

# Amherst ISD Teacher Certification Transition Plan

**Base Year: 2025–2026**

**Proposed Delay of Implementation: Through 2029–2030 School Year**

**Partner EPP: West Texas A&M**

**Submitted for Amherst ISD Board of Trustees Approval**

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## 1. Purpose and Overview

Amherst 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 Amherst ISD will transition from its current staffing model to one which **focuses on teachers hired who teach foundation curriculum courses for the 2029–2030 school year holding active Texas educator certifications.**

The plan is designed to:

- Address current labor shortages in rural Lamb County.
  - Ensure high-quality instruction during the transition period.
  - Implement a structured pathway for uncertified teachers to become certified through West Texas A&M.
  - Establish annual benchmarks that demonstrate measurable progress.
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## 2. Current Staffing Context (2025–2026 Base Year)

As of the 2025–2026 school year:

- Amherst ISD employs a combination of certified and uncertified teachers.
  - A small but stable annual applicant pool exists, but it lacks certified candidates.
  - Amherst ISD’s rural location creates challenges in teacher recruitment and retention.
  - The district has established a partnership with **West Texas A&M (WTAM)** to support educator preparation, coursework, mentoring, and certification pathways.
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### 3. Partnership With West Texas A&M (EPP)

West Texas A & M University will serve as the district’s approved educator preparation partner. The partnership will provide:

- Enrollment pathways for uncertified Amherst ISD teachers into WTAM’s EPP.
  - Coursework delivery via online, hybrid, and in-person formats when available.
  - Required field supervision for candidates working under intern or probationary certificates.
  - Ongoing performance feedback and compliance support to ensure certification progress.
  - Recruitment coordination to identify future WTAM graduates for Amherst ISD positions.
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### 4. 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 WTAM’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.
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### 5. Annual Benchmarks and Action Steps

#### 2025–2026 (Base Year)

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

## 2026–2027

- Require all newly hired uncertified teachers to enroll in WTAM’s EPP.
- 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 WTAM education graduates.

## 2028–2029

- Require all new hires to hold at minimum a **probationary or intern certificate**.
- Reduce uncertified hiring by an additional **20%** of total new hires.
- Continue mentoring, EPP collaboration, and retention supports.

## 2029–2030 (Final Implementation Year)

- Amherst ISD will **hire 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.

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## 6. Recruitment and Retention Strategies

To strengthen the transition, Amherst 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 WTAM’s EPP.
  - **WTAM Student Teaching Pipeline:** Establish a structured student-teaching placement program with WTAM to convert student teachers into full-time hires.
  - **Rural Recruitment Campaign:** Target recruitment at regional colleges, job fairs, and WTAM teacher candidate pools.
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## 7. District Support Structure for Certification Candidates

Amherst 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 WTAM meetings.
  - Annual progress monitoring for each candidate with documentation shared between Amherst ISD and WTAM.
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## 8. Data Monitoring and Reporting

The district will maintain annual records for:

- Number of certified vs. uncertified teachers.
- Number of teachers actively enrolled in WTAM'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:

- Amherst ISD Board of Trustees
  - West Texas A&M University EPP partners
  - TEA as required
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## 9. Board Approval

This plan requires formal approval by the Amherst ISD Board of Trustees.

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

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