

COMMUNITY AND
SCHOOL WORKING
TOGETHER TO
ENSURE CHILDREN
RECEIVE AN EDUCATION
THAT EMPOWERS THEM
TO ACHIEVE THEIR
INDIVIDUAL BEST.

MILROY AREA SCHOOLS

STUDENT FOCUSED DEDICATED POSITIVE TEAMWORK

Milroy Area Schools

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions Becoming One District

What is the current makeup of Milroy Area Schools including Milroy Area Charter School ISD 4138 and Milroy Public School ISD 635?

Currently Milroy Area Charter School ISD 4138 operates a Kindergarten through 4th grade school. Milroy Public School ISD 635 operates a 3 and 4 year old preschool as well as grades 5-8.

What has been the purpose of having a chartered school in Milroy for grades K-4? How has this need changed?

The vision for forming MILROY Charter school was to create a K-4 environment in which individualized education is stressed. This emphasis has been the cornerstone for education at MILROY Charter School for the past twelve years. A second purpose of the school was to operate an educational institution in a financially responsible manner that ensured for a school choice in Milroy for the long term future. While the emphasis on quality individualized education remains, unfortunately the long term economic feasibility no longer exists. A \$360,000 federal grant, that came with the conception of MILROY Charter School, allowed for a strong initial financial start to the school. However state funding for charter schools has not kept up with inflation costs and the lack of projected growth does not allow for fiscal stability. Therefore the lack of funding has created the need to address dissolving the school and merging with Milroy Public School.

What would Milroy Area Charter's Dissolution and Milroy Public School's expansion to include K-4 mean to me?

The two school districts have worked together in order to provide a seamless education for children. For the casual onlooker, one would not even know that the two schools are separate districts operating under one roof. Because of the work of the school boards, teachers, and community in establishing exceptionally positive operating relationships the merger of the two districts will be operationally unnoticeable.

How is the decision made to dissolve the charter and expand the district to include grades K-4?

Milroy Charter School has been an extremely important part of the educational system in Milroy. In fact, prior to the start of the charter, ISD 635 was operating in statutory operating debt with a bleak long term picture. The emergence of the charter provided financial relief for the district and established a new and exciting concept of school in the Milroy community. Unfortunately over the past several years the financial picture of the charter school has been in decline, while the financial picture of ISD 635 has done very well. The school boards of both districts have had ongoing meetings over the past several months to fully examine the educational possibilities for our community. These meetings examined educational programming, enrollment, opportunities for long term education in Milroy and the financial pictures of all options. The working group consulted with IQS, the charter authorizer, Mn Department of Education, and SWWC RMIC to ensure accurate short and long term data and information was being used and that all statutes are being abided by. Through examining these areas it became increasingly clear that the charter school is financially unsustainable; therefore, to act in a proactive manner the decision for dissolution to occur and a merger was decided upon. The merger allows for 1) maximizing available funds, 2) the ability to increase programming, and 3) allows for flexibility and efficiency in the utilization of staff. The merger of the two districts will begin with the 2018-2019 school year.

When would the transfer of grades K-4 from Milroy Area Charter School to Milroy Public School take effect?

The 2018-2019 school year.

Would the kids in K-4 notice a change from transferring from Milroy Area Charter School to Milroy Public School?

No. Due to the two districts working together seamlessly over the years the students should not notice anything other than the school name change and increase in programming.

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Frequently Asked Questions Milroy's Junior High

What is the rationale for the district no longer offering grades 7&8 and how was this decision made?

Over the last several years an increasing trend that Milroy Public School has seen, is students transitioning to the junior high aligned with the high school they will attend in 9th grade. These decisions have led to an enrollment decrease at the 7th and 8th grade levels. As recently as 2015 Milroy Public School had zero 8th graders to begin the school year.

There are a variety of reasons families have chosen this decision, however the most frequent responses received has to do with broader elective course opportunities for junior high students, increased extra-curricular opportunities, and that 7th grade is the time in which students naturally transition into the secondary setting in area school districts.

The district has worked hard to provide quality education for its students; however with limited students, finances, and rules around teacher licensure offering expanded elective courses for students has been difficult or impossible, therefore the district has chosen to focus on providing high quality core curriculum.

Teacher licensure rules have become more and more cumbersome over recent years. In order to teach 7th and 8th grade science, English, social studies, art, vocal, band, physical education, etc... a teacher can no longer have a "generalist" teaching license, rather they must meet the highly qualified licensure requirements for specific content. This has made attracting and keeping staff at ISD 635 extremely difficult. By moving to a PreK-6 setting, teachers with generalist licensure are able to teach all content areas, therefore allowing for all staff to meet highly qualified status and the district to be flexible in teaching assignments from year to year.

The PK-6 setting is the most financially stable long term setting of all the options examined, therefore providing stability in the school district for students, families, and the community.

Does the transferring of the K-4 from Milroy Area Charter School to Milroy Public School have any bearing on Milroy's Junior High Program?

No, the determination to no longer offer grades 7&8 was made based upon looking at the larger picture of long term planning, enrollment trends, and educational programming. When examining the school's mission of "empowering children to achieve their individual best" it was identified that the school has limited ability to offer electives that allow students to examine their interests, thus "achieve their individual best."

Why would becoming a traditional elementary school better serve students in grades PreK-6?

Milroy Public School has access to funding programs such as Title I, Integration and Achievement, and Long Term Facility Maintenance that Milroy Area Charter Schools does not have access to. Funding streams such as these make it possible to offer programming that intervenes, supports, and enhances academics for children. Due to the dual district structure in Milroy, Title I interventions, which research clearly shows is most effective at the primary school level, are only allowed to take place in grades 5-8. The merging of the district will unleash new opportunities to intervene at younger ages and challenge students in new ways in order to ensure they best reach their learning potential.

Does this affect TMB Sports?

Although there has been no official action at this point, conversations with the Tracy District would indicate there would be no change in the activities name of TMB Panthers.

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Frequently Asked Questions MPS ISD 635 PreK-6

Would this impact the current Levy?

Yes. Operating levies are based upon student enrollment. Currently the K-4 students are part of Milroy Charter School and therefore are not part of ISD 635's student enrollment count. In the 2018-2019 school year the K-4 students will be part of ISD 635, therefore those students will be part of the levy funding formula as they were prior to the start of Milroy Charter School meaning the levy for home and business owners will slightly increase.

What is the current financial picture of Milroy Public School and how will the merger effect that?

Through conservative financial principles, Milroy Public School has shown a positive budget each of the last 9 years. This approach has placed the district in a strong financial situation with a current fund balance of \$695,437 and a projected \$150,000 additional in FY18. This strong position will ensure a smooth financial transition through the merger. The five year projections show a five year balanced budget when utilizing projected enrollment, anticipated expenses, and modest state revenue increases.

When would we move forward as Milroy Public School ISD 635 as a PreK-6?

Beginning with the 2018-2019 School Year.

How would this affect staffing?

District staff with appropriate licensure will remain with the school district. Additional positions will need to be added in order to staff the K-4 grades. According to work contracts, these positions will be posted, applied for, and hired based on qualifications. It is expected that teachers in the Charter School will receive consideration for filling these new ISD 635 positions.

Would Preschool change?

No

How long has this been in the works?

The district boards have been carefully monitoring the finances of both districts over the last few years. Collaborative efforts and planning have taken place to lessen the expenditure burden of shared contracts/agreements to the Charter School. These efforts have not only helped the financial position of the Charter School, it has fostered a very positive working environment and partnership between the Milroy Public School and MILROY Charter School boards. Over the past 12 months a heightened awareness and effort towards collaborative long term planning has taken place between the two districts resulting in the current plan.

What does the future of Milroy Public Schools look like as a PreK-6?

The two district's boards and administration have worked to create long term fiscal models based upon the information known today that show long term feasibility.

The boards are confident in projecting out 5 years of revenues and expenditures; planning financial models outside of those parameters do not seem reliable, therefore it will be important for school administration and the school board to continue conservative fiscal practices. With these positive projections and strong fund balance the future of Milroy Public Schools appears bright.