This is an exciting time to be part of Windham School District (WSD)!

We invite you to be a part of what is happening to change lives for those wanting a second chance after a past of criminal activity. Every day, more people join our efforts to change the lives of those incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. “New teachers apply for jobs, volunteers sign up to devote time and some offer free short courses, businesses inquire about hiring students on release, and many charitable service and faith-based organizations ask to partner with WSD.” Many Texans are now interested in how they can become a part of our collective effort, making Windham’s goals part of their personal mission. We are hearing these people proudly state, “We are Windham,” expressing solidarity with our common mission to facilitate positive change.

Windham’s past performance is ranked as one of the highest in the nation among correctional educational programs, but we know we must continue to improve and challenge ourselves to deliver the best opportunities for offenders to be successful upon release back into Texas communities. Windham takes pride in past performance, but I hope you can also see our efforts to be responsive to needed changes. Our staff of highly qualified and dedicated people is rising to the challenges of educating the offender population in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. By improving educational content delivery, expanding vocational training opportunity for offenders, improving behavior and choice training for offenders, connecting with businesses who employ released offenders and continually working to improve efficiencies, Windham is providing a cost-effective intervention that helps protect all fellow Texans and lowers the cost of criminal activity to the state.

Windham’s Texas-certified teaching staff provided courses to incarcerated offenders on 91 campus units across the state. These dedicated professionals engaged in extensive training over the past year to improve the way content is delivered and to increase the level of educational skills needed to pass the new standards for the Texas High School Diploma Equivalency Exam. It is a challenging environment to teach offenders in multiple education levels within a classroom, and limited available technology. Yet Windham staff is meeting the challenge, and offender students are showing remarkable positive academic growth as reflected in TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education), HSEC (Texas High School Equivalency Certificate) and other assessments.

The Windham Career and Technical Educational (CTE) programs are undergoing a huge transition. Starting in the 2014-15 School Year, the CTE program emphasized the training necessary to match vocational programming with high-paying, technically-challenging jobs found in the modern Texas workforce. Windham CTE teachers have more than doubled the number of industry-recognized and endorsed certifications from just four years ago. Our CTE staff consists of skilled trades professionals who have work experience in the field prior to coming to Windham. Our students recognize the credible work history of their teachers and strive to learn from these successful business people.

Additionally, several very large employers in the heavy industry and middle skill STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) career businesses have recently partnered with Windham to provide technical advice and presentations to students. Some of these employers also offer preferred pool selection of trained students for employment on release. These developments have had a profound impact on raising employers’ excitement level for hiring our students. The offender learner expectations and standards in CTE classes continue to rise for them to achieve the needed industry level skill-set.

Windham is making great strides and undergoing significant changes to improve operations and the subsequent performance of its students. WSD is using cutting edge statistical analysis to determine which coursework is most relevant for achieving individual student goals, and we are making changes to teaching styles, course offerings and class structure to ensure we are providing the best opportunities for life changes for our students -- and better opportunities for success in businesses who hire our trained graduates.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the activities of Windham School District by reading our 2014-2015 Annual Performance Report. I hope you see the positive changes taking place by reading this report and find in these pages your own way to support this cause. We want each of you to feel that you, too, are part of our effort. After all, everyone in Texas has a role to play. We are all, Windham.
To the Honorable Governor of Texas and Members of the Texas Legislature
Austin, Texas

It is my honor to present the School Year 2014-2015 Annual Performance Report for the Windham School District.

Under the capable leadership of Windham Superintendent Dr. Clint Carpenter, WSD employees have made ambitious and successful efforts to improve operations and student performance, and I feel very fortunate to be associated with them.

School Year 2014-2015 was highlighted with the introduction of cost-effective methods to deliver educational content and expansion of the vocational training opportunities for offender students. The Windham Career and Technical Educational program teachers have increased the number of industry-recognized and endorsed certifications, offering students relevant training for successful employment upon release.

During this past fiscal year several large employers have partnered with Windham, providing technical advice and guidance to students. Ultimately, these same employers are more likely to hire former offenders upon their release from supervision. The positive impact of these partnerships is underscored by increased offender interest in obtaining employable skill sets and employer interest in the offender’s positive change. By reaching out to both public and private entities to strengthen WSD efforts, Windham is fostering long-lasting relationships that will help transform lives for generations to come.

WSD employees continue to improve the effectiveness of their operation, and are making great strides toward meeting the challenges associated with teaching multiple education levels within the same classroom. Their professionalism and hard work, combined with their compassion and a desire to help others, continue to make a positive difference for all Texans. They have earned my respect and appreciation for their services to this great state.

Respectfully,

Hon. Dale Wainwright
Chairman, Windham School District Board of Trustees
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Mission and Goals

VISION

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

MISSION

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

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.

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. Their experiences with academic success are limited or non-existent. 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.

The offender population is often weighted by a perception of failure and a lack of confidence. To overcome negative perceptions widely held by the general public, WSD strives to equip and empower offenders through educational accomplishment. Vocational, academic, and life skills training better equip offenders to re-enter the job market and their communities. Each educational success empowers the offenders to transform their lives into success stories.

Characteristics of the typical academic 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 32
- 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 many offenders are served by the WSD?

Highlights for Offenders Released During the 2014-2015 School Year
(September, 2014 - August, 2015: SY15)

Note: The Texas High School Equivalence Certificate (HSEC) is awarded through the Texas High School Equivalency Program. The HSEC was previously referred to as the General Education Development (GED).

• TDCJ released 70,311 offenders during SY15. Sixty-six percent of those released participated in one or more educational programs during the history of their incarceration.

• Of the released offenders, 13,322 attained an HSEC through WSD, and 35 attained a High School Diploma (HSD) through a partnership with Mullin Independent School District while incarcerated in TDCJ.

• Of the released offenders who participated in any Windham program and had at least two educational achievement tests, approximately 65 percent demonstrated a significant gain in educational achievement level or attained a HSEC 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 630 hours of instruction, or the equivalent of approximately 210 school days.

Educational Services Provided During SY15

• There were 60,648 offenders who received WSD educational services across widely varying educational backgrounds in SY15.

• During the WSD’s SY15, TDCJ had an average on-hand count of 149,186 offenders at the end of each month. Of those, an average of 138,619 offenders were on TDCJ - operated facilities. From this population, WSD served the highest-priority offenders as resources allowed, based upon their ages, release dates and educational needs.

• WSD services were provided on 91 facilities across the state during SY15. WSD had a school campus on 83 facilities and an educational presence on eight additional facilities for a total of 91 facilities with WSD services.
How are students evaluated and placed in programs to facilitate job readiness?

WSD is charged with providing its students the knowledge, skills and self-assurance needed for reintegration into local communities and job markets as viable, contributing members.

The WSD counseling staff provide the framework needed to assess the needs of the offender and determine an educational plan of action. 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 an 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.

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, and vocational assessments.

The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) tests are 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.

A focus on computer-based instruction and testing integrates computer skills into WSD curriculum and testing, enhancing WSD’s efforts at better equipping students to re-enter society and become job ready.

Enrollment in the most appropriate vocational course, based on the assessment of the offender, is another way WSD helps offenders become more employable. This process often requires a transfer of the offender to another facility. WSD partners with TDCJ to facilitate this process.
How are students prepared through Literacy, Career and Technical Education and Life Skills programs?

The WSD oversees a comprehensive instructional program designed to meet the unique needs of incarcerated adult offenders. WSD uses cutting-edge statistical analysis to make course selections and programming decisions that better benefit students and make them job ready.

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 needed 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 become responsible members of their communities.

WSD literacy, CTE and life skills programs remain focused on preparing offenders for job readiness after release. Correctional educators at WSD know that writing, communication skills, twenty-first century technology skills, computer navigation skills, the ability to make appropriate choices and a willingness to apply these skills are essential to an individual’s successful employment opportunities. Employers are seeking certified and job-ready workers who are also cooperative and able to learn even more skills and responsibilities after being hired. WSD is helping create this workforce.

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 CTE programs train in class 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 working toward attainment of a HSEC through the Texas High School Equivalency Program. 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.

Literacy students with at least two educational achievement tests who released during SY15 averaged a grade level advancement of 2.0 years in about 630 hours of instruction, or approximately one school year. This average includes offenders in regular and intensive reading literacy courses, ESL, Special Education and Title I courses.

![Literacy Participants Chart]

- Literacy I - Reading
- Literacy I, II, III
- English as a Second Language
- Special Education
- Title I
LITERACY AND HSEC ACHIEVEMENTS

- The average literacy participant receives about three hours of literacy instruction a day. WSD classes are open entry to accommodate the transient nature of the TDCJ population. Offender sentence length and other factors may not allow enrollment for the entire 630 attendance hours available. Literacy students with at least two educational achievement tests who released during SY15 averaged a grade level advancement of 2.0 years in about 630 hours of instruction, or approximately one school year.

- More than 43 percent of academic participants improved their reading level (nonreader, reader, literate, advanced) during the SY15 year.

- Of the 6,366 offenders who took the HSEC test in Literacy III classes, 5,194 (82 percent) earned an HSEC during SY15. Most of those not earning the HSEC passed one or more sections of the test. WSD dedicated $2.7 million in SY15 to fund 51 Literacy III teachers teaching final HSEC preparation skills.

- Of the 30,159 distinct literacy participants, approximately 68 percent met or exceeded the district’s performance criteria for progress.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Levels</th>
<th>Number of Students with Post Tests</th>
<th>Number of Students Completing Literacy Level</th>
<th>% Completing Literacy Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy I (0.0 to 3.9 grade levels)</td>
<td>2,572</td>
<td>1,204</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy II (4.0 to 5.9 grade levels)</td>
<td>5,137</td>
<td>2,455</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy III (6.0 and above grade levels)</td>
<td>12,886</td>
<td>4,083</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,595</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,742</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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.*

HSEC PROGRAMS

- Administering the HSEC 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 an HSEC while incarcerated had lower recidivism rates and higher rates of employment as compared to similar offenders who did not achieve an HSEC.

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

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

- On average, an offender is enrolled in literacy courses 518 hours before they achieve a level or proficiency required to attempt the HSEC. This is equivalent to almost an entire school year of course work.

82% Achieved an HSEC During SY15

- # of Offenders Awarded an HSEC
- # of Offenders Tested, HSEC Not Completed
The vocational training I received through Windham School District (WSD) created an opportunity to get a job after release,” says former offender Charlie Morris, who transformed prison time into an electrical industry career following his experience in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

“When I started my post-release career in electrical trades more than 16 years ago, I was working in a ditch doing ‘undergrounds’ – putting in pipes and conduits to bring electricity to different buildings,” he says. Morris has now risen to the position of field superintendent for Partners Electrical Firm in Houston, specializing in “tenant build outs” in Houston high rises. He works closely with electricians who share his enthusiasm for developing new projects with general contractors, architects, engineers and end users.

Hard work and determination brought Morris to this point, but his story was not always positive. He first came to Texas as a teenager from Peru and found himself “going down the wrong path at about 18,” he says. “I got in some trouble and was put on probation, and then I decided to leave the country. When I got back to the States, my probation was revoked; I was sentenced to four years in TDCJ.”

After being moved from unit to unit, Morris arrived at the Luther Unit in Navasota. Windham electrical teacher Frank Goodman completely changed his new student’s path with cutting-edge training and constant encouragement. Through Goodman, Morris met other inspiring professionals.

“I remember going to a unit career day in the school and gentlemen from the Houston Electrical Chapter visited. They were well dressed, well-spoken and full of current employment information,” Morris says. “I knew I would really like to work in the same field.”

After Morris earned his GED, successfully completed a life skills pre-release program, studied electrical trades and earned his NCCER (Electrical Level-1) certification through WSD, he found his release day from prison was only the beginning of new challenges. After three and a half years in TDCJ, it was predictably difficult for him to find a job. He went to work at his brother’s mechanics shop, but eventually found an opportunity to work with associated job contractors in Houston. He decided to go back to school at night during the week and earned his journeyman’s license, and eventually, his master’s license.

Just two years after the inspirational Luther Unit career fair, Morris found himself actually working in the free world alongside the same visiting electrician who inspired him to change -- and he has now done so for nearly 14 years. Morris has also returned to speak at the Luther Unit, encouraging current offenders to take control of their future through education.

“It is important for offenders to get some kind of skill or education while they are incarcerated so they can have something to rely on upon release,” he says. “The construction industry in Texas is booming, and oftentimes the industry is shorthanded,” he says. “We need plumbers, electricians, HVAC guys and more. I encourage offenders to spend their time wisely and get one or more trades under their belts.”

Along with work, Morris teaches a bilingual class for the Independent Electrical Contractors apprenticeship program. “I really enjoy teaching,” he says. “When I came here from Peru in my teens, I already knew English, so the transition was easy for me. I like to help others who did not have that same good luck but are trying to better themselves. This is one more way I can show appreciation for the Windham teachers who helped me find a second chance.”
Excellence in Teaching

“It is a privilege to recognize the WSD Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching Award finalists as some of the best correctional educators in the state,” said Chairman Dale Wainwright of the WSD Board of Trustees, which is also the Texas Board of Criminal Justice. “Their nomination and selection say a lot about professionalism, creativity and devotion to teaching.”

Award winner Jody Addy works with offenders at the Robertson Unit in Abilene, teaching a computer-assisted literacy course to help prepare students to take their HSEC test and ready themselves for future employment. She is a 20-year veteran of correctional education.

“I believe the cruelest thing you can do to students is to accept excuses for why they can’t better themselves,” Addy said. “After 20 years of teaching, I am still amazed by the difference made when students attain their GEDs. They stand taller, speak and act more maturely, and gain a peace and a confidence they have never demonstrated before. Education is a critical component of successful rehabilitation and reintegration into society. I am proud to be a part of this vital process.”

The other recognized finalists and their nominating units are literacy teacher Martha Estrada of Sanchez State Jail (El Paso) and Cognitive Intervention instructor Brent Frailicks of the Moore Unit (Bonham).

“What you do every day in our classrooms in TDCJ has tremendous impact for our state, and we thank you,” Chairman Wainwright told the teachers. “Please let Windham employees statewide know we appreciate the work they are doing every day to help men and women incarcerated in TDCJ change their lives and prepare to return to their families and communities. It’s not easy to do this, and we will continue to applaud and support you.”

The Excellence in Teaching honorees were recognized at a special meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees in Austin in the fall of 2015.
Letter from Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching Award winner:

As a 20-year veteran of Windham School District, I am proud of our commitment to provide offenders with the tools needed to become responsible, productive members of their communities. Windham is a state-wide network of professional educators rising to meet the challenges of integrating academic, behavioral and career education.

My daily goal as a WSD literacy teacher is to challenge students to acknowledge the needs of the whole individual: personal, educational, and professional. Breaking the cycle of criminality demands professionalism, creativity and tenacity, but the rewards are great.

When offenders are empowered to step out of criminality and victimization and gain the fire of self-determination, they discover the joy and power of becoming lifelong learners. They can then reap the benefits of reentering society as employable citizens who have regained respect and control of their lives, and they can embark on career paths that provide better futures for themselves and their families. In Windham classrooms throughout Texas, offenders are challenged to rise to these new expectations by consistent, creative, and practical instruction that is an effective marriage of behavioral, academic and career skills.

I want all Texans concerned with criminality and incarceration to know that WSD classrooms are the front line for addressing the issues that lead to recidivism, and WSD employees function as a team to provide relevant career applications for skills taught in academic and behavioral contexts. Though I work for Windham, I am also a proud citizen, taxpayer, wife and mother. I care about the future of our state and am concerned about the financial and personal toll that criminal behavior exacts from our communities. I am grateful that my profession allows me to make a personal, unique impact in promoting public safety and education in Texas.

Jody Addy
Robertson Unit
Literacy and Computer Assisted Instruction Teacher
2014-2015 WSD Teacher of the Year
How does WSD prepare students for successful career paths?

WSD provides a holistic programming approach that equips students as they pursue essential vocational training and plan productive career paths. The innovative blending of WSD literacy programs, life skills lessons and industry-leading vocational training prepares incarcerated individuals for success with their future employers, home communities and reunited families.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

WSD’s specialized Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are needed to help provide a skilled, educated workforce - one of the state’s greatest assets as it competes in a global economy. Through collaboration with certification and licensing agencies, universities, workforce groups and course-related industry employers, WSD provides training that meets recognized industry standards. These partnerships assist the district in offering a high degree of academic and technical rigor while preparing offenders for job opportunities.

CTE programming helps students build careers by providing quality instruction, preparation for industry certifications and development of career connections. Quality instruction includes curriculum focused on current industry needs, technology recommended by current employers and industry-preferred equipment and tools. CTE instructors are experts in their vocational areas, incorporating innovative learning strategies, soft skill instruction, and technical skill training to make offenders more employable.

In addition to emphasizing quality instruction, CTE focuses on preparation for industry certifications by connecting class training with outside professional industry organizations. Industry certification is a nationally-recognized standard indicating an individual has demonstrated specialized abilities to be successful in a job field. Employers value skilled instruction, trade certification attainment, and accreditation of WSD programs. Some of these certifications include: ASE (Automotive Service Excellence), OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration), NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research), MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist), C-TECH and ServSafe. Some CTE courses may also result in licensure, such as a Texas Commercial Driver’s License.

Career connections with companies that employ ex-offenders in viable wage paying jobs are an important part of WSD’s CTE initiative. WSD is hosting an increasing number of job fairs and career expos throughout the state in TDCJ facilities, connecting offenders with potential employers. WSD is actively building partnerships with a growing number of leading industry employers who participate in the career expos and offer ongoing input for curriculum and training practices. These industries are leading the way for other employers who also want to hire highly-skilled WSD students upon release.
WSD supports job-related apprenticeships through partnership with TDCJ, allowing offenders to gain job-related experience while incarcerated, improving their chances for employment upon release.

In addition, Windham staff makes 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 numerous private business locations, visits with state departments or agencies related to vocational interests, participation in different types of job expos or conferences, and discussions with staff at all 28 Texas Workforce Development boards.

- Participating offenders have the opportunity to earn a WSD CTE course completion and one or more industry-recognized occupational certificates or licenses. WSD awarded 6,445 CTE course completions and 11,183 industry certificates during SY15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career and Technical Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTE Course Completions Earned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Certificates Earned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- Vocational courses were added during SY15 that will allow some offenders with shorter sentence lengths the opportunity to also enhance their job skills. These middle skill STEM classes are grouped under Telecommunications Connectivity and offered as separate modules to allow more offenders the opportunity to attend one or more course components. The modules will introduce students to skills involving audio/visual systems, energy management fiber optic networking, copper based networking and telecommunications. Students will have the opportunity for hands-on activities within these various modules, emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving skill development.

CTE courses include:

- 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
- Bricklaying/Stone Masonry
- Business Computer Information Systems
- Business Image Management and Multimedia
- Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) Machining
- Construction Carpentry (Building Trades II)
- Culinary Arts
- Diesel Mechanics
- Electrical Trades
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration
- Horticulture Specialist
- Hospitality Services
- 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
- Small Engine/Outdoor Power
- Small Engine/Power Sports
- Technical Introduction to Computer-Aided Drafting
- Telecommunications Connectivity - Audio/Video Systems
- Telecommunications Connectivity - Copper-Based Systems
- Telecommunications Connectivity - Energy Management
- Telecommunications Connectivity - Fiber Optic-Based Systems
- Telecommunications Connectivity - Intro. to Telecommunications
- Truck Driving
- Welding
LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS

Life Skills programs are designed to help offenders change criminal thinking patterns and develop the people skills essential for success with employers, family members and communities where they will reside. This design complements WSD’s focus to introduce healthy habits in the individual to make decisions based on appropriate rational thinking processes rather than making emotional/impulsive decisions. Refocusing the offender’s thinking pattern will empower them to behave more responsibly, develop healthy relationships and retain better paying jobs.

• **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.

• **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 supporting the development of healthy family relationships. These positive behaviors are also reflective of the personal characteristics sought by employers.

<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>19,290</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Intervention</td>
<td>14,971</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Life Skills Participants](image-url)
Tina Harryman

Austin businesswoman lists education, faith, sobriety as life savers

Education, faith, sobriety and determination rewrote the dramatic story of Austin’s Tina Harryman, a successful businesswoman who overcame substance abuse and incarceration.

Harryman was a childhood drug abuser, in and out of Texas jails and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) until age 34. She became discouraged, considering herself a loser, a failed mother and a potential suicide victim. A teacher she met through Windham School District (WSD) in prison was the first person to help her feel differently. Today she is energetic and optimistic, enjoying creative work, relationships with her children, opportunities to encourage others, and her favorite role: grandmother. Yet “getting here from there” was not easy. She was born in Houston and was only three when her father died of a heroin overdose – around the same time she was first exposed to drugs.

“I was introduced to marijuana at two and a half years old, and at four and five, I was rolling and smoking it,” she recalls. “I was taking it to school with me in second and third grade, and my mother was addicted to heroin, too.”

Harryman and her brother moved around, “shifted from family member to family member, living in an environment of heroin addiction and alcoholism,” she says. “There was no stable home life and no staying in the same school for any length of time. I was ridiculed by teachers and classmates, and I felt stupid. I tried so hard to learn and really wanted to be successful, but I just couldn’t get it.”

Harryman dropped out of school with a seventh grade education and became a mother at 16, still engaging in marijuana use.

“After my second child was born at 17, I started drinking,” she recalls. “My alcoholism kicked in, and I was introduced to cocaine at 19. I was instantly hooked.”

That same year she was incarcerated for delivery of cocaine. Throughout the next 15 years, she would spend time in various facilities, including a TDCJ Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility. She found herself enrolled in a WSD literacy class in TDCJ, where she was urged to earn her GED.

“Windham didn’t ask me if I wanted to get a GED,” she says. “If you don’t have a GED or diploma, you have to be put in school in TDCJ. I don’t think I would have got it if that wouldn’t have happened. I was a straight-F student, and I didn’t think I could even learn anything. I had a teacher who wouldn’t give up, I finally earned that GED, and I began to believe I was not stupid.”

Harryman’s new confidence helped her fight her lifelong enemy: substance abuse.

“I was in a vicious cycle of addiction and incarceration until I committed to Alcoholics Anonymous,” she says. “I had gotten out of prison and jail a couple of times, planning to be successful, but I would take that first drink and spiral downwards. I’d quickly find myself back behind bars. I was scared and suicidal and did not see a way out.

“It was very, very difficult to get a good job after prison, so I considered starting a business. Of course, I knew nothing about life, making a change, being self-supportive or staying out of prison,” she says. “I did know that AA, staying sober and taking care of my family were priorities. I joined AA, becoming sober in 2000. After that, I just kept putting one foot in front of the other, with a whole lot of faith, and slowly started my own business in 2002: Artcrete Designs.

“Artcrete is a decorative concrete business in Austin providing services to homeowners, homebuilders and commercial project contractors. We create and treat concrete floors, countertops, fireplaces, driveways, and pool decks with an artistic approach. We provide beauty and unique flooring solutions to customers in surrounding areas. Overall, this has been a huge learning curve for me. It’s messy, difficult work, but I enjoy being able to provide good service to people.”

Harryman works with project crews of four or five employees, including adult son Dylan. Growing up with a young mother struggling with addiction and incarceration, Dylan also had to overcome his own substance abuse and criminal background.

“Dylan is in his fifth year of sobriety now, and he also earned his GED from WSD,” Harryman says. “I was proud to be able to attend his graduation. He, too, has had challenges and had to make changes. Dylan and I have the opportunity to inspire others, so we spend time speaking to people dealing with addiction or incarceration. Their question is usually ‘How do you get from there to here?’ I tell people it’s all about the power of God, faith, and the steps I took. I had to first learn that I could do anything and my actions had to change.

“I am also no longer hiding behind the fact that I dropped out and did not have a high school education. I’m no longer limited. Instead, I’m blessed with work and family. I can even help provide financially, emotionally and mentally for my grandchildren. This means everything!

“It’s been hard, but I’ve grown this business into a highly-respected part of our community,” Harryman says. “People trust me, handing me the keys to their homes and businesses. I’ve earned their trust, and I’ve learned my own value.”

“...I had a teacher who wouldn't give up, and she made me feel confident for the first time. I finally earned that GED, making me believe I was not stupid.”
When I got out of prison with a felony, nobody wanted to hire me,” says former offender Pablo Gonzales, who overcame the difficulties of building a career after release from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

Thanks to educational opportunities, vocational training and strong faith, Gonzales is now a project manager near San Antonio for American Directional Boring Companies Inc. (ADB). He helps install aerial and underground utility jobs and handles OSP/ISP fiber optics cable work for communication clients in South Austin, such as Google, Time Warner, AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile. ADB is a full service diversional telecom and technologies company with contracts throughout Texas.

As he shares his enthusiasm for supporting ADB’s communications projects, Gonzales rolls up his sleeves to reveal tattoos from time with TDCJ. He served three years in TDCJ and says he wouldn’t be where he is today if it were not for his teachers at Windham School District (WSD), the state’s adult education and vocational training system within the prison system. Through Windham, he earned his GED and trained in welding with teacher Jimmy Perry, who inspired him to prepare for success.

“Going to school through Windham was challenging because of the environment,” Gonzales remembers, “but I’m so grateful I took welding; I’ve come so far in my career because of the things that I was taught in that program. To WSD teachers, I would say, thank you for your patience and your willingness to teach, even in tough situations.”

Gonzales says the welding class at the Terrell Unit in Rosharon is the main reason for his achievements.

“I wanted to gain extra experience, because I knew when I got out, I would be trying to find work in a similar field,” he says. “Mr. Perry was a great teacher and role model, teaching me everything from pipe welding to MIG welding and talking to us about the current workforce. He also taught me that you need to sharpen your basic mathematic skills before starting any sort of project.”

Gonzales also completed WSD’s CHANGES pre-release program and left TDCJ with his welding certification and a positive attitude. He became a project manager in Atlanta, Ga., but ADB offered him a job near San Antonio. He returned home.

“My job here is to coordinate others’ jobs, see how they’re progressing and make sure that they’re promptly finished. I’m responsible for the work of about 60 men, including foremen and laborers,” he says. “I make sure lots of work keeps coming in for ADB. Sometimes when I will go to company meetings or company parties, I see the men I supervise with their families and children. It makes me think, ‘If I slack off on my job, I’ll let these kids down.’ I have a lot of responsibility for other people.”

Gonzales uses his experience to encourage current offenders to prepare for life after release by signing up for WSD classes, changing their attitudes, and never losing hope.

“Don’t give up when the odds are against you,” he says. “When you’ve got a TDCJ number over your life, there are going to be many strikes against you. I had to choose which path I really wanted. I had to decide to represent me or represent God, and I chose Him. As a result, I enjoy being a father to my kids and working in construction, supporting new technologies.

“I also have the opportunity to hire qualified ex-offenders, especially those who were in vocational training,” Gonzales says. “I encourage other employers to give former offenders an equal opportunity, like everyone else. Everyone needs a second chance.”
How do we support Educational Success?


The WSD administration staff supports the mission of WSD by providing training, curriculum development, business services, information technology, human resources, research, and operational support. The Administrative office functions as the liaison with TDCJ and other outside agencies and stakeholders.

Counseling, Testing & Records Department

The WSD administration Counseling, Testing and Records Department supports and complements unit testing processes, including an extensive HSEC testing effort. The department is also responsible for the management of educational assessments as offenders enter the correctional system and for maintaining educational records. Staff responds to legal and offender requests for educational records and process high school diploma, HSEC and college claim verifications.

The Counseling, Testing and Records Department provides training to unit education staff, and coordinates educational transfers for the district. Staff must review each potential vocational student transfer by applying applicable enrollment criteria, eligibility requirements, and the policy-driven need and priority factors. TDCJ unit profiles may also be considered in identifying the best candidates for vocational transfer. WSD accomplishes this mission through a strong, working relationship with TDCJ Classification Committee members.
VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Volunteers are important partners in WSD’s success, offering specialized skills, talents and resources. During SY15, WSD administration had oversight of more than 300 volunteers. These volunteers provided over 1,000 hours of assistance and served 7,666 offenders. Volunteers serve on advisory boards and committees and in academic, vocational and life skills training. Groups such as Literacy Highland Lakes support HSEC preparation, and Storybook volunteers work with female students to read and record books for offenders’ children, enhancing family support. Volunteers from the University of Houston have supported reading efforts, while the University of Texas has assisted with writing workshops. 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. These volunteers serve as presenters at WSD job expos, offering current information about available jobs and hiring practices. Volunteers also serve as valuable graduation speakers, motivating offenders to continue successful efforts and recognizing the contributions of family members in the process.

LIBRARIES

As part of WSD’s focus on job readiness, the district maintains 87 libraries for TDCJ facilities throughout Texas. Library staff is encouraged to purchase current information on various aspects of business. Materials are provided to support CTE classes, including an Occupational Outlook Handbook.

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

In addition, libraries provide offenders with a wide variety of books, reference collections and materials in support of educational programs and recreational reading.
SAN ANTONIO MAN RECEIVES
GOVERNOR’S 2015 CRIMINAL JUSTICE VOLUNTEER AWARD
April 17, 2015

(AUSTIN) – Charles M. Fisk of San Antonio, Texas was presented the “Judy Burd – Windham School District” Award during the Governor’s
2015 Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award program in April.

The award was presented by Oliver Bell, Chairman of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, and TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston during
a ceremony held in Austin.

“We’re grateful for the efforts of these award recipients,” said Livingston. “These everyday heroes are making a profound and lasting impact on
the lives of individuals across the State of Texas.”

“Through their grace and their love, these volunteers touch the lives of many Texans,” said Bell. “They assist agency staff, and they help the
offenders and their families have a chance for a better life - impacting generations to come.”

Mr. Fisk teaches web page design for computer maintenance students at the Dominguez State Jail in San Antonio. He has helped students with
no experience in web page development create their own web pages which may translate directly into employment opportunities in the future.

The award is named in tribute to curriculum specialist Judy Burd who worked for the Windham School District and developed the nationally
recognized pre-release program called CHANGES. She was also the Volunteer Program Coordinator for the district who encouraged others to
give of their time in service to others. Judy Burd also taught adult education classes at night in her community and helped many people learn to
read and write.

When not volunteering, Mr. Fisk enjoys spending time with his family and friends. He has also developed a web site to record family histories.

Mr. Fisk is one of 16 individuals and five organizations from across the state recognized for their efforts to help inmates and those who are on
parole or probation. They donate many hours of their personal time every year with the goal of changing the lives of convicted offenders, and
aiding and comforting their victims.

In FY2014, there were 21,492 volunteers who served a total of 427,345 hours for TDCJ.
Business Services

The Business Services department facilitates the financial planning, management and reporting necessary to provide financial support of 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biennium</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WSD Appropriation from General Revenue (GR) within the TEA Budget</td>
<td>$95,000,000</td>
<td>$103,000,000</td>
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</table>

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 offender contact (attendance) hours for the best 180 of 210 school days in each year of the biennium. In SY15, WSD spent $4.22 per contact hour ($851.40 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 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TDCJ for providing administrative oversight of recreation programs and The ECHO newspaper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding for Fiscal Year 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WSD Contact Hour Rates</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Education</td>
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<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year 2015 Cost Per Contact Hour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WSD (state)</td>
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<tr>
<td>$4.22</td>
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<tr>
<th>Contact Hours 2014-2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>Best 180 Days</td>
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<tr>
<th>Revenues - Fiscal Year 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE</strong></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>TRS 1.5% Retirement Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grant Pass Thru Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Transfer-In</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL REVENUE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Expenditures - Fiscal Year 2015</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Windham School District</strong></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 - (Recreation &amp; ECHO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</td>
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<tr>
<th>Cost Per Participant - Fiscal Year 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windham School District</td>
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</table>
HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Department 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.

- WSD Human Resources managed 1,110 positions during SY15.
- All teachers, counselors, librarians, diagnosticians and principals are certified by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification.
- The average years of experience for WSD teachers is 16.5 years, reflecting a relatively stable workforce, as evidenced by the large number of long-tenured employees.
- The Human Resources Department 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.
- 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. They also coordinate campus schedule and activities with TDCJ unit administration.

WSD STAFF COMPARISON TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

Because of the difficulty in working with the academic and behavioral challenges that offenders present, 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 extensive expertise in their trades prior to coming to WSD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Staff</th>
<th>SY15 - Public Schools*</th>
<th>SY15 - WSD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Teacher Experience</td>
<td>11.0 years</td>
<td>16.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Salary for 16 Years of Experience</td>
<td>$281.49/day</td>
<td>$245.50/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Teaching Salary</td>
<td>$270.23/day</td>
<td>$230.24/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Per Contract</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of positions are dedicated to classroom instruction. Teachers served the 60,648 students enrolled in educational programs during SY15. Counselors, librarians and principals provided services to these enrolled students, as well as the majority of all other offenders housed within TDCJ-operated facilities through assessments, information requests and library services. This is an exceptionally different situation than that of public school, where support staff and teachers serve only those students enrolled in their school or district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>SY15 - Public School Profile*</th>
<th>SY15 - WSD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Administration</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2015 Texas Academic Performance Report
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology (IT) Department provides reliable and secure technology solutions in support of the district’s mission. The staff, located in Huntsville and at three regional offices, maintains administrative and instructional architecture for 110 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.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

The Operational Support Department directs and manages initiatives to support the district’s mission.

The department has direct oversight of compliance and operational reviews; attendance policies; campus planning and development; coordination of ITP guidelines; the Recreation program and the Radio and Television Department. The department also oversees district and student achievement reporting and program evaluation. Operational Support coordinates internal and external research and serves as the educational liaison to private prisons, parole and American Correctional Association (ACA) initiatives.

Operational Support has oversight of The ECHO. The ECHO is a Texas Department of Criminal Justice publication produced by & for TDCJ offenders. It is managed by WSD through a Memorandum of Understanding with TDCJ and is published 10 times per year.

The partnership and information resources section 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 considers effective communication with the public to be essential, so district messages are shared through the WSD Newsletter, videos, brochures, photographs from various events, news releases for significant events, the WSD website, and other methods.

RECREATION

In conjunction with TDCJ, WSD offers recreation activities to offenders. The Recreation Department is a section of Operational Support.

Approved exercise equipment and supplies are provided and maintained in gymnasiums, on outdoor recreation yards and in a variety of special recreation areas for offenders administratively segregated from other offenders. Television viewing and table games are provided in housing area dayrooms.

Structured programs are also provided through intramurals and craft shop participation. Interaction with appropriate community organizations is also afforded through structured, organized recreational events.

Recreational activities serve to promote health and wellness through physical activity. Additionally, the interaction with others in a less structured setting allows offenders to continue developing appropriate social skills.
How badly do you want to succeed?” asks former offender Guillermo Almendarez, while sharing his story with offenders at Dominguez State Jail in San Antonio.

“I come from the same place that all of you come from: a broken home, domestic violence, angry streets and drug and alcohol abuse. But while I was in prison, I decided to make a change.”

Almendrez was incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) for 18 years and nine months for “murder, attempted murder and aggravated assault.” Today he happily works in San Antonio as a valued production team member for Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas Inc., an automobile production subsidiary of Toyota Motor Corporation. He realizes that preparation, hard work and being “hungry enough and determined” are keys to gaining employment. He was released from TDCJ four years ago, determined to live a clean life and encouraging others to do the same.

While incarcerated, Almendrez prepared himself for a new path through Windham School District (WSD) programs and college courses, changing his attitude and filling his years with participation in certification and training programs. He studied data processing, electronics and graphic design, and then earned his associates degree while still incarcerated.

Almendrez credits his current career success on skills learned in WSD Cognitive Intervention and pre-release CHANGES programs, noting a changed attitude was required for a new life.

“I saw a sign in CHANGES class years ago that said, ‘If nothing changes, then nothing changes.’ I then came up with the notion that I had to change every aspect of myself, from thoughts on down. I started to change my attitude, who was I hanging out with, the things I was doing in my free-time, my views of life, how I respond to people and how I manage my emotions – everything,” he explains. “It is easy to say, ‘Oh, I’m going to change when I get out!’ or ‘I’ll change on my own time.’ The hard part is to put it into action. Change has to start in here [in TDCJ], especially when it comes to authority,” he says. “When you get out, you will have responsibilities and obligations. You will have a boss, who has a boss, who has a boss! Your personal changes have to be second nature.”

Even though he transformed his thinking patterns, his post-release experience was risky. When choosing where to live after his release from prison, Almendrez did not go back home where he knew he would be surrounded by drug dealers and negative influences from his past.

He applied for a San Antonio position with Aerotek, one of the largest staffing firms in the United States and a recruiter for Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas, Inc. Almendrez passed Aerotek’s rigorous assessment and interview process and was hired despite his background of incarceration. After years of focused work, improved attitude and determination to change his life, Almendrez successfully transitioned from Aerotek to work full time with Toyota.

“Now, I am living the life, and it is all legal, based on hard work and ambition to do the right thing,” he says. “I make a lot of good money doing something I like, and I’m proud it is all legitimate.”

Almendrez continues to speak at in-prison Job Expos sponsored by WSD, encouraging offenders to take charge of their thinking and overcome circumstance.

“This good life can also be your life, too,” he says. “You just need to accept the power of change. Your priority should be to get a job and get stabilized!”
Why does WSD aspire to transcend boundaries?

WSD is devoted to finding the best pathways for men and women to succeed. The coalescent relationship of education to job-readiness crystallizes WSD’s relentless pursuit of innovative ways to create hope and opportunity for success. This relationship inspires the WSD to continuously employ a contemporary and dynamic approach to accomplish a comprehensive educational service.

WSD’s vision of empowering students to transform lives through excellence in education is strengthened and supported by stakeholders uniting with correctional education to change lives. WSD partnerships with elected officials, the TDCJ, the Texas Board of Pardons and Parole, volunteers, public schools, college educators, employers, families, the general public and others are integral to success and positive change for Texas.

WSD is committed to its vision, mission and statutory goals. Essential to this commitment is recognizing that acquiring employable skills to obtain and retain a job are fundamental to student success. Accordingly, the WSD continues to cultivate partnerships and target resources. This affords individuals the best opportunity to become job ready and connect with prospective employers prior to or upon release. Possessing job skills that can lead to a career enhances the quality of life for the individual and their family.

“We are Windham” does so much more than express the pride and dedication of professional correctional educators within the WSD. It captures the spirit of community and champions the value of people serving people.
I know teachers sometimes wonder if what they are doing is making a difference, and my life is proof that Windham teachers are making a huge difference!

~ Candelario Davila

Locked up as teenagers and serving about 20 years each for murder charges, Candelario Davila and Jose Sanchez are unlikely success stories. They were destined to years of solitary time in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice’s Administrative Segregation, lacking motivation, mentors and job skills. However, a correctional educator they describe as “father figure” and “the greatest welder ever” provided the intervention needed to transform their lives. Today they are gainfully employed as welders in the Austin area, enjoying their families, freedom and work.

Davila picked up a murder charge when he was 15 and was certified as an adult. He spent eight years in Administrative Segregation, emerging as a more mature young man in his 20s and realizing he needed to get involved with a job trade to be able to make a living after release from prison.

“I knew nothing about welding, but I took a trade through Windham School District (WSD) with veteran welding instructor Jimmy Perry,” he says. “My dad is a welder, so I knew about the trade, but I had no idea that I would like it. From the day I struck my first arc, it was game over! I knew this was the trade that would lead to a successful career.

“Mr. Perry caught me at the right time of my life when I knew I was going to need training. He was helpful and willing to go beyond what was required. Like a father figure, he took me in as a new student, but he was hard and tough. He took me above and beyond Level 1 welding classes. He easily could have given us two welding rods for each position and just left it at that -- giving me my certificate and sending me out the door, but he didn’t do that! Instead, he taught us flat welding, complicated out-of-position welds, and all of the principles of real fieldwork. Class was conducted just like we were at a job site.

“That program helped me build character,” Davila recalls. “Mr. Perry taught me how to talk like a welder, how to dress like a welder, how to act like a welder, and most importantly -- he taught me how to weld! He had an iron fist way of teaching, and because of him, I can now make a living. I’m free.”

Davila came to work early, applied his training, worked hard, and continuously practiced his craft at home after 12-hour work days. Before long, he was making the move to Patriot Erectors in Dripping Springs, where the owner was looking for talented welders.

“I know teachers sometimes wonder if what they are doing is making a difference, and my life is proof that Windham teachers are making a huge difference!”

~ Candelario Davila
“Mr. Perry was right about everything, except for one thing! He told me when I got into the real world, I would meet a lot of great welders,” Davila says, “but that’s not true. What I know is Mr. Perry is a great welder, and very few people have welding skills comparable to his!

“I know teachers sometimes wonder if what they are doing is making a difference, and my life is proof that Windham teachers are making a huge difference!” he says. “I had some outstanding teachers in Windham. In fact, I failed my GED the first time in math by one point, and I was ready to give up. But my literacy teachers mentored and hammered me, and by the time I took the next test, I blew it out of the water.”

Davila has been out of TDCJ about two years now after learning welding skills and earning his GED through WSD. At age 37, he is a happily married man with three children in the Austin area, and he serves as shop foreman for Patriot Erectors. This company offers steel fabrication and erection services to a large number of clients in Central Texas, including Samsung, Austin’s F-1 Racetrack, and the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center in San Antonio.

“As shop foreman, I have guys working under me and I move the jobs along. We make sure that they are welding, fabricating and meeting deadlines,” Davila explains. “We make sure that the welds are being done, and we also make sure we are not going over our job hours and losing the company’s money. I’ve been at Patriot for a little over a year. I am certified to work on stainless steel, to stick weld up to 4g, and to do flux core up to 4g.

“I have also been able to speak to some of Mr. Perry’s classes and help guys who have the same mentality I had or who may be leaving the class to find a job. I tell them, ‘You’ve got to stay hungry! You’ve got to be willing to work in the rain and the heat and the sun. Be willing to work on your days off; take the hard way. It is difficult, but to persevere, you’ve got to keep things in perspective.’ I have also been able to help a few guys get jobs here, too, as my boss looks for good welders.”

Jose Sanchez becomes job-ready through WSD

Davila was able to put in a good word at Patriot Erectors for fellow welding student Jose Sanchez, who entered TDCJ at age 16, also on a murder charge. During his incarceration, he also found himself in Perry’s welding class.

“Like Davila, I was locked up young,” Sanchez says. “I went to prison at age 16 for murder, and I did close to 19 years on the sentence. At the beginning of my sentence, I was getting in a lot of trouble, so I spent a whole lot of time in Ad. Seg. It wasn’t until I got to the C.T. Terrell Unit that I figured I needed a trade before I went home. Some people get into these trades not knowing what they’re getting themselves into; that was me.

“Once I starting welding, I fell in love with it! I loved the whole process of putting stuff together; I loved the entire learning process! Of course, Mr. Perry demanded a lot and he made us work – and I’m grateful. When he first offered me the extra extended 300 hours of class learning, I turned it down. But I changed my mind later on, and he let me take extra hours (in addition to the basic 600 hours of welding). So I had more shop experience, and it made a difference in being hired.

“A lot of the fabricating work that I do is related to blueprints I learned to read in Mr. Perry’s class. Mr. Perry is a really good teacher and a role model to a lot of men. A lot of offenders don’t want to learn, but our Windham teachers don’t give up,” Sanchez says. “My life is proof that we can learn and be successful and stay out of trouble. What we have learned in Windham keeps us out of trouble and focused on success.

In 2011 Sanchez graduated from Mr. Perry’s welding class, but he still had more than three years of prison time left to serve. He had earned his GED from Windham, and he took the Cognitive Intervention and CHANGES life skills classes, which helped change his outlook.

“My teachers taught me skills to get my mind right before I got out. I try to keep my determination to succeed and my life goals in the front of my mind,” he says. “Candelaria Davila helped me get this job,” Sanchez says, “and I work hard to make it successful. Patriot Erectors is teaching me to do welding the ways they need and they want. They let me get practice and have trained me to fabricate. I’m gaining a lot of great experience. The work can be stressful, but just knowing I can do a good job is enjoyable. I think I’ll be welding for quite a while.”

Jimmy Perry still teaches welding at the Terrell Unit, where his students show respect for their teacher and take pride in state-of-the-art training he offers. Perry is always happy to share the success stories of students who are released.

“It’s good to see Davila and Sanchez moving forward,” he says. “I had the chance to visit Patriot Erectors, and they have about four of my former students working there now. It was good to get to know the employers there and see that they are very, very supportive. They have even been willing to provide us with materials to work with in our classes, and we greatly appreciate their support. They are helping us give these men a second chance, and we enjoy working together to make a positive difference in the future.”

“My life is proof that we can learn and be successful and stay out of trouble. ...What we have learned in Windham keeps us out of trouble and focused on success.”

~ Jose Sanchez
Yesterday... Today... Tomorrow

*WSD teachers, administrators and support staff remain committed to providing students the keys to a better future.*

**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.

WSD has historically been dedicated to improving its services through new programming, connections to employment opportunities for former offenders and up-to-date training for WSD educators and support staff.

**Today**

WSD continually seeks to build new partnerships with community, school, volunteer, corrections, family and business groups while also taking time to re-evaluate itself and its role in Texas in 2016. 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 community service providers and volunteer organizations – all with the goal of providing current information to help released offenders successfully transition back into their communities.

- Offering Job Expos behind prison walls to bring soon-to-be-released offenders together with potential employers with the goal of providing current information to help released offenders successfully transition into viable employment.

- Expanding the high school diploma program to the Hughes Unit through a partnership with Mullin High School and TDCJ.

- Working closely with Texas Education Service Centers to evaluate and improve staff teaching methods and practices.

- Creating partnerships with employers to provide opportunities for WSD students to transform their lives and families through jobs with career-building potential.

- Working in partnership with Mockingbird Education through a three-year, district-wide initiative to help teachers strengthen teaching styles while better preparing students for the requirements of today’s workforce.

**Tomorrow**

- WSD continues to build additional partnerships and connections with industry employers that result in offenders being hired upon release in jobs for which they were trained during incarceration.

- WSD will expand educational opportunities for offenders by providing specialized courses during summer school. These specialized courses include career subjects, financial pointers, personal wellness information, and parenting skills.

- Beginning in SY 2016, WSD is authorized by the 84th Texas Legislature to issue high school diplomas to offenders. This will be accomplished in partnership with independent school districts and the TDCJ.
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
Halbert SAFPF (Burnet)

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 (Wynnsboro)
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
Powledge Unit
Hodge Unit (Rusk)
Boyd Unit (Teague)
Coffield Unit
(Tennessee Colony)
Michael Unit
(Tennessee Colony)

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)
Baten TF (Pampa)

Lubbock Area
Montford Unit
Rudd TF (Brownfield)

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

Wichita Falls 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)
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Lubbock Area
Montford Unit
Rudd TF (Brownfield)

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

Wichita Falls Area
Allred Unit (Iowa Park)
Changing the lives of those incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice

This graduation guest is obviously proud of her brother.

Strengthening families by empowering students.