

Westhoff Independent School District
District of Innovation Plan
2017-2018

Local Innovation Committee Members

David Kennedy	Superintendent
Donna Striedel	Elementary Teacher
Dustin Kenne	Junior High School Teacher
Lesli Sturm	Technology Coordinator
Sue Hilbrich	Community Member

District of Innovation Timeline

February 2017	Adopt Board Resolution (February 15) to pursue District of Innovation.
February 2017	Public Hearing (February 15) concerning District of Innovation. Appoint District of Innovation Committee.
March 2017	Provide District of Innovation Plan for review. Post on district website for 30 days (March 28-April 26). Notify the Texas Education Commissioner of the District of Innovation Plan. Approve District of Innovation Plan.

I. Introduction

The 84th Legislative Session passed House Bill 1842, allowing Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and thus permitting exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. In an effort to transform systematic improvement to allow for more local control, Westhoff ISD seeks to become a District of Innovation. Applied exemptions fall under the Texas Education Code statutes and associated TASB Local and Legal Board Policies EB (School Year) and EC (School Day).

A district committee met in February and March of 2017. This committee was comprised of various district, teachers, and community members. Based on the input from these individuals and direction provided by the Board of Trustees, the committee proposes the following District of Innovation Plan.

II. Term

This plan will be in effect from August 1, 2017 through July 31, 2022. This plan may be amended or terminated at any time by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Texas Education Code.

III. Exemptions Requested in Texas Education Code

A. Operation of Schools and School Attendance (TEC Section 25.081)

As authorized in the education code, for each school year each school district must operate so that the district provides for at least 75,600 minutes of instruction, including intermissions and recesses, for students. Flexibility in the number of required minutes of instruction will allow the district to:

- Accommodate inclement weather and/or natural causes of disruptions to the school day.
- Address decreased attendance because of severe illness and/or contagions.
- Compensate for any other widespread community disastrous conditions that might interfere with our students getting to school.

B. First Day of Instruction (TEC Section 25.0811)

Under current education code, districts may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. Flexibility to begin instruction earlier in the calendar year will enable the district to:

- Balance the amount of instructional time in the fall and spring semesters.
- Provide additional opportunities to schedule timely and meaningful staff development throughout the calendar year.
- Better pace and deliver instruction.

C. Last Day of School (TEC Section 25.0812)

As provided in the education code, a school district may not schedule the last day of school for students for a school year before May 15. The last day of school may be altered to:

- Allow students more time for remediation and test-taking skill development.
- Give the district options for how to structure the Final Exam Schedule.

D. School Day (TEC Section 25.082)

The education code states that a school day shall be at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses. Modifications of the seven-hour school day would:

- Allow for special student assemblies, productions, presentations, and UIL activities.
- Provide an opportunity for parent/teacher conferences and tutorials.
- Allow time to schedule staff development, address curriculum, and any required training.

E. School Day Interruptions (TEC 25.083)

The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting interruptions of classes during the school day for nonacademic activities such as announcements and sales promotions.

Changes to this requirement would allow for:

- Emergency notifications during the school day.
- Remedial tutoring or test preparation.

F. Teacher Contracts (TEC Section 21.401 and 21.002)

Texas Education Code requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service. Flexibility to the 187 required days of service will allow staff to:

- Attend summer professional development, work days, and additional local training to address specific student outcomes related to district objectives.
- Focus on district improvement initiatives.
- Encourage collaborative team-building and networking opportunities.
- Increase teacher morale.

Professional employees will not receive a reduction in pay for any reduction in their workload due to this change.