

**Windham School District**  
**Board of Trustees**  
*272nd Meeting*



**Minutes**

**November 30, 2012**  
**Austin, Texas**

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## WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Crowne Plaza Austin – Salons E-H  
6121 North IH-35  
Austin, Texas 78752**

**November 30, 2012  
11:45 AM – 12:30 PM**

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

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*Call to Order*

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

I. Regular Session

A. Recognitions

B. Consideration of Approval of Consent Items

1. Minutes of the August 23, 2012, WSD Board Meeting
2. Appraisers for the 2012-2013 School Year
3. Personal Property Donations
4. Excused Absences

C. Superintendent's Report – Discussion of Visit by the GED Testing Service and Representatives from the Texas Education Agency

D. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board

1. Superintendent's Announced Departure
2. FY 2013 Chairman's Fitness Challenge Update

E. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Annual Review of WSD Board Policies

1. WBP-07.05, "Term Contract Employment"
2. WBP-07.18, "Performance Evaluations and Professional Development Appraisal System"
3. WBP-07.39, "At Will Employment"
4. WBP-11.12, "Investment Policy" and Resolution Adopting the Investment Policy

F. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Revisions to WSD Board Policy 03.02, "Windham School District Superintendent Responsibilities and Authority"

G. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding the Deletion of Windham Board Policy 07.20, "School Calendar"

## H. Integration of Instructional Technology in the Classroom

*Recess 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. 272

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, November 30, 2012, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Austin, Texas.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Oliver Bell, Chairman  
Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman  
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary  
Eric Gambrell  
Janice Harris Lord  
J. David Nelson  
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Judge Larry Gist  
Terrell McCombs

**WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Debbie Roberts, Superintendent  
Veronica Casanova  
Gina Cooper  
Latreace Craig  
Linda Goerdel  
Michael Mondville  
Kevin Ainsworth  
Karen Koenning  
Sandra Nash  
Mike Vickers

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE STAFF PRESENT:** Sharon Howell  
Rick Thaler

**CONVENED**

Oliver Bell, Chairman, convened the meeting of the 272nd Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, November 30, 2012, at 11:50 a.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the *Open Meetings Act*. During the meeting, the Board conducted business from the agendas posted in the Texas Register. A quorum was present and the regular session was declared open.

Chairman Bell recognized John Newton from the Legislative Budget Board.

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 ten 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 would be heard on posted agenda topics.

### **RECOGNITIONS**

Debbie Roberts, WSD Superintendent, introduced Veronica Casanova as the new Instructional Division director. Ms. Casanova began working for WSD in 1992. She served as teacher and vocational counselor before moving to the administration building where she was over the General Education Development (GED) testing program. In 2006, she was promoted to director of Human Resources, where she served until her selection as the Instructional Division director in September.

Latreace Craig was promoted to director of Human Resources. Ms. Craig came to WSD from the public school system where she was a teacher and principal for ten years. She served as an assistant director for Human Resources and an instructional specialist for WSD before being promoted to this position.

Gina Cooper was promoted to educational specialist in September. She is supervising the academic educational specialists in the Division of Instruction. She has also been a teacher, counselor and principal for WSD.

Chairman Bell stated that the Board annually recognizes WSD employees who have dedicated 20, 25 and 30 plus years of service to the State of Texas. These individuals represent the strong commitment of the district staff systemwide. He, along with the rest of the board members and Ms. Roberts, expressed deep gratitude for the continued service of these employees. During the 2011-2012 school year, 19 Windham employees attained 20 years of service, three employees attained 25 years of service, three employees attained 30 years of service, and two employees attained 35 years of service. The names of these employees will be submitted for inclusion in the official minutes of this board meeting. As a symbol of appreciation, these individuals will receive a board certificate along with a personal letter of gratitude. (*Attachment A – Employee Names*)

### **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 August 23, 2012, meeting, appraisers for the 2012-13 school year, personal property donations, and the excused absence of Janice Harris Lord, who was unable to attend the August WSD Board meeting due to personal business.

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

Ms. Roberts reported on a recent visit she had with representatives from the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) and Texas Education Agency (TEA) regarding the computerized GED test scheduled for implementation in January 2014. It had become clear in ongoing discussions with TEA and GEDTS staff that they were having a difficult time visualizing the complexities of implementing computerized testing in Windham's unique environment. WSD staff invited them to tour some of the schools to experience not only the diversity of the campuses, but the size and demographics of the student population. WSD also wanted them to understand that because of that diversity, a one-size-fits-all simple solution would not address the district's concerns.

The group visited schools on the Lychner, Kegans, and Darrington units on November 5 and 6. Lychner was chosen because it is a large school where every available classroom is utilized from early morning to late at night, first for double-shifted classroom instruction, and then at night for chaplaincy and other volunteer programs. While Lychner does have computer labs, they do not have enough stations to always accommodate the volume of offenders taking the test. This is a state jail with a fairly rapid turnover, so GED testing is done at the facility 10 or 11 times per year.

The group also visited Kegans because it is very different from Lychner. It is a small state jail with two, very small classrooms and no computer lab. Like Lychner, the school is double-shifted and volunteer programs utilize the class rooms at night. The unit also has no place to install a computer lab.

The purpose of visiting Darrington, as a maximum security facility, was for the group to experience going through security and to see the difficulty of bringing anything onto the unit. As far as the logistics of the unit, it is a single shifted facility and has a computer lab. Computerized testing issues at Darrington would probably be easier to address than at the Kegans and Lychner units.

The group met after the tours to discuss the district's concerns. The tour was successful and both TEA and GEDTS had a clear understanding of the issues. WSD shared its two greatest concerns, the time frame for implementation and the inability of the new test to run on WSD's thin client architecture. GEDTS assured WSD they were committed to making the necessary modifications so thin client technology would be able to administer the new test. GEDTS indicated they would consider other ways to make the transition easier for Windham and other correctional facilities.

Subsequently, on November 15, a committee of the State Board of Education met to discuss whether to pursue contracting with a different vendor for the provision of the Texas High School Equivalency Exam or continue the state's relationship with GEDTS. Randy Trask, Executive Director of GEDTS, who participated in the tour of WSD facilities, informed the Board of Education members of that experience. He stated GEDTS understood the district's concerns and was implementing a waiver from the computerized test for correctional institutions at least through September 2017. After discussion with Mr. Trask and TEA staff, the Board of Education decided not to pursue a relationship with a different vendor.

Ms. Roberts stated she was pleased with the results of the tour and the meetings. Being able to utilize the current architecture to administer the test will save WSD and the state a significant

amount of money and time, and the waiver will enable WSD to phase in implementation.

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

### **Superintendent's Announced Departure**

Chairman Bell stated that Ms. Roberts has announced her plans to leave the Windham School District at the end of January. This was a hard decision for her as she is very devoted to the agency and the success of the district, but family obligations weighed in. He discussed her son's battle with cystic fibrosis and status as a candidate for a lung transplant. With a transplant on the horizon, Ms. Roberts decided to depart the school district and direct all her energy to home and family.

The Board fully supports her decision and appreciates the advanced notification. The Board will begin to make plans regarding a selection process for a new superintendent, and Ms. Roberts has graciously offered to assist to ensure a smooth transition.

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

The first quarter of the Fiscal Year 2013 Chairman's Fitness Challenge ended this past Sunday. As results are still being collected, the announcement of top participating teams will be released in the near future.

This year's second quarter challenge will begin December 17. It will focus on maintaining fitness levels, with the goal of 225 points per week continuing throughout the holiday season.

The staff's continued participation is appreciated. He encouraged everyone to continue to stay fit and healthy.

## **DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ANNUAL REVIEW OF WSD BOARD POLICIES**

### **WBP-07.05, "Term Contract Employment"**

Michael Mondville, WSD General Counsel, stated WBP-07.05 "Term Contract Employment" was revised to clarify that a professional educator must have a valid certificate from the State Board of Educator Certification. In addition, minor grammatical changes were made. This presentation will satisfy the annual review requirement as required in WBP-02.00 "Windham School District Board of Trustees Responsibilities." He asked the Board to approve the policy as presented.

*Carmen Hiles moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the revisions to Board Policy WBP-07.05, "Term Contract Employment," as presented.*

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

WBP-07.18, “Performance Evaluations and Professional Development Appraisal System”

Mr. Mondville stated that WBP-07.18 “Performance Evaluations and Professional Development Appraisal System” has been revised. Changes were made to improve grammar throughout the policy. Approval of this policy also satisfies the annual review required by WBP-02.00. He requested Board approval as presented.

*Tom Mechler moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the revisions to WBP-07.18, “Performance Evaluations and Professional Appraisal System,” as presented.*

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

WBP-07.39, “At Will Employment”

Mr. Mondville stated that WBP-07.39 “At Will Employment” has been revised. Changes were made to improve grammar throughout the policy. Approval of this policy will also serve as the annual review required by WBP-02.00. Board approval is requested.

*Mr. Nelson moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the revisions to WBP-07.39, “At Will Employment,” as presented.*

*Janice Harris Lord seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.*

WBP-11.12, “Investment Policy” and Resolution Adopting the Investment Policy

Mr. Mondville informed the Board that statute requires the Board to review WBP-11.12 “Investment Policy” annually. There were no revisions and the policy remains the same. He asked the Board to approve the policy as presented.

*Mr. Vasquez stated after completing the annual review of WBP-11.12, he moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the resolution adopting the Investment Policy as presented, and that the chairman and secretary sign the resolution adopting the policy.*

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

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REVISIONS TO WSD BOARD POLICY 03.02, “WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY”**

Mr. Mondville stated that WBP-03.02, “Windham School District Superintendent Responsibilities and Authority” was changed to improve grammar and to allow the superintendent to establish the school calendar in accordance with statute and board policies. The superintendent already has this authority but it was in a separate policy. This will consolidate the actions into one policy. He asked the Board to approve the policy as presented.

Mr. Nelson stated he noticed there are a set number of working days on the school calendar. He asked if WSD staff anticipated the number of days changing. Mr. Mondville responded the number of working days is set by statute. This policy revision gives the superintendent authority to declare certain days as bad weather days if necessary.

*Ms. Lord moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the revisions to WBP-03.02, "Windham School District Superintendent Responsibilities and Authority," as presented.*

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

### **DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE DELETION OF WINDHAM BOARD POLICY 07.20, "SCHOOL CALENDAR"**

Mr. Mondville stated WBP-07.20, "School Calendar" consists of three items all of which are now contained in other policies. For that reason it is superfluous and can be deleted. He asked the Board to approve the deletion of WBP-07.20 as presented.

*Eric Gambrell moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the deletion of WBP-07.20, "School Calendar," as presented.*

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

### **INTEGRATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM**

Ms. Casanova and Ms. Cooper presented on the types of instructional technology that are currently used in the WSD classrooms. Ms. Cooper explained how the Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) labs are used. Seventy four units currently have CAI labs, and on any given day, more than 3,100 offenders are served in the CAI labs. Odyssey software is used in the CAI labs because it provides appropriate instruction for all levels of students: Literacy 1 thru GED Prep. Teachers are able to customize individual learning paths for the students in their classes using Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) scores and the Odyssey assessment builder feature.

Ms. Cooper reviewed how the CAI labs are designed; the average lab has 22 computer stations and 28 students. This allows teachers to give direct instruction to small groups when they are not working at computer stations.

Ms. Cooper has been working on an Effectiveness Study for the CAI labs to determine how each lab is utilized and to determine the level of training and knowledge that each teacher has. She reported there are two factors to consider when determining lab utilization:

1. Who is served in the labs – lower levels, Pre-GED or all levels together; and
2. Frequency of instruction – Do the labs have a designated teacher (15 hours per week) or are they used on a rotational basis by several teachers and classes, and which model works best with each student.

Teacher training is an important factor. The district wants every teacher to have the knowledge to use the Odyssey software to its fullest potential so district wide training was set up. To date, an Odyssey trainer has trained 61 of the designated CAI lab teachers; the rotational teachers will all be trained by January 31.

Instructional technology is also used in the Title I programs. Currently there are Title I programs on nine units. Students must be less than 22 years old at the time of enrollment to qualify. There is a small student-to-teacher ratio (14:1) in the Title I programs. Title I grant money was used to purchase the equipment and software for the program. The software used in the Title I program is the Read 180 – Interactive Reading Intervention Program. Ms. Cooper explained how the Read 180 program is utilized in the classrooms.

The Title I programs also uses ExamView® Assessment Suite, which allows teachers to create customized tests for individual students, small groups or the whole class. In addition, it lets teachers grade tests through eInstruction's student response systems, track progress, and generate reports, all in one program. Ms. Cooper explained that ExamView comes with a Classroom Performance System (CPS) clicker that each student uses to answer questions on the tests. It gives the teacher immediate feedback and identifies areas the teacher may need to re-teach.

In the last two years, the district has begun to use document cameras in the classrooms in place of overhead projectors. These are high resolution cameras that are connected to projectors. Teachers can put the piece of paper that they want to display under the camera, and it will be displayed through the projector onto the wall. Teachers can mark on the paper, and students can see what they have done. There are 99 document cameras currently being used for classroom instruction in the district.

Interactive Whiteboards (Mobi™) connect wirelessly to a laptop computer and project onto any surface to create an interactive whiteboard experience. The Mobi is the first mobile interactive whiteboard designed to support student-centered active learning and give educators the mobility and flexibility to deliver engaging lessons as they move about the classroom.

Teachers can also present instruction through PowerPoint presentations and are able to highlight and write on the presentations using the Mobi. Students can also use the Mobi to show their work.

Ms. Casanova provided an update on the GED 2014 and the transition from paper-based testing to computer-based testing and what it means for Windham.

There are two basic issues WSD is working on: organizational adjustments in the testing program, and instructional impact that GED 2014 will have on students and teachers.

The volume of GED testing on the campuses must be considered. There are locations where as many as 200 students are tested each year, and there are locations where as little as 12 students are tested per year. A plan had to be developed to fit every variation between that and also consider the costs.

WSD is proposing to deliver the GED 2014 in four different models:

1. A Traveling Lab – This lab is a portable case, like a suitcase, that holds five laptops. It will be taken from a home base to a campus where testing will be administered, and then returned to the home base.

2. A Mobile Lab – This is similar to a traveling lab but will be in a cabinet with wheels and will have about 10 to 12 laptops. This will stay on the campus and will be rolled into a classroom and set up when testing is needed. Approximately 30 units would use this type of model.
3. Current CAI Lab – The current CAI lab can be retrofitted for testing on some campuses.
4. A Fixed Lab – WSD plans to install a fixed lab on ten facilities. So much testing takes place on these facilities that if the CAI labs were retrofitted, the students wouldn't have an opportunity to develop any computer skills before taking a computer-based test.

The skill set that is required for GED 2014 will require that students demonstrate higher level skills. The test must stay competitive because the standards to achieve a high school diploma keep climbing. The GED test will go from five subtests to four subtests, and will no longer be limited to multiple choice questions. The computer-based format allows the test maker to create technology enhanced questions. Students will be required to not only answer multiple choice questions, but they will also have to fill in the blank, use a drop down menu to select an answer, and drag and drop to create an answer. They will also use hot spot questions (such as plotting points on graphs), short answers, and extended answers, where students are free to type whatever answer they think is appropriate. Most of these items will be new to WSD students.

WSD is currently working on a plan to put laptops and software in the classrooms to give students the opportunity to become familiar with the skills they have not been exposed to.

Mr. Mechler asked about the increased cost of GED 2014. Ms. Casanova responded there are several questions about the cost. First, there is the cost of purchasing the technology and retrofitting the current CAI labs. GEDTS did inform WSD that they would find a solution for the district's CAI labs.

Second is the cost of the test. Currently, WSD leases paper tests. The tests are leased for one year, and students can use them over and over. WSD pays separately for scoring throughout the year. In the new model, there will be one cost, with administration and scoring combined. The cost would pose an increase for the district. WSD has asked GEDTS to consider the district's situation, the numbers and volume, and to give the district a different type of pricing. WSD staff met with GEDTS in November on this issue and plan to speak with them again about a cost break.

The third cost factor is staffing. GEDTS has not announced the examinee/examiner ratio yet, so WSD does not know how many examiners will be needed per examinee. Until that is released, WSD will not know the costs associated with staffing for the new GED.

Mr. Mechler stated he understood all the cost concerns and timing concerns. It seems like the new models the district plans to utilize have some advantages. The positive side is it will force the students to learn how to use technology in order to take their GED. Ms. Casanova agreed that it will open other doors for students, and WSD is excited and ready to get started with the initiative.

Ms. Lord noted the district will have to teach basic keyboarding skills to these students and she asked what percentage of students would have to be taught these skills. Ms. Casanova responded that she did not know the percentage of students that would need to be taught basic keyboard

keyboard skills. She stated as soon as vendors become aware of the operational aspects of GED 2014, more software will become available to teach the students the skills necessary to take the test. She added that the students will now need computer literacy and academic skills in order to achieve the GED. The district is currently looking for software to help the students develop their computer skills.

Chairman Bell stated there are five generations of people in the workplace now, and they all have various levels of technology backgrounds. Currently, 80 percent of Americans have a presence on social media by the time they are two years old. He commented that cell phones can do the same thing as laptops, and technology is constantly changing. WSD must make sure there is no misapplication of the technology.

Ms. Roberts stated that as WSD introduces these new types of technology to the classrooms, WSD staff is working closely with Mike Bell, Director of Information Technology for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), and Rick Thaler, Director of the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division, to make sure the district isn't bringing something in that TDCJ would not want to see in the prison environment. She stated WSD is also cognizant of the fact that procedures need to be in place to minimize risk.

Chairman Bell thanked staff for their presentations. He presented Ms. Roberts with a Chairman's Coin in appreciation for her dedication and service.

### **ADJOURNMENT INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The WSD Board of Trustees adjourned into executive session, which is closed to the public in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 551.074, at 12:44 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the 272nd meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

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Chairman

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Secretary

\*Signature on File

*Note: Attachments to the minutes can be obtained by contacting the Office of Record, Executive Services.*