



**Striving for
Academic Excellence**

***A Profile of Seven Economically
Disadvantaged School Districts***

Conducted by
McConnell Jones Lanier & Murphy, LLP
for the
Legislative Budget Board

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INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PROFILE

MILFORD

MILFORD ISD

BACKGROUND

Milford is located in Ellis County, Texas, 50 miles south of Dallas. Established in the early 1850s, it is one of the oldest towns in Ellis County. According to the 2000 census, Milford maintains a population of 685 people. Milford's population is made up of 55.6 percent White, 27.9 percent African American, and 13.0 percent Hispanic. Households with incomes below the poverty line are 18 percent of the population. The student population has very few migrant students, yet there is high student mobility due to the primary work industry of construction. Many students are disadvantaged with few life experiences, such as visits to museums, etc.

According to Milford Independent School District (MISD)'s mission statement, the district strives to meet the needs of its diverse student population. MISD is dedicated to building a foundation of excellence for its students and the community by providing a quality educational experience. The district will, to the best of its ability, successfully challenge and prepare each student to become a responsible, productive citizen, now and in the future, and prepare students to become competent graduates who can succeed at their next level of endeavor who believe in the dignity and worth of themselves and others, and who pursue lifelong learning in an ever-changing, richly diverse society.

Being a smaller school district where there is an opportunity of having a greater impact on each individual student, Milford places frequent emphasis on good conduct and personal responsibility. MISD takes one character trait each week and gives it individual attention on campus and led by their motto: "Be Positive. Be Punctual. Be Prepared."

The district provides an environment conducive to learning and a well-balanced curriculum delivered by a highly qualified staff responsible for teaching, with an uncompromised commitment to learning. MISD's school board strives to "Raise the Bar" for academic excellence by involving parents, teachers, and the community. As an example of their commitment to education, the school board approved a request to increase funding for the math and science content areas.

Milford's commitment to their students shows in MISD's level of state accountability, which has ranged from *Academically Acceptable* in 2003–04, to *Recognized* in 2005–06 with Gold Performance acknowledgments in: Attendance, Advanced Academic Courses (2004–05), Texas

Success Initiative in both ELA and Math, and *Commended* on Writing. In 2006–07 Milford ISD was *Academically Acceptable* with Gold Performance in Attendance. Furthermore, in November 2007, Milford ISD was awarded the Bronze Medal Award as one of the top high schools in the United States by *U.S. News and World Report*.

As presented in **Exhibit 95**, MISD's historical data indicates that from 2004–05 through 2006–07, the district's student population declined slightly, although the state and the region grew. Student enrollment decreased from 224 students in 2004–05 to 211 students in 2006–07. A review of student enrollment data based on ethnicity shows that African American student enrollment increased from 20.9 percent in 2005–06 to 27 percent in 2006–07. In 2004–05, MISD reported 21.9 percent of its student population as African American. During that same time period, Regional Education Service Center 10 (Region 10) had 20.6 percent African American students. In 2006–07, MISD's Hispanic student enrollment was reported at 20.9 percent, which is less than the percentage for Region 10 (37.7 percent) and the state (46.3 percent). White student enrollment declined by approximately 4 percent a year from 2004–05 to 2006–07, although it continued to be the largest percentage of any ethnic group in the district.

As shown in **Exhibit 95**, for the three-year period from 2004–05 to 2006–07, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students grew. More than three-fourths, or 75.8 percent, of MISD's students were reported as economically disadvantaged in 2006–07. Both the region and the state reported a smaller percentage of the student population as economically disadvantaged. In 2006–07, Region 10 reported 51 percent of its students in this category and the state reported 55.5 percent.

The data displayed in **Exhibit 96** indicates that the percentage of MISD students at risk of dropping out of school (45 percent) is less than the region percentage (45.4 percent) and the state percentage (48.3 percent).

Exhibit 97 shows that MISD had 21 teachers during 2006–07, which represented 51.9 percent of the district's total staff of 40.4 full-time-equivalent employees. MISD's percentage of teacher staff was slightly higher than the state average, which was 50.7 percent. Combined, MISD teachers had an average of 12.6 years of experience, which was 1.3 years higher than the state average. Also, **Exhibit 97** presents the number of students per teacher. MISD operates at an

EXHIBIT 95
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07

ENTITY	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	RACIAL/ETHNIC PERCENTAGE			PERCENTAGE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
		AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	WHITE	
2004–05					
Milford	224	21.9%	16.5%	61.6%	0.0%
Region 10	659,763	20.6%	35.7%	38.6%	5.1%
State	4,383,871	14.2%	44.7%	37.7%	3.3%
2005–06					
Milford	220	20.9%	21.8%	57.3%	0.0%
Region 10	681,520	21.1%	36.5%	37.2%	5.2%
State	4,505,572	14.7%	45.3%	36.5%	3.4%
2006–07					
Milford	211	27.0%	20.9%	52.1%	0.0%
Region 10	694,194	20.6%	37.7%	36.2%	5.4%
State	4,576,933	14.4%	46.3%	35.7%	3.6%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 96
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF AT-RISK STUDENTS
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE
2006–07

ENTITY	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF AT-RISK STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF AT-RISK STUDENTS
Milford	211	95	45.0%
Region 10	694,194	314,953	45.4%
State	4,576,933	2,209,538	48.3%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

average of 10 students per teacher while the state average is 14.7 students per teacher.

MISD had lower percentages of beginning teachers, teachers with six to 10, and with 11 to 20 years of experience than either Region 10 or the state, as noted in **Exhibit 98**. MISD exceeded both Region 10 and the state in the percentage of teachers with one to five and more than 20 years of experience.

Data provided in **Exhibit 99** indicated that all teachers in MISD were degreed. In 2006–07, MISD had a higher share of teachers with a bachelor's degree (90.5 percent) and doctorate degree (4.8 percent) than Region 10 or the state and a lower share of teachers with a master's degree (4.8 percent) compared with 25.5 percent for Region 10 and 21.1 percent statewide.

The percentage of students enrolled in bilingual/ESL, career and technology, gifted and talented, and special education are presented in **Exhibit 100**. Milford's student enrollment percentage of 4.7 percent in the bilingual/ESL program was

less than the region's 17 percent and the state's 14.8 percent. Also less than the region percentage (19.8 percent) and state percentage (20.6 percent) was MISD's career and technology student enrollment percentage of 15.2 percent. Gifted and talented students represented 3.3 percent of the student enrollment in MISD. Once again, when compared with the region percentage (8.4 percent) and the state percentage (7.5 percent), MISD's percentage was lower. However, when enrollment in special education was considered, the percentage of MISD students was higher than both the region and the state as reflected in **Exhibit 100**.

For the 2006–07 school year, **Exhibit 100** also shows that MISD had a higher percentage of students enrolled in special education (13.3 percent) than the region (10.3 percent) or the state average (10.6 percent).

Based on 2003–04 through 2005–06 reported data, MISD's annual dropout rate for grades 7–8 was 0 percent. **Exhibit 101** shows the region and the state could not make such claims. However, the 2005–06 data showed, for the first time in three years, MISD had an annual dropout rate for grades 7–12 of 0.9 percent. Noted also for that year were increases in the annual dropout rate with the region percentage of 2.8 percent and the state percentage of 2.6 percent. MISD's annual dropout rate for all grades and years were consistently lower than the region and state.

The class of 2006 had 100 percent of its members graduate as shown in **Exhibit 102**. This data shows a represented gain over the two previous classes when 92.3 percent of the eligible students graduated as recorded for both classes. Members of the class of 2004 who did not graduate dropped out of high

EXHIBIT 97
MISD AND STATE STAFF
2006–07

CATEGORY	DISTRICT TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF	STATE TOTAL	STATE PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF
Teachers	21.0	51.9%	311,466.3	50.7%
Professional Support	1.0	2.5%	50,333.9	8.2%
Campus Administration	2.0	4.9%	17,098.1	2.8%
Central Administration	2.0	4.9%	6,202.1	1.0%
Educational Aides	6.9	17.0%	61,344.6	10.0%
Auxiliary Staff	7.6	18.8%	167,469.2	27.3%
TOTAL	40.4	100.0%	613,914.2	100.0%
Total minority staff	7.9	19.6%	259,842.5	42.3%
Race/ethnicity of teachers:				
African American	1.0	4.8%	29,062.2	9.3%
Hispanic	0.0	0.0%	64,759.7	20.8%
White	20.0	95.2%	213,201.3	68.5%
Other	0.0	0.0%	4,443.1	1.5%
TOTAL*	21.0	100.0%	311,466.3	100.0%
Average years of experience	12.6		11.3	
Number of students per teacher	10		14.7	

*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 98
PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE
2006–07

ENTITY	BEGINNING	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
Milford	4.8%	47.6%	0.0%	19.0%	28.6%
Region 10	10.3%	32.2%	20.6%	19.6%	17.3%
State	8.1%	29.1%	19.6%	23.6%	19.7%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

school. Members of the class of 2005 who did not graduate returned to high school the following year. Therefore, progress in retaining students was noted.

As evidenced in **Exhibit 103**, MISD had class sizes in the elementary level, in first through sixth grades, that were smaller than both the region and the state. Kindergarten is the only exception where the state average class size was smaller than the district. MISD's average class size on this level was 0.5 students above the state. At the secondary level, the largest class size average for MISD was in science with 14 students per class. For the region, the largest class size average was 21.7 in social studies. Likewise, for the state, the largest class size was in social studies with an average of 22 students per class. At MISD, approximately half the number of students (10.2 students) comprised the English Language

Arts classes as compared with the region (19.8 students) and the state's average size of 20 students per class. The region in all grade levels exceeded the district in the average number of students per class.

Exhibit 104 shows MISD's passing rates on the TAKS tests for various subject areas. In reading/ELA for two years (2004–05 and 2005–06), MISD exceeded the state's passing percentage by at least three percentage points. In 2006–07, the state had a greater percentage of students meeting the standard on the test than the district, an 89 percent pass rate versus an 86 percent pass rate, respectively.

For all three years in math, MISD had a lower passing percentage when compared to the state. Between 2004–05 and 2005–06, MISD made an 11 percentage point gain (60 to 71 percent) in math, although the state's test takers made a 4 percentage point gain (71 to 75 percent). In 2006–07, the state continued its climb in math (77 percent) while MISD fell to 70 percent meeting the standard.

In writing, for the first two years represented in **Exhibit 104**, MISD was relatively close to the state passing rates for 2005 and 2006. However, in 2006–07, the state exceeded the district by 15 percentage points. MISD's passing rate of 77 percent that year was also 13 percentage points lower than the previous year (90 to 77 percent).

EXHIBIT 99
DEGREE STATUS OF TEACHERS
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE
2006–07

ENTITY	PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WITH DEGREE				
	NO DEGREE	BACHELORS	MASTERS	DOCTORATE	TOTAL*
Milford	0.0%	90.5%	4.8%	4.8%	100.0%
Region 10	1.1%	72.6%	25.5%	0.8%	100.0%
State	0.8%	77.6%	21.1%	0.5%	100.0%

*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 100
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND TEACHERS BY PROGRAM
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE
2006–07

ENTITY	BILINGUAL/ESL	CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SPECIAL EDUCATION	REGULAR EDUCATION
Milford					
Students	4.7%	15.2%	3.3%	13.3%	*
Teachers	4.8%	11.3%	0.0%	4.8%	74.4%
Region 10					
Students	17.0%	19.8%	8.4%	10.3%	*
Teachers	9.1%	3.4%	1.7%	10.3%	70.6%
State					
Students	14.8%	20.6%	7.5%	10.6%	*
Teachers	7.6%	3.9%	2.0%	10.0%	70.6%

*AEIS does not provide number of students in regular education.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 101
ANNUAL AND LONGITUDINAL DROPOUT RATES
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE
2003–04 THROUGH 2005–06

ENTITY	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Annual Dropout Rate Grades 7–8			
Milford	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Region 10	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%
State	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
Annual Dropout Rate Grades 7–12			
Milford	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Region 10	0.8%	0.8%	2.8%
State	0.9%	0.9%	2.6%
Annual Dropout Rate Grades 9–12			
Milford	*	*	1.5%
Region 10	*	*	4.1%
State	*	*	3.7%
Longitudinal Dropout Rate Grades 9–12			
Milford	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Region 10	3.5%	3.9%	9.7%
State	3.9%	4.3%	8.8%

*Information not available on AEIS.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 102
**PERCENT OF STUDENTS GRADUATING, RECEIVING A GED,
 CONTINUING HIGH SCHOOL, OR DROPPING OUT**
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE
CLASS OF 2004 THROUGH CLASS OF 2006

GRADUATING CLASS	MISD	REGION 10	STATE
Class of 2006			
Graduated	100.0%	79.8%	80.4%
Received GED	0.0%	1.9%	2.3%
Continued HS	0.0%	8.6%	8.6%
Dropped Out (4-year)	0.0%	9.7%	8.8%
Class of 2005			
Graduated	92.3%	84.5%	84.0%
Received GED	0.0%	3.2%	3.8%
Continued HS	7.7%	8.4%	7.9%
Dropped Out	0.0%	3.9%	4.3%
Class of 2004			
Graduated	92.3%	85.0%	84.6%
Received GED	0.0%	3.7%	4.2%
Continued HS	0.0%	7.8%	7.3%
Dropped Out	7.7%	3.5%	3.9%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 103
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE BY GRADE LEVEL
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE

2006–07

GRADE	MILFORD	REGION 10	STATE
Elementary			
Kindergarten	20.0	22.6	19.5
Grade 1	13.0	24.2	19.5
Grade 2	19.0	24.2	19.6
Grade 3	13.0	23.3	19.5
Grade 4	18.0	23.8	20.2
Grade 5	14.0	24.4	22.3
Grade 6	16.9	22.9	21.8
Secondary			
English Language Arts	10.2	19.8	20.0
Math	12.0	20.0	20.0
Science	14.0	21.2	21.0
Social Studies	13.0	21.7	22.0

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

Although MISD science scores for the three years depicted were consistently lower than the state, MISD peaked in 2005–06, when 66 percent of the students passed. The gap between the district and the state was narrowest during 2004–05 (1 percentage point) and widest in 2006–07 (7 percentage points).

As shown in **Exhibit 104**, the percentage of MISD students passing the social studies portion of the TAKS ranged from a low of 74 percent in 2005–06 to a high of 89 percent in 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 104
MISD PASSING RATES ON TAKS BY SUBJECT AREA
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07*

TAKS	2004–05		2005–06		2006–07	
	MISD	STATE	MISD	STATE	MISD	STATE
Reading/ELA	87%	83%	90%	87%	86%	89%
Math	60%	71%	71%	75%	70%	77%
Writing	91%	90%	90%	91%	77%	92%
Science	62%	63%	66%	70%	64%	71%
Social Studies	87%	87%	74%	87%	89%	89%
All Tests	57%	62%	64%	67%	62%	70%

*Sum of all grades excluding Grade 8 Science; Standard Accountability indicator.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

For all tests passed, MISD had 57 percent of its students succeed in 2004–05; 64 percent of its students pass in

2005–06; and then in 2006–07, 62 percent of its students met standard.

As shown in **Exhibit 105**, MISD met or exceeded the state passing percentage in the following grade levels and subject areas for 2006–07: Grade 3 reading was greater than 99 percent compared to the state which had 89 percent, and scores in all tests taken (73 percent MISD versus 78 percent state) were noted. All reported areas were areas of success in meeting or surpassing the state's passing rates for MISD's fifth graders. Also noteworthy was the 11 percentage point gap in fifth grade science. Of the reported performance areas for sixth grade, MISD outperformed the state in math (92 percent versus 80 percent). For seventh grade, the state passing percentage was greater than the district's in all subjects. MISD eighth graders surpassed the state when 92 percent of them met the standard in reading as compared with 89 percent of the state's eighth graders. The state outperformed MISD in all areas reported for ninth grade reading. ELA (89 percent compared to 85 percent state) and social studies (89 percent compared to 87 percent state) were academic performance areas of success for MISD tenth graders who exceeded the state in both areas. The MISD eleventh graders also had two areas, math (87 percent compared to 81 percent) and ELA (99 percent compared to 91 percent), in which the students scored above the state level.

MISD students participated in advanced and dual enrollment courses as shown in **Exhibit 106**. During 2005–06, 35.1 percent of the students completed an advanced or dual enrollment course. That year indicated the largest percentage of completers and exceeded the region and the state by almost 15 percentage points.

Noteworthy in **Exhibit 107** were the percentages reported for school year 2005–06. During school year 2005–06, MISD students were successful in surpassing the region and the state for higher education readiness. Seventy-one percent of the students in ELA and 57 percent of the students in math demonstrated readiness.

COMMENDABLE PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

MISD uses its small student/teacher ratio to provide more one-on-one instruction, provide personal and individualized help, and regulate the pace of the material each student receives based on their unique abilities and interests. Milford ISD attempts to address individual needs and interests through differentiated instruction in the classroom and extra time for individual projects. This is accomplished through special projects based on student interest that fit within the confines of the subject area and time limits of the regular

EXHIBIT 105
PERCENTAGE OF MISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED (IN ENGLISH) MEETING TAKS STANDARD BY SUB-TEST AND GRADE
2006–07

GRADE	DISTRICT/ STATE	PERCENTAGE OF MISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING TAKS STANDARD					
		READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES
Grade 3	MISD	>99%*	73%				73%
	State	89%	82%				78%
Grade 4	MISD	69%	63%	79%			56%
	State	84%	86%	91%			75%
Grade 5	MISD	89%	89%			89%	80%
	State	83%	86%			78%	69%
Grade 6	MISD	85%	92%				77%
	State	92%	80%				78%
Grade 7	MISD	70%	60%	75%			64%
	State	85%	77%	93%			71%
Grade 8	MISD	92%	58%			67%	83%
	State	89%	73%			71%	87%
Grade 9	MISD	78%	55%				55%
	State	87%	61%				60%
Grade 10	MISD		44%		89%	33%	89%
	State		65%		85%	59%	87%
Grade 11	MISD		87%		99%	67%	93%
	State		81%		91%	78%	94%

*First administration only.

Note: Blank cells indicate that test not given at that grade level.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

school schedule. These assignments are offered to all students in a class, and students choose according to individual interests.

Accommodations and modifications are given for struggling students who qualify for said accommodations. Subject area teachers work closely with the Special Education instructor to tailor instruction to the interests of the students in an attempt to motivate those students to strive for success. Enhancement and differentiated instruction suitable for Gifted and Talented students is also offered. Some strategies include condensed instruction, where students can test out of a unit and then spend the remaining time on special projects of interest to them within the subject area being taught; and modified pull-out, where students use the built-in tutorial time (that is not needed) on specially designed projects in which one project will cover areas of technology, research, presentation, and multiple subject areas. Students work together with other students of various grade levels. Teachers confer with each other regularly about individual needs and interests of students.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY USING INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

MISD is successfully using instructional technology to enhance educational service delivery. The district's overarching instructional strategy is: Teach Monitor Review Assess. MISD has selected a comprehensive set of instructional technology programs covering all grade levels to reinforce classroom instruction and target students' strengths and weaknesses in the areas of reading, math, and science. MISD is supported in this approach through the use of three computer labs with 70 computers. At a ratio of approximately one computer for every three students, MISD efficiently uses its computer labs to further reinforce and enhance student learning.

In keeping with MISD's "individual instruction approach," the district has established benchmarks for each student and identifies students who are exceeding, meeting, and struggling to reach academic standards. The instructional software packages outlined in **Exhibit 108** allow teachers to target students' strengths and weaknesses based upon individual student performance data.

GRANT FUNDED PROGRAMS

Each year, federal, state and local grants are awarded to school districts to assist K-12 schools to meet the special needs of

EXHIBIT 106

**MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE PERFORMANCE ON ADVANCED/DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES AND EXAMINATIONS
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

ENTITY	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
PERCENTAGE COMPLETING ADVANCED COURSES/DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES			
Milford	1.7%	35.1%	16.7%
Region 10	20.9%	20.9%	22.3%
State	19.9%	20.5%	21.0%
PERCENTAGE TESTED ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES			
Milford	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Region 10	21.9%	23.1%	23.7%
State	17.4%	18.4%	18.9%
PERCENTAGE OF AP EXAMINEES WITH SCORES EXCEEDING CRITERION			
Milford	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Region 10	56.9%	54.8%	54.2%
State	53.9%	51.8%	51.3%
PERCENTAGE OF ALL AP SCORES EXCEEDING CRITERION			
Milford	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Region 10	51.6%	50.0%	49.5%
State	49.3%	47.4%	47.2%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

EXHIBIT 107

**HIGHER EDUCATION READINESS—TEXAS SUCCESS INITIATIVE
MISD, REGION 10, AND STATE
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

ENTITY	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	MATH
2004–05		
Milford	*	50%
Region 10	43%	50%
State	39%	48%
2005–06		
Milford	71%	57%
Region 10	42%	52%
State	40%	51%
2006–07		
Milford	36%	33%
Region 10	55%	56%
State	53%	54%

*Results masked to protect student confidentiality.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

students. MISD has received the following grants to assist with strengthening its educational progress (**Exhibit 109**).

AFTER SCHOOL TUTORIAL PROGRAM

MISD's After School Tutorial Program was developed to increase a student's academic achievement. The curriculum

offers a variety of enrichment and academic activities that address individual student needs. According to MISD's staff, the district's tutoring programs have led to greater self-confidence in reading, improved behavior, and motivation for its students to read for pleasure. This is an opportunity for at-risk children to receive further individualized instruction.

MISD provides tutorial time both within the school day and after school for students who need extra help in a subject area. Tutorials allow for both small group and individualized instruction. A 20-minute tutorial period is built in to the regular school daily schedule, where students are assigned to tutorials by the academic counselor based on progress report grades and teacher recommendation. Students not needing help in any subject area use the tutorial time for individual projects based on student interest as well as providing peer tutoring for struggling students. During the one-hour after-school tutorial sessions, students are assigned to after school tutorials based on progress report grades, teacher recommendation, and previous year's TAKS scores. Additional, intense tutorial sessions are assigned approximately six weeks before TAKS tests are scheduled to be administered. Assignments for these tutorials are based on benchmark testing results. The instruction is individualized; student scores on benchmark testing are analyzed and instruction is tailored to meet student needs in the TAKS objectives in which the student scores the lowest.

EXHIBIT 108
SAMPLES OF MISD INSTRUCTIONAL SOFTWARE TOOLS FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

PROGRAM	GRADE LEVELS	PURPOSE AND COMMENTS
Waterford	K-2	Computer phonics program. Used for students on Tier 2 or 3 reading intervention levels. Used in Kindergarten for all students.
Headsprout	K-2	Web-based computer program to build phonics and reading comprehension skills, especially in ESL students.
Istation	K-3	Web-based program for building reading skills, especially phonics and comprehension.
Florida Center Activities	K-3	Games and other small group activities used at teacher discretion for individual student needs.
3-Tier Reading Program	K-3	3-tier reading model designed to help students to be reading on grade level upon passing leave third grade. Assessment done with TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) three times a year (beginning, middle, and end of year) for all students. Progress monitoring every two weeks for Tier 2 and 3 students – every 6 weeks for all students. Tier 1 = 90 minutes whole group instruction using Open Court Reading curriculum. Tier 2 = 30 minutes intervention using Waterford, Istation, or teacher-directed small group instruction/activity. Tier 3 = An additional 30 minutes using Waterford or Istation and teacher-directed small group instruction.
Accelerated Reader	K-12	Personal reading program based on reading level. Students choose outside reading, then take a computer test. Computer assigns points based on difficulty, length, and reading level. Approximately 1,600 library books were checked out for this program. Students then allowed to spend points on merchandise from Bookwork Boutique and/or gift certificates. Each teacher must incorporate it in their grading up to 10 percent of the grade.
Read Naturally	1-6	Computer software to build reading fluency.
Scottish Rite Dyslexia Program	2-12	Scottish Rite curriculum on CD with a Milford ISD facilitator to help dyslexic students acquire strategies to cope with dyslexia.
Study Island	3-12	Web-based practice for math, science, and reading.
Odyssey	7-12	Computer-based curriculum used for credit recovery or to solve scheduling problems for students coming from other districts or students who must "make up" credits.

SOURCE: MISD.

EIGHTH GRADE CAREER EXPLORATION CLASS

MISD's Career Exploration Class is a required class that arms students with career and vocational knowledge to help students make wise career, educational, and life choices in the future.

Career exploration allows students to discover career choices that are available, matches their interests and aptitudes to different professions, and informs them about what skills and education are needed to enter certain fields. It is also an opportunity to teach students workplace expectations from both an employee's and employer's point of view. MISD students also study about ethics and morals in the work place, communication skills needed (both oral and written), the need for teamwork, and social norms and influences. These incoming freshmen also gain knowledge about

decision-making skills, goal setting, and how to make educational plans for high school (classes needed in order to continue to college). Students also find out about the differences in requirements of community colleges versus trade schools, programs community colleges offer, and any financial aid that may be available. Students also discover which careers need licensing, certification, or degrees.

Approaching young adulthood, MISD students are also taught the realities of living, such as the cost of living and budgeting compared to salaries offered for a career choice. Additionally, MISD students are taught about how to complete and/or create job applications, résumés, and portfolios. The students are taught interviewing skills and are given resources on how to find information on careers of interest.

EXHIBIT 109
MISD GRANT SUMMARY

GRANT RECEIVED	PURPOSE
Reading First	<p>For grades K–3 regular education and K–12 special education to build reading skills to get students reading on grade level. Money received over a 5-year period. 2008–09 is the last year. Money decreased each year. With the money, Milford ISD was able to incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary computer lab • Four additional Waterford Stations • Hired three (3) instructional classroom aides • Computer lab aide • Open Court Curriculum • Istation partially funded with RF money (phonics and comprehension) • Read Naturally software program for fluency • Miscellaneous equipment and supplies to facilitate and enhance reading instruction
Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG)	Incentive money received from state for teachers who meet school criteria for increasing student scores.

SOURCE: MISD.

INDIVIDUALIZED GRADUATION PLANS

Milford ISD begins preparing their students for graduation early. Beginning in the ninth grade year, MISD faculty assists students in the preparation of individual graduation plans to track students' progress toward meeting each student's graduation plan (minimum, recommended, or distinguished) requirements. Students provide input regarding career tracks they wish to pursue and student electives are initially determined based upon these chosen tracks. For example, if a student selects the Agricultural Science track, agriculture electives are selected to fill their schedule. This plan is monitored through the school year and updated with GPA and ACT/SAT results. At annual registration, the Academic Advisor reviews with the student progress made toward meeting their graduation requirements.

ACT/SAT EXAMINATIONS

Each of the reported years in **Exhibit 110** indicated that at least half of the students took one or both of the exams. The peak year was 2006–07 when all of the students took an exam. Due to the small number of students who took SAT or ACT exams, the mean scores on these college placement exams are unavailable for MISD.

SENIOR FINANCIAL AID NIGHT WITH NAVARRO COLLEGE

Each year, MISD and Navarro College partner to sponsor a College Financial Aid Night at the Milford School library. This program is generally scheduled for the end of February, after parents have completed their previous year tax returns since that information is necessary in order to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). There are Navarro College representatives present to promote Navarro

EXHIBIT 110
**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TAKING ACT/SAT EXAMS,
MEETING CRITERIA
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

ENTITY	STUDENTS TAKING SAT/ACT EXAMS	STUDENTS MEETING SAT/ACT CRITERIA
	2004–05	
Milford	50.0%	*
Region 10	60.4%	32.4%
State	61.9%	27.0%
2005–06		
Milford	50.0%	0.0%
Region 10	65.0%	32.2%
State	65.5%	27.4%
2006–07		
Milford	100.0%	0.0%
Region 10	66.1%	32.7%
State	65.8%	27.1%

*Results masked to protect student confidentiality.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

College as an option for seniors to attend, and those representatives discuss the various sources of financial aid available for students including grants, scholarships, and student loans. The Navarro College representatives also help students and parents complete their FAFSA forms.

KEY FINDINGS AND KEY FACTORS

Because the Milford community is small, the district's faculty is intimately familiar with both parents and community members. The district's administration, staff, and community

members act as mentors and advisors in the learning process which promotes an atmosphere for all MISD students to excel.

MISD enjoys a collaborative working environment where “everyone pulls together to get the job done.” If a teacher identifies a student that is struggling academically or needs to be challenged more and the teacher does not have an immediate solution for addressing the problem, the MISD teachers collectively “put their heads together” to identify a successful instructional strategy to meet the student’s academic need.

MISD uses the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the state-mandated curriculum guidelines for every student from elementary to high school, as its core curriculum. The district augments TEKS with a comprehensive set of instructional technology programs covering all grade levels to reinforce classroom instruction and target students’ strengths and weaknesses in the areas of reading, math, and science. In keeping with MISD’s “individual instruction approach,” the district has established benchmarks for each student and identifies students who are exceeding, meeting, and struggling to reach academic standards. Classroom instruction is reinforced daily with a tutorial program both during and after school. All students are required to pursue the Texas Recommended High School Program graduation plan and all students are required to take the ACT college entrance examination in order to begin preparing for going to college.

MISD’s teaching staff is highly experienced with nearly one-half, or 48 percent, having 11+ years of experience. MISD’s superintendent and principal regularly observe classroom instruction to ensure that the curriculum is being followed.