



**Wortham ISD
District of Innovation Plan
2022-2023 through 2026-2027**

Approved by District Site-Based Committee

February 23, 2022

Approved by WISD Board of Trustees

March 28, 2022

Wortham ISD is utilizing HB 1842, of the 84th Legislative Session, in order to have more local control in certain areas. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to be named as a District of Innovation and have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have always been allowed. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to tailor plans based on the needs of our students and community.

This plan will be in effect for the beginning March 29, 2022 through March 28, 2027. The District of Innovation Committee may amend this plan at any time with approval of the Wortham ISD Board of Trustees.

This document serves as Wortham ISD's Local Innovation Plan, proposed renewal and amendments.

The original plan provided exemptions from the following legal requirements that we seek to renew:

- Teacher Certification- TEC 21.003
- School Start Date- TEC 25.0811
- Inter-District Transfers- TEC 25.036
- School District Depository Contracts- TEC Subchapter G. 45.206

In addition to these existing exemptions, Wortham ISD seeks exemption from:

- Probationary Contracts- TEC 21.102(b)
- District Site-Based Committee and SHAC meetings- TEC 11.251, TEC 11.252, and 28.004(d)

Wortham ISD District Site-Based Committee:

Melissa Bosley	Superintendent
David Hayes	Principal, Wortham HS
DeAnna Whaley	Principal, Wortham ES
Amanda Calame	Principal, Wortham MS
Krystal Duke	Counselor
Sarah Boyd	Technology/Media Specialist
Alicia Hayes	Teacher
Renee Bean	Teacher
Shanna Gargis	Teacher
Stephanie Russell	Teacher
Lindsay Hayes	Teacher
Penny Meredith	Reading Specialist
Dee Fletcher	Teacher
Justin Colquette	Parent/Community Member
Eve Carr	Parent
Jeff Carr	Parent
Missy Newhouse	Parent/Business Representative

Innovations:

1. Teacher Certification

(DK Legal, DK Local, DK Exhibit) TEC 21.003

Current Law

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. In certain circumstances, a district can use a local one-year permit.

Proposed

In order to best serve WISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

a. The principal, after following procedures, may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach subject(s) out of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses in which would qualify this individual to teach this subject.

b. An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials. The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment. The employee will be at-will.

c. This proposal will provide more flexibility in our scheduling and more options for our students in class offerings.

2. School Start Date

(EB Legal) (EB Local) (TEC 25.0811)

Current Law

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

Proposed

To meet local and community needs, this plan will allow a more balanced number of instructional days per semester and more instructional days prior to the state assessments given in early May. The plan would give WISD the flexibility to determine its start date on an annual basis.

- a. Students will start school no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August

3. Inter-district Transfers

(FDA Local) (TEC 25.036)

Current Law

Wortham ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (Local) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, the student's disciplinary records, and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules, and regulations of the District. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the District.

Proposed

Wortham ISD seeks exemption from the one-year transfer commitment. Non-residents who have been accepted as inter-district transfers may have such transfer revoked by the Superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned disciplinary consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program (DAEP), or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the state's 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

4. School District Depositories Contract

(BDAE Legal & Local) (TEC Subchapter G. 45.206)

Current Law

Term of Contract: (A) except as provided by Subsection (b), the depository bank when selected shall serve for a term of two years and until its successor is selected and has qualified. (B) A school district and the district's depository bank may agree to extend a depository contract for two additional two-year terms. An extension under this subsection is not subject to the requirements of Section 45.206. (C) The contract term and any extension must coincide with the school district's fiscal year.

Proposed

By gaining exemption to these statutes, Wortham ISD would be able to allow the district's existing bank contract to be extended beyond the total 6-year allowable term if the district determines contract pricing remains competitive and there is no operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out to bid. This exemption would lessen the administrative burden related to preparing and reviewing a Request for Proposal (RFP) when there are no other banking institutions within district boundaries available to bid on the district's business. In addition, this would further mitigate any impact to employees that would have to alter their direct deposit instructions and afford district flexibility with respect to local banking relationships

5. Probationary Contracts

(TEC 21.102(b))

Current Law

TEC 21.102(b) states that a probationary contract 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 with the district.

Proposed

Due to the unique nature of Wortham ISD, including our initiatives and processes, this period of time may not be sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract timelines demand that employment decisions must be made prior to the availability of the end-of-the-year classroom and student data. Upon exemption from TEC 21.102(b), all new contract employees will be subject to the probationary period set out in TEC 21.102(c), in order to allow more time for the district to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance.

6. Site-Based Decision Making and SHAC

(TEC 11.251, TEC 11.252, and 28.004(d))

Current Law

State law currently requires that the Site-Based Decision Making Committee and the SHAC meet 4 times a year. Additionally, statutory requirements dictate the composition of the Site-Based Decision Making committee.

Proposed

In place of a Site-Based Decision Making committee and the School Health

Advisory Council, a District Advisory Council (DAC) will be established to meet, review, analyze, and respond to both qualitative and quantitative data regarding Wortham ISD and its students. The DAC will convene at least two times per year to guide the general direction of district resources and efforts. This consolidation of committees will be comprised of various stakeholders and yield an opportunity for one council to address multiple needs of the students served by the district as opposed to having multiple committees addressing a narrower focus of needs. Wortham ISD views this DAC as a more efficient and effective way to serve our students, parents, and community.