



# Quick Facts SY 2016

## **VISION:**

The vision of the Windham School District (WSD) is to empower students and transform lives through excellence in education.

## **MISSION:**

The mission of the WSD, in partnership with its stakeholders, is to provide quality educational opportunities.

## **STAKEHOLDERS/PARTNERS INCLUDE:**

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, TDCJ Offenders & Former Offenders, Offender Families, Employers, Colleges, Workforce & Reentry Service Providers, Volunteers & Other Community Members, the Texas Legislature, and all Texans devoted to reducing recidivism and changing lives.

## **STATUTORY GOALS:**

The goals of the district in educating its students are to:

1. reduce recidivism;
2. reduce the cost of confinement or imprisonment;
3. increase the success of former inmates in obtaining and maintaining employment and
4. provide an incentive to inmates to behave in positive ways during confinement or imprisonment.

*Texas Education Code §19.003*

## **WINDHAM STRATEGIC GOALS:**

The WSD will:

1. provide high level instruction and develop critical thinking through guided curriculum;
2. recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and staff;
3. improve and promote effective communication and
4. integrate and enhance technology.

*Developed by WSD Strategic Planning Committee, July 2014*

## **OVERVIEW:**

- WSD was established by the Texas Legislature in 1969 and reauthorized in 1995. WSD was the first educational system to be created within a statewide prison system. WSD services are provided on facilities of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).
- WSD provides a variety of academic, vocational, and life skills classes to eligible offenders incarcerated in the TDCJ. WSD programs are designed to meet the unique needs of adult offenders to prepare them for success in postsecondary programs and employment, both within the prison system and upon release.
- Offenders are selected for enrollment in WSD programs based on an Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) process. The ITP outlines educational services and prioritizes participation in recommended programs based on the offender's age, program availability, projected release date and need for academic, vocational and life skills programs. Some offenders participate in more than one type of program.
- Offenders who are less than 35 years old and within five years of release are given priority for participation in WSD classes. Additional consideration for class enrollment and special services are given to offenders in this category who are less than 22 years of age.
- The Texas Board of Criminal Justice serves as the WSD Board of Trustees (WSD Board). The WSD is administered by a superintendent, who is selected by the WSD Board.

## GENERAL PARTICIPATION INFORMATION:

- There were 63,440 offenders who received WSD educational services across widely varying educational backgrounds in SY16.
- The typical WSD academic participant is approximately 32 years old and has a history of academic failure.
- The average initial educational attainment of a typical Windham student is 5.6.
- The average literacy participant receives about three hours of literacy instruction a day. WSD classes are open to accommodate the transient nature of the TDCJ population. Historically, literacy students with at least two educational achievement tests who have been released averaged a grade level advancement of at least 2.0 years in about 630 hours of instruction. This 630-hour time period is approximately one WSD school year.
- Of the 6,215 offenders who took the High School Equivalency Certificate test (formerly known as General Education Development or GED test), 5,156 (83 percent) earned a certificate during SY16. Many of the remaining students taking the test passed one or more of the required sections.
- WSD offers expanded educational opportunities for offenders through Elective Personal Enrichment Classes (EPEC). These programs help offenders obtain skills and certificates supporting employability and successful reentry into society. Summer 2016 EPEC programming took place at 46 TDCJ units, with more than 8,100 course enrollments serving more than 6,600 offenders. Additional EPEC sessions are planned.

## CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE):

- Offenders who completed vocational training while incarcerated are more likely to be employed, retain employment and earn higher average annual wages than those who did not receive vocational training. There were 14,833 vocational participants in SY16.
- Participating offenders have the opportunity to earn a vocational certificate of completion and one or more industry-recognized occupational certificates or licenses. During SY16 WSD awarded 12,147 vocational course completions and 18,532 industry certifications were earned.

## INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMER OFFENDERS:

- WSD forms and maintains successful industry and workforce partnerships to connect offenders with prospective employment prior to and upon release.
- WSD hosts unit Career and Service Provider Expos in partnership with employers, TDCJ, and reentry service providers. These events inform offenders concerning employment opportunities and successful reentry into communities following release.
- The WSD website offers employers a forum for posting jobs available to former offenders, and JobView Kiosks located within WSD State Jail libraries offer current employment information to offenders.
- WSD maintains communication and/or accreditation status with various certifying entities and current employers. This effort keeps WSD in touch with potential employment opportunities for ex-offenders.
- WSD has undergone auditing by the National Center for Construction Educational Research (NCCER), receiving accreditation through November 2018.

# WSD Contact Information

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