

**Windham School District**  
**Board of Trustees**  
*271st Meeting*



**Minutes**

**August 23, 2012**  
**Austin, Texas**

# **TEXAS BOARD OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

## **Meeting Schedule August 23, 2012**

**Sheraton Austin Hotel  
701 East 11th Street  
Austin, Texas 78701**

**Phone (512) 478-1111  
Facsimile (512) 479-6458**

### **Thursday, August 23, 2012**

9:30 – 10:15 AM	Windham School District Board of Trustees <i>Executive Session – Bonnell Room</i>
10:15 – 11:00 AM	Windham School District Board of Trustees <i>Regular Session – Capitol Ballroom D</i>
11:00 AM – 12:30PM	Texas Board of Criminal Justice <i>Executive Session – Bonnell Room</i>
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Audit and Review Committee <i>Capitol Ballroom D</i>
1:30 – 2:15 PM	Business and Financial Operations Committee <i>Capitol Ballroom D</i>
2:15 PM	Texas Board of Criminal Justice <i>Regular Session – Capitol Ballroom D</i>

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## WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Sheraton Austin Hotel – Capitol Ballroom D**  
**701 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Austin, Texas 78701**  
**August 23, 2012**  
**10:15 – 11:00 AM**

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

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#### *Call to Order*

#### *Reconvene Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board)*

#### I. Regular Session

- A. Recognitions
- B. Consideration of Approval of Consent Items
  - 1. Minutes of the June 15, 2012, WSD Board Meeting
  - 2. Appraisers for the 2012-2013 School Year
  - 3. Personal Property Donations
  - 4. Excused Absences
- C. Superintendent's Report – 67th Annual Correctional Education Association Conference
- D. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board
  - 1. Board Member Participation in Offender GED Graduation Events
  - 2. Chairman's Fitness Challenge
- E. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding the WSD Superintendent's Contract
- F. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding the WSD Budget and Salary Schedule for 2012-2013
- G. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Granting the Superintendent Authority to Award Administrative Leave to WSD Employees Fulfilling Requirements of the 2013 Chairman's Fitness Challenge
- H. Review of the Sam Houston State University Recidivism Study
- I. Public Comments

#### *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**

**271st MEETING**

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Thursday, August 23, 2012, at the Sheraton Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Oliver Bell, Chairman  
Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman  
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary  
Eric Gambrell  
Judge Larry Gist  
Terrell McCombs  
J. David Nelson  
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Janice Harris Lord

**WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Veronica Casanova  
Linda Goerdel  
Marjie Haynes  
Michael Mondville  
Kevin Ainsworth  
Allen Bourque  
Paul Brown  
Sandra Haak  
Karen Koenning  
Sandra Nash  
Mike Vickers

**WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent

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

Melinda Bozarth

**CONVENED**

Oliver Bell, Chairman, convened the 271st meeting of the Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Thursday, August 23, 2012, at 9:37 a.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the *Open Meetings Act*. A quorum was present and the meeting was declared open. The Board conducted executive session, which is closed to the public in accordance with the Texas Government Code §551.074.

Chairman Bell reconvened the regular session of the WSD Board in accordance with Chapter 551 of the

Texas Government Code, the *Open Meetings Act*. During the regular session, the Board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register. A quorum of the Board was present and the meeting was declared open at 10:26 a.m.

Chairman Bell recognized Dallas Reed from the Governor's Office and Candace Nolte from the Lieutenant Governor's Office.

The Chairman reported the WSD Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on posted agenda topics as well as for public comments on issues within its jurisdiction as provided in Board Rule 300.1. Persons interested in speaking 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. For this meeting, no speaker registration cards were received by the board staff prior to the required deadline. Therefore, no public presentations or public comments would be heard.

### **RECOGNITIONS**

This topic was skipped due to the absence of the superintendent.

Chairman Bell explained that Ms. Roberts was not in attendance due to a family illness.

### **CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS**

Chairman Bell called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda, which consisted of the meeting minutes from June 15, 2012, appraisers for the 2012-13 school year, personal property donations, and excused absences.

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

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

This topic was skipped due to the absence of the superintendent.

### **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD**

#### **Board Member Participation in Offender GED Graduation Events**

Chairman Bell stated he had the pleasure of serving as the keynote speaker for an offender GED graduation ceremony in Gatesville in June. It included students from the Crain, Hilltop, Mountain View, Murray and Woodman units.

Sixty-one female offenders were recognized that day for their achievements. They were very proud of

their accomplishment as were the family members and teachers present for the event. There was one graduate in particular, a special education student who tested at a 3rd grade level when she came into the TDCJ system in 2000. With the help of WSD teachers, she was able to bring her scores up through the years and pass her GED.

Members of the Board are routinely asked to participate in these events and as calendars permit, members attend as many graduation ceremonies as possible. Being present shows support, which is important to staff morale. It also shows the offenders that their achievement is significant to the agency and to the leaders of this state.

Anyone that has attended one of these events knows of the impact the recognitions make on the offenders and their families. The events are energizing and for many of the graduates, a stepping stone for further achievements. Sharing in the offenders' success is uplifting, as is seeing the pride on the faces of the teachers who helped make success a reality. It is the teachers' dedication to education that gives Windham the distinct honor of awarding more GED certificates than any other school district in Texas. During School Year 2010-2011, this amounted to 5,169 GED certificates.

### **Chairman's Fitness Challenge**

The fourth quarter of the 2012 Chairman's Fitness Challenge, "Summer Olympic Games," concluded August 12. The Windham School District completed the quarter with a grand total of 560,000 points.

Within Division 7, which is dedicated to Windham, the North Texas Region placed first with 258,829 points, which was the second highest score in the overall challenge. The West Texas Region came in second, and WSD Administration came in third.

Chairman Bell thanked the employees who helped make the fourth quarter a success.

### **DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE WSD SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT**

Chairman Bell noted the Board met in executive session regarding the superintendent's contract. Even though Ms. Roberts was not in attendance, the Board discussed the renewal of her contract, which she indicated she would sign if approved.

Chairman Bell asked if there were any questions or comments. Seeing none, he called for a motion and a second.

*Carmen Hiles moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the WSD Superintendent's contract as presented to include an annual salary of \$115,000.*

*Terrell McCombs seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.*

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE WSD  
BUDGET AND SALARY SCHEDULE FOR 2012-2013**

Linda Goerdel, WSD Chief Financial Officer, thanked the board for allowing WSD staff to meet with each of them during scheduled briefings to discuss the 2012-2013 WSD Budget and Salary Schedule. She appreciated their ideas, suggestions, questions and most of all their words of encouragement and their continued support of the district and its mission.

The WSD Budget and Salary Schedule for 2012-2013 reflects two significant differences from the past school year budget. The first is an increase in the regular programs budget of \$1.6 million due to an allotment for instructional materials. The second is the elimination of \$2.1 million of federal funds from the Incarcerated Individual's Program Grant, which funded some of the college programs.

The WSD regular programs budget reflects salaries budgeted at 96% with an estimated expense in 2012 reflecting a 92% filled rate. Along with the instructional materials allotment, there is an increase in the capital equipment line to cover information technology hardware and vehicle replacements.

Ms. Goerdel reviewed the federal pass-through grants for 2013 that are received from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). She also reviewed the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) for post-secondary, library, recreational services and the printing of the offender newspaper, The ECHO.

The estimated income for regular programs reflects a budgeted amount of carryover funds. Approximately \$3 million of these carryover funds will sustain approximately 59 teaching positions. The remainder of the provided budget book reflected the personnel schedule and salary plans for the 2012-2013 school year. As discussed in the briefings, the only change to this section is the addition of a separate plan for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers.

Chairman Bell noted he wanted to pay close attention to the carryover funds that are being used to maintain the 59 teaching positions. It is his understanding that line item could potentially disappear after this year. WSD may not have funding on hand to continue with those positions and may need to work to maintain funding for those positions. Ms. Goerdel responded that funding to maintain those positions has been requested as part of the exceptional item request through TEA.

Ms. Goerdel requested the Board approve the 2012-2013 budget as presented. With approval, the salary schedule will be incorporated into board policy.

Chairman Bell asked if there were any questions or comments. Seeing none, he called for a motion and a second.

*Tom Mechler moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the WSD budget and salary schedule for 2012-2013 and authorize the superintendent to make transfers as necessary as authorized by policy.*

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

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING GRANTING THE SUPERINTENDENT AUTHORITY TO AWARD ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE TO WSD EMPLOYEES FULFILLING REQUIREMENTS OF THE 2013 CHAIRMAN'S FITNESS CHALLENGE**

Veronica Casanova, Director of Human Resources, advised the superintendent requests board approval to grant administrative leave to WSD employees who complete the requirements of the 2013 Chairman's Fitness Challenge. This administrative leave would be granted in the same manner and in the same amount as granted to TDCJ employees.

Chairman Bell informed the Board that TDCJ has a provision where the executive director is already allowed to award administrative leave for completion of the Chairman's Fitness Challenge. By giving the superintendent the authority to grant leave to WSD employees who complete the 2013 Chairman's Fitness Challenge, the Board will not have to be involved in granting administrative leave.

*Judge Larry Gist moved that the WSD Board of Trustees grant the superintendent authority to award administrative leave to WSD employees fulfilling requirements for the 2013 Chairman's Fitness Challenge.*

*Mr. Mechler seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.*

**REVIEW OF THE SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY RECIDIVISM STUDY**

Marjie Haynes, WSD Director of Instruction, reported that Dr. Gaylene Armstrong, Research Director for the Correctional Management Institute of Texas at Sam Houston State University (SHSU), with assistance from graduate research assistants and two professors at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, have been conducting a study to help WSD ascertain the effectiveness of its programs. The professors conducting this study have all had previous research experience with correctional education programming. The study is entitled "An Outcomes Evaluation of the Windham School District Correctional Education Programming."

The study includes more than 231,000 offenders who were participants in correctional education programs between January 1, 2007, and December 31, 2011. The target population for the recidivism part of the analysis includes all offenders released during 2009 who participated in education programming prior to their release.

While the final report has not been completed, WSD has received some preliminary results. The final study will include the effectiveness of the academic, vocational, cognitive intervention, CHANGES (pre-release), and post-secondary (college academic & college vocational) programs.

The draft of the report includes a review of literature concerning previous studies of correctional education programs. Previous studies have indicated the following positive aspects of correctional education: reduced levels of recidivism; increased likelihood of success in obtaining and maintaining employment and higher wage earnings; and reduced levels of institutional misconduct which reduces the cost of confinement.

The literature suggests a minimum threshold of correctional education programming may be required for a program to have a significant impact on recidivism. As a result, the report looks at program exposure; the concentration of a particular program during the course of an offender's confinement. Program exposure was calculated by dividing the number of attendance hours in a program by the total number of days incarcerated. The study found the highest to lowest program exposure was special education, English as a second language, career & technical education (vocational), academic (literacy), CHANGES, cognitive intervention, college academic, and life skills.

Results for each of the correctional education program models demonstrated that increased levels of program exposure decreased the likelihood of offender re-incarceration to a statistically significant degree. Increased levels of program participation in WSD academic, WSD vocational, college academic, college vocational, and cognitive intervention programming resulted in statistically significant reductions in the likelihood of offender re-incarceration.

The report also examines the extent to which program overlap occurred; whether offenders participated in more than one type of correctional education program. For example, slightly more than 14% were exposed to correctional education programming that included some combination of three or more programs such as academic, cognitive intervention, and vocational programming or life skills programming. It would be anticipated that these offenders have maximized the benefit of correctional education programming.

The report provides a survival analysis to examine the relationship between varying levels of program participation and the number of days an offender successfully remains in the community. With respect to the academic or literacy program, the study found that more than 50% of the adult basic education participants successfully remained in the community. In terms of program exposure, without taking into consideration educational achievement level at the time of intake, those offenders with higher levels of program exposure re-incarcerated more quickly when compared to others. This was expected because lower functioning offenders spend the most time in the program and offenders who are the lowest functioning are at the highest risk of recidivating. In order to get a more accurate picture of the relationship between program exposure and survival in the community, Windham has requested that offenders who participated in academic programming be divided into subgroups according to their educational achievement levels at intake.

Offenders with lower math and writing test scores were significantly more likely to be re-incarcerated. This result lends credence to the legislative rider to target the young, lowest functioning offenders who are at the highest risk of recidivating. This report demonstrates that WSD has been targeting these offenders.

With respect to the vocational programs, vocational participants with the highest levels of program exposure were more likely to remain in the community than offenders with fewer hours of vocational participation. This underscores the importance of training to industry standards. Greater involvement and completion in vocational training leads to differences in re-incarceration; these differences begin to appear as early as six months after release. Almost 60% of vocational participants remained in the community if they had 600 or more hours of participation in the vocational program. Offenders with 60

hours or more of college academic programming were significantly more successful in avoiding re-incarceration.

With respect to the college vocational program, offenders who completed college vocational programming with 600 hours or more fared significantly better with almost 70% remaining in the community at the conclusion of the data collection period.

The study also found that approximately 65% of offenders who successfully completed the cognitive intervention program remained in the community. Those who completed the program were significantly more likely to remain in the community compared to those who did not complete the program.

The study includes a caveat that the CHANGES program experienced a significant curricular change in 2009, which is not accounted for in this study. In 2009, the curriculum was revised to be cognitive-based. Findings from this current study primarily reflect the results of the previous curriculum. The results of the current CHANGES II program with the revised cognitive-based curriculum will not be known until a future study is conducted.

The report indicates that offenders who are successfully employed contribute to the state and to society through taxes paid and reduced utilization of social benefits. As a result, the study looked at wages. With the exception of the academic program, an increased level of program exposure leads to a statistically significant increase in average quarterly wages. Five programs were found to have a statistically significant influence on average quarterly wages: WSD vocational, college vocational, cognitive intervention, life skills, and college academic. With respect to the effect of multiple program participation on average quarterly wages, the results indicate that cognitive intervention programming and vocational programming have a positive significant relationship with average quarterly wages.

A few key findings in the report included:

- In considering program exposure or concentration of individual correctional education programming, all correctional education programs with the exception of basic adult education were significantly related to higher levels of average quarterly wages when controlling for days incarcerated and demographic characteristics of the offender. Lower educational achievement levels are associated with lower wages.
- In considering total number of program hours, for those offenders reporting income during the period of release in the community, the average quarterly wage increased with increasing levels of participation in vocational programming, college vocational programming, life skills programming, or cognitive intervention programming.
- The most robust influences on average quarterly wages when controlling for involvement in other types of programming was found in increased levels of program attendance in vocational programming and cognitive intervention programming.

Considering the results of this study, WSD is particularly proud of the vocational and cognitive intervention programs. When the final report is published, Ms. Haynes noted she felt the Board will be pleased overall with the results. In addition, the Board can be confident that Windham staff members

will be using information from the study to aid with continuous program improvement efforts.

Chairman Bell reminded members this is an interim progress report on the results to date. Some of this information may shift around as the report is finalized. He also noted that there may be need for some term translations to make the report easier to understand. Ms. Haynes agreed, the study used the term survival analysis instead of recidivism rate and that could cause some confusion to readers who were not familiar with the term.

Mr. Bell commented on the statement regarding academic programs having a higher recidivism rate for offender with longer exposure. He compared it to the rehabilitation division's drug program. When the offender completes the full program, to include the aftercare component, the recidivism rate is significantly less (7%) as compared to 42% for those not completing the program. He noted the overall recidivism rate in Texas is 24%.

For clarification, Mr. Mechler noted the report does not use the term "recidivism;" instead, it uses the term "survival rate." This indicates researchers go back and determine how many ex-offenders actually stay in the community. He expressed his concern in trying to redefine new language over something that is readily accepted throughout the correctional industry and the state's leadership. Chairman Bell reminded members that this is an interim report on the progress that has been made on the study, not the final report. He stated that WSD staff should talk to the researchers about having the language and the notion of the report fit the culture for which it is written.

Mr. Mechler stated that the recidivism rate for Texas after a three-year term is 24.6%. The numbers in this study are in contrast to that figure, and asked about this discrepancy. Ms. Haynes responded that the study only included offenders who participated in Windham programs and lacked a comparison group of offenders who were released and did not participate. Staff felt the study should include a control group of offenders who did not participate in Windham programs while incarcerated. She stated that staff discussed this issue with the researchers.

Mr. Mechler said the preliminary study seems to indicate that offenders who began an academic program but did not finish it had a higher recidivism rate. Ms. Haynes responded the district believes that literacy participants in the study should be broken down into several groups by educational achievement level at intake, and WSD discussed this issue with the researchers. Offenders who spend less time in Windham academic programs tend to be those who have demonstrated higher achievement levels prior to incarceration. Offenders with higher educational achievement levels are less likely to recidivate. These offenders attend literacy classes for shorter periods of time before achieving a GED, but are less likely to recidivate because they are operating at a higher educational achievement level at the beginning of their incarceration. Offenders with longer term exposure to Windham academic programs, on the other hand, tend to be those who begin with very low levels of educational achievement and are the most likely to recidivate. In order to gage the impact of these offenders participation in academic programs, it would be necessary to compare recidivism rates of offenders with lower educational achievement levels at intake who do not raise their educational achievement levels with lower functioning offenders who do raise their educational achievement levels. Windham is talking to SHSU about using the educational achievement level of offenders at intake to make comparisons.

Mr. Mechler noted he was inclined to think there were more issues that contribute to the problem than education, whether it is emotional, substance abuse, etc. A control group is absolutely critical, and without it, it would be hard to have the findings be balanced. Ms. Haynes stated that WSD has expressed their concerns to the researchers.

Mr. McCombs suggested the report needs to use terminology that is easily understood and accepted nationally with outcome data that is readable and understandable. He indicated that he appreciated what has been said in the preliminary report concerning cognitive learning; he feels the cognitive program is underrated. Having an offender understand that they have choices in life, when many times they don't feel they have any, is a very enlightening point in their lives and it helps them change their behavior once they get out. Cognitive intervention is extremely important in helping these offenders understand they have choices in how they think.

Chairman Bell concluded the discussion by restating the board's desire to have a final report that can be easily understood and interpreted, while being a valuable tool in assessing WSD programs.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the 271<sup>st</sup> meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

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Chairman

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Secretary

*\*Signature on File*