

# *Windthorst Independent School District*

"Every 'One' Is Important"

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To Office of the Commissioner of Education,

The Windthorst Independent School District (WISD) is exercising authority created by passage of House Bill 1842 of the 84th Legislative Session, as set forth in Texas Education Code, Chapter 12A. HB 1842 allows a traditional public school to exercise greater local control, and utilize the exemptions in Education Law that charter schools currently are entitled to. We feel this is a great opportunity for our local district to create a plan based on the needs of our students and community.

Sincerely,



Don Windham

Superintendent

Windthorst ISD

Enclosed: District Plan, Timeline

## 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.

**Committee Members**

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

## **Windthorst ISD District of Innovation Plan Timeline**

### **December 12<sup>th</sup> -7:00 pm Regular Board Meeting**

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

### **January 9<sup>th</sup> – 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](http://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**

\*The District of Innovation Plan was passed by a vote of 7-0

\* District sends notification of Innovation Plans to Commissioner of Education for approval.