

Windham School District
Board of Trustees
258th Meeting



Minutes

June 17, 2010
Austin, Texas

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark
4140 Governor's Row
Austin, Texas 78744
Omni A, B, C**

**June 17, 2010
1:00 – 1:30 PM**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call to Order

Convene Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board)

I. Regular Session

- A. Recognitions
- B. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Consent Items
 - 1. Minutes of the April 8, 2010, WSD Board Meeting
 - 2. Excused Absences
- C. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Revisions to Windham Board Policy, WBP-05.00, "The ECHO"
- D. Overview of the Information Technology Division
- E. Superintendent's Report – District Improvement Plan Process
- F. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board
 - 1. Chairman's Fitness Challenge, 4th Quarter
 - 2. Salute to Teachers

Adjourn WSD Board

The WSD Board may discuss and/or take action on any of the items posted on this meeting agenda. The WSD Board may also convene into Executive Session on any of these matters when attorney-client privilege is warranted.

**MINUTES OF THE WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

258th MEETING

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Thursday, June 17, 2010, at the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark, in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Oliver Bell, Chairman
Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Pastor C.L. Jackson
Janice Harris Lord
Terrell McCombs
J. David Nelson
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Eric Gambrell

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent
Allen Bourque
Mike Mondville
Don Lawrence
Mario Cotton

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL
JUSTICE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brad Livingston, Executive Director
Bryan Collier
Melinda Bozarth

CONVENED

Oliver Bell, Chairman, called the meeting of the Windham School District (WSD or district) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Thursday, June 17, 2010, at 1:15 p.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the *Open Meetings Act*. A quorum was present and the 258th meeting of the Board was declared open. During the regular session, the Board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register.

Chairman Bell recognized Kyle Mitchell from the Governor's Office, Angela Isaack from the Legislative Budget Board, Marsha McLane from Representative Madden's office, Robert Hamilton from the Lieutenant Governor's office, and Travis Sampley from House Corrections, and thanked them for their continued support.

The Chairman reported the Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on topics posted on the meeting agenda as well as public comment on issues within its jurisdiction as provided in Rule 300.1. Persons interested in providing presentations at the meeting were required to complete a registration card and submit it at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting's posted start time. As no cards were received prior to the required deadline, the Board would not hear public presentations on posted agenda topics.

RECOGNITIONS

Superintendent Debbie Roberts, recognized Mario Cotton, who currently serves as WSD's Recreation Supervisor, for the wonderful job he did as Coach of TEAM WINDHAM during the Chairman's Fitness Challenge.

Ms. Roberts advised that Mr. Cotton was enthusiastic about leading the initiative and immediately adopted the title and the persona of "Coach" with all WSD participants immediately becoming TEAM WINDHAM. Instead of sitting back and waiting for the team to let him know how they were doing, Coach sent countless emails. Some were encouraging, some were chastising, and others were just plain humorous, but they were all motivating. Ms. Roberts noted that Coach lives the life encouraged by the Chairman's Fitness Challenge, and she thanked him for not only being an example, but for also inspiring more than 100 WSD employees to participate statewide.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING CONSENT ITEMS

Chairman Bell called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda which consisted of the minutes of the April 8, 2010, meeting.

Chairman Bell asked if there were any comments, objections, or amendments to the Consent Items. Noting there were none, the Consent Items were approved as provided.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REVISIONS TO WINDHAM BOARD POLICY, WBP-05.00, "THE ECHO"

Mike Mondville, WSD General Counsel, informed the Board that WBP-05.00 pertains to the editorial review of "The ECHO." The revision to the policy changes the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) component for the editorial review from the General Counsel to the Chief of Staff. Mr. Mondville asked for Board approval.

Terrell McCombs inquired why this change was being made. Chairman Bell noted that several sets of eyes review "The ECHO" to ensure appropriate content. As "The ECHO" did not need to be reviewed from a legal standpoint, the policy revision reflects the Chief of Staff as the appropriate reviewer on behalf of TDCJ.

Pastor C.L. Jackson made a motion for the Windham School District Board of Trustees to approve the revisions to WBP-05.00 concerning "The ECHO," as presented.

David Nelson seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

OVERVIEW OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) DIVISION

Allen Bourque, WSD Director of Information Technology, began his presentation by providing the mission and vision of the IT Division. The division has 28 full-time positions supporting 1,355 WSD positions and 18 college instructors. They also maintain 138 computer labs throughout the district. The IT staff is strategically positioned in order to cover 98 remote locations.

Mr. Bourque explained that the IT Division utilizes best practice processes, and provided some examples of these processes. Some of the technology utilized by the division includes:

- Thin Clients – provide security and centralized management
- Blend of desktops/laptops where appropriate
- Help Desk and Change Management tools
- Utilize Open Source development tools – free software programs
- Green technology – blade servers reduce heat and lowers power and space needs
- Virtual Servers – Software that emulates a physical server, thus reducing hardware expenses. Also contributes to the greening of WSD's infrastructure.

The IT Division manages more than 60,000 inbound and 15,000 outbound emails and repels more than 80,000 spam emails per month. IT provides and manages more than 21 terabytes of storage space and responds to more than 700 SysAid requests monthly. IT workers also support more than 4,500 thin client devices and 6,000 stand-alone workstations, and provide support to more than 400 applications.

Mr. Bourque explained the role of the IT division in supporting the goals of the district. He concluded his presentation by sharing the division's future plans with the Board:

- Service level agreements
- Enterprise Resource Planning
- Standardizing equipment, which would include replacing high maintenance printers with multi-function devices. This would consistently lower support costs.
- Developing and implementing IT asset tracking
- Tracking actual versus estimate on projects
- Security review and policy to cope with technological changes – i.e. encryption, broadband, and Wi-Fi

Mr. Nelson asked for an explanation of the term thin client. Mr. Bourque explained that it is an appliance where all processing is done on a server located at one central location. He added that

multiple thin clients can be purchased at a fraction of the cost of a stand-alone computer, and can then be connected to one server that does all the processing and provides the screen information.

Leo Vasquez stated that the presentation mentioned 138 computer labs, and asked how WSD defined computer labs. Mr. Bourque explained that many vocational classes utilize computer labs such as Business Computer Information Systems and Desktop Publishing. Even classes like truck driving and welding utilize computers. Ms. Roberts added that most units have one computer lab to aid in academic instruction, but some units have additional labs depending on the vocational classes taught.

Mr. McCombs asked about open source development tools and how that is cost saving for the district. Mr. Bourque explained that open source development tools are essentially and can be downloaded free of charge from the internet.

Chairman Bell thanked Mr. Bourque for his presentation.

Attachment – PowerPoint Presentation

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Ms. Roberts informed the Board that while the WSD school year does not officially end until the end of August, staff is already beginning preparation for next school year. The process begins with the development of a District Improvement Plan, which becomes the basis for the Regional Improvement Plan. Each unit then uses their respective regional plan to develop their Campus Improvement Plan.

On most campuses, this process begins with the formation of a Shared Decision Making Committee comprised of the principal, a cross section of teachers, and other staff who work collaboratively to determine goals and strategies to improve student achievement and reduce recidivism. The process increases the involvement of all staff in the overall improvement of educational programs offered on the unit.

The Shared Decision Making Committee begins by reviewing the strategies and objectives included in the District and Regional Improvement Plans. The Campus Improvement Plan is then designed to meet the overall goals of both the district and the unit. Each unit objective is discussed and modified to address one of the district’s four statutory goals: (1) reduce recidivism, (2) reduce the cost of confinement, (3) increase the success of former offenders in obtaining and maintaining employment, and (4) provide an incentive for positive behavior during confinement.

Other information considered in designing the campus plan include statistical information related to student progress, the educational needs of the campus, and the results of both the Units Needs Assessment Survey and an Instructional Materials Inventory that are completed by teachers and staff each year. This information is evaluated in light of unit objectives so that budget requests can be prioritized. Materials needed to support the campus goals included in the Campus Improvement Plan are given priority. Program needs are also identified.

The compiled information is then provided back to administration and used in developing the budget and in determining unit program offerings for the upcoming year.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD

Chairman Bell announced the Fourth Quarter Fitness Challenge - "Walk the Beautiful Beaches of Texas." This challenge will be conducted over a six week period beginning June 21st, and will encourage staff teams to walk 624 miles, the length of the Texas coastline. Chairman Bell noted WSD employees recorded the second highest total number of miles in the First Quarter Challenge by walking 8,068 miles.

Chairman Bell stated that the month of May was host to National Teacher's Day and to Teacher Appreciation Week. He expressed his appreciation to the WSD teaching staff, stating that WSD teachers impact lives. They provide opportunities to the offenders, they provide praise, and they help build self-esteem. Chairman Bell added that he recently had the opportunity to read a few testimonies about WSD teachers and shared the following comments.

- One testimony was received from an offender who was a recent welding completer. He was released from the GRAD (Gang Renunciation and Dissociation) program less than a year ago. He has been incarcerated since 1997, and has never been allowed to take a trade prior due to his gang affiliation. Since completing his trade, he is now employed as a welding teacher's shop assistant.

The offender wrote: *"Through Windham welding, I've found a sense of self. I've found something that has not only instilled a sense of pride in myself, but the value of helping others learn. I've developed skills that if I released this very day, I'd be prepared to enter the work force with confidence. I could compete in a demanding, specialized, and competitive job market, and also, be a productive member of society."*

- Another testimony came from Ms. Linda Masters, a teacher at the Estelle Unit, who had just attended a GED graduation.

She wrote: *"One of the graduates had been in my reading class just 2 ½ years prior. That year, while teaching him to read, I repeatedly told him he was smart, and I remember well him telling me I was the only person who had ever told him that. When he could read, his math scores soared and before long he advanced to Mr. Miller's GED class. On graduation day, after the ceremony, when graduates were allowed a picture with their family, this young man came to me and told me that no one in his family attended. He said, 'my parents never even took the time to know I was smart, but you and Mr. Miller did.'" At his request, the offender's GED picture that day included Ms. Masters and Mr. Miller by his side.*

- The last testimony was from an offender who had actually been dropped from WSD courses after achieving too many hours without obtaining a GED. Once he finally realized the good in getting his GED, he was given a second chance. Incarcerated in 1990, his first valid education achievement score was 1.9 in 1991. This past February, he accomplished his goal and passed his GED. Upon doing so, he wrote to Ms. Roberts: *"So many people are so proud of me for finally getting my GED. It really makes me happy and empowered after all these years. Hard work is what gets you achievements in life, and I appreciate you for standing up for those who want to*

Chairman Bell asked for everyone to join him in expressing appreciation and gratitude to all the WSD teachers for their dedication towards making a difference in the lives of offenders.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Bell adjourned the 258th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees at 1:45 p.m.

* _____
Chairman

* _____
Secretary

*Signature on file.

Referenced attachment for the minutes are available upon request for the Office of Record.