as defined by 75,600 minutes. Section §25.081 (e) of the bill defines a full instructional day as 420 total minutes.*

Districts are no longer afforded the flexibility through a waiver to alter the start and end dates of the school calendar. School districts are not afforded the flexibility intended in HB 2610 to bank minutes of instruction to be used when an emergency, bad weather, and half day events are needed within the district's regular approved calendar. It is the intent of Wellington ISD to build and operate a calendar that best serves the instructional needs of our students and meets the needs of our community. This flexibility will allow the district to evaluate these needs annually and make the best decision for the well being of our students and community.

### **Our plan:**

To allow for the flexibility in the calendar start and end dates and to use the minutes earned within the district with flexibility, Wellington ISD will:

- Provide flexibility in school start and end dates
  - This will allow Wellington ISD students to improve academic success by balancing the instructional time evenly between semesters
  - This will allow Wellington ISD teachers the proper instructional time to pace the first and second semesters.
  - This will promote Wellington ISD additional time within the first semester for transitioning students in grades K, 6, and 9.
- Wellington ISD's instructional calendar will not begin school any earlier than the 3rd Monday in August.
- Minimum Minutes of Instruction (TEC Code 25.081, HB 2610)
  - The state requires 75,600 minutes for full day programming. For half-day programs such as PreK and PPCD the required minute requirement would be 37,800 minutes. There is not enough time in the day to be able to accommodate 37,800 minutes for both a morning and afternoon group of students in our 170 day calendar. The plan would look at a 210 minute school day for half-day programs allotting students 35,700 minutes of instruction during their half-day program. WISD does not intend to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purpose. To the greatest extent possible, "early release" days would be planned ahead and noted in the district calendar, which is approved by the Board of Trustees and published/distributed to district stakeholders in advance of the school year. The district would not schedule early release days under this exemption that were shorter than 240 minutes (4 hours).

### **Class Size Waiver**

***(EEB Legal) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113)***

#### Currently

Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.

Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted.

### Proposed

- WISD will attempt to keep all K-4<sup>th</sup> core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio.
- A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a k-4<sup>th</sup> classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio
- This gives WISD the flexibility without having to apply for waivers within TEA

### **Contract Service Days (TEC §21.401)**

*(TEC §21.401 (b) states that an educator under a 10-month contract must provide 187 days of service)*

With the passage of §25.081 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, given the district does not reduce the annual pay of the employee's contract.

### **Our Plan**

#### **Teacher Contract Days**

#### ***(DCB Legal) (DCB Local)***

Current education law in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a 10-month contract equivalent to 187 days. The plan would reduce teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries allowing flexibility in the contractual days for certified personnel and to attempt to better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of the students, Wellington ISD will:

- maintain the current salary schedule for all certified employees
- Annually, the Board will consider the certified salary schedules as part of the regular budgeting process.
- Annually, the administrative staff will evaluate the number of contract days needed for certified staff in that school year and shall set the number of calendar work days prior to September 1st of the contract year.
- Wellington ISD will not reduce the annual salary of certified staff, except in accordance with TEC§21.4021 (Furloughs) which the district is not seeking exemption.

### **Implementation**

This Innovation Plan is designed to create parameters within which the District will operate, in order to provide additional student opportunities for academic success. Specific implementation plans will be developed by the appropriate campus leaders and grade level teacher leaders. Adjustments to Board Policy will be researched and adopted where appropriate.

## **Signature Page**

District of Innovation Plan Committee Members:

\_\_\_\_\_ - Kurt Ashmore  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Dian Souder  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Lloyd Bohannon  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Holly Johnson  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Wade Williams  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Jermaine Cantu  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Renessa Klink  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Rachelle Sumrall  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Megan Wischkaemper  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Lana Tillman  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Dane Richardson  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Deidre Kane  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Joe Jones  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Justin Mixon  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Jeff Anderson  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Dianna Bohannon  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Tim Webb  
\_\_\_\_\_ - Linda Castillo

By signing this document, I agree to the terms of this Plan and support its implementation in Wellington ISD. As a member of the District Innovation Plan Committee, I agree to monitor and provide feedback to the Board, no less than annually. Feedback will comprise edits, deletions, additions, and approval based on stakeholder's input and recommendations.