

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

Meeting No. 323

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, April 16, 2021 via Zoom Video Conference.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patrick O’Daniel, Chairman
Derrelynn Perryman, Vice Chairman
Pastor Larry Miles, Secretary
Mano DeAyala
Hon. Molly Francis
Hon. Faith Johnson
Ambassador Sichan Siv
Eric Nichols
Dr. Rodney Burrow

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S., Superintendent
Jon Lilley
Michael Mondville
Robert O’Banion

CONVENED

Chairman Patrick O’Daniel convened the meeting of the 323rd Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, April 16, 2021, at 10:51 a.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 O’Daniel reported that the WSD Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on posted agenda topics as well as for public comments on issues within its jurisdiction as provided in Board Rule 300.1. As no speaker registration cards were received by the Board staff, no public presentations on posted agenda topics were heard.

RECOGNITIONS

Jon Lilley, Director of Instruction, introduced Dr. Stephanie Dominique, who is an Educational Specialist for the district and the Regional Principal for the Sam Houston Region.

Mr. Lilley stated that Dr. Stephanie Dominique has almost 20 years of experience in education. She joined the Windham team as an Education Specialist – Principal Support in September 2020. In addition to this position, she also serves as the Regional Principal for the Sam Houston Region. Even though her goal after high school did not include attending college, she

matriculated through higher education and received four degrees. In 2015, she achieved one of her ultimate education goals when she earned a Ph.D. in Leadership in Educational Administration. Additionally, she has her principal certification and is a certified special education teacher.

Mr. Lilley stated that before joining the Windham School District, she worked at Region 6 Education Service Center, Huntsville ISD, and Klein ISD. During her brief time with Windham, Dr. Dominique has already updated the Teacher of the Year program and is currently working to develop a Principal of the Year program. Her expertise in public education administration has proven an asset in supporting the new Matthew Gaines High School program. In her role as regional principal for the campus, she has been instrumental in selecting the curriculum and learning management system in addition to providing technical assistance and audit expertise to supporting overall educator and student success.

Mr. Lilley concluded that Dr. Dominique is a committed servant leader supporting others with dedication and commitment. Her educational mission is to encourage her students to find their passion and their voice, develop into independent thinkers, and become productive members of their communities. Perhaps most importantly, she is committed to improving the education experience, ensuring equality and equity for all students, and encouraging them to take ownership of their learning process.

Mr. Lilley asked the Board to please help him welcome Dr. Stephanie Dominique to the Windham team.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Lilley and congratulated Dr. Dominique.

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 March 5th, 2020 meeting, appraisers for the 2020-2021 school year, and excused absences.

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Hartman stated that the district is receiving positive feedback from those with whom WSD has met with and have more meetings scheduled for the future. The 87th Legislative Session kicked off on January 12, 2021. There are several committees that have a direct interest in the Windham School District. These committees are Senate Finance; House Appropriations; Senate Criminal Justice, House Corrections, Senate Education and House Public Education. WSD has also recently reached out to members of the House International Relations and

Economic Development and Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development committees, which hear bills and address matters related to adult education and employment.

Ms. Hartman said that Windham has a unique funding structure. The district often finds that legislators who are new to committees of interest are not overly familiar with Windham or aware of the difference between WSD funding through the Foundation School Fund and Independent School District K-12 funding through the Foundation School Program. Therefore, it is important that meetings are held with these members to provide an overview of the district, including services, student demographics and funding.

The Superintendent reported that Chapter 19 of the Education Code outlines Windham School District's funding through the Texas Education Agency Foundation School Fund within Article III. Strategy B.2.4. The district's base appropriation request is \$108.5 million for the biennium.

Ms. Hartman said that this past summer, Windham was included in the 5% reductions to the 2020-21 appropriations. This resulted in a decrease in funding of \$5.7 million for the biennium. Due to the time of year when teachers often retire and vacancies are created, which is when this notification occurred, WSD was able to meet this obligation by eliminating those vacant positions. In total, we removed 53.5 vacant Full Time Equivalent positions, 43.5 of which were certified teacher positions. During the current legislative session, Robert O'Banion, Director of Operations/Chief Financial Officer, and Superintendent Hartman have testified before Senate Finance, House Appropriations and House Corrections Committees in addition to meeting individually with legislative offices. Ms. Hartman and Mr. O'Banion have received numerous questions and have had the opportunity to ensure that legislative offices are briefed on the mission and duties of the district so that they can make well-informed decisions.

Superintendent Hartman stated that Windham has requested exceptional item funding to restore the 5% reduction. This \$5.7 million exceptional item would allow WSD to reinstate the 43.5 certified teaching positions and 10 additional support positions. These positions would allow Windham to provide 1.3 million contact hours between teachers and students for over 6,600 students each year. This is the only component to the district's exceptional item request this session and the administration team has been working very hard to make legislators aware of the impact this would provide. At this time the Senate has adopted 50% of WSD's exceptional item request, so it will be a conferencable item between the House and the Senate.

Ms. Hartman said that there are also several bills of interest that would have a direct impact on Windham if they become law. HB 30 would require the district to offer a high school diploma program, in addition to the current high school equivalency program, and select the best option for the individual when enrolling students under the age of 18 and those under the age of 22 who receive special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. HB 3457 relates to the applicability of certain laws to the Windham School District that are present in public schools surrounding confidentiality of evaluations and educator contracts. HB 4279 would make Windham eligible to apply for Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant funds to offer new career and technical education opportunities not previously offered to students at any

campus in the district. Additionally, HB 4214 would permit individuals incarcerated within TDCJ to apply for a restricted occupational license for use during incarceration and/or prior to rejoining Texas communities.

Superintendent Hartman and her leadership team have met with over 50 legislative offices in the course of the current legislative session to ensure that they are well informed on the district's programs, services, funding structure and activities, and afforded the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions to improve the district's services. During each meeting, Windham highlights the great work of WSD's educators, district staff and students in preparing Texans to successfully reenter the workforce. Windham will continue to ensure that legislative offices remain informed and respond to legislative requests for resource and follow-up information.

Ms. Hartman thanked the Board for their ongoing support of the Windham School District as well as thanked TDCJ, specifically Kate Blifford in Governmental Affairs, who keeps Ms. Hartman updated when she sees something that may be of impact to Windham. Superintendent Hartman also thanked the Windham team who is tracking bills and tracking legislative conversations very closely. Ms. Hartman paused for questions.

Pastor Larry Miles thanked Ms. Hartman for her promotion for the Reading is Freedom Project. He stated that it is now being taught at all regions of TDCJ using field ministers from the Darrington seminary to facilitate the project.

Eric Nichols stated that from watching the committee hearings during the legislative session that deal with the department and the Windham School District, it is extremely gratifying to see the recognition among the legislatures, on both the House and Senate side, not only to the great work being done within the Windham School District, but also the importance of the school district to the agency's overall mission in terms of promoting positive change in offender behavior, as well as promoting the successful and positive reintegration of inmates into society.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WSD's Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Chairman O'Daniel stated that diversity and inclusion are critical to the success of any organization. Recognizing the importance, Windham School District (WSD) is committed to creating an environment that will inspire students and employees to appreciate diversity, recognize the importance of different cultures, and value inclusion.

Mr. O'Daniel said that last school year, Windham formally established a district diversity statement. This year, the district acted on this statement by creating a calendar that recognizes the achievement and contributions of diverse cultures through monthly topics of conversations. These monthly themes are incorporated throughout student curriculum and staff development to

raise awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures throughout society.

The Chairman said that students, educators and administrators across the district celebrate monthly through virtual guest lectures, classroom instruction and activities, research and presentations, and art and poetry contests.

Chairman O'Daniel reported that in February, the district recognized Black History Month by highlighting African American inventors. Students used this opportunity to research and complete projects about notable Black leaders and inventors who made an impact on society. In honor of Black History Month, Windham hosted Dr. Anthony Harris as a virtual guest speaker. In his eye-opening speech, Dr. Harris discussed his experiences growing up in Mississippi in the '60s, fighting for the Civil Rights Movement, and participating in the Freedom Summer.

Mr. O'Daniel stated that last month, the district celebrated Women's History Month by highlighting women who have won the Nobel Peace Prize. Additionally, in recognition of Women's History Month, Windham paid homage to its first superintendent, Dr. Lane Murray. The first woman superintendent of any Texas school system, Dr. Murray pioneered the concept of a school district operating within the state prison system. With only eight instructors and no model to follow, she implemented a non-traditional, competency-based approach to instruction. She would go on to oversee the district for more than two decades.

The Chairman said that this month, the district is recognizing Second Chance Month. Observed in the United States since 2017, this month is dedicated to raising awareness of the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction and unlocking second-chance opportunities for people who have paid their debt to society, so they can become contributing citizens.

The Chairman reported that future months will recognize Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage, Native American heritage, Hispanic heritage, Juneteenth, and disability awareness. Additionally, there will be three months in the upcoming year for campuses to choose their own topics to celebrate.

Chairman O'Daniel concluded that throughout these celebrations, employees and students learn about the traditions of various groups across the world, the contributions of diverse leaders to society, the struggles faced by different cultures, and, most importantly, the value of inclusion. The district's diversity and inclusion initiative is more than just a statement; it is a core value that they strive to uphold.

OVERVIEW OF THE WSD ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

Jon Lilley, Division Director of Instruction, gave an overview of the WSD Annual Performance Report for the 2019-2020 school year. Mr. Lilley stated that at Windham, the district aims to provide quality educational opportunities that facilitate meaningful employment of the district's students. He stated that it was his privilege to share WSD's annual report with the Board highlighting September 1st, 2019 through August 31st, 2020.

Highlights included:

- WSD students are incarcerated individuals in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice who are in need of educational opportunities that range from literacy and high school equivalency programs to advanced technical training and life skills.
- WSD's last report indicated that many of our students dropped out in the 9th or 10th grade, having an average academic functioning level of 6th grade when they join Windham classes, and have an average age of 32. Students are ready for new opportunities, and the district celebrates success as students progress throughout their course enrollment and completions with Windham.
- More than 60,000 students received WSD educational services in SY20. These were the highest priority students as resources allowed, based on age, release date and educational needs.
- WSD students in SY20 were supported by a combination of adult academic education, career and technical education, and life skills classes- all designed to support future employment.
- WSD adult education and academic programs aim to develop functional and advanced levels of literacy in individuals, leading to attainment of a high school equivalency certificate and/or industry recognized credentials. The recent implementation of the MOU between Windham School District, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Texas Department of Criminal Justice and the Texas Workforce Commission will support the district's students in the achievement of these credentials. WSD looks forward to providing updates in the future regarding Windham students' attainment of high school equivalency certificates from WSD's Matthew Gaines High School Program located at the Ferguson unit.
- In SY20, almost 23,000 students participated in WSD adult education and academic programs.
- Of the 22,620 students who participated in adult education and academic programs, 2,037 students took the high school equivalency exam in SY20. This number is significantly lower than in previous school years as all assessments were suspended from March through August 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the individuals who were assessed, 82% were awarded a high school equivalency certificate.
- Life skills is another area the district programs help students refocus thinking, develop soft skills, enhance cognitive skills, and retain better-paying jobs. In SY20:
 - 19,854 students participated in CHANGES
 - 13,935 students participated in Cognitive Intervention Programs and
 - 938 participated in Parenting and Family Wellness Programs
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming provides graduates with the skills and real-world learning experiences necessary to compete in today's workforce. Program expansion in SY20 included: Cosmetology, Customer Service Specialist, Exploring Information Technology, Horticulture/Urban Farming, OSHA 30 Construction, and Safety Fundamentals. 13,960 CTE certificates (84% completion rate of those eligible) and 18,264 Industry Certificates were earned.
- WSD provides supplemental services at designated campuses for students under the age of 22. Title I teachers use customized curriculum and materials to provide practice in core

subject areas, supporting rigorous educational standards and the achievement of a high school equivalency or high school diploma.

- Elective Personal Enrichment Courses (EPEC) were classes taught during the winter, spring, and summer breaks of SY20. Soft-skill lessons within the courses enhance job readiness and career potential. These classes are voluntary, and over 13,000 students were enrolled.
- WSD's Accountability System assists school employees in compiling campus data, tracking key unit activities, supporting the campus improvement plan and recognizing units and unit personnel. This system allows WSD to track performance in critical measures and strengthen effectiveness in all program areas. In accordance with the Texas Education Agency, all school districts were not rated in SY20 as the State of Texas was declared a state of disaster due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The WSD workforce and reentry initiatives create the opportunity for successful reentry into employment, careers, and reconstructed lives. WSD's partners include industry leaders and representatives, Texas Workforce Development Board members from across the state, and the Reentry and Integration Division from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). All partnerships focus on helping place former students in a position to solidify a career pathway.
- The WSD and the TDCJ team up to provide job experience and valuable training certifications for eligible individuals within TDCJ during incarceration. These work-based training opportunities include Work Certification, On-The-Job Training (OJT) and apprenticeship programs.
- TDCJ offers a Work Certification Program, providing incarcerated workers the opportunity to earn a certificate for demonstrating diligent participation in a full-time or part-time job assignment. Incarcerated workers who completely perform essential job functions and maintain positive work habits on a continuous six-month basis receive a certificate for completing the program.
- In partnership with TDCJ, Windham coordinates OJT and United States Department of Labor (DOL) apprenticeship programs. These work-based job-skills training programs are integral components of WSD jobs training.
- The WSD recognizes that in order to provide the most effective and efficient services, the district's educators and staff must be aware of the current advancements in instruction, communication, and support. Professional development in SY20 for WSD included training in motivational interviewing, accountability, technology, industry standards and best practices.
- The Professional Development team scheduled weekly activities for staff working remotely by leveraging use of technology for training opportunities during COVID-19 restrictions. Trainings were either virtual or teleconference and recorded with a Professional Development training documentation form.
- We are pleased to highlight the progress and efforts within WSD that are detailed in this report. WSD will continue to develop and implement innovative programs that support student success, provide the community with capable, reliable employees, and improved lives for individuals and their families during and following incarceration.

Mr. Lilley paused for questions. There were none.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REVISION
OF WSD BOARD POLICY 07.48, “FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE”**

Michael Mondville said that there have not been many changes to the Family Medical Leave Act, so the policy remains much the same. Changes include tightening up the language throughout and improving the definitions to match the Department of Labor language. He asked that the Board approve the revised policy as presented. Mr. Mondville paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman O’Daniel asked the board for a motion.

Molly Francis moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the revision of the WSD Board Policy WBP-07.48, “Family and Medical Leave” as presented.

Faith Johnson seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

Chairman O’Daniel thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be Friday, June 25th, 2021 via video conference.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman O’Daniel adjourned the 323rd meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 11:18 a.m.

Chairman*

Secretary*

*Signature on File

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.