

Blanket Independent School District



**District of Innovation Plan
2020-2025**

Blanket Independent School District

District of Innovation Overview

The District of Innovation concept, which was passed by the 84th Legislative Session in House Bill 1842, gives traditional independent school districts most of the flexibilities which are available to open enrollment charter schools.

Some of the potential benefits of becoming a District of Innovation include:

- **Local control:** A school district can decide which flexibilities best suit their local needs.
- **Customization:** A school district can create an innovation plan for a level of school (e.g., only high schools), grade level, or a single campus
- **Autonomy:** A school district must submit a district of innovation plan to the Texas Education Agency; however, approval is not required.
- **Flexibility:** A school district is granted flexibility in order to implement practices similar to open enrollment charter schools, including exemptions from educational mandates such as:
 - School start date (flexibility in school calendar)
 - 90% attendance rule (flexibility in attendance requirements)
 - Class-size ratios (flexibility in class-size ratios)
 - Site-based decision making processes (local control)
 - Certain student discipline provisions
 - Use of planning and preparation periods
 - Teacher certification requirements (flexibility in human resource management)

To qualify, an eligible school district must adopt a five-year innovation plan in accordance with the Texas Education Code. The plan adopted by the Blanket Independent School District will be in effect for the 2019-2020 school year through the 2024-2025 school year. The plan may be amended at any time by the District of Innovation Committee with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Blanket Independent School District

District of Innovation Timeline

Monday, November 11, 2019

- Blanket ISD Board of Trustees adopted resolution to initiate District of Innovation Plan

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

- Initial meeting with administrative staff to discuss preliminary thoughts and discuss possible members of the District of Innovation Committee (DOI). DOI meeting #1.

Monday, December 9, 2019 School Board Meeting

- Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation
- Regular meeting to approve a motion to pursue local "District of Innovation" plan. Board of Trustees approve the members of the District of Innovation Committee.

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

- 2nd Meeting of the DOI Committee

Thursday, February 6, 2020

- 3rd Meeting with DOI Committee - Final Plan for Presentation

Monday, February 10, 2020 - School Board Meeting

- Present District of Innovation Plan to the school board. Post the District of Innovation Plan on the district website for 30 days. Notify Commissioner of Education of the board's intention to vote on adoption of the proposed plan at the March board meeting.
- DOI plan posted online (February 11, 2020)

March 2020 - School Board Meeting

- Regular school board meeting to vote on DOI plan

Blanket Independent School District

RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER DESIGNATION AS DISTRICT OF INNOVATION

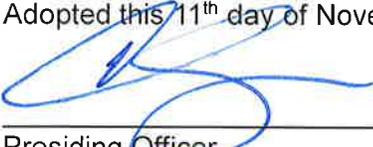
WHEREAS Education Code 12A.001 provides that a district is eligible for designation as a district of innovation if the district's most recent performance rating under Section 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance, and that consideration of designation as a district of innovation may be initiated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

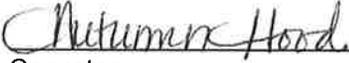
WHEREAS the Blanket Independent School District's most recent performance rating under Education Code 39.054 reflects at least acceptable performance.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Blanket 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 within 30 days to consider whether the District should develop a local innovation plan for the designation of the District as a district of innovation and that within 30 days of the public hearing the Board of Trustees of the Blanket Independent School District shall appoint an innovation plan committee to develop a local innovation plan or decline to pursue designation as a district of innovation.

Adopted this 11th day of November, 2019, by the Board of Trustees.



Presiding Officer

Secretary

Blanket Independent School District

District of Innovation Committee Members

PK-12 Principal, Chris Morrow

District Counselor, Debbie Jones

Technology Coordinator, Larry Smith

Parent/School Board Member, Autumn Hood

Secondary Teacher, Cynthia Heard

Elementary Teacher, Halye Mair

Paraprofessional, Juana Rodriguez

Blanket Independent School District

District of Innovation Plan - Proposed Guidelines

1. First Day of Instruction (EB legal, TEC 25.0811)

According to state law, a district may not begin instruction for students for a school year before the fourth Monday in August.

Proposal:

The flexibility of a locally approved start date allows the district to determine, on an annual basis, what best meets the needs of the students and community. Calendar flexibility would also offer the following:

- Allow for more balanced grading periods.
- Allow for more instructional time prior to state assessments in December.
- Allow students participating in dual credit through Ranger College to have more balanced semester, which will align more with the main campus.

Guidelines:

The district will determine, on an annual basis, when each school year will begin.

Blanket Independent School District

2. Teacher Certification {TEC 21.003, 21.051, 21.053, 21.057, DK Legal, DK Local}

State law states that a person may not be employed as a teacher by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued by the appropriate state agency. In the event a district cannot locate a certified teacher for a position or a teacher is teaching a subject outside of their certification, the district must request emergency certification from the Texas Education Agency and/or State Board of Educator Certification. Special education and bilingual teachers must be SBEC certified.

Proposal:

The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the district's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand areas (such as Spanish), as well as career and technical courses. In order to best serve Blanket ISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

Based on local need, this exemption from teacher certification requirements will enable greater flexibility in staffing and will enrich applicant pools in specific areas of need. This would allow for the following:

- Provide more flexibility in creating the master schedule.
- Provide more options for students in class offerings
- Allow experienced teachers to teach a course in an area they have qualified knowledge.
- Allow industry certified and/or trade professionals to teach specialized certification courses

Guidelines:

- The superintendent may allow a certified teacher to teach subject(s) out of their certified area and will notify the Board of Trustees when such a situation arises. The notification to the board must state the reason and document the current certifications that the teacher holds and/or the credentials/degrees held that would qualify the individual to teach the subject.
- Individuals with experience in a CTE field could be eligible to teach a vocational skill or course through a local teaching certificate. The superintendent would submit a notification to the Board of Trustees with all the documents that the individual holds that would qualify them to teach the course.

Blanket Independent School District

3. Inter-District Transfers (TEC 25.036, FDA Local)

Requires districts transfers to be for a period of one school year.

Proposal:

The district is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment in accepting transfer applicants.

Guidelines:

- Blanket ISD will follow FDA (Local) in approving all transfers.
- On some occasions, student behavior warrants suspension (in or out of school), placement in DAEP, or expulsion. In addition, student attendance may fall below the state's 90% attendance standard. In these circumstances, after other corrective measures have been attempted, a student's transfer status may be revoked by the superintendent at any time during the school year.

Blanket Independent School District

4. Teacher Contract Days (TEC 21.401, DCB Legal and Local)

Texas Education Code states an educator under a 10-month contract must provide 187 days of service.

Proposal:

Blanket ISD may reduce teacher contract days from 187 to a decreased length with no effect on teacher salaries. Reducing the teacher contract days to match the adopted school calendar will:

- Provide teachers more flexibility during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development
- Improve teacher morale
- Enhance teacher recruitment
- Allow the daily rate to remain consistent with the 187-day calendar

Guidelines:

To allow flexibility in the contractual days for certified personnel, Blanket ISD will:

- Evaluate the number of contract days needed for certified staff in each school year and shall set the number of calendar work days, with the objective of reducing the days from 187.
- The administrative staff will also annually determine the number of professional development days which are required and when and where they will be fulfilled on the calendar.
- Maintain the current salary schedule for all certified employees.

Blanket Independent School District

5. Length of School Day (TEC 25.081)

State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually. It requires a school district to file a waiver to exempt the 420-minute rule. Each district can request 6 waivers per school year.

Proposal:

- o Exemption from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Blanket ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule on selected days whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders

Guidelines:

- o Blanket ISD does not have any intention to shorten the school day on a regular basis, or without specific purposes. To the greatest extent possible, early release days would be planned ahead of time and noted on the district calendar, which is approved by the Blanket ISD Board of Trustees and published to all stakeholders in advance of the school year.