

**Windham School District
Board of Trustees
256th Meeting**



Minutes

**February 11, 2010
Austin, Texas**



WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sheraton Austin Hotel – Capitol Ballroom E
701 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

February 11, 2010
12:15 – 12:45 PM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Convene Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board)

I. Regular Session

- A. Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding Consent Items
 - 1. Minutes of the December 10, 2009, WSD Board Meeting
 - 2. Personal Property Donations
 - 3. Excused Absences

- B. Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding Granting the Superintendent Authority to Award Four Hours of Administrative Leave to WSD Employees Who Complete the 2010 Texas Round-Up Governor's Challenge

- C. Overview of the WSD Human Resources Division

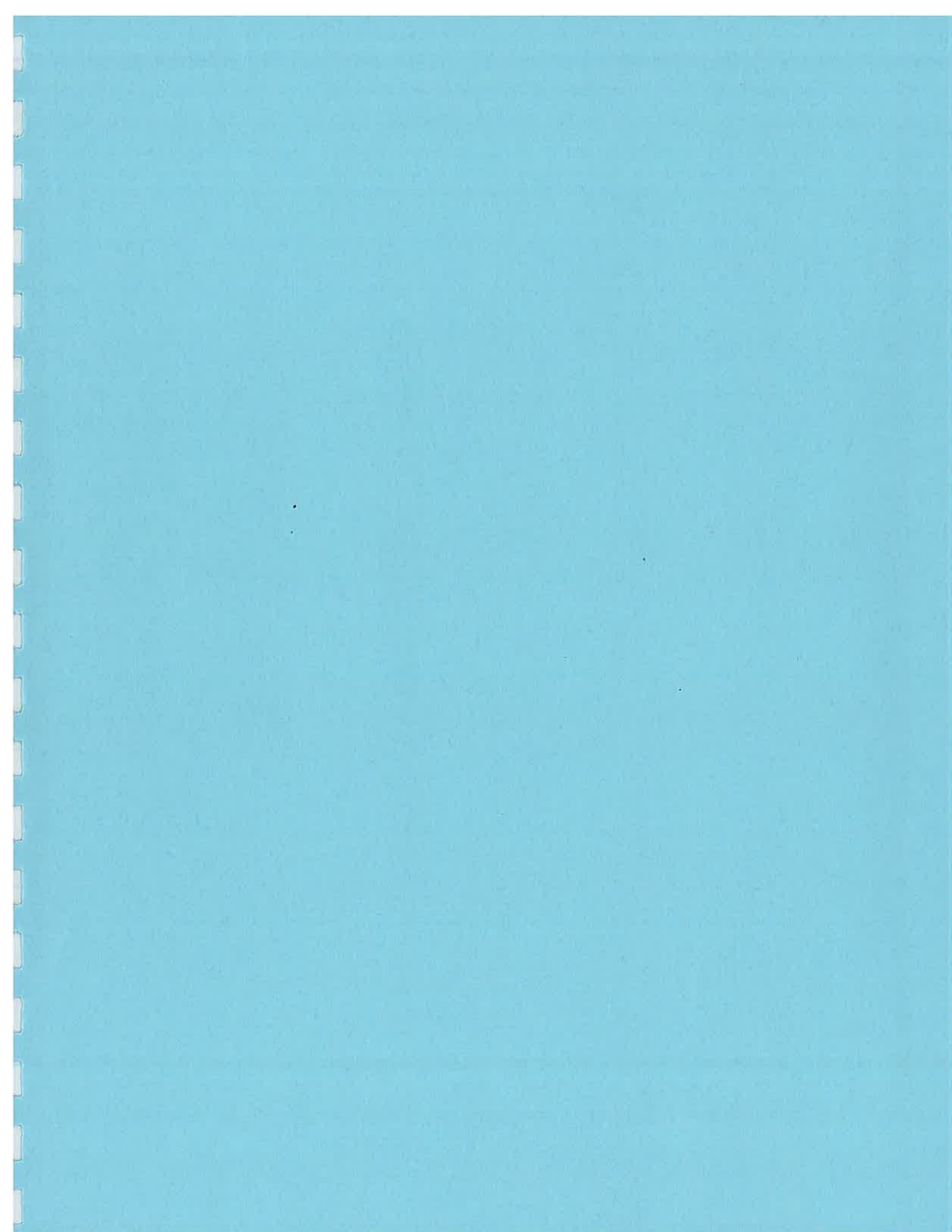
- D. Superintendent's Report – Update on Special Education Audit

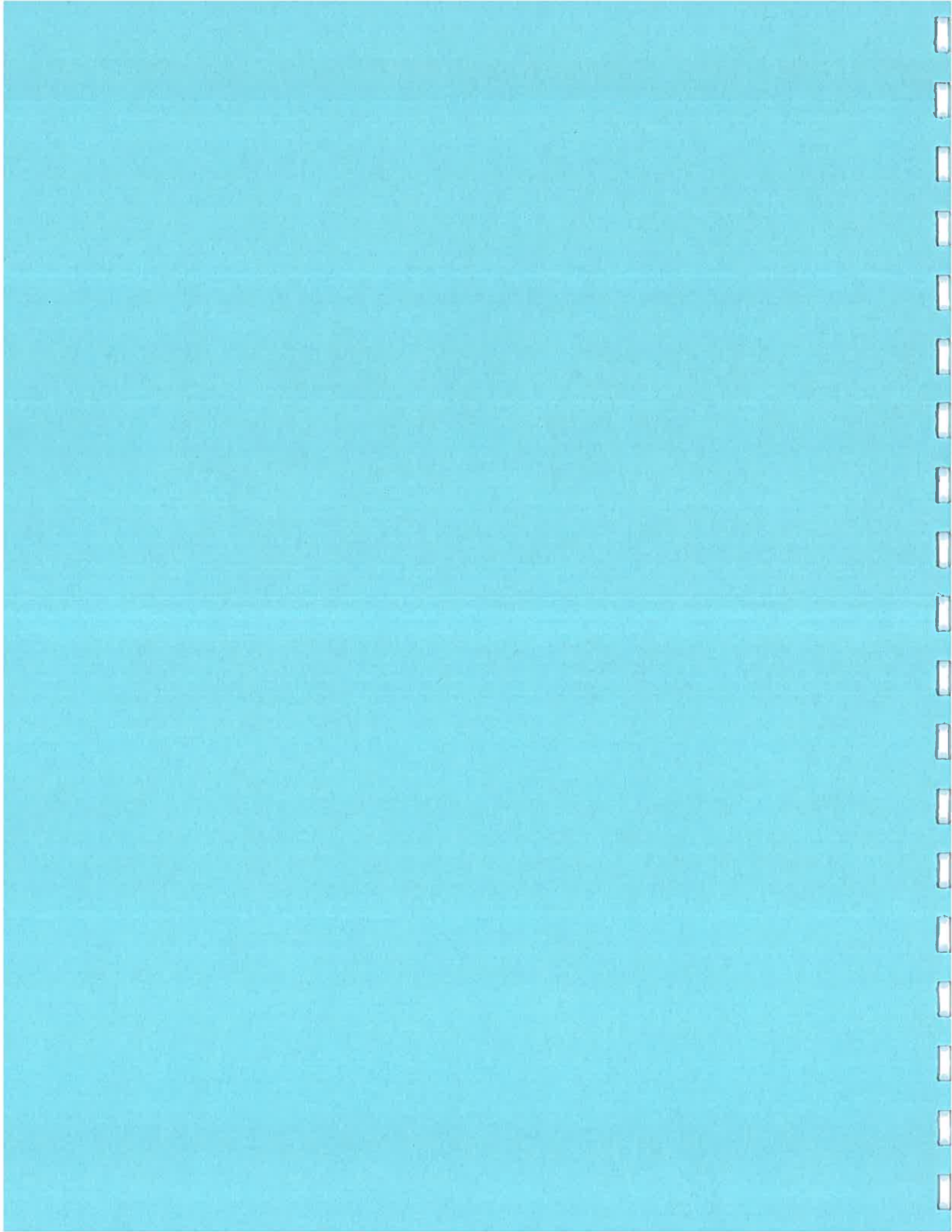
- E. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board
 - 1. Chairman's Fitness Challenge
 - 2. Training for Workforce Needs

Adjourn WSD Board

The WSD Board may discuss and/or take action on any of the items posted on this meeting agenda. The WSD Board may also convene into Executive Session on any of these matters when attorney-client privilege is warranted.







**MINUTES OF THE WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

256th MEETING

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Thursday, February 11, 2010, at the Sheraton Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Oliver Bell, Chairman
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Pastor C. L. Jackson
Terrell McCombs
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman
Eric Gambrell
Janice Harris Lord
J. David Nelson

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent
Marjie Haynes
Veronica Casanova
Linda Goerdel
Don Lawrence

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL
JUSTICE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brad Livingston
Bryan Collier
Melinda Bozarth

CONVENED

Oliver Bell, Chairman, called the meeting of the Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Thursday, February 11, 2010, at 12:21 p.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the Open Meetings Act. A quorum was present and the 256th meeting of the Board was declared open. During the regular session, the Board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register.

The Chairman reported the Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on topics posted on the meeting agenda, as well as public comment on issues within its jurisdiction as provided in Board Rule 300.1. Persons interested in providing presentations at the meeting were required to complete a registration card and submit it at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting's posted start time. As no cards were received prior to the required deadline, the Board would not hear public presentations on posted agenda topics.

Mr. Bell recognized Kyle Mitchell from the Governor's Office and thanked him for his continued support.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
CONSENT ITEMS**

Mr. Bell called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda which consisted of the minutes of the December 10, 2009, meeting, personal property donations, and approval of excused absences.

Mr. Bell asked if there were any comments, objections or amendments to the Consent Items. Noting there were none, he stated the Consent Items were approved as submitted.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
GRANTING THE SUPERINTENDENT AUTHORITY TO AWARD FOUR HOURS OF
ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE TO WSD EMPLOYEES WHO COMPLETE THE 2010
TEXAS ROUND-UP GOVERNOR'S CHALLENGE**

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent, stated that in an effort to support the health of state employees, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has allowed its staff up to four hours of administrative leave if they complete the Texas Round-Up Governor's Challenge. She requested that the Board approve allowing four hours of administrative leave for WSD employees that complete the challenge. The unit employees would take the administrative leave on days when classes are not conducted so that student services and earned contact hours are not negatively impacted.

*Terrell McCombs made a motion to approve four hours of administrative leave for
WSD employees that complete the Texas Round-Up Governor's Challenge.*

*Pastor C. L. Jackson seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when
called to a vote.*

OVERVIEW OF THE WSD HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

Veronica Casanova, Human Resources (HR) Division, began her presentation by stating WSD budgeted for 1,355 positions this year. The majority of WSD staff is assigned to the campus level to work with students, and 787 positions are devoted to direct instruction. The district continues to hire and retain an experienced workforce. Academic teachers have an average of 19 years of experience and vocational teachers have an average of 14 years. The teacher turnover rate for WSD is 11 percent, which continues to be below the state average of 14.7 percent.

The HR Division has ten staff members who manage more than 3,000 applicants each year, while providing services to about 1,300 employees. Some of the staff members have been in the WSD HR office for 20 years.

Ms. Casanova displayed a chart that showed the 15 areas of responsibility of the HR Division. Three of these areas would be covered in this presentation as they are unique to WSD (vs. TDCJ) in its operation as a school district.

Certification is required by 85 percent of WSD positions, which are approximately 1,000 staff members. Although all of the Career and Technological Education (CTE) positions require two or more certifications, the majority of the teaching staff hold more than one certification. HR tracks the achievement, renewal or expiration of all of these certifications, licenses and industry certifications each year. These certifications affect a teacher's assignment, eligibility for re-assignment, and/or promotion. In some cases, salary can be affected by the level of certification achieved. In all cases, the expiration of a required certification could lead to separation of the employee and termination of their contract.

Contracts are required for all positions which require a teaching certificate issued by State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC). The contract creates legal issues to consider if WSD should decide to non-renew or terminate an employee. Similar to TDCJ, terminations occur when there is a distinct disciplinary event or series of disciplinary events regardless of a binding contract. WSD has the ability to utilize a non-renewal process. Non-renewals are usually a result of many small issues or concerns, none of which, when considered individually, would rise to the level of termination.

Unlike other organizations, within WSD a probationary status is not a form of discipline. All teachers are hired in a probationary status their first two years of employment. The probationary period allows WSD to use broad discretion in identifying which contracts should be non-renewed. This process is common to all public schools. The majority of WSD staff are contracted to work 220 days. This is compared to 187 days for teacher contracts in public schools. WSD administrative staff work 226 days.

Substitutes are another area that WSD has in common with other school districts. Windham tries to utilize individuals who are certified or degreed; however, it can also hire individuals with a minimum of a high school diploma. In fact, many of WSD's substitutes are former or retired WSD teachers. Windham substitutes are paid \$65 per day. This is competitive compared to most school districts in Texas, except in the large urban areas. Initial training is given and background checks are conducted once a year on all substitutes. TDCJ employees and WSD teachers are also allowed to substitute for additional pay during their off-duty hours.

Ms. Casanova mentioned some other challenges presented by the fact that WSD employs teachers:

Job fairs are held throughout the state, and since most school districts hire 90 percent of their staff between March and May, job fairs are held in the spring. Windham hires year round. Once the spring push has passed, WSD is limited to other types of job fairs where the focus is not on teachers. The second challenge is that most school-oriented job fairs are held by colleges and universities whose main participants are recent college graduates. Windham rarely hires a teacher without any teaching experience. There are too many challenges facing any first year teacher without adding the challenges of teaching in a secure classroom setting.

The Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) is the standard tool used to evaluate teachers in Texas. It is developed with public school teachers in mind and as such, it is not always reflective of the skills required of a Windham teacher.

The last area of concern is Professional Development. It is difficult to find staff development opportunities for WSD teachers that consider an Adult Education approach in a prison setting. As a result, WSD must fill the gap to help its teachers apply what they learn in a manner consistent with teaching in a secure classroom environment. The HR Division collaborates with the Division of Instruction to fill this gap.

Ms. Casanova summarized that the HR Division is constantly searching for the best practices to fit the district's unique situation. A part of that search led to Oracle's PeopleSoft software as the HR management system. On December 1, the operation of four modules of the system began. This included a human resource module, which includes benefits; a payroll module; and two modules to manage the employee leave programs. One more module which will allow the division to manage applicants should be implemented by December 1, 2010.

Mr. Bell asked for clarification about the probationary period for new teachers and whether that was common to public schools. Ms. Casanova responded that it was very common for teachers to be on probation their first years of teaching. The length of the probation varies from district to district. The probationary period for WSD teachers is two complete school years. She stated that WSD is probably in the middle as far as it relates to probationary periods. Mr. Bell requested that she verify how WSD compares to other school districts in that area. Ms. Casanova responded that she would verify that information. Mr. Bell asked what constitutes "a day" for the \$65 per day substitute rate. Ms. Casanova advised "a day" would be equivalent to teaching two three-hour classes. Mr. Bell asked if the district was working to adapt the PDAS to better evaluate WSD teachers. Ms. Casanova responded affirmatively.

Attachment A – PowerPoint Presentation

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – UPDATE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION AUDIT

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), Division of Program Monitoring and Interventions, conducted an on-site visit in May 2009, to review the implementation of special education requirements for offenders less than 22 years of age.

Prior to the actual visit, TEA staff members reviewed the WSD policies and procedures related to the special education program. Then, during a two-week period (May 11-22, 2009), four teams of TEA staff members (12 individuals) visited the schools at twelve facilities: Montford, Smith, Daniel, Briscoe, Hughes, Murray, Clemens, Jester 4, Luther, Hodge, Beto, and Ferguson.

During the on-site review, the TEA teams conducted interviews with WSD administrators, counselors, educational diagnosticians, teachers, and students. They also conducted document reviews, student data reviews, and classroom observations in both general education and special education classrooms.

In January 2010, WSD received a letter from TEA, notifying the district that TEA was able to verify that policies and procedures are being implemented district wide as written and that WSD is in compliance with state and federal law with respect to serving young students with disabilities. There were no findings, and no further action was required by the district as a result of this monitoring visit. In addition, in late January, Marjie Haynes attended a meeting with 26 Special Education stakeholders who serve on a TEA Texas Steering Committee. A TEA representative at

that meeting referenced the WSD onsite visit and shared with the group that the monitoring teams were very impressed by the district. Ms. Roberts thanked Ms. Haynes for her leadership in this area.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD

Chairman's Fitness Challenge

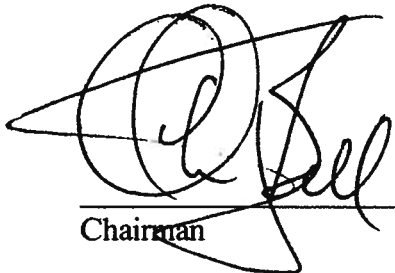
Chairman Bell stated that TDCJ and WSD are halfway through the six-week challenge. He encouraged all employees to continue to compete. It only takes 150 minutes a week, which is just 30 minutes for 5 days each week. Employees that have not participated in the challenge can still help towards winning the Governor's Cup. There is still time to sign up to walk or run in the 5K/10K/Family Walk scheduled in Austin on April 24. If staff prefers, they can help by volunteering at the Fitness Festival to be held on the Capitol grounds that same day. By working together, to stay fit and healthy, the agency can win.

Training for Workforce Needs

Chairman Bell noted that as a part of the Legislative Budget Board Effectiveness Study, WSD has been tracking information on how their vocational courses align with jobs in today's marketplace. This past legislative session, this data was used to help justify and obtain additional funding for the Career and Technology Program. It is also being used to determine the new courses being added with the expansion of the program. Chairman Bell added that as vocational training has a direct impact on an offender's successful reintegration into the community, he encouraged Ms. Roberts and her staff to continue to review the courses WSD is offering and stay aligned with the current market. Chairman Bell also encouraged Ms. Roberts and her staff to monitor reports and studies that identify future career trends. As growing job demands are identified, consider those trades, and where feasible, add or adjust courses to train offenders with the skills needed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Bell adjourned the 256th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees at 12:45 p.m.


Chairman


Secretary



ATTACHMENTS



Division of Human Resources

Windham School District (WSD)



Director

Assistant Director

Applications
Admin Asst III
Admin Asst II

Employees
HR Officer III
HR Officer II
Admin Asst III
Admin Asst II

Operations
HR Officer I
Admin Asst II



Division of
Human Resources

Policy

Applicant Selection

Benefits/Insurance

Program Staffing

Certification

Payroll

Substitutes

Evaluation/PDAS

Staff Development

Recruitment

Job Descriptions

Employee Services

Salary Schedules

Service Awards

Contracts

Certification

- 85 percent of WSD positions require one or more certifications
- All Career and Technology positions require 2-3 certifications/licenses
- Assignment
- Salary
- Contract

Contracts

- State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)
- Non-Renewal vs. Termination
- Probationary Period
 - Two full school years of employment

Contract Staff

Teaching staff – 220 days vs. 187 days

- 210 days of instruction with students
- 10 days of professional development
- Lockdowns/Disasters

Administrative staff – 226 days

Substitutes

- 135-200 Substitutes
- Certification/Degree
- \$65 per day
- Background check
- Training
- Allow WSD teachers to serve as substitutes
- Allow non-supervisory TDCJ employees to serve as substitutes

Challenges

- **Recruitment**
 - Job Fairs – usually held in the spring
 - Colleges and Universities – limited experience
- **Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS)**
 - Not always reflective of skills required to teach in a secure environment
- **Staff Development**
 - Home grown to focus on adult education in a secure environment

Questions?





