

Windham School District
Board of Trustees
282nd Meeting



Minutes

June 5, 2014

Austin, Texas

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**DoubleTree Hotel Austin – Phoenix North Ballroom
6505 IH 35 North
Austin, Texas 75752**

**June 5, 2014
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 17, 2014, WSD Board Meeting
 - 2. Appraiser(s) for the 2013-2014 School Year
 - 3. Personal Property Donations
 - 4. Excused Absences
- B. Report from the Superintendent
- C. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board
- D. Strategic Planning Report

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**

Meeting No. 282

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Thursday, June 5, 2014, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Oliver Bell, Chairman
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Judge Larry Gist
Eric Gambrell
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles
Janice Harris Lord
Terrell McCombs
Tom Wingate

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Clint Carpenter, Superintendent
Kevin Ainsworth
Paul Brown
Veronica Casanova
Martha Fields
Karen Koenning
Michael Mondville
Susan Norris
Luann Pickett
Rex Rhone
Karin Ruppelius
Mike Vickers

CONVENED

Oliver Bell, Chairman, convened the meeting of the 282nd Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Thursday, June 5, 2014, at 12:43 p.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the *Open Meetings Act*. A quorum was present and the meeting was declared open. During the regular session, the Board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register.

Mr. Bell reported the WSD Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on posted agenda topics as provided in Board Rule 300.1. As no speaker registration cards were received by the board staff, no public presentations would be heard on posted agenda topics.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Bell recognized John Newton from the Legislative Budget Board; Mario Cicconetti, General Counsel and Senior Policy Analyst to Senator Joan Huffman, and Harrison Blair, Intern for Representative James White.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

The Chairman called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda, which consisted of the minutes of the April 17, 2014, meeting; appraisers for the 2013-14 school year, and personal property donations.

There being no comments, objections or amendments to the Consent Items, the Consent Items were approved as submitted.

REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

1. Windham Program Overview to the Central Texas - Texas Inmate Families Association (TIFA) Chapter Meeting

Dr. Clint Carpenter, WSD Superintendent, stated that members of the TIFA contacted the WSD Superintendent's Office and asked for a presentation at the regional meeting of the organization in Killeen, Texas, on May 13, 2014. Dr. Carpenter attended the meeting and provided an overview of WSD programs offered, results from the latest performance report, and a description of the expansion of services through programs and additional campuses where vocational programs were expanded within the past year.

Additional information regarding a new partnership with an area high school for diplomas for students near completion, the opportunities of area job fairs, additional vocational programs, and an overview of the new Windham website were also presented.

During an active question and answer period, several very important topics and suggestions were heard. The group described the need for more family communication about WSD educational programs, communication with employers about needed job skills, and accessible input from employers via the new Windham webpage.

While the TIFA group stated that they were appreciative of the information about WSD programs and updates on improvements, the information which the participants shared regarding their needs and options for communicating with communities and families was very valuable to our district. WSD appreciates TIFAs desire to partner with Windham to improve services to the students and looks forward to working with them in the future.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD

1. Representative Phillip Cortez Tours Windham School Facilities at the Dominguez State Jail in San Antonio

On April 29, 2014, State Representative Phillip Cortez toured the Fabian Dominguez State Jail in San Antonio, Texas. He was given a close up look at the operations and educational partnership between TDCJ and WSD.

Warden Martinez, with TDCJ reentry staff, faith-based support organizations, the WSD Superintendent, a WSD Regional Administrator and the campus principal participated in a wide-

ranging tour featuring several unique initiatives such as the PAWS-itive canine service dog training program and a faith-based dorm program. The group was then provided an extensive tour of the Windham educational facilities. During the tour, Representative Cortez and his staff were shown the Cognitive Intervention Program and other literacy/vocational classes available at Dominguez State Jail. Representative Cortez was very interested in the educational attainment of students. He went into some of the classrooms to listen to the instruction and questioned students during class. After touring the educational program, Representative Cortez asked the Superintendent questions regarding support for employment upon release, the alignment of courses to job skills, and the opportunities academic programs provide the students. The Chairman was honored that Representative Cortez and his staff were able to take the time out of their schedules and allow WSD to highlight the wonderful work that is being performed everyday across the state from the WSD staff.

STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

Dr. Carpenter informed the board that several members from the field were invited to Huntsville, along with other staff members, to review the WSD strategic goals and plans. Some of the WSD staff that participated in the meeting will be giving a short presentation to the Board.

Susan Norris, WSD Assistant Human Resources Director, introduced herself and three other WSD employees who were making the presentation. They included Martha Fields, Darrington Unit Principal; Kevin Ainsworth, Regional Administrator for the North Texas Region, and Rex Rhone, Construction Carpentry Instructor at the Clemens Unit.

Ms. Norris stated that last March the WSD directors discussed new challenges for WSD educational programs. This discussion prompted the directors to review current WSD objectives. This review caused the group to decide that the WSD Strategic Plan needed to be updated and as a part of the update, the Windham mission and internal strategic goals should be reviewed to better focus WSD on outcomes that will be important over the next three to five years.

The directors felt it was important to solicit input from the field. Therefore, a statewide request was made for nominations for teachers, staff and regions to attend this strategic planning meeting. Nine nominated teachers and six principals, along with regional and program specialists, joined directors from the WSD central office on May 19 and 20 to plot the course for the school's future direction. The staff was honored to have Board Member, Janice Lord, WSD Education Sub-Committee Member, join in this effort.

Mr. Ainsworth said representatives from the Region VI Education Service Center (ESC) facilitated this strategic planning meeting and assisted WSD staff in reviewing and defining Windham's current vision, mission, and strategic goals. In order to assist this group, a district-wide survey of one-hundred questions was sent prior to the meeting to every WSD employee. While the results of the survey were overwhelmingly positive, certain items were identified as potential future problem areas. This survey information, input from representatives from the field, and perspectives provided by central office staff contributed to an in depth dialogue about how WSD can grow and improve over the next five years.

This important work began with consideration of the WSD statutory goals which are:

- Reduce Recidivism
- Reduce the cost of confinement or imprisonment
- Increase the success of former offenders in obtaining and maintaining employment
- Provide an incentive to offenders to behave in positive ways during confinement or imprisonment.

Ms. Fields stated the planning group considered the development of a belief statement. ESC representatives facilitated a dialogue that included field staff and district office staff. The focus was to come together around the common beliefs that the community and the school district hold to be true. These belief statements were intended to describe how stakeholders and a school district view themselves and what is most important to them. The four WSD beliefs identified in this initial effort are:

1. We believe in the value of education.
2. We believe that education empowers our students.
3. We believe that all students can learn and be successful.
4. As educators, our team is dedicated, committed to excellence, and makes a difference.

Ms. Fields stated that the planning group then moved on to consider the development of a WSD vision statement. This vision statement, not present in past Windham guidance, is being submitted to the WSD Board for consideration, revision and adoption at a future meeting, as directed from the Board.

Mr. Rhone said this vision statement was developed through a process of review of similar correctional and traditional education program vision statements, comments from the planning group and consensus developed within the group. The suggested WSD vision statement submitted for Board review is:

“The vision of WSD is to empower students and transform lives through excellence in education.”

Following the development of the proposed vision statement, the group worked together to define a WSD mission statement. Again, information from the field was considered by the planning team along with a review of similar educational organizations’ mission statements. Lengthy dialogue and deliberation resulted in a consensus over a WSD mission statement that reads:

“The mission of WSD, in partnership with its stakeholders, is to provide quality educational opportunities.”

Ms. Norris informed the board that the final phase of work was to ensure the focus of WSD’s goals to meet the new vision and mission statements of the district. While WSD has four goals found in law within the Texas Education Code, the planning group held the belief that strategic goals aligned with the vision and mission would be critical if the district were to successfully focus efforts on actions that would meet legislatively mandated goals. These four strategic goals, identified after considerable dialogue that included comments of field staff, a review of the state-wide survey and perspective from central office staff are:

1. Recruit and retain high quality teachers and staff

2. Provide high level instruction and develop critical thinking through guided curriculum
3. Improve and promote effective communication
4. Integrate and enhance technology

Mr. Ainsworth concluded the presentation by stating that with these four strategic goals driving the direction of Windham, measurable objectives will be developed for each region. Evaluation instruments, budget expenditures, and training will focus on the outcomes in order to meet these goals.

Windham is excited to be on course to implement a forward thinking, proactive approach to delivering educational services to offenders that also assists TDCJ in meeting the needs of the citizens of Texas. WSD looks forward to the board’s guidance and suggestions to better focus efforts on improvement, as staff works together with the board to implement a new driving focus for the district.

Chairman Bell stated the presentation was very informative and it brought the Board’s attention to the direction WSD needs to go and what WSD staff feels is important. He would like to continue the dialog as the process proceeds.

Ms. Lord stated that she appreciated being involved in the process. Having the opportunity to spend a day and a half with 40 teachers, principals, and central office staff convinced her of the high level of dedication and expertise of WSD. She said the meeting was very well done and the outcome was “awesome.”

Dr. Carpenter thanked the presenters and the entire WSD staff for participating in this effort. He said, many times we find ourselves looking at what goes on in the administrative offices and forgetting about what is most important-- and that is the teachers in the field. This presentation is the essence of what came out of a rather long 1½ day process of talking, discussing and reviewing data to bring WSD back into focus regarding teachers in the field; and how to support them as an educational entity. WSD also supports TDCJ’s mission by providing opportunities for students as they return to their communities. Dr. Carpenter thanked the Board for allowing this topic to be presented.

Chairman Bell thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated the next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees would be Friday, August 22, 2014, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Austin.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the 282nd meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

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Chairman

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Secretary

Note: Referenced attachments for draft minutes are available upon request. Following approval of the minutes, attachments will be maintained with the signed minutes in the Office of Record.

**Signature on file*