

District of Innovation Implementation Update: Summer 2017

Fort Bend ISD develops implementation plan to fill critical World Language teacher vacancies

This information is being sent on behalf of Ginger Carrabine, Executive Director of Strategic Planning.

Fort Bend ISD is excited to move forward on an innovative plan to hire highly-qualified teachers to fill vacancies in World Languages – an area that continues to see shortages. In late 2016 and early 2017, as part of the process to become a District of Innovation, a Local Innovation Committee, comprised of community members, parents, teachers, and District administrators, developed a Local Innovation Plan that outlined ways that Fort Bend ISD could better serve students by freeing itself from certain state mandates. Following the Board's adoption of this plan in March of 2017, District staff, working with other stakeholders, developed guidelines and an implementation plan for recruiting and staffing hard-to-fill positions, specifically, world languages, by allowing the District to consider qualified applicants with subject-matter expertise, but who lack certification.

More information about the plans is included in the Questions and Answers below.

Q: Why would the District hire noncertified World Language teachers?

A: Based on historical and current trends, FBISD knows there is a need for innovative recruitment and hiring processes in the areas of World Languages. In fact, last year, the District had multiple vacancies for the entire year in world language classrooms, most often in Spanish. According to the U.S. Department of Education, August 2016, there is a nationwide World Language and/or Spanish teacher shortage. To mitigate the teacher shortage and to provide teachers for our students, FBISD has developed procedures to attract and hire noncertified World Language teachers. Certified teachers will continue to receive priority consideration before a non-traditional candidate is selected.

Q: Who will determine if the applicants are qualified to teach World Language?

A: The District has developed an application and screening process using rigorous criteria that will be used to select applicants for a robust interview process, beginning in the 2017-18 school year. The candidate must demonstrate proficiency in the language, therefore, the interview process includes a writing and speaking sample in the target language. An interview panel will evaluate each applicant and establish a pool of candidates for principals to consider for hire for the vacancies at the campus. If hired, the applicant will participate in ongoing training and support.

Q: Is a college degree required to apply for the World Language teacher position?

A: The applicant must meet specific criteria including:

- Bachelor's degree in the language or,
- Bachelor's degree in another field and teacher certification/ experience in any field or,
- Bachelor's degree in any field with experience teaching adults or working with children or,
- Have formal teacher preparation in another country. If the candidate holds a foreign transcript/teaching credentials, the transcript must be validated and approved by the State Board of Education Certification (SBEC) transcript service.

Q: How does the job role differ from a certified World Language teacher?

A: Teachers hired under the District of Innovation plan will perform the same duties as a certified teacher hired in the traditional way. The campus principal will work with the teacher regarding the number of classes they will teach as well as any other essential job duties.

Q: Will there be a difference with salary and benefits for the noncertified World Language teacher?

A: The noncertified teacher will receive the same salary and benefits according to the District pay structure.

Q: Are there other subject areas that could be opened up to non-certified applicants?

A: Fort Bend ISD is exempt from the law that requires all District teachers to be certified in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education Certification. However, in accordance with the work of the Local Innovation Committee, FBISD is limiting hiring noncertified teachers to hard-to-fill positions, specifically, World Languages, and in the future, Career and Technical Education (CTE).

NOTE: If you are interested in applying for a World Languages teaching position for 2017-18, or know someone who may be interested, please visit the Human Resources webpage to review current vacancies.

CONTACT: If you have questions about Fort Bend ISD's Local Innovation Plan, please visit "[Let's Talk.](#)" You can find more information about the Local Innovation Plan at www.fortbendisd.com/innovation.