

# **2015-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **Windham School District**

PO Box 40 • Huntsville, TX

77342-0040



**Providing academic, vocational and life skills to  
eligible offenders incarcerated within the  
Texas Department of Criminal Justice.**





# WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

## 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, was the first educational system of such scope within a statewide prison system. Windham's education programs operate within the physical confines of state operated prison facilities. As such, all instruction is provided in a safe and secure manner. 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.

The WSD strategic plan discusses goals and strategies to be addressed by the District in the next five years beginning with fiscal year 2015. 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.

## Vision

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

## Mission

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



## Philosophy

The Windham School District serves a population of male and female adult offenders who left the public school system for a variety of reasons and eventually found their way into the legal system. The difficulties experienced by WSD students while they were in the public school system have not disappeared with age or incarceration. The offender's education difficulties and the ability to retain information might also be affected by excessive use of illegal drugs or alcohol prior to incarceration. Other factors can impact the offender's education achievement: age, general attitude toward school, health concerns and current medication.

Incarcerated adults often lack basic educational tools which allow them to process knowledge and information, the vocational competencies which enable them to be productive in today's workforce, and the social skills which provide them with self-confidence and the ability to interact successfully with others. In order to meet the needs of male and female offenders, the WSD offers structured classes in academic, life skills and vocational programming. WSD believes that education can empower students and transform lives.

# Historical Perspective

- 1969** The 61st Texas Legislature passed into law Senate Bill 35 authorizing the Texas Department of Corrections to establish a school district within the prison system.
- 1969** The 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 offenders 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, Schools in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
- 1996** The District implemented the Cognitive Intervention program.
- 1999** The District restructured career and 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 Texas Education Agency (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 certificates issued by industry recognized agencies, and 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 percent, which resulted in a reduction-in-force and a substantive organizational restructuring, 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. In addition, 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 employed a staff of approximately 1,264 with an additional 121 Project RIO personnel.
- 2009** Twenty percent of offenders on hand in state-operated TDCJ facilities participated in some type of WSD educational program on a typical day.
- 2009** Windham School District conducted an effectiveness study of its vocational programs and submitted its annual report to the Legislative Budget Board as required by Texas H.B. 2837, 79th Legislative, R.S. (2005).
- 2010** Windham School District began paying industry certification testing fees for eligible students, enabling more students to obtain industry certification and contributing to a 43 percent increase from the number of certificates issued in SY 2008-2009.
- 2011** The legislature reduced funding for the Windham School District by approximately 27 percent. Effective September 1, 2011, the District implemented a reduction-in-force eliminating 271 positions including 31 percent administrative positions and 20 percent of teaching positions, restructuring the organization from four regions to three, closing eight school campuses and increasing the number of campuses under the supervision of individual principals.
- 2011** Windham School District submitted a self-evaluation report to the Sunset Commission, highlighting the educational programs and services provided by WSD, in preparation for the legislatively-mandated Sunset Commission review of WSD in 2012.
- 2012** Windham School District contracted with Sam Houston State University (SHSU) to conduct an evaluation of WSD education programs. The study measured the effect of program participation on the likelihood of recidivism, along with employment outcomes such as wages.
- 2012** Windham School District participated in an assessment process conducted by the Sunset Advisory Commission.
- 2013** Windham School District provided educational services on 86 facilities across the state. More than 60,000 offenders received WSD educational services in SY13.
- 2013** The Division of Program Monitoring and Interventions from TEA conducted on-site visits to evaluate implementation of the special education program.
- 2014** Educational services were reestablished on five facilities that closed educational programming in 2012 resulting in services being provided on a total of 89 TDCJ facilities.
- 2014** The supervision of Post-Secondary Educational Services was transferred from Windham School District to the TDCJ Rehabilitation Program Division.
- 2014** The Windham School District entered into partnership with Mullin Independent School District to provide an avenue for eligible female offenders at the San Saba facility to earn a high school diploma.



# Statutory Authority

## 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.

## Statutory Basis

### State

- Senate Bill 35 passed by the 61st Texas Legislature, effective March 1969 authorized the Texas Dept. of Corrections to establish a school district within the prison system.
- Senate Bill 1 of the 74th Legislature, effective May of 1995 codified The Windham School District in chapter 19 of the Texas Education Code.

### 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)

# Windham School District Client Service Procedures

All of WSD's students are offenders incarcerated in one of the state-operated adult prisons or adult state jails. The incarcerated population includes men and women with ages as young as 14 to well into the 90s. It is a diverse population in terms of geography, age, gender, race and ethnicity. As one would expect, the average profile of a Windham student differs greatly from the traditional public school student.

To best achieve its mission, Windham School District has adopted a strategy of targeting an offender population most likely to recidivate. Primary focus is placed on services for offenders less than 35 years of age.

Windham has implemented an Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) for identifying and tracking the 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 to identify educational programming needs. Recommended programs/activities are documented on the ITP by the use of a two-digit key rating system. The need key reflects the offender's need 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.
- As seats become available in classrooms, school counselors select appropriately prioritized offenders for enrollment in classes.
- In general, offenders without a high school diploma or equivalency, less than 35 years of age, have priority for enrollment in academic classes; offenders less than 35 years of age without prior work experience or vocational training receive the highest priority for enrollment in vocational classes.
- Offenders who do not have a verified high school diploma or equivalency are expected to participate in academic programs as space permits. Life Skills and Career and Technical Education courses are also available to meet students' identified ITP needs. Offenders are counseled that participation refusals may negatively affect parole considerations. Refusal to participate is indicated on the ITP.

### Windham School District Academic Programs FY 2013

<u>Programs</u>	<u>Participants</u>
Literacy I, II, III	27,077
CHANGES/Pre-Release	19,429
Title I	1,025
English as a Second Language	598
Special Education	1,050
Reading	469
Cognitive Intervention	14,905
Parenting & Family Wellness	873
Perspectives and Solutions	2,751

### Windham School District Career and Technical Education Programs FY 2013

<u>Programs</u>	<u>Participants</u>
Career & Technical Training (Full-length courses)	9,211
Vocational Certificates of Completion	4,624
Industry Certificates Awarded	5,595
Short Course (45 to 200 hours course)	93
Apprenticeship Program	79

# 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 policies that guide the District.

### Windham School District Board Members

**Mr. Oliver J. Bell**  
Chairman of the Board  
Term Expires 2/2015  
Houston

**Mr. Tom Mechler**  
Vice-Chairman  
Term Expires 2/2017  
Amarillo

**Mr. Leopoldo “Leo” Vasquez, III**  
Secretary  
Term Expires 2/2017  
Houston

**Mr. “Eric” Gambrell**  
Member  
Term Expires 2/2019  
Dallas

**Mr. R. Terrell McCombs**  
Member  
Term Expires 2/2019  
San Antonio

**Ms. Janice Harris Lord**  
Member  
Term Expires 2/2015  
Arlington

**Judge Lawrence “Larry” Gist**  
Member  
Term Expires 2/2017  
Beaumont

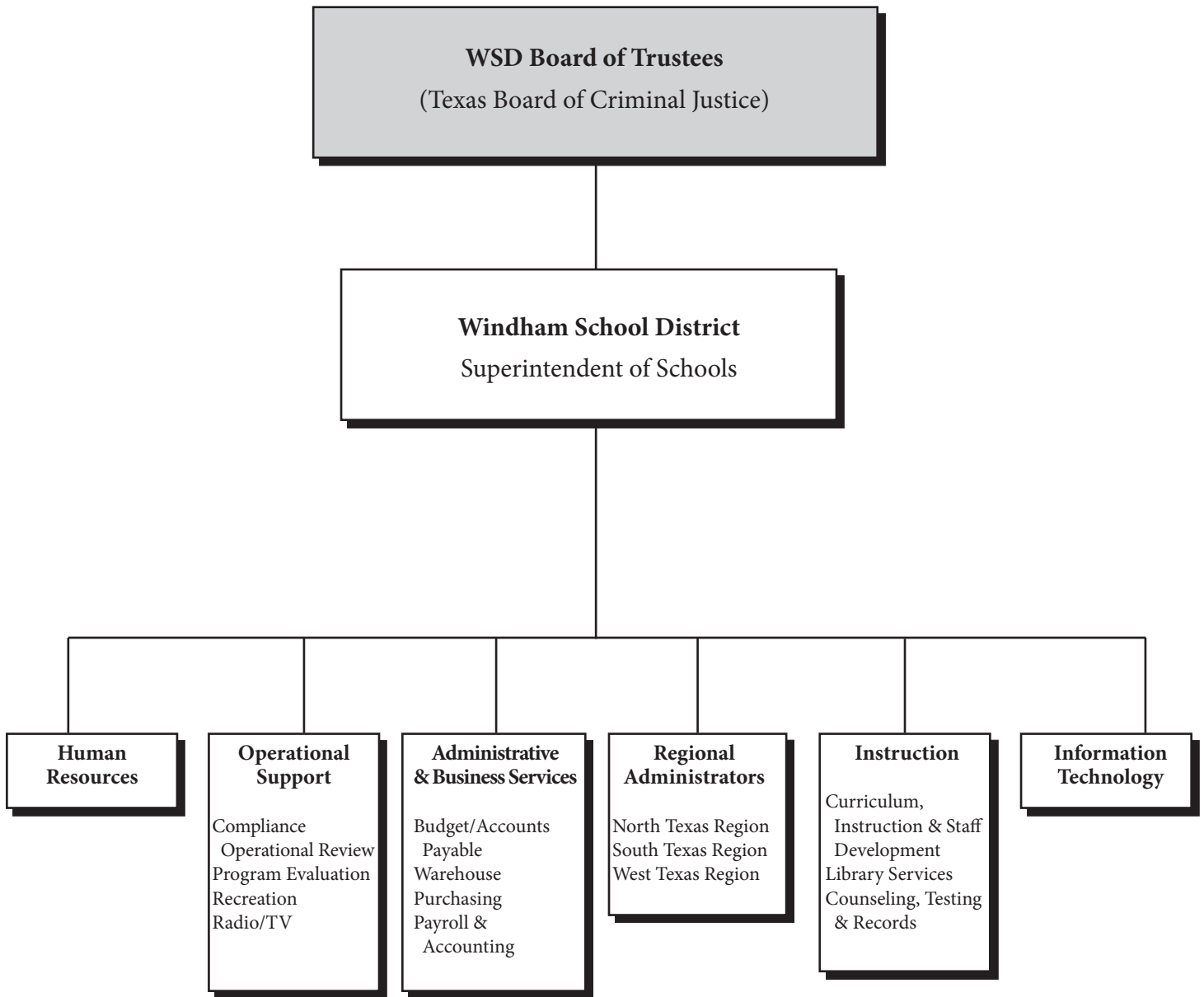
**Mr. Thomas P. Wingate**  
Member  
Term Expires 2/2019  
Mission

**Ms. Carmen Villanueva-Hiles**  
Member  
Term Expires 2/2015  
Palmhurst



# Windham School District

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



---

## **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; oversight of 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.

## **Division of Instruction**

The Division of Instruction designs programs and services to meet the unique needs of incarcerated adult offenders. 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 high school equivalency 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. Divisional staff create and deliver professional development tailored to meet the needs of the unique student population. Staff research current instructional strategies, researched based tools as well as instructional technology. The Division of Instruction has direct oversight of the WSD Counseling, Testing and Records Department which coordinates all student testing and placement for the district. The division also oversees the volunteer program for the district as well as the operation of 87 libraries for the TDCJ.

## **Division of Operational Support**

The Division of Operational Support oversees campus planning, student attendance accounting, operational reviews, district and student achievement reporting, program evaluation and records retention. Operational Support coordinates internal and external research and serves as the educational liaison to private prisons, parole and American Correctional Association initiatives. In addition, the Windham School District operates the Recreation Program which includes the Radio and TV shop for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. These programs are overseen by the Division of Operational Support.

## **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 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 Information Technology**

The Division of Information Technology provides reliable and secure technology solutions in support of the district's mission. The IT staff maintains over 100 computer labs and all instructional and administrative networks and computers across the state. WSD IT provides system, network, and database administration, evaluates and implements new educational software and develops applications to support the users throughout the district.

## **Regional Administrators**

Windham School District is divided into three regions: North Texas, South Texas and West Texas. 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. In support of student achievement, Regional Administrators also develop regional improvement plans to execute the goals of the District.

## **Principals**

Principals are responsible for implementing educational programs at each campus, with the majority of principals overseeing two or more campuses. As instructional leader of the campus, principals create and implement campus improvement plans, evaluate instruction and oversee a rigorous testing program to meet the educational needs of the unit population.

## **Unit Staff**

WSD employs professional staff at 89 facilities across the state to provide educational services to eligible offenders.



## 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.

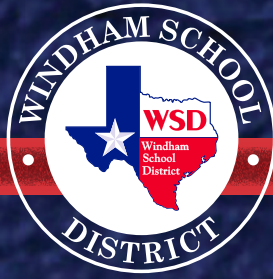
## Qualifications

All instructional staff including principals, counselors, diagnosticians, librarians and teachers hold professional credentials issued by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification.

Because of the difficulty in working with the academic and behavioral challenges that offenders provide and the inherent risks of teaching in a prison environment, experienced teachers tend to perform best in the WSD. WSD generally hires academic and life skills teachers with approximately 10 years of public school experience. Vocational teachers may have less public school teaching experience, but are experts from the industry field.

‘I know our students receive training that ensures greater employment success and encourages positive behavior. This reduces prison costs because the offenders become productive tax-paying citizens, instead of returning to prison and costing taxpayers more money. As teachers, we’re in the business of helping change lives.’

~ *WSD Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching  
Award Recipient 2013*



*Windham School District provides appropriate educational programming and services to meet the needs of the eligible population in the TDCJ. WSD believes that its legislatively mandated goals to reduce recidivism, reduce the cost of confinement or imprisonment, increase the success of former inmates in obtaining and maintaining employment, and provide an incentive to inmates to behave in positive ways during confinement or imprisonment will be directly impacted by the successful achievement of its educational goals, objectives, and strategies.*

---

## Strategic Planning Process

---

### May 2014

- ★ District-wide employee survey distributed to identify issues that should be addressed during the planning process.
- ★ District conducted a two-day strategic planning session with a committee comprised of representatives from divisions/departments across the state.
- ★ District's vision statement, mission statement and goals for the 2015 – 2019 Strategic Plan created by the committee of representatives.

### June 2014

- ★ Work groups established to develop the objectives and strategies for the strategic plan.

### July 2014

- ★ Work groups refined objectives and strategies for the District's Strategic Plan.
- ★ Administrative leadership finalized District's Strategic Plan.

### August 2014

- ★ 2015 – 2019 Strategic Plan presented to WSD Board of Trustees for review and approval.

# Goals, Objectives and Strategies

**Goal 1:** The WSD will provide high level instruction and develop critical thinking through guided curriculum

**Objective 1.1** Develop learner standards

**Strategy 1.1.1** Establish specific goals and objectives for each standard

**Strategy 1.1.2** Standardize the instructional materials that support learner expectations

**Strategy 1.1.3** Identify performance indicators to measure student success

**Objective 1.2** Provide opportunities for quality professional development that support educators in meeting learner expectations

**Strategy 1.2.1** Investigate multiple delivery models for professional development

**Strategy 1.2.2** Promote the development of internal content specific expert teams

**Strategy 1.2.3** Maintain on-going, consistent instructional support for all teachers

**Goal 2** WSD will recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and staff

**Objective 2.1** Implement recruiting strategies to reduce the vacancy rate

**Strategy 2.1.1** Accelerate the hiring process

**Strategy 2.1.2** Offer a competitive compensation package

**Strategy 2.1.3** Incorporate non-traditional avenues in recruitment efforts

**Objective 2.2** Establish strategies to retain new and existing staff and maintain a turnover rate at or below the state

**Strategy 2.2.1** Create an on-site mentoring program to support new teachers

**Strategy 2.2.2** Provide extensive training on curricular resources and instructional strategies

**Strategy 2.2.3** Develop a professional learning environment which supports opportunities for growth and enrichment

**Goal 3:** The WSD will improve and promote effective communication

**Objective 3.1** Improve and promote effective communication with offenders and former offenders

**Strategy 3.1.1** Use a variety of printed and electronic media to communicate information and opportunities

**Strategy 3.1.2** Provide resource and employment fairs



**Objective 3.2** Improve and promote effective internal communication

**Strategy 3.2.1** Use a variety of printed and electronic media to communicate with WSD employees

**Strategy 3.2.2** Develop opportunities to increase the flow of communication from the campus to the regional and central staff

**Objective 3.3** Improve and promote effective communication with external stakeholders

**Strategy 3.3.1** Use a variety of printed and electronic media to communicate with stakeholders

**Strategy 3.3.2** Promote successful employment and re-integration of offenders by enhancing awareness of WSD programs among employers, agencies and community stakeholders

**Goal 4:** WSD will integrate and enhance technology

**Objective 4.1** Investigate correctional educational equipment and software programs

**Strategy 4.1.1** Create a District Instructional Technology Committee to research potential educational equipment and software to address district needs

**Strategy 4.1.2** Standardize classroom and lab technology

**Objective 4.2** Support students' academic achievement and acquisition of 21st century knowledge and skills through the integration of technology

**Strategy 4.2.1** Identify and document existing classroom technology and its usage as it relates to district needs

**Strategy 4.2.2** Develop policies/guidelines for the educational use of technology for both staff and students

**Objective 4.3** Provide diversified professional development to increase skills in utilizing technology to enhance student achievement

**Strategy 4.3.1** Provide training for staff to learn essential technology and its integration into instruction

**Strategy 4.3.2** Expand the avenues for the provision of staff development through technology



PO Box 40 • Huntsville, TX 77342-0040