

Windthorst Independent School District

"Every 'One' Is Important"

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To Office of the Commissioner of Education,

The Windthorst Independent School District is exercising authority created by passage of House Bill 1842 of the 84th Legislative Session, as set forth in Texas Education Code, Chapter 12. HB 1842 allows a tradition public school to exercise greater local control and utilize the exemptions in Education Law that charter schools currently are entitled to. We became a district of innovation in 2017 and at this point we will be amending the plan for the remainder of the timeline based on current needs of the district. The District Team met on April 17, 2019 to discuss the amendments and both passed by a vote of 11-0. It was then taken to the board on May 13, 2019 and passed by a vote of 6-0 with one board member absent.

Sincerely,

Lonnie Hise
Superintendent
Windthorst ISD

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Windthorst ISD District of Innovation Plan

Background:

During the 84th Legislative Session, HB 1842 passed that allows Texas public schools to become Districts of Innovation which would allow them to obtain flexibilities with certain provisions of the Texas Education code, most of which are available to Texas' open-enrollment charter schools. Windthorst ISD is exercising this opportunity of becoming a District of Innovation to obtain more flexibility in order to better meet the unique needs of our district, students and community.

Term

Windthorst ISD's Innovation Plan will begin with the 2017-2018 school year and conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year unless the plan is terminated or amended by the Windthorst ISD Board in accordance with HB1842. If at any time within this 5 year plan, other areas of exemptions are to be considered, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider new exemptions. Any future amendments will adhere to the same term of the original plan.

Innovations:

1. Teacher Contract Days (TEC 21.401)(DCB Legal) (DCB Local)

Current

Current education law located in Chapter 21 defines a teacher contract as a ten month contract equivalent to 187 days.

Proposed

This proposal reduces teacher contract days from 187 to 182 with no effect on teacher salaries. This somewhat makes an attempt to align the teacher days to the 75,600 minutes required of students. This will increase the daily rate the district pays teachers and also should enhance teacher recruitment, therefore putting the district on a more level playing field with larger districts which will significantly improve teacher morale. Finally the proposal will provide teachers more opportunities during the summer months to seek out beneficial staff development that relates to their field.

2. School Start Date (TEC 25.0811a) (EB Legal)

Current Law

State law currently prohibits school districts from starting class before the fourth Monday in August, unless they are year-round districts.

Proposed

Windthorst ISD will start class no earlier than the second Monday in August, and will plan to end earlier in the Spring semester in order to better balance the days in the fall and spring semesters, to provide more educational days prior to scheduled state assessments, and to better align with dual-credit college courses in the Fall, Spring and Summer semesters. The primary goals of this change to create greater flexibility in the District Calendar are to improve the overall district attendance rate, to improve student success on state and local assessments, and to allow for greater opportunity for meaningful staff development throughout the school year.

3. Length of School Day (TEC §25.082a)(SAAH 3.8.1)

Current Law

The current rules allow no flexibility in the design of district and campus schedules 4 Innovation Strategies

Proposed

The opportunity to exempt from the 420 minute school day requirement will provide the district the opportunity to provide each campus the flexibility of creating a daily schedule that will better serve the students and teachers on each campus. This flexibility will give local control to the district in meeting the yearly requirement of 75,600 minutes in relation to the district calendar for each specific school year. 2. This exemption will provide greater flexibility than the current 6 day waiver maximum that relates to the length of the school day. 3. The opportunity to be exempt from the 7 hour day requirement will allow the district to create more flexibility within the daily schedule for students and staff. This flexibility will be used to create a unique bell schedule instead of the static schedule required of schools by this mandate. 4. The district will provide teachers and administrators the opportunity for weekly and monthly staff development opportunities through the creation of these unique schedules.

- 4. Transfer Students (TEC §25.036)** State law allows a student to transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in the state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer. In approving transfer requests, the availability of space and instructional staff, availability of programs and services, the student's disciplinary history, academic performance, and attendance records are also evaluated. Under TEC §25.036, a transfer is interpreted to be for a period of one school year.

Rationale for Exemption The administration will review disciplinary records, academic performance, attendance records, and other data of transfer students on an ongoing basis to determine if the transfer agreement is being upheld. Windthorst ISD is seeking to eliminate the provision of a one-year commitment to transfer students when they violate district expectations of attendance, discipline, academic achievement, and/or falsify documentation. This flexibility would allow the district to have the option of immediate revocation of a student's transfer status by the Superintendent or designee at any time during the school year.

- 5. Teacher Certification (TEC §21.003, §21.053 and §21.057)** 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.

Rationale for Exemption The current state teacher certification requirements inhibit the District's ability to hire teachers to teach hard-to-fill, high demand, dual credit, as well as career and technical courses. Windthorst ISD is located in a rural area which limits course offerings and utilize creative instructional methods district wide. Allowing the local district control over certifications in order to better enable students to obtain the educational benefits of such course offering, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements and its own requirements for training professionals and experts to teach such courses, in lieu of the requirements set forth in law.

Committee Members

Don Windham	Superintendent
Lonnie Hise	High School Principal
Darla Tackett	Jr. High Principal
Ann Armendarez	Elementary Principal
Ann Kopel	HS Teacher
Laverne Lindeman	Educational Aide
Tracy Schreiber	Jr. High Teacher
Stacy Wolf	Jr. High Teacher
Sheila Stevens	Elementary Teacher
Karen McCann	Elementary Teacher
Melanie Beisch	High School Teacher
Mary Blagg	Elementary Teacher
Chris Tackett	Athletic Director
Karen Berend	Community Member
David Veitenheimer	Community Member

Windthorst ISD District of Innovation Plan Timeline

December 12th -7:00 pm Regular Board Meeting

*Explanation and discussion to the board of the possibilities associated with becoming a District of Innovation.

January 9th – 7:00 pm Regular Board Meeting

*Public Hearing to explain and discuss the possibility of becoming a District of Innovation (TEC 12A, 001 (c) (1))

*Board approval of Resolution that will allow the district to start the process of possibly becoming a district of innovation (TEC 12A.001 (c)(1))

*A list of members was presented to the Board and approved as the District of Innovation committee (TEC 12A.002 (b)(2), 12A.003)

January 26-2017-3:45 pm

* First meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

Teachers were asked to get input from the staff for possible ideas concerning the different exemptions for the district's plan.

February 8, 2017-3:45 pm

*Second meeting of the District of Innovation Committee

A plan was developed based on the needs of the district according to the staff and community.

A vote was taken by the District of Innovation committee to approve the plan as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the plan as written.

February 8, 2017

*District of Innovation plan was posted on the Windthorst ISD website. (www.windthorstisd.net)

February 13, 2017-7:00 pm Regular call Board Meeting

*The proposed Windthorst ISD plan was given to the WISD Board of Trustees for review and discussion.

March 6, 2017- 7:00 pm Regular called Board Meeting

*Discussion and Vote of District of Innovation Plan

April 17, 2019 – 3:45 p.m. District of Innovation Committee Meeting

*District of Innovation Committee met to discuss amendments and vote. Amendments passed 11-0.

May 13, 2019 – 7:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting

*The Board approved the amendments to the District of Innovation Plan with a vote of 6-0.

Term of Plan: SY 2017-2018--SY 2021-2022

Plan applies to: Entire District
 Campus (list) _____
 Other (please describe) _____

Chapter 11 – School Districts

Subchapter D. Powers and Duties of Board of Trustees of Independent School Districts

- §11.1511 (b)(5), (14) Specific Powers and Duties of Board
- §11.162 School Uniforms

Subchapter F. District-Level and Site Based Decision-Making

- §11.251 Planning and Decision-Making Process
- §11.252 District-Level Planning and Decision-Making
- §11.253 Campus Planning and Site-Based Decision-Making
- §11.255 Dropout Prevention Review

Chapter 21 – Educators

Subchapter A – General Provisions

- §21.002 Teacher Employment Contracts
- §21.003 Certification Required
- §21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void

Subchapter B – Certification of Educators

- §21.051 Rules Regarding Field-Based Experience and Options for Field Experience and Internships.
- §21.053 Presentation and Recording of Certificates
- §21.057 Parental Notification

Subchapter C – Probationary Contracts

Subchapter D – Continuing Contracts

Subchapter E – Term Contracts

Subchapter H – Appraisals and Incentives

- §21.352 Local Role
- §21.353 Appraisal on Basis of Classroom Teaching Performance
- §21.354 Appraisal of Certain Administrators
- §21.3541 Appraisal and Professional Development System for Principals

Subchapter I – Duties and Benefits

- §21.401 Minimum Service Required
- §21.402 Minimum Salary Schedule for Certain Professional Staff
- §21.4021 Furloughs

- §21.4022 Required Process for Development of Furlough Program or Other Salary Reduction Proposal
 - §21.403 Placement on Minimum Salary Schedule
 - §21.4031 Professional Staff Service Records
 - §21.4032 Reductions in Salaries of Classroom Teachers and Administrators
 - §21.404 Planning and Preparation Time
 - §21.405 Duty-Free Lunch
 - §21.406 Denial of Compensation Based On Absence for Religious Observance Prohibited
 - §21.407 Requiring or Coercing Teachers to Join Groups, Clubs, Committees, or Organizations: Political Affairs
 - §21.408 Right To Join or Not To Join Professional Association
 - §21.409 Leave Of Absence for Temporary Disability
 - §21.415 Employment Contracts
- Subchapter J – Staff Development**
- §21.451 Staff Development Requirements
 - §21.452 Developmental Leaves of Absence
 - §21.458 Mentors

Chapter 22 – School District Employees and Volunteers

Subchapter A – Rights, Duties, and Benefits

- §22.001 Salary Deductions for Professional Dues
- §22.002 Assignment, Transfer, or Pledge of Compensation
- §22.003 Minimum Personal Leave Program
- §22.006 Discrimination Based on Jury Service Prohibited
- §22.007 Incentives for Early Retirement
- §22.011 Requiring or Coercing Employees to Make Charitable Contributions

Chapter 25 – Admission, Transfer, and Attendance

Subchapter C – Operation of Schools and School Attendance

- §25.0811 First Day of Instruction
- §25.0812 Last Day of School
- §25.083 School Day Interruptions
- §25.092 Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade

Subchapter D – Student/Teacher Ratios; Class Size

- §25.111 Student/Teacher Ratios
- §25.112 Class Size
- §25.113 Notice of Class Size
- §25.114 Student/Teacher Ratios in Physical Education Classes; Class Size

Chapter 37 – Discipline; Law and Order

Subchapter A – Alternative Setting for Behavior Management

- §37.0012 Designation of Campus Behavior Coordinator
- §37.002 Removal by Teacher

Chapter 44 –Fiscal Management

Subchapter B – Purchases; Contracts

- §44.031 Purchasing Contracts
- §44.0331 Management Fees Under Certain Cooperative Purchasing Contracts
- §44.0352 Competitive Sealed Proposals
- §44.042 Preference to Texas and United States Products
- §44.043 Right To Work
- §44.047 Purchase or Lease of Automated External Defibrillator

Subchapter Z – Miscellaneous Provisions

- §44.901 Energy Savings Performance Contracts
- §44.902 Long-Range Energy Plan to Reduce Consumption of Electric Energy
- §44.903 Energy-Efficient Light Bulbs in Instructional Facilities
- §44.908 Expenditure of Local Funds

Chapter 45 – School District Funds

Subchapter G – School District Depositories

- §45.205 Term of Contract
- §45.206 Bid Or Request for Proposal Notices; Bid and Proposal Forms
- §45.207 Award of Contract
- §45.208 Depository Contract; Bond
- §45.209 Investment of District Funds

Other

Please list any additional exemption required for your Innovation District Plan:

- X TEC 25.082a Length of Day
- X TEC 25.036 Transfer Students