OPPORTUNITIES
for SECOND CHANCES
Career... Community... Family

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
SCHOOL YEAR 2017-2018

Let Our Students Tell Their Stories! Download Our Mobile App. See pg. 4 For Details.
Thank you for making time to learn how Windham School District (WSD) is growing

Windham School District programs, outlined in this annual performance report, support the ongoing transformation of our students as they transition out of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). A strategic planning session five years ago sparked the diligent work Windham continues to do in order to upgrade the program offerings and enhance the learning opportunities for students.

The plan, developed by staff members, teachers, administrators, and stakeholders, created a vision of what Windham should be. We used extensive data analysis to determine where programs could improve with better outcomes. The implementation of the strategic plan required changes to curricula, new teaching materials, and expansion of program offerings. It also required significant restructuring to achieve set goals. Since recidivism is measured three years after release, the results have now started to appear, showing positive gains in all areas of programming.

Windham completely revised the Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) and Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) curricula to provide research-based strategies and assessments to measure student gains. In the past, these courses provided benefits over time, but with the new additions, individual behavior changes can be measured more accurately and in a timelier manner. The outcomes of the current programs, fully implemented in the 2017-18 school year, will begin providing beneficial proof of these revisions.

Academic gains in the 2017-18 school year continue to show some of the highest results in the nation among correctional education programs. Students can expect to see more than two years gain academically in literacy classes for every one year of study—630 hours of classroom instruction. Windham completed the implementation of computer-based testing for the High School Equivalency Certificate (HSE) in 2017-18, which allows students to test and receive results more quickly.

Extensive vocational programming continued to grow, reaching more students and providing essential credentials and skills needed for them to gain high-paying jobs after release. The program expanded the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) occupation training and provided more opportunities for female students. The continued expansion of Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) machining and telecommunications connectivity opened up new career paths for all students. In addition, the expansion of non-traditional job skills training for females in the 2017-18 school year included electrical trades, cabinetmaking, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). The number of female-offered trade certification courses has doubled to 22 programs over the past five years. During that same time, Windham programs saw a 470 percent increase in the number of industry-recognized certifications awarded to females, according to last year’s certification data. Windham continues to enhance programs in all areas and expand opportunities for employment by connecting with employers to obtain guidance on program changes and job connections for releasing students.

This report shows the progress of the change efforts occurring within Windham. This team effort from Windham staff, TDCJ, and external stakeholders fuels the continued improvement of our district and students. We are proud of the work everyone does to make Windham a top-performing correctional education program, and we look forward to continued improvement in support of our shared mission.

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 2018 Annual Performance Report for the Windham School District.

Under the skillful leadership of Windham Superintendent Dr. Clint Carpenter, WSD continues to perform its mission and 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 viewing 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 2018, almost 33,000 industry-recognized certifications were awarded to Windham students, confirming and documenting their employability. Over the past five years, Windham has doubled the number of female-offered trade certification courses. 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.

to prove that we could be better even after we fall. ~ Unknown
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Scan the QR code below to download our WSD-APR app. Open the app and hover your phone over the photos denoted by this symbol and watch as our students speak to you about their experiences and achievements with Windham School District. (See cover and page 22)  *This app was built in-house by Windham employees at no additional expense.

* All data in this publication does not include units maintained by private facilities.
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.

WSD provides opportunity for offenders to successfully improve in education
Windham School District (WSD) serves a population of male and female adult offenders who have not been successful in completing their education in the past or who simply need a skill set 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 the free-world’s 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 achievement. 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 offers the opportunity for second chances.

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 provided services to more than 68,000 offenders in School Year 18

Highlights of Released Offenders in the 2017-2018 School Year

(September, 2017 - August, 2018: SY18)

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 SY18. More than 70 percent of those released participated in one or more educational programs during the history of their incarceration.

- Of the released offenders, 11,787 attained an HSE certificate through WSD, and 83 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 59 percent demonstrated a significant gain in educational achievement level or attained an HSE certificate or HSD.

### Educational Services Provided During SY18

- There were 68,371 offenders with widely-varying educational backgrounds who received WSD educational services in SY18.

- During the WSD’s SY18, TDCJ had an average on-hand count of 145,474 offenders at the end of each month. Of those, an average of 136,038 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

Certified counselors provide comprehensive guidance program

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

WSD employs certified counselors to provide a comprehensive guidance program at the unit level. Counselors collect educational history data from offenders and 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, and students are tested at the units throughout the school year to monitor academic progress.

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 programming.

Counselors conduct face-to-face interviews with students to share course information, discuss individual interests, consider work history, assess existing skills and abilities, and review the state licensing process. This process is done to identify the vocational path best suited for each offender. In addition, WSD partners with TDCJ to facilitate a transfer when an offender needs to be reassigned to access specific programming. These services help to ensure the most appropriate educational placement for offenders, better preparing them for successful workforce reentry.
“Teaching literacy skills, training offenders in vocational job trades, working to change criminal thinking patterns, and sharing essential life skills are just some of the ways Windham teachers are making a difference in the lives of their students.

~ Dr. Clint Carpenter
Literacy, Career and Technical Education, Life Skills Programs

WSD uses programs to encourage student success

For individuals with a history of incarceration, the already demanding employment environment includes additional obstacles in starting a career and rebuilding their lives. WSD faces the challenging opportunity to combine vocational training, life skills, and academic strategies to give students a second chance toward successful careers.

Second chances for WSD students in SY18 were supported by a combination of customized literacy courses, expanded Career and Technical Education (CTE) vocational offerings, and focused life skills programs. WSD’s diligence serves as a strategic differentiator for successful outcomes by providing data-driven programming. Front-line statistical analysis forms the base of WSD’s comprehensive approach in specific program choices. 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 SY18 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, leading 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 towards gaining a second chance.

Improved planning for WSD’s vocational initiatives in SY18 involved 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 SY18, 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.

WSD’s life skills initiative is another area the district uses to inspire the learning path 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 life skills offerings help to significantly strengthen critical behavioral skills required for students to make better choices and reintegrate into society. 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.

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 and second chances for offenders.
Academic courses combine literacy instruction with employment skills to offer offenders a second chance.

To transform WSD students into productive workers, family members, and citizens, WSD’s academic instruction fuses literacy skill achievement and employment-based learning. WSD provides different levels of competency-based instructional programs to help students achieve either a HSE certificate or HSD. WSD’s specialized reading instruction develops non-readers and emerging readers into self-sufficient students.

In SY18, WSD’s literacy programs served nearly 30,000 offenders with an average initial educational attainment of 5.6. Accommodating the transient nature of the TDCJ population, WSD classes remain open. 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—approximately one WSD school year.

**LITERACY SUCCESS LEADS TO HSE CERTIFICATE OR HSD**

All WSD coursework is aimed at productive levels of literacy and attainment of a HSD 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 focuses 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 HSD. This effort included male and female facilities, affording students additional pathways of success leading to post-release employment or post-secondary educational opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion of NRS Educational Functioning Levels 2017-2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Educational Functioning Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (0.0 to 1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 (2.0 to 3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 (4.0 to 5.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 (6.0 to 8.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5 (9.0 to 10.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6 (11.0 to 12.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></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, 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.
Lead & Achieve teachers and staff met quarterly to assess, implement, and provide feedback for a new college and career component of the Lead & Achieve curriculum. In addition to supporting the goal of achieving a HSE certificate or HSD, the teachers and students in these classes also began spending 20 percent of their class time on dedicated lessons and practice in work-readiness and career planning skills. Teachers learned about current research on effective practices for young adult learners and shared their best activities and classroom successes. Staff development was provided for new HSE certificate and career focused curriculum materials obtained to support this endeavor. Throughout the year, teachers evaluated new materials geared to helping students set goals to help them transition from incarceration to career and continued education opportunities, giving them a second chance for success.

WSD continued its partnership with American YouthWorks Austin in SY18. This collaboration affords eligible young students—ages 18-24—in state jail facilities opportunities to transition from incarceration to a second chance for 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. Participants 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 SY18, WSD continued to join 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. The program provides young men and women the opportunity to earn their HSE certificate or HSD. YouthBuild also trains students in construction, welding, and Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) machining while also addressing core issues such as affordable housing, employment, and leadership development.

**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 SY18 also helped ELL students advance their level of reading skills.
ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT ENHANCES EDUCATORS’ SKILLS, TECHNIQUES, STRATEGIES

Staff development in SY18 for WSD teachers and administrators included training with Reading Horizons, Compass Learning (Odyssey), Houston A+, and Brown and Associates. 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, enhance teaching using language arts and mathematics strategies for adult learners, and create and maintain a positive school climate using professional learning communities (PLCs).

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 direct-teaching methods with the assistance of computer-assisted instruction 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.

Training sessions for educators by Compass Learning (Odyssey) were used to boost teaching effectiveness, student achievement, and enhance WSD efforts to increase passing rates for HSE tests. Compass Learning’s Odyssey training helped prepare literacy instructors to effectually use Odyssey software to teach a broad range of academic skills while balancing digital and face-to-face instruction.

Houston A+ provided participants with information about systems, in addition to building and maintaining collaboration among campuses and throughout the district using PLCs. They also demonstrated lessons for teaching fractions and writing. Brown and Associates facilitated sessions that focused on the effectiveness and importance of a positive school culture and the characteristics of school leaders who cultivate and grow schools with a positive school climate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinct Literacy Participants*</th>
<th>29,049</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy I, II, III</td>
<td>28,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead &amp; Achieve Academy</td>
<td>1,013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Each participant count is by literacy program. The total of the distinct counts by specific program may be larger than the distinct count of participants in all of the literacy programs combined since an offender may be eligible for more than one literacy program during the SY.
Arrested at age 23, Chris Harrell believed himself to be the family disappointment and burden. Harrell filled his teenage years and early twenties with shenanigans and disruptive behaviors that eventually led to his imprisonment within Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

Even though Harrell already had a high school diploma, he wanted to get involved with Windham School District (WSD).

"I was hoping I was going to get sent to a unit that had some kind of vocational training," he said. "As soon as I got to the unit I started sending request forms out to be put on the waiting list."

Harrell earned several industry certifications including Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) with WSD instructor Ted Watts. Harrell said Watts was different than most other teachers and made a significant impact on Harrell’s vocational education.

Harrell even tried to track down Watts at the Lewis Unit to give him a special message after he reestablished himself in his community.

"I just wanted to let him know I appreciate all the training he gave me," Harrell said. "He actually cared. In that kind of setting a lot of people don’t and he’s one of the ones that cared. He really put his heart and soul and a whole lot of effort into that [teaching]."

Knowing the difference between a job and a career is one of the many things Harrell learned in his WSD education. Along with setting and obtaining goals, a career offers professional fulfillment and provides for family.

For Harrell, his career must also entice him with day-to-day variety. Working as a lead installer and service technician for a heating and air conditioning company in east Texas achieves this goal.

“Every day is different. I’m not stuck behind a desk in an office, which some people, they like that. It helps them be organized, and I’m just not a paperwork kind of guy,” Harrell chuckled. “I love working with my hands.”

Lack of monotony and diversity are important to Harrell in his work. He also enjoys the responsibility of his position.

“I’m trusted. We work business hours Monday through Friday while everyone else works too,” he explained. “I work in people’s homes. People trust me and it’s given me the opportunity to make the best of a new start.”

Harrell went to work soon after his release in 2014. However, it wasn’t until 2016 that he found his current job, which offers professional fulfillment and provides for his family.

“I learned quickly and I was willing to do anything they threw at me,” he said, smiling. “Eventually, they put me in charge of the install crew and it’s been great ever since.”

Harrell’s advice to those currently incarcerated includes “taking the chip off your shoulders, being willing to take instructions, and learning from mistakes.”

Today, five years after his release, Harrell diligently works a steady job near his hometown and brings home more than $50,000 a year.

When asked about his parents’ reaction to his full turnaround in life, Harrell said they are ecstatic and grateful.

“That is real humbling and gratifying for me, to give back and be a positive aspect of their lives again,” Harrell explained. “After everything I put myself through, I put them through so much more. So for them to see me being successful and having a career and being sober, a good influence and a force for good in the world—they’re just at peace.”
PEC Summer School is designed to equip offenders with soft skills that support their development as productive members of society.

~ Travis Henderson
The WSD offered Elective Personal Enrichment Courses (EPEC) during the summer of SY18. Classes centered 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 on selected facilities. Instructors included WSD teachers, administrators, and other staff. The courses occurred at 44 TDCJ units during three weeks in July. There were almost 9,000 course enrollments from roughly 7,000 offenders.

The WSD partnered with Acceleron Learning, a Texas-based company specializing in development of digital lectures and planning tools for practical life skills, in the development of these courses for the correctional environment. 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 include Career Planning, Workplace Skills, Financial Literacy, Parenting Skills, Family Health, and Reentry Roadmap. Further EPEC offerings were selected from WSD staff proposals and current WSD classes. These EPEC classes included OSHA Safety courses, Computer Basics, 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. About 38 percent of the offender participants had not been previously served by the WSD during SY18. The support and cooperative effort of the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division was essential to this successful outreach effort.

“The classes I took helped me start planning my future career and enrolling into college. It also helped me write a resume for a job when I get out. Thank you for the opportunity.”

Amanda M.
WSD EPEC participant
Accountability: a new system

Each unit report card provides an overall grade, an accomplishment level, and a score for each graded area. The above report card is for demonstration purposes only.
The Accountability System ensures collaboration and dependability between units

During SY18, WSD worked to develop a completely new and comprehensive Accountability System, which will be implemented in SY19. This system will allow WSD to track performance on critical measures and strengthen effectiveness in all program areas. WSD’s Accountability uses factual evaluation procedures and places a significant focus on highlighting the achievements of all faculty, staff, and students at the unit level. Most importantly, the Accountability System will recognize, value, and empower all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, TDCJ unit administrative and correctional staff, and WSD administrative staff.

District employees played an important role in developing the new system. There were 21 accountability meetings held throughout Texas during SY18, incorporating more than 890 district personnel, including approximately 750 unit-based staff. Attendees used WSD’s goals, vision, and mission to guide the development of the system. Excellence in education and quality educational opportunities motivated WSD’s resiliency and resolve to create an accountability system that cultivates employee ownership and serves to enhance program effectiveness.

The design of WSD’s Accountability System will assist school employees in comparing unit data, tracking key unit activities, supporting the campus improvement plan, and recognizing units and unit personnel. This new, inclusive system recognizes the performance of every employee on the unit, including stakeholders and support staff. Beginning with SY19, WSD will use seven major activity items to determine an accountability rating.

- Percent of Attendance
- Percent of Academic Completion
- Percent of Vocational Career and Technical Education (CTE) Completion
- Percent of Life Skills Combined Measures (CIP and CHANGES Program)
- Percent of Compliance for WSD Audit
- Percent of CTE students earning Industry Certification
- Percent Earning HSE Certificate

All activity areas will be weighted and combined to arrive at a final accomplishment level and rating for each unit. Unit scores will be based on a 0 – 100 scale, consistent with the Texas Education Agency State of Texas K-12 scale and grading system. Weighted unit measures depend on which programs the unit offers.

The dissemination of information regarding a unit’s performance is important in this new accountability system. All district personnel will be able to view their unit performance measures and data through various reports and the Accountability Dashboard on the WSD Intranet for comparison.

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

Pictured left: Life skills gauges show percent of completion for CIP and CHANGES and bar graphs show pre and post test gains for CIP and CHANGES.

CTE gauges show CTE completion by category – based on length of course.
Career and technical training gives WSD students the opportunity to prepare for the workforce by earning necessary skills and industry certifications.

~ Rick Jones
Skills training with real-world relevance provides second chances for offenders

The WSD vocational programming, known as Career and Technical Education (CTE), provides a graduate with the skills and real-world learning experiences necessary to compete in today’s workforce. With a dynamic combination of hands-on training, classroom instruction, and third-party industry related certification, CTE courses have proven to give graduates more opportunities for success with a lower likelihood of recidivism and increased career-earning abilities than students who have not completed CTE programs.

Technical training without related academics potentially sets a student up for failure in the job market. Related academics in the areas of math and trade-related science are an integral component in each of the programs offered. The goal of the training is to provide our graduates with a grounded education in all aspects of the trade being taught.

**CTE courses provide:**

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

WSD’s dedicated CTE teachers are committed to the success of students. All instructors are experts in their field with numerous years of teaching/work-related experience. Along with the technical skills taught in each trade, WSD CTE instructors provide soft skills training necessary for success in today’s workforce. Soft skills include how to get along with co-workers on a job, problem solving, the worth and value of work, teamwork, appropriate communication skills, and more.
CTE programming is competency based, utilizing industry standards as each student prepares for a career. All courses are aligned with specific career clusters, ensuring students take a focused approach to career goals. WSD counselors work with each student to help them succeed in vocational training that best fits their future.

Industry-recognized certification is based on an exhaustive curriculum and testing process. This use of third-party certifications further validates the training offered and skills attained. Certifications include National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), ServSafe, North American Technician Excellence (NATE), and many others. Students who earn a third-party certification often have an advantage over applicants with no certification. They may also use their industry-recognized certificates to obtain advanced training in their chosen career fields through certified training providers.
New courses for SY18 include:

- Level II Advanced Welding
- Construction Craft Laborer
- HVAC Preventative Maintenance Technician
- HVAC Service Technician

WSD offers more than 40 CTE courses. In many of the courses offered, students are able to earn multiple industry-recognized training certificates.

A number of the courses offered in SY18 allowed students the opportunity to qualify for maintenance and prison jobs within TDCJ. These include apprenticeship and on-the-job training positions. This component of the CTE program provides students with viable work experience, which can transfer to free-world positions. WSD is a United States Department of Labor registered apprenticeship program.
A focus on contemporary job training for women enrolled in WSD courses expanded in SY18. Female offenders are offered training in more than 20 CTE courses. These include Telecommunications Connectivity, Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) machining, Cabinetmaking, Electrical Trades, HVAC Preventative Maintenance Technician, HVAC Service Technician, and other courses that help provide female offenders skills needed for a second chance at success. WSD continues to make great strides in preparing female offenders for the workforce and successful return to society.
Workforce partnerships, vocational trades provide employable skills to offenders

Right, WSD Workforce Liaison, Rex Rhone (left), and Superintendent Clint Carpenter (right), work with TIC Regional Recruiting Manager, Bryan Robinson (center), to create job opportunities for offenders reentering society and the workforce.

WSD’s workforce and reentry initiative creates the opportunity for successful reentry into employment, careers, and reconstructed lives. By connecting with industry leaders and community stakeholders, WSD gives students opportunities for skilled training, genuine career experience, and reduced chances of recidivism to create a stronger workforce.

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 time in WSD schools offering current training suggestions while discovering the broad spectrum of employment training offered by WSD.

To build employment partnerships, WSD signed Employability Skills Collaboration agreements during SY18 with Workforce Solutions and Texas workforce development board including Lower Rio Grande Valley. These collaborations help provide former offenders with high-level employability skills and also enhance economic growth through employment. The partnerships are nurtured to increase community engagement and expand second chance 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. During SY18, WSD staff visited three company locations to enhance their vocational knowledge.

Windham educators offer each student the opportunity to fill out a generic job application before their release date. The application is entered into a database with the student’s permission, and upon release it is sent to prospective employers. 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. Windham is also working with the TDCJ Reentry Website for Work. By means of this website, WSD students can choose to have their vocational credentials posted for potential employers to view and once the student is released, can be contacted for employment. WSD partners support the process and welcome the opportunity to hire WSD-trained men and women.

WSD’s industry partners are the foundation of employment-related expo events. The expo events take place inside TDCJ facilities to make students aware of employment and reentry services, along with continued education opportunities. WSD and TDCJ sponsored 18 expo events during SY18.

• Career Expos allow offenders to meet with potential employers and learn 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.
Above: Lisa Bogany and Crosby Brito with Workforce Solutions, Employer Service Division are speaking with the Apprenticeship HVAC students. WSD works with Houston-Galveston Area Council in an apprenticeship grant, helping offenders with HVAC, Electrical or Welding with employment when they are released. Our students will be connected with companies that have DOL apprenticeship programs to continue their education and work skills. Having this partnership connects WSD CTE programs, apprenticeship hours with TDCJ skills and employment upon release with companies that use these programs.

WSD, TDCJ concentrate on expanding post-release career prospects:

Work certification program, OJT, apprenticeship enrich 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.

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.
Tish Gribble smiles at the old photo hanging in her house in Galveston. It’s a picture from many years ago of herself, in prison whites, holding her hard-earned High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate and smiling about her progress in life.

Gribble’s life of trauma, drugs, alcohol, and fast money began early with both of her parents being heroin addicts. Lack of good parental role models and poor decision-making skills led Gribble, with two young children at home, to receive her first felony case at age 20.

Her second felony case came soon after, resulting with a three year sentence for both cases.

Not long after entering the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) system, Gribble began taking classes through Windham School District (WSD).

“The reason why education is such a profound part of my story is because it was literally the only thing that kept me from any type of trouble,” Gribble explained. “I can’t do this because then I can’t go to school. Missing class was my only consequence.”

Gribble avoided fights and unnecessary trouble so she could work toward her HSE certificate. The classes helped her realize her own intelligence for the first time in her life.

Gribble worked hard in her classes. Nothing, not even sickness, would keep her from achieving her new dream of getting her HSE certificate.

“I got really sick during my GED test,” Gribble said. “Once you walk out of your GED test you have to wait forever to retake it. So, I was at the back of the room getting sick and I still got really good scores.”

Soon after taking the test, Gribble transferred to the Hobby Unit, where she would participate in the graduation ceremony. Gribble remembered several of the women graduating being recognized for things such as the youngest and oldest to get their HSE certificates.

“I figured I didn’t get an award because I just hit the unit within that month,” she said. “Whenever they announced my name for valedictorian, because I had gotten the highest scores, it was like the first time in my entire life I ever felt proud of myself.”

Being recognized for something other than causing trouble was a pivotal moment in her life. Gribble will always remember it as the first time she knew she could do so much more with her life.

Gribble also completed WSD’s Cognitive Intervention Program. She still has her notes from the class, where she first learned how to redirect her criminal thought patterns.

“That was the class that actually impacted my life tremendously,” she said.

Overall, WSD played an irreplaceable role in Gribble’s second chance at life. She remembers her teachers as caring and effective.

“Both teachers that I had actually cared about what they were doing and me as a person,” she said. “I remember it being very personal. Coming from a world where nobody cared what I was doing, it meant a lot to learn from them.”

Now, as a way of giving back and reminding her where she came from, Gribble does prison ministry.

“I tell them flat out ‘kids follow us,’” Gribble stated. “It’s important to give them better steps to follow in.”

Gribble refused to provide undesirable footsteps for her daughter. She decided submitting her life to God was the best way for her to set an example.

The importance of being a good example and getting her HSE certificate goes beyond self-accomplishment. Gribble fulfilled her hopes of ending the cycle of troubled parents and troubled kids with her generation.

“For them to be two kids who came from teen parents that got their GEDs in prison, and to both be college students with actual high school diplomas, it’s a really big deal for me,” she said.

Gribble looks back at her graduation photo often. Surrounded by her kids and holding her prized HSE certificate, she is reminded of the meaning and inspiration of it all—her family.
Both the Franklin Reality Model and Criminal Addictive Cycle are tools I will use in the free-world so that I can remain free and be a positive member of my family and community. I want my children to be proud of me.

Javier, WSD CIP student
WSD Life Skills programs

Changing criminal thinking to enrich future lives

WSD strives to elevate and enrich the futures of students who experienced academic, behavioral, and life challenges. Providing educational support to assist them in obtaining a more confident, efficient, and productive way of life accomplishes this goal. 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 life. Refocusing thinking processes can empower offenders to behave more responsibly, develop healthy relationships, and retain better-paying jobs. The design of Life Skills classes enhances cognitive skills and promotes a healthy environment for positive attitudes and mindsets. They are offered on most TDCJ 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. In 2009, it was modified to become CHANGES II incorporating a cognitive component. CHANGES 3, the latest edition of the curriculum, was introduced in 2016.

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 National Institute of Corrections assisted with the creation of the CIP curriculum in 1996, which updated into CIP 2 in 2016. Through cognitive intervention, students learn more appropriate thinking skills using instruction, role play, and exercises in interpersonal problem solving.

WSD also 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 communication-based, interactive program supports the development of healthy family relationships. These positive behaviors are also reflective of the personal characteristics sought by employers.

The CHANGES and CIP curricula received revisions 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. CHANGES 3 and CIP 2 curriculum revisions included updates and realignment 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).

These curriculum revisions reinforced and advanced program effectiveness in CHANGES and CIP, making life skills a continued and valued course offering for WSD. 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, citizens, and employees. WSD strives to provide a well-developed life skills program, enabling students to translate knowledge, attitude, skills, and values into action. After release, these former students and their home communities can benefit in educational, social, health, cultural, and economic areas. The successful revision of life skills programs by WSD and its stakeholders serves as reinforcement for students as they strive for second chances in personal change and life success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Skills Program</th>
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<tr>
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Javier,

WSD CIP student
Born and raised in a loving family in Abilene, Texas, Tammy Kister never had trouble with the law beyond a speeding ticket. However, shortly after turning 29 in 1991, she found herself in a place she never expected to be—prison.

“This type of thing was not a family trait,” Kister said. “My poor choices didn’t have anything to do with my upbringing.” Harassment concerning her teenage pregnancy caused Kister to drop out of high school in her junior year. Instead of education, Kister joined the workforce.

“I always worked, but then I made bad choices and got in with the wrong people and it all went downhill from there,” she said.

Not long after coming into the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), Kister began classes with Windham School District (WSD) to earn her High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate.

“I think if Windham hadn’t been available for me to take advantage of doing something positive with the time I had to be there [in prison], I’m not sure I ever would have gone back and gotten my GED,” Kister said.

Attaining her HSE certificate gave Kister the confidence and desire to further her education.

“I strongly believe education is the foundation for success,” she said.

While earning two associate’s degrees from Cisco College, Kister discovered her passion for real estate. Equipped with her degrees in business management and real estate, she applied to the Texas Real Estate Commission to become a licensed Realtor.

“Because I was a convicted felon I did have to jump through a few more hoops,” Kister said. “I had to do a moral character determination and get some support letters and things like that from people in my community.”

Ten years later, Kister’s passion for learning and achieving, which began with WSD, led her to a bachelor’s degree at McMurry University. Now working for a large real estate firm in Abilene, Kister also partners in a property management company called Absolute Real Estate Management, which she established.

Kister explained she enjoys contributing to her community by helping people find their dream homes.

“Service and giving back have really been a big part of my life since I returned home,” she said. “I guess I’m still trying to pay penitence for the mistake that I made. A positive way for me to do that is to serve on boards that benefit the community.”

Building trust within the community and with her clients holds great meaning for Kister.

“I love what I do in being able to help families with one of the biggest decisions of their life, which is buying or selling a home,” Kister said. “I feel like to a degree I’m a matchmaker. I match people with homes and it gives me a lot of joy and pride to be trusted with that decision.”

Her achievements inspire her to give back and to help others who have similar struggles. Kister said there may be more hoops to jump through and more obstacles to clear, but she never lets the past inhibit the future.

“Don’t let where you are or what you’ve done define you throughout the rest of your life,” she said. “You always need to keep looking forward to whatever your goal is.”

Learning from mistakes is another way Kister continues to move on in life and career. She encourages current and former offenders to learn from their mistakes and not give in to guilt.

“I would say that I’m certainly not proud of some of the choices I’ve made in life that ultimately led me to have a number behind my name and be a convicted felon, but I’m very proud of the accomplishments that I’ve made and the success that I have enjoyed by putting in the effort and the hard work to make a change,” Kister said.

Enduring hardship taught Kister many lessons, which she uses to help others and encourage them to persevere.

“I think it was God’s plan, as much as I don’t like that, it was his plan,” Kister said. “I think he put me where I needed to be to save me from myself and to give me a story that I can use to inspire others.”
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 (CT&R) Department supports and supplements essential unit testing processes, including educational assessments for newly-received offenders, periodic assessments of those enrolled in WSD programs, and an extensive High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate testing effort.

The three-year journey of transitioning to computer-based testing (CBT) concluded in SY18. CBT was introduced on 87 TDCJ facilities, resulting in a more consistent test delivery, faster scoring and reporting, and enhanced test security. All WSD testing facilities are approved as secure individual Pearson VUE testing sites and must meet GED Testing Service, Pearson VUE, and Texas Education Agency standards and guidelines to ensure exams are administered in a fair and consistent manner.

WSD administrative staff developed a two-day test administrator training, incorporating procedures to address constraints specific to the prison environment.

WSD consistently maintained a subtest pass rate of 80-85 percent. Within the last two years, the district’s HSE certificate pass rate of 82-85 percent exceeded both the Texas and National pass rates from both paper and computer-based testing.

In addition to testing responsibilities, CT&R personnel also work continually with education agencies throughout the United States in an effort to verify the high school diplomas, HSE certificates, and college claims of offenders. The CT&R Department is also responsible for maintaining educational records for all offenders, current and former, and responds to legal and offender requests for records.

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

LIBRARIES

Education and job skills training define a journey of learning opportunities in which students face transformational challenges. WSD maintains 86 libraries in TDCJ facilities throughout Texas to assist offenders to become job-ready and envision a better future. With an emphasis on job training and literacy skills, these libraries complement vocational and academic training. Library staff members 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. WSD recognizes the importance of literacy in seeking employment and improving quality of life, so WSD libraries also provide services for non-students.

WSD partners with Lee College to obtain a Texas State Library grant to provide digital resources to every WSD library across the state. Work progresses on the eGranary digital library, a pilot program conducted in collaboration with Lee College to provide digital reference materials to library patrons.

eGranary allows offenders to research information for themselves on stand-alone computer stations.
Libraries cont.

The digital resources originate from an online source; however, the information is placed in a digital file and downloaded into the computer, which is not connected to the internet. The files will be updated regularly to keep information current.

The WSD Information Technology department developed a digital catalog of every book in each of the 86 library collections to be used as a resource for library staff members. The pilot program for this endeavor will be implemented in the 2018-2019 school year and will quickly be implemented in every library. The vision for the future is to allow offender library patrons access to the digital collection as well. Additionally, WSD recently acquired the services of TexQuest, which provides online resources available only to library staff members. WSD continues to advance its technological capacities to provide improved services to students.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

WSD volunteers offer specialized skills, talents, experiences, and resources to assist educators in creating a culture of continuous learning. During SY18, WSD administration had oversight of more than 450 volunteers. These volunteers provided nearly 4,300 hours of assistance, serving about 7,800 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. They serve as presenters at WSD job expos and reentry services expos, and offer current information about employment, hiring practices, workplace skills, and available community reentry resources. Volunteers also serve as inspiring graduation speakers, sharing their experiences and motivating 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 prepare for 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 Programs

WSD Library Information for SY18

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* Does not include libraries maintained by private facilities

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:

(AUSTIN)—Debra Taylor of San Saba, Texas was presented the “Judy Burd—Windham School District” Award during the Governor’s 2018 Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award program today. Above right, from left to right: TBCJ Chairman Dale Wainwright, Mr. Taylor, Debra Taylor, Supreme Court Justice Jimmy Blacklock, and TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier.

Debra Taylor of San Saba, Texas was presented the “Judy Burd—Windham School District” Award during the Governor’s 2018 Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award program today.

Each of these award recipients has given countless hours of volunteer service within the TDCJ, and we are extremely grateful for their efforts,” Director Collier said. “They help to make a profound impact on the lives of thousands of offenders and, in doing so, make Texas safer. They are truly every day heroes.”

Chairman Wainwright said, “These award recipients are giving of their time and gifts to help build better communities throughout Texas. We are extremely thankful for the volunteers we recognize with these awards. They selflessly serve others out of a sense of responsibility to their fellow Texans and to the offenders.”

Ms. Taylor is a dedicated TDCJ volunteer and played an instrumental role in the success of the Storybook Project at the San Saba Unit. The project allows female offenders to select a book appropriate for their child’s age and read it to create a recording of their voice. Volunteers then transfer the recording to a CD that is sent to the offender’s child along with the book. The Storybook Project helps foster a relationship between the mother and child during her incarceration. It also helps to motivate the offender to read to their child, which can be critical to the child’s success and break the chain of criminal behaviour.

“Ms. Taylor’s dedication to promoting literacy and helping others is critical to education and reentry efforts,” Windham
School District Superintendent Dr. Clint Carpenter said, “We are proud of her and of the many citizen volunteers who are supporting efforts to give offenders second chances to succeed in life.”

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

**Creative Writing Volunteer Program**

The Pen City Writers, a creative writing certificate program for men incarcerated at the Connally Unit, began in the summer of 2015. Sponsored by the University of Texas in Austin English Department, Professor Deb Unferth volunteers her time to lead this certificate program.

Students study materials in addition to their school work, read carefully chosen books, and participate in monthly workshops where they focus on the elements of grammar and craft.

The students hold positions within the class, learning leadership and teamwork. In 2016, the students published a journal of their stories, funded by the UT English Department. The department plans to fund an annual Christmas journal to highlight the students work and give them opportunities to learn new skills.

In January 2018, UT agreed to grant three college credits per year for students enrolled in the program. Students who complete the program will earn a certificate of completion, as well as a college transcript with course work and hours reflected.

Participation can be included as part of offender’s Individualized Treatment Plan. The program allows students to gain professional skills they will be able to use when they re-enter society such as writing, typing, group leadership, excellence in reading, the ability to work toward distant goals, and community participation.

**Additional 2018 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, San Saba, and Dayton areas and recently expanded to include the Hobby Unit.

**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.
Having a second chance makes you want to work even harder. ~ Tia Mowry

Financial Data cont.

These formulas are based on offender contact (attendance) hours for the best 180 of 210 school days in each year of the biennium. In SY18, WSD spent $4.28 per contact hours—$756.93 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.

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 1,099 positions during SY18.
- All WSD teachers, counselors, librarians, diagnosticians, and principals are certified by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification.
- WSD teachers average 17 years of experience, reflecting a relatively stable workforce. Long-tenured employees make up a large portion of the district.

- WSD’s Human Resources Department works through Teacher Job Bank, Texas Association of School Administrators Network (TASANET), Education Service Centers, newspapers, Indeed.com, publications, 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: wsdtx.org.

Regional Principals are located in eight geographic areas of the WSD to oversee educational programs located at TDCJ facilities in their area. Regional Principals 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 referred to as 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 68,371 students enrolled in educational programs during SY18, as well as additional offenders, through library services, I-60s, assessments, information requests, interviews, and more. Counselors, librarians, and principals provided these services not only to enrolled students, but also to the majority of all other offenders housed within TDCJ-operated facilities. This is an exceptionally different situation than that of public school, where support staff and teachers serve only those students enrolled in their school or district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>SY18 - Public School Profile*</th>
<th>SY18 - WSD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Administration</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Staff</th>
<th>SY18 - Public School*</th>
<th>SY18 - WSD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Teacher Experience</td>
<td>11.0 years</td>
<td>17.0 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Salary for 17 Years of Experience</td>
<td>$295.40/day</td>
<td>$245.51/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days Per Contract</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2018 Texas Academic Performance Report
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology (IT) Department provides current technology solutions in support of the district’s mission, emphasizing security and reliability in a correctional education setting. The staff is located in Huntsville and at three area offices, and maintains instructional and administrative support for testing, vocational, and academic computer labs across Texas.

WSD’s computerized architecture consists of servers, thin clients, and laptops. Though classrooms do not have access to the Internet due to security restrictions, teachers use a variety of educational software products to support 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 accountability updates, database conversions, user-friendly report creation, and life skills applications development with several successful software implementations.

Some of this year’s highlights include:

GED Implementation—IT completed updating all units to computer-based testing. All units were visited to ensure the best testing solution, room modifications were made, and application scripts improving the process were created.

Accountability Dashboard—IT developed an application containing data visualizations that are updated weekly to help district employees view the progress of their work and facilitate necessary modifications to their campus action plans. The dashboard monitors critical measures that enable the district to better serve the education-eligible offender population.

Office 365—the district successfully converted from Microsoft Exchange to Office 365; the conversion provides users with expanded capabilities and tools within the Office 365 suite.

Library Unit Application (LUNA)—an application developed for Library Services that functions as a real time digital card catalog for the district’s unit library users. It replaces the printing of catalog cards, allows users to review their collection assessment in real time, and provides a method for electronically identifying/requesting books to be deleted from their collection.

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 Information Resources section of Operational Support 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.
Travis Ware preaches the most important thing he learned from his time in prison: “anything can be accomplished if you have a want-to. The know-how will come later; all you need is the want-to.”

Growing up in Angleton, Texas, Ware had little to no desire to do anything with his life. He got involved in drugs, alcohol, and other activities that led to his arrest at age 18.

Going into the system at such a young age, Ware didn’t have a lot of work or life experience.

“I spent five years down there with absolutely no motivation,” Ware explained. “I asked myself ‘how do people get up in the morning and go to work.’”

While inside, Ware enrolled in Windham School District’s Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) program in the Robertson Unit. His teacher, Frank Rose, helped Ware decide in which Windham trade program to enroll: Heating Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration.

“When I read the first couple of chapters of the [HVAC] book, it just opened my eyes to so much more and I wanted to learn more about it,” Ware said.

While earning six industry certifications in HVAC and related skills, Ware discovered his natural talent for HVAC, as well as his passion for the work. Two weeks after his release, he got a job on an install crew where he gained more experience and knowledge.

After 10 months of working on an install crew, Ware decided to start his own business, Integrity Rough-In Service, based out of Crockett, Texas.

“My first year, the end of 2016, I worked three months on my own and I had already made just as much working for a company for eight months out of that year,” Ware explained. “This last year was really my first full year of being self-employed and employing other people.”

Wanting to dispel the stigma of former offenders in the workplace and promote the cycle of second chances, Ware’s employees are often former offenders.

“I have anywhere from two to five people working with me depending on the workload,” he said. “Everybody that works for me is a rescue situation. I give people opportunities. The majority of the people that I hire, I saw them walking down the road and I said ‘hey, you want something more? You want-to work? Will you show up every morning?’”

Ware’s employees often spend a short time working for him, gaining experience, and moving on to a new job, allowing the opportunity for Ware to continue helping more and more people.

Along with trying to improve the lives of others, Ware continually evaluates his own goals to improve himself.

With the continuing success of his business, expansion seems to be the next step. Currently, Ware receives contract jobs from other companies, but one day he hopes to have his own contractor license.

“I’m working towards getting my own contractor license,” Ware detailed. “I’m doing this with a bigger intent than to just work and make money. I’m going to be a contractor one day. I’ll be able to run my own subcontract crews with people just like me.”

Ware talked about the things he’s already achieved with his business and life saying he replaced his old beat-up utility bed truck with a brand new Ford F-150 loaded up with all the tools he could possibly need for work.

Ware said he enjoys the fact that he has the freedom, downtime, and resources to live a full life.

“When I do get downtime, I’m making enough money to take my wife and go to Galveston for a weekend,” he said. “We can go to the beach and rent golf carts and ride around. I can do whatever I want.”

Another goal Ware hopes to achieve involves him going back into the prisons to share his story and inspire current offenders.

“Most of the guys in there are stuck on this idea I can’t do anything because I’m a felon. It’s going to be harder for me because I’m a felon,” Ware began. “Yeah, you’re going to have to prove yourself twice as hard, but there is nothing holding me back.”

Ware said one of the myths commonly spread in prison is that people won’t give former offenders a chance out in the free world.

“It’s not real,” Ware shared. “I’ve never had anybody say ‘I don’t want him doing this job because he’s a felon.’ I would like to go back into prison once I’m a contractor, maybe sooner, and let these guys know firsthand.”

The biggest thing Ware wants offenders to know is it’s all about attitude.

“There is nothing holding you back when you get out,” he explained. “There’s a high demand out here for anybody that knows any skilled trade that has a want-to. The know-how will come once you start doing it, but the main thing was having a want-to...all you have to do is find the want-to.”
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)
Jordan Unit (Pampa)
Roach Unit (Childress)
Tulia Unit (Tulia)

Plainview Area
Formby Unit
Wheeler Unit

Wichita Falls Area
Allred Unit (Iowa Park)

WEST TEXAS
El Paso Area
Sanchez SJ

Ft. Stockton Area
Ft. Stockton TF
Lynbaugh Unit

Lubbock Area
Montford Unit
Rudd ISF (Brownfield)

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

NORTH TEXAS
Dallas Area
Hutchins SJ
Johnston SAFPF (Winnsboro)
Telford Unit (New Boston)

Palestine Area
Gurney TF
Pawledge Unit
Hodge Unit (Rusk)
Beto Unit (Teague)

Bryan Area
Hamilton Unit

Huntsville Area
Ellis Unit
Estelle Unit
Goree Unit
Holliday TF
Huntsville Unit

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

Ft. Stockton Area
Ft. Stockton SAFPF

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)

SOUTH EAST TEXAS
Beaumont Area
Gist SJ
LeBlanc Unit
Stiles Unit

Dayton Area
Henley SJ
Hightower Unit
Plane SJ

Humble Area
Lynchner SJ

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

Navasota Area
Luther Unit
Pack Unit

ALAMO
Austin Area
Travis County SJ
Halbert SAFPF (Burnet)

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

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)

SAM HOUSTON
Bryan Area
Hamilton Unit

Huntsville Area
Ellis Unit
Estelle Unit
Goree Unit
Holliday TF
Huntsville Unit

Beaumont Area
Gist SJ
LeBlanc Unit
Stiles Unit

Dayton Area
Henley SJ
Hightower Unit
Plane SJ

Humble Area
Lynchner SJ

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

Navasota Area
Luther Unit
Pack Unit

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