



## **Muenster I.S.D. District of Innovation Plan 2017 - 2022**

### **Introduction**

During the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, HB1842 was passed. This law allows Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation which affords them the opportunity to obtain exemptions from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Muenster ISD is exercising this opportunity to gain more local control and will request exemptions from the Texas Education Code.

The Muenster Independent School District of Innovation Plan has been developed to address State rules and regulations detrimental to small, rural districts with stable student populations. The school calendar (TEC 25.0811) has equal fall and spring semesters on either side of a Christmas Break.

The calendar has the required 75,600 minutes of instruction and the teacher work year is more in line with instructional hours for students (TEC 21.401). Because of limited funding, the five unused teacher development days will be used as an incentive, in lieu of a teacher salary increase, which the MISD budget cannot sustain at this time.

Small, rural schools are having a difficult time in recruiting teachers, especially those in critical needs and in career and technical subject areas (TEC 21.003). Our plan is to work with our local community college (North Central Texas College) to utilize the talents of adjunct college staff with master's degrees in subject areas, but without state certification through SBEC. In addition, Muenster has highly skilled vocational and technical community members whose talents could be utilized on a part time basis.

### **Term**

Muenster ISD's Innovation Plan will begin with the 2017-2018 school year and conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Muenster ISD Board in accordance with HB1842. If at any time within this 5 year plan, other areas of exemptions are to be considered, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider new exemptions. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

# **INNOVATIONS**

## **► School Start Date/End Date**

*(TEC 25.081, TEC 25.0811a, TEC 25.0812, TEC 25.082, TEC 25.083) (EB LEGAL)*

*Statutes that relate to this goal.*

*TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the fourth Monday of August.*

*The current rule allows no flexibility in the design of annual calendars to fit the needs of the community or the wishes of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.*

### ***Innovation Strategies***

1. Muenster ISD students will begin instruction no earlier than the 2nd Monday of August. This change will create greater flexibility in the creation of the district calendar as well as allowing more opportunities in scheduling meaningful and balanced staff development days.
2. The earlier start date will allow the district to move instructional days that occur after state mandated testing dates to the front of the school year and be able to dismiss before Memorial Day.
3. The earlier start date will provide more balance to the first semester grading period during the first semester.

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## **► Length of School Day**

*(TEC §25.082a)(SAAH 3.8.1)*

*Statutes that relate to this goal.*

*TEC 25.082a states that a school day must be 7 hours each day including recesses and intermissions.*

*SAAH 3.8.1 states that a school day must be at least 420 minutes including recesses and intermissions. School districts are subject to this requirement.*

*The current rules allow no flexibility in the design of district and campus schedules.*

### ***Innovation Strategies***

1. The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each campus. This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year.

2. This exemption will provide greater flexibility than the current 6 day waiver maximum that relates to the length of the school day.
  3. The opportunity to be exempt from the 7 hour day requirement will allow the district to create more flexibility within the daily schedule for students and staff. This flexibility will be used to create a unique bell schedule instead of the static schedule required of schools by this mandate.
  4. The district will provide teachers and administrators the opportunity for weekly and monthly staff development opportunities through the creation of these unique schedules.
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## ► **Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size**

*(TEC 25.111) (TEC 25.112) (TEC 25.113) (EEB LEGAL)*

### ***Statutes that relate to this goal.***

*TEC 25.112 requires districts to maintain a class size of 22 students or less for Kindergarten – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classes. When any class exceeds this limit, the district must complete and file a waiver with the Texas Education Agency.*

*TEC 25.113 requires district to notify parents of waivers or exceptions to class size limits.*

### **Innovation Strategies:**

1. At the beginning of each school year, Muenster ISD will attempt to meet the suggested student to teacher ratio of 22:1 per K-4 homeroom class. In the event that any class size exceeds this ratio during the school year, students will be added 1 to each section until the total number of students in a class is 24. At that time the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees and to the parents of the affected students. If within 30 calendar days, the 24:1 ratio remains the same or increases, every attempt will be made by campus and district administration to add an additional teacher/section in order to lower the ratio below 22:1 or to secure paraprofessional support.
  2. A TEA waiver will not be filed when a K-4<sup>th</sup> classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
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## ► **Certification - General**

*(TEC §21.003a, TEC 210031, TEC 21.051, TEC 21.053, TEC 21.057)  
(DBA LEGAL) (DBA Local)*

### **Manner in which statute inhibits the goals of the plan**

*TEC 21.003(a) states 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. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their*

*certification, the district must request emergency certification for the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.*

### ***Innovation Strategies***

1. The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.
  2. The current certification requirement severely limits the districts options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses from CTE and STEM related courses along with other required courses needed throughout the district. In order to maximize the opportunities for students to take such courses, the district will consider the qualifications necessary to create a local requirement for these courses instead of the requirements set forth in TEC 21.003(a). This exemption will allow the district to:
    - a. Consider part time professionals to teach junior high and high school courses.
    - b. Hire North Central Texas College adjunct faculty with Master's Degrees in Core Subject Areas to teach high school and dual credit courses at Muenster High School.
    - c. Provide the opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession and demonstrate teaching proficiency to the campus principal and superintendent in order to receive a MISD Teaching Certificate.
    - d. Provide the possibility of increasing the number of CATE and STEM courses available by allowing trade professionals the ability to teach CTE courses in their field if deemed qualified by campus principal and superintendent.
    - e. Provide for continuing education requirements identical to current state rule and require for training in pedagogy through the Education Service Center, local community colleges, and universities.
  3. The superintendent will report these actions to the Board of Trustees at the first board meeting following these assignments and/or certifications.
  4. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.
  5. The ultimate goal of MISD is to hire fully certified and qualified individuals for all professional positions. This innovation will be utilized, only, when that goal becomes unattainable.
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## ► Probationary Contracts

(TEC 21.002, 21.102)

### **Manner in which the statute inhibits the plan.**

In TEC 21.102(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.

### ***Innovation Strategies***

1. For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to the district who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, a probationary contract may be issued for up to two additional years from the first day of employment for a total of three years.
  2. This will allow district administrators to fully appraise the teachers' classroom management, parental relationships, and administrative skills before a term contract is awarded as with a beginning teacher.
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## ► Teacher Contract Days

(TEC §21.401) (DCB LEGAL)( DCB LOCAL)

### ***Statutes that relate to this goal.***

TEC §21.401 requires a teacher who is on a 10 month contract to work an equivalent of 187 days.

### ***Innovation Strategies:***

In an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of the students, the district would have the option to reduce the amount of contract days of teachers to 182 days with no effect on teacher salaries. Also, due to property values, it is difficult to compete with local schools in the area of teacher salary. 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, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with neighboring districts.

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## ► School District Depository Contract

(TEC, Chapter 45, Subchapter G §45.201—45.209) (BDAE, BBFA, BBFD, CDA LEGAL)( CDA LOCAL)

### ***Statutes that relate to this goal.***

TEC §45.205 requires that depository bank contracts not exceed a two-year term. This section provides school districts the authority to extend a depository contract for two additional two-year terms.

***Innovation Strategies:***

In such a small community with limited bank availability, the current statute requiring a Request for Proposal (RFP) promotes disruption to district operations and increases the administrative burden.

1. The Muenster ISD will only send depository services out to bid if the district determines contract pricing becomes uncompetitive or there is some operational or financial reason to send the district's banking services out for bid.
2. Relief from TEC §45.205 allows the district to ensure that its resources are concentrated on student achievement and that campus operations are not disrupted.
3. Texas Education Agency Forms will be altered to meet the needs of the MISD.

# **Muenster ISD District of Innovation Plan Timeline**

## **February 8, 2017 – 6:30 pm – February Board Meeting**

- Board approval of Resolution that will begin the decision process (*TEC 12A.001 (c)(1)*)
- Resolution attached.
- Board approval of members of District of Innovation Committee (*TEC 12A.002(b)(2), 12A.003*)

## **February 13, 2017 – 3:15 pm – Faculty/Staff Meeting**

- MISD Faculty/Staff meeting to discuss merits of becoming a District of Innovation

## **February 14, 2017**

- MISD Faculty/Staff vote on proceeding/not proceeding with the plan to become a District of Innovation

## **February 15, 2017 – 6:10 pm – February Special Called Board Meeting**

- Public Hearing of the Rationale for MISD to become a District of Innovation Process and Proceedings (*TEC 12A.001*)

## **February 27, 2017 – 3:15 pm**

- First meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

## **March 29, 2017 – 5:15 pm**

- Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

## **April 3, 2017 – 3:15 pm**

- Teacher staff development meetings to discuss specific exemptions of TEC as it relates to HB 1842.

## **April 10, 2017 – 3:15 pm**

- Final meeting of the District of Innovation Committee.
- District Education Improvement Committee finalize and approve the Proposed Muenster ISD District of Innovation Plan.

## **April 10, 2017**

- Proposed Muenster ISD District of Innovation Plan approved by the District Education Improvement Committee posted to the Muenster ISD website for 30 days.
- Proposed Muenster ISD DOI sent to TASB Policy Service for review.
- Muenster ISD Board of Trustees send notification to the TEA Commissioner of the District's intention to vote on the District of Innovation Plan.

**May 10, 2017 – 6:30 pm Regular May School Board Meeting**

- Proposed MISD District of Innovation Plan is reviewed and finalized by the MISD Board of Trustees.
- Approve the District of Innovation plan by a vote of at least ( 5 - 2 ) (TEC 12A.005(b))
- District of Innovation Plan along with the TEA form relating to the specific TEC exemptions in the plan is submitted to TEA and the Commissioner and to the TASB for policy updates.
- Muenster ISD Board of Education approves 2017-2018 MISD School Calendar.