O'DONNELL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Approved on February 19, 2026

O'Donnell ISD Teacher Certification Transition Plan

Base Year: 2025–2026
Proposed Delay of Implementation: Through 2029–2030 School Year
Partner EPP: iTeach Texas, Texas Tech University
Submitted for O'Donnell ISD Board Approval on February 19, 2026

Purpose and Overview

O'Donnell ISD seeks approval from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for a Delay of Implementation of the requirement to hire fully certified teachers. This plan outlines how O'Donnell ISD will transition from its current staffing model to one in which all teachers hired who teach foundation curriculum courses for the 2029–2030 school year will hold active Texas educator certifications.

The plan is designed to:
• Address current labor shortages in rural Dawson County.
• Ensure high-quality instruction during the transition period.
• Implement a structured pathway for uncertified teachers to become certified through iTeach Texas.
• Establish annual benchmarks that demonstrate measurable progress.

Current Staffing Context (2025–2026 Base Year)

As of the 2025–2026 school year:

• O'Donnell ISD employs a combination of certified and uncertified teachers.
• A small annual applicant pool exists, but it often lacks certified candidates.

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• O'Donnell ISD's rural location creates challenges in teacher recruitment and retention.

• The district has established a partnership with iTeach Texas to support educator preparation, coursework, mentoring, and certification pathways.

Partnership With iTeach Texas (EPP)

iTeach Texas will serve as the district's approved educator preparation partner. The partnership will provide:

• The EPP will ensure that its program complies with all State Education/ Certification Agency regulations, including deadlines, certification requirements, and standards for alternative teacher preparation programs.
• Candidates will have access to 100% online, self-paced teacher certification program, which includes comprehensive coursework designed to meet state certification requirements.
• Qualified supervisors to observe, evaluate, and provide feedback to candidates during their teaching experience, ensuring they meet the required competencies.
• Ongoing support to candidates throughout the program, including access to academic advisors, instructional coaching, test preparation resources, and professional development opportunities
• Recruitment coordination to identify future iTeach Texas candidates for O'Donnell ISD positions.

Transition Goals (2025–2030)

The primary goal of this plan is that by the start of the 2029–2030 school year, 100% of newly hired teachers that teach foundation curriculum courses will hold a valid Texas educator certificate.

Secondary goals include:

• Increasing the percentage of certified teachers in the district incrementally each year.
• Ensuring that all uncertified teachers are enrolled in iTeach Texas's EPP or another TEA-approved certification pathway no later than August 2027.
• Providing district-led mentoring and support systems to help candidates successfully complete certification.

Annual Benchmarks and Action Steps

2025–2026 (Base Year)

• Finalize partnership with iTeach Texas EPP.
• Identify all uncertified teachers and determine their eligibility for enrollment in the iTeach Texas program.
• Begin enrolling uncertified teachers into the iTeach Texas EPP.
• Provide district onboarding, mentoring, and observation cycles.

2026–2027

• Require all newly hired uncertified teachers to enroll in iTeach Texas's EPP within 60 days of employment.
• Implement district-wide instructional coaching for all certification candidates.
• Begin reducing the number of new uncertified hires by at least 10%.

2027–2028

• All uncertified teachers remaining from the base year must be enrolled in an EPP and progressing toward certification.
• Reduce the percentage of uncertified new hires by an additional 20%.
• Increase recruitment efforts targeting iTeach Texas education graduates.

2028–2029

• Require all new hires to hold at minimum a probationary or intern certificate.
• Reduce uncertified hiring to no more than 5% of total new hires.
• Continue mentoring, EPP collaboration, and retention supports.

2029–2030 (Final Implementation Year)

• O'Donnell ISD will hire only fully certified teachers for all foundation curriculum teaching assignments.
• All current uncertified teachers from prior years must have completed certification or will not be eligible for assignment as teacher of record.
• Submit annual TEA updates verifying full implementation.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies

To strengthen the transition, O'Donnell ISD will implement the following strategies:

• **Grow-Your-Own Pathway:** Identify paraprofessionals and local community members interested in education careers and sponsor their entry into iTeach Texas's EPP.
• **Student Teaching Pipeline:** Establish a structured student-teaching placement program with iTeach Texas to convert candidates into full-time hires.
• **Rural Recruitment Campaign:** Target recruitment at regional colleges, job fairs, and iTeach Texas teacher candidate pools.

District Support Structure for Certification Candidates

O'Donnell ISD will provide:

• Assigned mentor teachers for each certification candidate.
• Ongoing walkthroughs, coaching cycles, and performance feedback.
• Release time, when possible, for EPP coursework or required iTeach Texas meetings.
• Annual progress monitoring for each candidate with documentation shared between O'Donnell ISD and iTeach Texas.

Data Monitoring and Reporting

The district will maintain annual records for:

• Number of certified vs. uncertified teachers.
• Number of teachers actively enrolled in iTeach Texas's EPP.
• Certification progress benchmarks for each candidate.
• Recruitment outcomes and retention rates.
• Percentage of new hires meeting certification goals.

Reports will be shared annually with:

• O'Donnell ISD Board of Trustees
• iTeach Texas EPP partners
• TEA as required

Board Approval

This plan requires formal approval by the O'Donnell ISD Board of Trustees.

Upon approval, O'Donnell ISD will submit the plan and application to the Texas Education Agency to request the Delay of Implementation through the 2029–2030 school year.