

# White Deer ISD

## District of Innovation Plan

### I. **Introduction:**

The 84<sup>th</sup> legislature passed HB 1842, which allowed traditional independent school districts the ability to access flexibilities, which had previously been reserved, for Texas' open enrollment schools. In order for an independent school district to obtain these flexibilities, districts must seek designation as a "District of Innovation." On Monday, January 22, 2018, the White Deer ISD Board of Trustees initiated the process by adopting a resolution to pursue a "District of Innovation" designation.

### II. **Mission:**

"White Deer Independent School District students, Board of Trustees, administration, teachers, and support staff in partnership with the parents and communities of Skellytown and White Deer provide and expect quality instruction and exemplary modeling so that all students achieve their academic potentials and assume their roles as productive citizens in our society. We believe that each of us shares the responsibility of accomplishing these goals in order to enhance the lives of our families, communities and nation."

### III. **Committee Members**

1. Karl Vaughn, Superintendent
2. Darla Forney, High School Principal
3. Rob Groves, Elementary Principal
4. Amanda Means, JH/HS Teacher
5. Jem Ann Freeman, Elementary Teacher
6. Jodi Crow, Elementary Parent
7. Kevin Browning, JH/HS Teacher
8. Lee Brossette, Band Director
9. Linda Allen, JH/HS Counselor
10. Lisa Petty, Elementary Teacher
11. Mark Arnold, FFA Teacher
12. Nikki Chavez, Elementary Parent
13. Shawna Harper, Elementary/JH Parent
14. Sheryl Starks, Community/Business
15. Tiffany Broxson, HS Parent
16. Yvette Bryan, SPED Teacher

IV. **Timeline of Events:**

Monday, January 22, 2018: Board of Trustees approve resolution to consider and discuss the possibility of using HB 1842 to become a District of Innovation.

Monday, January 29, 2018: Board of Trustees held a public hearing to explain and answer questions in regards to the district becoming a District of Innovation. Following the public hearing, the board met and appointed members to a District of Innovation Committee

Thursday, February 15, 2018: The District of Innovation Committee held its initial meeting to discuss which exemptions they might claim as a DOI.

Monday, March 5, 2018: The DOI committee met to determine the calendar and which innovations they felt would be best for our learning community.

Friday, March 16, 2018: The final version of the District of Innovation Plan was posted on the district's website.

V. **Term of Plan:**

The term of the District of Innovation Plan, as constituted by the Texas Education Agency, will be five years. Therefore, this plan will begin with the 2018-19 school year and conclude at the end of the 2022-2023 school year unless terminated by the Board of Trustees. The District Improvement Committee will annually monitor the Local Innovation Plan and provide feedback to the Board as to the effectiveness of the plan.

VI. **Innovations:**

Calendar (EB Legal) (TEC §25.0811

Texas Education Code, Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August.

*Innovation Strategy:*

School start date is an area in which the district should be able to determine locally and on an annual basis to determine what is best for our community. Having the ability to modify the start date of school allows us the flexibility to balance semester days, align

classes to college courses, and ease transitions by beginning school on a shortened week, when possible. An exemption from §25.0811 is requested.

Teacher Certification (DK Legal, Local, Exhibit) (§TEC21.003, §21.053, §21.057)

Current law says the school district must hire teachers with certification in most teaching fields. Some of these fields have proven almost impossible to fill with certified personnel.

*Innovation Strategy:*

In order to best serve White Deer ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled with the following specific areas. First of all, the district has been unable to hire a certified Spanish teacher for several years. As a result, if the district can locate an individual who can teach the curriculum as per the TEKS, then that individual can be hired to give our students the best “hands on” option available. In addition, the district has been unable to truly provide our students options for various certifications/licensures that would enhance their ability to pursue a career of their choice by providing the opportunity to industry, base-line courses/licensures locally. With the current teacher shortage, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and the flexibility to work with Clarendon Junior College as more and more opportunities arise as a result of working with the college to address areas of need which might include instrument technology, wind turbine specialists, certified nursing assistant, and cosmetology. However, other areas may become available later on as Clarendon College might be able to offer other cutting edge licensures/certifications that would give our students an advantage entering into the job market. The district’s exemption from TEC 21.003 would allow the district to consider part time professionals to teach courses, allow industry expert professionals to transition to the teaching profession in Career and Technology and also assist in staffing high need STEM and dual credit course offerings. When applicable, the district’s exemption from TEC 21.003 would also allow experienced, certified teachers in our district to teach a course outside of their certification area due to their education, background and/or experience in order to allow for innovation and flexibility in scheduling to meet student needs. This exemption would only be for Spanish or another viable foreign language offering and for any CTE, licensures/certifications, and dual credit courses not covered by the district’s existing CTE programs under FFA, FCCLA, and business core areas.

Teacher Contract Days (DCB Legal, Local) (TEC §21.401)

Current education law in Chapter 21 requires a teacher who is on a 10 month contract to work an equivalent of 187 days.

*Innovation Strategy:*

In an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students, the district would have the option to reduce the amount of contract days with no effect on teacher salaries. The actual number of teacher contract days would be decided by the District Site-Base Team as they make the final determination on the school calendar each year before the calendar is submitted to the board for approval. The total amount of teacher contract days will fluctuate year to year based on the final school calendar with the total number of teacher contract days having a minimum number of 180 days and a maximum of 182 days.

#### Length of School Day (EC Legal) (TEC §25.082a)

TEC 25.082a states that a school day must be 7 hours each day including recesses and intermissions. SAAH 3.8.1 states that a school day must be at least 420 minutes including recesses and intermissions. School districts are subject to this requirement.

#### *Innovation Strategy:*

The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each campus. This flexibility will 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. This exemption will provide greater flexibility than the current 6 day waiver maximum that relates to the length of the school day. 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. This flexibility will be used to create a unique bell schedule instead of the static schedule required of schools by this mandate.

#### Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (TEC 37.008)

TEC 37.008 states that each school district shall provide a disciplinary alternative education program that: (7) employs only teachers who meet all certification requirements established under Subchapter B, Chapter 21

#### *Innovation Strategy:*

White Deer ISD seldom needs the existence of a DAEP and is usually a short term requirement since there will be a very limited number of students assigned to DAEP. Since most of the classes will be provided using computer/Chrome book based instruction, it is not necessary to have certified teachers monitoring DAEP. The Campus administrator will ensure that the staff of the DAEP has the support necessary to properly supervise the students assigned to the program and will lend assistance of teachers with specific certifications as needed.

#### Transfer Students (FDA) (25.036)

Under TEC 25.001, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

*Innovation Strategy:*

TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer student 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. The district's policy in looking at transfer students is based on attendance, grades, and discipline. With the current law, the district would be very cautious in accepting transfers. However, White Deer ISD will seek exemption from the one-year transfer commitment. By having this exemption White Deer ISD may consider a high risk transfer student in hopes that by permitting a school change, for the student, will help in areas such as grades, attendance, and discipline.

School Health Advisory Council (BDF Legal) (TEC 28.004)

TEC 28.004 (d-1) states that the local health advisory council shall meet at least four times each year.

*Innovation Strategy:*

White Deer ISD will seek exemption from the requirement to hold a minimum of four meetings per year. The WDISD SHAC committee shall meet at least once per year. The district's size and the stability of the membership of the SHAC committee ensures that committee members are aware of the needs of the district's students and are often able to review, advise, and revise plans in fewer than four meetings. The HISD Board of Trustees and the members of the SHAC committee should determine how often the committee should meet. WDISD seeks exemption from 28.004 d-1.

**Summary:**

This plan of innovation is a culmination of collaboration between parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and community members. This committee investigated the needs of our faculty and students and formulated this plan which allows our district to provide an efficient, high quality education for all students. This plan provides an opportunity for the White Deer ISD and community to make local decisions on the best way to educate our children. We are thankful for the support of the White Deer ISD Board of Trustees, local and state legislatures, and the Texas Education Agency for making this process possible.