ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017

THE JOURNEY
ALIGNING EDUCATION WITH JOB OPPORTUNITIES
Thank you for taking the time to learn more about educational programming provided by Windham School District (WSD) within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

WSD aligns job opportunities and learning with instruction and class offerings for offenders. The result: a productive, positive journey for offenders seeking workforce reentry. WSD accomplishes this through enhanced program offerings and classes requiring significantly elevated skill levels. We have improved programs by adding new components to existing courses, and we have worked with experts to bring the best possible educational opportunities to our students. In addition, WSD has expanded partnerships with industry and community workforce boards. These alliances support the alignment of courses with employer demands throughout the various regions of Texas.

Windham recently revised its life skills offerings. Experts in cognitive and criminogenic change processes worked with Windham staff and community stakeholders to improve two essential life skills classes: the Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) and Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES). With these advances, Windham uses assessments to better measure outcomes for students while identifying areas students and instructors can work to improve.

Academic gains for students in the literacy classes at Windham are among the highest in the nation. Students can expect academic advances of between two to three years for every year of instruction within Windham classes. Furthermore, the classes are aligned with job skills needed in vocational occupations to better prepare students for work; classes bring real-world relevancy to daily lessons. In addition, Windham has redesigned services for special needs students to better serve those with learning disabilities and other barriers to effective learning. They, too, are making the journey to find employment and successfully reenter society.

Vocational trades at Windham have expanded to include skills needed in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) middle-level jobs. These include computerized numerical control machining, fiber and copper cabling, computer controls programming, and telecommunications. Windham has also partnered with TDCJ to provide training and United States Department of Labor-approved apprenticeship program participation for workers in various jobs within TDCJ facilities. By aligning the educational skills with job requirement skills, offender workers are able to apply the knowledge obtained through Windham with real-world job experience at TDCJ units.

Windham has implemented many changes over the past three years. By carefully evaluating program outcomes in student gains and employment upon release, WSD helps reduce the cost of incarceration. The cost to taxpayers for crimes committed in communities is also reduced. This journey of continuous improvement, driven by data analysis, has strengthened academic growth during incarceration and lowered recidivism rates for those students who participate in Windham programming.

Windham is always looking for new ways to better serve the State of Texas, and I hope this Annual Performance Report provides you with evidence of the quality education the teachers and staff at WSD provide to thousands of men and women each year. Our students’ journey to success has begun.

Respectfully,

Dr. Clint Carpenter
Superintendent, Windham School District
To the Honorable Governor of Texas and Members of the Texas Legislature:

I am pleased to present the School Year 2017 Annual Performance Report for the Windham School District.

Under the skillful leadership of Windham Superintendent Dr. Clint Carpenter, WSD continues to make significant improvements in operations and in the performance of students in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Windham School District.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice and Windham School District form a distinct partnership to change lives through education. TDCJ and WSD are two stakeholders working in a collaborative approach to address the needs of at-risk populations. Vigilant in addressing the needs of those they serve, TDCJ and WSD have matured to thinking of reentry as a philosophy rather than a program. To meet this challenge, Texas has developed and continues to refine a comprehensive, integrated plan for coordinating offender re-entry services among state, local, civic, nonprofit, and faith-based agencies and organizations.

Windham’s determined approach of aligning job skills and training skills with increased employment opportunities has produced successful program outcomes in both student achievement and employment upon release. In School Year 2017, almost 28,000 industry-recognized certifications were awarded to Windham students, documenting their employability. The staff’s professionalism, hard work, compassion and desire to help others are to be commended.

Thanks to the education and training imparted to Windham students, the students improve their lives and their potential, resulting in lower recidivism rates and a better and safer Texas for us all.

Respectfully,

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

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

- Vision, Mission and Goals ................................................................. 5
- The Typical WSD Student ................................................................. 5
- Offenders Served ................................................................. 6
- Student Evaluation and Programs Placement .................................. 7
- Introduction to Literacy, Career and Technical Education, and Life Skills Programs ......................................... 8
- Aligning Literacy Instruction With Employment Skills .................. 9-10
- Success Story: Danna Bailey-Watts ........................................ 11
- Elective Personal Enrichment Courses (EPEC) ............................... 12-13
- Success Story: Roy Jaramillo ...................................................... 14
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs ......................... 15-19
- WSD Partners with TDCJ – Work Certification Program, OJT, and Apprenticeship ........................................ 20
- Success Story: Kenneth “Chance” Mentesana ............................... 21
- Life Skills Programs ........................................................................ 22-23
- Success Story: Jason Cole .............................................................. 24
- Administration Staff Support Learning ........................................... 25-29

WSD Education Support Services: Counseling, Testing & Records; Libraries; Volunteer Programs; Business Services; Human Resources; Information Technology; Operational Support; and Recreation

- Success Stories: Former Students Share Life Updates ................ 30
- WSD Educational Programming Locations ..................................... 31
WSD equips offenders for successful futures

Windham School District (WSD) serves a population of male and female adult offenders who have not proven successful in completing their education in the past or who simply need additional skills to better equip them for the future.

The difficulties experienced by those who did not complete their education have not disappeared with age or incarceration. Their past experiences with academic success are often limited or non-existent, and many also carry the ill effects of drug addiction and abuse.

Furthermore, 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 prepare offenders through educational accomplishment. Vocational, academic, and life skills training better equip offenders to re-enter the job market and their communities. Each educational accomplishment empowers offenders to transform their lives into success stories. Education begins the journey to success.

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.

Characteristics of the typical academic student entering WSD programs:
- Dropped out of school in 9th or 10th grade
- Functions at the 6th grade level
- Average age of 32
- 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
WSD serves more than 68,000 offenders during school year

Highlights for Offenders Released During the 2016-2017 School Year

(September, 2016 - August, 2017: SY17)

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

- Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) released over 65,000 offenders during SY17. About 70 percent of those released participated in one or more educational programs during the history of their incarceration.

- Of the released offenders, 12,187 attained an HSE certificate through WSD, and 66 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 62 percent demonstrated a significant gain in educational achievement level or attained an HSE certificate or HSD.

Educational Services Provided During SY17

- There were 68,146 offenders with widely varying educational backgrounds who received WSD educational services in SY17.

- During the WSD’s SY17, TDCJ had an average on-hand count of 146,372 offenders at the end of each month. Of those, an average of 136,316 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 Evaluation and Placement

Students start journey to success

WSD aligns education and training with future employment for each offender student. WSD works to provide these students the knowledge, training, and self-assurance needed for reintegration into local communities and job markets as viable, contributing members.

The WSD counseling staff provides the framework required 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 vocational, academic, and life skills programs.

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 heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; electrical trades; and plumbing are counseled in the state licensing process. Counselors also coordinate the administration of standardized achievement tests and vocational assessments.

Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 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.

Enrollment in the most appropriate vocational course, based on a face-to-face assessment, is another way WSD assists offenders to become more employable. This process often requires a transfer of the offender to another facility. WSD partners with TDCJ to facilitate this process, and the end result is increased training for successful workforce reentry.
Literacy, Career and Technical Education, Life Skills Programs

WSD uses programs to inspire student success

The employment environment is demanding, and individuals with a history of incarceration face formidable obstacles in finding employment and rebuilding their lives. The real challenge for the WSD – and the great opportunity – is being able to align vocational training, life skills, and academic strategies to advance student journeys toward successful careers.

Second chances for WSD students in SY17 were supported by a combination of customized literacy courses, expanded Career and Technical Education (CTE) vocational offerings, and focused life skills programs. A strategic differentiator for successful outcomes is WSD’s diligence to provide data-driven programming. Specific program choices for WSD’s comprehensive approach are based on front-line statistical analysis. Data is gathered from national research, labor market analysis, and current studies to guide decisions for WSD program effectiveness. Along with specific job training, essential skills like reading, writing, communication, relevant technology usage, computer navigation, the capability to make appropriate choices, and a willingness to apply these abilities are required by today’s employers. In addition to learning core technical skills, WSD works to help its adult learners acquire soft skills such as professionalism, critical thinking, problem-solving, and management of healthy work relationships to better adapt to career environments.

Academic gains for students in WSD literacy classes in SY17 were supported by teacher recognition of individual needs as determined by test results and face-to-face interaction. After identifying foundational elements lacking in their students’ development, WSD literacy teachers employed a multiplicity of teaching tools to meet learning needs: relevant lessons, focused instruction, effective classroom management strategies, and innovative, motivational approaches.

Instruction on the journey to academic success includes customized group lessons and computer-assisted literacy instruction, supplemented by a variety of cutting-edge teaching methods. WSD’s literacy teachers address the needs of students ranging from beginning learners to those obtaining an HSE certificate. Furthermore, teachers skillfully align courses with job skills required in vocational occupations. This results in students experiencing real-world relevancy through constant integration of career training and academic essentials. In addition, the inclusion of computer-assisted learning helps these same students transition into the digital world and more easily fit into the workplace. For many WSD students, academic accomplishment in the classroom – and possibly recognition for earning an HSE certificate or HSD – mark the first time they have ever experienced academic success. Accomplishment raises self-esteem, changes outlook, and is an important step on the journey to re-defined futures.

Improved planning for WSD’s vocational initiatives in SY17 involved thorough revisions of course curricula, expanded collaboration with industry partners, and continued implementation of new strategies to offer offenders with shorter sentence lengths the opportunity to acquire job skills. These changes resulted in increasing numbers of offenders obtaining viable career training.

As these vocational trade offerings were enhanced in SY17, Windham partnered with TDCJ to expand job training options, including United States Department of Labor-approved apprenticeship program participation for workers in TDCJ facility jobs. Knowledge obtained through Windham supported real-world job experience at TDCJ units, creating a pre-release career path for offenders while also increasing work experience.

Helping students understand and solve employment challenges is a daily effort by WSD educators. Reaching out to stakeholders ranging from industry representatives to offender family members, WSD is making student knowledge, experience, and work skill competencies a priority in planning the journey to successful employment. Continuous projects, events, visits, and meetings with industry representatives are leading to increased job opportunities for offenders.

WSD’s life skills initiative is another area the district uses to inspire the learning journey of its students. Those men and women who have not learned appropriate responses, actions, decision-making techniques, or relationship values are given an opportunity to change their negative thinking patterns, actions, and consequences. The WSD recently revised its life skills offerings to significantly strengthen critical behavioral skills required for students to make better choices and reintegrate into society. Authorities in cognitive and criminogenic change processes worked with Windham staff to enhance two essential life skills classes: the Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) and Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES). With these improvements, Windham uses assessments to better measure outcomes for students while identifying areas students and instructors can strive to improve. By helping students examine and re-direct their personal behaviors, WSD helps them become positive influences in their communities and better able to enjoy productive lives.
Academic courses align literacy instruction with employment skills

Academic instruction aligning employment-based learning and literacy skill achievement supports WSD students in becoming productive workers, family members, and citizens. The WSD provides different levels of competency-based instructional programs. The instruction serves to improve literacy and numeracy skills of students and also to prepare students for attainment of an HSE certificate or HSD. In addition, specialized reading instruction is provided to develop non-readers and emerging readers into self-sufficient students.

In SY17, more than 30,000 offenders were served through WSD literacy programs, with the average initial educational attainment of a typical Windham student being 5.6. WSD classes remain open to accommodate the transient nature of the TDCJ population. Historically, literacy students with at least two educational achievement tests average a grade level advancement of two years or more in about 630 hours of instruction. The 630-hour period is equivalent to approximately one WSD school year.

Academic staff development enhances educators’ skills, techniques, strategies

Staff development in SY17 for WSD teachers and administrators included training with Reading Horizons, the Flippen Group, Mockingbird Education, and Compass Learning (Odyssey). Educators learned techniques that cover several areas of academic instruction: how to enhance teaching and reading curriculum strategies for adult learners, use computer-assisted learning resources, and develop leadership characteristics in students.

Reading Horizons, recommended by the University of Texas - Texas Literacy Initiative, provides WSD with a strategic, uniform curriculum focused on improving student reading levels. Teachers use computer-assisted instruction and direct-teaching methods to create a more effective instructional program. WSD literacy students participate in three hours of computer-assisted instruction per week, pairing students with technology and teachers equipped to maximize engagement and learning. Reading Horizons curriculum incorporates employability skills and labor market research, assisting students with setting employment goals for release.

The WSD completed its collaboration with the Flippen Group through the Lead & Achieve Academy (LAA) at selected sites for students under age 22, focusing on leadership, literacy, and employment soft skills. CEO Flip Flippen worked with students at the Luther Unit in Navasota through a student leadership program, encouraging positive behavior during confinement. Young participants developed skills needed for academic success, personal development, and future careers.

### Completion of NRS Educational Functioning Levels 2016-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning Educational Functioning Level</th>
<th>Grades within Functioning Level</th>
<th>Number of Students Beginning Level</th>
<th>Number of Students Completing the Level</th>
<th>Percent Completing Level*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (0.0 to 1.9)</td>
<td>K &amp; 1st</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 (2.0 to 3.9)</td>
<td>2nd &amp; 3rd</td>
<td>2,031</td>
<td>1,061</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 (4.0 to 5.9)</td>
<td>4th &amp; 5th</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2,555</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 (6.0 to 8.9)</td>
<td>6th, 7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>7,390</td>
<td>3,141</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5 (9.0 to 10.9)</td>
<td>9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>2,762</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6 (11.0 to 12.9)</td>
<td>11th &amp; 12th</td>
<td>2,394</td>
<td>2,078</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>19,736</td>
<td>10,684</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Per the National Reporting System the national average for adults completing one or more educational functioning levels is 43% as of the latest congressional report for 2011-12.

While the percentage of students completing an educational functioning level in the chart above exceeds the national average in each category, those students who did not complete an educational functioning level were on track to make academic gains. The students in the chart above averaged 253 hours of academic classroom instruction. Based on recent research by Texas Tech University, students who participate in WSD academic programs gain about 2 grade levels during their incarceration history for every 630 hours of classroom instruction, which is the equivalent of one WSD school year.
Training sessions for educators by Mockingbird Education and Compass Learning (Odyssey) were also used to boost teaching effectiveness, student achievement, and enhanced WSD efforts to increase passing rates for HSE tests. Mockingbird Education focused on training teachers to motivate high-risk learners with a history of academic failure, both in vocational and academic classrooms. Compass Learning’s Odyssey training helped prepare literacy instructors to effectively use Odyssey software to teach a broad range of academic skills while balancing digital and face-to-face instruction.

WSD continued to build its partnership with American YouthWorks Austin in SY17. This collaboration affords eligible young students in state jail facilities (ages 18-24) opportunities to transition from incarceration to successful post-release lives. Offenders are offered pre-enrollment in American YouthWorks during counseling with WSD staff. Program offerings can then help youth earn diplomas, HSE certificates, and industry certifications. TDCJ releasees in the program are encouraged to finish education and job training they began during incarceration. Post-release training in construction, multimedia, computer maintenance, healthcare, and other fields is offered to them. In addition, participants develop leadership skills through direct, team-based national and community service, and they have the opportunity to earn college credits. American YouthWorks Austin also offers YouthBuild Austin, a program that provides wraparound services to offenders post-release.

In SY 17 WSD also joined forces with YouthBuild Fort Worth by partnering with Community Learning Center, CLC, Inc. YouthBuild is funded in part by the United States Department of Labor and serves at-risk youth, encouraging them to perform meaningful work and service to their communities. YouthBuild provides young men and women the opportunity to earn their HSE certificate or HSD. YouthBuild also trains students in construction, welding, and CNC machining while also addressing core issues such as affordable housing, employment, and leadership development.

Literacy success leads to HSE certificate or HSD

All WSD coursework is aimed at productive levels of literacy and attainment of a high school diploma or HSE certificate, with the average literacy participant receiving about three hours of literacy instruction per day. Administering the HSE program is the most cost-efficient path for students who are incarcerated for various lengths of time, compared to a traditional K-12 educational program. Instruction is focused on meaningful employability and societal reentry efforts.

The WSD continued to partner with independent school districts to offer eligible students an opportunity to earn a high school diploma. This effort includes male and female facilities, affording students additional pathways of success leading to post-release employment or post-secondary educational opportunities.

The WSD provides courses at designated campuses for students under age 22. Courses are designed to enhance literacy, leadership, and employability skills. These programs are funded by the Title I, Part D, and Subpart 1 grant. Students in these courses may be concurrently enrolled in another academic or CTE course. Teachers who work with these students participate in dedicated training to assist them in working with youthful offenders.

Special programs address additional needs of student population

The education of special needs students continues to be a WSD priority. The district promotes educational success for these students through individualized and specially-designed instruction, accommodations and modifications, adapted equipment and materials, and accessible settings. These students achieve higher levels of personal self-sufficiency in school, at work, and in their communities after release, thanks to the help of WSD teachers.

English language learners (ELLs) in WSD classes acquire English language skills and learn content in English while learning academic and vocational skills. The WSD provides assessment and support for eligible students through ELL courses and general literacy classes as appropriate, based on Language Proficiency Assessment Committee recommendations. Reading Horizons training for teachers in SY17 also helped ELL students advance their level of reading skills.

JobView Kiosks are also available to WSD students and other offenders to help future job seekers discover employment opportunities. WSD offers these computerized kiosks in school libraries located at six TDCJ state jails and one ID unit, and students and general population offenders are able to access their services. Employment information is kept current and freely provided to offenders housed at these sites. In addition, WSD encourages former students and families to access JobView via the WSD website when searching for job opportunities.
Kicking out addiction:
Danna Bailey-Watts proves change is possible through hope, dedication, education

Danna Bailey-Watts keeps her old prison ID card as a reminder of incarceration in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Her faded institutional photo is expressionless: a pale young woman with glassy eyes, doing time and diminished by drugs. Today she bears little resemblance to her former mugshot. Instead, she is an East Texas drug counselor, reunited with family and looking contagiously happy. Released from TDCJ in 2005, she helps others beat their addictions — and loves her “normal” life.

“I have been sober for 12 years,” she says. “I have a message for those who are still incarcerated: change is possible. It’s not easy, but it’s so much better than prison.”

A fifth-generation drug addict, Bailey-Watts’ early life lacked hope. Addiction and substance abuse plagued her family, dissolved her parents’ marriage, and created a broken home.

“My father lived and breathed AA, but my mom was addicted to everything,” she remembers. “Their marriage split when I was two. My only sibling, my sister, would later die from complications of drug use and diabetes.

“I first smoked marijuana at 14. In 10th grade I got pregnant with my first son and quit school. Then I married someone who introduced me at the age of 24 to heavy drugs: crystal, crack, and cocaine. This man, who was also an addict, was very verbally, physically, and mentally abusive toward me. This situation only allowed my addiction to grow. Things eventually got so bad that I chose drugs instead of being a mother, giving my two children to my family to raise. However, I don’t blame this man for my addiction because my addiction is mine - and mine only. We eventually divorced.

“Lacking all self-esteem, I found methamphetamine,” Bailey-Watts says, “and I ended up getting my first charge for forgery, which I committed to support my habit. I asked for treatment, but there wasn’t a drug court available. Instead, I did 30 days in county jail, got released, and was arrested on two charges of forgery. This sent me straight to TDCJ: Plane State Jail in Dayton, Texas.

“Even though I earned a GED after dropping out, I didn’t have much going for me,” she says. She signed up for anything she could take in TDCJ: Anger Management, Bible study, the Windham School District (WSD) Parenting, Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP), Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) pre-release program and Business Computer Information Systems (BCIS) class.

“I remember two wonderful teachers at Windham: BCIS instructor Linda Gordon and CIP teacher Melinda Stegall,” she says. “I don’t think I would be where I am today if it weren’t for Ms. Stegall’s Cognitive class,” Watts says. “She taught me that I didn’t have to let the past define me and that I could embrace the past, forgive myself, and move forward. She said if I could just help at least one person, that’s what I was meant to do.”

After a little over a year in TDCJ, this former high school drop-out was released. After about five more years, she decided to start college. Graduating with honors, she received her associate’s degree in drug counseling from community college and a bachelor’s degree in rehabilitation studies with a minor in sociology from the University of North Texas. She also earned her master’s degree from Concordia University as a Family Life Educator.

Today Bailey-Watts makes a positive difference by working for the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council of Deep East Texas. She does one-on-one counseling, supervises interns and a drug court group, and teaches parenting to women.

“Cycles of addiction can be broken. If you come out of prison and change your lifestyle, you can be the parent, adult, and person you need to be to have a happy and successful life. It’s just the best feeling in the world.”

Along with keeping a TDCJ ID card, Bailey-Watts has a picture of her Cognitive Intervention class which was published years ago in The ECHO, TDCJ’s offender newspaper.

“Ms. Stegall, my Windham teacher, told us, ‘You need to keep these things so you remember where you went — and never come back.’ Yet one day I hope to return to Plane State Jail and talk to women about the importance of education in changing lives,” Bailey-Watts says. “The greatest part of my new life is providing hope to others.”
Focusing on workplace skills, reentry needs

Success of SY16 Elective Personal Enrichment Courses motivates WSD to expand SY17 special outreach efforts

The WSD continued its Elective Personal Enrichment Courses (EPEC) throughout SY17. Classes were focused on giving offenders skills and certificates supporting employability and successful reentry into society. Soft skills lessons within these course offerings enhanced job readiness and career potential. Classes were voluntary and open to all minimum custody offenders in the general population. Instructors included WSD teachers, administrators, and other staff. Courses were offered at 50 TDCJ units during three weeks in July and one week each during winter and spring breaks. There were more than 15,000 course enrollments by more than 13,000 offenders.
To develop these courses for the correctional environment, the WSD partnered with Acceleron Learning, a Texas-based company specializing in development of digital lectures and planning tools for practical life skills. WSD worked in collaboration with Acceleron Learning to produce “Conduits for Corrections”, an educational series consisting of video modules and related tools focused on incarcerated individuals and their reentry needs. These courses were launched in SY16 and included Career Planning, Workplace Skills, Financial Literacy, and Parenting Skills.

Success of the SY16 courses motivated the expansion of offerings in SY17. An additional 20 modules were developed for Family Health and Reentry Roadmap courses. Further EPEC offerings were selected from WSD staff proposals and current WSD classes. These EPEC classes included OSHA Safety courses, Computer Basics, Coping Skills, and Creative Writing.

**Offenders who successfully completed an EPEC course received a certificate of completion which may be used to demonstrate reentry preparations to the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP).**

The WSD’s EPEC initiative proved to be highly successful in expanding educational opportunity and capacity for men and women incarcerated in TDCJ. Combined student attendance hours for EPEC exceeded 225,000 hours, and over 27 percent of the offender participants had not been previously served by the WSD during SY17. The support and cooperative effort of the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division was essential to this successful outreach effort. The successful launch of EPEC in SY16 created the opportunity for the expansion of offerings in SY17.

“After this class, I know how to overcome negative thought processes and how to present myself in a positive way to employers — and also to others in the freeworld...”

**Kenneth E.**

WSD EPEC participant
Amazing Solutions:
Former WSD student attains HVAC career using education, self-motivation, hard work

“If your air-conditioning goes out at 9:30 at night, and it’s hot, you need help right away — that’s where we come in,” says Roy Jaramillo, owner of Amazing Air Solutions and Amazing Home Solutions, two businesses serving San Antonio and surrounding areas. “I’m happy to be able to talk to people and provide the professional services they need.” Although frequent traveling, long days and personal sacrifice are common to his work, Jaramillo treasures his job and the freedom offered by post-incarceration opportunities. As he builds his new life, he values helping others and supporting his family.

“I have a wife and kids, and we are stable and happy! They are an important part of my life,” Jaramillo says, “and I am grateful to be able to support them by working since I left incarceration in 2002. I entered into this field because I trained for it in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) with Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) classes. I was very young, but thanks to Windham School District (WSD), my education helped me grow up and understand this industry. I started out as a technician, and now I am running two businesses and supervising employees.

“I began the business Amazing Air Solutions in 2008, and we expanded to open Amazing Home Solutions in 2017. This second business offers services to remodel homes: lighting, painting, flooring, janitorial, and more.”

Diverse vocational training in TDCJ helped Jaramillo prepare for his career: “I studied landscaping, plumbing, air-conditioning and data processing, and at one point, I was a teacher’s aide,” he says. “I took advantage of all opportunities and attended Lee College in TDCJ.”

Jaramillo also earned his High School Equivalency through WSD, and he praises teachers for caring about him and his future: “It’s hard to find those people who care; Windham teachers at the Dominguez State Jail took it beyond the limit to understand and listen to me.”

Jaramillo thanks life skills teacher Gary Griffin for encouraging positive outcomes in his students: “Mr. Griffin pointed me in the right direction, and I was able to get over my fear of public speaking. I’ve always had the motivation to speak; I just never had a way of letting it out. Mr. Griffin helped me gain confidence. I attended a Toastmasters event in TDCJ and was able to win first place. It was exciting for me to open up to the crowd as a motivational speaker,” he says. “Today I’m honored to speak to WSD graduates, encouraging them to keep reaching for success. I focus on increasing education and always finding the strength to push forward.”

Twenty years ago, Jaramillo’s situation was anything but inspiring. Entering TDCJ at age 21, he spent most of his 20s incarcerated. He says the time spent in prison was even tougher because he and his mother had been very close, and she would pass away only six months after he returned home.

“Losing my mother was life-changing because for six years I wasn’t there for her,” Jaramillo says. “She was lost to me soon after I was released.” He told himself at that point that he would work even harder to honor her memory.

Returning home, Jaramillo felt he was looked at differently as a former offender, and it was discouraging. He knew he had an “uphill battle” to get back to work, and he credits his wife for encouraging him to continue his education.

“When I came out, she helped me return to school, so I pushed hard to finish classes and achieve career goals. I went back to study HVAC at St. Philip’s College in San Antonio, and I earned another certification,” he says. Using vocational certifications from WSD and St. Philip’s College, he started his own business within five years.

Jaramillo says his knowledge of the HVAC industry and his drive to succeed resulted from continuous reading, research, and education.

“Life success always depends on the individual working to make it happen,” he says. “When you’re positive, things happen; when you’re negative, things don’t happen. I want to make an impact, whether it’s in prison or church, and help people understand how to experience good lives: embrace the fact that the choices you make are your own, forgive yourself, and surround yourself with positive people.

“I am also certain you have to wake up with a passion and desire to move forward,” Jaramillo says. “You always have the choice to better yourself or stay in the same situation. Education allowed me to turn a lot of negativity into positive growth. I am 42 years old now, and there is still so much I want to accomplish. It’s an amazing life.”
WSD Career and Technical Education:

Creating an educational skills training environment that combines core academics with real-world application

The WSD provides vocational programming, known as CTE, to assist students in building careers through quality instruction, preparation for industry certifications, and development of career connections. The WSD continually assesses job markets in the state and tailors CTE programs to provide marketable employability skills to its students, taking into consideration the impact a previous felony conviction has on the ability of offenders to secure certification, licensure, and employment. WSD offers CTE training with a competency-based curriculum in 42 different courses for offenders in the TDCJ.

WSD’s CTE program remains at the forefront of multi-dimensional career preparation that extends beyond the development of simple technical skills. Vocational career fields have become increasingly innovative and have expanded into high-demand industries. Strong CTE programming offers students extensive academic and technical skills, helping them build the necessary abilities to be adaptable and competitive in the workforce.

CTE courses provide:

1. An authentic, technical work-related environment;
2. A rigorous, competency-based curriculum based on industry standards;
3. Industry-certified teachers knowledgeable of current industry practices;
4. The integration of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) with workplace competencies and industry standards and practices throughout the curriculum; and
5. The opportunity for students to earn an industry-recognized occupational certificate or license and a WSD course completion certificate.
WSD’s vocational program is not just about teaching students a narrow set of skills sufficient for entry-level jobs; it is about preparing students for careers. CTE students are trained for high-demand jobs, productive futures, and successful reentry into society. CTE course completion has been shown to reduce offenders’ chances of reincarceration and also empower their career-earning abilities.

WSD teachers motivate students with hands-on, quantifiable learning experiences that mimic real-world work environments. In addition, WSD career-training programs are relevant to industry needs. These programs provide students with opportunities to acquire the competencies required in today’s workplace environments—such as critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving, innovation, teamwork, and communication—along with the opportunity to develop a career focus for a productive life.

A comprehensive revision of WSD’s CTE Course Curriculum in SY17 resulted in expanded opportunities for vocational students. The WSD course catalog was redesigned to assist WSD counselors and educators with the career guidance process. All courses were reviewed and, where possible, revised to add additional industry-related certifications. Course lengths were also adjusted as appropriate, allowing larger numbers of students to benefit from CTE classes. These revisions resulted in a significant increase in the number of students served, vocational course completions, and industry certifications earned.

CTE programming for SY17 continued to provide opportunities for over 19,000 students to earn almost 28,000 valuable industry-related certifications to assist them in employment activities. This effort is supported by collaboration with certification and licensing agencies, universities, workforce groups, and course-related industry employers to offer courses that meet recognized industry standards. WSD maintains communication and/or accreditation status with various certifying entities to provide students the opportunity to earn nationally-portable, standards-based, industry-recognized skills.
credentials. This collaboration also helps the district keep in touch with potential job opportunities for ex-offenders. While learning vocational skills, offenders can earn industry-recognized certifications and increase their chances for viable careers after release.

**According to a recent study (Wang et al., 2016),** those who had an industry certification had a 22.5 percent lower recidivism rate and an 11.8 percent higher employment rate. With this in mind, WSD ensures that all CTE courses allow an offender the opportunity to earn one or more applicable industry certifications or licensures. 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.

**Many of these certifications provide offenders the opportunity to qualify for TDCJ jobs in prison operations and prison industry positions.** Pre-release opportunities give offenders on-the-job experience and training to strengthen skill sets and employability. The WSD supports job-related apprenticeships through partnership with TDCJ, allowing offenders to gain further work experience while still incarcerated.
An important part of WSD’s programming strategy has been to offer offenders with shorter sentence lengths the opportunity to acquire and/or enhance job skills. This practice continued in SY17. Recent expansion of programming has incorporated course offerings with industry certifications in the Telecommunications Connectivity field. Students have the opportunity to learn and develop skills involving Telecommunications, Copper Cabling, Fiber Optic Network Cabling, Audio/Video Systems, and Energy Management Systems. As a result, the number of CTE course completions and industry certifications increased for male and female students.

WSD continued to expand vocational service capability through several other initiatives:

- **OSHA and Construction Fundamentals continued to be offered during SY17**, giving offenders with shorter sentence lengths more opportunities to earn industry certifications. Safety credentialing is an important factor in the vocational training of WSD students.

- **WSD continued to expand ShopBot® usage** to provide middle-skill STEM training resulting in a computerized numerical control (CNC) certification. WSD offered CNC training at seven sites in SY17, providing students with transferable skills that apply to a wide variety of career endeavors.

- **The Conduits® program by Acceleron Learning continued to be used in CTE courses**, adding an interactive, video-based program allowing students to examine vital components of the job search process.
Workforce partnerships pave road for reentry

WSD’s workforce and reentry initiative paves the road for successful reentry into employment, careers, and reconstructed lives. By partnering with enthusiastic industry leaders and community stakeholders, WSD gives students opportunities for skilled training, authentic career experience, reduced chances of recidivism, and a stronger workforce for Texas.

WSD’s partners include industry leaders and representatives, Texas workforce board members from across the state, and TDCJ’s Reentry and Integration Division. All partnerships focus on putting former offenders to work. Input from these alliances gives WSD teachers essential information about job environments and requirements, provides WSD with current data for expanding and focusing curriculum, and provides students a system of direct application for available jobs. In addition, potential employers spend valuable time in WSD schools, discovering the broad spectrum of professional hands-on employment training offered by WSD.

To build employment partnerships, the WSD signed Employability Skills Collaboration agreements during SY17 with Workforce Solutions and Texas workforce development boards including Gulf Coast, Deep East Texas, Tarrant County, and Concho Valley. These collaborations help provide former offenders with high-level employability skills and also enhance economic growth through employment. The collaborations are nurtured to increase community engagement and expand employment opportunities for former offenders.

WSD also partners with industry employers and community representatives. Industry partners tour WSD classrooms within TDCJ facilities to observe WSD literacy, life skills, and CTE programs. They note the level of CTE skills WSD instructors teach students, and they offer professional input regarding curriculum improvement and equipment needs. These partners encourage communities to support correctional education and employ skilled former offenders. The partners also hire students who have received WSD training to become craftsmen in their vocations.

In addition, industry partners provide WSD staff opportunities to visit professional work sites, affording WSD educators insight regarding industry job standards, hiring requirements, soft skills needs, and potential working environments. These experiences allow staff to communicate employer expectations directly to students through lesson plans, presentations, and counseling.

Windham educators offer each student the opportunity to fill out a generic job application before their release date.

The application is entered into a data base with their permission, and upon release it is sent to prospective employers. These applications are individually processed by WSD workforce staff, encouraging offenders to connect with employment opportunities and enhancing opportunities for successful reentry into the workforce and society. WSD partners support the process and welcome the opportunity to hire WSD-trained men and women.

WSD’s industry partners also support employment-related expo events, which take place inside TDCJ facilities and make students aware of employment and reentry services, along with continued education opportunities. Eleven expo events were sponsored by WSD and TDCJ during SY17.

- Career Expos allow offenders to meet with potential employers and hear first-hand about workforce needs and employment options. In addition, licensing regulations are discussed, and connections are made with Workforce Solutions representatives to give offenders additional employment resources. Industry partners serve as presenters, discussing career requirements, career challenges, and employment trends.

- Service Provider Expos bring offenders together with community service providers and volunteer organizations. These organizations provide current information to assist offenders in successfully transitioning back into their communities. Information about housing, job training, family resources, health concerns, and faith-based support is offered.

Members of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board tour a WSD campus to observe job training programs and educational offerings.
WSD, TDCJ focus on increasing post-release career opportunities:

Work certification program, OJT, apprenticeship enhance employment for releasees

The WSD and the TDCJ collaborate to provide job experience and valuable training certifications to offenders working within the TDCJ during incarceration. These work-based training opportunities include the Work Certification Program, On-The-Job training (OJT), and apprenticeship programs. Each provides a pathway from prison to viable careers, aligning job skills development with employment potential.

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

In partnership with the TDCJ, the WSD coordinates OJT and apprenticeship programs. These two work-based job skills training programs are integral components of WSD vocational training. In addition to job training and experience, offenders can develop constructive work habits to improve employment potential within prison and upon return to their communities.

OJT combines career experience and standardized training in approved occupations for a minimum of six months under the supervision of a TDCJ employee. OJT’s purpose is to provide credible training to offenders in job assignments meeting OJT certification criteria. While the goal of OJT is to teach essential workplace proficiencies, the program also instills aspects of positive workplace culture and high performance expectations. Many of the OJT occupations have the potential to transition into an apprenticeship.

An apprenticeship is a program registered with the United States Department of Labor that is designed to prepare individuals for occupations in skilled trades and crafts. Apprenticeships offer a combination of rigorous and relevant on-the-job learning with related instruction on the theoretical and practical aspects of the occupation. Upon satisfactory completion of an apprenticeship program, the participant is awarded a nationally-recognized Apprenticeship Completion Certificate. The apprenticeship training platform provides opportunity for participants to develop a career vocation, professional ethics, and self-confidence based on accomplishment. The WSD partners with the TDCJ to expand the program and cultivate a more robust, nationally-recognized job training opportunity for offenders. During SY17, apprenticeship programs were expanded to nine new units and included three new program areas.

The value of the WSD/TDCJ job skills training and certification structure is best defined by its seamless accessibility to offenders. Participants can access job training opportunities at any level. Marketable skills and career experience can be acquired within each program individually and are certainly enhanced if the offender elects to take advantage of more than a single job skills training opportunity. The Work Certificate, OJT, apprenticeship, and CTE programs combine to create the conditions and structures necessary for the WSD and the TDCJ to administer effective job skills training.
A Chance for success:
Persistence, education, faith
Help rebuild life for former offender

The man helping others with compassion since 2007 as Project Manager at a Southeast Texas flooring store presents a very different picture from the violent drug dealer and addict he used to be. Today he helps customers build their homes. In the past, he served multiple prison terms: eight years of combined incarceration following aggravated drug manufacturing charges and a fast ride in a stolen car.

"Almost 30 years ago, I was on the front page of the San Angelo Times for Aggravated Manufacturing of Methamphetamine," says Kenneth "Chance" Mentesana. "I was out of control and made newscasts whenever there was movement in my case; it was the biggest bust in the history of Tom Green County. More recently, however, I have been featured on the front of the Huntsville Item -- preaching at the Goree Unit." He unfolds a news clip of himself at a chapel altar, addressing a room of men in white. "A lot has changed since my release from prison in February of 2006."

Mentesana serves as a motivational speaker for Windham School District (WSD) job expos behind prison walls, and he volunteers to help the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) chaplains. During eight years of incarceration, he used education, spiritual training, and persistence to turn around his life.

"I learned how to stay out of prison and took advantage of every single positive activity I could. I finally become humble and teachable," he says.

The former drug manufacturer participated in drug and alcohol recovery programs and faith-based activities while incarcerated. He completed WSD’s Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) and enrolled in the Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) pre-release class. He received vocational training in computer programming and data processing during multiple incarcerations, including college classes.

"Windham teachers showed me there were people who actually cared about those behind bars," he says. "They were not just there to collect a paycheck! In CIP, I realized I had to change my thinking and actions, making this a lifestyle. In vocational classes, I acquired valuable job and computer skills.

"I have a message for those who are going to reenter society after prison: take all of the classes you can in TDCJ. This will help prepare you for release and careers. And don’t buy into the ‘X on my back’ lie," he adds. "The employment search is a full time job. I tell current offenders: if you don’t really want a career in the future, take it easy after release: wake up at noon, fix a little coffee, watch ‘All My Children’, and send out a couple of applications. Then you can cry that nobody will hire you because you’ve been in the penitentiary."

"In reality, if you’re lazy while applying for jobs, you’re not in the game. You’ve got to get up early and spend some hours filling out applications on the internet. You could maybe do 10-12 applications in two hours, and in the course of five days, you could do 60 applications," Mentesana says. "When I was newly-released and trying to get a job, I followed computer applications with newspaper want ads, making morning phone calls. Then I would ride the bus to afternoon interviews. You have to work hard at this! As a result, I have never been more than two weeks without work.

"It’s also important on applications and in interviews to answer the question 'Have you ever been convicted of a felony?' honestly. Do not lie. I’d suggest writing ‘Will discuss in interview’ and then spend 15 seconds talking about your crime and three minutes talking about the positive changes you have made, including courses you’ve completed.

"Once you get a job, you still have to work hard and be realistic. You don’t usually get out and start making $80,000. You may have to prove yourself," he says. "I’ve been in the flooring project management business for more than 10 years, and it took at least a year and a half for things to be good. We’ve had some ups and downs, but business is better than it has ever been.

"In addition, we have had the chance to lift up people rebuilding homes after Hurricane Harvey. We offer them quality products and installation at fair prices. Dealing with hurricane victims reminds me that my life at one time was like a violent storm or devastating flood: 14 years ago I became incarcerated for the fourth time and just wanted the storm to end. Fortunately, my relationship with Jesus Christ and my persistence in finding new friends and a job are the main reasons I am able to stay out of prison."

Faith and family remain priorities for Mentesana, who is determined to stay free of incarceration and care for his wife and young daughter.

"My daughter has never seen her daddy wearing white," he says. "She’s never had to visit him on the other side of the glass– and she’s not ever going to. I have a beautiful daughter and wife, I’m active in church and prison ministry, and I have a great career. I’m celebrating 14 years of sobriety, and life is awesome!"
WSD Life Skills programs

Changing criminal thinking to empower future success

WSD strives to elevate and enrich the futures of students who have experienced academic, behavioral, and life challenges. This is accomplished by providing educational support to assist them in obtaining a more confident, efficient, and productive way of life. WSD Life Skills Programs are a critical component of educational support, designed to help offenders change criminal thinking patterns and develop people skills essential for success in all areas of their lives. Refocusing thinking processes can empower offenders to behave more responsibly, develop healthy relationships, and retain better-paying jobs. Life skills classes are designed to enhance cognitive skills and promote a healthy environment for positive attitudes and mindsets. They are offered on the majority of facilities.

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, and it is designed to help them re-integrate into society. This program includes topics such as developing healthy relationships, living responsibly, drug education, and putting together a new start in life. The CHANGES curriculum was developed internally in 1995, and in 2009, it was modified to become CHANGES II and incorporate a cognitive component.

The Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) teaches students to examine and change thinking that leads to criminal behavior. The course teaches students to meet their own needs without trespassing on the rights of others. The CIP curriculum was created in 1996 with assistance from the National Institute of Corrections. 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.

**Revisions were made to the CHANGES and CIP curricula in SY16 based on recommendations from Dr. Robert Morgan, a nationally-recognized expert and chair of Psychology at Texas Tech University who specializes in forensics and correctional psychology.** The new CHANGES 3 and CIP 2 curriculum revisions were implemented by the WSD in SY17, and they included updates and alignment of the curriculum, incorporation of a theoretically-based curriculum to improve student impact and system outcomes, and the addition of an assessment component.

**Revisions incorporated a thorough evaluation component to monitor student progress as well as programmatic assessment measures.** An assessment of student knowledge acquisition consists of seven modular quizzes for CHANGES 3 and 12 lesson quizzes for CIP 2. Programmatic assessment measures utilized for both programs are the Measure of Criminal Thinking Styles (MOCTS) and the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA).

**Assessment data was collected from Sept. 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017 on modular quizzes, lesson quizzes, MOCTS, and MCAA.** Preliminary assessment results indicated there was a successful implementation of revisions with positive results for both CIP 2 and CHANGES 3 across all modules and lessons. Preliminary results further indicate positive outcomes in antisocial attitudes and criminogenic thinking for both programs using the MCAA and MOCTS as measures. Modular quiz data for CHANGES 3 and CIP 2 demonstrates an increase in student knowledge acquisition on pre- and post-test results. It also shows improvement in attitude towards associates, violence, entitlements, and anti-social intent. In other results, CHANGES 3 and CIP 2 MOCTS data shows improvement in the areas of cognitive maturity, control, and egocentrism. While these results are preliminary and contain an analysis on assessment data for only a portion of the school year, the results indicate positive changes are being made in students’ criminal thinking patterns.

**Revisions have reinforced and advanced program effectiveness in CHANGES and CIP, making life skills a continued and valued course offering throughout WSD.** In addition, former students repeatedly cite the importance of WSD Life Skills Programs in allowing them to experience self-worth, increased self-esteem, and the desire to become productive family members, contributing citizens, and valued employees. WSD strives to provide a well-developed life skills program which enables students to translate knowledge, attitude, skills, and values into action. After release, these former students and their home communities can then benefit in educational, social, health, cultural, and economic areas. The successful revision of life skills programs by the WSD and its stakeholders is reinforcement for students on the journey toward personal change and life success.

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<td>CIP</td>
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Embracing the challenge:
Successful businessman seizes opportunities to grow from former incarceration experience

“I made a promise to myself in prison that when I got out, if anybody gave me a foot in the door, I was going to make myself irreplaceable to that company for giving me a chance,” says Jason Cole. “Today Cole is a service manager for a horse trailer dealership in Canton, Texas. He remembers 11 years of incarceration within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) as the time he decided to get ready for a different future.

Cole says he was angry his first five years in prison, facing charges of manslaughter and aggravated assault in his early 20s. However, one day he promised himself that he was not going home as the same person he was when he arrived. Cole says he was going to do everything possible to initiate employable qualities within himself before he departed from TDCJ.

“I took every Windham School District (WSD) class that I could sign up for,” he explains. Cole participated in the Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) and Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) pre-release programs through WSD, and he credits CIP teacher Charles Anthony and CHANGES teacher James Boeman for guiding him to a life change. Cole then became an ‘offender mentor’ at the Torres Unit in Hondo, assisting a Windham teacher in facilitating a CIP class. At this time, Cole also earned a business degree from Southwest Texas Junior College.

Cole says “cellies” would tell him to get his mind out of the free world. They would say, “You’re physically in prison, and you need to mentally be here,” but Cole disagreed. “Adjusting to free world life was easier for me because I made plans for when I got out.”

Upon release, Cole immediately began looking for a job. Education at WSD had a huge influence on the skills he carried into the free world. He entered TDCJ with his high school diploma and was released with life skills training, OJT completion, and his college degree in March, 2012. With the help of a man from his AA group, he was introduced to Triple M Trailers in Canton. He asked the company for an interview under strict parole stipulations.

“When I interviewed, they asked me roughly 40 or 50 questions on what I knew about horse trailers, but I had no answers,” he says. Cole says that in his CIP and CHANGES courses, he learned that anytime you have to give a negative response, you should come back with something positive.

“If interviewers asked me, ‘Do you know how to wire a trailer,’ I would say, ‘No, I don’t, but if you show me one time, you will never have to show me again.’”

Instead of waiting for a call back, he then re-contacted his potential employer. He credits CIP for teaching him to not wait on a phone call, but to take initiative.

He was hired in May, 2012.

“My attitude and responses got me hired,” Cole says. Though he initially knew little about horse trailers, he now manages everything at the business with regards to service and parts. Cole supervises 13 people, communicates with the technicians, and works the service side.

His life is busy with work, family, and volunteerism. Cole is married and has two young daughters for whom he cares deeply, and he volunteers as a Windham motivational graduation speaker. He does ministry work in TDCJ, and he has made presentations to Windham GED, CIP, CHANGES, and vocational classes.

“I volunteer in a discipleship mentor program at the Torres Unit,” Cole says. “If we can reach these men, they can change their lives.”

Cole stresses the importance of changing thinking habits, and he supports WSD.

“You DON’T have to come back. Get out and be productive members of society,” he tells students. “Be a sponge, soak up everything, and work on your thinking. Go to the library, start learning how to make yourself irreplaceable for the day when you finally get out of TDCJ and go to work.”

Cole also emphasizes selecting new peers after release, and he says he got caught up with the wrong crowd.

“Most people go to prison not because of a single thing they do, but because of whom they choose as friends,” he says. “If you don’t make up your mind in prison that it’s not an option to go back to the same friends again, and you wait until you get out to make a plan, you’re too late. I refuse to hang around anyone who is going to lead me back to prison.”

Cole loves his new career and is proud of his success, and although some days in the free world are tough, he says his positive attitude and training help keep him free.

“I love people and I love challenges. My job and my life center around those things,” he says. “My worst day out here is better than my best day in prison. This is nothing.”
WSD resources open pathways for achievement


The WSD administration staff provides necessary resources for correctional educators and students to achieve academic and career preparation success. These resource personnel support the mission of WSD by providing training, curriculum development, business services, information technology, human resources, research, and operational support. The WSD Administrative office functions as a thorough and efficient liaison, connecting WSD with TDCJ and other outside agencies and partners.

COUNSELING, TESTING & RECORDS

The Counseling, Testing & Records Department supports and supplements essential unit testing processes, including an extensive HSE certificate testing effort. The department is also responsible for management of educational assessments for newly-received offenders and for periodic assessments of those enrolled in WSD programs. Department staff work continually with education agencies throughout the United States in an effort to verify the HSD, HSE certificate, and college claims of offenders. Furthermore, the department is responsible for maintaining educational records for all offenders and responds to legal and offender requests for copies of records.

LIBRARIES

Education and job skills training define a journey of learning opportunities in which students face transformational challenges. One way WSD assists offenders to become job-ready and envision a better future is by maintaining 87 libraries for TDCJ facilities throughout Texas. With an emphasis on job training and literacy skills, these libraries complement vocational and academic training. Librarians are encouraged to purchase current information regarding business, employment, and job trends, making it available to a wide group of readers. Materials are also provided to support CTE classes, including an Occupational Outlook Handbook. WSD libraries provide offenders with a variety of books, reference collections, and materials in support of educational programs, job hunting, and recreational reading. The WSD recognizes the importance of literacy in seeking employment and improving quality of life, so WSD libraries provide services for non-students as well as WSD participants.

<table>
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<tr>
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<td># of Books Distributed to Libraries</td>
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* Does not include libraries maintained by private facilities

WSD’s Counseling, Testing & Records Department staff provide training to unit education staff and coordinate educational transfers for the district. Each potential educational transfer is screened utilizing enrollment criteria, eligibility requirements, as well as policy-driven need and priority factors. TDCJ unit profiles may also be considered in identifying the best candidates for transfer. WSD accomplishes this mission through a solid professional partnership with TDCJ State Classification Committee members.
“People helping people” is the essence of volunteering in correctional education. WSD volunteers offer specialized skills, talents, experiences, and resources, assisting educators in creating a culture of continuous learning. During SY17, WSD administration had oversight of more than 300 volunteers. These volunteers provided more than 1,300 hours of assistance, serving 7,896 offenders. Volunteers serve on advisory boards and committees and in academic, vocational, and life skills training.

Volunteers’ activities and input help students receive the support they need to achieve in numerous education and reentry areas. Volunteers from business, education, and state agencies participate in WSD programs by meeting with offenders and staff to discuss current aspects of the job market and reentry resources. Volunteers serve as presenters at WSD job expos and reentry services expos, and they offer current information about available employment, hiring practices, workplace skills, and available community reentry resources. Volunteers also serve as inspiring graduation speakers, sharing their experiences and motivating offenders to continue to rewrite their lives and successfully connect with families, employers, and communities. State legislators, community leaders, local businesspeople and even former students continue to inspire current students to change and grow, completing their journeys toward successful lives.

Correctional education volunteers:

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

Volunteer of the Year:

University of Texas Professor is honored with Governor’s volunteer service award

Professor Deb Olin Unferth of Austin was presented the “Judy Burd – Windham School District” Award during the Governor’s 2017 Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award program in Austin.

“Professor Unferth has done a wonderful job teaching creative writing at the Connally Unit,” said Principal Ann Warwas, who works closely with Unferth. “In between semesters teaching at the University of Texas, she conducts a writing class with a group of 15 offender students. She creates a positive classroom learning environment that encourages students to ask questions and promotes a higher order of thinking. One of the most meaningful things that she has done is select a collection of writings from each offender student. The students published a chapter book of these writings in the fall of 2016 that contributing students were able to keep and share with their families.”

Unferth used her volunteer program to teach writing while building her students’ self-esteem. “By coming to Connally to teach writing, I was daring the students to believe that they have something to contribute,” she said. “Behind bars and separated from society, these students are still participants in the world who have voices and stories that are important and worthy.”

Additional 2017 Volunteer Highlights:

- The Women’s Storybook Project continues to connect incarcerated mothers with their children. Volunteers in this project work with female students to read and record books for offenders’ children, enhancing family support. This program is active in the Gatesville and Dayton areas.
- A group of volunteers offered a reading and literacy project at a Houston-area prison. Upon completion of the study, books used by the class are shared with general population offenders.

For her dedication and service, Deb Unferth (center), was presented an award in Austin by Board of Trustees Chairman Dale Wainwright (left) and TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier (right).
BUSINESS SERVICES

WSD’s 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:

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 SY17, WSD spent $4.51 per contact hour ($820.12 per participant) of state-appropriated money from TEA.

Other sources of WSD revenue include local (interest income) and other funds. Federal Grant Pass-Through funds are provided through grants such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I-Part D-Subpart 1, Title II-Part A, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-B), and the Carl D. Perkins Corrections Grant. WSD receives reimbursement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TDCJ for providing administrative oversight of recreation programs, library services and The ECHO newspaper.

Financial Data:

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<th>Funding for Fiscal Year 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WSD Contact Hour Rates</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year 2017 Cost Per Contact Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WSD (State)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best 180 Days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost Per Participant - Fiscal Year 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WSD (State and Federal Funding)</td>
<td>$848.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revenues - Fiscal Year 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local (Interest Income)</td>
<td>$158,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windham School District State (Foundation School Program)</td>
<td>$50,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Material Allotment (IMA)</td>
<td>$968,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grant Pass-Through Funds</td>
<td>$1,958,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>$4,557,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$98,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Transfer-In</td>
<td>$256,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$58,488,334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditures - Fiscal Year 2017

| Windham School District State (Foundation School Program) | $54,821,068 |
| Instructional Material Allotment (IMA)                    | $968,690 |
| Federal Grant Pass-Through Funds                           | $1,953,904 |
| Contract (Recreation, Library Services & The ECHO)         | $4,557,811 |
| **TOTAL Expenditures**                                    | $62,300,973 |

Biennium Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WSD Appropriation from General Revenue within the TEA Budget</th>
<th>84th Legislature 2016-2017</th>
<th>85th Legislature 2018-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$103,000,000</td>
<td>$104,365,440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HUMAN RESOURCES

WSD’s Human Resources Department develops and implements activities and programs relating to recruitment, staffing, employee classification, compensation and benefits, employee relations, employee recognition, and training on human resources policies and procedures.

- WSD Human Resources managed 1,115 positions during SY17.

- All WSD 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 years, reflecting a relatively stable workforce. There is a large number of long-tenured employees.

- WSD’s Human Resources Department works through Teacher Job Bank, Texas Association of School Administrators network (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.

- Principals-In-Residence are located in eight geographic areas of the WSD to oversee educational programs located at TDCJ facilities in their area. Principals-In-Residence coordinate WSD activities with unit wardens and TDCJ 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 Lead & Achieve Academy (previously Title I) services. They also coordinate the 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, along with 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.

The majority of positions in WSD are dedicated to classroom instruction. Staff served 68,146 students enrolled in educational programs during SY17. Counselors, librarians, and principals provided services to these enrolled students, as well as the majority of all other offenders housed within TDCJ-operated facilities. This was done 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.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology (IT) Department provides secure and reliable technology solutions in support of the district’s mission. The staff, located in Huntsville and at three area offices, maintains instructional and administrative architecture for
testing, vocational, and academic computer labs across the state. WSD’s computerized architecture consists of centralized servers and thin clients. Though classrooms do not have access to the Internet due to security precautions, teachers use a variety of educational software products supporting academic and vocational curricula. IT staff evaluates and tests all new software for WSD and server compatibility.

WSD IT delivers system, network, and database administration, and developers create and maintain applications to support WSD in meeting its mission. WSD IT continues to make significant technological advances, including major student computer program updates, human resources and life skills applications development, and several successful software implementations.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

The Operational Support Department sustains and corroborates the WSD’s mission by directing and managing initiatives that support student achievement in job training, academic growth, and essential life skills.

The department has direct oversight of compliance and operational reviews, campus planning and development, attendance policies, coordination of ITP guidelines, the Recreation program, and the Radio and Television Department. Operational Support also oversees district and student achievement reporting, along with program evaluation. The department coordinates internal and external research, and it serves as the educational liaison for private prisons, parole, and American Correctional Association (ACA) initiatives. Operational Support also calculates and verifies formal performance measures reported to TEA and Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC).

Operational Support has oversight of The ECHO, a TDCJ publication produced by and 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 of OPS 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, Annual Performance Report, videos, brochures, photographs from various events, news releases for significant events, the WSD website, TDCJ public information and media resources, and other methods.

RECREATION

In conjunction with TDCJ, WSD manages structured recreation activities for offenders, promoting health and wellness through physical activity, as well as allowing offenders to develop appropriate social skills. 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 male and female housing area dayrooms.

Organized programs are also provided through intramurals and craft shop participation. Interaction with appropriate community organizations is offered through supervised recreational events.
New chapters:
Former WSD students share career, life updates:

Monica Bennett-Oakley:

Monica Bennett-Oakley has shared her moving story with correctional educators from several states and inspired incarcerated men and women across Texas. At the age of 10, she was sexually abused by a babysitter’s son. She did not tell her parents, later reacting with rage, addiction, and criminal acts. Finding herself in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, isolated from outside influences, she turned to the Bible and WSD’s Cognitive Intervention Program to choose a different life. Her WSD teachers helped her change her path, creating a life-long appreciation of the power of education.

Bennett-Oakley was released in 2008, and she continued her education while rebuilding her life. She finished a degree in Process Operations through Lee College in December 2015, graduating Summa Cum Laude. A positive change in her family’s financial situation enables her to now focus on being a mother and home schooling her youngest stepson. She also recently appreciated the opportunity to help her community by purchasing and distributing food and supplies to local victims of Hurricane Harvey. She is enjoying her new roles in life.

“Family is the most important aspect of my life; I couldn’t be happier with where God has directed me,” she says.

Isaac White:

When he was 18, Isaac White was convicted of aggravated robbery with a weapon. He knew he would be in prison until he was 26 years old, and he realized he needed new plans for life after release. Enrolling in WSD vocational classes, he received plumbing and electrical training – and discovered a new career. Following release in 1999, White worked for contractors and finished a four-year apprenticeship program. After completing school, he went on to teach apprenticeship classes for nine years. In 2013, he made the decision to strike out on his own. Now in his early 40s, White is the hard-working president and owner of a successful electrical contracting company in Waller, Texas. He says his business revenue was $70,000 in the first three months with only two employees, and it had increased by 150 percent with five employees at the close of October, 2017. White adds that he has not been 24 hours without employment since 1999.

White recently addressed the 13-county Gulf Coast Workforce Board affiliated with Workforce Solutions, and his proud wife was in attendance. He praised his WSD vocational teachers with sincerity, thanking all school employees for their efforts: “It’s important to walk out of prison and feel like you have a future. What Windham does is phenomenal! The efforts of the Windham School District and its educators gave me the basic skills to get out and begin to make a life after prison. Today I am an Electrician because of those efforts.”

Candelario Davila:

Candelario Davila was convicted of murder and entered TDCJ at age 15. While spending time in Administrative Segregation, he realized he needed to prepare himself to earn a living after release from prison. His dad was a welder, so he began to think about a career in the same field. When he was discharged from Administrative Segregation into TDCJ’s general population, he signed up for welding classes with the WSD. Davila then found himself in the intense hands-on program of teacher Jimmy Perry and discovered he enjoyed the challenge of welding.

He became the welding shop foreman for Patriot Erectors in Dripping Springs after he left TDCJ, and he is busy supervising the night shift. The company serves a large number of Central Texas clients, and Davila is still happy with his career.

“Things are going great,” he says. "My family is growing so I have a lot of new expenses, but I can take care of everyone.”
WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
(WSD educational programming available at these locations)

Key
★ = Administrative Offices
SAFPF = Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility
SJ = State Jail
TF = Transfer Facility
ISF = Intermediate Sanction Facility

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

Wichita Falls Area
Allred Unit (Iowa Park)

WEST TEXAS
El Paso Area
Sanchez SJ

 Ft. Stockton Area
 Ft. Stockton TF
Lynaugh Unit

Lubbock Area
Montford Unit
Rudd ISF (Brownfield)

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

CENTRAL
Abilene Area
Middleton TF
Robertson Unit
Havins Unit
(Brownwood)

Breckenridge Area
Sayle SAFPF

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)

NORTH TEXAS
Dallas Area
Hutchesin SJ
Cole SJ (Bonham)
Moore TF (Bonham)
Johnston SAFPF
(Winsboro)
Telford Unit
(New Boston)

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

SAM HOUSTON
Bryan Area
Hamilton Unit

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

Navasota Area
Luther Unit
Pack Unit

ALAMO
Austin Area
Travis County SJ
Hubert SAFPF
(Burnet)

Beeville Area
Chase Field
Garza East TF
Garza West TF
McConnell Unit
Glossbrenner SAFPF
(San Diego)

Dilley Area
Briscoe Unit
Cotulla TF (Cotulla)

Edinburg Area
Lopez SJ
Segovia Unit

San Antonio Area
Dominguez SJ
Ney SJ (Hondo)
Torres Unit (Hondo)

GULF COAST
Kenedy Area
Connally Unit
Stevenson Unit
(Cuero)

Richmond Area
Jester I SAFPF
Jester III Unit
Jester IV Unit

Rosharon Area
Darrington Unit
Ramsey Unit
Stringfellow Unit
Terrell Unit
Clemens Unit
(Brazoria)
Scott Unit
(Angleton)
Young Medical Facility
(Dickinson)

SOUTH EAST TEXAS
Beaumont Area
Gist SJ
LeBlanc Unit
Stiles Unit

Dayton Area
Henley SJ
Hightower Unit
Plane SJ

Humble Area
Lychner SJ

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

Note: Windham also provided educational services at Baten, Kegans and Ware units for a portion of SY ’16-’17.
Aligning Education and Opportunity to Change Lives