



## Montague Independent School District

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### Montague ISD District of Innovation Plan 2022-2027

(Renewed 11/30/2021) (Amended 7/24/2023)

(Amended 12/11/2025)

#### **Introduction**

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

#### **Term**

Montague ISD's Innovation Plan will begin in April 2022 and conclude in April 2027 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Montague 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**

##### **Kindergarten – Grade 4 Class Size**

(TEC 25.112a-g) (TEC 25.113a-b) (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 districts to notify parents of waivers or exemptions top class size limits.

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

1. At the beginning of each school year, Montague ISD will 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, the superintendent will report this information to the Board of Trustees and to the parents of the affected students. The determination of whether to add another teacher to bring the class under the 22:1 mandate will be made by the administration and this recommendation will be reported to the Board of Trustees.
2. A TEA waiver will not be filed when a K-4<sup>th</sup> classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.

## **School Start Date**

*(TEC 25.0811a) (EB LEGAL)*

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

TEC 25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August.

The current process 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. Montague ISD students will begin instruction no earlier than the second week of August. This change will create better 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.
3. The earlier start date will provide more balance to the first 3 six weeks grading periods.

## **Teacher Contract Days**

*(DC Legal) (Ed. Code 21.401)*

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

*Current education law defines a teacher contract as a ten- month contract equivalent to 187 days.*

### **Innovation Strategies:**

1. 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. Changes in the number of days required to fulfill the contract will not alter the teacher pay scale. Teacher daily rate will be adjusted to maintain current salary.
2. This proposal reduces teacher contract days from 187 with no effect on teacher salaries. This stems from an attempt to provide flexibility to better align teacher service days to instructional days.
  - This proposal will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers.
  - This proposal should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts.
  - This proposal will improve teacher morale.
  - This proposal will provide teachers more opportunities during the year to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

## **Transfer Students**

*(FDA Local) (Ed. Code 25.036)*

### ***Statues that relate to this goal***

State law allows a student to transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in the state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history, academic performance, and attendance records are also evaluated. Under Texas Education Code 25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

### **Innovation Strategies:**

1. The district is seeking exemption from the one- year commitment in accepting a transfer student allowing the district to rescind a transfer at any time during the school year if the student violates district expectations of attendance, discipline, academic achievement, and/or falsifying documentation.
2. This flexibility would allow the district to have the option of immediate revocation of a student's transfer status by the Superintendent or designee at any time during the school year.

## **E-Cigarettes**

*(Ed. Code 37.006(a)(2)(E); 37.009 (a)*

### ***Statues that relate to this goal***

Subject to the requirements of Section 37.009(a), a [A] student shall be removed from class and placed in a disciplinary alternative education program as provided by Section 37.008 if the student:

(C-2) possesses, uses, sells, gives, or delivers to another person an e-cigarette, as defined by Section 161.081, Health and Safety Code

### **Innovation Strategies:**

1. The district is seeking exemption from the mandatory DAEP requirement for possession or use of e-cigarettes/ vapes.
2. This flexibility would allow the district to have more options for more effective discipline practices. Some of these options could include: in-school suspension or immediate revocation of a student's transfer status.

## **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) Meetings**

(TEC §28.004)

### ***Statues that relate to this goal***

TEC 28.004 Requires the school board of each school district to establish a local school health advisory council to assist the district in ensuring that local community values are

reflected in the district's health education instruction. Further, the law requires the health advisory council to meet at least four times each year.

### **Innovations Strategies**

1. Due to the size of the District, Montague ISD seeks exemption from the statutory provision requiring the SHAC to meet at least four times each year. The members of the SHAC committee and the Montague ISD Board of Trustee's shall determine how often the committee will meet.

## **State mandated grievance policy**

*(TEC, Chapter 26a and TEC § 26.011)*

During the 89th Texas Legislative Regular Session, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 12, creating Chapter 26A of the Texas Education Code. This new chapter requires school districts to adopt a grievance policy that addresses "grievances received." Most notably, Senate Bill 12 significantly alters many portions of school districts' grievance policies. For example, grievances may now be filed up to ninety (90) days after the date on which a parent or person knew or should have known of the facts giving rise to the grievance.

In addition:

1. Conferences must be held within ten (10) days after a grievance or appeal is filed—regardless of when the grievance was filed—and the district must issue a decision within twenty (20) days after the conference.
2. Grievants must be allowed to add "additional claims," and a grievance may be remanded to a lower level of review to develop the record.
3. A grievance must "relate back" to the date on which an earlier, insufficient grievance was filed.
4. Senate Bill 12, along with House Bill 2, requires that grievance procedures adopted under Chapter 26A must also provide notice to teachers when a complaint is filed against them (TEC § 26.011).

These new mandates extend timelines far beyond current requirements, substantially increasing the likelihood of multiple grievances being processed at once. Combined with remand requirements, additional claims, and relation-back rules, smaller districts in particular may face strained administrative resources and disruption of otherwise effective grievance systems.

#### Benefits for MISD

Exemption from Chapter 26A and TEC § 26.011 would allow MISD to:

5. Avoid multiple, overlapping grievances and conferences that could overburden limited administrative resources.
6. Dedicate more time to teaching and student services, rather than extended grievance proceedings.
7. Encourage timely filing of grievances, which improves witness recollection, access to documents, and scheduling of interviews.
8. Preserve community confidence in the district's existing, efficient grievance process.
9. Ensure Level I and Level II investigators continue to build a complete and reliable record for Board or Commissioner review, without complications from untimely claims.

#### Local Guidelines

1. MISD has long maintained effective grievance procedures under Board Policies DGBA (LOCAL), FNG (LOCAL), and GF (LOCAL). These procedures are fairly implemented and provide all stakeholders—parents, students, employees, and community members—an accessible process to grieve district decisions.
2. Current policy requires grievances to be filed within 15 days, which (1) makes it unlikely that more than one grievance will be pending at a time, and (2) ensures records and witness accounts remain fresh and accurate. This efficiency allows administrators to devote time to what matters most: educating children.
3. Existing policy also ensures the development of a complete record, enabling the district to focus on the central issues of each grievance without the distraction of late-filed or unrelated claims.
4. MISD's current policies balance fairness to grievants with the district's need to operate efficiently and effectively.

Because TEC § 26.011 requires districts to adopt grievance policies that comply with Chapter 26A, and MISD is exempting itself from Chapter 26A, § 26.011 is likewise inapplicable. However, MISD will continue, when appropriate, to provide teachers with notice if they are the subject of a grievance.

## Library Materials

TEC 33.026; TEC 33.027(b), (d), (f), (g), and (h)

### *Statutes that relate to this goal*

TEC 33.026 requires the school district to adopt a policy for the acquisition of library materials which includes procurement or acceptance of donated library materials. The policy, among other things, requires the Board to approve all such library materials, allows the public to review a list of prospective library materials 30 days prior to final approval, and sets timelines by which the list of prospective library materials must be considered at a Board meeting.

### Innovation Strategies:

1. Montague ISD is committed to ensuring that students of all ages have access to library materials that are appropriate and academically relevant. Further, MISD is confident in the campus librarian, in conjunction with campus administration, to review and select such library materials.
2. Upon Board adoption, MISD will discontinue the new policies TEC 33.026; TEC 33.027 (b), (f), (g), and (h) requiring Board approval of library materials. Board review can be utilized when necessary and any donated library materials will be received in compliance with Board Policy CDC (Legal) and (Local).
3. Upon discontinuing policies TEC 33.026; and TEC 33.027 (b), (f), (g), and (h), MISD will not adopt a policy consistent with TEC 33.027. The district will revert to its previous local processes and procedures to respond timely to any library material challenge.