Wall Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan

Introduction

The 84th Legislature passed House Bill 1482, which allows traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to the state's open enrollment charter schools. HB 1842 provides Wall ISD an opportunity to modify state requirements, which will allow Wall ISD to more effectively and efficiently meet the needs of our students. Wall ISD meets all requirements set by the Texas Education Agency to become a District of Innovation.

Wall ISD began this process with the WISD Board of Trustees approving a resolution initiating the process to seek District of Innovation status. The Board then held a public hearing to consider if it was in fact in the best interest of WISD to pursue the development of a District of Innovation Plan. At that time, the Board decided to proceed in the process. A committee was appointed to develop an innovation plan, which was successfully completed. Following a public meeting regarding the plan, the committee reconvened to address areas of the plan. The plan will be posted on the Wall ISD school website for at least 30 days. The District of Innovation Committee will have a public meeting to approve the DOI plan before the plan goes back to the Board for final approval.

District of Innovation Committee

Russell Dacy, Superintendent
Ryan Snowden, High School Principal
Matt Rivers, Middle School Principal
Matt Fore, Elementary Principal
Danielle Real, High School Counselor
Kysha Tanner, Middle School Counselor
Kim Jordan, Parent

Jamie Glass, Elem. School Counselor
Tyler Warren, High School Teacher
Ivy Pickens, High School Teacher
David Hettick, Middle School Teacher
Kelli Cope, Middle School Teacher
Gena Muehlstein, Elementary Teacher
Pilar Henry, Parent
Paige Jones, Parent
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 utilize this flexibility to develop a calendar that will balance the first and second semesters 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 probationary contracts:
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))

Currently:

State law currently states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event the 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 from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

Innovation strategy regarding teacher certification:

This exemption will allow Wall ISD the following flexibility:

1. To offer more CTE and LOTE course selections.

2. Provide students "real life" applications in multiple career fields.

Information regarding this innovation strategy:

A. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach one subject out of his/her certification field. The principal must specify, in writing, the purpose of the request and provide the credentials the teacher possesses which qualify this person to teach this subject.

B. A person with experience in a CTE area could be eligible to teach a vocational skills course through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with the credentials of the individual in consideration for employment. The superintendent may then approve the request if he or she believes that the individual could be an asset to the students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning employment.
C. A person with a college degree and practical work experience, or certified in a trade, could be eligible to teach a course related to his or her expertise through a local teaching certificate. The principal will submit the request to the superintendent with all of the individual’s credentials. The superintendent may then approve the request if he or she believes that the individual could be an asset to the students. The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning employment.

Local teaching certifications will require an employment agreement rather than a contract.

This plan will remain in effect for five years unless amended or terminated earlier by the Wall ISD Board of Trustees in accordance with Texas law. In the event that Wall ISD finds that additional exemptions would benefit the district, community, and students, the Board of Trustees will follow the guidelines established under the law.