

# Miles ISD Innovation Plan

## Introduction

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On April 8, 2019, the Miles Independent School District Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and support innovation to improve educational outcomes.

On April 8, 2019, the board of trustees also conducted a public hearing and appointed a local Innovation Committee comprised of district administrators, teachers and parents.

On January 25, 2024, Miles ISD District of Innovation Committee meet to discuss amendments to the District of Innovation Plan.

On February 13, 2024, Miles ISD Board of Trustees met to amend the DOI Plan.

On February 15, 2024 DOI Plan posted to the Miles ISD Webpage

On March 18, 2024 Public Hearing on Amendment to the District of Innovation

## Innovation Committee members Updated 1-8-24

Ty Stevens, Superintendent of Schools

Paige Ernhart, Teacher

Brytin Black, Teacher

Nicole Barnes, Dean of Students

Wayland Cooksey, Secondary Principal

Jill Kellermeier, Teacher

Kati Briley, Business Manager

Susan Garcia, Teacher

Leann Cook, Technology Coordinator

T.J. Christian, Teacher

Tiffany Riddle, Teacher

Curt McKneely, Elementary Principal

Megan Vahlenkamp, Teacher

Whitney Schneirs, Teacher

Jayson Wilhelm, Athletic Director

Sara Stevens, Secondary Counselor

Sarah Crouch, Elementary Counselor

Stacey Collins Elementary Parent

Barry Coker Secondary Parent

## Term

The term of the MISD Innovation Plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2020-21 school year and ending at the end of the 2024-25 school year. A local innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a vote of the district-level committee and the board of trustees in the same manner as required for initial adoption of a local innovation plan. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.

## Innovations

The district exercises innovations in the following areas under HB 1842:

## School Calendar

(TEC §25.0811)

Under current Texas state law, “a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August” (TEC 25.0811).

The school start date should be determined locally by the District, and on an annual basis, by considering what is best for our community. Having the ability to modify the start date of school allows us the flexibility to balance semester days, align classes to college courses, and ease transitions by beginning school on a shortened week.

Miles ISD will begin instruction no earlier than August 13. A district calendar committee made up of teachers and administrators will meet to develop the annual calendar each school year. The superintendent will submit the annual calendar to the Board of Trustees for approval.

### **Probationary Contracts**

(TEC §21.102)

Texas Education Code states that experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

In order to support teacher growth and gather performance data, a one year time period is not always sufficient to evaluate a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom.

Experienced teachers new to Miles ISD that have been employed in public education for at least five of the previous eight years may be issued a probationary contract for up to two years from the date of district employment.

### **Teacher Certification**

(TEC §21.003)

Texas Education Code requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds the appropriate certificate or permit issued by the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC).

In order to best serve Miles ISD students, decisions on certifications will be handled locally. The Principal may submit to the Superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach a subject out of his/her certification field. The principal will be required to provide valid reasoning for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify this individual to teach this subject.

An individual with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The principal may submit to the Superintendent a request including all the individual’s credentials. The Superintendent will approve or deny the request and report the action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning employment. Employees teaching pursuant to a local certificate will be employed at-will or on the basis of an employment agreement that is not governed by Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code.

In the case the district is not able to hire an appropriately certified teacher, the Principal may submit a request to the Superintendent to hire a non-certified teacher. The principal and Superintendent will establish a plan of action which includes an appropriate number of professional development hours and a focused mentorship to help the teacher become certified

in a reasonable time period. The Superintendent will present the plan to the Board of Trustees prior to the employment of the individual. Special Education and ESL/ELL certifications cannot be waived.

### **Transfer Student Timeline**

(TEC §25.036)

A district may choose to accept students who are not entitled to enroll in the district through the transfer process. The transfer timeframe is for a period of one school year.

MISD accepts transfer requests from students outside of the district. Current law requires MISD to enroll the student until the end of the school year. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and all rules and regulations of the district. In cases where the student does not meet minimum attendance requirements, the district loses funding.

Non-resident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students at Miles ISD may have such transfer status revoked by the superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. Students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard or at risk of academic failure as stated in the MISD transfer guidelines may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

### **Minimum Minutes of Instruction**

(TEC §25.081 & TEC §25.082)

House Bill (HB) 2610, passed by the 84th Texas Legislature, amends the Texas Education Code (TEC) §25.081, by striking language requiring 180 days of instruction and replacing with new language requiring districts and charter schools to provide at least 75,600 minutes of instruction annually and 420 minutes of instruction daily. The bill allows school districts to add minutes as necessary to compensate for minutes of instruction lost due to school closures caused by disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions etc. However, it eliminated any options to pursue state waivers to reduce the minimum number of minutes per day to allow for flexibility to pursue early releases for parent-teacher conferences, teacher professional development or innovative scheduling due to events.

The flexibility to adjust minutes of instruction will assist with personalizing learning to better meet individual student needs. Communication about student progress is essential for the innovative work taking place throughout our campuses. The MISD community values the opportunity to meet face to face with teachers to discuss student progress. Early release time would allow parent-teacher conferences to occur. A later start time or additional early release time would accommodate professional development/collaboration opportunities for teachers and provide opportunities for flexible scheduling needed throughout a school year.

### **Teacher Contract Days**

(TEC §21.401)

Texas Education Code requires that teachers on a ten month contract work an equivalent of 187 days.

MISD would like to align the teachers days to the 75,600 minutes required of the students. This would give the district the option to reduce the amount of contract days to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This reduction in contract days at the current salary schedule would make MISD salaries more competitive by increasing the daily rate the district pays teachers and

enhance teacher recruitment.

**Summary**

The District of Innovation committee developed the plan to provide an opportunity for the Miles Independent School District to make local decisions about the most appropriate way to educate our students. We are thankful to the MISD Board of Trustees for making this process possible.