

**Wimberley Independent School District
District of Innovation Proposals for 2017-2022**

Board Final Approval 5/15/17

School Calendar /Flexible Start Date

(TEC §25.0811) (EB LEGAL)

Current Law

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday of August. For many years this was the rule. However, districts had the option of applying for a waiver to start earlier. The vast majority of districts applied for the waiver and would begin the 3rd Monday, some even going as early as the 2nd Monday. The Texas tourism groups lobbied to have this stopped because they believed it was hurting their tourism business. Therefore, several years ago the legislature took away all waivers and dictated that districts may not begin until the 4th Monday, with no exceptions.

WISD Proposal

Wimberley ISD would like the flexibility of looking at the calendar each year and starting earlier. Removing the uniform start date could also let the district start classes as mid-week, easing the transition for students entering kindergarten, middle school, and high school.

Class Size 22:1 Ratio

(TEC §25.112) (EEB LEGAL)

Current Law

Kindergarten – 4th Grade classes are to be kept at a 22 student to 1 teacher ratio according to state law. When a class exceeds this limit, the district must complete a waiver with the Texas Education Agency. These waivers are never rejected by TEA. Along with the waiver, it is required that a letter is sent home to each parent in the section that exceeds the 22:1 ratio, informing them the waiver has been submitted. Many times soon after the waiver is submitted, students move out of the district and we are below the 22:1 ratio.

WISD Proposal

Over the last several years, Wimberley has had to write waivers for a handful of classes and the TEA always approves the waivers. Wimberley ISD would seek board approval to exceed the 22:1 in any K-4th grade classroom. Parents will be notified within the first three weeks of the start of school of any classroom size that is above the 22:1 ratio.

Behavior Coordinator Assignment-Student Discipline Provisions (FO LEGAL & LOCAL) (TEC §37.0012)

Current Law

Currently 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.

WISD Proposal

The proposal is for the District to abstain from the state requirement that each school have a designated campus behavior coordinator. WISD's approach to discipline is becoming more collaborative, with multiple people providing emotional and social support to students, rather than just one person. Exemption from this requirement will allow the option of increasing collaboration in regard to student discipline, as outlined in the WISD Student Code of Conduct. Campus Administrators will continue to inform parents of discipline /incidents involving their children.

Teacher Contracts-Extension of Probationary Contracts (TEC §21.102(b)) (DCA LEGAL)

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.

This time period 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 state assessment results.

WISD Proposal

Wimberley ISD would like to create a policy where experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, may be issued a probationary contract for up to two years from the last date of district employment.

District Transfer Policy

(TEC §25.036)

Current Law

A district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district under §25.001. Under §25.036, a transfer is for a period of one school year.[64] The district may charge tuition under a transfer agreement to the extent permitted under §25.038.

WISD Proposal

The district would like the option of being able to terminate the transfer agreement for students in K-11 when the student/ parent has not been forthcoming with information regarding discipline, special programs or other issues that end up costing the district to keep the student enrolled. At any time during the school year, a transfer student who becomes a discipline issue, poor attendance, or is in need of special services which exceeds state funding for that student, WISD can terminate their transfer agreement.