



**WINDHAM SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**

**NUMBER: OP-08.16 (rev. 7)**

**DATE: February 8, 2017**

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**SUPERSEDES: OP-08.16 (rev. 6)  
August 21, 2015**

# **OPERATING PROCEDURES**

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**SUBJECT: CHANGING HABITS AND ACHIEVING NEW GOALS TO EMPOWER SUCCESS (CHANGES) PROGRAM 3**

**AUTHORITY: Tex. Educ. Code Chapter 19**

**APPLICABILITY: Windham School District (WSD)**

## **POLICY:**

WSD will provide a pre-release program to provide offenders with an opportunity to develop the basic life skills and social values needed for successful reintegration into society.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **I. Purpose**

CHANGES is a pre-release program that prepares offenders to transition from incarceration to the “free world.” This program is required as a condition for parole for all offenders with a pending FI3-R vote from the Board of Pardons and Paroles. It is a skills-based program that addresses personal development, healthy relationships, living responsibly, drug education, psychological development, health education, and resources for release into the “free world.”

### **II. Program Description**

**A. The CHANGES program consists of lessons in the following modules of instruction:**

- 1. Personal Development (preparing for change, goal setting, self-discovery, values, attitudes, beliefs, patience with self and others);**
- 2. Healthy Relationships (reuniting with family, relationship styles, communication and conflict resolution, family patterns, effective parenting);**
- 3. Living Responsibly (respecting boundaries; civil responsibilities; budget planning; time management; problems and solutions);**

4. Drug Education (basic facts, common drugs and their effects, drug use and the power of associations, what it takes to protect your sobriety, steps in changing habits);
  5. Living Well (inside-out, mind-body connections, male/female health issues, reproductive health, stress management and nutrition);
  6. Putting Together a New Start (anger management, loss and grief, empathy, making amends, stressful interactions); and
  7. Going Home (getting and keeping a job, technology skills, success is a choice, goals and resources for success).
- B. These practical, everyday issues are explored within the context of developing a positive mental attitude, accurate thinking for self-assessment and life planning, self-discipline, appropriate interpersonal skills, and values definition and clarification.

### III. Program Organization

- A. The content and processes included in the CHANGES program are structured to provide a minimum of 180 hours of classroom instruction.
- B. Individual class sessions will be at least three hours and 15 minutes in length.
- C. The curriculum for the CHANGES program defines the objectives to be addressed and suggested program materials.
- D. The CHANGES curriculum will be delivered in its entirety following the designated script for each module/lesson as designed.
- E. There are 35 lessons to be covered sequentially.
- F. Materials to be used in the program are specified in the curriculum.
- G. Offenders may participate in this program and in other educational programs as appropriate to meet individual learner needs; however, students will be scheduled in only one CHANGES class per day. In special circumstances, the division director (or designee) may grant an exception.
- H. CHANGES is the primary program that satisfies an FI-3R or Pre-Release requirement defined in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Administrative Directive (AD)-07.07, "Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) Management."

### IV. Instructional Design

- A. The CHANGES class is facilitated, rather than taught through a direct instruction approach. Teachers are required to facilitate the program as written, with fidelity and integrity, without omissions. After all parts of the curriculum have been completed, extra activities can be added to extend the learning process. Teachers may supplement the approved curricula with creditable resources not supplant.

- B. The theoretical framework of this program includes cognitive behavioral, social learning, motivational interviewing, and Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) model.
  - C. Students are exposed to all program elements. The major elements of the program consist of lecture, group discussion, individual assignments, role plays, video lessons, and other dynamic activities.
  - D. Homework is incorporated throughout the curricula to increase student learning and enhance behavior change. It takes significant repetition of new knowledge and skills for students to break out of their offending cycles. This repetition must include using learned information and skills in their natural environment. Both active and passive homework are included.
  - E. Guest speakers may be used for supplemental activities; however, guest speakers will not take the place of any lesson or activity in the curriculum.
  - F. The use of audiovisual aids, group discussions, and group activities are promoted to allow students of diverse academic abilities to learn together in a class setting.
  - G. Role plays shall involve positive scenarios; touching is not allowed.
  - H. Eligible offenders cannot "test out" of CHANGES.
  - I. Students will be exposed to all program elements. Students who miss one or two lessons in a module will make up the lesson(s) at the teacher's convenience. Students who miss three or more lessons in a module will repeat the entire module.
  - J. CHANGES classes will not be scheduled for the computer lab.
  - K. CHANGES classes will not be scheduled for the library.
  - L. All CHANGES pre-tests will be administered prior to enrollment. CHANGES teachers are responsible for administering the post-test quizzes at the end of each respective module. Post-tests for the Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA) and Measure of Criminal Thinking Styles (MOCTS) will be administered by the CHANGES teacher when the students are within three days of completing the class.
  - M. Teachers must scan the Life Skills answer sheets weekly, however, immediate scanning after test administration is preferred.
- V. Teacher Training
- A. It is highly recommended that experienced classroom teachers with superb management skills, who are able to neutrally facilitate difficult and controversial topics, be considered for this type of class.
  - B. Prior to teaching a CHANGES class, teachers must receive training in facilitation of the CHANGES curriculum provided by the WSD Division of Special Programs and Populations no more than one year before their teaching assignment begins.

Hence, if a teacher does not teach CHANGES for a year, that teacher must repeat the training sequence.

- C. This initial training is followed by a two to three day observation, demonstration, and evaluation period in an existing CHANGES class.
- D. Proper training is vital for the success of the program and the improved climate of the school.
- E. Training for new CHANGES teachers is typically scheduled once a month.
- F. A minimum of three participants is required for the training to be held.
- G. It is highly recommended that additional teachers be trained on each facility to serve as substitute or replacement teachers when needed.

#### VI. Student Qualifications

- A. Offenders who are WSD eligible and within 24 months of projected release may participate in the CHANGES program.
- B. If an offender receives an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer after enrollment, the unit counselor or principal must utilize the waiver process to obtain approval for continued enrollment.

#### VII. Student Selection and Enrollment

- A. The principal or counselor is responsible for the selection and placement of offenders into the CHANGES program based on ITP priority.
- B. Offenders who do not have college hours or degrees have higher priority for enrollment than those who do.
- C. Offenders who have completed CHANGES in the past two years have lower priority than those who have not.
- D. Students will only be enrolled in the CHANGES program at the beginning (first lesson) of a module of instruction.
- E. Principals and counselors will collaborate with the teacher to determine the entry and exit dates for students.
- F. Preferably, new students should not be placed into the class at the beginning of the Module VII (Going Home). If possible, these students should be enrolled at the beginning of Module I (Personal Development).
- G. A student must have completed all modules of the CHANGES curriculum within two years of release to be excused from participation by the principal.
- H. A student transfer who has completed a portion of the curriculum at another unit should be placed into the curriculum cycle at the beginning of the module where he or she left off.

- I. Completion of the CHANGES program during a previous incarceration will not excuse an offender from participation in the program during the current incarceration.

#### VIII. Attendance Accounting

The teacher is responsible for recording daily attendance on the class attendance sheet in accordance with OP-9.02, "Student Attendance Accounting."

#### IX. Student Records

- A. The teacher will maintain a record of lessons completed by each participant using the CHANGES Student Progress Record (SPR). The dates spent on each lesson will be recorded in the lesson boxes on the SPR, including the date that any make-up work was completed. The date of completion of each module will be recorded under each module on the SPR.
- B. SPR cards will be updated weekly.
- C. The back of the SPR card is devoted to teacher comments. This comment section will be used to document conversations held with students regarding their lack of progress. Signed and dated comments in this area serve as supporting documentation for teachers' decisions to not grant certificates or to drop students for lack of participation. Copies of disciplinary cases and signed program refusal forms will be attached to the back of the SPR card as additional supporting documentation.
- D. Incomplete computer records negatively impact the release dates of offenders, particularly those with FI-R votes. Therefore, proper maintenance of CHANGES records on the SPR cards and subsequent, timely entry of that information into the computer is imperative. The following procedures apply to all students and to all facilities.
  - 1. When a student completes or is withdrawn from the class, completed modules will be entered on the Counselor Review Page (CHANGES tab) as soon as possible and no more than two weeks from the date of program completion or withdrawal.
  - 2. When a CHANGES student is transferred:
    - a. The SPR card will be scanned to the unit of destination. All original SPR cards will remain on the original unit.
    - b. Information on the Counselor Review Page (CHANGES tab) will be used by the receiving unit to determine appropriate placement.
  - 3. The SPR card will be kept for a minimum of two years following the student's exit from the class.
  - 4. If the student was denied a certificate of completion, the SPR card will be kept until the offender successfully completes the CHANGES program or is released from TDCJ.

- E. SPR cards are official state documents and should never be copied or in the hands of an offender. When not in use, SPR cards shall be secured in an appropriate location.

X. Student Evaluation

Completion decisions will be based on:

- A. Consistent and active student participation;
- B. Completion of all the lessons and activities;
- C. Completion of the required minimum of 180 clock hours;
- D. Completion of all assessments; and
- E. All seven course modules must be completed within one year from the beginning of CHANGES instruction. If not completed within one year, the offender must begin again and complete all seven modules within a new one-year time period in order to complete the program.

XI Certificates

- A. The teacher will issue both the CHANGES Certificate of Completion and Drug Education Certificate (if applicable) when a student has completed all the items cited in the student evaluation section of this policy.
- B. A drug education certificate will only be awarded to offenders who earn a certificate of completion for CHANGES and who successfully participated in at least 15 hours and completed the Drug Education module.
- C. The certificate can be used by the offender as evidence of program participation for parole and other purposes.
- D. The following rules apply to CHANGES certificates, including the Drug Education certificates issued in CHANGES.
  - 1. There will be no alterations to the certificates, such as embossing or any seals.
  - 2. CHANGES certificates will be kept secured either in the principal's office or in an alternate location designated by the principal. CHANGES certificates will not be kept in a classroom.
  - 3. Duplicate CHANGES certificates will not be issued to the offender. However, once released, former students may contact the Division of Special Programs and Populations for Drug Education certificates that will be issued directly to the Department of Public Safety.

XII Program Evaluation

CHANGES is evaluated on an ongoing basis using the following measures:

- A. The MCAA is a self-report measure to determine criminal tendencies of those with whom they associate and an assessment of their pro-criminal attitudes.
- B. The MOCTS assesses for the presence of maladaptive thinking styles underlying criminal and other antisocial behavior.
- C. Lesson quizzes assess the course content associated with each lesson.
- D. Student Certificates of Completion are granted to students who successfully complete all the course requirements.

Signature on file  
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Dr. Latreace Craig, Director  
Division of Special Programs and Populations