



DISTRICT OF INNOVATION PLAN

**Developed in cooperation with and approval by the
District Site Based Decision Making Committee**

November 2016 - April 2017

Introduction

In December 2016, the McGregor ISD Board of Trustees charged the administration to work with the District Site Based Decision Making Committee to develop a “District of Innovation Plan” as permitted by the Texas Legislature under HB 1842 (TAC Chapter 102).

The District of Innovation Plan, as developed, is intended to enhance the educational environment in McGregor ISD. The SBDM Committee that developed this plan is substantially composed of teachers. The ultimate goals of the plan are to advance innovative curriculum, instructional methods, community participation, governance of campuses, and parental involvement by eliminating onerous compliance requirements and focusing district resources on what matters most.

Term

The term of the plan is for five years beginning August 9, 2017 and ending August 8, 2022, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. The committee will monitor the effectiveness of the plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications.

Immediate Advantages Resulting From the Exemptions Sought

- Hiring the best teachers / staff available.
- Providing greater flexibility in assigning teachers in hard-to-fill areas.
- Providing greater flexibility in ensuring new teachers will be effective in the classroom.
- Providing greater flexibility over the school calendar, ensuring that it reflects the preferences of the local committee and the Board of Trustees.
- Eliminating requirements in half-day programs that are in conflict with other TEC mandates.
- Removing barriers that prevent students from fully exploring their post-secondary educational opportunities.
- Eliminating state reporting that takes time but delivers no advantage to the district.
- Eliminating unnecessary local notices that takes time but delivers no advantage to the district.
- Providing greater flexibility in meeting the requirements of mandated committees.
- Removing academic barriers that prevent students from completing courses that meet their individual needs and fulfill their graduation and endorsement plans.
- Eliminating redundant requirements that serve no purpose.
- Improving teacher morale by eliminating bureaucratic rules.
- Streamline processes to allow local planning efforts take precedence over state compliance activities, eliminating hours of work that could be better spent on the needs of the district’s students.

District of Innovation Plan: Areas of State Law Considered for Exemptions

McGregor ISD will consider ALL permitted exemptions as described in the District of Innovation legislation (TAC 102) of 2015. The following items identify exemptions that the District will seek immediately. McGregor ISD reserves the right to examine and approve exemptions in all areas identified in statute or Commissioner rules.

Chapter 21: Educators

Teacher Certification

Statutory Citation: TEC 21.003, TAC Title 19 Part 7 Chapter 231, Subchapters A-G

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the requirements which limit the district's ability to hire the best candidate for a job based solely on certification issues.

There are rare instances when an uncertified person is the best individual for the job. There are professionals from various academic or vocational fields that can be the best candidate to teach a particular course even if they are not yet certified to teach. MISD will continue to seek and employ fully certified teachers.

Teacher Instructional Assignment

Statutory Citation: TEC 21.003, TAC Title 19 Part 7 Chapter 231, Subchapters A-G

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the requirements which limit the district's ability to assign staff to meet local needs.

Current requirements sometimes limit the ability of MISD to staff hard-to-fill positions. While MISD will continue to seek and employ fully certified teachers, exemptions from these requirements will allow the district to meet its staffing needs. Examples of these exemptions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Allow an elementary certified teacher with expertise in early grades (e.g. 1st/2nd grade) to teach kindergarten.
- Allow a teacher certified to teach through 6th grade to teach courses in grades seven and/or eight.
- Allow a teacher certified to teach elementary reading to be the reading teacher of record for middle and/or high school students.
- Allow a teacher certified in middle school and/or high school mathematics to teach elementary grades such as fourth and/or fifth.
- Allow a teacher to teach one or two classes out of their certified field in an area or areas that the teacher has college course work and/or expertise.
- Allow for greater flexibility in determining appropriate CTE experience in order to teach a CTE course.

Probationary Contracts

Statutory Citation: TEC 21.102

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the limit on the maximum number of years an experienced teacher, new to the district, may be extended a probationary contract as outlined in TEC 21.102 (b) and (c).

- For the first year teacher (and teachers with less than five years experience) the district will continue to offer probationary contracts for a period of three years.
- For experienced teachers (those with more than five years experience in the past eight years) the district may extend the one year probationary contract for a maximum period of three years.

Current mandates only allow for one year on a probationary contract for an experienced teacher, defined as one who has taught five of the last eight years, who is new to the district. This exemption will allow MISD greater flexibility to determine if the new/experienced teacher will be effective in the classroom. A teacher may be offered a term contract or have their employment terminated earlier with administrative recommendation and board approval. This exemption is for teachers hired beginning January 1, 2017, and does not apply to staff members hired before this date.

Chapter 25: Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

School Calendar

Statutory Citation: Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 25.0811 and Section 25.0812

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the first day of instruction requirements listed in TEC 25.0811 and the last day of instruction requirements listed in TEC 25.0812.

Current law mandates a school start date of the 4th Monday of August or later. This requirement creates unequal semesters, poor decisions on scheduled holidays, and a school year that ends in June. McGregor ISD, using educator and community input, should be allowed to develop a school calendar that best meets the needs of our students, parents, staff, and community. Multiple calendar options will be developed for consideration. The calendars will be presented to district staff for a vote. The calendar with the majority vote will be presented to the Board of Trustees for their review and consideration. Final calendar approval, including when the MISD school year begins and ends, will be made by the locally elected MISD Board of Trustees.

Length of School Day

Statutory Citation: TEC 25.081 and 25.082

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the minimum minutes of instruction requirement in its half-day pre-K program.

The law, as currently written, requires pre-K students to attend 3.5 hours per day in order to receive half-day funding. MISD operates a half-day pre-K program that is open to all pre-K aged students in the district. Because time must be allowed between the

morning and afternoon sessions in order to accommodate transportation of the morning group home and pick up and drop off of the afternoon group to school (and to comply with the duty free lunch provisions of TEC 21.405 and the preparations time provision of TEC 21.404) MISD's half-day program will operate less than 3.5 hours per session.

Absences for College/University Visits

Statutory citation: TEC 25.087 b-2 (1) (2) and Texas Administrative Code 129.21 (j)

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the two day excused absence limit for students visiting institutions of higher education.

The two day limit does not allow students a visit to out-of-state or some in-state colleges and universities. MISD will establish the number of days a student may receive an excused absence while visiting a college or university.

Class Size Ratio

Statutory Citation: TEC Section 25.112

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the 22:1 requirements listed in TEC 25.112.

After the district has made a good faith effort to maintain the required 22:1 ratio in grades K-4, the district should not be required to seek an expedited waiver through the Commissioner's waivers process. McGregor ISD will continue to strive to meet the required 22:1 class size ratio for grades K-4. MISD central office administrators, campus administrators, and teachers will determine if classes exceeding the 22:1 ratio should be divided or allowed to exceed the TEC limit. The exemption will allow MISD flexibility and eliminate the requirement to seek an expedited waiver from the Texas Education Agency.

Notice of Class Size

Statutory Citation: TEC 25.113

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the requirement to notify parents when class sizes exceed the 22:1 requirement.

Parents who want information concerning their child's class size may ask for it at any time. In many cases, these required notifications cause unnecessary friction between parents and the school. As stated in the intent to seek exemption from the 22:1 requirement, MISD has no intention to exceed the state mandated limit. However, in the event that the 23rd student moves into the district, and absent a parent request for the information, the district should not be required to post a notification.

Chapter 28: Courses of Study; Advancement

School Health Advisory Council

Statutory Citation: TEC 28.004

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the requirement to hold a minimum of four meetings per year.

The MISD SHAC committee shall meet at least once per year. The district's size and the stability of the membership of the SHAC committee ensures that committee members are aware of the needs of the district's students and are often able to review, advise, and revise plans in fewer than four meetings. The MISD Board of Trustees and the members of the SHAC committee should determine how often the committee should meet.

Chapter 37: Discipline; Law and Order

Campus Behavior Coordinator

Statutory Citation: TEC 37.0012

McGregor ISD will be exempt from the requirement to designate a campus behavior coordinator for each campus.

The requirements in TEC 37.002 are redundant. MISD utilizes a multi-administrator approach for student discipline. The campus principals and assistant principals already serve as "behavior coordinators" and it is unnecessary to designate one of them as such.

Resolution to Pursue District of Innovation Designation

WHEREAS Education Code 12A.001 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a district of innovation if the district's most recent performance rating under Section 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance, and that consideration of designation as a district of innovation may be initiated by a resolution adopted by the board of trustees of the district, and

WHEREAS the McGregor Independent School District's most recent performance rating under Education Code 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of McGregor Independent School District by adoption of this resolution initiates the process under Education Code Chapter 12A to become a district of innovation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that after this resolution is signed by the Board, a public hearing shall be held to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation and that after the public hearing the Board of Trustees of McGregor Independent School District shall appoint a committee to develop a local innovation plan or decline to pursue designation as a district of innovation.

Adopted this the 15th day of December, 2016, by the Board of Trustees.

Approved by the McGregor ISD Board of Trustees at the December 15, 2016, meeting by a vote of 7 to 0.