

# Mount Enterprise ISD District of Innovation 2023-2028

## **Introduction**

The 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session passed HB 1842 that allows Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation allowing them to obtain flexibilities with certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. Mount Enterprise ISD is exercising this opportunity to become a District of Innovation to obtain the flexibility to better meet the unique needs of our district, students and community.

## **Term**

Mount Enterprise ISD's Innovation Plan will begin at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year and will conclude at the end of the 2027-2028 school year, unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Mount Enterprise ISD School Board in accordance with HB.

## **Timeline of Events**

**December 2017** – The administration begins exploring the opportunity to become a District of Innovation.

**November 7, 2022** – The DOI committee unanimously votes to approve the plan for the Board of Trustees to consider.

**March 1, 2023** – The DOI plan re-up is posted for the public to view.

**April 3, 2023** – The public has the opportunity to comment on the proposed DOI plan. The Board of Trustees votes to reapprove the DOI plan for the school years of 2023-2024 through 2027-2028.

# MEISD Approved Innovations

## **Transfer Students**

**Currently** a district may choose to accept, as transfers, students who are not entitled to enroll in the district. Under TEC §25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

### **Innovation Strategies:**

Mount Enterprise ISD maintains a transfer policy under FDA (LOCAL) requiring nonresident students wishing to transfer to file a transfer application each school year. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history records, work habits and attendance records are also evaluated. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and the rules and regulations of the district. TEC 25.036 has been interpreted to establish the acceptance of a transfer as a one-year commitment by the district. The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment and be able to withdraw a student at any point during the school year for the following circumstances:

- Student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school – ISS or OSS).
- Placement in a disciplinary alternative program or expulsion.
- Parents/guardians of transfer student unwilling to accept responsibility or work with MEISD for the betterment of the transfer child.
- Unacceptable academic performance
- Student attendance falls below the TEA truancy standard.

## **First Day of Instruction**

**Currently** in TEC §25.0811: A school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

### **Innovation Strategies:**

- Mount Enterprise ISD would like to locally determine the school start date. This flexibility would allow the district to determine, on an annual basis, what start date best meets the needs of the students.
- Starting earlier will help to balance the number of days in each semester.
- The balanced semesters will allow more instruction time before state-mandated tests.
- The first day for students will not occur before August 15 of each year.

## **Teacher Contract Days**

Currently 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 no lower than 182 days with no effect on teacher salaries. Depending on the calendar each year adopted by the board of trustees, teachers will work a minimum of 182 days up to a maximum of 187 days.

Teacher salaries will be based on 187 days. On school years where the teacher works less than 187 days, salaries will remain the same, but the daily rate of pay will increase. On school years where the teacher works more days than the previous year, but no more than 187 days, salaries will stay the same, but the daily rate will decrease due to more days.

## **Probationary Contracts**

Currently 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:**

- For experienced teachers, counselors, or librarians, 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.
- 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.
- For exceptional teachers, MEISD may offer a term contract, after the first year with the district, provided the teacher has been employed in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment by the district.

## **Teacher Certification Requirements**

**Currently** in TEC §21.003, a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless that person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. 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 from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification.

TEC §21.053

This requires a teacher to present his or her certificate to the district before their employment contract is binding, and prohibits the district from paying an educator as a teacher if the educator does not hold a valid certificate at the time.

TEC §21.057

This requires that the district provide written notice to parents if an inappropriately certified or uncertified teacher is assigned to a classroom for more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

### **Innovation Strategy**

The district will maintain its current expectations for employee certification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for all positions. However, when that is not reasonably possible, the district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable and equipped to effectively perform the duties of the position in question.

Exemption from TEC §21.003 would allow the district the ability to locally certify teachers in the circumstances below in order to better meet the educational needs of our students, allow more flexibility in scheduling, enrich applicant pools, and provide more options for our students.

- Individuals with industry certifications and/or background, experience, skills, or work related to industry experience could become eligible to teach a CTE course through a local teaching certification.
- Certified teachers, due to their education, background, and/or experience, could be equipped to teach a course outside of their certification area or grade level. This would allow the district the option of locally certifying them to do that. A teacher that is asked to teach out of their field of certification but has knowledge or experience in the subject he/she is being asked to teach, could receive a stipend for the additional work.
- Out of state certified teachers could be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education and credentials. The out-of-state certified teacher will have 2 years to become Texas certified. If, after 2 years, the teacher does not become Texas certified, the teacher will be terminated at the conclusion of the contract. The teacher will teach under a probationary contract both years.
- Individuals with a minimum of a bachelor's degree with experience, education and/or knowledge of the subject, will be considered for "hard to fill" positions, such as mathematics and science. An individual qualified would become eligible to teach through a local teaching certification. The individual who is hired will have the option of becoming Texas certified by being accepted into an accredited alternative education institution. The individual understands that at the end of the probationary contract, the position will be posted in order for the district to search for a Texas certified teacher. The candidate hired under this DOI exemption will have the opportunity to enroll in a Texas Alternative Certification Program and remain on staff the following year under a probationary contract, provided he/she has performed satisfactorily to warrant a second year.

- Teachers hired under this exemption, besides current teachers teaching a subject outside his/her field, will be provided a mentor by a teacher from the district. This teacher will be entitled to a stipend for his/her mentorship.
- Special Education teachers and bi-lingual teachers must be SBEC certified.

**Local Guidelines**

The principal will make a request to the superintendent for the reason(s) for a local certification of an individual that falls under the innovation strategy directly above. The superintendent has the authority to deny and the initial authority to approve said request. Final approval authority will rest with the board of trustees.

## **Committee Members**

Dr. Chance Mays	Superintendent
Shawn Lucena	Secondary Principal
Lawren McDermant	Elementary Principal
Dr. Tiffanie Jones	Counselor
Kasey Goss	Teacher
Jennfier Opperman	Teacher
Angie Phillips	Parent/Teacher
Amy Richardson	Teacher
Yasmin Southern	Teacher
Clint Creel	Parent/Teacher/CTE Director
Jessica Sprayberry	Parent