

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Ann Armendarez
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Windthorst Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 100 St. Mary's Drive P O Box 190
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Windthorst State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 76389-0789

County Archer County

Telephone (940) 423-6679 Fax (940) 423-6505

Web site/URL http://www.windthorstisd.net E-mail ann.armendarez@windthorstisd.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Lonnie Hise E-mail lonnie.hise@windthorstisd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Windthorst Tel. (940) 423-6679

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Chad Steinberger
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	12	17	29
K	14	13	27
1	12	12	24
2	12	18	30
3	10	17	27
4	13	12	25
5	16	12	28
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	89	101	190

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.6 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 27.8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 71 % White
 - 0.6 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 11%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	13
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	179
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %
22 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39 %

Total number students who qualify: 75

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

21 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	98%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The mission of Windthorst Elementary is to provide an exemplary education that encourages each student to realize his or her potential.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III - SUMMARY

Windthorst was founded as a German Catholic community in 1892. Windthorst Elementary School (WES) is within the Windthorst Independent School District (WISD) in Windthorst, Texas. Located thirty miles from the Oklahoma border, it is a rural community consisting of multi-generational families. Once a strong dairy community, Windthorst has developed a more diverse economy growing crops and raising cattle. WES has a tradition of high student expectations and strong parent and family engagement. The faculty at WES collaborates with students, families, and community members to meet academic, social, and emotional needs of all of the students in multiple ways.

WES currently serves 192 students prekindergarten through fifth grade. The demographic composition of the student population includes 71% Caucasian, 28% Hispanic, .6% American Indian, and .6% with 2 or more races. Within these groups 42.6% are economically disadvantaged, 12.5% are English learners, and 8.5% receive special education services. Because of the high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, WES is a Title I campus. Windthorst Elementary also offers special programs to serve the needs of our students. English as a second language (ESL) serves our English learners. A program for children with disabilities (PPCD) and the inclusion model provide for our special education students. WES also serves dyslexia students with a strong dyslexia program.

WISD has always met state accountability standards, but in 2015 WES shifted focus to the mastery level of state assessment while still maintaining an excellent passing rate for all. Making a good school great has been the motto for WES the last five years, and WES has thrived using Robert Marzano's High Reliability Schools (HRS) model. Intensive HRS training from 2017 to the present has ensured the highest potential of each student is achieved. Forty-three elements addressing the emotional, social, and cultural needs of the students at WES are the foundation of the HRS model.

Marzano's HRS model promotes campus certifications in five areas, Windthorst Elementary has worked hard to achieve the first two levels of certification. WES achieved certification in level one in March of 2019, illustrating a safe, supportive, and collaborative environment. Level two of the HRS model is effective teaching in every classroom. To ensure this, a campus-wide instructional model was created. Frequent feedback from administration and a goal--setting component for teacher self-improvement are also part of level two. The instructional model has improved the vertical alignment of content and vocabulary instruction, resulting in higher student achievement. Professional learning communities (PLCs) were also created as a part of the HRS model. PLCs allow teachers the opportunities to collaborate on students' needs, content, and teaching strategies, opening the lines of communication and increasing dialogue for continued student success. WES has also set up instructional rounds within the district and with surrounding districts for teacher growth. Rounds afford teachers the opportunity to see not only examples of great content in others' classrooms but also examples of systems and classroom management. Peer observations and watching videos of effective teaching have been pivotal in improving teaching practice. Level two certification of the HRS model was achieved in March of 2020. As a result, Windthorst Elementary has received an A rating in the state accountability system for the past two years. The district has received the highest overall rating in region nine for two years as well.

WES implemented an extensive response to intervention program (RtI)-now known as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)- serving students from kindergarten through fifth grade. This program closes achievement gaps in reading and math by continually analyzing student data and developing strategies and lessons to address student deficiencies. Used with fidelity, intervention has been a strong factor in improving student achievement. In the 2018-2019 school year, 96% of fifth grade students participating in the RtI program met state standards in the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test in reading and 100% met standards in math.

Although WES strives for academic excellence, our campus believes that physical activity is an important component of each school day increasing student achievement as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle. All students in kindergarten through fifth grade attend forty minutes of physical education each day. In addition, students participate in at least fifteen minutes of recess time daily to encourage social and physical

interaction.

Because Windthorst is such a small town, everything is centered around two areas-the church and the school. The community is involved in every aspect of our school. When hardship is faced by a community member, the entire town rallies to help out. When celebrations are in order, the community is there to make signs and participate in planning and supporting our students. Even community members with grown children still consider themselves a part of the school and support WISD in every possible way.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

The vision of WES is to provide an exemplary education that encourages each student to reach his or her potential. WES aligns resources to our curriculum, The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). These state standards outline what students should master in each subject at each grade level.

Our instructional model incorporates research-based strategies and allows teachers choice on content coverage and the context in which they present materials. This flexibility affords teachers the opportunity to differentiate instruction from class to class and from year to year depending on the individual needs of their students. Teachers preview, chunk and process content, and engage students in cognitive complex tasks when presenting content. Teachers also employ student grouping, examination of similarities and differences, and reflection of content to help students at WES learn.

WES has implemented a very effective RtI program now known as MTSS. Using formative assessments and PLC meetings, teachers identify student learning gaps quickly and intervene during small-group instruction in reading and math.

WES is currently working toward level three of the HRS model which includes a guaranteed and viable curriculum. WES teachers received specialized training in TEKS breakdown where each standard was unpacked to help understand the depth and meaning of each standard. Proficiency scales were then developed for our priority TEKS and implemented to assess student learning. In addition, WES created a campus-wide vocabulary program consisting of cognitive and guaranteed words to be taught at each grade level, ensuring coverage of content and vertical alignment of material. All teachers utilize the Frayer Method for vocabulary instruction.

In addition to our state content standards, WES teachers weave social and emotional content throughout their lessons. Our hope is to address issues that our students encounter each and every day and to help them find ways to navigate through these issues. Students are provided opportunities before, during, and after school to receive additional assistance with both academic and emotional needs.

1b. Reading/English language arts

WES is committed to providing every child a background in literacy, as reading and comprehension promote and assist in all other curriculum. WES believes every child can and should love to read. Understanding that reading comprehension is essential to being successful in school and everyday life drives English language arts and reading (ELAR) instruction. To achieve this goal, WES teachers incorporate many genres and various strategies. Teachers across grade levels use trade books and authentic texts to teach concepts. In addition to authentic texts, teachers use basal readers and other written resources to provide students with texts that will help them become successful readers.

ELAR curriculum is rigorous and based on the TEKS set forth by the state. A variety of approaches in whole group-small group- and individual instruction are used to meet all learners where they are. In the primary grades, kindergarten through second grade, teachers provide curriculum that is needs based and uses high-yielding pedagogical practices. Early years are marked by an eagerness to learn through play. This idea is used through centers that are created based on the needs of the students as well as the concepts being taught. Concepts are spiraled throughout the year to cement ideas and help learners excel. Phonics, word work, shared reading, journal writing, and morning messages help WES learners excel in the ELAR curriculum.

WES implements a goal-oriented online reading and testing program beginning in first grade with each grade-level teacher deciding how he or she will use the program. The program assesses students in the

beginning, middle, and end of the year determining the reading level of each student so that teachers have the perfect book in the hands of their readers. Goals and rewards are an integral part of the system. Our library is fully stocked, and each grade visits at least once per week. Teachers confer with students about their chosen books, and students participate in novel talks. Beginning in third grade, whole-class novels are used in addition to independent reading, basal read-alouds, and informational texts. Many times novels are cross-curricular and touch on subjects that are also explored in social studies and science.

Integrating writing with reading during these learning times is crucial. The ELAR TEKS bundle the reading and writing student expectations, and teachers use this approach daily in their lessons. WES students write about what they read and use mentor texts to enhance their writing skills and emulate specific writing skills taught throughout the lesson.

WES uses various assessments to guide instruction. A Texas kindergarten assessment system assesses our kindergarten readers multiple times a year. This helps teachers plan based on strengths and weaknesses and also shows where growth occurs for their students. By identifying strengths and weaknesses, teachers plan their reading curriculum accordingly using whole-group, small-group, and individually planned hands-on learning, which is vital in the early years of education. First and second grades use beginning, middle, and end of the year assessments to monitor growth and guide instruction. WES third through fifth grade classes use benchmarks twice a year to identify where to focus instruction for optimal growth. Intervention is then given daily through our response to intervention program.

1c. Mathematics

The math curriculum at WES consists of standards set by the state, the TEKS. The TEKS, a statewide data system, and a text that is one-hundred-percent aligned to the TEKS serve as the basic resources WES teachers use for math instruction. These resources were chosen so students receive instruction for age-appropriate procedural fluency in the areas of process standards, numbers and operations, algebraic reasoning, geometry and measurement, data analysis, and personal financial literacy.

All teachers use the WES instructional model to administer instruction. Teachers use hands-on activities and modeling to build a foundation for conceptual understanding. Grades second through fifth use self-paced activities and computer timed tests to encourage automaticity of facts. Students have math class daily for fifty minute periods. Each grade level also incorporates a forty-five minute RtI and enrichment period daily. Math RtI students are pulled in small groups with the math interventionist for extended math exposure to close gaps and reinforce concepts. The remaining students have center time that focuses on fluency and enrichment activities. These groups are fluid and can change as students' needs change. Students are identified through classroom performance, benchmark results, formal and informal assessments, and data assessment reports. Teachers also offer after-school tutoring based on the above data and student needs.

WES has a vertically aligned guaranteed math vocabulary at each grade level and shared cognitive verbs in two grade bands: kindergarten through second and third through fifth grades. The creation of guaranteed vocabulary lists ensures that all teachers are providing instruction of identified terms to all students; students are held accountable for learning these non-negotiables. The shared language and vocabulary contribute to higher student achievement.

Our math curriculum provides purposeful activities that help our students build a strong number sense and prepares them for success in school. Most activities are hands-on learning opportunities. They also use physical movement as part of their daily schedule. Prekindergarten guidelines include counting, shapes, ordinal terms, subitizing, addition and subtraction of one to five objects, and using math language. Each teacher uses his or her own creativity to bring activities to the classroom that contribute to student achievement. Some of these activities include celebrating and tracking math fact mastery and growth, 100 day of school math activities, array bakery, warm-ups, student-led math centers, teacher-led lessons, and differentiation based on learning styles. Brain breaks, learning through song and dance, math through literature, guided student-led math centers, and stem lessons are also examples of math activities. Others include fluency fitness brain breaks, kahoot, plickers, homework bingo, and games with dominoes, cards,

and dice. Use of many types of manipulatives including linking cubes, money, clocks, geoboards, fraction strips, and ten frames are also used during math lessons to engage students and make learning concrete.

1d. Science

At WES the ultimate goal is a curriculum that is driven by hands-on activities and real-world experiences to enable students to make lasting connections. Teachers use district-adopted and supplemental materials that are vertically aligned to the TEKS. However, administrators give each teacher the freedom to seek additional resources to ensure that all diverse learning styles are met. Teachers strive each year to change how materials are presented in order to tailor each lesson to the needs of their students. Lessons are created using the 5E model: engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate. Students use academic journals and collaborate in student-led stations. Digital labs, videos, and out-the-door exploring activities assist students by making connections with real-life concepts. Outdoor education opportunities help provide an integrated experience on school grounds that challenge students to enhance their learning beyond traditional classroom settings.

Vertically aligned vocabulary is implemented daily and spiraled back throughout the year which is crucial to the success of student learning. Strategies such as hand motions, extensive modeling, pictures, chunking, and previewing the content help ESL students make connections with academic vocabulary. Formal and informal assessments at all grade levels enable teachers to monitor the mastery of the TEKS. Fourth and fifth graders chart their progress, which is powerful for ownership of their growth along the continuum of knowledge. Benchmarks are given twice a year to fifth graders, and analysis reports are used to develop a tailored approach for struggling students that are TEKS specific. Tutoring is offered after school, and intervention is provided once per week. Online resources that are aligned with the rigor of the TEKS provide additional intervention to students below level and challenge higher level learners.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Ultimately, the social studies curriculum is designed to build character and citizenship in children, making them lifelong contributing citizens to society. WES teachers accomplish this by pairing the state standards, the TEKS with a variety of instructional techniques to develop a deeper understanding of history, government, and civic responsibilities. Studies Weekly newspapers keep students engaged with colorful illustrations and short articles about these topics. Teachers expand on this curriculum by using an assortment of literature and discussions, and students are afforded many experimental learning opportunities through field trips and guest speakers. Students visit programs like Cowboy True to learn about the cowboy way of life. They visit the fire station to learn about how a community works and the helpers that are crucial to our way of life. Visitors from the local police station explain their duties in civic affairs. Character days and monthly drug-free days teach students the importance of being successful and responsible members of society.

The TEKS require every grade level to teach the importance of both the Declaration of Independence and the "Star-Spangled Banner" and how they contribute to a feeling of pride and patriotism for all people living in the United States of America. During election years, WES has mock voting and examines the voting process. Teachers explain that voting in elections is our civic duty as citizens. Traditions and customs are discussed from a multicultural point of view where all traditions and customs are valued in a nation founded on freedom and liberty. In addition to these ideas, upper-grade-level students are challenged to memorize the entire map of the United States as well as the capitols of all fifty states. Each student is tasked with researching a famous American and displaying their findings in a wax museum presentation where students dress as their famous person and present his or her life story. WES teachers use assessments to guide instruction. Formative and summative assessments include written tests as well as hands-on projects such as posters, presentations, and speeches to demonstrate mastery of concepts.

1f. For secondary schools:

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

WES follows a curriculum aligned with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. These guidelines are aligned with kindergarten TEKS and beyond. The curriculum provides integrated instruction across all domains. The majority of the prekindergarten (Pre-K) students' days are spent working and playing in learning centers. These centers not only provide time for students to practice literacy, math, science, writing, and creative skills but are essential for students to grow their social skills as well. These social skills are a crucial aspect of school readiness. The learning center activities also provide an opportunity for differentiation for English Learners (ELs), younger students, students with special needs, and students who need to be challenged.

Although the curriculum is well-rounded, an additional phonological awareness supplement is used to grow stronger readers in kindergarten. Pre-K instruction is driven by the intention of making students successful in the future. For example, students are building a number sense foundation that will ready them for math processes in kindergarten. Their foundation of making marks and writing letters gives them a basis for publishing and spelling. Their rhyming skills ready them for poetry. EL students get a solid grasp of English so they are ready for kindergarten skills. The vocabulary students acquire in Pre-K helps to increase reading comprehension later in elementary school.

The WES Pre-K program uses a formal progress-monitoring program that assesses vocabulary, alphabet, math, phonics, writing, and social skills. The results are used to tailor instruction to the needs of the students.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The fine arts curriculum in Windthorst Elementary is based on the TEKS. All students receive instruction in drama, art, and music. Although drama is not a separate course at WES, it is addressed in multiple ways. First, students study the drama genre in the English language arts and reading classes. All grade levels collaborate to provide one production during the school year for the Parent Teacher Group Meetings which occur monthly. In addition, the fifth grade students present a live wax museum. Students research and create a speech detailing the life of an important, well known person and present this narrative in costume as various people push their buttons in the museum.

Art is a part of the curriculum from kindergarten through fourth grade. Classroom teachers implement art TEKS throughout the school year. Fourth graders receive art instruction in four-week units throughout the year. Student artwork is always displayed in hallways and classrooms. In addition, each classroom is assigned a month during the school year in which they decorate the main bulletin board in the entrance of the elementary. Art contests sponsored by the Windthorst Volunteer Fire Department, the Windthorst Federal Credit Union, and Comcell also give students a chance to showcase their creativity.

Fifth grade students receive music education for fifty minutes daily by a certified music teacher following the TEKS. Concerts are performed at Christmas and at the end of the year for students, parents, families, and community members.

The physical education program at Windthorst Elementary follows state standards for kindergarten through fifth grade. Student receive fifty minutes of instruction by a certified physical education teacher. The focus is to promote physical activity and social development to instill the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Each year students participate in comprehensive fitness assessments to assess cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition. At the end of each school year, students look forward to participating in the annual track and field day celebrating and showcasing students' skills. Students are afforded the opportunity to engage in fun and games to end the school year.

Health is a part of the curriculum as classroom teachers implement health TEKS for kindergarten through fourth grade classes. Drug-free days are covered monthly during the year. Dental health is presented to students with presentations from the Department of Health; students are also given free toothbrushes at this time. Healthy meals are introduced during Thanksgiving units covering the Food Pyramid; healthy vs. unhealthy foods are discussed and studied. Fourth graders receive health and nutrition instruction in four-

week units through the year.

Windthorst Elementary also participates in the University Scholastic League (UIL) academic meet each year. Students from second grade through fifth grade compete against other schools in events such as music memory, art, and oral reading.

The technology curriculum at Windthorst Elementary is aligned to the TEKS. Technology strands are embedded into daily instruction in all content areas, and digital citizenship is emphasized as students learn to practice safe and responsible behavior while using digital tools. All students have access to iPads in general education classes; however, fourth and fifth grade students are given an iPad to use in all classes for the entire day. Computer labs are also available for student use. Students use various programs and tools to enhance their learning in all subjects through the use of technology.

WES strives to build a strong literacy foundation through the use of the library. The librarian has established a schedule for classes to check out and return books. The campus utilizes the Renaissance system's Accelerated Reader program which assesses students on books that they have read. A school-wide reward system is in place providing student motivation to reach reading goals set by teachers.

Character building contributes to the positive student culture at Windthorst Elementary. A monthly character trait accompanied with teaching lessons as well as dress-up days emphasize the importance of kindness and good choices. Anti-bullying speakers and activities are also an essential part of the character building curriculum.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Instructional decisions are made based on a multitude of data including previous years' testing data, benchmark testing throughout the year, and progress-monitoring programs throughout the school year. Students Pre-K through second grade are tested at the beginning of the year, the middle of the year, and the end of the year to monitor progress. Students in third through fifth grades are assessed using released state exam questions throughout the school year.

Information from all of these assessments are used to identify both strengths and areas of concern for each student. WES uses a RtI program, now known as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), to help students who are lagging behind grade level material or need additional support. This intervention is built into the daily schedule. Grades first through third receive fifty minutes daily, while fourth and fifth grade students receive thirty minutes daily.

A professional learning community meeting comprised of the classroom teachers, math and reading specialists, and an administrator determines students needing small-group tier 2 instruction. Evidence-based interventions to address phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension are implemented to assist students in reading. Students are also engaged in mathematical instruction to build foundation skills such as learning math facts and numerical literacy. Each child in RtI is reevaluated in six-week increments with progress monitoring data to determine necessary changes. The goal of the RtI program is to close student achievement gaps. Students not responding to intervention will move to tier 3 one-on-one instruction with the certified teacher.

Our state assessment in 2018-19 illustrated gaps between our Hispanic 85% and white 100% populations in math, Hispanic 78% and white 94% populations in science, and economic disadvantaged 89% and white 100% populations in writing. Using released tests these gaps were a result of non-mastery of vocabulary in these student populations. To address these gaps WES has implemented a rigorous campus-wide academic and cognitive vocabulary program.

3b. Students performing above grade level

WES teachers understand the crucial need to challenge students who are above grade level, and the staff strives to make this happen in every classroom. All students receive TEKS-aligned, grade-level instruction during each class, as well as an enrichment period which is built into their daily schedule. Teachers use this time, along with instructional time throughout the day, to work with students performing above grade level.

Superficial learning is rare at WES and is easily noted by the level of questioning in all classrooms. Teachers use higher level critical thinking questions to challenge their students to go deeper in every subject and incorporate these learning activities into their weekly lesson plans. Differentiated stations, which are both student driven and self-paced, are used at WES to enhance student learning. Students are encouraged to work on rigorous tasks which extend their learning once they have completed their daily instruction. Students use their imagination while listening to podcasts and use highly important critical thinking skills with brainteasers.

All teachers at WES are gifted and talented certified. Gifted and talented students are identified early and given extra opportunities to participate in projects and field trips throughout the year. Project-based learning is used during lessons where appropriate, and most classrooms have science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) boxes for creating and extending learning.

Student choice is another way WES students are engaged and challenged during the learning process. Science classes incorporate many hands-on lab experiments where students decide what resources to use. Choice boards are available in classrooms to extend learning and allow student ownership in the learning process. Even at the youngest pre-K level, children are encouraged to make their own choices about their learning styles some choosing dramatic play intertwined with art using different mediums while others choose computer programs that extend learning.

3c. Special education

Monitoring student progress is an important part of student success at WES. The staff recognizes that all students learn at a different pace. If students continue to struggle after Tier 3 interventions, they are considered for eligibility in Section 504, dyslexia, or special education services. Windthorst Elementary designs instruction to meet the diverse individual needs of all students. WES believes that all students can learn and is committed to the success of each student.

Students with specific disabilities qualify for accommodations through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These students are evaluated by a committee of educators that develop a plan of services for each student. These services put accommodations in place for student success. Dyslexia students meet with a dyslexia specialist two days per week for fifty minutes for specialized dyslexia instruction. These students also receive necessary accommodations for success in their classrooms. Accommodations include reducing spelling lists, phonics instruction, and oral administration of tests. Students who qualify for special education services receive educational, emotional, and social support needed to be successful. Reduced work and preferential seating assist these students in being successful. Daily frequent check-ins and personal interaction with these students is crucial. They are educated in classes with their grade-level peers. WES uses the inclusion model for students receiving special education services. Students on alternate curriculum plans still spend a maximum amount of time in a general education setting. An individual education plan (IEP) containing specific student goals outlines the educational structure for each special education student.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

In addition to the TEKS, Windthorst Elementary also incorporates the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) as a part of the curriculum. Planning and instruction using the ELPS is an essential element of the ESL program. WES has a Hispanic enrollment of 28.7%. Most of these students are second-generation WES students who are bilingual.

Students who are in the ESL program kindergarten through third grade receive English language instruction

for thirty minutes daily using English- language-learning software addressing the four domains of English instruction: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Intermediate grade levels monitor and assess students' work helping students read, write, and speak in a more natural English narrative. Teachers' lessons are designed utilizing the ELPS. Specialized vocabulary instruction is an important part of every lesson. Windthorst Elementary has a certified ESL teacher at each grade level. All EL students are tested yearly through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) to determine improvement and to evaluate whether the appropriate instructional practices are being used for each EL student.

Parent and family engagement activities are also an integral part of the ESL program.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

WES teachers and staff prioritize two areas in students' learning: engagement and belonging. Students must be engaged to learn, so teachers stimulate students through multiple methods keeping learning lively, fun, and fresh. A culture of caring is evident in every classroom, hallway, playground, and cafeteria. Every staff member truly cares for and knows the students at WES. The level of caring increases engagement because students feel like they belong to a family.

WES teachers include physical movement throughout their lessons. Movement increases blood flow to the brain, which stimulates engagement. Teachers use hand motions and body movements to remember content such as vocabulary, dates, and events. Students review information with movement, such as Four Corners and Sink or Swim-review games, where movement helps to cement learning.

WES teachers teach with intensity and enthusiasm. Teachers understand that if the teacher is excited and enthused about the content, students are also more likely to find it interesting. Real-world situations, humor, personal quotations, and movie clips are just a few ways WES teachers make lessons applicable to their students.

Academic games also increase students' engagement and can be useful for keeping an upbeat pace while making learning fun. Students retain information and can readily access content when academic games are used. Vocabulary review games-name that category, talk a mile a minute, and which one doesn't belong are all examples of academic games used in classrooms.

Students are provided opportunities to talk about themselves. When students are able to talk about themselves, they feel welcomed and part of a larger community. When they feel safe and comfortable in the classroom to share stories, they are more likely to perform for their teacher. WES teachers take interest surveys, use life connections in lessons, and understand their student learning profiles. Morning meetings provide an excellent time for students to share themselves with others increasing their self-confidence. In older grades, morning meetings are prepared and delivered by students.

High school peer assisted leadership (PAL) students mentor Windthorst Elementary students. While mentoring students, they work on specific skills, play games, or just talk. This promotes student engagement because students learn to value themselves.

Students' success is celebrated throughout the year during accelerated reading parties and star students awards for hard-working students and achievers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

A strong partnership between the school and home is essential for a quality educational program. WES is dedicated to the philosophy that parent involvement is integral to the success of every student. For this reason, parents are actively recruited as our partners for success.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in a variety of ways as the campus strives to develop and maintain an optimum learning environment for all students. Parents may contribute through volunteer programs as well as creating a supportive home atmosphere. Campus staff and parents develop and maintain specific parental involvement activities best suited to meet the individual needs of all stakeholders. Meet the teacher night is the first opportunity each year to enhance this partnership as teachers outline the home school compact. The WES parent and family engagement policy is detailed on the school website in English and Spanish. Parent teacher conferences are held in October and February each school year to discuss student progress. The Windthorst Elementary family night in February is essential in explaining the state assessment and building parent capacity to work with their students at home. Written publications are also a way to keep parents informed and involved. The "Blue Zone" is distributed to the community twice monthly in addition to the

parent and family engagement newsletter mailed monthly. Other fun events such as Grandparent Day, the Fall Festival, and track and field day occur throughout the year to keep both families and the community engaged with WES.

Family engagement is strong at WES. Students are given every opportunity for success through the development and enhancement of the home-school partnership. Windthorst Elementary recognizes that needs and expectations change from year to year; therefore, parent surveys, including questions about the effectiveness of the parent, family and community engagement program, are distributed at the end of each year. Campus staff analyzes the results and makes necessary changes in policies and procedures as needed.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

WES believes that a safe and collaborative environment is vital for the success of both teachers and students. Teachers who feel safe are able to maximize collaboration to enhance student learning. Windthorst has a long history of supporting the school, the staff, and the students.

WES provides support and time for teachers and staff in a variety of ways professional development, community support, and relationships with peers and administration, all of which allow collaboration and ultimately lead to the success of the school. Professional development aligns with school-wide goals such as data-assessment needs, state-directed initiatives, curriculum-driven workshops, and teacher-led presentations. Teachers are also encouraged to participate in campus instructional rounds. Teachers observe other teachers' craft to validate and assist in implementation of instructional frameworks and to encourage collaboration among staff. Professional learning community (PLC) meetings are also a part of the staff development taking place at WES. Teachers share approaches and activities that have been effective in their classrooms. PLC meetings review students to determine instructional needs. Teacher collaboration impacts student achievement using a team approach identifying student issues and possible solutions. The administration is open to new ideas and fully supports the staff by having an open-door policy. Even though WES has a small fiscal budget, money is prioritized to get teachers what they need for student achievement. WES is unique that there is low teacher turnover, which can be attributed to feeling safe, supported, and appreciated. The staff is cohesive and supports each other like a family.

In order to achieve the school mission of encouraging students to reach their potential, it is important that students feel safe and supported as well. This can be attributed to faculty and staff providing a warm environment that is inclusive and encourages risk taking. In addition to academic professional development, staff are provided learning opportunities which guide them in addressing the social and emotional well being of students. Students feel like contributing members of the school family and feel that the campus is a safe environment for them. Surveys, which give feedback on both the climate and culture of the campus are conducted throughout the year by administration. These surveys are given to students, parents, and faculty members to gauge what is going well and what issues need to be addressed to improve the school.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership is modeled daily by the administrator, staff, students, and volunteers at WES. The campus principal's role is to serve as the campus leader. The beginning of each school year opens with a campus-wide meeting outlining school policies and procedures, as well as principal expectations designed to ensure optimal function of the campus and student success. Programs used at WES are chosen based on student achievement needs, implemented with fidelity, and constantly evaluated to ensure proper functionality.

As instructional leader, the principal takes an active role in providing an instructional program that focuses on meeting the needs of all students. WES has a campus-wide instructional model guiding teachers on research-based strategies of instruction to ensure student success. Windthorst Elementary works to create a positive, caring environment for staff and students. The principal supports teachers by ensuring they have the appropriate training and the necessary resources for student success. Teachers are treated with respect, and their input is valued as the principal is open to suggestions and concerns. The campus principal's role as a true leader is to believe in the capacity of her staff to empower them in decision making when possible. The principal advocates and nurtures a campus climate and culture conducive to student learning and staff

growth. The leadership team, consisting of the principal and teachers, understands the value of growing its staff. Yearly evaluations and walk-through visits are conducted with the goal of improving staff performance. Yearly teacher self-growth goals are set and monitored as well for teacher improvement. Administration recognizes staff member strengths and innovative practices in the classroom. Staff members are encouraged to present professional development that ties with campus needs to other staff. Teachers who are experiencing success with certain strategies provide training to other teachers on the campus. Teachers are also encouraged to participate in instructional rounds as a method of improving their practice to improve student achievement.

Learning and collaborating with professionals on campus enhances the learning experience for both teachers and students. The principal leads the development of the Campus Improvement Plan and District Improvement Plan with teachers, staff, and community members collaborating and playing an active role.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

WES has consistently met accountability standards for state assessment, but in 2015 WES shifted focus from the Approaches standard to the Masters standard while still maintaining an excellent passing rate for all. Changes were put in place to improve the instructional practices at WES. The most important of these is the development of a campus-wide instructional model to assist teachers in designing engaging daily lessons. Implementation of the High Reliability Schools (HRS) Framework by Dr. Robert Marzano facilitated this change.

The HRS framework consists of five levels of certification in addition to research based, high-yield instructional strategies covered in *The Art and Science of Teaching*. This model consists of three major categories: content, context, and feedback further divided into ten design areas and broken down into 43 elements of instruction.

In the early stages, WES created a very basic model of instruction using three major categories: educational practices that you should see daily such as teaching with enthusiasm and intensity, practices that you might see occasionally like project-based learning, and things that you should never see in the classroom like disengaged students. Together, the faculty filled in the categories with twenty strategies to be used as an instructional model. This was a very basic instructional model that was easy to follow, but WES teachers felt there were many strategies left out of this design. The decision was made to add all of the elements from *The Art and Science of Teaching* so that teachers could choose from the 43 elements of instruction. The new instructional model is still easy to use, but teachers now have a variety of activities to work with to meet the needs of all learning styles. Teaching has become more of an art with cleverly designed lessons aimed at student engagement. The instructional model is displayed in every classroom as well as the teachers' lounge and the front office.

Student performance results on the state assessments have increased because of the use of the instructional model. Results from the 2018-19 state accountability show Windthorst Elementary Met Standard and received Distinction Designations in six of the possible six areas. Distinctions were achieved in English Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, and Science as well as in Comparative Academic Growth, Post Secondary Readiness, and Closing the Gaps.