

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

Meeting No. 294

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, June 24, 2016, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hon. Dale Wainwright, Chairman
Terrell McCombs, Vice Chairman
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Thomas Fordyce
Eric Gambrell
Judge Larry Gist
Pastor Larry Miles
Derrelynn Perryman
Thomas P. Wingate

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Clint Carpenter, Superintendent
Paul Brown
Dr. Latreace Craig
Martha Fields
Amy Lopez

CONVENED

Chairman Dale Wainwright, convened the meeting of the 294th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, June 24, 2016, at 10:00 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.

Judge Wainwright recognized David Gutierrez, Chairman of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, and Judge Dale Spurgin from Jones County.

Judge Wainwright 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. As no speaker registration cards were received by the board staff, no public presentations on posted agenda topics were heard.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

The Chairman called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda, which consisted of the minutes of the April 15, 2016, meeting and excused absences.

There being no other comments, objections or amendments to the Consent Items, the Consent Items were approved as submitted.

REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Clint Carpenter, Windham Superintendent, reported on employment opportunities for former offenders. He said WSD was excited to meet with three major employers in Texas during May and share information regarding training provided in Windham Career and Technical Education classes.

Representatives of Bechtol Manufacturing, Quinco Electrical Contractors, and Steve's Doors met with Windham staff to see first-hand the skills taught and trades supported by Windham. Senior corporate representatives were very impressed with the training Windham provides and agreed to work with Windham and TDCJ to hire released offenders for projects throughout the state.

All three companies have followed up with requests for applications from offenders who are being released. Almost 200 positions are being staffed by the companies in the next 45 days, and WSD anticipates a large percentage of these positions may be filled by former TDCJ offenders. These jobs are all career entry level positions paying between \$12-\$18 per hour with growth potential for the employee.

Additionally, all three companies are anxious to show support for our offender population getting jobs and turning their lives around, and have therefore agreed to allow Windham to use their company name when presenting information about Windham training.

WSD thanked these companies for their support of former offenders.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD

Chairman Wainwright reported on career paths which provide opportunity for licensure. On May 25th, Windham Superintendent Dr. Clint Carpenter and Windham Vocational Department's Kevin Ainsworth met with Mr. Greg Dodson with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) to discuss opportunities for offenders trained by Windham and TDCJ to become licensed tradesmen in Texas. Mr. Dodson described how his office has spoken to Windham classes so that offenders have factual knowledge regarding employment opportunities. Mr. Dodson provided guidance to Windham regarding the type of offenses impacting licensure by TDLR as well as the restrictions that offenders may face when applying for licenses in particular professional trades. Mr. Dodson stated that Windham programs align with TDLR licenses and that the apprenticeship program Windham and TDCJ are developing will provide additional work experience to help offenders qualify for state licensure.

Mr. Dodson was very supportive of Windham and TDCJ working in partnership to provide work experience for offenders who will be seeking licensure. Windham is working to develop counseling skills for staff based on the recommendations of Mr. Dodson so offenders may choose career paths which provide opportunity for licensure. Windham staff will continue to work with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation as well as the Texas Workforce Commission to provide offenders with credentials that will build career opportunities.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
REVISIONS TO WINDHAM BOARD RULE 300.1, “PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND
COMMENTS TO THE WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES”**

Paul Brown, WSD Chief Financial Officer, said the proposed changes to the rule were found on pages 1-6 of the board agenda. The Windham School District proposes amendments to WSD Board Rule 300.1 concerning Public Presentations and Comments to the Windham School District Board of Trustees. The proposed amendments are necessary to conform the rule to legislation from the 84th legislative session that prohibits the open or concealed carry of firearms by anyone other than law enforcement at an open meeting. Mr. Brown asked for the Board to approve the amended rule for publication in the Texas Register.

Judge Larry Gist moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the proposed amendments to Windham Board Rule 300.1 “Public Presentations and Comments to the Windham School District Board of Trustees” as presented.

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

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
REVISIONS TO WINDHAM BOARD POLICY WBP-07.52, “EQUAL EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY”**

Mr. Brown stated that this proposed action is on pages 7-11 of the board agenda. WBP 7.52, “Equal Employment Opportunity”, is a new policy for the district. In the past WSD has generally followed the TDCJ EEO policy, making changes for the organization and the specific forms. This new policy is very similar to the TDCJ and the district believes that adoption of this policy will show the district’s commitment to the provisions of equal employment opportunity. Mr. Brown asked for Board approval of the adoption of WBP-07.52, “Equal Employment Opportunity” as presented.

Pastor Larry Miles moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the revisions to Windham Board Policy WBP-07.52, “Equal Employment Opportunity”, as presented.

Tom Fordyce seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
DELETION OF WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD ADOPTED OPERATING
PROCEDURE OP-07.34, “PAPERWORK REDUCTION”**

Mr. Brown informed the board that the proposed action is on pages 12-13 of the board agenda. The Windham School District general counsel has requested deletion of this OP because the Texas Education Code §21.925(e) which limits the paperwork burden on classroom teachers, does not apply to WSD. WSD will, however continue to make a good faith effort to protect teachers’ time to teach while complying with various reporting requirements. Mr. Brown asked for board approval of the deletion of Windham School District Board adopted operating procedure OP-07.34, “Paperwork Reduction” as presented.

Mr. Fordyce moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the deletion of Windham School District Operating Procedure OP-07.34 "Paperwork Reduction," as presented.

Pastor Miles seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

UPDATE ON LIFE SKILLS CLASSES

Dr. Latreace Craig, WSD Division Director of Special Programs and Populations, informed the Board that WSD staff began revising the life skills curriculum with the focus on CHANGES and Cognitive Intervention in September, 2015.

She explained the life skills programs are designed to:

- Help offenders change their criminal thinking patterns and develop the people skills essential for success with employers, family members and the communities where they will reside.
- Refocus the offenders' thinking processes to empower them to behave more responsibly, develop healthy relationships and retain better paying jobs.
- Ensure that the needs of the whole person are being met, whereas, vocational and academic classes provide for work and functional needs of the students.

Dr. Craig shared the progress and current status of the life skills program enhancements with the Board.

She explained that the Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) program is a pre-release life skills program for offenders who are within two years of their projected release. The CHANGES curriculum was developed internally in 1995. It includes topics such as developing healthy relationships, living responsibly, drug education, and putting together a new start. The CHANGES curriculum was modified in 2009 to become CHANGES II, which incorporated a cognitive component.

The CHANGES program is the only WSD program that satisfies the requirement of an FI3-R parole vote.

The Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) teaches students to examine and change thinking that leads to criminal behavior. The course teaches students to meet their needs without trespassing on the rights of others. The CIP curriculum was created in 1996 with assistance from the National Institute of Corrections. Through cognitive intervention, students learn more appropriate thinking skills using instruction, role play and exercises in interpersonal problem solving.

During the 2015 school year, WSD served 32,587 students in life skills programming. An offender may participate in both CHANGES and the Cognitive Intervention Program.

Both of these programs are popular throughout the district and are offered on the majority of the facilities. Although research indicates that life skills and cognitive behavioral interventions promote a reduction in recidivism, quantifiable evidence of the impact of these programs is

missing. WSD wants to add value to the existing programs by incorporating a curriculum with research-based best practices and built-in assessments.

A comparison of the two WSD life skills programs was conducted in Fall 2014 by an independent consultant. This included a review of the instructional design of both programs, and it explored program limitations, identifying curriculum overlap, and possible integration. Dr. Craig reviewed some of the recommendations made by the independent consultant.

An examination of the recommendations resulted in the development of an action plan to accomplish the program revision objectives. Dr. Robert Morgan, a member of the psychology department at Texas Tech University who specializes in forensics and criminal psychology, consulted on the re-write of both curriculums.

The life skills revision project was divided into four phases (with projected timeframes):

- Planning Phase – September thru December 2015
- Revision Phase – January thru May 2016
- Training Phase – June – August 2016
- Implementation – September 2016

An evaluation of the new program will be conducted in December and January.

Dr. Craig stated for offenders to be successful in both employment and reconnecting with family and community, they must have behavior and thinking skills to change the trajectory they were on when incarcerated. WSD life skills programs are intended to assist offenders in changing their behavior and thinking. The desired outcome is to design a theoretically-sound program with appropriate duration and intensity, incorporating a robust assessment instrument to assist with the identification and placement, as well as measuring progress of students in life skills programs.

Judge Wainwright asked if it was a fair assumption that the longer an offender has been incarcerated, the more types of training they need before release. He also asked if the classes were distinguished based upon the number of years of incarceration.

Dr. Craig responded that more training was needed for offenders who have been incarcerated for longer periods of time. The classes are not distinguished by the number of years of incarceration. The CHANGES course is designed for offenders who are near release.

Judge Wainwright asked if the types of skills and amount of education required are related to the severity of the offense for which the offenders are incarcerated.

Dr. Craig responded that they are not. The cognitive intervention program is a voluntary program. The CHANGES program is mandatory based on the FI3-R parole vote, and those offenders are given priority.

Mr. McCombs commented that he was a huge proponent of the Cognitive Intervention Program. He said it is effective and useful because so many offenders have come from very dysfunctional circumstances. He asked how district staff determines if an offender is suitable for CIP,

CHANGES or both. He also asked why CIP was voluntary since some of the offenders that need CIP the most may not volunteer for it.

Dr. Craig responded that the district says CIP is a voluntary program because it is not set up as an academic program. If they don't have a high school diploma or GED, offenders are automatically placed in the academic program. If a staff member recommends an offender be placed in CIP, then priority is given to those offenders based upon those recommendations. Staff tries to counsel with the offenders so they can see the importance of enrolling and completing the class.

Mr. McCombs asked if staff receives a lot of resistance at that point.

Dr. Craig said there was not a lot of resistance. Both of the classes are very popular with the offenders.

Mr. McCombs stated that since CIP has such an impact on reducing recidivism, it seems that the program should be expanded and have more instructors for CIP. He said it is an absolutely critical component in reducing recidivism for these offenders to realize they made bad choices and are facing the consequences, yet they didn't have to originally make those choices.

Leo Vasquez said he feels the life skills programs make a huge difference and is in favor of supporting the life skills programs. However, he said he did not hear any statistics cited during the presentation.

Dr. Craig responded that in the past, there was very limited data collection on the CIP and CHANGES programs. One of the recommendations made by the consultant was to incorporate a pre- and post-test assessment of the programs as well as ongoing assessments. Moving forward, WSD will be collecting data and will have appropriate assessments in place so the district can make those determinations. Based on the most current program evaluation conducted on the WSD, data indicates offenders who participated in CIP had an eight percent lower recidivism rate than those who did not participate. Of the offenders who participated in the CHANGES program, there was a five percent lower recidivism rate than for those who did not participate.

Judge Wainwright commented that data collection will increase as the programs move forward. He asked Dr. Craig to prepare a summary for the board members of the data WSD has on these programs to date.

Pastor Miles asked if CIP was available to offenders housed in high-security areas.

Dr. Craig responded that it depends on the offenders' custody level.

Mr. Fordyce asked if a condition of an offender's parole is to attend the CHANGES class, and is that offender given higher consideration to attend.

Dr. Craig responded that those offenders are given priority.

Judge Wainwright then read an excerpt from an article from the Dallas Morning News that was written by U. S. Senator John Cornyn and Mark Levine, from the Texas Public Policy Coalition.

It reviewed federal legislation that the Senator is proposing. It relates to the rehabilitation and reentry efforts in Texas and how they have been effective and are the product of WSD and the TDCJ to make Texas a safer place.

Judge Wainwright also recognized former board member Tom Mechler, who was in attendance at the meeting.

Judge Wainwright thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and reminded them that the next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be Thursday, August 18th, at the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark in Austin.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the 294th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

Chairman*

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.