



**Thorndale Bulldogs**

*Our Vision:* We will develop students who reflect a spirit of excellence in the pursuit of college, career readiness and effective citizenship.

Relationships ★ Work Ethic ★ Community ★ Excellence

**Thorndale ISD  
District of Innovation Plan (HB 1842)  
2016-2017**

HB 1842, of the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, allows a traditional public school to have some of the same local flexibility that public charter schools have always been allowed. Thorndale ISD is utilizing HB 1842 to obtain more flexibility and establish greater local control in an effort to better meet the needs of Thorndale ISD students.

This plan will be in effect for five years, beginning on April 25, 2017 and ending on April 24, 2022. A local innovation plan may be amended, rescinded, or renewed if the action is approved by a vote of the district-level committee and the board of trustees in the same manner as required for initial adoption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.

**District of Innovation Timeline**

**March 20, 2017 – 6:30PM, Board Room**

- ❖ The Thorndale ISD Board of Trustees approve a motion to pursue a local District of Innovation Plan

**March 20, 2017 – 6:40PM, Board Room**

- ❖ The Thorndale ISD Board of Trustees conduct a public hearing over District of Innovation designation

**March 20, 2017 – 6:50PM, Board Room**

- ❖ The Thorndale ISD Board of Trustees approve members of the District of Innovation Committee to develop that plan during their regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

**March 22, 2017 – 4:30PM, Board Room**

- ❖ The District of Innovation Committee will meet to develop the District of Innovation Plan
- ❖ The District Site-Based Decision Making Committee meets and passes the plan by a majority vote and sends it to the Commissioner of Education
- ❖ Post the District of Innovation Plan on the District Website for 30 days.

**April 24, 2017 – 6:30PM, Board Room**

- ❖ Board approval of the District of Innovation Plan by a 2/3 majority vote at a special called meeting of the Thorndale ISD Board of Trustees

## District Innovation Committee

Adam Ivy	Superintendent	Bonnie Lindig	HS Teacher
Rebecca Peel	Business Manager	Stacy Leschber	MS Teacher
Orlando Vargas	HS Principal	Jana Heine	Elem Teacher
Lee Hafley	MS Principal	Brenda Johnson	Elem Teacher
Meghan Esau	Elementary Principal	Deby Leschber	Technology Staff
Megan Riggins	Counselor	Stephanie Churchman	Community Member
Jeni Anders	Nutrition Director	Hector Hernandez	Business Representative
Allen Leschber	Maintenance Director	Salina Towery	Parent
Earl Crouch	Technology Director		

## Innovative Plan Goals

### 1. School Start Date (EB Legal) (Ed. Code 25.0811)

#### Currently

Students may not begin school before the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of August.

#### Proposed

To allow for a calendar that fits the local needs of our students and community, we would like to consider mandating a start date of no earlier than August 10 each year which would:

- ❖ Provide flexibility in developing calendars each year
- ❖ Provide more days of instruction before state assessments
- ❖ Allow the district to comfortably finish the first semester before the Christmas holidays and help keep the days in the semesters balanced
- ❖ Afford teachers the opportunity to receive meaningful professional development during the school year instead of frontloading all of the staff development days prior to the beginning of school

### 2. Length of School Day (EC Legal) (Ed. Code 25.082)

#### Currently

State law currently requires that all school days must be 420 minutes long each day in order to count for ADA calculations and funding purposes, and to accumulate instructional minutes towards the 75,600 minutes required annually.

#### Proposed

Exempting from the 420-minute day requirement would allow Thorndale ISD the flexibility needed to alter the school day schedule whenever it was locally determined as necessary or beneficial to the district and its stakeholders. Exempting completely from the 420-minute requirement would give the district a significant amount of local control over scheduling without the fear of diminishing state funding or losing credit for instructional time that might cause the district to fall out of compliance with annual minute requirements.

**3. Submitting waivers for Kindergarten – Grade 4 class size** (EEB Legal) (Ed. Code 25.111) (Ed. Code 25.112) (Ed. Code 25.113) (Ed. Code 25.114)

Currently

Current Texas Education Code requires that districts maintain class sizes of 22 students or less in Kindergarten through fourth grade, and a waiver must be completed if a class exceeds the number.

Proposed

While we certainly believe that small class size plays a positive role in the classroom, we do not believe it has a negative effect when you only add one or two more students. Many times it is not the number of students but the makeup and chemistry of the classroom which influence the learning environment.

- ❖ Thorndale ISD will attempt to keep all K-4<sup>th</sup> core classrooms to a 22:1 ratio. However, in the event the class size exceeds this ratio, the Superintendent will report to the Board of Trustees.
  - ❖ In the event a K-4<sup>th</sup> core classroom reaches 25:1, the campus will notify the parents of the students in the classroom and inform them of the situation.
  - ❖ A TEA waiver will not be necessary when a K-4<sup>th</sup> classroom exceeds the 22:1 ratio.
  - ❖ Exemption from Texas Education Code 25.111-114 will require the District to review its policies at EEB (LEGAL) and (LOCAL).
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**4. Teacher and Principal Evaluation** (DNA Legal, DNA Local) (Ed. Code 21.352) (Ed. Code 21.3541)

Currently

The State of Texas has a new teacher appraisal system in 2016-2017, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). Districts currently have the authority to only formally appraise teachers once every five school years. Thorndale ISD teachers are formally evaluated annually. Principals are evaluated annually using the Texas Principal Evaluation & Support System (T-PESS).

Proposed

Thorndale ISD would have the option to utilize locally developed teacher and principal evaluation tools.

- ❖ The teacher evaluation instrument would be developed with input from central administration, campus administration, and teachers.
  - ❖ All teachers must be formally evaluated at a minimum of every third school year.
  - ❖ Every teacher would receive a minimum of four informal walk-throughs per year.
  - ❖ Principals will be evaluated annually.
  - ❖ Probationary teachers would be evaluated annually.
  - ❖ The locally developed plans should reflect the strengths, areas of concern, and goals for Thorndale ISD.
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**5. Teacher Certification** (DK Legal, DK Local, DK Exhibit) (Ed. Code 21.003) (Ed. Code 21.053) (Ed. Code 21.057)

Currently

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 submit a request to the Texas Education Agency. TEA then approves or denies this request. There is a significant amount of paperwork involved in the process.

Proposed

In order to best serve TISD students, decisions on certification will be handled locally.

- ❖ The campus principal may submit to the superintendent a request to allow a certified teacher to teach outside of their certified field. The principal must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses which qualify them to teach this subject.
  - ❖ An individual with experience in a CTE, Fine Art, or Technology Applications field could be eligible to teach through a local teaching certificate. The principal must submit a request to the superintendent with the individual's credentials. The superintendent will approve the request if the individual will be an asset to the students. The superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees. Local teaching certificates will be for one year. The teacher will be at-will.
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**6. Probationary Contracts** (DCA Legal) (Ed. Code 21.102 (b))

Currently

A probationary contract may not exceed one year for a person who has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district.

Proposed

For experienced teachers, counselors, librarians, or nurses new to Thorndale ISD that have been employed in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, the probationary period would be two years.

- ❖ This will provide for sufficient time to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers as well as provide time for development and growth.
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**7. Contract Service Days** (Ed. Code 21.401)

Currently

State law currently requires educators employed on a 10-month contract to provide a minimum of 187 days of service.

Proposed

The passage of Ed. Code 25.081 changed the required days of instruction to minutes. However, the law did not address contract days for 10-month contract employees. The determination of how many days that are required to fulfill and employee's contract should be a local decision.

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