DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

2022-2027

WILDORADO ISD DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

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Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session, provides an opportunity for Texas

public school districts to become Districts of Innovation allowing modification of state

requirements found in the Texas Education Codes. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase

the District’s flexibility to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students and the

community.

Term

The term of the plan is to renew for five years, beginning November 15, 2022 and ending on November 14, 2027, unless terminated or amended by Wildorado ISD Board of Trustees in accordance with the

law. If, within the term of this plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility

as part of HB 1842, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose

additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board

will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate

plans at any one time.

WILDORADO ISD District of Innovation Committee

Troy Duck, Superintendent; Jennifer Williams, School Principal; Anna McCord, School Principal: Michelle Tarver, Teacher; Melissa Stephens, Cafeteria Manager; Dixie Gonzalez, Girls Coach; Brody Russell, Ag Teacher; Michelle Fithen, Interventionist; Eve Crist, Library; Rance Barnett, Athletic Director; Michelle Gruhlkey, Parent; Jennifer Albracht, Parent; Celeste Corman, Parent; Shaley Fuller, Parent.

Wildorado ISD Proposed Innovations

I. Uniform School Calendar (TEC 25.0811) (TEC 25.0812) (EB Legal) (EB Local) Texas

Education Code Section 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction

before the fourth Monday in August. Texas Education Code Section 25.0812 states that

a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. Local control of

the instructional calendar affords the District the following advantages: ∙ Balanced Six

Week and Semester grading periods. ∙ Alignment of Calendar with Community College

Calendar and STAAR/EOC timelines. ∙ Creates flexibility for the District to provide

remediation and accelerated instruction during the summer months.

II. Minimum Minutes of Instruction (TEC 25.082) (EB Legal) TEC 25.082 requires that a

school day be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses.

Exemption from the 420 minutes per day requirement would allow the Wildorado ISD the

flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule whenever it was locally determined

as beneficial to the district and its stakeholders to accommodate the unique needs of

our students. The district would not be tied to 6 early release days which is the

maximum that can be requested under the existing early release waiver process.

Exempting the district from the 7 hour school day requirement would afford the district

the following advantages: ∙ Give the district a significant amount of local control over

scheduling without fear of a loss of funding or losing credit for instructional time that

might cause the district to fall out of compliance with the daily minute requirements. ∙

Allow the district the flexibility to schedule non-instructional days into the schedule to

allow for teachers to analyze student data and engage in targeted, and relevant

professional development.

III. Certification Required (TEC 21.003) (TEC 21.0031) (DBA Legal) (DBA Local) TEC 21.003 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 or permit issued as

provided by Subchapter b.” The current certification requirements inhibit the District

from hiring professionals with industry experience to teach Career and Technology

Education (CATE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)

and foreign language courses. In order to provide more students the opportunity to

take such courses and obtain possible professional certifications, the District seeks to

establish its own local qualification requirements in lieu of the

requirements set forth in law. The District does not wish to be exempted from any

existing laws relating to teacher contracts or teacher benefits. Flexibility to establish its

own teacher certification requirements affords the District the following advantages: ∙

Industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses. ∙

Greater number of CATE courses offerings resulting in more opportunity for students ∙

Ability to employ part-time professionals to teach specialty courses ∙ Allows the school

district to utilize technology to implement on-line courses (CTE, foreign languages,

general courses) ∙ Allows a Certified Teacher who has credentials in a subject outside of

their certified field to teach those courses providing for more opportunities for

students. Texas Law restricts the district’s ability to hire educators outside the SBEC approved certification fields. Rational for exemption: the law limits the district's ability to hire non-certified instructors for CTE courses or other high need areas. Small school districts schedules need flexibility in order to avoid disruption of an instructional path. The proposed innovation: To best serve the students of Wildorado ISD, decisions on certification will be made locally. The district will establish local requirements such as years of experience, qualifications, an industry certifications. The district will utilize the exemption in areas of career and technical education (CTE) and courses needed for instructional paths. A currently certified teacher could teach outside his/her state certified field through a local teaching certificate in order to avoid the disruption of an instructional path, with approval of the district’s superintendent.

(21.053) Requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the District before their employment contract will be binding, ad prohibits the District from paying an educator for teaching if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time. (21.057) Requires that the District provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 20 consecutive instructional days. Teacher certification waiver requests, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The District will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach have the knowledge and resources necessary to be successful.

IV. Evaluations (TEC §21.352) (TEC §21.3541) (DNA LEGAL) (DNB LEGAL)

* Principals will be evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.
* Wildorado ISD will utilize a locally developed principal evaluation tool.

• A local plan will be developed to evaluate non-instructional staff.

• Principals will continue to be evaluated annually on a locally developed plan.

V. Term of Depository Contract (TEC 45.205) (TEC 45.206) (TEC 45.207) (TEC 45.208) (TEC 45.209) requires that depository bank contracts not exceed a two-year term. This section of the plan would allow for the district the ability to extend the depository contract for an additional two year term. The current statute requiring a

Request for Proposal promotes disruption to campus and district operations.

a. At least once every two years, the district will evaluate the performance of the

current depository bank. Should the district determine that the contracted services

are provided effectively and the quality of service is acceptable, the district will seek

to negotiate terms to extend the contract for one additional two-year period.

b. Relief from TEC 45.205 allows the district to ensure that its resources are

concentrated on student achievement and campus operations are not disrupted.

The implementation process will be as follows:

c. No later than 60 days prior to the current contract expiration, the WILDORADO ISD

Superintendent will formally evaluate services provided by the current depository bank.

Items to be evaluated will include:

i. Bank’s compliance with the terms of the current contract

ii. Customer Service

iii. Timeliness responding to district inquiries o Earned interest credit

iv. Reasonableness of bank fees

v. Quality of electronic banking systems

vi. Fraud prevention and notification services

vii. Additional services offered

viii. Access to bank branches

d. Upon satisfactory evaluation, district finance staff will formally request that the

depository bank agree to fees and services for the following two-year period.

e. Administration will recommend approval of a contract extension to the Board of

Trustees.

f. Upon board approval, the contract extension will be executed by the board

president and appropriate bank officer.

g. WILDORADO ISD Business Manager will file the depository contract with the Texas

Education Agency.

h. Should district administration or the Board determine that an extension of the

current depository contract is not in the district’s best interest, the district will

initiate a Request for Proposal (RFP) process as prescribed in TEC 45.206-45.209.

VI. Teacher Contract Days (TEC 21.401 b) (DC Legal) Current education law in chapter 21

defines a teacher contract as a 10 month contract equivalent to 187 days. Exemption

from this would allow the Wildorado ISD to determination of how many days are required

to fulfill an employee's contract should be a local decision. Determination by the district

to reduce the number of teacher contract days from 187 days of service will have no

effect on teacher salaries. The exemption from this requirement would benefit the

district as follows:

a. Reducing teacher contract days from 187 with no effect on teacher salaries would

essentially increase the daily rate of pay for teachers. This will enhance teacher

recruitment and improve teacher morale.

b. This reduction in days would better align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes

required of students.

VII. Probationary Contracts (TEC 21.002) (TEC 21.102) (DCA Legal) For experienced teachers

new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has

been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight

years. A one year probationary period is not a sufficient amount of time to evaluate the

teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom. Exemption from this requirement would allow the district to issue a probationary contract to all teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to the district, a probationary contract for up to three years from the first day of employment.

VIII. INTER-DISTRICT TRANSFERS (TEC 25.036) (FDA Local) Currently, under Texas Education

Code 25.036, a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not

entitled to enroll in the district, but TEC 25.036, has been interpreted to require a

transfer to be for a period of one school year. Wildorado 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, availability of programs and services, the student’s disciplinary

history records, work habits, 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. The district is seeking to eliminate the

provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants. On rare occasions,

student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary

alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the

TEA truancy standard. In these rare cases, Wildorado ISD seeks exemption from the one

year transfer commitment. Nonresident students who have been accepted as interdistrict transfer students may have such transfer status revoked by the Superintendent or principal(s) at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. In addition, students not meeting the State’s 90% attendance standard may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

IX. Class Size Ratio (TEC §25.111) (TEC §25.112) (TEC25.113) (TEC25.114) (EEB Legal)

Texas Education Code §25.111 states that each school district must employ a sufficient number of

teachers certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, to maintain an average ration of not less than

one teacher for each 20 students in average daily attendance. Texas Education Code

§25.112 state that a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first,

second, third, or fourth grade class. The District seeks to establish its own local ratio requirements

and provides the following advantages:

• More flexibility when teaching

• Creative ways of delivering instruction

• Ability to manage increases in class sizes