

Millsap ISD

2022 Innovation Plan



MILLSAP ISD STRATEGIC PLAN

DISTRICT VISION

Millsap ISD will partner with parents and community to be the premier educational organization.

DISTRICT MISSION

The mission of Millsap ISD is to inspire, develop, and educate every student in a safe environment to be a productive, responsible citizen prepared for lifelong success.

DISTRICT MOTTO

Your Child, Their Dreams, Our Mission

DISTRICT VALUES

We value the development of the whole child.

We value community/parental partnerships and mutual respect.

We value positive relationships with students, staff, and parents.

We believe student success is our ultimate measure.

We practice ethical behavior and personal integrity.

Adopted May 20, 2019

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

The Millsap ISD will foster an environment in which graduates

Are inspired to:

Have growth mindsets,
Possess self-confidence and integrity,
Be lifelong learners, and
Be service oriented.

Effectively communicate through:

Personal and social engagement.

Own their education by:

Being active participants in their education,
Displaying perseverance, and
Being collaborative.

Are problem solvers who are:

Adaptable and
Creative thinkers.

Adopted May 20, 2019

DISTRICT GOALS

Every student will be empowered and prepared to develop into a productive, responsible citizen throughout life.

Every student will be challenged in a safe and nurturing environment.

PARAMETERS

We will make decisions in the best interest of the students we serve. We will reflect the values and embrace the vision, mission and direction of Millsap ISD.

We will not confine our thinking to the limits of our existing organization. We will not allow government restraints to compromise learning opportunities.

We will be accountable for our success.

Millsap ISD as a District of Innovation House Bill 1842, TEC 12A, AF (LOCAL), AF (LEGAL)

This District of Innovation plan relates only to the specific exemptions outlined below. The district will adhere strictly to the Texas Education Code in all other areas. If it becomes apparent that changes to this plan are necessary, the district will reconvene the District of Innovation Planning Committee to discuss and potentially enact those changes.

House Bill (HB) 1842 was passed in the 84th Texas Legislative Session. This law gives Texas public school districts an opportunity to modify state requirements to meet the needs of their students and community. In 2015, Millsap ISD embarked on a bold process of creating a Strategic Plan to set goals for the district for the next 3-5 years. Numerous stakeholders from across the community were involved in the process and encouraged to think beyond the limits of the existing organization nor allow government restraints to compromise learning opportunities. In so doing, a plan came forth which the community felt would allow for a Millsap graduate empowered with the tools to be successful in the 21st Century.

Adopted May 20, 2019

MISD seeks, via this process, to bring to fruition the district's vision of being the premier educational organization. Community, business partners, and staff were involved throughout the process of developing our innovation plan providing feedback regarding how their students' experiences could be most enhanced. Millsap ISD prides itself in offering a unique education and the innovation process allows that on an even greater scale.

TEC 12A allows districts to exempt themselves from a limited subset of requirements imposed by the Texas Education Code (TEC) "that inhibit the goals of the plan and from which the district should be exempted on adoption of the plan. . ." The purpose of TEC12A is to spur innovation in school districts, and it is the desire of Millsap ISD to continue to enhance district innovations while striving to be better tomorrow than we are today.

The Millsap ISD Board of Trustees adopted the District of Innovation Plan in March of 2017 to become effective June 1, 2017. The plan may have a term of up to five years from the date of implementation. However, in keeping with Millsap ISD's philosophy of best practices, the plan was reviewed in March of 2018 and again in March of 2019. Where necessary, the superintendent of schools or designee will promulgate regulations, policies, and procedures to govern the areas for which local flexibility has been sought.

On June 13, 2022, once again, the Millsap ISD Board of Trustees passed a District of Innovation Resolution allowing the district to explore the opportunity of becoming a District of Innovation. Following the adopted resolution, a public hearing was held to consider whether the district should develop an innovative plan. Finally, the Board of Trustees approved the District Educational Improvement Committee as the District of Innovation Committee.

Believing that certain statutes limit MISD's potential, we seek exemption from the following permissible provisions of the TEC as allowed in the statute:

Adopted May 20, 2019

Uniform School Start Date

(EB LEGAL) (EB LOCAL) (TEC §25.0811)

Current Requirement

Students may not begin school before the 4th Monday in August.

Proposed Flexibility

Having flexibility for the first day of instruction will allow Millsap ISD local stakeholders to annually determine what start date best meets the instructional needs of students and family needs of the community. This enables MISD to personalize learning, increase college and career readiness, balance the amount of instructional time per semester, and provide more flexible professional development opportunities for our staff. Removing the uniform start date would also allow MISD to start classes on a Wednesday or Thursday, as a short week, easing the transition to the beginning of the school from the summer months.

Adopted August 1, 2022; Proposed June 14, 2022; Previously Adopted May 20, 2019

90 Percent Attendance Rule

(FEC LOCAL) (FEC LEGAL) (TEC §25.092)

Current Requirement

State law requires students to attend class 90 percent of the school days in order to earn class credits. The law currently requires the district to award class credit to students based on "seat time" rather than based on content mastery.

Proposed Flexibility

The 90 percent rule is an arbitrary percentage, which means school districts award credit based on seat time rather than based on content mastery. Abstaining from the requirement means the district will not have to penalize students who miss class due to extra/co-curricular activities, academic activities, or other extenuating circumstances. This exemption will allow the district to promote student engagement, as well as social and emotional development, by encouraging more students to participate in such activities. It will also allow MISD administrators to award credit to students who demonstrate they understand the concepts rather than to those who just attend class a certain number of school days. The proposal would allow counselors and administrators to refocus efforts on students who are truly at risk, while simultaneously providing rigor and relevance in the curriculum. Exemption from this requirement will provide educational advantages to students of the district by promoting learning through innovation in the methods, locations, and times instruction may be delivered to students, thereby accommodating students with legitimate scheduling conflicts, reducing dropouts, and increasing the number of qualifying graduates. Relief from Section 25.092 does not, in any way, impact or alter existing compulsory attendance requirements or University Interscholastic League ("UIL") rules. Moreover, opting out of Section 25.092 in no way limits or modifies a teacher's right to determine the finality of a grade in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0214, nor does it restrict or alter a teacher's right to assign grades in accordance with Texas Education Code Section 28.0216.

Adopted August 1, 2022; Proposed June 14, 2022; Previously Adopted May 20, 2019

Teacher Contract Days

(DC LEGAL, DC LOCAL) (TEC §21.401)

Current Requirement

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten-month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed Flexibility

TEC 25.081 changed student instructional days to minutes. However, TEC 21.401 has not been adjusted to change teacher contracts from days to minutes. As a result, teachers are required to be on contract for several days beyond those with students. Quality professional development is a high priority in Millsap ISD. However, the district and community feel the number of resulting professional days is actually counterproductive for teachers. This proposal adjusts teacher contract days each year, depending on the calendar, but does not negatively impact teacher salaries. This stems from an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students.

This proposal will cause teacher daily rates to fluctuate from year to year but will not negatively affect their overall salary.

This proposal should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts.

This proposal will significantly improve teacher morale.

This proposal will provide teachers more opportunities during the year to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

Adopted August 1, 2022; Proposed June 14, 2022; Previously Adopted May 20, 2019

Teacher Certification

(DK LEGAL, DK LOCAL, DK EXHIBIT) (DBA LEGAL, DBA LOCAL) (TEC §21.003, §21.051, §21.057)

Current Requirement

Currently, TEC 21.003 states that “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.”

Proposed Flexibility

Millsap ISD prides itself in its innovation and efforts to allow students to be active participants in their own education. MISD believes the current code limits the district’s ability to hire professionals with industry experience to teach career and technical/STEAM (applied Science, Technology, Engineering, and Arts & Mathematics) courses, hard-to-fill, high demand, dual credit, and AP courses. These requirements also inhibit the district’s ability to hire teachers moving in with out-of-state credentials. By obtaining exemption from existing teacher certification requirements, the district will have the flexibility to hire community college instructors, university professors, or internal applicants seeking assignments outside of their traditional certification area for full and/or part time course loads. This would also allow enrichment offerings such as robotics, exploratory courses, etc. In addition, this exemption will afford the district the flexibility to hire professionals in certain trades or vocations to teach the crafts of those trades or vocations (such as welding, fine arts, health sciences, law, etc.) if certified teachers are not available to teach those courses, or their quality of expertise would benefit the students in that area.

District leadership will establish its own local qualification requirements to ensure an instructor is deemed an expert in their field. Further, the district will establish its own requirements for training of professionals and experts to teach such courses in lieu of the requirements set forth in law. Therefore, parental notification of “inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers” under TEC 21.057 would no longer be necessary. The final determination of employment shall rest with the Superintendent and Board of Trustees.

Adopted August 1, 2022; Proposed June 14, 2022; Previously Adopted May 20, 2019

Transfer of Students

(FDA LEGAL, FDA LOCAL) (TEC §25.036)

Current Requirement

Millsap ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA LOCAL requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file an application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff and the student's disciplinary history, academic records, and attendance records are evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements, rules and regulations of the District. Violation of the terms of the agreement may result in a transfer request not being approved the following year. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the District.

Proposed Flexibility

The District is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applications. The District will reserve the right to revoke the transfer of a student at any time during the year based on behavior, excessive tardies, attendance, or not remaining in good academic standing.

Adopted August 1, 2022; Proposed June 14, 2022; Previously Adopted May 20, 2019

Teacher Mentors - §21.458

(FDA LEGAL, FDA LOCAL) (TEC §21.458)

Current Requirement

Each school district may assign a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned. The rules concerning qualifications must require that to serve as a mentor a teacher must complete a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner; complete a mentor training program provided by the district; have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance; demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills.

Proposed Flexibility

The District seeks exemption from Section 21.458 to provide flexibility in designating exceptional teachers with less than three years of experience to serve as mentors for novice teachers and provide flexibility in training program requirements, giving the district the ability to develop local requirements.

Adopted August 1, 2022; Proposed June 14, 2022