

Milford Independent School District
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District of Innovation Plan (HB42)
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House Bill 1842, passed during the 84th Legislative Session, allows for greater local control at the district area in certain areas. HB 1842 was created to allow public schools exemptions in Educational Law that charter schools are currently entitled. This opportunity will allow for Milford ISD to create a plan that best suits the needs of our students and community. Once in place, the plan will be effective for five consecutive school years.

Vision of Milford ISD: The vision of Milford Independent School District (ISD) is that all students will be challenged, successful, motivated to learn, independent thinkers, and problem solvers. Milford ISD envisions a learning facility where students will achieve academically, explore their interests, and grow mentally, morally, and physically through the school's academic, fine arts, athletic and vocational programs.

The Milford ISD administration and the entire school staff along with the community will act as mentors, guides, and advisors to the learning process in order to achieve excellence in all fields of study. Students will strive for excellence in all classes and extracurricular activities and be proud of the school they represent. Parents will be a part of their child's education process in a positive and supporting manner at each grade level and all areas of endeavor.

In order to better serve the students of Milford ISD, the District Advisory Committee has developed a five-year District of Innovation Plan to allow greater opportunities for the Milford ISD Board of Trustees to use their best judgment to make decisions concerning the students of Milford ISD. The plan includes the following:

First Day of Instruction

Exemption From: TEC §25.0811

Law: Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposal: Milford ISD recognizes that this law restricts the flexibility in designing calendars annually to fit the needs of the school district and community. The district seeks to start school no earlier than the second Monday in the month of August. This will provide the district the following opportunities:

1. Increase the number of student instructional days before state assessments.
2. Alignment of the school calendar with the local community college that provides dual credit instruction for our high school students.
3. Balancing the number of instructional days during the fall and spring semesters.
4. Ending the school year before June to allow more days of remediation during summer school before state assessment retesting.
5. Allow for qualifying students to be able to enroll in summer courses through the local community college without overlap of district instructional days and college instructional days.

Teacher Contract Days (Minimum Service Required)

Exemption From: TEC §21.401

Law: (a) A contract between a school district and an educator must be for a minimum of 10 months' service. (b) An educator employed under a 10-month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposal: Milford ISD seeks to better align the number of contractual days 10-month contract employees work with the required 75,600 minutes of instruction for students. Milford ISD will reduce the required days of service from 187 days to 182 days with no effect on 10-month contract employee's salary. In addition, this will also:

1. Increase the daily rate of pay for teachers.
2. Allow teachers more time during the summer to seek out individualized professional development that better relates to the needs of their fields of employment.
3. Assist in teacher retention and recruitment.

Teacher Contracts (Probationary Contracts)

Exemption From: TEC §21.102(b)

Law: (b) A probationary contract may not be for a term exceeding one school year. The probationary contract may be renewed for two additional one-year periods, for a maximum permissible probationary contract period of three school years, except that the probationary period may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

Proposal: Milford ISD looks to increase the length of the probationary contract for teachers who have been employed at least five of the eight years from a maximum of one year period to a three year period. This will allow the district the following:

1. A longer evaluation period of the teacher to also include assessment data from the end of the first year of employment since contractual decisions have to be made prior to the end of the first academic year of employment.
2. These employees will also be subject to the probationary period set out in TEC §21.102(c) in order to allow more time to fairly and thoroughly assess an employee's performance.

Teacher Certification

Exemption From: TEC §21.003(a)

Law: A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

Proposal: Milford ISD will maintain current certification requirements for core curriculum instruction as set out in TEC §21.003(a), but would like the flexibility in locally certifying teachers in Career and Technical Education and languages other than English courses. The district will make every attempt possible to hire individuals with appropriate certification for the positions in question, but sometimes will need the flexibility to fill these positions in high demand. Individuals with industry certifications and native speakers with qualified experience will be considered eligible for employment and will be issued a local teaching certificate. Additionally, Milford ISD will notify parents of students enrolled in courses where the district has locally certified teachers within 30 days of instruction and will include in the letter the qualifications used to locally certify the teacher.

Teacher Evaluation

Exemption From: TEC 21.352

Proposal: The administration of Milford ISD will have the option to develop a local instrument for teacher evaluations that will be approved by the board of trustees before implemented into the school system. This will allow the team to develop a system based on a combination of elements presented in PDAS and T-TESS that best fits the needs and goals of Milford ISD. This will require the following:

1. Continuing contract teachers will be evaluated on a rotating cycle of once every three school years. Every teacher in the category will receive a minimum of six informal walk-throughs per calendar school year.
2. Probationary contract teachers will be evaluated annually each year with a minimum of 1 formal evaluation of 45 minutes and 6 informal walk-throughs per calendar school year. The formal evaluation will be based on the locally designed evaluation instrument.

District of Innovation Timeline:

- January 19, 2017 – Milford ISD Board of Trustees passes resolution to initiate the process of forming a District of Innovation by a margin of 6-0; Trustee Wimbish absent from meeting.
- February 16, 2017 – Milford ISD Board of Trustees holds public hearing at 6:00 pm.
- February 16, 2017 – Milford ISD Board of Trustees votes by a margin of 5-0 to proceed with District of Innovation and appoints the District Advisory Committee to work on developing the District of Innovation Plan; Trustees Griffin and Wimbish absent from meeting.
- March 3, 2017 – District of Innovation plan published on district website for the duration of 30 days ending April 2, 2017.
- March 20, 2017 – Milford ISD Superintendent Clingenpeel notifies Commissioner of Education Morath of the intent to vote on the District of Innovation Plan at the April 20, 2017 Board of Trustees meeting.
- March 30, 2017 – Milford ISD District Advisory Committee holds public meeting and passes District of Innovation plan by a majority vote. Members voted in favor of approving the District of Innovation Plan and sends the DOI to the Milford ISD Board of Trustees for final approval at the April Board Meeting.
- April 20, 2017 – Milford ISD Board of Trustees votes by a margin of 5-0 in favor of final approval of District of Innovation Plan; Trustees Cook and Wadley absent from meeting.

At the time of final approval of the District of Innovation plan for Milford ISD, the plan will go into effect for 5 consecutive school years beginning August of 2017 and ending May of 2022. If at any time the board sees necessary, the District of Innovation plan may be modified and adjusted to meet the needs of the students of Milford ISD. The board will reconvene the District Advisory Committee to make necessary changes to the District of Innovation plan.