



District of Innovation Designation

Board Approval:

October 11,2022

Term of Designation:

October 11, 2022- October 11, 2027

Waxahachie ISD's Vision

Our vision is to be a district where innovation thrives and growth is limitless

Waxahachie ISD's Core Values

- We value choices because they make us unique and are critical to learning.
- We value a collaborative culture that honors and supports all who positively impact the lives of our students.
- We value an environment of belonging that respects individual differences and ensures equality for all.
- We value relationships that broaden learning experiences and enrich our community.

Beginning a Time of Choice

In the summer of 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature passed HB 1842, allowing public school districts to become Districts of Innovation in order to gain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code that apply to Texas public schools. To be eligible for the District of Innovation designation, a district must have a "met standard" rating or higher for the current school year. As a district that has continuously maintained an accountability rating at or above state expectation, Waxahachie ISD qualifies for this designation.

Waxahachie ISD (WISD) first became a District of Innovation on March 20, 2017. Amendments to the original plan were added May 13, 2019, August 31, 2020, and August 9, 2021. WISD began the process of becoming a District of Innovation for a second time on August 8, 2022.

Waxahachie ISD Timeline for Seeking District of Innovation Status

- *August 8, 2022, Waxahachie ISD Boardroom*
 - Board of Trustees received information related to District of Innovation process
- *August 8, 2022, Waxahachie ISD Boardroom*
 - Regular Board Meeting
 - Board of Trustees approves a resolution to hold public hearing for District of Innovation
 - Public hearing held for District of Innovation
 - Board of Trustees unanimously approved appointment of local District of Innovation committee
- *August 24, 2022, 4:30 - 6:00 PM, Waxahachie ISD Teaching, Learning & Innovation Building*
 - Initial meeting of the District Innovation Committee
 - Review plan options and determine areas for research

- *August 31, 2022, 4:30 - 6:00 PM, Waxahachie ISD Teaching, Learning & Innovation Building*
 - Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee
 - Develop district plan focused on innovation needed to provide high quality education
- *September 9, 2022, Waxahachie ISD Website*
 - Posted the District of Innovation plan on the district website for 30 days for public commentary and review
- *September 9 - October 11, 2022, Waxahachie, Texas*
 - Presented plan to district and community stakeholders
 - Promoted plan and encourage review of resources by all stakeholders
- *October 11, 2022, Waxahachie ISD Boardroom*
 - Public Meeting held to present Waxahachie ISD District of Innovation Plan by Innovation committee members
 - Regular Board of Trustees Meeting
 - School Board approved District of Innovation Plan

Span of Local Plan

This Comprehensive Local Innovation Plan shall remain in effect for a period of five years, to include a span of years from October 11, 2022- October 11, 2027 unless terminated by the commissioner pursuant to TEC §12. A.008.

Waxahachie ISD District of Innovation Committee Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship to District</u>
Melanie Anderson	Teacher
David Averett	Assistant Superintendent
Noel Baskin	Teacher
Dustin Binnicker	Executive Director of Learning
Sean Cagle	Director of Fine Arts
Julia Carrillo	Teacher
Jessica Chambliss	Teacher
Perri Colas	Teacher
Debbie Davis	Teacher
Paige Davis	Assistant Principal
Courtney De La Cruz	Teacher
Shanna Dunn	Community Member
Amy Eckert	Teacher
Valerie Fell	Teacher
Gina Freels	Teacher
Kris Garrison	Teacher
Rolando Gomez	Director of Facilities
Jennifer Gonzalez	Teacher
Brittany Griffith	Principal
Clarissa Hanson	Teacher
Rainey Hicks	Community Member

Tammy Hill	Librarian
Deke Jones	Teacher
Leeon Juarez	Teacher
Gina Kosa	Teacher
Robert Lester	Teacher
Ken Lynch	Principal
Leslie Moon	Teacher
Lisa Mott	Assistant Superintendent
Jennifer Mudd	Teacher
Joshua Perry	Teacher
Jimmy Poarch	Parent
Ginger Robinson	Director Educational Support
Stephanie Rodriguez	Dyslexia Therapist
Tabitha Russell	Teacher
Judith Schuster	Community Member
Laura Schweizer	Teacher
Morgan Smith	Teacher
Melissa Starnater	Trustee
Vanessa Vasquez	Teacher
Amberly Walker	Administrative Intern
Ashley Williams	Teacher
Hope Winter	Teacher
Derek Zandt	Principal
Alex Zurfas	Parent

Areas of Innovation

The following statutes were found to be of benefit to the students and staff of the district by enhancing the local decision-making process and maintaining a focus on the community:

- Uniform School Calendar TEC 25.0811, TEC 25.0812
- Teacher Appraisal Process TEC 21.352
- Uniform Group Coverage TEC 22.004
- Teacher Certification TEC 21.003
- Probationary Contract TEC 21.102
- Campus Behavior Coordinator TEC 37.0012
- Out of School Suspension below grade 3 TEC 37.005

Uniform School Calendar TEC 25.0811, TEC 25.0812

Current: TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin instruction before the fourth Monday in August. TEC 25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15.

Proposed: Local control of the instructional calendar affords the district the following advantages:

- Elimination of imbalanced 6 weeks and semester schedules while still ending the first semester prior to the holiday break.
- Alignment of calendar with Navarro College, Advanced Placement Exams, and STAAR/EOC timelines.
- Ensure hour/seat time requirements are met for Certification courses

Teacher Appraisal Process TEC 21.352

Current: Texas Education Code requires the commissioner to adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of teachers. The criteria must be based on observable, job-related behavior, including: (1) teachers' implementation of discipline management procedures; and (2) the performance of teachers' students. In appraising teachers, each school district shall use the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner.

Proposed: The district is seeking flexibility within the recommended appraisal process and performance criteria for teachers and staff evaluated using the appraisal system Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). The district seeks to continue to utilize T-TESS as the teacher appraisal instrument, while seeking exemption from the Student Growth Measure. Data provided from district and campus local assessments will continue to be utilized following the current district assessment model.

Preclusion from Providing Alternative Uniform Group Coverage TEC 22.004

Current: Texas Education Code precludes the District from providing alternative Uniform Group Coverage Program once the program of coverages under Chapter 1579, Insurance Code is implemented.

Proposed: By seeking the exception from TEC 22.004, the district would have increased local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee needs.

Teacher Certification TEC 21.003

Current: 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 certification or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B

Proposed: By seeking this exemption, Waxahachie ISD may employ a person as a CTE teacher without appropriate certification or permit issued by Subchapter B of TEC Chapter 21, if the person in the subject matter to be taught has relevant work experience, formal training and/or education, and licensure, certification or registration.

Probationary Contracts TEC 21.102

Current: Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

Proposed: This exemption will permit the District the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two years for experienced teachers, counselors or nurses newly hired to Waxahachie ISD. This will allow Waxahachie ISD to better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness.

Campus Behavior Coordinator Provisions TEC 37.0012

Current: Senate Bill 107 requires the designation of a campus behavior coordinator on each campus. This designee is responsible for maintaining student discipline and the implementation of Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

Proposed: The proposal is for the District to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator. Waxahachie ISD's approach to discipline is more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person through our efforts with PBIS and restorative discipline. Exemption from this requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration in regard to student discipline.

Out-of-School Suspension for Students Below Grade 3 TEC 37.005

Current: A student who is enrolled in a grade level below grade 3 may not be placed in out-of-school suspension, unless while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, the student engages in: 1. Conduct that contains the elements of an offense related to weapons under Penal Code 46.02 or 46.05; 2. Conduct that contains the elements of a violent offense related under Penal Code 22.01, 22.011, 22.02, 22.021 3. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of an amount of: a. Marijuana or a controlled substance, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 481, or by 21 USC Section 801 et seq.; b. A dangerous drug, as defined by Health and Safety Code Chapter 483; or c. An alcoholic beverage, as defined by Alcoholic Beverage Code 1.04.

Proposed: To best serve the students of Waxahachie ISD and provide a high quality learning environment for all students, the District proposes that school administrators be able to exercise professional judgment and place students of any grade level in out-of-school suspension when they deem it necessary for safety and in order to maintain an orderly learning environment for all students. Specifically, the District seeks the flexibility to authorize school administrators to suspend students out-of-school below grade 3 when necessary. The District currently monitors the suspensions of all students, regardless of grade level, to ensure that District policy and the Student Code of Conduct are applied appropriately across the district. Should an exemption from TEC §37.005 be granted, the District would continue to monitor the suspensions of all students, which would now include students in grades below 3, to ensure that suspensions are appropriate. The benefits of the proposed innovation are to allow for school-based decision making, assist in maintaining an orderly learning environment for all students, and allow school administrators to more effectively ensure the safety and security of all students.