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## **Texas House Bill 2 Delay of Teacher Certification Action Plan Levelland ISD**

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### **Purpose and Overview:**

The purpose of this plan is to establish a structured and data-driven approach for reducing the number of uncertified teachers within Levelland Independent School District in compliance with the certification-and-foundation-curriculum requirements under the House Bill 2 (HB 2) of the 89th Texas Legislature before the start of the 2029-2030 school year. A detailed timeline, accountability steps, and supporting strategies are included for submission to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and for the District's Board of Trustees review.

### **Background/Context:**

To frame the plan, the following key statutory and regulatory points apply:

- HB 2 amends the Texas Education Code ("TEC") in several places, including adding §21.0032 (Employment of uncertified classroom teachers) which states: "A school district may not employ as a teacher of record for a course in the foundation curriculum under Section 28.002 a person who does not hold an appropriate certificate or permit ..." unless the district has submitted an approved plan and the Commissioner grants a delay until before the beginning of the 2029-2030 school year.
- Under §21.0032(a-1), the district may submit a plan for the delay of full compliance but must meet a "reasonable timeline and strategy" to comply. §21.0032(a-2) also allows certain exemptions for Districts of Innovation (DOI) until September 1, 2027, but only for non-reading/language arts or non-mathematics courses above grade 5.
- The "foundation curriculum" is defined in TEC §28.002(a)(1) to include English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
- HB 2 also places increased emphasis on certification, reimbursement of successful certification/exam fees, and teacher preparation routes.
- The TEA guidance identifies key implementation dates for HB 2, including "New Certification Requirements" correspondence dated October 16, 2025.

Thus, Levelland ISD must plan to ensure that by the 2029-2030 school year, every teacher of record in a foundation curriculum course holds an appropriate standard certificate or permit, unless properly exempted via DOI waiver until the earlier expiration date. The District must also align its District of Innovation plan to ensure any waiver of certification requirements is limited as HB 2 prescribes.

### **Historical Staffing Trends:**

In recent years, Levelland ISD has experienced ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining fully certified teachers. This trend is consistent among school districts across the State of Texas. As a result, Levelland ISD has at times relied on uncertified teachers, substitutes, or individuals working toward certification to ensure classrooms remain staffed and instructional continuity is maintained for students. These hiring decisions have been driven by necessity

rather than preference, with the district prioritizing stable instruction while supporting uncertified hires in pursuing appropriate certification pathways when possible.

Levelland ISD is committed to ensuring that all teachers hold appropriate state certification by the start of the 2029-2030 academic year. This plan outlines how the district will systematically reduce the number of uncertified teachers, strengthen support for certification attainment, and develop long-term recruitment pipelines for fully certified educators.

This initiative aligns with Texas Education Agency (TEA) statutory certification requirements and reinforces our district's mission to provide high-quality instruction to every student.

### **LISD Current Status of Teacher Certification:** *Data is current as of February 3, 2026*

- Total number of teachers in Levelland ISD: 179
- Total teachers in foundational subjects: 132
- Total uncertified teachers teaching foundational subjects: 29
- Percentage of uncertified teachers in foundational subjects: 21.9%

### **LISD Human Resources Current Protocol for Uncertified Teachers:**

- Signed Addendums on Teacher Contracts:
  - Each uncertified teacher currently signs a contract acknowledging their understanding of the expectations related to obtaining full certification. By signing this agreement, the teacher commits to actively pursuing and completing the necessary requirements for standard certification within the established timelines.
- Semester Progress Monitoring (2x):
  - Each uncertified teacher currently has check-ins each semester with district personnel regarding testing, coursework, and expected completion dates. These check-ins are documented and updates are made on an internal Human Resources spreadsheet.
- Human Resource Addendum Meetings
  - HR and district administration personnel meet throughout the school year to discuss LISD uncertified teachers and where they are in the certification process.
  - The current expectation for LISD employees that are not certified is to hold a standard certificate or show positive progress by March of the current school year.
- Personnel Discussions with Campus Administration and Supervisors.
  - Campus Administration is informed if uncertified teachers are not on track to fulfill the addendum requirements of their contract.

### **Plan for Levelland ISD: Goals and Strategies:**

**Overall Goal:** By the start of the 2029-2030 school year, Levelland ISD will ensure all foundation curriculum teachers hold an appropriate valid certification (or permit where legally allowable) and will no longer rely on the previously broader waiver of certification requirements for foundation courses under the District of Innovation (“DOI”) plan beyond the statutory allowance.

To achieve this, the District will pursue the following strategies:

1. Audit and inventory of current teacher certification status.
  - By end of School Year 2025-26: Compile a data-report of all current teachers of record in foundation courses (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) showing certificate type/status, years until expiration, and any permits or alternative certifications in place.
  - Ongoing: Maintain a spreadsheet document of certification status for all teaching staff, with alerts for upcoming expiration, permit-to-standard transitions, and “at-risk” teachers.
2. Recruiting and hiring strategy aligned with certification requirements.
  - For any new hire of a teacher of record in foundation courses beginning school year 2026-27: Require a valid standard certificate (or an intern/associate permit with defined pathway to standard certificate) at time of hire or within an accelerated timeline.
  - Prioritize hiring candidates who either already hold appropriate certifications or are in a teacher residency/alternative certification program as defined by the Texas Education Agency (“TEA”).
  - Implement hiring-contract language that clearly states expectations: if employed under permit or temporary certification, the candidate must complete standard certification by a specified date, with a support plan in place.
3. Professional development and certification-completion support.
  - Provide access to an online exam preparation program to assist candidates in preparing for the appropriate certification exam.
  - Partner with Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) and Region Education Service Center 17 (“ESC 17”) for “residency route” or “alternative certification with residency” pathways, consistent with HB 2’s enhanced certification pathways. *jiTeach Texas, Texas Teachers of Tomorrow, Lubbock Christian University, Texas Tech University – TechTeach, Wayland Baptist University, and West Texas A&M University*
  - Design a “Permit-to-Standard” timeline for any teacher hired under a teaching permit—e.g., within 24 months achieve standard certificate—with

monthly progress check-ins, mentoring, and completion incentives.

4. Monitoring of assignment to foundation courses.

- The district will verify that any teacher assigned as “teacher of record” in foundation curriculum courses (§28.002(a)(1)) holds an appropriate certification/permit at the time of assignment. This includes English Language Arts, Math, Science, & Social Studies.
- For any assignment where the teacher does *not* hold a standard certificate, the district will either (a) expedite certification, or (b) reassign the teacher to a non-foundation course where a waiver may be permissible under DOI, or (c) restructure the role into a co-teacher model until certification is achieved.
- Beginning (“SY”) 2027-28, the district will restrict hiring uncertified teachers in foundation courses to only exceptional shortage cases, and then only with an explicit campus-level remediation/mentoring contract and an individual certification completion plan.

5. District of Innovation (DOI) Plan alignment.

- Levelland ISD recognizes that HB 2 limits the ability of districts of innovation to waive certification requirements for foundation curriculum courses. Specifically:
  - **§21.0032(a-2)** allows a district of innovation plan to employ an uncertified teacher of record for a course *other than* reading / language arts or mathematics in a grade level above grade five—but that exemption **expires September 1, 2027**. [LegiScan](#)
- The District will review its DOI waiver language, and revise it by no later than December 2026 to ensure that:
  - No uncertified teacher is assigned as teacher of record in a foundation curriculum subject (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) beyond the document’s sunset date.
  - Any waiver for teaching permit usage is explicitly limited to non-foundation subjects, or non-foundation grade levels, and ends by the statutory deadline.
- The District will submit to TEA (and keep on file) the internal plan described here as the “reasonable timeline and strategy” required by **§21.0032(a-1)** for delayed compliance.

6. Communication and stakeholder engagement.

- The District will inform all campuses, principals, instructional coaches, and HR staff of the new requirements stemming from HB 2 and the timeline for full compliance.

- Report annually to the Board of Trustees (and to campuses) on certification compliance status, unfilled certification needs, hiring trends, and risk mitigation plans.

## **Timeline**

Below is a year-by-year timeline (development aligned with school years) to ensure full compliance by the start of 2029-2030 school year.

### **2025-2026 School Year**

- Maintain accurate certification and permit tracking for all instructional staff.
- Ensure all uncertified teachers are enrolled in a TEA approved certification pathway.
- Provide assigned mentors and instructional support.
- Monitor certification progress each semester.
- Establish and communicate that there will be a pay differentiation between certified and uncertified teachers beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. Uncertified teachers will make less than certified teachers.

### **2026-2027 School Year**

- Monitor progress of current teachers toward standard certification fall & spring semesters;
- Hire only candidates with valid certificate/permit + documented pathway to increase the percentage of fully certified instructional staff.
- Update HR and campus principal procedures for assignment to foundation courses to verify certification status.
- Document progress monitoring in teacher certification programs.
- Maintain fully documented certification records for all instructional staff.
- Continuing targeted professional development and certification exam support.
- Submit the “reasonable timeline and strategy” plan to TEA for approval under § 21.0032(a-1)
- By June 2027, ensure that any DOI waiver for uncertified teachers in foundation subjects is eliminated (or ends within allowable exception period)

### **2027-2028 School Year**

- Continue to increase the percentage of fully certified instructional staff.
- By August 2027, no uncertified teacher (no permit without pathway) shall be assigned as teacher of record in any foundation curriculum course unless in final remediation and clearly on certification path.
- Continue recruitment and retention pipelines; focus on critical shortage fields.
- Annual report to board of trustees regarding certification compliance and hiring trends.
- Maintain fully documented certification records for all instructional staff.
- Conduct annual internal audits to ensure sustained compliance.

### **2028-2029 School Year**

- Final “push” year: target 100% of teacher of record assignments in foundation courses hold valid standard certificates or permitted transition status (with final deadline of Summer 2029).
- Ensure full compliance with HB 2 expectations for certified teacher placement.
- Continue to audit certifications.
- Conduct internal compliance audit in May 2029 to identify any remaining gaps.
- Campus-level remediation plans for any remaining uncertified teachers in foundation courses.
- Update policies, job descriptions, contracts to reflect full certification requirement for (“SY”) 2029-30.
- Conduct annual internal audits to ensure sustained compliance.

### **2029-2030 Full Compliance**

- At the start of 2029-30, Hale Center ISD will ensure all classroom teachers of record in foundation curriculum courses hold proper certification/permit. Any exception must have individual written remediation plans approved prior by Commissioner or via limited permit as appropriate.
- For continued monitoring, maintain certification-status spreadsheet, annual reviews, and link certification status to evaluation and assignment decisions.

### **Strategies:**

Levelland ISD has established a partnership with an approved Educator Preparation Program (EPP) provider to support uncertified teachers in earning standard certification. Through an executed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), the district has partnered with Texas Tech University (Raider Teach) as their primary EPP. However, the district will maintain the flexibility to collaborate with other EPPs in which teachers may already be enrolled who will also be able to offer accessible, high-quality certification pathways, including coursework, exam preparation, and clinical teaching support.

- Support employees who hold a bachelor's degree but have no teaching certificate through Alternative Certification programs.
- Support currently certified teachers who are teaching one out-of-field core area to add the new certification by exam.
- Levelland ISD is committed to attracting and retaining high-quality certified educators by offering a competitive salary and comprehensive benefits package. Teachers receive strong instructional coaching and access to professional resources that support effective classroom practice and continuous growth. The district-wide schedule includes a conference period and an opportunity for teachers to attend PLC meetings. This dedicated time allows our teachers an opportunity for planning, collaboration, and instructional improvement.
- Levelland ISD currently has an established teacher mentor program. With the enhancement through LASO 4, the mentor program pairs new or less-experienced teachers with veteran educators who provide personalized guidance, instructional support, and ongoing encouragement. Mentors assist with lesson planning, classroom management, and helping teachers feel supported and connected. This approach

strengthens instructional quality, builds professional confidence, and improves teacher retention by fostering strong relationships and collaboration.

### **Recruiting, Hiring & Retention:**

- Early Recruiting:
  - Increase the number of job fairs our district attends.
  - Promote district's participation in Teacher Incentive Allotment.
- Strategic Partnerships:
  - Continue relationships with nearby universities to attract student teachers and recent graduates.
- Residency Placements:
  - LISD received the LASO 4 grant to begin this partnership in the 2026-2027 school year.
  - Collaborate with partner EPPs for paid teacher residency programs.
- Teacher Mentor Program:
  - Levelland ISD currently has an established mentor program.
  - LISD received the LASO 4 grant for the 2026-2027 school year to enhance our current program and offer financial assistance to our mentors and mentees.

### **Compliance and Board Approval:**

In accordance with TEC §21.0032(a-1), this plan will be approved by the Levelland ISD Board of Trustees on February 18, 2026, and submitted to the Commissioner of Education for final authorization.

The district's submission includes:

- The total number of uncertified individuals currently assigned to teach foundation curriculum courses in 2025-2026 as of date of submission.
- Educator Preparation Programs (EPP) partner who will be used to support certification efforts.
- The link to a web page where you post Board of Trustee Meeting Agendas for your school system.
- Date of approval by the District Board of Trustees.
- Provide the web link to the public posting of the plan approved by the Board of Trustees.

**Board Approval Date:** [Insert Date]

**Board Agenda Link:** [Insert URL]

**Posted Plan Link:** [Insert URL]

### **Conclusion:**

Levelland ISD has demonstrated the ability to strategically leverage certification flexibility to maintain fully staffed classrooms while developing a certified teacher workforce. Extending certification flexibility through the 2029-2030 school year ensures a smooth, accountable transition to full certification, protects instructional continuity for students.