



## Blanco ISD Innovation Plan

### **Introduction**

House Bill 1842, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, permits Texas public school districts to become Districts of Innovation and to obtain exemption from certain provisions of the Texas Education Code. On October 9, 2017, the Blanco Independent School District Board of Trustees passed a Resolution to Initiate the process of designation as a District of Innovation in order to increase local control over District operations and support innovation to improve educational outcomes.

On November 13, 2017, the board of trustees conducted a public hearing and appointed a local Innovation Committee comprised of district administrators, teachers and parents.

### **Innovation Committee members**

Clay Rosenbaum, Superintendent of Schools  
Dina Johnson, Director of Curriculum and Special Programs  
Kathryn Rutherford, Director of Special Education  
Matt Streger, Business Manager  
James Caudell, Network Administrator  
Collin Gaskamp, Instructional Technologist  
Jowie Walker, Principal  
Cynthia Warner, Teacher  
Kathryn Korelich, Principal  
Linda Minjares, Teacher  
Keitha St. Clair, Principal  
Amanda Wier, Teacher  
Tara Calzoncit, Parent  
Sheila Felts, Parent  
Diane Kainer, Community Member

### **Term**

The term of the BISD Innovation Plan is for five years, beginning at the start of the 2018-19 school year and ending at the end of the 2022-23 school year. A local innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a vote of the district-level committee and the board of trustees in the same manner as required for initial adoption of a local innovation plan. The Committee will continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and recommend to the Board any suggested modifications to the Plan.



## **Innovations**

The district exercises innovations in the following areas under HB 1842:

### **School Calendar**

(TEC §25.0811)

Under current Texas state law, “a school district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August” (TEC 25.0811).

The school start date-should be determined locally by the District, and on an annual basis, by considering what is best for our community. Having the ability to modify the start date of school allows us the flexibility to balance semester days, align classes to college courses, and ease transitions by beginning school on a shortened week.

BISD will begin instruction for students as deemed appropriate by the district, each school year. The superintendent will submit the annual calendar to the Board of Trustees for approval.

### **Probationary Contracts**

(TEC §21.102)

Texas Education Code states that experienced teachers new to the district have a probationary period that may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years.

In order to support teacher growth and gather performance data, a one year time period is not always sufficient to evaluate a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom.

Experienced teachers new to Blanco ISD that have been employed in public education for at least five of the previous eight years may be issued a probationary contract for up to two years from the date of district employment.

### **Teacher Certification**

(TEC §21.003)

Texas Education Code requires that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds the appropriate certificate or permit issued by the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC).

In the event that the district cannot locate a certified teacher for a CTE position, the district must submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. Flexibility to establish local teacher certification requirements when hiring CTE teachers will allow BISD to select from a larger and more experienced candidate pool for CTE courses and hire CTE teaching staff with industry-standard professional certifications.



The district will maintain high standards for teacher qualification and will make every attempt to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for open positions in BISD. The district will have the flexibility to hire individuals who are knowledgeable in the subject area and equipped to perform the duties of the respective CTE course.

## **Transfer Student Timeline**

(TEC §25.036)

A district may choose to accept students who are not entitled to enroll in the district through the transfer process. The transfer timeframe is for a period of one school year.

BISD accepts transfer requests from students outside of the district. Current law requires BISD to enroll the student until the end of the school year. Transfer students are expected to follow the attendance requirements and all rules and regulations of the district. In cases where the student does not meet minimum attendance requirements, the district loses funding.

Non-resident students who have been accepted as inter-district transfer students at Blanco ISD may have such transfer status revoked by the superintendent at any time during the year if the student is assigned discipline consequences of suspension (in or out of school), placement in a disciplinary alternative program, or expulsion. Students not meeting the State's 90% attendance standard or at risk of academic failure as stated in the BISD transfer guidelines may also be subject to immediate revocation of the transfer status.

## **District and Campus Level Planning**

(TEC §11.251, §11.252, §11.253)

State law requires that each campus and district shall have an improvement plan developed, evaluated, and revised annually. Under this statute the campus and district improvement plans must include nine compliance components and the improvement planning committees must hold at least one public meeting each year.

The nature of the components indicated in the standards references often make the campus and district improvement plans cumbersome compliance documents rather than workable guides for actionable goals.

BISD will continue to provide collaborative improvement plans being reflective of action-oriented tasks and measurable goals. The documents, however, will no longer restrict and overburden the content of the plans to encompass the previously included items relative only to compliance rather than relevant actions aimed at progress toward goals.



# BLANCO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## **Summary**

The District of Innovation committee developed the plan to provide an opportunity for the Blanco Independent School District to make local decisions about the most appropriate way to educate our students. We are thankful to the BISD Board of Trustees for making this process possible.