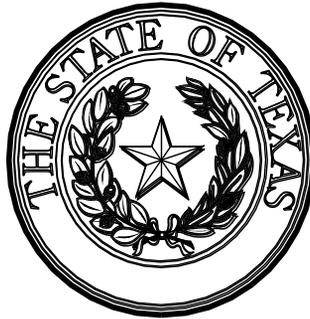


Windham School District
Board of Trustees
286th Meeting



Minutes

February 20, 2015

Austin, Texas

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Omni Hotel Downtown Austin – Lone Star Room
700 San Jacinto Street
Austin, Texas 78701**

**February 20, 2015
12:00 – 12:30 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 December 5, 2014, WSD Board Meeting
 - 2. Appraisers for the 2014-2015 School Year
 - 3. Excused Absences
- B. Superintendent's Report
- C. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board
- D. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action on the Resolution Regarding Texas Association of School Board – Sponsored Media Honor Roll
- E. Overview of the WSD Annual Performance Report for 2013-2014 School Year

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. 286

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, February 20, 2015, at the Omni Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Oliver Bell, Chairman
Terrell McCombs, Vice Chairman
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles
Janice Harris Lord
Larry Miles
Thomas P. Wingate

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Eric Gambrell
Judge Larry Gist

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Paul Brown
Mario Cotton
Latreace Craig
Karen Koenning
Sandra Richardson
Karen Ruppelius
Mike Vickers

CONVENED

Oliver Bell, Chairman, convened the meeting of the 286th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) on Friday, February 20, 2015, at 12:12 p.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. During the regular session, the Board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register.

Chairman Bell reported the WSD Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on posted agenda topics as provided in Board Rule 300.1. As no speaker registration cards were received by the board staff, no public presentations would be heard on posted agenda topics.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Bell recognized Judge Dale Spurgin from Jones County.

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 December 5, 2014, meeting, appraisers for the 2014-15 school year, and excused absences.

REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Chairman Bell said that Dr. Carpenter had been called to testify before the Legislature so there would be no report.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD

Overview of the Education Operations and Efficiency Committee Meeting

Chairman Bell said in June 2011, the board of trustees 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 valuable insight into the daily operations of the district.

During the committee's most recent meeting in January, Dr. Carpenter reviewed the district's evaluations of program effectiveness and use of data to drive operational changes. Discussions covered the district's actions to address programmatic needs and improve fiscal efficiency, programs, operations and finance.

The committee also received an extensive review of the legislative visits and briefings conducted with Dr. Carpenter. He has met with nine senators and 12 representatives (or their staff), and each visit has been positive. All the members were very complimentary and supportive.

Future plans for the district that were discussed during the meeting include: expanding vocational programming in state jails, teacher training and expanding the use of computer assisted instruction, and continuing to expand partnerships with employers, TDCJ operations divisions and TDCJ reentry. The focus of future efforts will also include student achievement, especially in special education, behavioral change and the GED and high school diploma programs.

Chairman Bell said that he did not want to speak for the committee members, but based on the feedback he has received, he thought it was a productive meeting that focused on some very positive initiatives taking place at Windham. He thanked the committee: Carmen Hiles, who serves as the chairman, Janice Lord, Judge Gist and Larry Miles. He said their time and dedication is greatly appreciated. Chairman Bell said he looks forward to their continued efforts as well as their work with Dr. Carpenter as the legislative session proceeds.

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

Paul Brown, WSD Chief Financial Officer, informed the Board that two Abilene journalists made the trip inside a maximum security prison for a first-hand look at Windham School District and education for prisoners. Their experience was described as visiting "another world" in Big Country Magazine's "A Second Chance" (First Quarter: Jan. – March, 2014).

This publication is devoted to stories of people who "make a wonderful difference in the lives of others," so it was natural for Windham teachers to be the focus of an article. Wes Flach spent a day with WSD staff and students to examine the impact of a typical school day at the Robertson Unit, and Michelle Roberts attended a Saturday graduation ceremony behind prison walls. The result was an extensive, detailed and positive report about the Windham success story and the programs available to help Texas offenders change their lives and experience success after release. This magazine article educated, influenced, and informed countless readers in Abilene and surrounding areas. The article is still available on the WSD web site. Wes and Michelle are being nominated for the statewide TASB Media Honor Roll for their efforts and work in learning about WSD and communicating this to readers through a well-researched and written story.

Ms. Hiles moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the resolution regarding the Texas Association of School Board (TASB) Sponsored Media Honor Roll as presented.

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

OVERVIEW OF THE WSD ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2013-2014

Ms. Sandra Richardson, WSD Director of Operational Support, stated she was proud to present the 2013-2014 WSD Annual Performance Report highlights and accomplishments.

During the 2014 school year WSD served 59,678 offenders. Academic, life skills and career and technical courses were offered to help offenders gain the basic skills necessary to succeed in life. WSD programs are designed to help students relate learning to relevant job skills.

Of the 82 percent of students who GED tested and received their GED, 4,613 Career and Technical Education certificates were earned and 8,126 industry certificates were awarded. Also, 32,660 life skills participants learned improved pro social thinking skills and coping mechanisms for successful reentry into society.

In the 2014 school year, WSD reestablished educational services at five facilities that were closed in 2011, resulting in educational services at 89 total facilities across the state. These additions provided literacy and life skills classes for many offenders who had previously not had access to WSD programs.

WSD partnered with Mullin ISD to establish Texas's first in-prison High School Diploma (HSD) program in more than 30 years. The program began on February 18, 2014, with approximately 40 young females, and the first graduation took place in June with 27 students receiving their high school diploma.

WSD increased the number of industry certificates earned. Two Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) short courses were added in 2014. WSD expanded OSHA training through a partnership with TDCJ by serving offender workers within the Manufacturing and Logistics Division in addition to WSD students. OSHA training provides industry recognized instruction to help offender workers identify job related hazards. WSD hopes this partnership will provide a benefit to the students and to TDCJ in the form of a safer environment.

Ms. Richardson informed the Board that a new approach was taken during the drafting of the 2015-2019 strategic plan. During the spring, strategic planning sessions were held with participants consisting of representatives from the Board, and WSD divisions, departments, and unit staff from across the state.

The group developed goals and strategies that supported WSD's district vision that Windham can empower students and transform lives through excellence in education.

Job fairs and service provider expos were held on various units to link offenders with employers, community service providers and volunteer groups. These events were held to facilitate communication and provide more visibility for employment and services for ex-offenders to promote successful re-entry into communities following release.

In 2014, WSD strengthened partnerships with volunteers. Windham benefited from 200 volunteers who volunteered 1,272 hours and touched the lives of 4,952 offenders. One of WSD's volunteer groups, the Highland Lakes Literacy Council, was honored at the 2014 Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service award for its work with female offenders on the Halbert Unit.

WSD made great strides to help students become proficient in technology skills to prepare for the transition to GED computerized testing and to be better prepared for employment in today's technological society. Laptops were added to classrooms and software was expanded in the computer labs on the units to provide instruction that could be transferable to an academic or workplace setting.

Technology training was expanded for teachers. Many of WSD's teachers participated in online professional development to improve and increase their use of technology. Employees were encouraged to participate in the International Computer Driving License program which teaches the skills and competencies necessary to use a computer and common computer applications essential for work and for life. The district also conducted several technology training sessions for staff to encourage the use of technology in the classroom to enhance instructional strategies.

WSD revised its website to provide a forum to link employers and ex-offenders with employment opportunities, to provide up-to-date information to WSD staff and stakeholders, and to provide opportunities for WSD and ex-offenders to share success stories.

Ms. Richardson concluded by stating 2014 was a year of successful initiatives for Windham. The district is proud of its accomplishments, and has continued this momentum into the current school year.

Judge Wingate asked if progress was being made to expand the high school diploma program.

Ms. Richardson responded discussions were underway to expand the program to a male facility.

Judge Wingate asked if the district had found a way to get more CTE instructors qualified and hired.

Ms. Richardson responded the district is working to get more CTE instructors hired. She stated that Dr. Latreace Craig, WSD Director of Human Resources, would be more qualified to respond to that question.

Chairman Bell asked WSD staff to send the information on CTE instructors to Judge Wingate.

Mr. McCombs asked how WSD is doing in regards to partnerships with outside businesses, specifically involving them coming in and seeing the training that is taking place so they have more confidence in hiring ex-offenders.

Ms. Richardson said meetings and conference calls had been held with two large organizations interested in students who are being released. WSD is very interested in which skills the employers are looking for so those skills can be implemented in the classrooms. The district wants to make sure we have the right equipment for training students.

Mr. McCombs said it was critical for WSD to move forward with this initiative and to reach out to the various communities where prison facilities are located, to local businesses and to businesses that have statewide offices and branches. If WSD can break down the barriers to give employers more confidence in hiring these ex-offenders, it would be of benefit to everyone. It would also help lower the recidivism rate.

Ms. Lord commented that the website and Annual Performance Report were both magnificent.

Chairman Bell commented on a former offender who spoke at the Region V Correctional Education Conference in November. She was a very impressive speaker, and in spite of how impressive she was and all of the things that she had done, she still talked about the difficulty she had getting over the employment hurdle. After that meeting, Chairman Bell said he renewed the effort by asking Dr. Carpenter to work on this initiative.

The Chairman informed the members they would be receiving information from Dr. Carpenter on other initiatives WSD is conducting with employers, and he has also offered help if WSD needs board members to go out and talk with employers and help create a better sense of confidence. Board members are willing to support that initiative in any way possible.

Chairman Bell thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated the next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees would be Friday, April 17, 2015 at the Omni Hotel in Austin.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the 286th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

*

Chairman

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Secretary

** Signature on file*

Note: Referenced attachments for draft minutes are available upon request. Following approval of the minutes, attachments will be maintained with the signed minutes in the Office of Record.