

# Morton ISD

## District of Innovation Plan

August 2017 – July 2022

House Bill (HB) 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> 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 January 19, 2017 the Morton Independent School District's Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to adopt a District of Innovation Plan to increase local control over District operations and to support innovation and local initiatives. The adoption of this plan seeks to increase the District's flexibility in order to improve educational outcomes for the benefit of the students and the community.

The Plan will take effect for the 2017-2018 school year through the 2021-2022 school year.

This plan may be amended at any time by the committee with approval of the Board of Trustees.

### **District of Innovation Timeline:**

- 1-19-2017 – MISD Board of Trustees pass resolution to submit District of Innovation Plan
- 1-19-2017 – MISD Board of Trustees conducts a public hearing to consider developing an innovation plan.
- 2-9-2017 – MISD District of Innovation Committee holds Public Meeting to consider and approve the final version with a majority vote.
- 2-23-2017 – MISD Board of Trustees approves Innovation Plan.
- 2-24-2017 – MISD notifies the Commissioner in writing of intent to adopt Innovation Plan.
- 2-24-2017 – MISD District of Innovation Plan is posted on the district website a minimum of 30 days: <http://www.mortonisd.net>
- 4-20-2017 – MISD Board of Trustees vote to adopt District Innovation Plan

### **MISD District of Innovation Committee:**

- Vicki Rice - Superintendent
- Glen Smith - Secondary Principal
- Kellye Kuehler - Elementary Principal
- Regina Ingle - Special Programs and Populations
- Tera Cruz – Business Manager
- Teri Rohmfeld - PIEMS Coordinator
- Elsie Zapata - Migrant Liaison
- Luisa Martinez - Parent
- Holly Boggs - Parent
- Treva Kuehler - Local Business Owner

## **1. Uniform Start Date**

### ***Exemption:***

- TEC 25.0811 and 25.0812 First Day of Instruction (Starting before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August) and Last Day of Instruction (Ending before May 15<sup>th</sup>)

### ***Plan:***

- Review annually the calendar to determine what is best for students and the community and set school start and end dates accordingly

### ***Benefit:***

- Allowing more balanced 6 weeks and semester schedules
- Increased instructional time prior to Fall administration of End of Course exams
- Provide greater choice of Professional Development opportunities
- Allows district to determine locally, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and the local community

## **2. Teacher Contract Days**

### ***Exemption:***

- TEC 21.401 Minimum Service Required (teachers on 10 month contract must provide a minimum of 187 days of service)

### ***Plan:***

- Reduce teacher contract days from 187 to 182 without reducing teacher salaries

### ***Benefit:***

- Provide teachers more flexibility during summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field
- Increase daily rate the district pays teachers
- Improve teacher morale
- Enhance teacher recruitment
- It will be part of the calendar planning process to reduce the number of teacher contract days

### **3. Teacher Certification**

***Exemption:***

- TEC 21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts and TEC 21.003 Certification Required

***Plan:***

- In order to best serve the students of MISD, decisions on certification will be determined locally
  - The principal may submit in writing to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach subject(s) and/or grade level(s) out of their area of certification.
    - The principal must specify the reason for the request and
    - The principal must show what credentials the teacher possesses that would qualify the individual to teach the 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 will submit the request to the superintendent with all the individual's credentials
    - The superintendent will then approve the request if they feel the individual could be an asset to the students and program
    - The superintendent will then report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment
    - The employee will be at-will
  - The superintendent may approve teaching certificates from states other than Texas
    - The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees prior to the individual beginning any employment
    - The teacher will be given a probationary contract until they have received a Texas teacher certification

***Benefit:***

- Provide more flexibility in scheduling
- Provide more options for students in class offerings
- Provide industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses
- Provide opportunity to employ part-time professionals to teach specialty courses
- More realistic requirements for professionals to transition from industry to teaching
- Streamline hiring process for out-of-state teachers

#### **4. Teacher and Principal Evaluations**

***Exemption:***

- TEC 21.352 Local Role (Teacher Appraisals) and TEC 21.3541 Appraisal and Professional Development System for Principals

***Plan:***

- MISD may utilize a locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tool
- Evaluation instrument will be developed with input from central administration and campus administration
- It will use staff input, PDAS, T-TESS, T-PESS, and any other relevant best practices
- All teachers will be formally evaluated at a minimum of once every three years
- Probationary teachers will be evaluated every year
- All teachers will have an annual summative conference to discuss the year and set classroom goals
- Principals will be evaluated annually
- Locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals

***Benefit:***

- Allows the district the option to develop evaluations that could be a combination of PDAS, T-TESS, T-PESS and other best practices
- Allows the district option to utilize local control of decisions regarding teacher and administer evaluations

# MORTON ISD AMENDMENT TO CURRENT LOCAL INNOVATION PLAN

EFFECTIVE JUNE 18, 2020

With regard to each area of innovation, the District declares exemption from the listed statutory provision, as well as any implementing rules or regulations promulgated pursuant to those statutory provisions by any state agency or entity, including but not limited to the Commission of Education, Texas Education Agency, State Board for Educator Certification, and State Board of Education.

## **Texas Education Code §22.004(i) Inhibits the Goals of the Local Innovation Plan**

*TEC §22.004(i) Group Health Benefits for School Employees states that a school district may not make group health coverage available to its employees pursuant to TEC §22.004(b) after the date a district implements the program of coverages provided under Chapter 1579 of the Texas Insurance Code. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of group health insurance benefits to fit the needs of all district employees. This provision also prohibits the district from procuring group health insurance benefits that may provide better coverages for its employees at a lower cost. This provision does not give the district the flexibility needed to acquire benefits packages that would potentially be more attractive to prospective employees.*

## **Exemption from Texas Education Code §22.004(i)**

TEC §22.004 is not included in any of the prohibited exemptions that can be included in a District's local innovation plan pursuant to TEC §12A.004 or the list of the Commissioner's prohibited exemptions in the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Chapter 102, subchapter JJ, Section 102.1309. Therefore, in order to have the option to offer additional benefits options to employees and to increase local control of the group health benefits plan to allow the District to be responsive to employee and community needs, the district proposes that the District of Innovation Plan be amended to exempt the district from the health insurance requirements in TEC §22.004(i).