

Windham School District
Board of Trustees
273rd Meeting



Minutes

January 11, 2013
Austin, Texas

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Radisson Hotel – Austin Room
111 Cesar Chavez at Congress
Austin, Texas 78701**

**January 11, 2013
11:15 AM – 12:00 PM**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call to Order

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

I. Regular Session

- A. Consideration of Approval of Consent Items
 - 1. Minutes of the November 30, 2012, WSD Board Meeting
 - 2. Appraisers for the 2012-2013 School Year
 - 3. Excused Absences
- B. Superintendent's Report – Importance of Student Attendance to Student Progress
- C. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board
 - 1. Overview of the Board's Education Operations Efficiency and Performance Standards Committee
 - 2. Chairman's Fitness Challenge
- D. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Interim Superintendent
 - 1. Approval of Chairman's Interim Appointment
 - 2. Approval of Contract for Interim Superintendent
- E. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action on the Resolution Regarding Texas Association of School Board (TASB) – Sponsored Media Honor Roll
- F. Results from the Annual Accountability Committee Meeting and Annual Review of the WSD Accountability System
- G. Human Resources Division Update

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**

Meeting No. 273

The Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) met in session on Friday, January 11, 2013, at the Radisson Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent
Veronica Casanova
Latreace Craig
Linda Goerdel
Michael Mondville
Kevin Ainsworth
Karen Koenning
Sandra Nash
Mike Vickers

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mike Bell
Sharon Howell
Rick Thaler

RECONVENED

Oliver Bell, Chairman, reconvened the meeting of the 273rd WSD Board to order on Friday, January 11, 2013, at 11:42 a.m. 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 was present and the meeting was declared open.

Chairman Bell recognized Jared Staples with the Governor's Office, John Newton from the Legislative Budget Board, and State Representative James White.

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. For this meeting, as no speaker registration cards were received, no public presentations would be heard.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

Chairman Bell called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda, which consisted of the minutes of the November 30, 2012, meeting, appraisers for the 2012-13 school year, and excused absences. There being no comments, objections or amendments, the Consent Items were approved as submitted.

Chairman Bell advised there would be a slight deviation in the order of topics from the posted agenda. Item D would be considered prior to continuing with the rest of the agenda.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

Approval of Chairman's Interim Appointment

Mike Mondville, WSD General Counsel, stated that WBP-03.01 "Windham School District Superintendent Qualifications, Selection, Evaluation, Renewal or Non-Renewal, and Dismissal of Contract" gives the chairman the authority to appoint an interim superintendent should the need arise. With Ms. Roberts' resignation, Chairman Bell appointed Veronica Casanova to serve as interim superintendent on December 10, 2012. The policy also states a person appointed on an interim basis shall serve until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board, at which time the Board shall approve the chairman's interim appointment, appoint another person to serve on an interim basis, or appoint a person to fill the position on a permanent basis. Therefore, policy requires the Board to take action on the interim appointment.

Chairman Bell noted the Board met in executive session to discuss this topic. His intent on appointing an interim was to ensure someone was available to help the district get through the term of the session and to carry on the normal flow of business through the end of the school year. The Chairman stated during the interim, the Board will continue to search for a person to fill the job on a full time basis.

Carmen Hiles moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the selection of Veronica Casanova as interim superintendent for the Windham School District.

Leo Vasquez seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

Approval of Contract for Interim Superintendent

Mr. Mondville stated since the Board has approved the appointment of Ms. Casanova as interim superintendent, there is the matter of her contract. The contract, executed in December, was reviewed by the Board in executive session.

Chairman Bell stated the contract will be at the current level of the superintendent's pay and the term is through the end of the school year. It provides flexibility for both parties to end the contract should it be appropriate and there is no penalty to either side.

Janice Lord moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the contract with Veronica Casanova as interim superintendent of the Windham School District, as presented.

Ms. Hiles seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

Ms. Casanova thanked the chairman and Board for the opportunity to serve as interim superintendent. She expressed her excitement and hopes that she meets and exceeds their expectations.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As January is School Board Recognition Month, on behalf of the Windham School District, Ms. Casanova thanked each of the Board members for their dedication and support.

Importance to Student Attendance to Student Progress

Ms. Casanova discussed the effect of program dosage on student achievement. Staff often talk about student contact hours being tied to the budget, however the most important effect of contact hours is student achievement. If teachers don't have face to face time with students, they can't teach them. In public schools, this is referred to as "seat time." Research shows increased contact hours in Windham classrooms results in improved student achievement.

On average, WSD students spend about 525 hours in literacy programs; that number can increase by up to 900 hours for special education students. Research shows that 20% of offenders who entered WSD programs as illiterate or functioning below a 6th grade level, left TDCJ as literate or advanced readers after participating in WSD programs. The same is true for higher functioning offenders, just over 20% of offenders that walk in as readers, left TDCJ as advanced readers after participating in WSD programs. Furthermore, research shows that as contact time is increased, reading scores increase. For example, with less than 325 hours, the average reading score change is 1.2 grade levels, but with 1,075 hours or more, the average reading growth gain is 4.4 grade levels.

WSD doesn't have the luxury of time with all of the offenders, but this shows a significant difference can be made in the lives of offenders in 4 to 6 months. Educational services not only increase an offender's reading ability, it allows the offender to function better within the TDCJ and be better prepared for other programs. In addition, it helps prepare them for successful employment after release.

Contact hours provide a concrete measurable tool for student achievement, which in the end, is another method to measure program effectiveness. Chairman Bell noted the book "Ten Thousand Hours" is very popular and is about the amount of time it takes to become an expert in certain areas. The more time spent with people, the greater percentage of return.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD

Overview of the Board's Education Operations Efficiency and Performance Standards Committee

In June 2011, the Board established an Education Operations Efficiency and Performance Standards Committee. The committee was created to assess the district's format and delivery of educational services to the offenders.

To date, a number of committee meetings have been held with a variety of Windham staff participating, to include division directors, principals, teachers and educational specialists. The committee's interaction with these individuals, and the information gained through their presentations, provided invaluable insight into the day-to-day operations of the district.

During these meetings, the committee reviewed the district's organizational and operational structure, much of which is set by state statute. This includes the requirements for teachers to be certified, for staff to work 220 or 226 days, and allows for salaries to be commensurate with educator salaries in districts contiguous to that school site. Windham was established as one of the first correctional institution school districts in the country. There are many people who are trying to model their activities after those of Windham.

Discussions were held related to the district's organizational model and to the impact change to that model would have on operations, outcome and budget. Such change could affect staff qualifications, teacher salaries and creditable years of service, eligibility for the state minimum personal leave program, contracts and contract non-renewals, the school calendar, and employee turnover rates. Moving from a school district model would also deviate from the use of recognized national standards for correctional education. This deviation could result in the inability to assess progress and develop data on WSD students for the drawdown of federal adult education grant funds.

The committee also received an extensive review of the district's performance measures and its Accountability System. This system is assessed annually to ensure standards, and benchmarks are revised to provide for continuous program improvement. In addition, the committee was given a detailed presentation on research relating to effective correctional education programs. This resulted in a discussion and examination of Windham's researched-based practices surrounding program implementation and curriculum.

The most recent meeting of the committee addressed the utilization of technology and its associated costs. Windham currently operates computer labs for academic instruction at most units. Labs are supervised by teachers who analyze student achievement, develop individual lesson plans, and provide small group instruction when necessary. The district is in the process of assessing the effectiveness of lab versus classroom participation, and is researching other software programs and resources that could be utilized in a secure, correctional environment.

With changes underway in the national General Educational Development (GED) testing program, and the future release of the WSD-contracted Sam Houston State University Recidivism Study, the committee will be meeting again soon to continue their review of the impact of these issues to the delivery of WSD services.

Chairman Bell thanked the committee - Carmen Hiles, who serves as the chairman, Janice Lord, Judge Larry Gist and Tom Mechler for their time and dedication to this area. He is looking forward to the committee's continued efforts as well as their work with Ms. Casanova.

Chairman's Fitness Challenge

The chairman stated the first quarter of the FY 2013 Chairman's Fitness Challenge was a success, and he publically commended the employees of the district and the agency for their support and participation in this fitness endeavor. The district's overall accumulation of points for this quarter was just over 1 million, up 560 thousand from the last quarter.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION REGARDING TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARD (TASB) – SPONSORED MEDIA HONOR ROLL

The Texas Association of School Boards sponsors a Media Honor Roll to recognize representatives in print, radio, television or electronic media who report school news in a fair and accurate manner and give a high profile position to good news about schools.

Ms. Casanova advised the Windham School District would like to nominate Reporter Josh Brown of the Port Arthur News in Port Arthur, Texas, for his balanced and accurate approach to reporting the challenges facing Windham schools and the student success the district is able to achieve through the hard work of its teachers. His article provided information to the public about Windham including the number of college degrees, GEDs and vocational certificates awarded for the year, as well as the number of participants in WSD classes.

Judge Larry Gist moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the nomination of Josh Brown for the Texas Association of School Board's Sponsored Media Honor Roll as presented.

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

RESULTS FROM THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE WSD ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Sandra Nash, WSD Division Director of Operational Support, noted the purpose of this presentation was two-fold. First, it will serve as the Board's annual review of the Accountability System by presenting the proposed changes in the system for the 2012-2013 school year. Secondly, it will provide the final results of accountability ratings for the 2011-2012 school year.

Ms. Nash explained how the student performance information is gathered, evaluated, and implemented. The accountability system was implemented in September 1999 to promote continual improvement of student performance, display an accurate reflection of campus activity, and measure student performance.

The criteria used for accountability measurement was established by a district-wide committee, composed of teachers in the respective content areas, counselors, principals, administrators and technical experts from around the state. The committee convenes annually in order to review all relevant student performance data from the previous year and to use that data to establish future student and campus performance thresholds. Recent performance data is reviewed to determine if the standards and benchmarks need to be adjusted. The accountability measures reflect WSD and campus performance in academic, vocational, and life skills programs.

Ms. Nash explained the three different ways a student demonstrates progress in academic programs.

1. Student Education Achievement testing – the reading, math and writing scores on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) test are used for accountability purposes.
2. Students who achieve a GED.
3. Students who become eligible to take the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) based on TABE scores.

Different standards have been established to allow for the unique student populations at prison facilities (.5 gain) and at state jail and transfer facilities (.7 gain). Literacy programs included in the accountability system include Literacy I, English as a Second Language and Special Education. In these three programs, a .3 gain must be attained to demonstrate progress.

Each campus has a report card that is posted internally on the WSD Intranet page and updated on a daily basis. This allows WSD staff to monitor and assess student performance data throughout the academic year. Several samples of campus report cards were reviewed, and Ms. Nash explained the benchmarks that are established for academic and vocational rankings.

Beginning in school year 2012, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) district accountability rankings are based on two criterion: percent of completers and performance quality for the completers. The new measure, the quality indicator, was added this year to allow the district to assess performance measures for completers. The quality indicator score has four components with each component factoring as 25% of the total average. The four components are end of course exam, modular test average, percent of skill average, and average of modular competency rating. A sample report card for CTE was reviewed.

Life skills programs were added to the accountability process in school year 2012. Data was collected and analyzed to serve as norm. The pre- and post-test results for the CHANGES classes and the Criminal Sentiment Scale for the Cognitive Intervention classes were used in the analysis.

Ms. Nash reported the accountability committee met on November 1-2, 2012, and recommended the following changes.

- In the academic area: Campuses that have a single sub-test area that prevents a higher ranking by 5 points or fewer may be adjusted, provided that the composite score meets or exceeds the higher ranking benchmark. Prior to 2013, this adjustment could only be applied for campuses moving from Unacceptable to Acceptable. The proposal is to allow

the adjustment for campuses going from acceptable to recognized, or recognized to exemplary.

- In the Life Skills Program: CHANGES and Cognitive Intervention will be excluded from the formal District Accountability rankings for 2012-2013 school year however data will be collected and posted on the campus report card.

Ms. Nash presented the accountability results for the 2011-2012 school year.

<u>Academic</u>		<u>CTE</u>	
Exemplary	3	Exemplary	0
Recognized	24	Recognized	18
Acceptable	47	Acceptable	32
Unacceptable	8	Unacceptable	14

The 2011-2012 accountability results allow WSD to assess the programming and staffing decisions that were implemented with the reduction in force that was effective September 1, 2011. Due to restructuring, most staff took on additional responsibilities and teachers began new teaching assignments. Even with these challenges, there was not a drastic change in the district accountability results. Ms. Nash felt these results are reflective of the quality of staff that WSD has and the dedication they show each day. The district will continue efforts to improve program success in order to provide students with the necessary tools to reenter their communities as productive citizens.

Tom Mechler asked what steps are taken to assist a campus that is unacceptable. Ms. Nash advised a lot of the district's resources are focused on the particular campuses that are unacceptable. The instructional specialists go and work with individuals as well as large groups and conduct additional training. In some instances, teachers are brought in to the administration building where they are given additional training. District staff look at the campus data and try to identify exactly what caused the unit to be unacceptable.

Mr. Mechler asked if any campuses had dropped from acceptable to unacceptable; Ms. Nash advised there were three in the 2012-2013 school year.

Janice Lord asked why WSD was not measuring CHANGES and cognitive intervention for the school year. Ms. Nash responded there was not enough data to complete the norming. WSD is collecting the data, trying to get a large pool of results so the norms can be set and the rankings can be put in place. Chairman Bell asked when WSD anticipated being able to rank CHANGES and Cognitive Intervention; Ms. Nash responded the district hopes to be able to rank them by 2014.

Ms. Hiles asked if WSD looked at literacy as a whole across all campuses; Ms. Nash responded affirmatively, literacy is reviewed as a whole across the district.

Ms. Hiles asked if previous years of the campus report cards are online; Ms. Nash advised it is reflected on the campus profiles that are on the district website.

Mr. McCombs asked for a better explanation of the academic rating. Ms. Nash responded it was the percentage of the total population for the particular unit. The scoring is based on academic performance and is taken from the results of TABE testing or if a student receives his GED during that school year. It demonstrates progress in all three subtest areas, or if a student becomes THEA eligible, that is reflected as progress in the three subtest areas. It looks at the overall performance for the academic scores of all of the students on that particular unit.

Mr. McCombs asked how these rankings compared to other correctional education programs. Ms. Nash advised WSD implemented the accountability system in 1999 and at that time no other correctional education programs had an accountability system in place. She stated that she would investigate and let the Board know how WSD compares to other correctional education programs. Ms. Casanova stated WSD has a very structured process and she does not know that other correctional education school systems have all the formal pieces that WSD has in place. She said that the district could make some comparisons and inform the Board of the findings.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION UPDATE

Latreace Craig, WSD Human Resources Director, reported the district's staffing information for the 2012-2013 school year remains consistent with the 2011-2012 school year. There are a total of 1,096 positions across 78 campuses and 86 facilities. There are 1,018 positions funded with Foundation School Program (FSP) and Title funds, which are Title I and Title II federal funds that are allocated for a specific program or group of students.

Ninety three percent of the positions in the district are dedicated to direct student services. Teachers in the WSD have an average of 18 years of experience. By hiring experienced teachers, the district feels they are hiring experts in the field; they are experienced with curriculum, classroom management and best practices.

Of the 648 positions located on the campuses, the bulk are teachers. There are three regional administrators, and 46 principals that provide leadership for the 78 campuses. Most of the principals are responsible for multiple units; one principal has as many as five units.

The district's professional staff consists of 77 counselors, 13 diagnosticians, and 20.5 support staff. Other campus staff includes 85 administrative assistants, 18 library support, and 39 testing staff.

There are a total of 68.5 district level positions that provide support for the units and regions. This number makes up 7% of the positions in the district.

Ms. Craig highlighted some of the Human Resources (HR) statistics for the 2011-2012 school year. The HR division processed 169 new hires, 23 rehires, and 304 transfers. There were 80 volunteer applications and 69 substitutes processed. The district had an average of 94 vacant positions each month, 68 of which were teaching positions.

Ms. Craig informed the board about three initiatives that were implemented during the school year.

- Non-teacher performance evaluations were revised to be split into three sections - organizational and job competencies, job responsibilities, and future goals. The rating scale used for the new performance evaluation will be explained to all supervisors who

will be utilizing the instrument. The district will communicate with supervisors to ensure the consistency and uniformity in the application of this instrument.

- Vocational teachers were placed on a salary plan separate from teachers and librarians. The annual salary was increased to \$40,272 for the first five years. This was done to help increase the applicant pool of vocational teachers and to compensate them for the skills and experience they have acquired in the industry. After the fifth year, the salary for all teachers becomes the same.
- A salary report is being generated for each employee. The purpose of the salary report is to provide the employee with information on their salary rate for the year. The report is informative, offers validation of the information that is on file, and serves as a form of communication to district employees. Public school teachers are familiar with this type of instrument. A sample of the salary report and the type of information that is on the report was shared.

Mr. McCombs asked how the total administrative staff of 7% compares with the public sector. Ms. Craig responded she has not gathered information on public schools as it relates to the percentage of administrative staff. Mr. McCombs noted it would be very interesting to know by comparison in terms of efficiency.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the 273rd meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

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Vice Chairman

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Secretary

*Signature on File