This 2013-2014 Annual Performance Report for Windham School District is designed to provide an overview of the programs, activities and accomplishments of our campuses within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Our teachers and staff have dedicated their careers to providing vocational and educational opportunities to offenders incarcerated in the Texas prison system. This challenge is rewarding for us and beneficial to our State. The impact of criminal activity on the Texas economy is significant not only in the costs of incarceration, but also in the loss of workforce productivity, the costs of social services for offenders and their families, and the suffering of victims of criminal acts. Along with our correctional partners in TDCJ, WSD education staff is committed to mutual goals which aim to lower the number of crimes committed by released offenders.

The Windham staff teaches offenders industry-recognized vocational skills, literacy skills, graduate equivalent diploma courses and behavioral/cognitive change coursework. Through this instruction, WSD’s Texas certified teachers have shown remarkable results in lowering recidivism.

Windham is responding to the new challenges our students face in literacy, technology skills and the evolving technical/vocational skills in the workplace. Our programs utilize the latest data analysis to better target teaching skills and improve content delivery to meet new challenges, both academically and vocationally. Teachers and support staff in Windham are highly trained professionals working with extraordinary challenges for professional educators. Our programs touch not only the lives of the offenders, but also benefit families and communities of Texas.

I encourage you to follow our progress on the Windham School District website, which contains resources and information for our offender students, their families, community members, and businesses seeking skilled employees. Together we are helping students better prepare for the next chapters of their lives: change, success, choices and opportunity. WSD’s efforts ensure a brighter future for all Texans, and each of us is proud to serve in this role.

Dr. Clint Carpenter
Superintendent

Letter to a WSD Welding Teacher

“Thank you for everything you have done for me. I took your class and fell in love with the welding trade. I got a job welding and I had to write and just thank you. ... Because of you I can make a living. I’m free. I have a job that pays good and what helps me is that I love what I’m doing and it’s men like you that made a difference in my life. ... If you ever question the fact of whether you’re making a change in the lives of people, know that in my life you have made a difference and I will be forever grateful to you!!”

~ Candelario D.
Providing education helps students prepare for the next chapter of their lives.
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VISION

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

MISSION

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

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.

WINDHAM STRATEGIC GOALS

Developed by WSD Strategic Planning Committee, July 2014

The WSD will:

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

WSD Board of Trustees

(L-R) Sitting: Vice-Chairman Tom Mechler, Chairman Oliver J. Bell, Secretary Leopoldo “Leo” Vasquez III. Standing: Janice Harris Lord, Thomas P. Wingate, John “Eric” Gambrell, R. Terrell McCombs, Judge Lawrence “Larry” Gist, and Carmen Hiles.

The Windham School District (WSD) was established by the Texas Board of Corrections, as authorized by the Legislature, 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 vocational instruction to eligible offenders incarcerated within the TDCJ.
Who is the typical WSD Student?

The WSD serves a population of male and female adult offenders who left the public school system for a variety of reasons and eventually found their way into the legal system. The difficulties experienced by WSD students while they were in the public school system have not disappeared with age or incarceration.

The offender’s educational difficulties and the ability to retain information might also be affected by excessive use of illegal drugs or alcohol prior to incarceration.

Other factors can impact the offender’s educational achievement: age, general attitude towards school, health concerns and current medication. In order to meet the needs of male and female offenders, the WSD offers structured classes in academic, life skills and vocational programming.

Characteristics of the typical student entering WSD programs:

- Dropped out of school in 9th or 10th grade
- Functions at the 6th grade level
- Below average IQ (86)
- Average age of 33
- History of academic failure
- Defensive and/or negative attitude
- Low self-esteem
- Little confidence in self to find employment
- Limited ability to visualize a productive future
- Difficulty with relationships
- Difficulty controlling anger
- Exhibits impulsive behavior

How are offenders selected for WSD Programs?

Selection for WSD programs is based on an Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) developed for each offender. The ITP outlines educational services and prioritizes participation in recommended programs based on the offender’s age, program availability, projected release date and need for academic, vocational and life skills programs. Some offenders participate in more than one type of program.
How many offenders are served by the WSD?

Highlights for Offenders Released During the 2013-2014 School Year
(September, 2013 - August, 2014: SY14)

- TDCJ released 70,521 offenders during SY14. Sixty-four percent of those released participated in one or more educational programs during the history of their incarceration.

- Of the released offenders, 13,242 attained a GED through WSD, and two attained a High School Diploma (HSD) through a partnership with Mullin Independent School District while incarcerated in TDCJ. (see related story on page 20)

- Of the released offenders who participated in any Windham program and had at least two educational achievement tests, approximately 66 percent demonstrated a significant gain in educational achievement level or attained a GED or HSD.

- Of the released offenders, literacy students who had at least two educational achievement tests averaged a grade level advancement of 2.0 years in approximately 627 hours of instruction, or the equivalent of approximately 209 school days.

Educational Services Provided During SY14

- There were 59,678 offenders who received WSD educational services (K-12) in SY14.

- During the WSD’s SY14, TDCJ had an average on-hand count of 150,747 offenders at the end of each month. Of those, an average of 140,129 offenders were on TDCJ - operated facilities. From this population, WSD served the highest priority offenders as resources allowed, based upon offenders’ age, release date, and educational need.

- WSD services were provided on 89 facilities across the state during SY14. WSD had a school campus on 84 facilities and an educational presence on five additional facilities for a total of 89 facilities with WSD services.
The Division of Instruction oversees a comprehensive instructional program, which is designed to meet the unique needs of incarcerated adult offenders.

Many of the offenders in TDCJ lack the educational background and basic skills necessary for attaining employment upon release. The average initial educational achievement (EA) level of offenders enrolling in WSD programs is approximately sixth grade level. WSD is strongly committed to providing these students with the education tools they need to succeed in life. Academic, vocational and life skills programs are designed to provide offenders with skills they need to obtain and maintain employment and to become responsible members of their communities.

All programs emphasize skills for offenders that potential employers demand, such as personal qualities, teamwork, decision making, cultural sensitivity/tolerance, and problem solving. Most literacy and life skills program participants attend classes approximately 15 hours per week, and most of those participating in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs attend approximately 30 hours per week.

### Literacy Programs

Literacy programs provide adult basic education for offenders functioning below the sixth grade level and secondary level adult education for those who are working toward attainment of a high school equivalency certificate (GED). Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) labs, available at most campuses, provide diagnostic, prescriptive, computer-based instruction to support and enhance the academic program.

Literacy programming is divided into **Literacy I, Literacy II, and Literacy III** for students functioning at the elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. Literacy I students with significant reading deficits may be enrolled in **Literacy I - Reading**. This is a special program designed to provide intensive instruction in reading.

A supplemental **Title I** program is provided for underachieving students who are 21 years of age or younger. The Title I teacher works with the regular literacy teacher to reinforce and/or re-teach literacy and math concepts to these younger students.

A comprehensive referral and assessment process is used to identify offenders who may be in need of **Special Education** services. Special instruction is provided for students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, intellectual disabilities, vision and/or hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, speech impairments, traumatic brain injury and other health impairments.

WSD also provides a specialized program for eligible students who exhibit limited English proficiency. Certified **English as a Second Language (ESL)** teachers provide intensive instruction in English language development, reading and writing.

The overall grade gain on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for SY14 was 1.2 years. This average includes offenders in regular and intensive reading literacy courses, ESL, Special Education and Title I courses.

![Literacy Participants Chart]

**Note:** An offender may have participated in more than one literacy program during SY14.
• The average literacy participant receives about three hours of literacy instruction a day for just over two months. In this short time, the average overall educational growth is equal to 1.2 years of growth in a traditional school year.

• More than 43 percent of academic participants improved their reading level (nonreader, reader, literate, advanced) during the SY14 year.

• Of the 6,212 offenders who took the General Educational Development (GED) test in Literacy III classes, 5,095 (82 percent) earned a GED certificate during SY14. Most of those not earning the GED passed one or more sections of the GED. WSD dedicated $2.7 million in SY14 to fund 56 Literacy III teachers teaching final GED preparation skills.

• Of the 29,925 distinct literacy participants, approximately 68 percent met or exceeded the district’s performance criteria for progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Participants* – 29,925</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy Levels</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy I (0.0 to 3.9 grade levels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy II (4.0 to 5.9 grade levels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy III (6.0 and above grade levels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completion of a literacy level typically takes more than one school year.

* The total distinct participant number will not match the sum of the number of participants in each literacy level. The offenders in the Literacy Levels category of the table only include literacy participants with a post (subsequent) TABE test during the academic year.
Your legacy will be one of perseverance, one of accomplishment and one of encouragement. ... I hope you recognize the love and support of your family members. The love and support of the people who believed in you enough to help you get through this process is never wasted, even though you may not see it on a daily basis, an hourly basis or a minute-by-minute basis."

~ Senator Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) speaking at the Daniel Unit to GED and CTE recipients

- Administering the GED is the most cost-efficient path to completing a high school equivalency program for students who are incarcerated for various lengths of time, compared to a traditional K-12 educational program.

- Studies have consistently found that offenders who attain a GED while incarcerated had lower recidivism rates and higher rates of employment as compared to similar offenders who did not achieve a GED.

- Offenders are eligible to take the GED exam based on test scores that indicate a likelihood of passing the GED.

- Offenders who attain GED eligibility are enrolled in Literacy III; however, not all offenders in Literacy III reach GED eligibility.

- On average, an offender is enrolled in literacy courses 507 hours before they reach a proficiency to attempt the GED. This is equivalent to almost an entire school year.

6,212 offenders took the GED Test during SY14

82% Achieved a GED During SY14

# of Offenders Awarded a GED

# of Offenders Tested, GED Not Completed

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) program provides vocational training in a variety of trade areas. Through partnerships with certification and licensing agencies, universities, along with workforce agency visits and on-site visits to course related industries, WSD provides training that meets recognized business/industry training certification standards. This continuous communication assists the district in identifying employment opportunities and projected labor market conditions for offenders.

Windham staff including vocational instructors and specialists make various contacts with organizations and businesses to discuss ways to:

- improve curriculum to better equip ex-offenders to obtain and maintain employment,
- determine current industry standards and operating practices to inform decisions with regard to equipment and various other requirements,
- provide additional training opportunities for instructors and staff, and
- develop partnerships which facilitate communication and provide more visibility for employment opportunities for ex-offenders.

These contacts include visits to various private business locations, visits with state departments or agencies related to vocational interests, participation in different types of expos or conferences and discussions with staff at all 28 Texas Workforce Development boards.
• Participating offenders have the opportunity to earn a Windham CTE certificate of completion and one or more industry recognized occupational certificates or licenses.

• WSD awarded 4,613 vocational certificates of completion and 8,126 industry certificates during SY14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career and Technical Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTE Certificates Earned (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Certificates Earned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• By offering industry certifications, WSD maintains communication and/or accreditation status with the various certifying entities. This also helps WSD keep in touch with potential employment opportunities for ex-offenders.

• Two Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) short courses were added in SY14. WSD expanded OSHA training through a partnership with TDCJ by serving offender workers within the Manufacturing & Logistics Division in addition to WSD students. These courses provide procedures on how to identify, abate, avoid and prevent job related hazards on a job or construction site.

Full-length CTE courses include:

- Automotive Collision Repair and Refinishing
- Automotive Specialization Air Conditioning and Heating
- Automotive Specialization Brakes
- Automotive Specialization Electronics
- Automotive Specialization Engine Performance
- Automotive Specialization Fundamentals
- Automotive Specialization Transmission Repair
- Bricklaying/Stone Masonry
- Business Computer Information Systems
- Business Image Management and Multimedia
- Computer Maintenance Technician
- Construction Carpentry (Building Trades II)
- Culinary Arts
- Custodial Technician
- Diesel Mechanics
- Diversified Career Preparation: Food Production, Management and Services
- Electrical Trades
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration
- Horticulture
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Landscape Design, Construction & Maintenance
- Major Appliance Service Technology
- Mill and Cabinetmaking
- Painting and Decorating
- Piping Trades/Plumbing
- Printing and Imaging Technology
- Restaurant Management
- Sheet Metal
- Small Engine Repair
- Technical Introduction to Computer-Aided Drafting
- Truck Driving
- Welding
• The WSD maintains 87 libraries for TDCJ facilities throughout Texas. Libraries provide offenders with a wide variety of books, reference collections and materials in support of educational programs, as well as recreational reading.

• State Jail offenders visiting WSD libraries are also encouraged to research current employment opportunities using JobView kiosks. Offered in cooperation with TDCJ, JobView helps state jail offenders find possible jobs based on skills, particular experiences, or interests they may have.

Hutchins State Jail Principal H. Linley demonstrates how the JobView kiosks work to Representative Toni Rose during her visit to the unit. State Jail offenders get a head start on future employment by researching job openings using JobView kiosks located within some WSD libraries.

Volunteer Programs

People helping people is the essence of volunteering in correctional education. Volunteers are active on advisory boards and committees and in academic, vocational and life skills training.

Within the WSD community, volunteers provide significant contributions. Windham has more than 200 volunteers volunteering 1,272 hours and serving 4,952 offenders. Operating the Women’s Storybook Project on six campuses involves more than 100 volunteers for this initiative alone. Volunteers from business, education and state agencies participate in WSD programs by meeting with offenders and staff to discuss various aspects of the job market. Other volunteers provide literacy and language tutoring, working with students throughout the state.

Award-Winning Volunteer Program

The Literacy Highland Lakes was honored for volunteer service with the WSD. Executive Director Sally May accepted the 2014 Governor’s Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award (also known as the Judy Burd Award, in memory of a WSD volunteer coordinator and lifelong educator). The Literacy Highland Lakes volunteers teach GED classes at the Ellen Halbert Unit and provide one-on-one tutoring as needed. These volunteers embrace the opportunity to help the women prepare for a better life and provide them with the necessary tools to get good jobs and further their education.
**Thinking First**

“I would like to let the Education Department know how important they are to us inmates. I graduated from Cognitive Intervention and the course has had a major impact on me and my behavior. I was taught to think before acting and to think before reacting. Thanks.”

~ Kenneth J. 

**Life Skills Programs**

- **Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES)** is a pre-release life skills program for offenders who are within two years of projected release. Topics include developing healthy relationships, living responsibly, drug education and putting together a new start.

- **The Cognitive Intervention Program**, developed with the help of the National Institute of Corrections, serves as a model for other states. The program teaches students to examine and change thinking that leads to criminal behavior. The course teaches students to meet their needs without trespassing on the rights of others. Through Cognitive Intervention, students learn more appropriate thinking skills using instruction, role play and exercises in interpersonal problem solving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>% Completions of those eligible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHANGES (Pre-Release)</td>
<td>19,480</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Intervention</td>
<td>15,013</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **WSD offers a Parenting & Family Wellness program** at some facilities. The Middle Way Parent Education Program serves as the curricular foundation for the Parenting section. This is a communication-based, interactive program that supports the development of healthy family relationships.
Education, honesty, determination:  
\textit{Derek Hess’s transformative journey}  

From prison cell to Excel

Despite six years of imprisonment for a conviction involving drug offenses, firearms and a stolen vehicle, former Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) offender Derek Hess is now living a successful life employed as a contractor for a global oil company. Education and faith helped him create a new life, and he voluntarily uses his story to encourage other Texas prisoners to also make a change. Today Hess says he can earn $650 per day, and he is blessed with marriage, family, a new home, a potential promotion -- and the opportunity to give back.

“They say success comes when hard work meets opportunity,” says 34-year-old Hess, who maintains his new life with persistence and personal honesty. Change, however, has not been easy. His story comes with a warning: persistence is the key to success, and be prepared for setbacks.

First incarcerated in TDCJ at the age of 22, Hess served two sentences before taking a real route to success. Not until he was enrolled in classes behind bars did Hess value education.

“I was locked up for six months before I signed up for classes,” he says. “I was able to take a Business Computer Information Systems class (BCIS) offered through Windham School District and also an Alvin Community College class. Seeking more knowledge of computers, networks, and systems management, Hess led his BCIS class in earning all four Microsoft certifications: Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint.

After his release in 2013, he dealt with the challenge of having a past conviction while looking for employment. Through persistence, faith and honesty, he found a position requiring proficiency in multiple Microsoft skills. It was offered by an industry consulting firm. Opening employers’ eyes to his potential, Hess was hired and joined the firm in 2013. Hess now works on a rotational schedule (two weeks on, two weeks off), and his responsibilities involve keeping track of all site expenditures.

“I deal with vendors, call companies to come set up equipment, create spreadsheets, and track costs. I work on different sites entering information into various programs. I do a lot of work in Excel at this job.”

Along with computer duties, Hess said he is quick to help with whatever is needed at his job.

“If the trash needs to be taken out, I take out the trash. If the floor needs to be swept and mopped, I’ll do it,” he says. “When you get out of prison, you have to be willing to work hard for whatever type of pay scale is offered. Sharing your eager spirit to work builds character.

“The real challenge is to make things work out, rather than to hope they will.”
The Division of Administrative and Business Services facilitates the financial planning, management and reporting necessary to provide financial support of education and recreation programs. This division is responsible for transactions relating to accounting, accounts payable, budget, payroll, purchasing, Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program and warehousing.

### Financial Data:

WSD is funded through state appropriations to 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 offender contact (attendance) hours for the best 180 of 210 school days in each year of the biennium. In SY14, WSD spent $4.06 per contact hour ($835.56 per participant) of state appropriated money from TEA.

Other sources of WSD revenue include local (interest income) and other funds. Federal Grant Pass Thru 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 Corrections Grant. WSD receives reimbursement through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with TDCJ for providing administrative oversight of recreation programs and the ECHO newspaper.

#### Funding for Fiscal Year 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WSD Contact Hour Rates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Education</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year 2014 Cost Per Contact Hour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WSD (state)</td>
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<tr>
<td>$4.06</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Contact Hours 2013-2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Best 180 Days</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Revenues - Fiscal Year 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local (Interest Income)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windham School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (Foundation School Program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Material Allotment (IMA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grant Pass Thru Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Transfer-In</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL REVENUE</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Expenditures - Fiscal Year 2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windham School District</td>
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<tr>
<td>State (Foundation School Program)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Material Allotment (IMA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Grant Pass Thru Funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract - (Recreation &amp; ECHO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Per Participant - Fiscal Year 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WSD Appropriation from General Revenue (GR) within the TEA Budget</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biennium</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windham School District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (Foundation School Program)</td>
<td>$48,407,621</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Material Allotment (IMA)</td>
<td>$1,457,032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Grant Pass Thru Funds</td>
<td>$1,979,133</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract - (Recreation &amp; ECHO)</td>
<td>$4,337,010</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</td>
<td>$56,180,796</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Windham School District</td>
<td>$868.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Divisions Supporting the WSD Mission**

**DIVISION OF OPERATIONAL SUPPORT**

The Division of Operational Support directs and manages initiatives to support the district’s mission. The division has direct oversight of the WSD Counseling, Testing and Records Department; compliance and operational reviews; attendance policies; campus planning and development; coordination of ITP guidelines; the Recreation program and the Radio and Television Department. The division also oversees district and student achievement reporting, program evaluation and records retention. Operational Support coordinates internal and external research and serves as the educational liaison to private prisons, parole and American Correctional Association (ACA) initiatives.

**COUNSELING, TESTING AND RECORDS DEPARTMENT**

The Counseling, Testing and Records Department is responsible for the district’s testing program, including one of the largest GED testing programs in the nation. The department is also responsible for the management of educational assessments as offenders enter the correctional system and for maintaining educational records. Staff respond to legal and offender requests for educational records and process high school diploma, GED and college claim verifications.

The Counseling, Testing and Records Department provides administrative support and supervision to unit education staff. WSD employs certified counselors to provide a comprehensive guidance program at the unit level. Counselors share information with potential students and enroll eligible offenders in appropriate educational programs. For example, students enrolling in electrical trades, heating/ventilation/air conditioning and plumbing are counseled in the state licensing process. Details for appealing licensing decisions are discussed as well. Counselors also coordinate the administration of standardized achievement tests, GED tests and vocational assessments. Additionally, counselors play a key role in the development of an Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) for each offender. The ITP outlines educational services and prioritizes participation in recommended programs based on the offender’s age, program availability, projected release date and need for academic, vocational and life skills programs.

The TABE is administered to incoming TDCJ offenders to determine each offender’s educational level. Offenders enrolled in WSD academic programs are tested throughout the school year to monitor student progress.
In conjunction with TDCJ, WSD offers recreation activities to promote offender wellness through physical activity.

Approved exercise equipment and supplies are provided and maintained in gymnasiums, on outdoor recreation yards and in a variety of special recreation areas designed for offenders who are administratively segregated from other offenders. Television viewing and table games are provided in housing area dayrooms. Structured programs are also provided through intramurals, free world interaction through recreational activities, and craft shop participation.

**Education changed my life**

“I could barely read or write and didn’t even realize I had given up on myself....a great teacher from WSD taught me how to believe in myself by showing me the importance of getting an education. She gave me the tools for my education, and as a result, built my self confidence. It was the greatest accomplishment in my life to learn how to read and write. I am extremely grateful that WSD is much more than trade certificates and GEDs. As a result of my teacher helping me believe in myself, I now have greater freedom in my life. I can be the father my kids need, as well as a positive role model in my community. Most importantly, I can remain free upon my release.”

~ Chad K. 
Garrett Stanley:
Journeyman electrician credits WSD vocational training for chance to re-wire life, enjoy success and freedom

Today Garrett Stanley has been a successful journeyman electrician for eight years, gainfully employed and working at commercial and industrial sites in Austin, including power plants and water treatment plants. He worked with the same company from 2006 until late 2014. He had promoted to the position of general foreman, but his ability to run and organize large jobs recently gave him an even higher position with a different company. Stanley is now construction manager of special events and new construction in Texas for a major cell phone provider. These advancements are in stark contrast to the past he left behind as a resident of the Texas Youth Commission (age 14-16) and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (age 17 to 29). He served 12 years on three prison units during a 17-year sentence.

The jobs skills and talents that helped turn his life around came as a result of correctional education in TDCJ. Stanley fortunately fell under the guidance of skilled vocational instructors during his years at the Luther Unit in Navasota; education helped him re-direct his path. The young man discovered an aptitude for electrical work when he enrolled in Windham School District’s electrical trades program, and today he credits those teachers and WSD’s vocational program for his success.

“My Windham teachers showed patience, effort, and kindness; they were very helpful. They taught us even when some of us seemed unteachable,” he recalls. “I now have a good job and a good career due to the classes and skills learned through the WSD electrical trades program. I give all the credit to WSD. I can make an honest living, I am a citizen of society and I pay taxes – no one can take these things from me.”

Stanley completed his WSD classes, worked in the unit maintenance department and as a teacher’s aide in the electrical trade classes, and earned his Associate of Arts degree. When he was released in 2006, the state’s Project RIO program assisted him with purchasing tools, and he answered a newspaper ad for an electrical job. He was given an interview by a union electrical shop, who handled industrial and commercial electrical installation. Stanley was honest about his criminal history, choosing to deal with parole discussions early in the interview meeting. He was hired on the spot and began his job the next day with construction of a new elementary school.

Prepared for all assigned tasks, he immediately volunteered for evaluations at an apprenticeship training center to set his pay scale even higher. Stanley passed a series of progressively-difficult skills evaluations, ranging from conduit bending to understanding motor controls. Despite a lack of work history, certifications he earned in prison, including six different On-the-Job (OJT) certifications, were taken into consideration. He was then named a New Hire Intermediate Journeyman by the Austin Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee for the Electrical Industry. He was also given encouragement to seek additional opportunities for more training and increased pay, and he enjoyed working with his employer until October 2014, when other job opportunities arose.

Stanley says he enjoys the privileges of freedom, such as voting, living as a citizen, getting married, and even going on a cruise, and he continues to share his success story with current offenders whenever possible telling them, “Go to school, take pride in the work you do. Educate yourself for the future and dedicate your time towards an education and skills that can provide a career once you are released.” He has also found a way to encourage others to succeed by working as an AA volunteer for the past year and a half on weekends at TDCJ prisons in Burnet and Hondo.

“I’m very appreciative of everything I learned in Windham School District,” he says. “I didn’t have any of those tools before I went in there, and I definitely did not have any of those behaviors that it took to facilitate me having a job with upward movement. It all started there at Windham.”

Turning the page...
Choosing Success!
The Division of Information Technology (IT) provides reliable and secure technology solutions in support of the district’s mission to reduce recidivism. The staff, located in Huntsville and at three regional offices, maintains administrative and instructional architecture for 106 computer labs (including 25 vocational labs) across the state.

WSD uses a computerized architecture consisting of centralized servers and thin clients. Though classrooms do not have access to the Internet, teachers use a variety of educational software supporting academic and vocational curricula. IT staff evaluates and tests all new software for WSD and server compatibility.

WSD IT provides system, network, and database administration, and developers create and maintain applications to support WSD in meeting its mission. WSD IT had significant technological achievements this year, including major hardware upgrades, human resources and life skills applications development, and several successful software implementations.

**Instructional Software Supported by IT:**

- Odyssey
- EDUSS
- Office 2007 & 2010
- Typing Master Pro
- GED Test Prep
- Accelerated Reader
- GED Millennium
- Typing Master 7.10
- Khan Academy
- GED Item Samplers
  (Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies)
- Algebra 1
- Basic Math
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- GED Tutorials
- InDemand
- Exam View
- Adobe CS6
- AutoCad 2010
- Read 180
- Fraction Nation
- Aztec
- eSPED
Windham partners with Mullin ISD, TDCJ
Begins new High School Diploma program

Texas’s first in-prison High School Diploma (HSD) program in more than 30 years began with approximately 40 young females in February, 2014, thanks to a unique partnership among Windham School District (WSD), Mullin Independent School District (ISD) and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). TDCJ offenders who were incarcerated at the time they had nearly earned a diploma were given an opportunity to attend classes at the San Saba Unit, with WSD providing desks, computer equipment and high school software. Mullin ISD provided the teaching staff for these students behind bars, who met the eligibility criteria for enrollment in Mullin ISD courses, according to Texas Education Agency guidelines. WSD provided administrative oversight, and TDCJ provided classroom space and security services. The program opened on Feb. 18, and the first graduation took place in June amid cheers from graduates, parents, and teachers. Contagious pride in accomplishment and intense emotions were on display as each student received their diploma from Mullin ISD and a certificate of completion from WSD. Students in this program gain course credit in subject areas needed for the Texas HSD. Diplomas are awarded when all coursework and required state assessments are passed. A second graduation took place at the end of 2014.

“We are exceptionally proud of these graduates for working hard to earn their diplomas despite tough circumstances. They have turned their negative situations into personal, family success stories,” WSD Superintendent Dr. Clint Carpenter said. “Mullin teachers have provided excellent instruction to these young women, and their families have given them the backing needed to make positive changes in their lives. This becomes a better story for generations to come. We thank TDCJ and Mullin ISD for the exceptional support they gave to make this program a reality.”

WSD Superintendent Clint Carpenter congratulates graduates.

Mullin and Windham administrators form an education partnership.
Mason Staggs:

Education in prison leads to long-term employment, life success in West Texas

Every graduation ceremony is a special occasion, but what you men have gone through in order to be here today makes your accomplishments so much more outstanding,” Mason Staggs tells a Robertson Unit group of GED and vocational graduates in West Texas.

Former offender Staggs’ success story frequently inspires incarcerated graduates in Windham School District (WSD). Staggs himself was incarcerated for close to 10 years within the TDCJ, serving time on the Ferguson, Hughes and Middleton units. He has now been on the outside for 18 years.

While incarcerated, Staggs took full advantage of educational opportunities available in TDCJ through WSD. He first received a GED, then immediately followed up a vocational certificate in auto mechanics. Afterwards, his pursuit of self-improvement led him to an associate’s degree in general studies from Lee College and a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a minor in marketing from Tarleton State University.

Staggs acknowledges the importance of teachers and their crucial impact on an offender’s life.

“Education at WSD helped me realize that the teachers cared about us and were investing in us, so I needed to succeed in order to repay their efforts. I did not want their efforts to be wasted,” he says.

Happily married now with three children, he is an American Board of Optometry certified optician and has managed a major optometry company for the past 15 years.

“Education taught me how to think and analyze problems, which helps me daily in my current employment,” he says.

Emphasizing choices and their consequences, Staggs encourages graduating offenders to use time behind the walls wisely.

“Do you want to waste your time watching movies and sports on TV, until a decade or more has passed you by?” he asks. “Or would you rather make choices that will get you out of prison and put you on a path to a better way? Education is the one thing in life that no one can take away,” he says.

“The tools for success are right in front of you, but it’s up to each and every one of you to make the choice to work the programs that WSD offers. An education is the door to success after incarceration, plain and simple.”
The Division of Human Resources develops and implements activities and programs relating to recruitment, staffing, employee classification, compensation and benefits, as well as employee relations, employee recognition and training on human resources policies and procedures.

Human Resources Division implemented several initiatives this school year to help increase the number of students served by filling all teacher positions to 93% capacity. The teacher recruitment award, granting eight hours of administrative leave, was given to employees who referred a teacher that resulted in a hire. Bumper stickers advertising teacher vacancies were distributed throughout the district. A partnership was formed with two universities to assist vocational instructors with teacher certification. Vocational vacancies were posted as multiple trades in an attempt to attract a qualified applicant. District personnel also attended non-traditional career fairs to recruit skilled craftsmen and advertised positions with historically Black and Hispanic serving institutions of higher education.

• WSD Human Resources managed 1,105 positions during SY14.
• Approximately 77 percent of all WSD staff hold a college degree.
• The average years of experience for WSD teachers is 16 years, reflecting a relatively stable workforce, as evidenced by the large number of long-tenured employees.
• The Division of Human Resources works through Teacher Job Bank, TASANET, Education Service Centers, universities, the Texas Workforce Commission and various websites to recruit highly-qualified applicants.

Organization of WSD Employees:

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

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

• A regional administrator is located in each of three geographic regions of the WSD to oversee educational programs located at TDCJ facilities in that area. Regional administrators coordinate WSD activities with unit wardens and TDCJ regional administration (see WSD map, p. 26)

• Principals are responsible for implementing educational programs at each campus, and the majority of principals oversee two or more campuses. As instructional leader of the campus, principals create and implement campus improvement plans to meet the educational needs of the unit population. Beyond overseeing 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.
Because of the difficulty in working with the academic and behavioral challenges that offenders provide and the inherent risks of teaching in a prison environment, experienced teachers tend to perform best in the WSD. As such, the WSD generally hires academic and life skills teachers with approximately 10 years of public school experience. Vocational teachers typically have years of expertise in their trades prior to coming to WSD.

The majority of positions are dedicated to classroom instruction. While teachers served the 59,678 offenders targeted for school services in 2014, counselors, librarians and principals provided services to the majority of all offenders housed within TDCJ operated facilities. This is a uniquely different situation than that of public school, where support staff serve only those students enrolled in their school or district.

~ Chairman Oliver J. Bell, Windham School District Board of Trustees

WSD STAFF COMPARISON TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

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We want to help offenders build on their past in positive ways, find the value in and learn from their experiences, accept responsibility and exercise personal choices in manners conducive to growth. The ultimate job of correctional teachers is to help students change through education. Windham School District has personal influence over offenders released from prison through job skills training, academic achievement, behavioral changes, and restoration of self-confidence. What a privilege to have a hand in this!

~ Chairman Oliver J. Bell, Windham School District Board of Trustees
Turning the page...

Choosing Success!

Monica Bennett-Oakley:
Cognitive Intervention class, persistent Windham teacher
Help woman change life choices, change destiny

Tears streaming down her face, Monica Bennett-Oakley took an unexpected phone call after delivering a speech in San Antonio.

She had just publicly praised a prison teacher from her past, when a member of the audience phoned the now-retired correctional educator. Overcome with emotion, Oakley found it difficult to speak when she was surprised with a call from her mentor.

“You have changed my life forever, Mrs. Bohne,” Oakley told her former Windham School District teacher, Pam Bohne. “What you told me in class changed my life. What you taught me was, ‘If you change your choice, you can change the reaction to everything that is going on in life.’ You even made me write down goals in our Cognitive Intervention class to finally make changes. I have mentioned your name in magazine articles and in every speech I’ve given, and I’ve been looking for you for about six years just to tell you this: Thank you so much!”

Oakley, formerly incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), had just shared her inspiring – and sometimes shocking – life story with correctional educators from four states in a Region V Meeting of the Correctional Education Association. Beginning with her parents’ “bitter divorce” when she was a little girl, Oakley survived a series of tragedies that fueled rage and rebellion and led to years in prison. Molested at age 10 by her babysitter’s son, she reached for alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs in the next few years to deal with anger, despair and “loss of control and dignity.” She ran away from home by age 15, tried crystal meth at 17 and was pregnant at 18. Oakley was in self-destruct mode.

After marrying a man who later became violent, Oakley found herself again pregnant. She got a divorce and gave birth to a third daughter, so her mother ended up raising all three girls. While working briefly in construction, Oakley tried to stay sober but again married an abuser. She was back on the path to divorce, depression, and drug abuse, and before long, she was homeless, shocked by her own sad state of living. Oakley ended up being arrested for prostitution, writing hot checks, and petty theft, and she did time in county jail.

She tried sobriety once more before turning to selling drugs. At this point she made the bad decision to drive to Houston with a man who was going to rob a liquor store. Oakley ended up with an eight year sentence, and she realized six previous sentences in county jail were nothing compared to TDCJ.

Isolated from outside influences, she began to read the Bible and enrolled in Windham School District’s Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP), led by teacher Pam Bohne. Oakley says her instructor told her to stop blaming her mother for everything bad in her life.

“Ms. Bohne told me, ‘You’re projecting everything that goes wrong onto your mother, and it isn’t her fault,’” Oakley says. “She told me, ‘You have choices, Monica. You can choose not to get angry.’”

“For the first time, I realized ‘choosing’ meant I could change,” Oakley says. She wrote out a five-year plan of personal goals, including earning college degrees, and decided to change her life. She was released from prison in 2008.

Oakley began to study for college entrance exams, and after release, was able to enroll in college classes. In May 2012 she earned an AAS in Drug and Alcohol Counseling with a 3.9 GPA, Summa Cum Laude. She has been married again for more than two years, established relationships with her grown daughters, taken a role in parenting her young stepsons, and enjoyed being a grandmother. She is now a full time college student working on a degree in Process Technology with Lee College and a part time employee with a weekend rental business near Winnie, Texas.

“It’s the education I learned in the Cognitive Intervention class that changed me,” she says. “I learned to change my perspective. If I change the way I see things, I can change the way I react to things; I can change my destiny.”

Oakley summarized her new lifestyle in the phone conversation with her former teacher: “I’ve won many awards and honors in college, and it’s all because of the goal you made me write in our Cognitive class,” she told Bohne. “I love you, and I thank you for standing on my toes. You stood up to me, showed me you cared about me, and you changed me. I thank you for everything you did for me in that class. Because of you, I tell my story openly.”
Yesterday

When it was authorized in 1969 by the Texas Legislature and established by the Texas Board of Corrections, Windham School District (WSD) offered some of the first educational opportunities for state prison offenders.

Forty-five years later, WSD is dedicated to improving its services through new programming for current offenders, connections to employment opportunities for former offenders and up-to-date training for WSD educators and support staff.

Today

WSD seeks continually to build new partnerships with community, school, volunteer, corrections, family and business groups while also taking time to evaluate itself and its role in Texas in 2015. Playing a vital role in reducing recidivism while helping incarcerated offenders prepare for employment and successful lives after prison, WSD has taken several important steps toward being an even more relevant service provider.

These include:

- Offering Service Provider Expos behind prison walls to bring soon-to-be-released offenders together with potential employers, community service providers, and volunteer organizations – all with the goal of providing current information to help released offenders successfully transition back into employment and law-abiding lives.
- Offering a high school diploma program at the San Saba Unit through a partnership with Mullin High School and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
- Working closely with Texas Education Service Centers to evaluate and improve staff teaching methods and practices.
- Opening five additional campuses dedicated to expanding education opportunities for TDCJ offenders: Havins, Johnston, LeBlanc, San Saba, and Sayle.

Tomorrow

- Developing a partnership with Mockingbird Education to begin a three-year, district-wide initiative to help teachers better prepare students for the rigorous requirements of today’s workforce.


Thank you WSD

My son received his GED through Windham School District. I just wanted to “Thank You” for this program. If not for this program, I do not believe that my son, Christopher C., would have graduated. The services that you provide are priceless. Thanks is also in store for all of the staff that really put their hearts into educating these young men ...I felt that it was a real school. I just wanted to thank the school district, for without it, my son would still be lost. Thank you again.

~ A Mother

TURNING THE PAGE... CHOOSING SUCCESS!
WSD Educational Programming is available at these locations

Key
SAFPF = Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility
SJ = State Jail
TF = Transfer Facility
★ = Regional Office
★★ = Central Office

SOUTH TEXAS

Austin Area
Travis County SJ

Beeville Area
Chase Field
Garza East TF
Garza West TF
McConnell Unit
Connally Unit (Kenedy)
Stevenson Unit (Cuero)

Bryan Area
Hamilton Unit

Dilley Area
Briscoe Unit
Cotulla TF (Cotulla)

Edinburg Area
Lopez SJ
Segovia Unit

El Paso Area
Sanchez SJ

Houston Area
Kegans SJ
Lychner SJ (Humble)

Navasota Area
Luther Unit
Pack Unit

Richmond Area
Jester I SAFPF
Jester III Unit
Jester IV Unit

NORTH TEXAS

Beaumont Area
Gist SJ
LeBlanc Unit
Stiles Unit

Dallas Area
Hutchins SJ
Cole SJ (Bonham)
Moore TF (Bonham)
Johnston SAFPF (Winnsboro)
Telford Unit (New Boston)

Dayton Area
Henley SJ
Hightower Unit
Plane SJ

Huntsville Area
Ellis Unit
Estelle Unit
Goree Unit

Huntsville Area
Holliday TF
Huntsville Unit
Wynne Unit
Eastham Unit (Lovelady)
Ferguson Unit (Midway)

Livingston Area
Polunsky Unit
Goodman TF (Jasper)
Lewis Unit (Woodville)

Palestine Area
Beto Unit
Gurney TF
Powiedge Unit
Hodge Unit (Rusk)
Boyd Unit (Teague)
Coffield Unit
(Tennessee Colony)
Michael Unit
(Tennessee Colony)

WICHITA FALLS AREA

Abilene Area
Middleton TF
Robertson Unit
Havins Unit (Brownwood)
Sayle SAFPF (Breckenridge)

Amarillo Area
Clements Unit
Neal Unit
Dalhart Unit (Dalhart)
Formby SJ (Plainview)
Wheeler SJ (Plainview)
Jordan Unit (Pampa)
Roach Unit (Childress)
Tulia TF (Tulia)

Richmond Area
Allred Unit (Iowa Park)

WEST TEXAS

Abilene Area
Middleton TF
Robertson Unit
Havins Unit (Brownwood)
Sayle SAFPF (Breckenridge)

Amarillo Area
Clements Unit
Neal Unit
Dalhart Unit (Dalhart)
Formby SJ (Plainview)
Wheeler SJ (Plainview)
Jordan Unit (Pampa)
Roach Unit (Childress)
Tulia TF (Tulia)

Ft. Stockton Area
Ft. Stockton TF
Lynaugh Unit

Gatesville Area
Crain Unit
Hilltop Unit
Hughes Unit
Mountain View Unit
Murray Unit
Woodman SJ
Hobby Unit (Marlin)
Marlin TF (Marlin)
San Saba TF (San Saba)

Huntsville Area
Jester I SAFPF
Jester III Unit
Jester IV Unit

Lubbock Area
Montford Unit
Rudd TF (Brownfield)

Snyder Area
Daniel Unit
Smith Unit (Lamesa)
Wallace Unit
(Colorado City)
Ware TF
(Colorado City)

San Antonio Area
Dominguez SJ
Ramsey Unit
Stringfellow Unit
Terrell Unit
Clemens Unit (Brazoria)
Scott Unit (Angleton)
Young Medical Facility (Dickinson)

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Isaac White: ‘Life was waiting for me!’

Business owner credits vocational classes as foundation for success after release from prison

I was 18 years old, convicted of aggravated robbery with a weapon, and knowing I would possibly be in prison until I was 26. I knew I had to make plans for the rest of my life. I knew after I was released, I had to get out and make a living. Life was waiting for me,” remembers Isaac White, a former offender who served time in three facilities in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Today White is a free citizen and president and owner of his own successful electrical contracting company based in Waller, Texas. The company has been in business since September 2013, serving Waller, Washington, Grimes, Austin and Harris counties. White employs three men and says last year’s sales revenue was about $300,000.

“We provide residential homeowners, general contractors and commercial business owners with emergency service, repair work, and new construction and remodeling work. We do honest, good work with integrity, and we get a lot of referrals from clients,” he says. “We do all things electrical.”

White credits the electrical and plumbing training he learned in prison from Windham School District as the foundation of his success.

“Other offenders told me about educational opportunities available through Windham. I knew I needed a trade that would provide me with a solid job to get on with life. I enrolled in a six-month WSD plumbing class at the Clemens Unit and graduated. Then I received a two-year set off and couldn’t go home. I decided to enroll in another vocational class to add to my skills; I was planning for my release, whenever it would be. I graduated from the electrical program at the Luther Unit in 1998. I had found my Windham teachers were real people, and they taught their subject areas really well. They gave me hope for a future career with actual skills, and after 16 years in the trade, I have done well.”

Following his release in 1999, White hired on for a year with a swimming pool contractor and soon made his move into the electrical field. He also went to the Independent Electrical Contractors Association to attend a four-year apprenticeship program.

“When I graduated, I took a test to acquire a Journeyman Electrical License and later pursued a Master Electrical License,” he says. “I went to school for four years to learn all I could. Knowledge is power and money!”

Along with financial rewards, White enjoys doing his job well and balancing it with family life, which includes a wife and teenage son.

“I love to see the excitement and relief on my customers’ faces when their job is fixed properly and in a timely manner,” he says, “but the most challenging part of what I do these days is balancing everything in my life. I make sure I keep appointments with clients, I make sure I have time with family, and I make sure I keep my reputation at its best for the future of my company.”

White encourages current offenders to use their time to prepare for success after release: “Life is waiting for you!” he says. “Get ready for that day when you walk out those doors. Learn a trade and get your GED and education. And when you get settled and are doing well for yourself, tell someone and share your story. If you can go back and tell those who are still waiting for their chance, let them know that life is waiting.”
Education helps open a new chapter of opportunities for family success.