



# District of Innovation Plan

**2022-2023 Through 2026-2027**

\* Expires June 30, 2027

*Board Approved: August 15, 2022*

*Posted online: March 30, 2022*

*Board Amended: January 23, 2023*

*Board Amended: October 20, 2025*

# **Midlothian Independent School District District of Innovation Plan**

## INTRODUCTION

A District of Innovation (DOI) is a concept passed by the 84th Texas Legislature that gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities available to open enrollment charter schools, including exemption from many requirements mandated in the Texas Education Code. To create a DOI, a school district must adopt an innovation plan for its district. On July 25, 2022, the Board of Trustees hosted a public hearing to gather public comments on Midlothian ISD becoming a District of Innovation, a product of House Bill 1842 from the 84th Legislative Session. The School Board appointed a District of Innovation Committee composed of community members, appointed by the School Board, parents, teacher leaders, and campus, as well as district administrators. The primary goal of this committee is to prepare a District of Innovation plan to address the needs of the District.

## TERM OF RENEWAL/AMENDMENTS

The MISD District of Innovation Plan will be implemented beginning with the 2022-2023 school year and end on June 30, 2027. The District of Innovation Committee will review the plan annually to verify that elements in the plan are still compatible with district needs. Any changes will be posted online for 30 days and will require approval of the Innovation Committee, DEIC, and the School Board.

## MISSION

The mission of Midlothian ISD is to educate students by empowering them to maximize their potential.

## VISION

Midlothian ISD .Inspiring excellence today to change the world tomorrow

## MISD BALANCED SCORECARD (Strategic Plan)

### **Priority 1: Student Success**

Performance Objectives:

- 1.1 Multiple pathways for All Students to Belong
- 1.2 All Students Exhibit Yearly Growth in Core Areas
- 1.3 Continuous Improvement of Curriculum, Professional Development, and the Art and Science of Teaching

### **Priority 2: Capacity Building and Effective Leadership**

Performance Objectives:

- 2.1 Recruit and Retain High-potential Talent
- 2.2 Systematic Management of Individual Talent
- 2.3 Development of a High-performing Organizational System

### **Priority 3: Culture, Climate and Safety**

Performance Objectives:

- 3.1 Commit to MISD Cultural Tenets in a Way that Ensures Staff and Student Well-being
- 3.2 Strive to Be a Listening and Learning Organization Aligned with Stakeholder Engagement

### **Priority 4: District Operations and Financial Stewardship**

Performance Objectives:

- 4.1 Systematic Long-range Facility Management
- 4.2 Effective and Efficient Cross-departmental Work processes
- 4.3 Commitment to Financial Stewardship

<b>District of Innovation Committee Members</b>	
Dr. David Belding	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rebecca Metzger	Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations
Shelle Blaylock	Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Aaron Williams	Chief Human Capital Officer
Krista Tipton	Executive Director of Administration and Student Services
Shannon Thompson	Executive Director of Specialized Learning
Dr. Ray Borden	Executive Director of Leadership Development
Dr. Amanda Rodgers	High School Principal
Carly Woolery	Middle School Principal
Adam Henke	Elementary Principal
Trina Silmon	Elementary Principal
Jimmy Spradley	Secondary Associate Principal
Melonie Bagby	High School Classroom Teacher
Jacob Gordon	Middle School Librarian
Sarah Hill	Elementary Classroom Teacher
Leah Cowan	Elementary Classroom Teacher
Judy Walling	Community Representative
Karen Childress	Community Representative

**Midlothian Independent School District  
District of Innovation Plan**

AREAS OF FOCUS AND PROPOSED GUIDELINES

**1. Class Size (Kindergarten - 4th Grades Only)**

- TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - 25.112 CLASS SIZE - Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.
  - 25.113 NOTICE OF CLASS SIZE - A campus or district that is granted an exception under Section 25.112(d) from class size limits shall provide written notice of the exception to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to each student affected by the exception.
- Local Guidelines
  - EEB (Local)
- Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD
  - This exemption will allow Midlothian ISD the ability to group students based on academic, social and emotional needs without additional waivers.
  - Being exempt from 22:1 class size ratio will prevent the relocation of students to another attendance zone and allow them to remain with the same teacher and classmates that they began the school year with, allowing continuous stability and support for the student. This exemption will also reduce the relocation of staff in the timeframe immediately preceding this first day of instruction and before class-size leveling efforts can take place.
- District Procedures
  - If class size exceeds 22:1 after leveling efforts because of additional growth there will be a 30-day consideration period to determine the impact of a student teacher ratio up to 24:1. The following considerations will be made:
    - Grade / subject of classroom
    - Dynamics of campus and classroom
    - Availability of space and resources
    - Availability of additional staff
    - Effects of campus relocation
    - Compensation plan for class ratio flexibility
  - The District will not provide written notice of exceptions to class size limits in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade while the ratio is 24:1 or less.
- Additional Information
  - This exemption permits Midlothian ISD to go over the 22:1 ratio for elementary classrooms due to fast growth school zones. This exemption would only be used in the case of a new student(s) coming into the district during the school year. The district will not begin the year or set class size norms at more than 22:1. This will be closely monitored to ensure that it is only in extenuating circumstances that a class would be over the 22:1 and that the

academic health and physical safety of the classroom is prioritized.

## 2. Instructional Calendar

- TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - Sec. 25.0811 FIRST DAY OF INSTRUCTION. (a) Except as provided by this section, a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.
- Local Guidelines
  - EB (Local) - No change necessary
- Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD
  - This exemption will allow balance between the two semesters to coincide with the natural occurring winter break.
  - By beginning the school year one week earlier, semester exams would be able to occur prior to winter break, in turn giving additional time in the second semester for STARR/EOC/AP preparation and testing.
  - This exemption would allow the flexibility for the district calendar to be aligned with the local college semester and assist with coordinating dual credit courses.
  - Instructional calendar flexibility will allow more opportunities for staff development before and during the school year.
  - Calendar flexibility will allow time to organize vertical alignment, the integration of one-to-one and the restructure of lesson design.
- District Procedures
  - Midlothian ISD will begin instruction prior to the 4th Monday in August thereby providing additional days for Professional Development during the school year.

## 3. Employee Appraisal

- TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - Sec. 21.352. LOCAL ROLE. In appraising teachers, each school district shall use: (1) the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the commissioner; or (2) an appraisal process and performance criteria: (c) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, appraisal must be done at least once during each school year.
  - Sec. 21.354. APPRAISAL OF CERTAIN ADMINISTRATORS. The commissioner shall adopt a recommended appraisal process and criteria on which to appraise the performance of various classifications of school administrators. The criteria must be based on job-related performance.
  - Sec. 21.3541. APPRAISAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FOR PRINCIPALS. (a) The commissioner by rule shall establish and shall administer a comprehensive appraisal and professional development system for principals.
- Local Guidelines
  - DN, DNA, DNB
- Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD

- Flexibility with the Employee Appraisal system will allow for a more customized approach for non-core faculty and staff.
- Exemption from the Employee Appraisal system will provide flexibility to the Principal and Administration to conduct evaluations at the appropriate frequency for each staff member.
- More specific evaluation measures will provide a more individualized learning plan for employees.
- District Procedures
  - Midlothian ISD may create appraisal instruments specific to non-core faculty and staff.
  - Student growth measures may be identified and developed locally.
  - The frequency of evaluations will be determined locally by the Principal and/or Administration.

#### **4. Teacher Certification**

- TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - Sec. 21.003. CERTIFICATION REQUIRED. (a) 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.
  - Sec. 21.053. PRESENTATION AND RECORDING OF CERTIFICATES. (a) A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding. (b) An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.
- Local Guidelines
  - DBA
- Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD
  - Being exempt from this certification requirement will allow our district to secure highly qualified individuals in hard to recruit or retain positions following a locally developed procedure to permit candidates.
  - MISD will have more flexibility for hiring staff and scheduling courses for our students in areas that would include, but not limited to, Career Technical Education (CTE), Language Other Than English (LOTE), Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM), and areas of advanced academics.
  - In addition, campus administrators will have the ability to consider out-of-state or out-of-country educator certifications.
- District Procedures
  - The district will establish local criteria, such as years of experience, formal education/training, and industry certifications, to qualify for a local (district) teaching certificate. Principals will submit candidates to the Superintendent or their designee with credentials for approval.

- Out-of-state or out-of-country certified educators may be considered for positions upon a local review of experience, education, and credentials.
  - Out-of-state certified applicants would qualify for teaching assignments related to the applicable field of their existing certificate.
  - Staff hired under a local permit will benefit from the same rights/responsibilities as certified teachers within the district.
- Continuing education will be provided to these individuals to enhance knowledge of pedagogical practices.
- Special Education and Bilingual teachers in the district will continue to be SBEC certified following federal funding guidelines.
- Individuals falling into any of these categories will be placed on a local permit to be reviewed annually prior to renewal.
- Under the above exemptions, the district will not be required to submit to TEA any teacher certification waiver request, state permit applications, or other such paperwork regarding locally permitted staff. The district will ensure that all individuals assigned to teach in the district have the necessary resources to be successful.
- Beginning with the 26-27 school year, this exemption will not allow a teacher without an appropriate certification or teaching permit to teach a foundation curriculum course.

## 5. 90% Attendance Rule

- TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - Sec. 25.092. MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE. (a) Except as provided by this section, a student in any grade level from kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered.
- Local Guidelines
  - FEC, EI
- Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD
  - Exemption to the 90% Rule will provide flexibility for students who:
    - are unable to attend class in the traditional learning facilities because of illness or family concerns.
    - would benefit from a different time structure than that of the typical school day.
    - would benefit from virtual and online classes either in addition or in lieu of the traditional classroom setting.
    - are pursuing an accelerated learning program such as music or swimming and require extensive travel.
  - Exemption to the 90% Rule will reduce the number of dropouts and increase the number of qualifying graduates.
- District Procedures
  - MISD will research and implement innovative methods, locations,

and times for instruction thereby offering students more flexibility and opportunity, such as:

- online coursework
- outside of school hours
- project-based learning experiences
- Internships
- The expectation of all students in MISD is to be in attendance for 90 percent in order to attain credit or to receive a final grade for a class.
- The campus Principal will develop a plan for students who fall below the 90% attendance threshold to determine appropriate course of action and additional requirements a student must meet to earn course credit or grades.

## **6. Probationary Contracts**

- TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - Sec. 21.102 PROBATIONARY CONTRACT. (a) Except as provided by Section 21.202(b), a person who is employed as a teacher by a school district for the first time, or who has not been employed by the district for two consecutive school years subsequent to August 28, 1967, shall be employed under a probationary contract. A person who previously was employed as a teacher by a district and, after at least a two-year lapse in district employment returns to district employment, may be employed under a probationary contract. (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. (c) An employment contract may not extend the probationary contract period beyond the end of the third consecutive school year of the teacher's employment by the school district unless, during the third year of a teacher's probationary contract, the board of trustees determines that it is doubtful whether the teacher should be given a continuing contract or a term contract. If the board makes that determination, the district may make a probationary contract with the teacher for a term ending with the fourth consecutive school year of the teacher's employment with the district, at which time the district shall:
    - terminate the employment of the teacher; or
    - employ the teacher under a continuing contract or a term contract as provided by Subchapter D or E, according to district policy.
- Local Guidelines
  - DCA (Local)
- Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD
  - Under current guidelines, probationary periods for newly hired

teachers who have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years cannot exceed one year. This limited period is insufficient in some cases to fully determine the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom.

- Relief from Texas Education Code 21.102 will permit the district the option to issue a probationary contract for a period of up to two full years for experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses newly hired in MISD. This will allow MISD to better evaluate a teacher's effectiveness.
- District Procedures
  - Employees who are new to the district and have been in public education for at least five of the previous eight years may be issued a probationary contract for a period of up to three full years for experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses.
  - Principals will review and recommend probationary contract extensions on a case-by-case basis annually.
  - The Superintendent or their designee will approve the extension of probationary contracts under this exemption.

## **7. Planning and Preparation Time**

- TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - Sec. 21.404 PLANNING AND PREPARATION TIME. Each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. A planning and preparation period under this section may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.
- Local Guidelines
  - DL (Local)
- Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD
  - Each classroom teacher is entitled to at least 450 minutes every two weeks for instructional preparation, including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' work, and planning. Under this section, a planning and preparation period may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. During a planning and preparation period, a classroom teacher may not be required to participate in any other activity.
  - Exemption from this requirement will allow for greater school-based decision making, assists in maintaining an orderly learning environment for all students, and allows school administrators to more effectively ensure the safety and security of all students.
- District Procedures
  - The district may develop a plan to monitor the frequency of campus use of this exception to ensure that staff retains adequate time for their own preparation and planning time.
  - The district will meet the needs of our students by affording secondary teachers an opportunity to voluntarily provide

temporary classroom coverage for other classes during their planning time, on an as-needed basis.

- The District would afford those teachers with additional compensation for voluntarily opting to participate in assisting the campus with their ongoing needs to provide constant, appropriate supervision for all students.

## **8. Transfer Students**

- TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - Sec 25.036 TRANSFER OF STUDENT (a) Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer.
- Local Guidelines
  - FDA (LOCAL)
- Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD
  - TEA currently interprets this law to prohibit mid-year revocation of a student transfer agreement, regardless of a student's attendance, behavior, or academics, or any other legitimate factor. Exemption from this restrictive interpretation will allow the District to require transfer students to maintain the attendance, student discipline and academic progress standards required for transfer eligibility status in the application process.
- District Procedures
  - Transfer status may be revoked if the student fails to meet the reasonable standards set by the District in the transfer agreement. Transfer students must meet eligibility guidelines in order to be approved and the students must maintain the eligibility guidelines in order for the transfer to remain valid. Any violation of the terms of the agreement may result in revocation of the agreement during the school year or non-renewal the following year.

## **9. Instructional Plan Disclosure**

- a. TEC Code Requiring Exemption
  - Sec 26.0062 REQUIRED DISCLOSURE REGARDING INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN. (a) Each school district shall adopt a policy to make available on the district's Internet website at the beginning of each semester an instructional plan or course syllabus for each class offered in the district for that semester. (b) The policy adopted under Subsection (a) must:
    - (1) require each teacher to provide before the beginning of each semester a copy of the teacher's instructional plan or course syllabus for each class for which the teacher provides instruction to:
      - (A) district administration; and



c. Benefit of the Exemption for Midlothian ISD

- These laws create new requirements for district policy addressing parent grievances filed with the district. The bill specifies components of the grievance procedure to be outlined in new policy and significant changes to timelines for grievance proceedings.
- The District believes that its current grievance policies and procedures are appropriate and effective at resolving parent concerns and complaints at the lowest possible level.
- The benefit in maintaining preexisting procedural timelines and access ensures a thorough, appropriate, and timely response and resolution to complaints. Extending the grievance procedural timelines could compromise the investigation or collection of evidence related to a particular situation and could prevent an investigation from being promptly initiated as close to the time of incident as possible.
- Midlothian ISD will maintain procedural timelines, and standards for accessing and submitting formal grievances prior to those set forth in SB12 of the 89th Legislative Session. Additionally, Midlothian ISD will undertake a review of existing policies, procedures and communications to identify any improvements that can be made for the sake of parent access and transparency in the complaint process.

**Timeline of Events 2017-2018: Original DOI Plan**

- April 18, 2016 -adopted resolution
- August 15, 2016 - Board of Trustees hosted a public hearing
- November 7, 2016 - Dr. Stewart presented overview of the DOI process to DEIC
- February 21, 2017 - First DOI Committee Meeting
- February 27, 2017 - Second DOI Committee Meeting
- March 10, 2017 - First day of 30 day web posting
- March 24, 2017 - Plan sent to Commissioner of Education
- April 12, 2017 - Dr. Stewart presented the DOI Plan to DEIC
- April 17, 2017 - Plan presented to Board of Trustees for approval
- April 18, 2017 - Official District of Innovation Plan posted to website

**Timeline of Events 2022-23: New DOI Plan**

- March 30, 2022 - New DOI plan posted on District website
- July 25, 2022 - Board of Trustees considers adopting a board resolution for a new DOI plan.
- July 25, 2022 - Board of Trustees holds a public hearing to consider the new DOI plan.
- July 25, 2022 - Board of Trustees considers re authorizing committee members for new DOI plan.
- July 26, 2022 - District sends plan to commissioner (no approval required) TEC 12A.005(a)(2)
- August 15, 2022 - Board considers approving the DOI plan.

### **Timeline of Events 2022-23: Amended DOI Plan**

- December 14, 2022: Proposal presented to DOI Committee for feedback (Zoom).
- January 19, 2023: Proposal presented to DEIC for approval (5:30pm).
- January 23, 2023: Proposal presented to the Board for approval.
- Upon approval of the three phases listed above:
  - Notify Commissioner of amendments
  - Update posting of DOI with amendments on MISD website
  - Send updated DOI with amendments to TEA within 15 days of approval

### **Timeline of Events 2025-26: Amended DOI Plan**

- September 22, 2025: Proposal presented to DOI Committee for feedback.
- October 7, 2025: Proposal presented to DEIC for approval.
- October 10, 2025: Board Subcommittee
- October 20, 2025: Proposal presented to the Board for approval.
- Upon approval of the three phases listed above:
  - Notify Commissioner of amendments
  - Update posting of DOI with amendments on MISD website
  - Send updated DOI with amendments to TEA within 15 days of approval