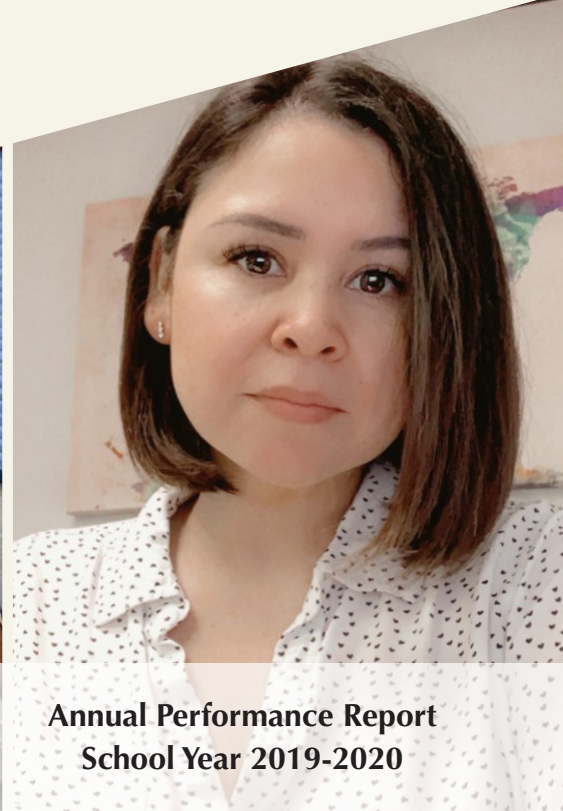


Today's Vision, Tomorrow's Reality:
The Future Starts Now!



Annual Performance Report
School Year 2019-2020

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Thanks to your support, the Windham School District (WSD) is innovating within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

The Windham School District serves incarcerated students and Texas communities by preparing students to return to the workforce as skilled, productive individuals with real opportunities for success, both socially and professionally. The onset of COVID-19 presented both challenges and opportunities for growth in the correctional education environment, and demonstrated the resiliency and commitment of both our educators and students.

WSD increases partnerships to support student employment. WSD continues to gain support from multiple stakeholders to ensure student success. During the school year, regular meetings were held with the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and Texas Department of Criminal Justice to identify process improvements and data-sharing opportunities to support reentry and immediate employment of returning citizens. These interactions have resulted in open dialogue and identified opportunities to better support Texas businesses.

WSD expands apprenticeship opportunities. Applying skills training to real-world employment for both women and men was supported by increased opportunities to engage in apprenticeships. Career and Technical Education training opportunities are robust within WSD and result in national or third-party industry-recognized certifications. The addition of apprenticeship programs and On-the-Job Learning (OJL) hours within the many different divisions of TDCJ allow students to practice, learn and implement the training skills in an everyday work experience. These skills/OJL hours are approved standards by the Department of Labor with recognized

industries. Students apply apprenticeship hours earned while incarcerated and transfer these hours to outside programs to satisfy occupational licensing and certificate requirements.

WSD supports students during COVID-19. During COVID-19 protocols, the WSD enhanced communication with administrators and principals from our 88 campuses, increased social media presence and assessed district needs by administering staff and student surveys and interest inventories. Through a unique collaboration with TDCJ, WSD was able to continue supporting students via distance learning with individualized lessons and library books during Texas school closures, followed by implementation of a hybrid model of instruction with small groups of students. Completion of courses required by the Board of Pardons and Paroles, assessments associated with career and technical education skills and certifications, literacy level advancements and high school equivalency exams remained a focus throughout the pandemic. WSD also recognized the necessity to increase appropriate technology in the correctional education setting and will implement these advances next school year to make this vision a reality.

WSD connects classroom to community. Windham is committed to investing in its students and inspiring them to shape their future by making their present relevant. WSD strives to instill a healthy student learning framework that transcends incarceration, expands horizons and strengthens families and communities!

Respectfully,

Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S.
Superintendent, Windham School District

To the Honorable Governor of Texas and Members of the Texas Legislature:

Correctional education is a challenging enterprise indispensable to an effective re-entry strategy for incarcerated individuals. The Windham School District (WSD) continues to stand strong and diligent to meet this challenge. Innumerable futures have been positively impacted as WSD works to prepare and inspire men and women to chart a course to success.

The professionally-certified correctional educators and support staff who compose the WSD are fundamental to the vibrancy and success of the district.

Under the professional and accomplished leadership of Superintendent Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S., WSD demonstrated its ongoing resolve to improving operations and student services in the 2020 school year.

Collaborations and partnerships remain a major focus within Windham. The strong relationship between rising educational attainment, job skills training, employability and reduced recidivism inspires and drives the Windham team in this important effort. This point should assure each of us that correctional educators play a vital role in the quest for a significant reduction to recidivism and generational incarceration. The partnerships pursued and entered into by Windham reflect the desire to make a lasting impact in our communities.

The unprecedented environment resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic brought about significant challenges. The Windham team remained strong, resilient and well-positioned to support student growth and success. As a well-functioning organization, WSD prepared and mobilized resources to implement distance learning and on-site hybrid educational services for students. This effort illustrated Windham's capacity to overcome adverse circumstances and the dedication to helping the students achieve a brighter future.

Windham has an unwavering commitment to integrity, fairness and responsibility. In the 2020 school year, Windham formally incorporated a district diversity statement. The WSD demonstrates its commitment to inclusion and diversity by recognizing the achievements and contributions of the many diverse cultures represented by our students and staff. All schools and workplaces participate in monthly activities and learning exercises. By celebrating the unique cultures, traditions, struggles, inventions and achievements of others, employees and students gain a greater appreciation for the contributions made by individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds. Diversity and inclusion is beyond an initiative for the district. It represents a philosophy that vitalizes and permeates the organizational culture.



The cohesive relationship between the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and the WSD represents the results-driven alliance necessary to affect positive outcomes for students and communities. The WSD is resolute in its organizational vision to empower students and transform lives through excellence in education. Thanks to the academic, technical and life skills training afforded to Windham students, lives continue to change for the better. The ultimate beneficiaries are the participants, their families and all the citizens of Texas.

Respectfully,

Patrick O'Daniel
Chairman, Windham School District Board of Trustees

The Windham School District (WSD) was authorized by the Texas Legislature in 1969 and established by the Texas Board of Corrections as an entity separate and distinct from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The Texas Board of Criminal Justice serves as the Board of Trustees of the WSD. It is the policy of the Board that the WSD shall provide academic, life skills, and Career & Technical Education instruction to eligible offenders incarcerated within the TDCJ. Board members are volunteers appointed by the Governor, overseeing the direction and operations of correctional education in Texas.

Table of Contents

Vision, Mission and Goals5

The Typical WSD Student5

Students Served6

Educational Services Provided6

Professional Development.....7

WSD Evaluation and Placement8

Introduction to Academics, Career and Technical Education and Life Skills Programs9

Academic Courses Combine Instruction with Employment10

WSD Provides Additional Academic and Work-Readiness Support for Younger Students.....11

Special Programs12

WSD Teacher of the Year: Jerry Riley13

WSD Teacher of the Year Finalist: Lee Russell14

WSD Teacher of the Year Finalist: R. Juarez15

Elective Personal Enrichment Courses16-17

Accountability18-19

Career and Technical Education Programs20-22

Success Story: Tabitha Wood23

Start a Career, Reconstruct a Life 24

Changing Lives through Apprenticeships/OJT25

Life Skills Programs.....26-27

Windham Resources Open Pathways.....28-32

Success Story: Noemi Martinez33

Success Story: Steve Golden34

WSD Educational Programming Locations.....35

Note: Windham School District follows strict COVID-19 protocol of wearing proper face covering and social distancing. Photos in this report not following these protocols were taken prior to the pandemic.

VISION

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

STATUTORY GOALS

Texas Education Code §19.003

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.

MISSION

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

WINDHAM STRATEGIC GOALS

Developed by WSD Strategic Planning Committee, July 2019. 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;
- (4) integrate and enhance technology; and
- (5) facilitate meaningful employment of students.



Windham School District provides opportunities for incarcerated individuals to succeed in education.

The Windham School District (WSD) serves a population of incarcerated individuals who have been unable to complete their basic education in the past and others who need technical training and soft skills to better equip them for the future.

Difficulties experienced by those who did not complete their education have not disappeared with age or incarceration. As past experiences with academic success are often limited or nonexistent, each educational accomplishment empowers students to transition their lives into success stories.

WSD strives to prepare students through educational achievement, career and technical education, academic instruction and life skills training. The district's ultimate goal is to better equip students to reenter the workforce within their communities.

Characteristics of the typical academic student entering WSD programs:

- Dropped out of school in 9th or 10th grade
- Functions at the 6th-grade level
- Average age of 32
- Exhibits impulsive behavior
- History of academic challenges
- In need of skills training

WSD provided services to 60,901 students in 2019-2020 School Year.

Highlights of Released Students

(September, 2019- August, 2020: SY20)

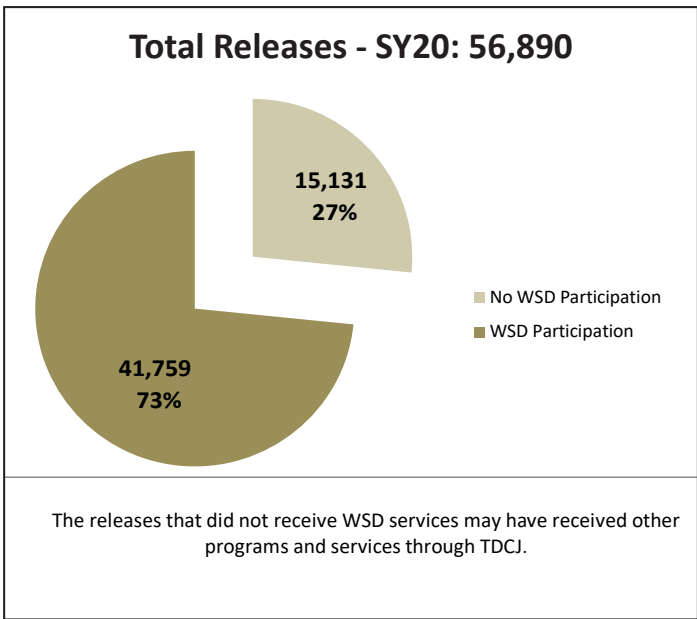
The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) released 56,890 individuals during SY20.

- 73 percent of those released participated in one or more educational programs during the history of their incarceration.
- 10,464 earned a High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate* through the Windham School District (WSD), and 87 received a High School Diploma (HSD) through partnerships with the Mullin Independent School District and the Lometa Independent School District.
- 17,514 of those released completed one or more Career and Technical Education (CTE) course.
- 21,012 completed life skills programming.
- 55 percent of the released students who participated in any Windham program, and had at least two educational achievement tests, demonstrated a significant gain in educational achievement level or attained an HSE certificate or HSD.

*Note: The HSE certificate is awarded through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) HSE Program.

Educational Services Provided During SY20

- There were 60,901 students with varying educational backgrounds who received WSD educational services in SY20.
- During the WSD’s SY20, TDCJ had an average count of 133,055 incarcerated individuals at the end of each month. Of those, an average of 127,761 were on TDCJ-operated facilities. From this population, WSD served the highest-priority students as resources allowed, based upon their ages, release dates and educational needs.



Professional Development

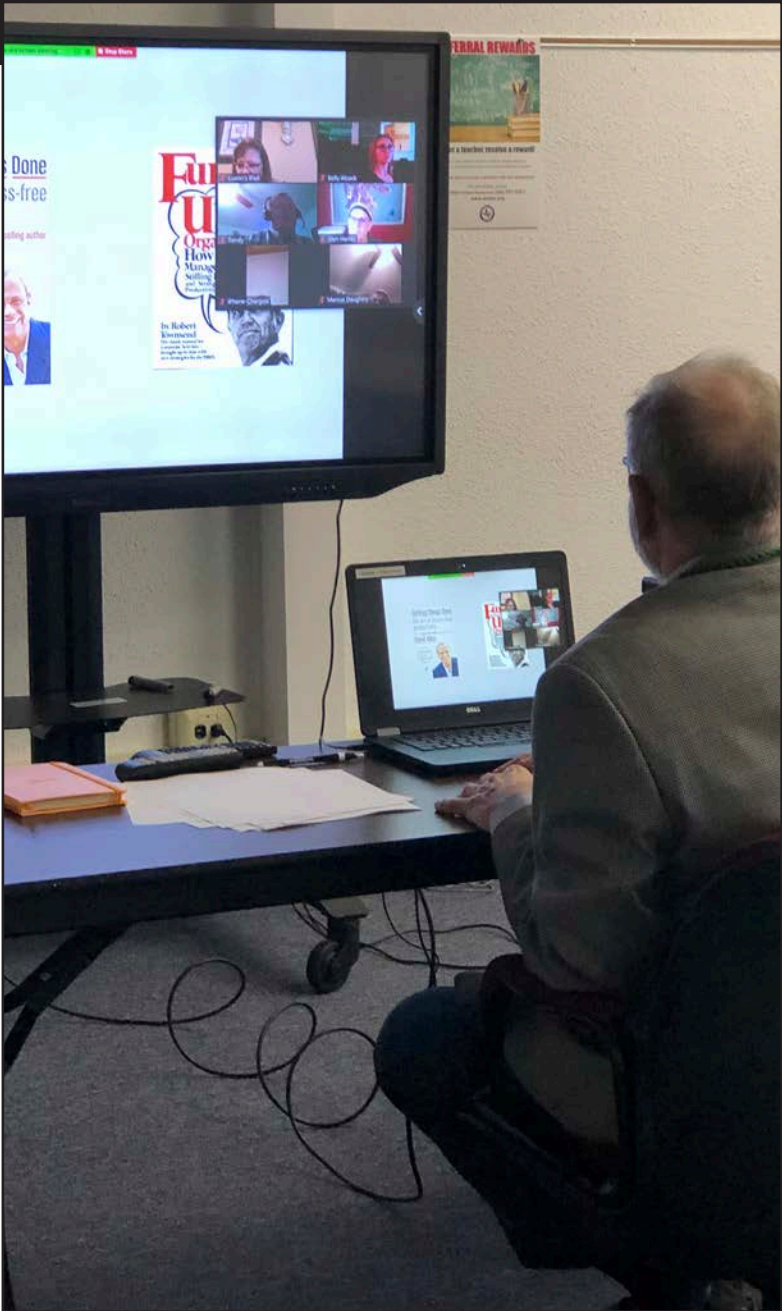
The Windham School District (WSD) recognizes that in order to provide the most effective and efficient services, our educators and staff must be aware of the current best practices in instruction, communication and support. Professional development in SY20 for WSD included training in motivational interviewing, accountability, technology, industry standards and best practices.

The Professional Development Department hosted its first Principal/Leadership Academy (PLA) that consisted of all 51 principals statewide. The purpose of the PLA was to assist principals in obtaining detailed administrative procedures to include topics related to:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Accountability | • Human Resources |
| • Attendance | • Information Technology |
| • Audits | • Library Services |
| • Career and Technical Education | • Recreation and Wellness |
| • Counseling, Testing and Records | • Requisitions |
| • General Counsel | • Security |
| • General Leadership training | • Special Education |
| • Grievances | • Title 1 |
| | • Travel |

The Professional Development team scheduled weekly activities for staff working remotely by leveraging use of technology for training opportunities during COVID-19 restrictions. Trainings were either virtual or teleconference, and documented with a Professional Development training documentation form. Topics covered include:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| • CyberSecurity Awareness training | • Targeted instructional training |
| • Internet etiquette | • Title IX |
| • National Institute of Corrections LearnCenter website | • Workplace diversity |



WSD conducted a standardized curriculum implementation workshop that included the WSD curriculum review team.

- In December 2019, two representatives met with a group of teachers, principals and instructional specialists from WSD to discuss an implementation plan for standardized curriculum. Following this meeting, and from this group of participants, a curriculum committee of approximately 20 teachers and one principal was formed to begin the process of reviewing and selecting the academic materials that would become standard within the district.

The Professional Development Department also conducted Motivational Interviewing training that consisted of primarily student advisors, principals and additional Windham School District leaders. Participants learned how to assist students, and potential students, resolve ambivalence and set goals through Motivational Interviewing. This training targeted principals, diagnosticians and student advisors to provide tools when working with resistant learners.

WSD is committed to provide quality and relevant professional development to meet the needs of the staff and student population.

Windham School District Evaluation and Placement

Certified student advisors provide comprehensive guidance program.

Always focused on students’ future employment, the Windham School District (WSD) aligns education and training to provide men and women with the knowledge, skills and self-assurance needed for reintegration into local communities and job markets.

Certified student advisors and administrators construct a comprehensive guidance program for students and prospective students. Windham’s student advisors provide the framework necessary to assess each student’s needs and determine an educational plan of action.

Student advisors collect educational history data, coordinate the administration of academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) assessments, and conduct one-on-one interviews. Advisors interview potential students to share course information, discuss individual interests, consider work history, assess existing skills and abilities, and review the state licensing process. This individual assessment is performed to identify the programming and career pathway best suited for each participant.

The Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) are administered initially during the intake process to determine the educational functional level of each newly received incarcerated person.

Subsequently, WSD students are tested throughout the school year to monitor academic progress.

Windham transitioned from the educational assessment TABE 9-10 to TABE 11-12. TABE 11-12 is 100 percent aligned to College and Career Readiness Standards. The new assessment includes test items that have higher depths of knowledge and a broader range of topics.

Selection for WSD programs is based on an Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) developed for each member of the population. The ITP outlines educational services and prioritizes participation in recommended programs based on age, program availability, projected release date and need for CTE, academic instruction and life skills programming.

Additionally, WSD partners with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to facilitate a transfer when a student needs to be reassigned to access the most suitable programming. These services help to ensure the most appropriate educational placement, better preparing the incarcerated for successful workforce reentry.



Academic, Career and Technical Education, Life Skills Programs

WSD Provides a Future-Focused Educational/Training Experience

Even with the highest and best of qualifications, finding a job that fits just right can be challenging. For men and women with a history of incarceration, there are additional obstacles which make it more difficult to start a career and rebuild their lives.

Combined with customized academic courses, expanded Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings and focused life skills programs, Windham School District (WSD) students in SY20 found plenty of support in order to transition to successful careers. Windham’s data-driven programming provides a strategic approach to achieve successful outcomes for students.

Forming the base of Windham’s comprehensive approach in specific program choices is front-line statistical analysis. Data is gathered from national research, labor market analysis and current studies to guide decisions for WSD program effectiveness.

Along with specific job training, essential skills such as reading, writing, communication, technology usage, computer navigation, decision-making and initiative to apply these abilities are required by today’s employers.

WSD works to help its adult learners acquire soft skills such as professionalism, critical thinking and problem-solving while maintaining healthy work relationships to better adapt to career environments.

Instructional gains for students in Windham academic classes in SY20 were supported by teacher recognition of individual needs as determined by assessment results and face-to-face interaction. After identifying foundational elements lacking in their students’ development, WSD academic teachers employed a plurality of teaching tools to meet learning needs such as relevant lessons, focused instruction, effective classroom management strategies and innovative and motivational approaches.

Customized group lessons and computer-assisted academic instruction, supplemented by a variety of cutting-edge teaching methods, are some of the tools used for instruction leading to academic success. Windham’s academic teachers address the needs of students ranging from beginning learners to those obtaining a High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate.

Furthermore, teachers skillfully align academic course content with the job skills required in various occupations. Students experience real-world relevancy through constant integration of career training and academic essentials as a result.

For many WSD students, academic accomplishment in the classroom — and possibly recognition for earning an HSE certificate or High School Diploma (HSD) — mark the first time



they have experienced academic success. Accomplishment raises self-esteem, changes outlook and is an important step for students striving to better themselves.

Improved planning for the WSD’s CTE initiatives in SY20 involved revisions of course curricula, expanded collaboration with industry partners and continued implementation of new strategies to offer students with shorter sentence lengths the opportunity to acquire job skills.

Program expansion in SY20 focused on current industry employment needs and marketable employability for students. These changes resulted in increased viable career training opportunities for students.

Windham continued to partner with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to expand job training options, including United States Department of Labor-approved apprenticeship program participation for workers in TDCJ facility jobs. Knowledge obtained through Windham supported real-world job experience at TDCJ units, creating a pre-release career path for WSD students while also increasing work experience.

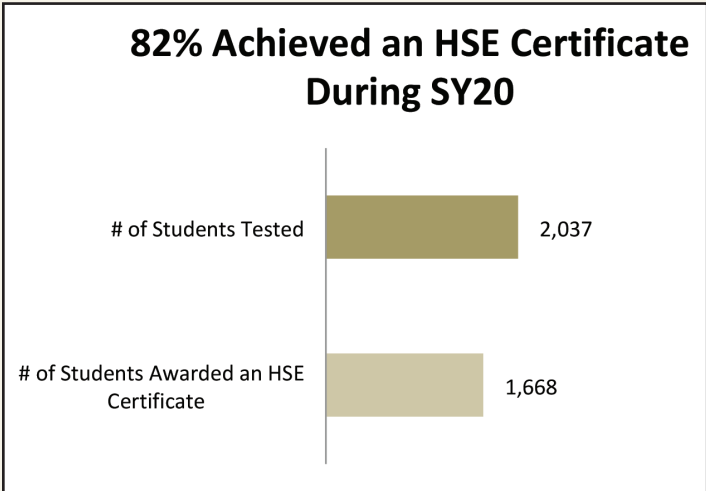
Windham’s life skills initiative inspires students to envision and shape healthy futures. This program helps to significantly strengthen critical behavioral skills necessary for students to make better choices and successfully reintegrate into society. Windham utilizes life skills assessments to measure outcomes for students while identifying areas students and instructors can strive to improve.

By helping students examine and redirect their personal behaviors, WSD helps them become positive influences in their communities and better able to enjoy productive lives.

Academic courses combine instruction with employability skills to offer students an opportunity to chart a successful course.

With the objective of transforming students into productive workers, family members and citizens, the Windham School District’s (WSD) programming deftly fuses academic achievement, life skills acquisition and employment-based learning.

Windham provides different levels of competency-based instructional programs to address the individual needs of its student population. The district also helps students achieve a High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate or High School Diploma (HSD). All WSD coursework is aimed at demonstrating progress in academic achievement, with the ultimate goal for most students



Distinct Academic Participants* = 22,620	
Academic Participants	
Academic I, II, III	22,204
English as a Second Language	414
Lead & Achieve Academy	737

** Each participant count is by academic program. The total of the distinct counts by specific program may be larger than the distinct count of participants in all of the academic programs combined since a student may be eligible for more than one academic program during the SY.*

NRS Educational Functioning Levels: 2019-2020				
<i>*Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of Texas was declared a State of Disaster. Instruction continued throughout the pandemic, but assessments were suspended. The chart below reflects the number of students in each functional level at the beginning of the school year.</i>				
Beginning Educational Functioning Level	Grades within Functioning Level	Number of Students Beginning Level - Reading	Number of Students Beginning Level - Language	Number of Students Beginning Level - Math
Level 1 (0.0 to 1.9)	K & 1st	162	366	169
Level 2 (2.0 to 3.9)	2nd & 3rd	722	1,008	866
Level 3 (4.0 to 5.9)	4th & 5th	1,464	1,628	2,250
Level 4 (6.0 to 8.9)	6th, 7th & 8th	1,427	890	666
Level 5 (9.0 to 10.9)	9th & 10th	177	67	8
Level 6 (11.0 to 12.9)	11th & 12th	1,679	1,664	1,663

being the attainment of an HSD or HSE certificate.

Students who successfully complete Windham’s HSE program are more attractive to prospective employers. Many students also experience a huge boost of confidence in their skills and abilities, a factor that was sorely missed for most prior to their Windham schooling.

Windham students are enrolled in three hours of academic instruction per day. Administering the HSE program is the most efficient path for most students who are incarcerated for various lengths of time as compared to a traditional K-12 educational program. Instruction focuses on meaningful employability and societal reentry efforts.

To accommodate the transient nature of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice population, WSD classes are provided in an open-enrollment model.

WSD continues to offer eligible students an opportunity to earn a standard high school diploma. This effort includes affords both women and men additional pathways of success leading to post-release employment or post-secondary educational opportunities.

In SY20, WSD’s academic programs served 22,620 students with an average initial educational attainment of approximately 6th grade level.

During the 2019-2020 academic school year, WSD formed a curriculum committee to review and select materials to be used in the transition from the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 9/10 to TABE 11/12. This committee, which was comprised of academic teachers and principals from across the state, selected updated math, reading and language materials for classroom use, beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year. Additionally, WSD provided professional development, supported by the material vendors, to academic teachers in all regions.



Designed for its youngest students, the Windham School District’s (WSD) supplemental educational programs and collaborative agency partnerships provide students under the age of 22 with enhanced education and transition supports.

Funded by Title I, Part D, Subpart 1, WSD provides additional academic and work-readiness support at designated campuses for younger students. Ongoing needs assessment evaluations drive the planning for this program.

Title I teachers use customized curriculum and materials to provide practice in core subject areas, supporting rigorous educational standards and the achievement of a High School Equivalency (HSE) or High School Diploma (HSD). WSD added updated instructional software at each Title I campus after its success as a pilot program at several sites. This interactive program provides academic support through intuitive and engaging software. DVD libraries, added at the campus sites, further enhance student knowledge in science, social studies and media literacy.

Additional Title I program materials provide activities in employability skills, leadership and social emotional learning. As an extension of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), WSD incorporated the "Why Try" curriculum on Title I campuses to provide and practice cognitive awareness and soft skills.

WSD’s Title I program also provides students with transitional planning and support. In addition to services offered by the Transition Coordinator, WSD added a Transitional Specialist position to increase targeted services for youth.

The district extended its transitional support to 65 sites by implementing a "new student orientation" program designed to motivate and inspire young adults and youth to further their education. At these campuses, student advisors conduct group orientations and use laptops to present video success-stories of former WSD students along with media clips of CTE and academic programs. Students are exposed to information about educational programming and are given the opportunity to allow the Title I transition team to reach out and communicate with family members.

The orientations supply students with transition planning documents and Selective Service registration forms. Sessions also provide an avenue for students to share their educational history and to communicate with WSD staff about their education and career goals.

Throughout the year, the Title I department provides professional development sessions to inform staff of program specifics and to solicit data and feedback for continuous improvement. Training for WSD teachers and student advisors in technology, curriculum and transition programming provides for collaboration opportunities between team members and assists staff in applying effective practices to meet the needs of the under 22 population.

WSD’s continued partnerships with state and community entities support efforts to provide students with current, researched-based educational and transitional practices. Joint efforts with Texas State University, Sam Houston State University and Texas Department of Criminal Justice have enhanced Title I programming in PBIS, social emotional learning and music applications. Through these combined efforts, students are encouraged to envision, plan and work toward a positive future by building upon their interests, education and career training prior to and upon release.

Special Programs address ancillary needs of Windham’s student population

When it comes to education, students and their learning abilities are as diverse as the material being taught. Some students need specialized assistance to receive their proper education and knowledge.

The Windham School District (WSD) employs measures to be effective in teaching students with disabilities and those who receive special education resources.

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the district utilizes a strategic approach to identify students within the district who meet IDEA eligibility requirements for special education services. Through Windham’s Child Find efforts, WSD now serves more than three times as many students in special education as the district did four years ago.

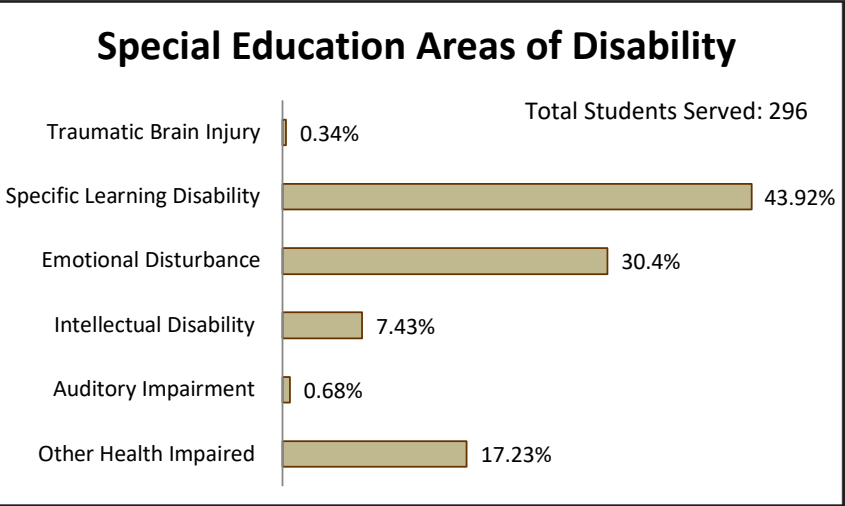
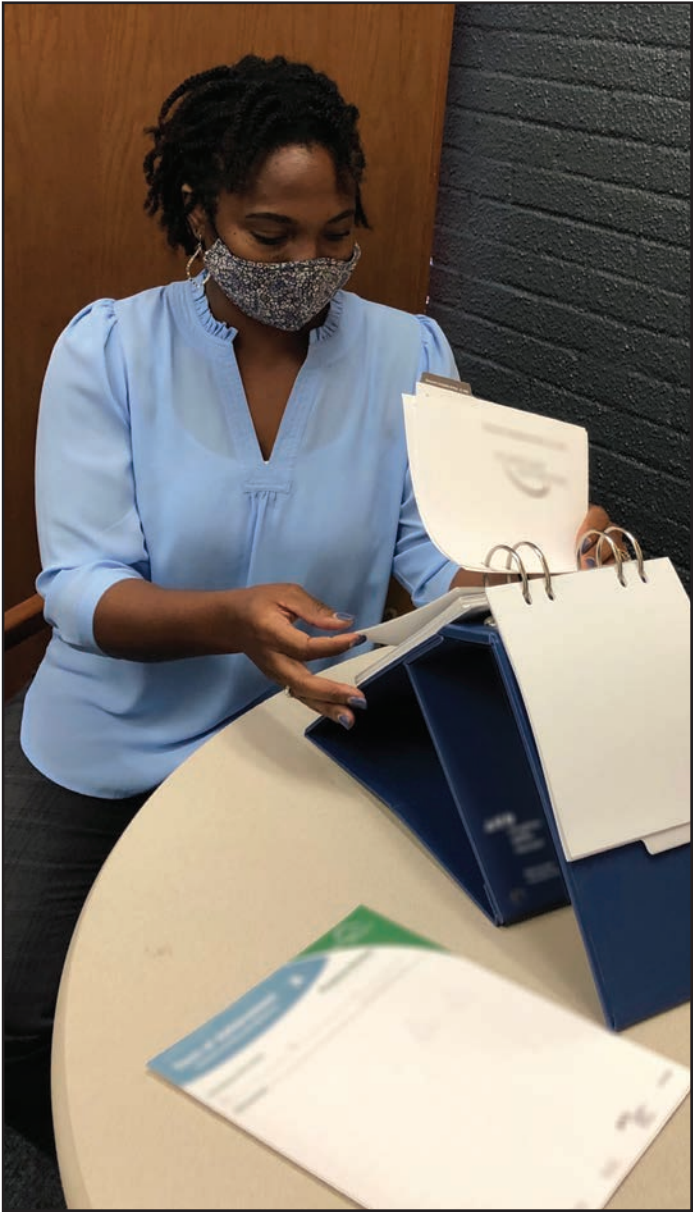
WSD and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice have identified 20 sites throughout the state that serve as Priority Placement Units (PPU) for students eligible for special education services. The educational staff at each location is committed to providing high expectations and strong support systems to enable each student to achieve academic, Career and Technical Education (CTE) and personal success. The district promotes educational success for these students through individualized and specially designed instruction.

With the goal of meeting the demands of an increasing number of students identified as eligible for special education services, the Texas Education Agency increased funding by more than \$200,000 to WSD in SY2020-2021 to support the provisions of the individualized services.

WSD provides the continuum of instructional services required by 34 C.F.R. 300.115 through the provision of general education classes with direct and indirect special education support (inclusion), resource classes, tutoring, related services and speech services. Targeted instruction is also available through Vocational Adjustment Classes for students requiring transition and workforce readiness training. Additional special education teachers have been added to several campuses to assist in the provision of special education services.

The Individual Education Plan, which outlines placement and services to be provided to eligible students, is developed by an Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee. In addition to the educational diagnosticians working diligently throughout the state, WSD has added two ARD facilitator positions to meet the growing need for developing individual education programs. The provision of special education services allows students the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

The IDEA requires schools to make available, to all eligible students with disabilities, a free and appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs (34 C.F.R. Part 300; 19 T.A.C. Chapters 75, 89).



Teacher of the Year

Windham teacher receives highest honor during pandemic challenges

Reprinted from The ECHO

“One of the most touching moments of my career was when a former student’s parents called me. Their son had just made parole and gotten a job in the construction trade — and was doing well. The changes in their son made a huge difference in their lives,” Windham School District teacher Jerry Riley said. “That simple phone call made such a difference in my own life. It brought deeper meaning into what I am doing here as a teacher at Windham.”

Riley earned the 2020 Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching (LMET) award — a point of professional achievement for Windham School District educators. The honor was bestowed upon Riley, who teaches at the Neal Unit in Amarillo, during a challenging 2020 school year as the district rolled its programming into a positive pandemic response with distance learning.

“This is the greatest award of my career and I am very appreciative,” Riley said. “It is truly an honor.”

Riley’s integrity makes him a perfect role model for students and peers at Windham. For the past 28 years, he has taught courses for Windham’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming. Since 1998, Riley has taught Building Trades II and Construction Carpentry Level 1.

His classes offer students an opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications, including from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). NCCER certification is a nationally-recognized certification that has a registry database. Once a student has completed the career and technical education trade, they can go to any NCCER employer and present their registered number, which communicates their training and skill level to the employer. This prerequisite comes with construction fundamentals.

“I am really proud of the CTE curriculum that Windham is offering. It is recognized nationwide,” Riley explained. “When the students get out of prison they will have a construction fundamentals certificate, NCCER credentials and an OSHA card — valuable tools that will enable them to get a job.”

Riley’s relationship with Windham began at the Clements Unit in 1992, where he forged a teaching career based on a dynamic combination of competency-based curriculum, exposure to technical math, trade-related science, safety training and plenty of hands-on experience. He says interpersonal skills are also an essential element of CTE instruction, grounding students in not only the fundamentals of construction — but also in everyday life.

“At Windham, we do not just teach driving nails and cutting boards. There are life skills involved here as well, such as problem-solving, teamwork, communicating meaningfully with others, and [developing] ethics and morals,” Riley said.

Riley has taught CTE construction fundamentals at the Neal Unit since 1998, and to this day, he continues to provide relevant training and the development of essential skills that give students more



opportunities for success and a lower likelihood of recidivism.

“I didn’t realize the profound importance of correctional teaching until a few years into it, when I started noting the impact I was making in the students’ lives,” he said.

Riley is determined to get students involved with the curriculum and to help them transform obstacles into assets.

“The best part of my job is seeing the changes come over the students. I take great pride when I see the light bulb turn on, and they smile and begin to talk enthusiastically about their projects,” he said. “That makes it all worth it, and that is what really motivates me: to see the dramatic changes in these men.”

Riley also does his utmost to raise students’ self-confidence, bringing diligence, renewed focus and the sharing of wisdom gleaned from his nearly 30 years of experience in the construction field.

“I tell all of my students this: come into the classroom and get something out of it. Apply yourself; don’t just come in here expecting to frame a house or operate a ShopBot,” he said. “Students can get their lives on track for the first time, and the construction industry will hire them simply because they are skilled, focused and reliable. Life is full of second chances, and employers are willing to look at what a person can do — not just at what a person has done.”

Riley said a teacher’s ability to inspire students should not be underestimated. The veteran teacher urges Windham educators to keep students apprised of the ever-changing demands of the world.

“Windham teachers: keep making a difference,” Riley added. “Every time you go into a classroom, you have the potential to change someone’s life for the better, so don’t ever discount that. Dig in and try to find ways to reach out to students in a positive way.”

Teacher of the Year Finalist

Windham teacher Lee Russell helps students find path to success

Reprinted from The ECHO

“My biggest challenge in correctional education is getting my students to see that the same tools for success on a job are the same tools required to be successful in obtaining an education,” said Lee Russell, Literacy II/III instructor on the Connally Unit. “These are tools such as being committed, being responsible, being disciplined and being willing to put out the necessary effort to achieve.”

Russell is one of Windham School District’s (WSD) 2020 Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching (LMET) initiative honorees. The LMET initiative acknowledges teachers’ contributions to both the success of their students and the success of the instructional program itself. These accolades come as a result of Russell’s powerful impact as an educator.

After eagerly embracing the opportunity to teach at WSD two years ago, Russell has helped his students take giant strides in a short time.

Russell’s journey with WSD began with an occurrence to which the late Dr. Martin Luther King could have related.

“One night I saw myself working in a correctional facility in a dream,” Russell recalled, “but I didn’t know anything about school for those incarcerated before I started working for Windham.”

Before being inspired by his dream, the idea to work in correctional education was also suggested by much more conventional means.

“I was a facilitator and tutor for an adult literacy program that provided education for previously incarcerated individuals,” Russell said. “One day a student in that program asked me if I’d ever thought about teaching in a correctional facility, after which he expressed to me, ‘Mr. Russell, you’d be a good fit.’”

From there, he searched for job opportunities in correctional education and found Windham. Russell brings a vast background in education to WSD. Besides teaching in the above-mentioned adult literacy program, he is also a former collegiate instructor of anatomy and physiology, and had an extensive career in public school academics. Russell has been teaching practically all of his life.

Russell strives to prepare his students to navigate a threefold challenge: the daunting challenge that re-entering society presents to all formerly incarcerated individuals, the daily challenges facing students who are in the correctional setting and the rather significant challenge of eradicating self-defeating internal mindsets.

“When I taught at the middle and high school levels, it was always at at-risk schools,” Russell said. “I find that the attitudes and the behaviors of the students at those at-risk schools and the correctional facility are very similar.”

“When I got here, I could see that for most of the students, [correctional education] was a reality check,” he said. “I can see that they are thinking, ‘I missed out. Now I understand that education something really valuable that I need.’”

Russell has his own set of challenges as an instructor in this unique environment. He said he must continually devise new strategies to teach. One way he did this is through a game he plays called ‘Speed.’

“I created a board with squares that are numbered 1 through 100,” Russell said. “Each student is given a small piece of paper colored with a marker and rolled into a ball that a student advances across the board with each correct answer they provide. The students enjoy racing against each other, so the game keeps them totally engaged.”

Russell helps students



As someone gifted with creativity, Russell frequently makes use of these kinds of fun, original activities to ensure his students are motivated and enthused about learning.

“I’m very excited about all of my students and what motivates me is seeing them learning and sharing in the joy of them achieving their goals,” Russell said.

Through resourcefulness and dedication, Russell is able to persuade students to become invested in their own development. When they reach the milestone of achieving their High School Equivalency (HSE) as a result, it’s just as gratifying for Russell.

“The last HSE ceremony I attended was such a touching moment for the parents and for the staff,” he said. “Seeing tears of joy in men’s eyes over the fact that they graduated was one of the most sentimental moments I’ve ever had. But actually, every day for me is a rewarding experience just being able to do this kind work in a correctional institution.”

A piercing degree of insight allows Russell to recognize the need to fulfill additional roles besides teacher, such as life coach and mentor.

“The most important aspects of correctional education are learning to communicate effectively, learning to be a part of a team, learning to use technology, and carrying oneself as a professional,” Russell said. “This is all in keeping with the things that were taught to me: to always carry yourself with integrity, responsibility, respect. Hopefully the knowledge gained in the classroom will prevent my students from returning to a correctional facility.”

Like any good educator, Russell is always learning from his pupils, even as he imparts knowledge to them.

“Watching the students here deal with living in prison and still show up to get an education is a significant success story in itself. It teaches me the importance of not giving up —and the importance of hope,” he said.

Teacher of the Year Finalist

WSD teacher R. Juarez uses experience to build futures

Reprinted from The ECHO

The past year provided tremendous life challenges on a global scale: the COVID-19 pandemic, hurricane-induced evacuations and the rapid rise of distance learning. Fortunately for students in R. Juarez’s CHANGES 3 class at the Sanchez State Jail, their teacher is not one to back down from a challenge. Instead, Juarez embraces a good challenge.

That’s one of many reasons Juarez was chosen as one of the Windham School District’s (WSD) 2020 Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching (LMET) honorees for her work in teaching life skills. The LMET initiative acknowledges teachers’ contributions to both the success of their students and the success of the instructional program itself.

Before coming to Windham, Juarez taught junior high science in El Paso in a large public school system. The challenges involved in teaching in public schools versus corrections education are vastly different, yet also similar. In public schools, Juarez previously taught science mainly to teenagers, while in WSD she teaches adult life skills to a wide range of ages. However, she says the objective is the same.

“In public school, your job is to build students up for their future,” she said, “and in the correctional system, you have to help students rebuild their future after release. The content [curriculum] is different, though. In the public school I taught science; now I teach the life skills they will need upon their release.”

A challenge common to every educator is how to generate interest in subject matter for students.

Juarez overcomes that challenge by thinking outside the box and using her creativity. When discussing behavioral issues, she said she makes up the most “unexpected, far-fetched scenarios” she can think of, often placing herself in the situation, and then asking students to identify the thinking errors she is making.

Then, after they show they have a grasp of the material, she turns it back on them and asks them to consider an episode in their past where they made a poor decision — and determine what thinking errors contributed to that bad decision. More importantly, she asks how they could have handled the situation in a more positive manner with the information they have learned.

Another example of Juarez’s creativity was the time she used “someone near and dear” to her students to teach the importance of managing personal finance: their mothers. She created a Mother’s Day project where each student had a certain amount of money he could spend for Mother’s Day, but he also had to be able to pay his bills. Using printed store circulars, she allowed her classes to practice comparison shopping for the imaginary gift for their mothers. She said that exercise showed her students how the things they were learning in the class could be applied to their lives when they return to society.

The recent acceleration of distance learning due to the effects of the coronavirus was another challenge for schools worldwide. Juarez met that challenge in her Windham classroom with her usual can-do attitude, going above and beyond what is required to succeed.

In the assignment packages she sent to her students who could not attend class together, she included quotes from famous people and handwritten notes of encouragement to her students to stay positive and safe — and to also understand this was a trying time for everyone. She said that when in-person classes resumed, her students inundated her with messages of gratitude for the notes and quotes.



One challenge Juarez faces, however, is the misperception many students form when they see a petite, 5-foot, 1-inch teacher behind the desk the first time they walk into the classroom. It happens so often that Juarez says she can recognize it in her students’ eyes.

Juarez says students assume that because she has a college education, she cannot possibly understand the circumstances that led these students to incarceration. That’s when she tells them a story where she describes a person coming from a background that most of them recognize as being similar to their own.

The person she describes grew up in an impoverished neighborhood where drug use and alcoholism was rampant, bringing social, economic and personal hardships. Finally, once she has set the scene and hooked them with the story, she reveals that she is actually the person she is describing.

Juarez said this is when her students learn their first lesson in her class, that she is not simply telling them what she learned from reading books or inside a classroom; she is sharing lessons she learned while living her life. Negative experiences in her life, such as being a run-away and teenage mother, have turned into positives. She gets to help others who may have experienced the same things that she did.

“I am a living example that there is hope,” Juarez says.

Juarez said she stays and faces the daily challenges because she loves what she does. She loves trying to make a difference in the lives of her students.

“For me, I feel it is more rewarding here than teaching in public schools,” she said. “I tell people on the outside: one day that student will one day be your neighbor, that student will be someone you meet at your church, that student will be an employee — and we want them to be successful. I get to reach that unreachable student. ... I get to show him there is grace for him if he puts in the work.”

Focusing on workplace skills, reentry needs

Elective Personal Enrichment Courses

The learning never stops at the Windham School District (WSD). During the winter, spring and summer breaks of School Year 2020, WSD offered Elective Personal Enrichment Courses (EPEC) designed to help students fine-tune their skills and earn certificates that boost their employability and create a pathway to successful re-entry into society.

“EPEC classes give students an opportunity during a normal school break to gain skills supporting employability and successful re-entry into society,” said WSD Director of Instruction Jon Lilley.

Soft-skills lessons within these courses enhanced job readiness and career potential. Classes were voluntary and open to eligible members of the incarcerated population.

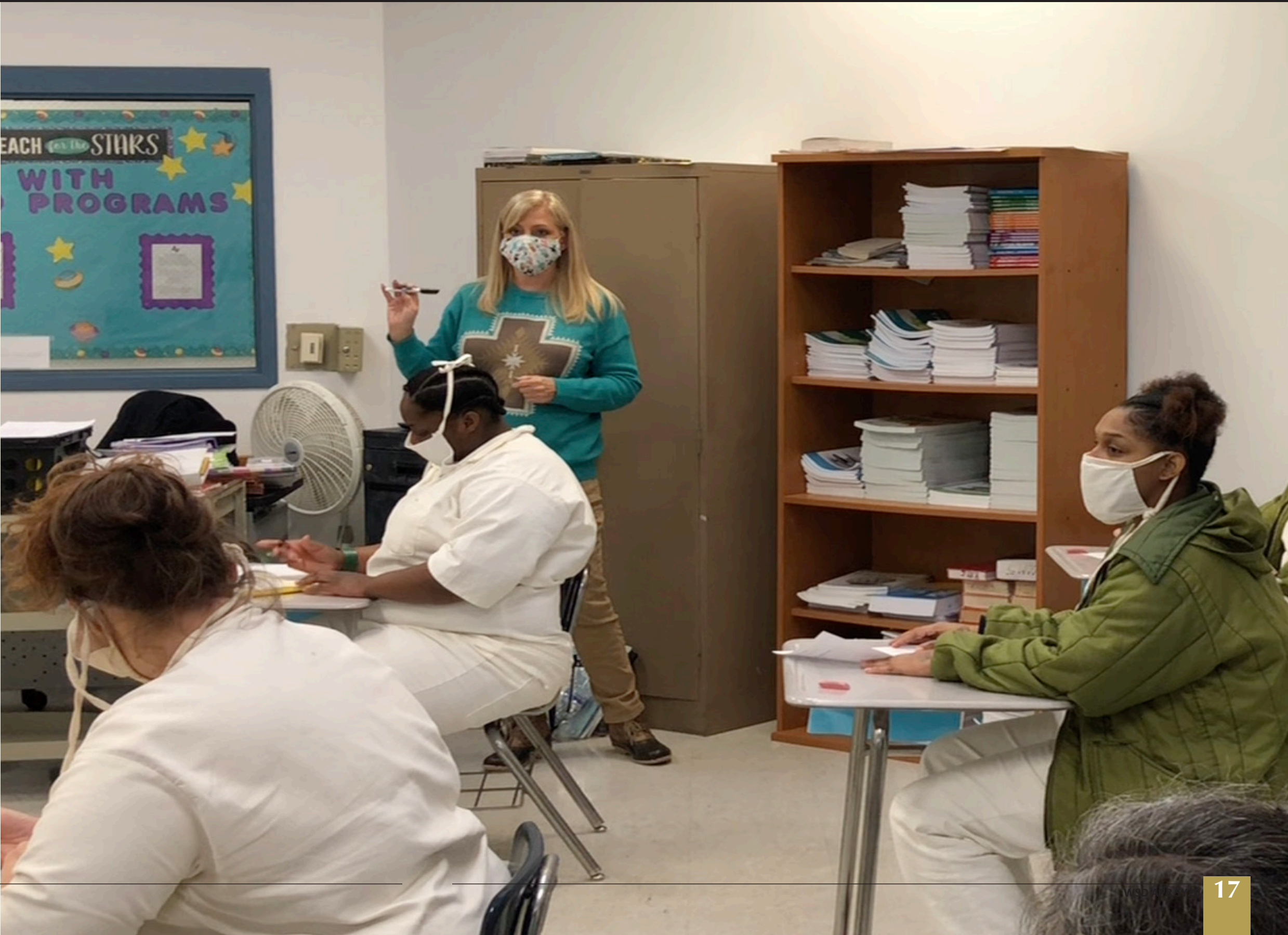
Instructors included WSD teachers, administrators and other staff members. There were over 13,000 students who were enrolled in EPEC courses.

WSD EPEC courses include digital lectures and planning tools for practical life skills, in the development of these courses for the correctional environment.

Open to Venture, a course on starting your own business, and Family Health were also offered during the year. Further EPEC offerings were selected from Windham staff proposals. Current WSD classes included OSHA Safety courses, Computer Basics and Creative Writing.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Windham also continued offering academic courses, Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) and Cognitive Intervention. For the first time this summer, students were allowed to continue their regular courses as an option for EPEC. This helped CHANGES students to finish class prior to release. Students who successfully completed a course received a certificate, which may be used to demonstrate reentry preparation to the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Approximately 37 percent of the participants had not been previously served by the WSD during SY20. The support and cooperative effort of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Correctional Institutions Division were essential to this successful outreach effort.



Accountability: Measuring for Success

Formalizing Expectations of Excellent System Fundamentals

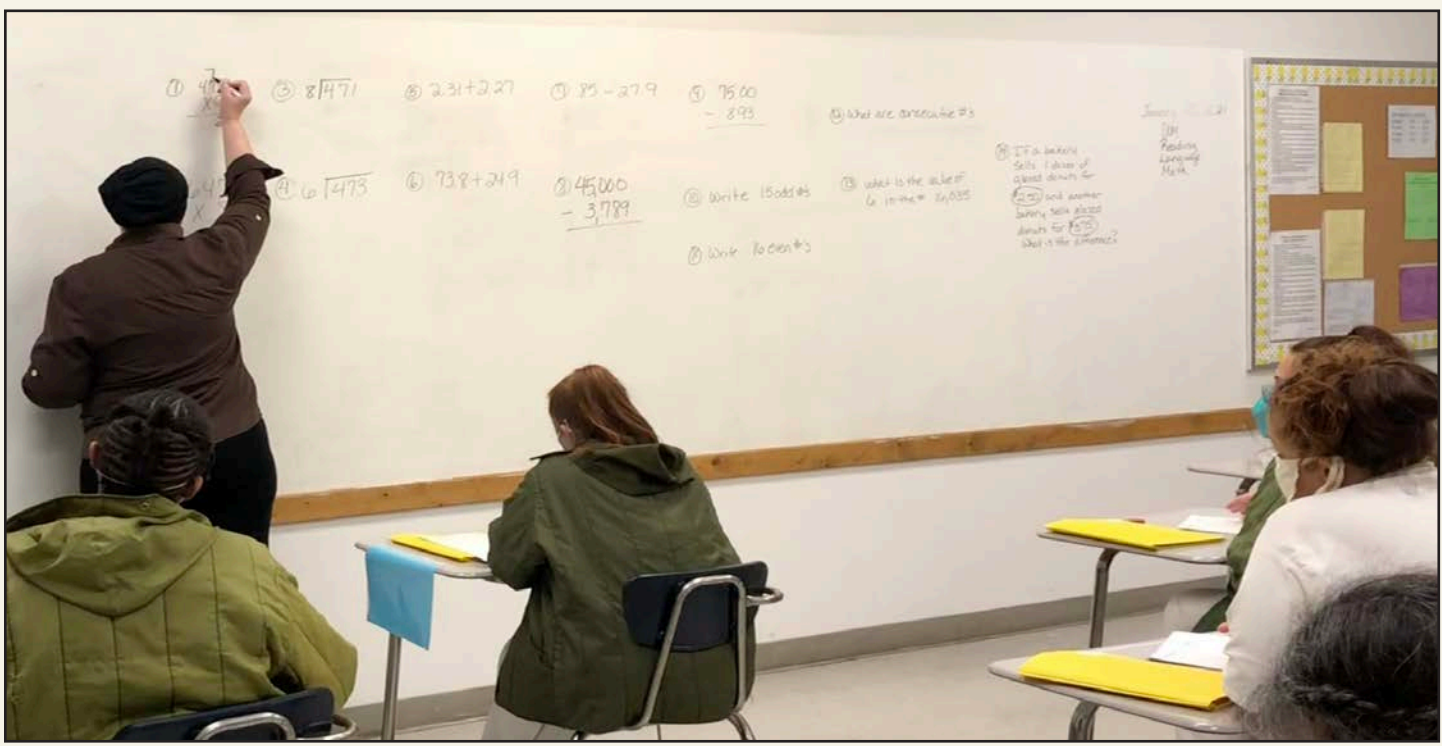
Clear Performance Expectations and Measurement, Team-Based Goals and Structures, Performance Baselines and Continuous Improvement

The Windham School District's (WSD) accountability system uses factual evaluation procedures and places a significant focus on highlighting the achievements of all faculty, staff and students at the campus level. Most importantly, the accountability system recognizes, values and empowers all stakeholders, including school leadership, teachers, support staff, students and Texas Department of Criminal Justice facility administrative and correctional staff.

WSD's Accountability System assists school employees in comparing campus data, tracking key unit activities, supporting the campus improvement plan and recognizing units and unit personnel. This inclusive system recognizes the performance of every employee on the unit, including stakeholders and support staff.

WSD used seven major metrics to determine an accountability rating:

- Percent of Attendance
- Percent of Academic Completion
- Percent of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Completion
- Percent of Life Skills combined measures Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) and Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) Program
- Percent of Compliance on WSD Audits
- Percent of CTE students earning Industry Certification
- Percent Earning HSE Certificate



All metrics are weighted and combined to arrive at a final accomplishment level and rating for each campus. Campus scores are based on a 0-100 scale, consistent with the Texas Education Agency State of Texas K-12 scale and grading system. Weighted unit measures depend on which programs are offered.

The dissemination of information regarding a campus' performance is important in this new accountability system. All district personnel are able to view their campus performance measures and data through various reports and the Accountability Dashboard on the WSD Intranet.

The Accountability System allows WSD to recognize units, individual programs and unit staff who achieve high scores, thereby strengthening statewide effectiveness.

Accountability ratings for schools have proven to be a valuable and essential tool to support continuous improvement for WSD students, allowing educators and administrators to better identify and expand efforts that are working. Due to the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with direction from the Texas Education Agency, school districts were not rated in SY20.

Windham School District 2020 Accountability Report Card



District Wide
Not Rated

Accountability Score

Attendance:	17.2	Academic Completion:	8.44	CTE Certificate:	7.81
HSE:	12.28	Industry Certificate:	12.25	Life Skills:	10.93
WSD Audit:	8.22			Bonus Points:	2

*Note: For illustration purposes only. In accordance with Texas Education Agency, school districts were not rated in SY20 as the State of Texas was Declared a State of Disaster due to the COVID-19 pandemic.





Career and Technical Education



CTE students earns industry-recognized certifications

The Windham School District’s (WSD) Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming provides graduates with the skills and real-world learning experiences necessary to compete in today’s workforce.

With a dynamic combination of hands-on training, classroom instruction and the award of third-party industry certifications, CTE courses have given graduates more opportunities for success with a lower likelihood of recidivism and increased career-earning abilities than students who have not completed CTE programs.

Technical training with relevant academic instruction is necessary for students to compete in the 21st-century job market. Academics in the areas of math and trade-related science are an integral component in each of the programs offered at WSD.

The goal of the training is to provide Windham graduates with a grounded education in all aspects of the trade being taught.

CTE courses provide:

- A work-related setting
- A rigorous, competency-based curriculum based on industry standards
- Experienced teachers well-versed in all aspects of their respective trade
- Standardized training
- Safety training
- An opportunity to earn both an industry-recognized certification and a WSD completion certificate

Windham’s dedicated CTE teachers are committed to students’ success. All instructors are experts in their field with numerous years of teaching and work-related experience.

Along with the technical skills taught in each trade, Windham’s CTE instructors provide soft-skills training necessary for success in today’s workforce. Soft skills include how to get along with co-workers on a job, problem-solving, the worth and value of work, teamwork, appropriate communication skills and more.

During the COVID-19 restrictions when teachers were working remotely, WSD instructors created lesson packets that were distributed to the students. Teachers were involved in virtual training with trade-specific companies that provided



Career and Technical Education Certifications*	
CTE Certificates Earned (% completions of eligible)	13,960 (84%)
Industry Certificates Earned	18,264
*Note: Assessments were suspended due to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.	

resources. During this time, the CTE department held two sessions of training for the teachers in similar trade areas. Teachers attended the training and shared different ideas about creating engaging lesson plans and activities for distance learning.

CTE programming is competency-based, utilizing industry standards as each student prepares for a career. All WSD courses are aligned with specific career clusters; ensuring students receive a focused approach to career goals. The WSD student advisors work with each student to help them select and to be successful in the training career cluster that best fits their future.

In addition, licensing regulations and the licensure application process are discussed with students.

Earning industry-recognized certifications are based on an exhaustive curriculum and testing processes. Using these types of certifications that are recognized by companies further validates the training offered and skills attained.

Certifications include National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Serv-Safe, Commercial Drivers License, North American Technician Excellence (NATE) and many others.

CTE Courses*
Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horticulture/Urban Farming Landscape Design, Construction, and Maintenance
Architecture & Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bricklaying & Masonry Cabinetmaking Construction Carpentry Construction Fundamentals Computer-Aided Design (CAD) Electrical Trades Electronic Systems Technician Finish Carpentry Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) & Refrigeration Painting and Decorating Pipefitting Plumbing Trades Welding
Arts, A/V Technology & Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printing & Imaging Technology
Hospitality and Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culinary Arts Customer Service Specialist Hospitality Services Restaurant Management Retail Meat Cutter
Human Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cosmetology
Information Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Computer Information Systems Exploring Information Technology
Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) Machining
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telecommunications Connectivity — Audio/Video Systems Telecommunications Connectivity — Copper-Based Systems Telecommunications Connectivity — Energy Management Telecommunications Connectivity — Fiber Optic-Based Systems Telecommunications Connectivity — Grounding & Bonding Telecommunications Connectivity — Intro to Telecommunications
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automotive Collision Repair and Refinishing Automotive Specialization Air Conditioning and Heating Automotive Specialization Brakes Automotive Specialization Electronics and Electricity Automotive Specialization Engine Performance Automotive Specialization Fundamentals Diesel Mechanics Small Engine Repair Truck Driving Warehouse Equipment Operator
Work & Career Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSHA Professional Communications Safety Fundamentals
*Courses may have multiple completion levels

CTE continued:

Students who earn a third-party, industry-recognized certification often have an advantage over applicants with no certification. They may also use their industry-recognized certificates to obtain advanced training, or upscale their knowledge in their chosen career fields through certified training providers.

New courses for SY20 include:

- Cosmetology
- Customer Service Specialist
- Exploring Information Technology
- Horticulture/Urban Farming
- OSHA 30 Construction
- Safety Fundamentals

The CTE department offered 46 courses for the men and 30 courses for the women in SY 20. In many of the courses, students were able to earn multiple industry-recognized certifications. WSD added a Women’s Program Specialist to serve the women population to help implement new programs.

A number of the courses offered in SY20 allowed students the opportunity to qualify for maintenance and other jobs within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), including the apprenticeship program. This component of the CTE program provides students with viable work experience, which can transfer to TDCJ working related positions after completion.

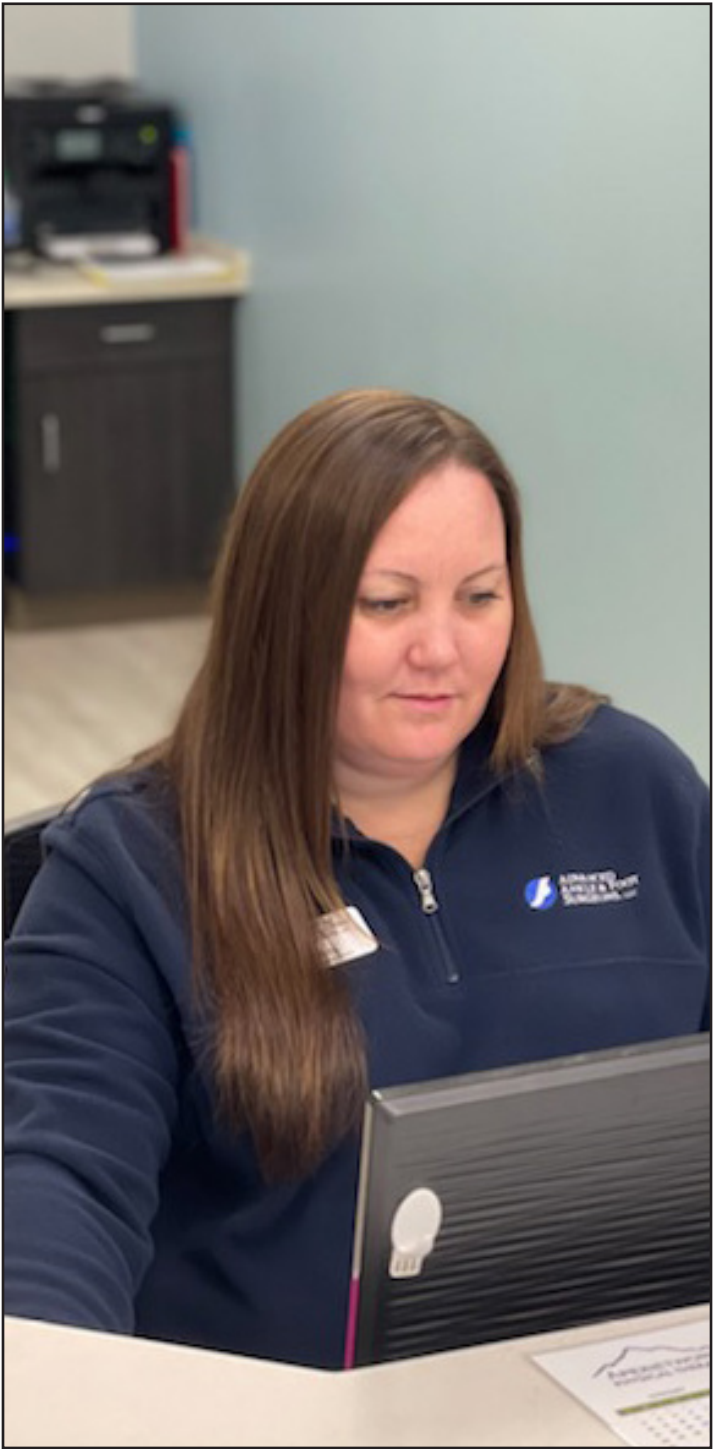
The WSD continues to make tremendous strides in preparing its students for the workforce and successful transition to society.



Celebrating SUCCESS

Tabitha Wood

Former Windham Student



Combining the lessons she learned in Windham School District (WSD) classrooms with her experience in the military, Tabitha Wood is making the most of new opportunities.

Today, Wood works two jobs. She takes care of patients at a podiatry office and serves hungry customers in a restaurant in Illinois.

Less than two years after being released from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Wood has moved into her own place. She saved her money and bought a car and a two-bedroom duplex.

Every day, Wood shines as a patient representative for Advanced Ankle & Foot Surgeons. She loves what she does and enjoys taking care of patients.

“I do what I do and go the extra mile for patients because that is what I would want someone to do for me,” Wood said. “I help in whatever ways I can so that when the patient leaves our office, they are comfortable knowing that their appointment is secure, prescriptions have been called into their pharmacy and their needs as a patient have been met to the highest regards.”

Wood performs many duties for Advanced Ankle & Foot Surgeons, including checking patients in and out, processing medical insurance claims, scheduling appointments and tests and working closely with providers to meet the needs of every patient.

Because Wood earned a college degree before incarceration, she was not eligible for educational or Career and Technical Education training with Windham. Therefore, she took advantage of classes offered to help prepare her once she was released.

“The classes I took at WSD were Life Matters, Cognitive Intervention and Parenting,” Wood explained. “One of the most important things I learned while taking those classes was how important it is to set goals. In or out of a unit, it is important to set goals.”

“When I came home, I literally had to start over with nothing. I obtained a job as a waitress first, so every day that I worked, I would set a goal to make a certain amount for various things I needed for myself to survive. The first was a car. In one month, I’d made and saved enough to purchase a vehicle and paid cash for it,” she said.

“Today, after being home for not even two years, I have my own duplex, two bedrooms, fully furnished and I paid cash for everything that I have,” Wood added. “Cognitive also taught me how to deal with others in a productive way.”

Wood was incarcerated in Texas for 12 years. She knows exactly what it’s like to picture what she would do once finally being released. Knowing there are hundreds of Windham students who are counting the days until release, Wood has some words of advice.

“Don’t give up,” Wood said. “Keep the faith and know that if God will do it for me, He will do it for you.”

Start a career, reconstruct a life

The Windham School District’s (WSD) workforce and reentry initiatives create opportunities for successful returns into employment, careers and reconstructed lives.

Joining forces with industry leaders and community stakeholders, WSD provides students opportunities for future employment and paths to successful careers. This partnership also helps reduce the state’s recidivism rate and creates a stronger Texas workforce for companies looking to hire skilled workers.

WSD’s partners include industry leaders and representatives, Texas Workforce Development Board members from across the state and the Reentry and Integration Division from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). All partnerships focus on helping place former students in a position to solidify a career pathway.

Input from these alliances gives WSD instructors essential information about job environments and requirements, provides WSD with current data for expanding and focusing curriculum and provides students a system of direct application for available jobs. In addition, potential employers spend time in WSD schools offering current training suggestions while discovering the broad spectrum of skills training offered by WSD and career-ready students.

WSD also partners with industry employers and community representatives. Last year, WSD increased its goals with the Texas Workforce Investment Council and created an Advisory Committee which includes industry partners and community organizations. This gives Windham an opportunity to assess the district’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and determine the industry needs in the workplace.

The advisory committee members recognize the level of CTE skills WSD instructors teach students, and they offer professional input regarding curriculum improvement and equipment needs. These partners encourage communities to support correctional education and employ skilled former students. The partners also hire students who have received WSD training to become

craftsmen in their vocations.

CTE instructors and specialists attended five virtual trainings with employers and third-party industry certification organizations on various equipment and industry certification processes. These types of experiences allow staff members to communicate employer expectations directly to students through lesson plans, presentations and advising. During SY20, WSD staff visited six company locations to enhance their industry knowledge.

Windham is also working with the TDCJ Reentry Website for Work. This website is designed for students who are released on parole. Students’ CTE program information is posted for companies to review the students’ credentials for potential interviews. Once students are released, they may be contacted for employment opportunities.

WSD partners support the process and welcome the opportunity to hire WSD-trained men and women. The CTE department has partnered with TDCJ Reentry in the Strength Through Restoration Independence Vision and Empowerment (STRIVE) program.

Women students earn a Professional Communication certification from Southwest Airlines when they complete the CTE program. In that program, students sharpen their interview skills, they learn how to develop resumes and submit applications for work while still incarcerated.

Industry partners are the foundation of employment-related expo events. The events take place inside TDCJ facilities to make students aware of employment and reentry services, along with continued education opportunities. TDCJ, in partnership with WSD, sponsored 18 career expos and 18 post-release job fairs during SY20. During COVID-19 restrictions, WSD attended nine virtual job fairs.

Career expos and job fairs allow students to meet with potential employers and learn firsthand about workforce needs and employment options. Industry partners serve as presenters, discussing career requirements, challenges and employment trends.



Above left, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation spoke to students in regards to the procedures for applying for licensure. **Above right,** Representatives from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and Windham School District met at the Lewis Unit in January 2020 to provide information to staff and students and discuss support for individuals who received receiving training during incarceration in regulated fields.

Changing Lives through Apprenticeships/OJT

The Windham School District (WSD) and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) team up to provide job experience and valuable training certifications for eligible individuals within TDCJ during incarceration. These work-based training opportunities include Work Certification, On-The-Job Training (OJT) and apprenticeship programs.

TDCJ offers a Work Certification Program, providing incarcerated workers an opportunity to earn a certificate for demonstrating diligent participation in a full or part-time job assignment. Incarcerated workers who competently perform essential job functions and maintain positive work habits on a continuous six-month basis receive a certificate for completing the program.

In partnership with TDCJ, Windham coordinates OJT and United States Department of Labor (DOL) apprenticeship programs. These work-based job-skills training programs are integral components of WSD jobs training.

In addition to on-the-job learning and experience, OJT trainees and apprentices develop constructive work habits to improve employment potential within prison walls to enhance their career search when these men and women transition to their communities.

OJT combines career experience and standardized training in approved Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) jobs that are approved by TDCJ and WSD. The trainees are in these jobs for a minimum of six months under the supervision of a TDCJ employee. The purpose of OJT is to provide credible training in job assignments meeting OJT certification criteria.

While the goal of OJT is to teach essential workplace proficiencies, the program also instills aspects of positive workplace culture and high-performance expectations. Many of the OJT workers have the potential to transition into an apprenticeship.

An apprenticeship is a program registered with the U.S. Department of Labor that is designed to prepare individuals for occupations in skilled trades and crafts. Apprenticeships offer a combination of rigorous and relevant on-the-job learning with related technical instruction on theoretical and practical aspects of the occupation.

Upon satisfactory completion of an apprenticeship program, the participant is awarded a nationally recognized Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship. The apprenticeship training platform provides opportunities for participants to kick off a new career.

WSD partners with TDCJ to expand the program and cultivate a more robust, nationally-recognized job-training opportunity for apprentices. The value of the WSD and TDCJ job-skills training and certification structure is best defined by its seamless accessibility.

Currently, Windham has 13 occupations with the Department of Labor apprenticeship program that are located throughout the state. WSD had 235 registered apprentices in SY 20.

Marketable skills and job experience can be acquired within each program. Students may participate in the life skills programs,



earn their High School Equivalency and industry-recognized certifications and participate in the On-the-Job training and apprenticeship programs. Students have opportunities for up to 8,000 hours in programs created by Windham and TDCJ.

The ultimate aim is to help students become competent and confident in the workplace. These programs also help students develop their own vision of positive and productive opportunities.

WSD has students who have completed the CTE electrical class, started their apprenticeship program inside a TDCJ facility, and have been released and hired to complete the apprenticeship electrical program. Their hours from the WSD Apprenticeship program transferred to their future workplace. Those students are well on their way to starting a new career and building a new life.



Life Skills Programs

Students learn critical life skills in WSD programs

The Windham School District (WSD) strives each day to elevate and enrich the futures of students who have experienced academic, behavioral and life challenges. Providing educational support to assist students in obtaining a more confident, empowering and productive way of life accomplishes this goal.

WSD Life Skills programs are a critical component of educational support, designed to help students change criminal- thinking patterns and develop people skills essential for success in all areas of life. Refocusing thinking processes can empower students to behave more responsibly, develop healthy relationships and retain better jobs.

Windham’s Life Skills classes are designed to enhance cognitive skills and promote a healthy environment for positive attitudes and mindsets. Students participating in Life Skills programs in 2020 dealt with daily challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Completion of the programs was crucial to students with a parole-approval vote that required them to finish the CHANGES program in order to be released on parole supervision.

What is CHANGES?

Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) is a 180-hour pre-release life skills program for students who are within two years of projected release. The CHANGES program is designed to help men and women develop basic life skills and social values needed for successful transition back into society.

This program addresses personal development, healthy relationships, living responsibly, drug education, psychological development, health education and resources for release.

Resume Building and Interviewing Techniques

House Bill 918 was implemented on Jan. 1, 2020. The bill requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to provide documentation of work-related experience and work training records to residents releasing from TDCJ. Residents who are required to complete a pre-release program by the parole panel, complete a resume and practice interview. In December of 2019, the WSD Professional Development Department revised the CHANGES pre-release curriculum to include both a completed personal resume and practice employment interview for residents enrolled in the program.

Thinking Changes in CIP

The Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) is a 150-hour program that teaches students to examine and change thinking that leads to criminal behavior. The course teaches students to meet their own needs without trespassing on the rights of others. Through CIP, students learn more appropriate thinking skills using instruction, role play and exercises in interpersonal problem solving.

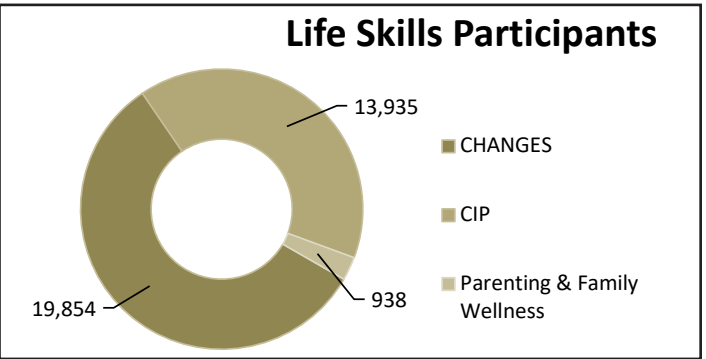
Former students often cite the importance of WSD life skills programs in allowing them to experience self-worth, increase self-esteem and become productive family members, citizens and employees.

Learning How to Have Healthy Family relationships

WSD also offers an important Parenting & Family Wellness program. This communication-based, interactive program supports the development of healthy family relationships. These positive behaviors also reflect the personal characteristics sought by employers.

WSD aspires to provide well-developed life skills programs, enabling students to put into action new knowledge, new attitudes, skills and values. Former students, and their home communities, serve to benefit in educational, social, health, cultural and economic areas.

The successful life skills programs offered by the WSD and its stakeholders serve as reinforcement for students as they transition back to their communities and strive for personal change and life success.



Life Skills	
Program	% Complete of Those Eligible
CHANGES	78%
CIP	83%



Windham resources open pathways for achievement

Counseling, Testing and Records, Libraries, Volunteers, Health and Wellness, Business Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, Operational Support

Quietly, the administration staff at the Windham School District (WSD) keeps the wheels turning in classrooms all across Texas. Administration workers provide necessary resources for correctional educators and students to achieve academic and career preparation success.

These resource personnel support the mission of the district by providing training, curriculum development, business services, information technology, human resources, research and operational support. The WSD Administrative office functions as a thorough and efficient liaison, connecting the WSD with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and other outside agencies and partners.

Counseling, Testing & Records

The Counseling, Testing & Records (CT&R) Department supports and supplements essential unit testing processes, including educational assessments for the newly received incarcerated population, periodic assessments of those enrolled in Windham programs and an extensive High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate testing effort.

All Windham testing facilities are approved as secure Pearson VUE testing sites and must meet GED Testing Service, Pearson VUE and Texas Education Agency standards and guidelines to ensure exams are administered in a fair and consistent manner. All Windham HSE testing staff members recertify annually as Pearson VUE Test Administrators, which requires the successful completion of a Pearson VUE certification exam and active participation in the administration of HSE exams.

For the last three years, the district's HSE certificate pass rate of 82-86 percent has exceeded both the Texas and national certificate pass rates of 75 percent. In the last two years, Windham has maintained an average subtest pass rate of 84 to 93 percent.

In addition to testing responsibilities, CT&R personnel regularly work with education agencies throughout the United States in an effort to verify the high school diploma, HSE certificate and college claims of students.

The CT&R Department is responsible for maintaining educational records for all of the TDCJ incarcerated population, current and former. The department responds to records requests from current and former students, as well as subpoenas received from the legal community.

CT&R Department personnel provide training to unit education staff and coordinate educational transfers for the district. Each potential educational transfer is screened utilizing enrollment criteria and eligibility requirements, as well as policy-driven

needs and priority factors.

TDCJ unit profiles are considered in identifying the best candidates for transfer. WSD accomplishes this mission through a solid professional partnership with TDCJ State Classification Committee members.



Libraries Play Important Part In Students' Lives

A lot has been written about the work done in the WSD classroom. The same goes for the facilities and worksites where students learn important technical skills that increase readiness to reenter the workforce.

Vibrant, growing libraries and skilled librarians and library assistants who work together with students — are a vital tool in the WSD apparatus. Like classroom work and job training, libraries help prepare students for successful returns to their communities.

The WSD maintains 92 libraries in TDCJ facilities across Texas,

WSD Library Information for SY19	
Libraries Maintained*	92
Books Circulated	1,072,375
New Books Received	24,571
Books Cataloged	39,675
Books Distributed to Libraries	37,895
* Does not include libraries maintained by private facilities	

helping students become job-ready and better prepared for a successful future. WSD libraries complement career and technical education (CTE) and academic training with an emphasis on job training and literacy skills. Library staff members secure current information regarding business, employment and job trends, making it available to a wide group of readers.

Materials are also provided to support CTE classes, including an Occupational Outlook Handbook.

WSD libraries provide patrons with a variety of books, reference collections and materials in support of educational programs, job searches and recreational reading. Literacy is recognized as important in seeking employment and improving quality of life, so WSD libraries also provide services for nonstudents.

WSD continues to advance its technological capacities to provide improved services to library patrons. A digital catalog of every book in the library collection was developed to be used as a resource for library patrons. This digital catalog has been implemented in WSD libraries at 10 facilities for women and is available to all library patrons. Library patrons can now research what resources are available in the facilities' library's collection.

WSD continues to partner with the Harris County Public Library to pilot a public library card program. Any interested individual at the Lychner State Jail, located in Humble, Texas, receives a temporary public library card, which is included in their release document folder. This allows newly released residents immediate access to all resources provided by the Harris County Public Library.

WSD libraries continue to expand resources available for library patrons — students and nonstudents alike. This has been made possible, in part, by various partnerships developed with outside organizations.

Working together, more opportunities and skills are available to help everyone make a successful transition to his or her community.

Volunteer Programs

Volunteers play a vital role in the success of the Windham School District. With their specialized skills, talents, experiences and resources, volunteers assist educators in creating a culture of continuous learning.

During SY20, WSD administrators worked with 494 volunteers. These volunteers provided 825 hours of assistance, serving 4,088 residents. Volunteers serve on advisory boards, committees and in academic, CTE and life skills training.

Volunteers' activities and input help students receive the support they need to achieve in numerous education and reentry areas.

Business, education and state agency volunteers participate in WSD programs by meeting with participants and staff to discuss current aspects of the job market and reentry resources. They serve as presenters at Windham events and offer current information about employment, hiring practices, workplace skills and available community reentry resources.

Volunteers also serve as inspiring graduation speakers, sharing their experiences and motivating students to continue to create inspiring visions for their lives and successfully connect with families, employers and communities.

State legislators, community leaders, local businesspeople and even former students continue to inspire current students to change and prepare for successful lives.

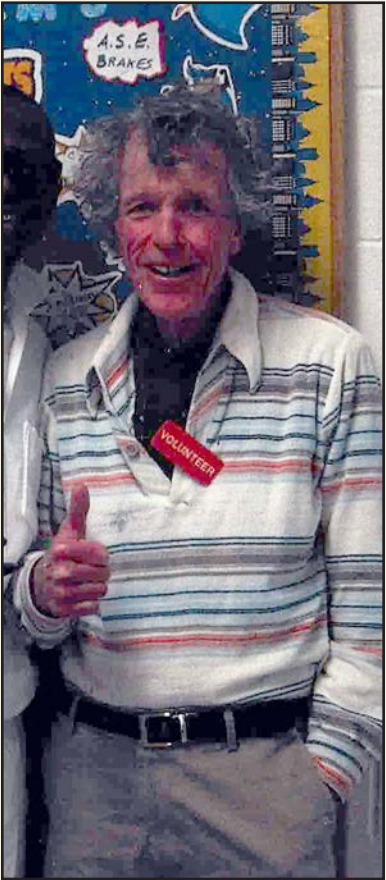
Correctional education volunteers:

- Provide academic and language tutoring
- Offer assistance with specific activities and programs
- Promote personal growth and development
- Serve as positive role models of citizenship and service

Volunteer of the Year

Dr. Michael Ryan earned the Judy Burd-Windham School District Award in 2020. Dr. Ryan has been a volunteer in the education department at the William P. Clements Unit. He began his volunteer experience with a senior student with limited academic skills. This student transferred to another facility. Dr. Ryan began working in the classroom as a roving tutor. He has worked in several different academic classes and became known as the go-to math tutor. He has been fabulous with the students who are close to completing their High School Equivalency tests. Dr. Ryan works most of his magic with the math test.

Dr. Ryan has shown a commitment that is not only admirable but uncommon. His presence can be felt every Monday morning. In fact, if Monday is not a school day, Dr. Ryan many times shows up on Tuesday. It is common for Dr. Ryan to volunteer for six to seven hours a day.



Health And Wellness Program

With a foundation based on the eight dimensions of wellness, the Health and Wellness program (HWP) began defining what a healthier well-being meant and looked like for staff members and residents.

With the HWP staff providing technical oversight, monthly health initiatives and challenges were provided across all TDCJ facilities.

Residents were offered positive activities to not only express themselves, but also grow while adopting and maintaining new healthy behaviors. Outlets such as those accomplished through organized programs. These programs were provided through intramurals and craft-shop participation. Examples of some of those intramurals are competitive checkers/chess tournaments, artistic competitions, table tennis tournaments, scrabble and more.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the HWP staff worked to keep emotional, mental and physical dimension information readily available to everyone working and living on the facilities. The HWP team eagerly took on the challenge of keeping workers and residents focused on healthy living in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic while still maintaining social distance in an effort to limit and eliminate the spread.

The HWP staff encouraged Windham School District (WSD), Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), and the Texas Board of Criminal Justice to participate in the Walk Across Texas (WAT) Challenge. For eight weeks, the HWP staff urged everyone to get out and walk while maintaining social distance. The goal was to walk a total of 832 miles.

Participants met the challenge with an overwhelmingly positive reception. The push from all those who participated was off the charts! A total of 92,133.91 miles were walked by employees of the Windham School District, TDCJ and TBCJ.

The HWP team also led WSD to a second-place division finish in Get Fit Texas challenge. Weekly tips, tricks and encouragement messages were delivered to push staffers to become more physically active and to live less of a sedentary lifestyle.

The HWP staff also provides and maintains approved exercise



equipment and supplies in gymnasiums, on outdoor recreation yards and in a variety of recreation areas for individuals in general population as well as restrictive housing settings. Television viewing and table games are provided in housing area dayrooms.

District Designed For Success

WSD has an organized structure designed to ensure that the district fulfills its mission statement.

Division directors oversee various departments and activities and report to the superintendent. Contact information for each division is available on the WSD website: wsdtx.org.

The authority to administer and lead the daily operations of Windham is delegated by the WSD Board of Trustees to the superintendent, who may further delegate this authority to staff as appropriate.

In SY19-20, regional principals were located in 10 geographic regions of the WSD to lead and support campus principals.

Principals are responsible for implementing educational programs at each campus, and the majority of principals oversee two or more campuses. As instructional leaders of each campus, principals create and implement campus improvement plans



to meet the educational needs of the unit population.

Beyond leading staff, principals provide professional development, evaluate classroom instruction using research-based principles and administer mandated school activities such as Response to Intervention, Admission Review and Dismissals and Title I services. Additionally, the principals coordinate the campus schedule and activities with TDCJ unit administration.

What Does Business Services Do?

The Windham Business Services Department facilitates the financial planning, management and reporting necessary to provide financial support for the district's education and recreation programs.

This department is responsible for transactions relating to accounting, accounts payable, budget, payroll, purchasing, the Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program and Warehousing.

Financial Data

WSD is funded through state appropriations to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Foundation School Program, and the district must earn these funds according to formulas set by law.

These formulas are based on student contact hours (attendance) for the best 180 of 210 school days in each year of the biennium. In SY20, WSD spent \$4.29 per contact hour —\$877.08 per participant — of state-appropriated money from the TEA.

Funding for Fiscal Year 2020		
WSD Contact Hour Rates		
Academic Education		\$4.47826
Career and Technical Education		\$3.67445
Fiscal Year 2020 Cost Per Contact Hour		
WSD (State)	Federal Grant Pass-Through	Total
\$4.29	\$0.21	\$4.50
Contact Hours		
2019-2020		
Best 180 Days		12,439,163
Cost Per Participant - Fiscal Year 2020		
PROGRAM		AMOUNT
WSD (State and Federal Funding)		\$919.75

Funding for Fiscal Year 2020	
Revenues - Fiscal Year 2020	
TYPE	AMOUNT
Local (Interest Income)	\$264,439
Windham School District State (Foundation School Program)	\$55,507,322
Instructional Material Allotment (IMA)	\$603,121
Federal Grant Pass-Through Funds	\$2,593,485
Contract	\$7,515,569
Other	\$120,386
Operating Transfer-In	\$241,739
TOTAL REVENUE	\$66,846,061
Expenditures - Fiscal Year 2020	
Windham School District State (Foundation School Program)	\$52,701,596
Instructional Material Allotment (IMA)	\$603,898
Federal Grant Pass-Through Funds	\$2,593,485
Contract (Recreation & The ECHO)	\$7,515,569
TOTAL Expenditures	\$63,414,548

Biennium Budget	85th Legislature 2018-2019	86th Legislature 2020-2021
WSD Appropriation from General Revenue within the TEA Budget	\$104,365,440	\$108,518,518*

Staff	SY20 - Public School*	SY20- WSD
Teachers	49.4%	53.6%
Central Administration	1.1%	1.4%
All Other	49.5%	45%

Teaching Staff	SY20 - Public School**	SY20- WSD
Average Teacher Experience	11.1 years	16.2 years
Average Salary for 16 Years of Experience	\$317.20/day	\$275.78/day
Days Per Contract	187	220

* After a statewide 5% legislative reduction in appropriations.
**2020 Texas Academic Performance Report prepared by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

Financial Data continued

Other sources of WSD revenue include local (interest income) and other funds. Federal grant pass-through funds are provided through grants such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I-Part D-Subpart 1, Title II-Part A, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-B), and the Carl D. Perkins grant.

The WSD receives reimbursement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TDCJ for providing administrative oversight of the Radio and Television services, Library and Health/Wellness programs, and The ECHO newspaper.

Human Resources

Windham’s Human Resources Department strives to continuously develop and introduce innovative strategies to improve service delivery to both inside and outside customers and enhance the employment experience.

Human Resources staff is focused on creating new and efficient ways to successfully administer programs such as selections, talent management, position classification, compensation and benefits, and employee relations.

- WSD Human Resources managed 1,206 positions during SY20.
- All WSD superintendent, principals, student advisors, teachers, librarians and diagnosticians are certified by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification.
- WSD teachers average 16 years of experience, reflecting a relatively stable workforce. Long-tenured employees make up a large portion of the district.
- WSD’s Human Resources Department partnered with LinkedIn, Military.com, Diversity.com and Monster.com, and participated in online hiring events to recruit highly qualified applicants.

Communications department

It’s critical for WSD to communicate effectively with the public. That’s why Windham regularly shares and distributes essential information through the WSD newsletter, the Annual Performance Report, videos, brochures, photographs, social media, news releases for significant events, the WSD website, TDCJ public information and media resources, and other methods.

The Communications Department promotes effective communication and positive public relations for WSD by preparing and distributing pertinent information about WSD activities, goals and policies to employees and stakeholders.

WSD also has oversight of The ECHO, a TDCJ newspaper produced by and for the TDCJ population. The ECHO is managed by WSD through a Memorandum of Understanding with TDCJ and is published 10 times per year.

Information Technology

The Information Technology (IT) Department provides technology solutions in support of the WSD’s goal to reduce recidivism, emphasizing security and reliability in a correctional education setting.



Windham’s IT architecture consists of servers, thin clients (simple computers optimized for establishing a remote connection with a server-based computing environment), desktops and laptops.

Most Windham classrooms don’t have access to the internet, so teachers use a variety of educational software that support the district’s academic and Career and Technical Education (CTE) curriculum. IT staff members review, research, evaluate and test new available technology and software for WSD compatibility.

The IT department consists of 23 team members, grouped in three areas, supporting more than 1,000 employees to better serve Windham students.

The Help Desk staff is located in Huntsville and at five area offices, and maintains all IT equipment for administration personnel and the 100-plus testing, academic and CTE labs across the state.

The Infrastructure and Network team administers database, security, system and network resources.

Application Development continues to create, maintain and improve applications for WSD personnel, as well as database conversions, user-friendly reports and dashboards to support the WSD in meeting its mission.

Operational Support

The Operational Support Department helps facilitate the Windham School District’s mission by analyzing, tracking, evaluating and monitoring initiatives that support student achievement.

The department has direct oversight of compliance and operational reviews, attendance policies, coordination of Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) guidelines and the Radio and Television Department. Operational Support also oversees district and student attendance accounting, achievement reporting and program evaluation.

The department coordinates internal and external research and serves as the educational liaison for private prisons, parole and American Correctional Association (ACA) initiatives. Operational Support also calculates and verifies formal performance measures reported to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC).

Celebrating SUCCESS

Noemi Martinez

Former Windham Student



Noemi Martinez started dreaming days before she began serving an 18-year sentence in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. She started believing in those dreams while sitting in Windham School District (WSD) classrooms.

Dreams of a new life, Martinez says, slowly turned into a strong belief that a better way of living was truly possible.

“Those teachers with Windham, every single one of them was so helpful and so kind. I could breathe and escape in those classrooms,” Martinez said. “You almost got to feel normal for a while.

“Those teachers made me feel like I could do something positive with my life.”

Martinez took a wide range of classes at Windham. Wanting to make the most of her time in TDCJ, she immersed herself in cognitive intervention, parenting, women’s health, landscape design and construction classes.

With Windham teachers constantly lifting her up, Martinez finally started believing in herself.

“Those classes help you grow as a person. They help you grow and become more accountable,” she explained. “Most importantly, those classes and those teachers give you self-esteem, self-confidence. They make you believe you can do this, that you are worth more than you were previously.

“If you get a chance like that to grow, you should definitely take it — not just for you, but for your whole family.”

Martinez took that chance more than eight years ago. Miraculously, she started her new life only four years into a lengthy sentence when she was released from TDCJ in 2012.

Since then she has reconnected with her family, helped raise four children and maintained steady employment. Currently, she’s working as a paralegal for a law firm in Dallas.

She received no specific paralegal training at WSD, but she got a lot more.

“I have a much better attitude now,” Martinez said. “Besides good work habits, those classes taught me so much more. That parenting class helped me a lot. I was a mom at a very young age. Communication with my kids was not very good. I learned what you’re supposed to do as a parent. I learned some skills in every class I took.”

Martinez credits her former pastor for putting her on a new path. She said Windham gave her tools that help her stay the course.

“I was in a very, very dark place before I went to prison,” she admits. “I was looking for something; I needed something to save me. ... I got invited to church — a very, very small church. Suddenly, it was all new to me. I found hope and a relationship with God. That gave me what I needed while I was away from my family.

“While in prison, I became so focused on being a better person and growing,” Martinez added. “I give it my all in everything I do now.”

Celebrating
SUCCESS

Steve Golden
Former Windham Student



After bad decisions put him behind bars in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Steve Golden realized that a path to success could be in the cards if he started making better choices.

Equipped with knowledge and skills he gained in Windham School District classrooms, Golden finds himself today as the owner and operator of a Houston-based moving company. Additionally, he is also working for an international moving corporation.

It takes hard work and dedication, Golden said, to restart a life and reach lofty goals like owning a company, having a home and a being a part of a happy family. Golden knows firsthand that it is possible to attain "everything that you've ever wanted on the other side of the [prison] gate." It takes "blood, sweat and tears," he added, "but the cost is worth it should you stay the course." Golden said he wouldn't be able to help families move into new homes and businesses into better locations without the training he received at Windham School District (WSD).

"Cognitive Intervention taught me to process my thoughts and address issues from an emotionally level head," Golden said of the courses he participated in at Windham. "Life Matters taught me about the simple principles of living life on life terms from a civilized place of accountability," he added. "Interaction with People, it was these helpful lessons that prepared me for my customer base, with communication, excellence and cognitive interpretations of right living."

"My GED showed me that I could do anything if I put my mind to it and paved the way to other academic successes," he said.

In order to have a bright future upon release from prison, Golden invested in the education and skills training he received. Besides gaining skills, Golden also learned plenty of intangibles that allowed him to gain the confidence needed to succeed in life.

"I learned that I was intelligent and seriously underdeveloped," he said. "The most important thing I learned was how to go to school again for the sake of life. How to study, learn and seek help healthily."

"I believe I learned how to integrate back into society," Golden added. "Things like regular conversation, exchanges of ideas and relational harmony helped to teach me how it could be once free."

Golden works for an International moving corporation, New World Van Lines, as well as owning and operating Golden Rule Relocations, a moving company that services Houston and the surrounding areas.

With prior experience as a mover before his incarceration, the education and training he received at WSD enabled Golden to take a leap into entrepreneurship.

"I believe that coupled with my moving experience and customer-service skills, the market is wide open for me to do this," Golden said. "I also love being able to connect with the customer as we ensure the safe transport of their items."

"I believe I was gifted to do this. And since I am walking in that giftedness, my cup is overflowing from maximum capacity. This is a gift from God. He has always allowed me the knack for certain skills of communication and it shows up abundantly in business and work."

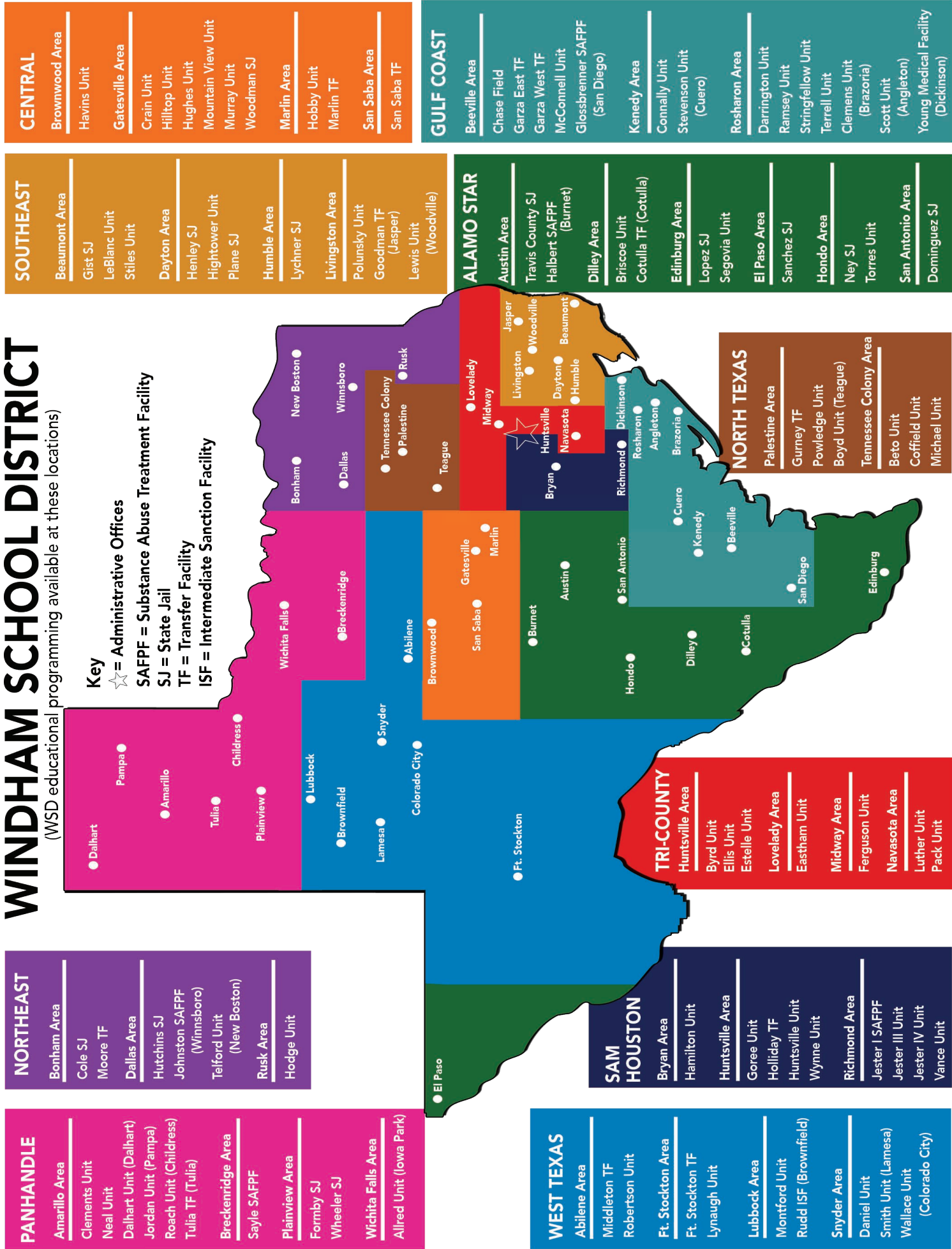
Golden got another shot at success after completing the Windham programs. It is up to him now, Golden said, to stay on the right path and continue making wise decisions.

"I'm responsible for more than just me now," he said. "People depend on me to stay away from the madness, live life right and honor them with my integrity. Before Windham, I didn't have a real awareness of that kind of healthy dependency. I do now."

Moving on from his previous decisions that landed him with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Golden plans to use everything he learned from the Windham School District to have a successful future and take care of his family.

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

(WSD educational programming available at these locations)



“WSD strives to instill a healthy student learning framework that transcends incarceration, expands horizons and strengthens families and communities!”

~ Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S.

Superintendent, Windham School District

