

Windham School District
Board of Trustees
270th Meeting



Minutes

June 15, 2012
Austin, Texas

TEXAS BOARD OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Meeting Schedule

June 15, 2012

**Radisson Hotel & Suites – Austin Room
111 Cesar Chavez at Congress
Austin, Texas 78701**

**Phone (512) 478-9611
Facsimile (512) 478-3227**

10:30 – 11:00 AM	Health Care Committee
11:00 – 11:30 AM	Management Information Systems Committee
11:30 AM – 12:15 PM	Business and Financial Operations Committee
12:15 – 12:45 PM	Windham School District Board of Trustees – Regular Session
12:45 – 2:00 PM	Texas Board of Criminal Justice Executive Session – <i>Old Pecan Room</i>
2:00 PM	Texas Board of Criminal Justice – Regular Session

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Radisson Hotel & Suites – Austin Room
111 Cesar Chavez at Congress
Austin, Texas 78701**

**June 15, 2012
12:15 – 12:45 PM**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call to Order

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

I. Regular Session

- A. Consideration of Approval of Consent Items
 - 1. Minutes of the April 19, 2012, WSD Board Meeting
 - 2. Appraisers for the 2011-2012 School Year
 - 3. Excused Absences
- B. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Revisions to WSD Board Policy WBP-08.01, “Student Eligibility for Windham School District Programs”
- C. WSD Staff Interaction with Industry Groups
- D. Superintendent’s Report – High School Equivalency Assessment
- E. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board
 - 1. Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report on WSD
 - 2. Chairman’s Fitness Challenge

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**

270th MEETING

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, June 15, 2012, at the Radisson Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Oliver Bell, Chairman
Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Eric Gambrell
Judge Larry Gist
Janice Harris Lord
Terrell McCombs
J. David Nelson
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent
Michael Mondville
Virginia Price
Kevin Ainsworth
Allen Bourque
Linda Goerdel
Marjie Haynes
Karen Koenning
Sandra Nash
Mike Vickers

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

Melinda Bozarth

CONVENED

Oliver Bell, Chairman, convened the 270th meeting of the Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, June 15, 2012, at 12:24 p.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the *Open Meetings Act*. During the regular session, the Board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register. A quorum was present and the meeting was declared open.

Chairman Bell recognized John Newton from the Legislative Budget Board and Judge Dale Spurgin from Jones County.

The chairman reported the WSD Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on posted agenda topics 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 ten minutes prior to the meeting's posted start time. For this meeting, no speaker registration cards were received by the board staff prior to the required deadline, therefore no public presentations were heard on posted agenda topics.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

Chairman Bell called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda, which consisted of the minutes of the April 19, 2012, meeting, appraisers for the 2011-12 school year, and excused absences for Carmen Villanueva-Hiles and Terrell McCombs, both of whom were unable to attend the February meeting due to personal business. Additionally, Mr. Bell stated that he, along with Eric Gambrell, Janice Harris Lord and David Nelson were absent from the April meeting due to personal business.

Chairman Bell asked if there were any comments, objections or amendments to the Consent Items. Seeing none, the Consent Items were approved as submitted.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REVISIONS TO WSD BOARD POLICY WBP-08.01, "STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS"

Michael Mondville, WSD General Counsel, informed the board that revisions were recommended to WSD Board Policy (WBP)-08.01, "Student Eligibility for Windham School District Programs." These revisions were minor, mainly in style and to remove the references to Project RIO. No substantive changes were recommended. Mr. Mondville requested the Board's approval of the policy as presented.

Ms. Hiles moved that the Windham School District Board of Trustees approve the revisions to Windham Board Policy 08.01, "Student Eligibility for Windham School District Programs," as presented.

Judge Larry Gist seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

Leo Vasquez commented on the removal of language referring to Project RIO in WBP-08.01, and said he sincerely hopes that after the next legislative session, the language can be placed back into the policies.

WSD STAFF INTERACTION WITH INDUSTRY GROUPS

Virginia Price, WSD Administrator for Career and Technical Education (CTE), advised that establishing contacts for industry certification through WSD is one of the many projects that are ongoing in the CTE department. The district identified the need to utilize available, outside resources for both instructors and students, and to develop a two-year training plan for instructors. Some of the benefits of the training plan included:

- Partnerships with industry, which provide feedback to the instructors about the program and training content for students.
- WSD instructors benefit from the training they received from the partnerships.

- Collaboration amongst instructors to improve the program.
- Instructors met with businesses, trade organizations and industry to identify job availability for offenders.

Due to the size of the district and the location of the units, this is the only opportunity WSD instructors have to meet with their specific trade clusters. This was all made possible through the efforts of the staff in the CTE department.

The first CTE statewide conference was held in Palestine, where instructors visited the Terry Manufacturing Corporation. Participants included instructors from the Mill and Cabinetmaking, Construction Carpentry, Painting & Decorating, and Bricklaying/Stone Masonry classes. One of the outcomes of the conference was a partnership that developed with Terry Manufacturing who donated materials to the painting and decorating classes. Instructors observed advanced technology available in the construction field, and they were exposed to new trends in their industry.

The Heating and Air Conditioning instructors had the opportunity to visit and receive training on psychometrics and airflow dynamics through Johnstone Heating and Air Conditioning in Houston. As a result of the training, instructors collaborated to add three curricular modules, including: leak detection, trouble shooting heating, and trouble shooting cooling. The instructors felt the addition of these modules was critical to help prepare students for training in the employment field.

The Welding, Plumbing, Piping Trades, and Sheet Metal instructors attended a conference in Abilene, where they visited Rentech, Inc. As a result, the instructors revised curricular modules based on professional input and determined it was time to update the welding curriculum, which is now in place. They were encouraged to explore the possibility of offering non-traditional trades for female offenders (such as welding). Rentech provided WSD instructors the opportunity to visualize the realm of employment opportunities for their students; this company hires ex-offenders. As a result of the tour of the Rentech facility, a numerical control plasma cutter and software were added to the sheet metal program. The tour also helped determine what equipment was needed to upgrade the welding shops to the new curriculum.

Trio Electric Company met with WSD Electrical Trades and Plant Maintenance instructors at the Gulf Coast Independent Electrical Contractors Association in Houston. Instructors compared the technology and apprenticeship lab to the technology currently available in the WSD shops. Both companies commended WSD instructors in the quality of training they provided to students in the Windham programs. Two former students currently teach apprenticeship programs for the association. Trio Electric also encouraged the district to provide alternative training for females. As a result of this suggestion, WSD is in the process of adding electrical trades at the Woodman State Jail. Newer versions of the curriculum and current code books have been provided to the students.

As a result of the Central Unit closing, the Truck Driving program was moved to the Garza East Unit in Beeville. Staff worked with the Department of Public Safety in Beeville to establish procedures for testing offender students for their commercial driver's license. Staff also became very aware of the job availability in Texas for the truck drivers due to the oil and gas industry.

This past fall, Auto Specialization, Small Engine Repair and Diesel Mechanics instructors visited the Toyota plant in San Antonio. Instructors met with factory workers who shared their experiences in the field. This created awareness among WSD instructors of the scope of career possibilities available to Windham students.

Since that time, staff had the opportunity to attend the Equipment and Engine Training Council (EETC) Conference in Dallas. This is the industry that certifies WSD's small engine program students. The EETC contacted Ms. Price to ask permission for one of WSD's instructors to attend the conference, noting WSD's students have some of the highest scores on the industry exam in the nation. Ms. Price, two WSD instructors and two CTE specialists attended the conference, and the instructors were given the opportunity to provide input for the testing questions on the industry exam.

Ms. Price discussed some of the limitations the district is experiencing because of limited access to the Internet. In the past, the auto classes and diesel mechanics classes have been given the opportunity to take the Automotive Service Excellence Exam (ASE). As of November 2011, the ASE exam was computerized and must be taken on the Internet. WSD staff located an alternative exam for the Diesel Mechanics class that is offered by the EETC. Ms. Price discussed similar barriers in the Drafting, Business Image Management & Multimedia and Computer Maintenance programs.

Horticulture, Landscape Design, and Construction & Maintenance instructors had the opportunity to visit with Landmark Nursery and Greener Pastures in Fort Worth. Discussion between the nursery and landscape company and the instructors revealed the training provided in the WSD programs equips students with all the necessary skills and produces industry-ready skilled workers. The instructors reviewed new curriculum that incorporated multimedia technology, and as a result, improved technology has been purchased for the classrooms. Plans are to review other computer based programs and incorporate more into the program. The district would like to strengthen the partnership with Texas Nursery Landscape Association in order to review the program requirements for WSD classes.

Instructors in Culinary Arts; Diversified Career Preparation: Food Production, Management & Services; and Personal & Family Development programs had the opportunity to visit Melange Catering in Houston. The instructors were able to tour the facility and participate in an evening of cooking and preparing different dishes with the chefs. The chefs even provided training for the instructors. This gave the instructors a lot of insight into the industry and preparing students for success in the culinary field. Ms. Price noted this company also hires ex-offenders.

As a result of the conference with Melange Catering, staff determined there was a need for a restaurant management program. On September 1, 2012, WSD will be converting the Personal and Family Development classes into Restaurant Management. The reasoning behind this change is the instructional objectives taught in the program will give students greater potential for employment.

New Horizons in Houston provided training to the Business Computer Information Systems instructors on advanced Microsoft Access and Excel Training, and to the Business Image Management & Multimedia instructors on advanced InDesign Training. The instructors

collaborated to develop an enrichment module into their curriculum, which included portfolio development and job searching.

The Computer Recovery Center in Huntsville hosted the Computer Maintenance Technician instructors. The instructors were made aware of another resource available to them, along with on-the-job training opportunities for their students. They also identified an alternative industry certification, Electronic Technician's Association, which is a paper exam.

Hillyard Cleaning, at Abilene Christian University, hosted the Custodial Maintenance Technician instructors. The instructors were given the opportunity to view new technology and equipment in the industry. They also received training in biodegradable and green technology chemicals in the workplace.

The Technical Introduction to Computer-Aided Drafting instructors received training at the Cadco Drafting Corporation in Abilene. Instructors discussed with business professionals the use of the district's software (AutoCAD 2010) in reference to real-life applications. They also toured the architectural drafting facility.

Ms. Price reviewed the following future plans for the CTE department:

- Continue to make improvements by aligning the district's programs with industry standards
 - Maintain contact with trade and industry
 - Provide future training for CTE instructors
- Review existing programs to determine effectiveness
 - Review course curriculum
 - Eliminate or replace classes
 - Continue employment studies in construction, cosmetology and barbering and the machine industries.
- Further explore viable career opportunities for WSD students
 - Hospitality & Tourism (Murray Unit)
 - Restaurant Management (Crain and Hodge units)
 - Non-traditional female trades
 - Landscaping (currently at Mt. View and Plane units)
 - Construction Carpentry (currently at Plane and Crain units)
 - Auto Brakes (currently at Hobby Unit)
 - Electrical (will open at Woodman State Jail)

Of the businesses noted, Janice Harris Lord asked if the catering program in Houston was the only one that hired ex-offenders. Ms. Price responded that several companies including Rentech Inc. and Trio Electric Company offer employment for ex-offenders.

Tom Mechler commended Ms. Price on her presentation. The fact that WSD instructors are interacting with industry is an excellent idea and it will help to make sure WSD programs are in sync with the skills that employers are seeking.

Mr. Mechler also noted that he liked the idea of non-traditional trades for female offenders. He asked how welding could be offered to females since it is only offered on a limited number of male facilities. Ms. Roberts stated WSD is currently looking at that. There are limitations such as the need for a large shop with special wiring to offer welding. It is also an expensive trade to set up and operate. She noted it would be a great opportunity for students; there are jobs available in the field, and there are no residential or licensing issues in welding.

Ms. Roberts commented females sometimes do very well in non-traditional trades while in prison, but when they are released they do not want to work in that environment. When WSD looks at the percentage of employment in the non-traditional fields, it is somewhat low because the women don't want to work at a place where they are the only female. Ms. Roberts added there may be things WSD can do to better prepare the females, but it is an issue the district has experienced in the past. Ms. Price noted the district's counselors met recently and were trained on motivational interviewing and how to encourage female offenders and give them insight on the benefits of working in non-traditional trades.

Mr. Mechler asked if WSD had talked to the industry certification groups that are going to computerized testing and explained why WSD cannot do computerized testing. Ms. Price replied that she had talked to the ASE correctional facilities representative about the hardship it would cause. She was informed that ASE does plan to explore an option in the future for this scenario, but no definite timeline was provided. This is why the district is currently reviewing other options for certification testing.

Mr. Mechler stated that employment in the auto industry is very competitive and inquired, even with proper training, on the chances of an ex-offender being able to obtain employment in that field. Ms. Price advised that during the visit to the Toyota plant in San Antonio, she talked with several employees who conducted the tour. It was her understanding that it is difficult to get a job at the plant, because Toyota is such a good company to work for. However, away from the plant, there are opportunities for individuals trained in small engine repair, diesel mechanics and auto specialization trades.

Terrell McCombs was complimentary of the district and the fact that WSD is always trying to improve all areas of the district. He thought it was a good idea to meet with private industry, and he encouraged the district to continue to seek out companies that currently do not hire ex-offenders and encourage them to give ex-offenders a chance.

Ms. Roberts stated that approximately 18 months ago, administrators felt a need to rejuvenate the vocational offerings. At that time she reached out to Ms. Price and convinced her to move from her principal's job to lead the new CTE initiative. Since that move, Ms. Roberts noted she has been amazed at the work Ms. Price has done. She thanked Ms. Price for her hard work on this initiative.

Mr. Bell asked that he be sent the estimated cost to set up a welding shop and the space requirements. Having seen some of the shops, he could see where WSD could be limited on where certain classes are offered. He asked about the possibility of giving the female non-traditional classes an acronym such as Women in Nontraditional (WIN) businesses. He thought it was a good idea to include training to prepare the women for work in an environment that is traditionally male.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

High School Equivalency Assessment

Ms. Roberts gave a brief update on the implementation of the GED 2014 that was discussed at the April board meeting. She stated the GED Testing Service and Pierson View have entered into an agreement that will change the entire GED process. By January 2014, the GED test will only be administered via computer, which may present some unique problems to state correctional education programs, including Windham. Security concerns are a potential obstacle, as well as the costs and logistics associated with implementation of the new process.

Over the last several months, WSD has met a number of times with GED Testing Service and Pierson View, and WSD has provided them with information on the district's current technical environment. Senior management is in the process of reviewing that information so they can make a decision as to whether the current environment is acceptable or if modifications will need to be made. WSD is awaiting that review so estimates relative to both cost and timeframe for implementation can be made.

The process is further complicated by the state of Texas considering options for a high school equivalency exam other than the GED. The GED 2014 test is being rewritten to fit to the common core state standards that have been adopted by most states. Texas has not adopted these standards. The TEA has issued a request for information to explore the option of Texas developing its own high school equivalency exam based on Texas standards, and it is possible the exam could be a paper and pen test or that administration costs would be lower.

Ms. Roberts stated WSD is not taking a wait and see approach, but is trying to remain as flexible as possible to be ready whenever a final decision is made. WSD is continuing to gather information as it becomes available and will participate in a webinar on June 25th that is being hosted by the Correctional Education Association. The district hopes to hear from states who have implemented computerized testing. Ms. Roberts said that she would update the board as more information becomes available.

Judge Gist asked how difficult it would be to isolate the GED test where it could be the only thing offenders could access through the Internet. Ms. Roberts responded that possibility is being considered. The current setup includes individual servers and thin clients at each unit. There is a possibility the test can be sent to each server and then administered in that manner. The question is whether or not the company will consider that environment secure enough. Initially, WSD was informed that the thin client architecture was not sufficient. Right now, GED Testing Service is reviewing what is currently used by WSD to determine if it can work in the current environment. If it will not work, new equipment would have to be purchased, which could be extremely costly to the district.

Ms. Lord asked about the issue of offenders being able to pass the pencil and paper test but not a computerized test because they lack keyboarding skills. Ms. Roberts replied that could be a problem, and there is software in the computer labs that addresses computer skills. Not all offenders that take the GED participate in the Computer Assisted Instruction labs, but they may have to pass a computer tutorial before taking the GED. The challenge is tying it all together to make sure the logistics are taken care of.

Ms. Roberts added that California already has its own high school equivalency exam. Texas is not alone in exploring the possibility of its own exam; several other states are looking into the option as well.

Mr. McCombs noted there has been a nationwide outcry regarding the increased cost of the GED exam. In the long run, a company does not want to lose 30 percent of its sales. That would be an unwise decision, so they may reconsider their decision.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report

In conjunction with the Sunset Advisory Commission (Sunset) Review of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the commission recently conducted a limited purpose review of Windham's operations, structure and management. From that review, two recommendations related to the school district have been made for legislative consideration.

The Sunset staff recommended that Windham be required to conduct biennial program evaluations. This recommendation would require the district to collect result-based performance data for each of its programs, and to evaluate whether the programs are meeting the district's statutory goals. This data would be used to produce and compare recidivism and other correctional impact trends and make changes to programs when needed.

This recommendation would also eliminate the requirement for Windham to consult with the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) on its evaluation of vocational trainings services, along with the requirement for the LBB to submit that information to the legislature and governor in an annual report. Windham would be responsible for the collection, compilation and analysis of the data, and for reporting findings to the board, the legislature and the governor, on a biennial basis.

Sunset staff also recommended that Windham be subject to regular Sunset reviews in conjunction with future TDCJ reviews. Since Windham is an integral part of the state's criminal justice system, this recommendation would ensure a full and cohesive examination of all the state's adult correctional programs at one time.

The Board and district are pleased with the commission's findings and support the recommendations provided. As to the recommended evaluation, the district continues to move forward with its current assessment of program effectiveness. The contracted study with Sam Houston State University to review academic, vocational, life skills and college-level programs will be released soon and will potentially help set the stage for future program evaluations.

Chairman's Fitness Challenge

The third quarter of the fitness challenge "Stay Fit, Stay Trim" concluded in May. Windham completed the quarter with a grand total of 474,128 points. For Division 7, the WSD North Texas Region placed first with 220,828 points, the West Texas Region ranked second, and the WSD Administration placed third. Chairman Bell thanked all employees who helped make the third quarter a success, noting overall scores were up significantly from the previous quarter.

The “Summer Olympic Games” will be the fourth quarter of the Chairman’s Fitness Challenge and it will begin in July. He expressed appreciation for WSD’s continuing participation in the fitness endeavor.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the 270th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

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Chairman

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Secretary

*Signature on File

Note: Attachments to the minutes can be obtained from the Office of Record, Executive Services.