

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN

2010-2014



WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
P. O. BOX 40
HUNTSVILLE, TX 77342-0040

Introduction

Windham School District (WSD or District) provides academic, vocational (career and technical education) and life skills programs to eligible offenders incarcerated within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The District, which was established by the Texas Legislature in 1969, is the first educational system of such scope within a statewide prison system. Windham's education programs operate within the confines of each State operated prison facility. As such, security and safety are of paramount importance. The District is directed by Chapter 19 of the Texas Education Code to have a strategic plan that includes:

- 1) A mission statement relating to the goals and duties of the district;
- 2) Goals to be met by the district in carrying out the mission stated; and
- 3) Specified educational, vocational training, and counseling programs to be conducted by the district to meet the goals stated in the plan.

WSD's funding is appropriated through the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Additional funds are channeled through the TDCJ via inter-agency agreements and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as the funding relates to Project Re-Integration of Offenders (RIO). TEA, TDCJ and TWC, as State agencies, are required to prepare a strategic plan following instructions of the Governor's Budget, Planning and Policy office and the Legislative Budget Board. To that end, appropriate District outcome measures and performance measures are reported to TEA, TDCJ and TWC respectively for inclusion in the strategic plan of each of these State agencies.

The WSD strategic plan discusses goals and strategies to be addressed by the District in the next five years beginning with fiscal year 2010. These goals and strategies serve as the foundation for the District Improvement Plan, Regional Improvement Plans and Campus Improvement Plans. Performance measures as they relate to the goals and strategies identified herein are established in the District Improvement Plan. These performance measures are reviewed annually.

Statutory Goals for Windham School District

-§19.003, Texas Education Code

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.

Statutory Powers and Duties

-§19.002, Texas Education Code

The district may establish and operate schools at the various facilities of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

As set forth in the Texas Education Code, the district shall:

1. Develop educational and vocational training programs specifically designed for persons eligible under Section 19.005: ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.
 - (a) Any person confined or imprisoned in the department who is not a high school graduate is eligible for programs or services under this chapter paid for with money from the foundation school fund. To the extent space is available, the district may also offer programs or services under this chapter paid for with money from the foundation school fund to persons confined or imprisoned in the department who are high school graduates.
 - (b) Eligibility under this chapter does not make a person eligible for a program or service under any other chapter.
2. Coordinate educational programs and services in the department with those provided by other state agencies, by political subdivisions, and by persons who provide programs and services under contract under Section 19.004: GOVERNANCE, LIMITATION ON POWERS, AND DUTIES

Windham School District Mission

The Windham School District shall provide appropriate educational programming and services to meet the needs of the eligible offender population in Texas Department of Criminal Justice and reduce recidivism by assisting offenders in becoming responsible, productive members of their communities.

Windham School District Philosophy

Adults in the United States face the challenges of life in an ever-changing technological age. Successfully coping with these challenges requires adults to employ educational processes that are the basic tools of human growth and development. Incarcerated adults, as a group, lack these basic educational tools needed to adjust successfully to the dynamic economic, sociological, and cultural dimensions of today's society. Confined persons need to develop the academic skills which allow them to process knowledge and information, the vocational competencies which enable them to be productive in society, and the social skills which provide them with self-confidence and the ability to interact successfully with others.

Statutory Basis

- **State**
 - Senate Bill 35 passed by the 61st Texas Legislature established Windham School District effective 1968-69 school year.
 - Senate Bill 1 of the 74th Legislature reauthorized Windham School District, which was originally established under Chapter 19 of the Texas Education Code, to be effective for the school year 1968-1969.

- **Federal**
 - Federal - P.L. 105-17 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Requires Windham School District to provide free, appropriate education to qualified youths)
 - Federal - Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (Prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in programs which receive federal funds).

Historical Perspective

- 1969** 61st Texas Legislature passed into law Senate Bill 35 establishing Windham School District.
- 1969** Board of Corrections appointed Dr. Lane Murray as new District Superintendent (the first superintendent in a correctional institute and the first female superintendent in a school district in Texas).
- 1974** WSD employed a staff of 198.
- 1976** WSD was the first corrections education system to receive accreditation from a regional accreditation association (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools [SACS]).
- 1979** Windham employed a staff of 376.
- 1988** Windham employed a staff of 569.
- 1989** WSD eliminated Physical Education, Art and Music programs.
- 1990** Windham committed to the full-scale implementation of Computer Assisted Instruction.
- 1992** Windham employed a staff of 871. The District was funded under Article III, item 17 of the General Appropriations Act and a contact hour rate for funding was established.
- 1993** Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) reintegration/life skills program began as a pre-release program to better prepare offenders for release.
- 1993** *Schools Behind Bars: Windham School System and Other Prison Education Programs*, a performance review of the District by the Texas State Comptroller, was published.
- 1994** Windham served 45,000 inmates on 51 campuses; employed staff of 1,469.
- 1994** WSD established regional offices.

- 1995** Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1 (The Comprehensive Education Act) and Chapter 19 reauthorized the Windham School District.
- 1996** The District implemented the Cognitive Intervention program.
- 1999** The District restructured career & technical education courses for female offenders, adding new programs.
- 2000** Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council conducted a study and published a series of four reports: 1) An Overview of the Windham School District; 2) Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District; 3) Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Post-Release Employment; and 4) Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Recidivism.
- 2000** Select Committee on the WSD produced "Interim Report to the 77th Texas Legislature".
- 2001** Windham introduced Perspectives and Solutions, a cultural diversity/tolerance program designed to assist offenders with adjustment as they enter a correctional environment.
- 2001** The District implemented the Parenting program.
- 2001** The TEA conducted a Title I Program Monitoring review.
- 2003** Windham operated 88 schools, serving 83,785 offender participants; awarded 4,723 high school equivalency (GED) certificates, 8,646 vocational certificates of completion and 3,307 industry standard certificates; employed 1,487 staff members with an additional 135 Project RIO personnel.
- 2003** The TEA conducted a District Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) visit.
- 2003** The legislature decreased funding for the District by approximately 19%, which resulted in a reduction-in-force and a substantive organizational restructure, effective September 1, 2003.
- 2005** Windham incorporated assistive technology for students with visual and hearing impairments.
- 2005** A Sunset review of WSD was conducted.

- 2006** Windham conducted its initial effectiveness study of Career and Technical programming in relation to post-release employment as required by the Texas Education Code, Chapter 19 and the Texas Labor Code, Chapter 306 (79th Legislature) and submitted the report to the Legislative Budget Board.
- 2007** The TEA conducted an extensive site and field review of Windham School District as required by Rider 79 Article III of the 2005 General Appropriations Act. This review evaluated the structure, management and operations of the District and the impact of its programs. The report was submitted by the State Commissioner of Education to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and members of the Texas Legislature.
- 2008** As of August 31, 2008, Windham served approximately 82,449 offenders in its literacy, career and technical education and life skills programs. Continuing Education served an additional 8,205 offenders through its post-secondary programs. 5,039 offenders received a GED, 509 Associate's degrees were awarded, 56 Bachelor's degrees were awarded, and 15 offenders had a Master's degree conferred. Windham employs a staff of approximately 1,264 with an additional 121 Project RIO personnel.

Windham School District Client Service Procedures

In order to best achieve its mission, Windham School District has adopted a strategy of targeting a primary inmate population of individuals between the ages of 14-35. This target population was not selected randomly, but based upon an analysis of recidivism by age group.

All of WSD's clients are offenders incarcerated in one of the State-operated adult prisons or adult State jails. The incarcerated population includes men and women with ages ranging from 14 to the 90's. It is a diverse population from the standpoint of geography, age, gender, race and ethnicity. It is self-evident that the average Windham "student" differs greatly from the traditional public school student profile.

Windham has implemented an Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) for identifying and tracking educational program and progress history of each participant. This ITP specifically and clearly targets which programs are most appropriate for the participant.

The ITP process is as follows:

- Newly received offenders are reviewed so educational programming needs can be identified and addressed. Recommended program/activities are documented on the ITP by the use of a two-digit key rating system. The need key reflects the offender's need level for a particular program. The priority key prioritizes the offender's placement based on such factors as the offender's age, presumptive release date, receive date and program eligibility criteria.
- Selection and prioritization of students occurs through an automated process. As seats become available in classrooms, the list is used to select appropriately prioritized offenders for enrollment in classes.
- In general, offenders less than 35 years of age have priority for enrollment in academic classes; offenders less than 35 years of age and within five years of projected release receive the highest priority for enrollment in vocational classes.
- Offenders who do not have a verified high school diploma or GED are expected to participate in academic programs as space permits. Refusal to participate is indicated on the ITP. Offenders are counseled that participation refusals may negatively affect parole considerations.

Client Participation Information

Windham School District Academic Programs FY 2008	
<u>Programs</u>	<u>Participants</u>
Literacy	39,687
CHANGES/Pre-Release	31,875
Title 1	870
English as a Second Language	1,165
Special Education	1,784
Reading	555
Cognitive Intervention	18,156
Parenting	5,683
Perspectives and Solutions	3,603

Windham School District Career and Technical Education Programs FY 2008	
<u>Programs</u>	<u>Participants</u>
Occupational Training from Auto Specialization to Welding (full-length course)	12,182
Industry Certificates Awarded	4,011
Short Course (45 to 200 hours course)	134
Apprenticeship Program	324

Windham School District Continuing Education Programs FY 2008	
<u>Programs</u>	<u>Participants</u>
Two-Year College Academic	5,471
Four-Year College Academic	432
Graduate College Academic	92
Vocational College Credit	2,818
Vocational College Non-Credit	780
Workforce Educational Non-Credit	284
Project RIO (Re-Integration of Offenders)	59,318

Overview of the District

Texas Board of Criminal Justice – WSD Board of Trustees

The WSD Board of Trustees consists of nine non-salaried members who are appointed by the Governor for staggered six-year terms. The Board is responsible for providing general oversight and the hiring of Windham School District's superintendent. The Board is also responsible for setting rules and policies that guide the District.

Windham School Board Members

Mr. Oliver Bell

Chairman of the Board
(Term expires 2/2015)
Austin

Mr. Tom Mechler

Secretary (Term expires 2/2011)
Amarillo

Mr. Terrell McCombs

Member (Term expires 2/2013)
San Antonio

Mr. Eric Gambrell

Member (Term expires 2/2013)
Dallas

Mr. J. David Nelson

Member (Term expires 2/2013)
Lubbock

Pastor Charles Lewis “C. L.” Jackson

Member (Term expires 2/2011)
Houston

Mr. Leopoldo R. Vasquez, III

Member (Term expires 2/2011)
Houston

Ms. Janice Harris Lord

Member (Term expires 2/2015)
Arlington

Ms. Carmen Villanueva-Hines

Member (Term expires 2/2015)
Palmhurst

Superintendent

The superintendent, as the chief executive officer of the District, reports directly to the WSD Board. The superintendent's responsibilities include the implementation of comprehensive educational programs for offenders incarcerated in the TDCJ and implementation of appropriate measures to evaluate the effectiveness of WSD programs.

The superintendent has the authority to administer, organize, manage and supervise the daily operations of WSD. This includes, but is not limited to employment, discharge, and non-renewal or termination of employees; power to prescribe policies, procedures, and regulations; authority to structure the organization of the District to improve operations; oversee the fiscal management of the District; litigation settlement authority up to the prescribed amount; delegation of authority to staff as appropriate; and implementation of personnel policies.

Public Information Officer

The public information officer is responsible for press releases, media relations, and providing current news to all Windham staff. The public information officer provides photographs for District publications, updates the website calendar and bulletin board, and provides supervision for the offender newspaper staff. Windham acquired responsibility for the publication of the offender newspaper, *The Echo*, from the TDCJ during the 2001-2002 school year.

General Counsel

General counsel provides quality legal support and services so the District can lawfully fulfill its mission.

Division of Administrative and Business Services **Chief Financial Officer**

The Division of Administrative and Business Services facilitates the planning, management, and reporting necessary to provide financial support of education and recreation programs. This division includes the areas of Budget, Purchasing, Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program, Warehousing, Accounting, Accounts Payable and Payroll Processing.

Division of Continuing Education

The Division of Continuing Education is responsible for supervising and administering Post-Secondary, Project RIO and Recreation programs. Continuing Education administers programs designed to meet the needs of the eligible population and addresses performance measures and riders that are legislatively mandated. Contractual agreements are made with 15 two-year and three four-year colleges and universities to provide academic, vocational credit and vocational noncredit post-secondary educational opportunities to offenders. Project RIO works in conjunction with the TWC in linking offender educational and vocational training with job placement after release.

Division of Human Resources

The Division of Human Resources develops and implements activities and programs relating to recruitment, staffing, employee classification, compensation and benefits, as well as employee relations, employee recognition and training on human resources policies and procedures.

Division of Instruction

The Division of Instruction designs programs and services to meet the unique needs of adult offenders and address the legislatively-mandated goals of reducing recidivism, reducing the cost of confinement, promoting positive behavior during confinement, and increasing offenders' success in obtaining and maintaining employment. Literacy programs provide adult basic education for offenders functioning below the sixth grade level and secondary level adult education for those who are working toward attainment of a GED certificate. Career and technical education programs provide vocational training to entry-level industry standards. Life skills programs include pre-release preparation, cognitive intervention and parenting. Also included in the Division of Instruction is the Media Center, which provides media services for the District.

Division of Operational Support

The Division of Operational Support oversees compliance, campus planning, student accounting, District performance and the District operating calendar. The Division of Operational Support consists of the Office of Compliance and Operational Review, Program Evaluation, Policy Development, Information Management and Computer Services.

Regional Administrators

Regional administrators oversee the daily operation of educational programs at each of the TDCJ units and coordinate District activities with the unit wardens and the TDCJ regional administration. Windham School District is divided into four regions: Gulf Coast, North Texas, South Texas and West Texas.

Workforce

Ethnicity

Windham's overall employee profile is in compliance with Federal and State guidelines governing diversity in the workforce. Windham continues to strive for increased diversity in the workplace. The average academic teacher comes to WSD with approximately 9.89 years of teaching experience, while the vocational teacher comes with an average experience base of 4.22 years. The average length of service for teachers is 8.57 years.

Qualifications

Approximately 34 percent of the professional staff hold a master's degree or higher. All principals, counselors, diagnosticians, librarians and instructional staff are required to hold professional credentials issued by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal 1

Reduce Recidivism

- Objective 1.1** Promote higher educational attainment, thereby positively impacting recidivism.
- Strategy 1.1.1 Provide instructional services designed to enable students to progress from non-readers to readers.
 - Strategy 1.1.2 Provide instructional services designed for student improvement.
- Objective 1.2** Target high-risk offenders, thereby positively impacting recidivism.
- Strategy 1.2.1 Implement a prioritization framework to ensure those most likely to recidivate receive highest priority for program enrollment.

Goal 2

Reduce Cost of Confinement or Imprisonment

- Objective 2.1** Positively impact disciplinary events through the use of cognitive-based programs, thereby reducing the cost of confinement.
- Strategy 2.1.1 Coordinate with TDCJ to provide Cognitive Intervention through staff referrals.
 - Strategy 2.1.2 Promote pro-social thinking skills in all life-skills classes.
- Objective 2.2** Provide vocational training commensurate with TDCJ needs.
- Strategy 2.2.1 Coordinate with TDCJ to evaluate alignment of vocational training with offender job assignments and to address training needs.
 - Strategy 2.2.2 Coordinate with TDCJ and state classification regarding vocationally trained offenders who are ready to be assigned to jobs for statewide TDCJ operational efficiency.
- Objective 2.3** Provide opportunities for engaging offenders in constructive activities.
- Strategy 2.3.1 Maintain appropriate enrollment levels in all educational programs.
 - Strategy 2.3.2 Maintain appropriate attendance requirements in all educational programs.
 - Strategy 2.3.3 Optimize unit library operations to allow for improved offender access to library holdings.

Goal 3 **Increase Success of Former Offenders in Obtaining and Maintaining Employment**

- Objective 3.1** Prepare offenders whose release is imminent for successful post-release employment through Project RIO.
- Strategy 3.1.1 Provide pre-release career guidance.
 - Strategy 3.1.2 Conduct Career Awareness Days with potential employers.
 - Strategy 3.1.3 Gather employment documents.
- Objective 3.2** Equip offenders with job skills designed to meet labor market demands.
- Strategy 3.2.1 Provide vocational training targeting entry-level skills in current and emerging job markets.
 - Strategy 3.2.2 Provide industry certification testing to further enhance employment potential.
- Objective 3.3** Provide opportunities, through partnership with TDCJ, for vocationally trained offenders to gain related work place experience prior to release.
- Strategy 3.3.1 Communicate with unit classification processes to ensure that offenders who have completed vocational training programs are reviewed for potential unit job assignment related to vocational training.

Goal 4 **Provide Incentive to Behave in Positive Ways During Confinement or Imprisonment**

- Objective 4.1** Provide opportunities for self-improvement.
- Strategy 4.1.1 Encourage participation in and successful completion of educational programs.
 - Strategy 4.1.2 Provide positive reinforcement activities or student incentives to offenders who make progress in and/or successfully complete educational programs.
- Objective 4.2** Achieve early release eligibility through positive behavior and successful program completion.
- Strategy 4.2.1 Offenders with appropriate Rehabilitative Tier Voting Option (FI-R) votes will satisfy educational components to meet parole requirements.