

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

Meeting No. 327

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, December 10, 2021 at the Prison Museum in Huntsville, Texas.

**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

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dr. Rodney Burrow

**WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kristina Hartman, Superintendent  
Kevin Sawnick  
Nathan Herrod  
Jon Lilley  
Ofelia Jimenez  
Stephine Crabb  
Cora Huggins

**CONVENED**

Chairman Patrick O’Daniel convened the meeting of the 327<sup>th</sup> Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, December 10, 2021, at 10:52 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**

Mr. Kevin Sawnick, Department Director of Instruction, introduced Mr. Nathan Herrod, who is the Advisement, Assessment, and Records Administrator for the district.

Mr. Sawnick stated that it was his honor to introduce Nathan Herrod, Windham's new Administrator for the Assessment, Advisement, and Records Department. Mr. Herrod joined the Windham School District in January of 2020 as Windham's Workforce Specialist for college and career readiness. In this role, he supported the development and implementation of the standard high school diploma program for young students. He acted as a liaison for post secondary education with TDCJ's Rehabilitative Programs Division, and he served as the point of contact for review and coordination for dual credit in articulation agreements with state colleges.

Mr. Sawnick stated Mr. Herrod is a native Texan and holds a Bachelor of Arts from Texas A&M University, Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Master of Arts from the University of Florida. During his time in Florida, he taught at the university level and served at the Florida Department of Corrections as a placement and transition specialist, principal, and regional principal.

Mr. Sawnick said that upon Mr. Herrod's return to Texas, he was an adjunct professor of history at Central Texas College prior to joining the Windham School District.

Mr. Sawnick asked the Board to please join him in congratulating Mr. Herrod on his new role.

Mr. Herrod stated that he is blessed to work with the brave and distinguished men and women at Windham and TDCJ, and he is blessed to have an incredible staff and incredible supervisors.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Herrod.

Mr. Jon Lilley, Division Director of Instruction, then introduced Ms. Ofelia Jimenez, who is the Sanchez Campus Principal.

Mr. Lilley stated that he would like to recognize Ms. Jimenez, Principal of the Sanchez Campus, for earning the highest accountability score in the district during the 2020-2021 school year. The WSD accountability system evaluates attendance, course completions, audit compliance, industry certifications, and high school equivalency certifications.

Mr. Lilley said that Ms. Jimenez started her career in education in 1990 as a computer lab paraprofessional at an elementary school. Since then, she has worked as a Spanish teacher and a school administrator for a charter school, before working for Windham as the principal at the Sanchez campus. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master's Degree in School Administration, both from West Texas A&M University. In addition, she has her lifetime Texas certifications in elementary education and secondary education, as well as her principal and superintendent certificates.

Mr. Lilley asked the Board to please join him in congratulating Ms. Jimenez, and some of her staff that are present in the audience, on their outstanding accountability score and thanking her for her service to her students and the district.

Chairman O'Daniel thanked Ms. Jimenez and asked her to introduce her staff that is present.

Ms. Jimenez stated that she brought some of her academic teachers: Ms. Estrada, a former

teacher of the year for Windham; Ms. Rosales, the GED/English Language Arts teacher; and Ms. Carmona, the Title I teacher at the Sanchez campus.

Ms. Jimenez stated that as Principal of the Rogelio Sanchez State Jail, it is her privilege to provide an overview of the campus. Located in El Paso, the Sanchez Campus provides academic, life skills, and Career and Technical Education, and specialty programs to more than 1,100 male students a year to prepare them to reenter our Texas communities.

Ms. Jimenez said that specifically, for adult basic education, Sanchez Campus teachers teach Academics, English as a Language, and prepare students to take their high school equivalency. Their life skills program consists of CHANGES and Cognitive Intervention courses designed to help students change their thinking patterns and develop skills essential for success in all areas of life. Additionally, the Sanchez Campus offers Culinary Arts, Electrical Trades, and Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning, or HVAC. With these programs, students have an opportunity to earn third-party industry certifications and learn the occupational skills needed to gain employment upon release to their communities. In addition to these CTE programs, the Sanchez Campus provides on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities. Through these apprenticeship programs, students gain invaluable experience working in the field and will earn a Department of Labor apprenticeship certification.

Ms. Jimenez stated that Windham also provides specialty services to the campus in the form of Title I support to help younger students, those under the age of 22, and assist in their journey of obtaining a High School Equivalency certification or High School Diploma. Additionally, the Sanchez campus offers the Family Literacy Program which allows incarcerated parents the opportunities to become active partners in their children's education through parenting curriculum, interactive activities, and parent-teacher conferences. The Sanchez staff operates a library at the campus to serve the residents and provide them opportunities with education, fiction, and non-fiction books.

Ms. Jimenez stated that her team consists of 13 teachers and five administrative staff members, with new positions on their campus making 16 teachers, who work diligently to help WSD's students and campus succeed. As stated earlier in this meeting, the Sanchez campus received an "A" on the accountability rating for last school year. It is because of all of the hard work that the Sanchez Campus was able to achieve this distinguished metric. Ms. Jimenez concluded that personally, she believes the campus success comes from effective and constant communication, a strong and cohesive team, and clear and high expectations set for all students and staff members. Ms. Jimenez said that she is proud of the success of Sanchez Campus students and staff, and is honored to be leading the campus.

She thanked the Board for their time and paused for any questions.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Jimenez.

### **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 October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting, appraisers for the 2021-2022 school year, excused absences and personal property donations.

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

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

### **Integrated Education & Training**

Superintendent Hartman stated that Integrated Education and Training (IET) is a research-based educational strategy that provides students with concurrent and contextualized adult literacy instruction, workforce preparation, and workforce training for educational and career advancement. Windham uses this strategy to motivate students, increase achievement in the classroom, and better prepare its students for workplace success upon release from incarceration.

Ms. Hartman said an example of an IET is the Academic Teacher and the Construction Carpentry Instructor isolating foundational material in the construction curriculum, such as measurement and fractions, to be reinforced so that students can achieve a deeper understanding of the trade elements in both their academic classroom and their trade classroom. The Academic Teacher then supports the Career and Technical Education instruction in the academic classroom by directly teaching the selected skills using construction examples in their academic classroom. By contextualizing learning in the academic classroom, students are able to learn basic adult education concepts through an occupational lens. This strategy, allows students to see the direct correlation between foundational academic skills and their future careers. Additionally, IET programing focuses on soft skills. To meet this component, WSD is integrating a new workforce readiness curriculum into the Career and Technical Education courses.

The Superintendent noted the district is in the beginning stages of a pilot IET program at the Woodman State Jail, a women’s facility in Gatesville. This program was developed following the selection of WSD by the U.S. Department of Education as a recipient of technical assistance through the IET in corrections pilot. The technical assistance provided began in May of 2021 and includes virtual workshops, state staff discussions, intensive coaching, and participation in a convening. The IET at Woodman will focus on the Electrical trades. To be eligible to participate in the program, students must be within three years of their projected release date, committed to working toward achieving their High School Equivalency, and must indicate an interest in working in the architecture and construction trades on their career interest inventory assessment. The district is currently in the process of acquiring industry partners to provide an additional component to the program, industry professional co-teaching. WSD’s goal is for these industry partners to attend classes and serve as co-teachers for students. This will help to reinforce important industry and soft skills necessary for the workforce. As this program is being piloted at a women’s facility, it is the district’s goal to bring in female professionals as the industry partners in construction trades to encourage WSD female students to engage in skilled trades upon release.

Ms. Hartman stated that the district is also working to expand the programing to other campuses following successful implementation of the pilot. Part of this expansion includes an upcoming partnership and funding through the Texas Workforce Commission. The goal of this initiative is to serve 500 students over three years through an IET model from education to employment.

Ms. Hartman said that through this new strategy, Windham hopes to motivate students and provide different teaching methods to help students earn their High School Equivalency or High School Diploma, third-party industry certifications, and employment in the field of training. This concurrent and contextualized teaching approach has shown proven results in other adult education institutions across the country, and the district is excited to see the results.

Ms. Hartman said she would now like to discuss additional topic related to staff retention and morale. A recent employee staff survey was completed to poll all district employees about the culture and experience of working within the district. Communications Administrator, Dr. Amanda Coleman, will brief the board about this topic at the next board meeting. The survey responses noted areas that the district can improve while also highlighting the primary reasons employees enjoy working for Windham, which are “helping others” and “working with their peers.” The district is fortunate to employ staff members who are not only experts in their field, but are hard-working, wonderful people. Ms. Hartman said that she is thankful to all of WSD’s employees for ensuring the students succeed. As this is the last board meeting of the calendar year, Ms. Hartman wanted to take this opportunity to express her gratitude to the Windham staff and to the TDCJ staff, and to wish all of the Board members a Merry Christmas. She thanked them for the hard work and dedication, and wished all a happy holiday season.

Ms. Hartman then paused for questions.

Pastor Larry Miles asked Superintendent Hartman for an update on the Reading is Freedom program and the plans for the next year. Ms. Hartman stated the Reading is Freedom program is now expanded to include at least one program site per region. Over the next year, WSD will continue to work with the Rehabilitative Programs Division. Ms. Hartman said the district is looking at the Hobby unit, where the field ministry program will be present for the women. She stated that she believes that is a good location to kick-off the program.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Hartman.

## **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **Cosmetology Graduation**

Chairman O’Daniel stated Windham School District achieved a new milestone with the graduation of its first class of cosmetology students. The district started the new program at Mountain View, an all-women’s campus in Gatesville, to prepare students for a career in cosmetology upon release to their communities.

Mr. Chairman explained that at the beginning of the program, students receive their cosmetology

permit from the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. This permit allows students to practice and earn hours toward getting their cosmetology license. Students must complete a minimum of 1,000 hours in the classroom and pass a written and practicum test to graduate the program.

Mr. O'Daniel said the program consists of three components focused on hair, skin and nails. Students learned skills ranging from cutting and coloring hair, performing facials, and manicuring nails. Additionally, students received training in business skills, salon management, professional development, health and safety, and legal components relating to cosmetology. These business management skills are essential as it provides students with the knowledge to successfully rent their own booth or open their own salon upon release to their communities. Once these students reenter their communities, they can apply for their cosmetology license and then proceed to work in the field; a license which, until very recently, they could not receive due to being convicted of a felony.

Chairman O'Daniel stated all students who complete the program must be within five years of release. Students who release shortly after graduation will be able to immediately apply for a license and begin their career in the industry.

Mr. Chairman noted that cosmetology is a growing field. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicted the cosmetology industry will grow 19 percent from 2020 to 2030, which is significantly faster than the average for all occupations. Windham's new program will add to this growing workforce while providing students an opportunity to earn gainful employment.

The Chairman concluded that this program was popular among the female residents and the district is looking to expand it in the future. Mr. Chairman said that the audience will now hear first-hand from the students about the program in a short video taken at their graduation.

*Video from the Cosmetology graduation played*

### **SANCHEZ CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS**

The Chairman explained that Ms. Jimenez had already given her prepared remarks regarding the Sanchez campus highlights earlier in the meeting. Mr. Chairman, however, invited Ms. Jimenez to the podium while the slideshow played.

Mr. Chairman asked Ms. Jimenez to describe the traits she thinks make for a great principal and a great Windham School District campus. Ms. Jimenez stated one of the key elements of being a great principal is communication; that is at the very top. Keeping your staff informed, being an active listener, because they do all the work, and they have the greatest ideas. She stated that when you listen to them, and value their input, they do all the work. She stated to genuinely care about your staff, be passionate about your students and their needs, and strive.

Ms. Jimenez described her word this year is to "relentlessly" strive to meet their needs and the needs of her staff. Sometimes that will be uncomfortable for others, but Ms. Jimenez said she

will press for her students and her staff. She stated she doesn't always win, but most of the time she does.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Jimenez for her relentless commitment to excellence. Ms. Jimenez thanked Chairman O'Daniel for opportunity to showcase the hard-work and the achievements of her staff.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE**

Ms. Stephine Crabb, Human Resources Administrator, stated the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) reported that two-thirds of respondents to Frontline Education's nationwide survey reported a teacher shortage this year. Specifically, Houston ISD reported 700 teachers for the 2021-2022 school year. Reasons for the shortage cited by TASB include an insufficient number of qualified applicants, uncompetitive salary and benefit packages compared to other careers, and a 27 percent decrease in the number of newly certified teachers, as noted by the Texas Education Agency. Due to this staffing challenge, Windham's Human Resources Department's focus for this school year is on retention and recruitment.

Ms. Crabb provided context regarding Windham's current staffing position by sharing some data from the previous year. In the 2020-2021 school year, Windham hired 160 new employees. Of these employees, 80 were teachers. In total, the district received 1,740 employment applications. Additionally, WSD had 183.9 employee separations. Of these, 104.5 were teachers and only 57 were due to retirement. As of August 31, 2021, the district had 181.9 vacancies, with 130 of these being teacher vacancies.

Ms. Crabb reported that to fill this workforce gap, Windham Human Resources is focused on recruitment. Currently, WSD is searching for a Talent Acquisition Specialist. Ms. Crabb stated that she hopes the position will be filled soon. This position will be dedicated to increasing the district's exposure to and acquisition of a diverse candidate pool. Specifically, this role will develop affirmative action plans, create succession plans for key leadership positions, and facilitate opportunities for campus staff to be district ambassadors. The district will expand recruiting efforts through increasing WSD's online presence, participating in teacher and trade organizations, and partnering with universities to expose students to the district and the rewarding career opportunities. Additionally, WSD is collaborating internally with the district's Communications department to develop marketing, brand recognition, and retention strategies. The new Communications Coordinator will work directly with the Talent Acquisition Specialist to develop advertising campaigns and employee retention incentives. To expand the applicant pool, Windham is seeking industry experts who can complete the alternative certification programs to become qualified to teach in WSD classrooms and fill the teacher shortage.

Ms. Crabb said the district is working to increase retention by improving the workplace culture. Windham recently surveyed the entire district about communications and employee experience to determine areas in need of improvement. Additionally, Windham asks all separating employees to complete an exit survey prior to leaving the district. Based on these results, WSD is focused on increasing interaction, communication, and visibility with staff. One example is the addition of a hotline call, so that the district's employees have an outlook to speak to human

resources staff without fear of retaliation. The department has started visiting campuses throughout the district to provide staff an opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with their Human Resources Administrator. Through these visits, WSD hopes to discover what is being done well and the opportunities to improve employee job satisfaction. Determining what keeps WSD employees engaged will be critical to retaining staff.

Ms. Crabb concluded that increasing recruitment and retention is one of her strategic goals and is a critical component to fulfilling the district's mission and vision. Her team has worked diligently to expand WSD's efforts, and she is grateful for their dedication and service to the district. Ms. Crabb paused for questions.

Judge Faith Johnson asked Ms. Crabb why there are 181.9 vacancies. Ms. Crabb responded that WSD has some employees that are not full-time, but are a step up from part-time. It is a calculation.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Crabb for the update.

### **NON-TRADITIONAL DAY OF LEARNING**

Ms. Cora Huggins, Federal Programs Department Administrator, stated that in support of Texas' education goals and the United States *Every Student Succeeds Act*, Windham School District strives to encourage the district's youth and young-adult-learners to become involved in education classes. Per law, students who are under the age of 22 are eligible for additional support to increase their chances for academic, vocational, transitional, and social success. This group receives the highest priority for enrollment in Windham academic classes to help them achieve their High School Diploma or High School Equivalency.

Ms. Huggins said that members of this population often have negative memories of early school experiences, or have not yet realized the benefits that education provides in helping to shape productive and fulfilling futures. Fortunately, studies show that young adults are unique in their ability to learn and to make decisive changes. And, even one positive, meaningful encounter can help someone in this age group change the trajectory of their lives. With these students, motivation to learn new things is still very high, and, in cases where it is low, increased participation, leads to increased motivation. Based on this research, since 2019, Windham has conducted an annual week of non-traditional education activities designed to spark enthusiasm in young learners and to encourage their sustained participation and enrollment in WSD programs.

Ms. Huggins reported that this year's non-traditional week was held from October 25 to October 29. Although aimed at young learners, the activities were open to all students, regardless of their age. Windham campus teams created specialized lessons to immerse students in interactive learning tasks in areas ranging from mathematics to CHANGES curriculum. Students completed science experiments and engaged in team building activities. This unique opportunity allows hesitant students who lack academic esteem to witness the enjoyable aspects that emerge from learning when involved in an education community.

Ms. Huggins stated that in providing this annual experience, Windham allows students to



become involved in projects that are fun and engaging. This helps them begin to see the value in their continued participation in formal learning environments. Late adolescence and early adulthood is the peak time for students to learn new things. In fact, one's maximum capability for cognitive processes necessary to learning is seen in the mid-twenties, and researchers found young adults outperformed older adults in all cases when learning new information and in task-switching.

Ms. Huggins concluded that each Windham campus is dedicated to providing young adults with learning options to maximize their potential and increase their ability to make informed choices in their current and future living communities. There are numerous reasons to target the young-learner population. We all have the opportunity to reach young adults and help them make the crucial connection that a combination of academics, career technology education, and social skills will increase their chances for meaningful employment and a productive and successful life. Ms. Huggins paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman O'Daniel thanked Ms. Huggins, and stated that it was a very inspirational presentation.

Mr. Eric Nichols stated that as Board members, whenever they go out to the units, they see the programs in action and they see the level of excitement and motivation among the inmate population that is qualified and motivated to take advantage of it. He stated that all the additional programs that only increase that level of awareness among the inmate population and the level of engagement are very welcome and appreciated.

Chairman O'Daniel thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 in Lubbock, Texas.

**ADJOURNED**

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman O'Daniel adjourned the 327<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 11:29 a.m.

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Chairman\*

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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.*