



Katy ISD superintendent Dr. Lawrence Hindt

Having attended West Memorial Junior High and Taylor High School in Katy ISD, Dr. Lawrence Hindt is excited about the opportunity to return to the district. Dr. Hindt says that some of his greatest influences were Katy ISD namesakes Garland McMeans, Obra D. Tompkins, and Jack Rhodes.

Welcoming Katy ISD's New Superintendent

Taylor High School graduate, Dr. Lawrence Hindt, dishes about himself and his plans for the district

Written by Kirsten Cornell

Photography courtesy of Katy ISD

What did you enjoy most about Katy ISD? “I’m a 1983 graduate of James E. Taylor High School. What I enjoyed most was a really strong connection between Katy and what we called Katy Taylor High School at that time. You pretty much knew everybody in town. Even though we may have attended different high schools, a lot of us attended the same middle schools and ran around together.”

Were any Katy namesakes your teachers? “I had Garland McMeans as my principal at both West Memorial Junior High and Taylor High School, so for a total of six years.

I also remember Obra D. Tompkins as a coach. Jack Rhodes was the athletic director while I was in school and I knew him very well. It’s neat to come back after 33 years and see the schools and legacies that have been established here in Katy.”

How has Katy changed since you were a student? “I don’t know if it’s changed, it’s just gotten bigger. It’s a big town but it has a small-town feel and I think it’s important that we keep it that way.”

Why did you pursue a career in education? “Because of the people that taught me high school; I knew

my junior year that I wanted to be a teacher and a coach. I was a teacher for eight years before moving into an assistant principal position.”

What are your goals for Katy ISD? “To maintain the high achievement that we have in the classroom. My goal is to come in and be all eyes and ears, look at the data points, and see how we can improve instruction in the classroom.”

What do you foresee as your biggest challenge? “Katy is growing by 2,500 to 3,000 kids a year so naturally when you have that many kids you have to have bricks and

mortar to put them in. We're going to have to accommodate the growth of the district while at the same time taking care of the tax payers."

Who has been influential in your life? "I could give you name after name. What I can tell you is that I'm a prayerful person so my Lord and Savior is my greatest influence. But, next to that, I have a great family and a wonderful wife who is a teacher and keeps me grounded. She helps me not to distance myself from the classroom because I believe that's where the rubber meets the road in public education."

What qualities are important for a successful superintendent?

"Personally I think you have to be available. Superintendents have to roll up their sleeves and work with all staff members no matter what the position is. I believe that every position in public education is an important part of the function of the school district. I like to call myself a 'blue collar superintendent,' I don't like sitting in my office too much. I like getting out in the field and being useful."

Why is community involvement so important? "Because we have their kids in our buildings - that is their most precious commodity. Each and every child is an individual. They are our future leaders of tomorrow, the ones that are going to be taking care of you and me. It's our job to provide them with a well-balanced education and teach them to be productive citizens."

What is the most unique challenge facing students today? "An accountability system that is detrimental. The state says that one test, on one given day out of a 178-day

year is supposed to tell us what a child knows, and what a teacher is teaching; I don't buy into that philosophy. I realize there has to be some sort of accountability system, but I don't think it should be as punitive as it is today. I think they should be more diagnostic and used to help us improve."



Dr. Hindt takes selfies with Katy ISD employees at a board meeting announcing his nomination

What are the key ingredients for a successful school district? "You have to have great leadership. I think that administration has to have servant hearts. Our job is to serve teachers in the classroom because that's really where the magic is. If we can take some of the bureaucracy, the paperwork off of them and allow them to be creative

and differentiate the way they teach kids, and praise them for doing a great job, I think that's really the ingredient."

What is something that would surprise people to know about you? "I climbed the water tower in front of Taylor High School. That was a rite of passage as a senior. It's not that hard getting up there, but it's extremely scary coming down."

What excites you most about returning to Katy ISD?

"To be able to give back to a community that gave so much to me and my family. I can honestly say I would not be sitting in the position that I am today had it not been for the folks that were in those school buildings

when I was in junior high and high school. Lots of great mentors and folks that helped me in my direction - many of whom I still talk to." **KM**

KIRSTEN CORNELL is the lead associate editor for Katy Magazine. She and her team will also be taking #SuperintendentSelfies.

HINDT HINTS

- Climbed the Taylor water tower in high school
- 1983 graduate from Taylor High School
- Favorite Katy restaurants are Lupe Tortilla and Midway Barbeque
- Has three miniature dachshunds: Turbo, Jazz, and Rafiki
- Likes to watch Texans, Rockets, and Astros games when given the chance
- Earned his doctorate from the University of Houston
- His wife, Kathryn, is a teacher
- Son Zach is a senior at UTSA and daughter Alexis is a freshman at LSU
- Favorite family vacation was hiking through the El Yunque Rainforest in Puerto Rico