



## 2020 - 2024 Strategic Plan



Providing academic,  
career and technical education  
and life skills to eligible individuals  
within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.



# WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Introduction

**Windham School District (WSD or district)** provides academic, career and technical education and life skills programs to eligible individuals within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The district, which was authorized by the Texas Legislature in 1969, was the first educational system of such scope within a statewide prison system.

The district is directed by Chapter 19 of the Texas Education Code to have a strategic plan that includes:

- 1) A mission statement relating to the goals and duties of the district;
- 2) Goals to be met by the district in carrying out the mission stated; and
- 3) Specified educational, vocational training, and counseling programs to be conducted by the district to meet the goals stated in the plan.

The WSD strategic plan discusses goals and strategies to be addressed by the district in the next five years beginning with fiscal year 2020. These goals and strategies serve as the foundation for the District Improvement Plan and Campus Improvement Plans. Performance measures, as they relate to the goals and strategies identified herein, are established in the District Improvement Plan. These performance measures are reviewed annually.

## Vision

The vision of Windham School District is to empower students and transform lives through excellence in education.

## Mission

The mission of the Windham School District, in partnership with its stakeholders, is to provide quality educational opportunities.



## Philosophy

The Windham School District serves a population of men and women who left the public school system for a variety of reasons and eventually found their way into the legal system. The difficulties experienced by WSD students while they were in the public school system have not disappeared with age or incarceration. Other factors that may impact the students' education achievement are age, general attitude toward school, and their physical and mental health.

Adult learners may require basic educational skills which allow them to process knowledge and information, the vocational competencies to be productive in today's workforce, and the social skills which provide them with self-confidence and the ability to interact successfully with others. In order to meet the needs of our students, the WSD offers structured classes in academic, life skills, and career and technical education. WSD believes that education can empower students and transform lives.



# Historical Perspective

- 1969** The 61st Texas Legislature passed into law Senate Bill 35, which authorized the Texas Department of Corrections to establish a school district within the prison system.
- 1969** The Board of Corrections appointed Dr. Lane Murray as new district Superintendent (the first superintendent in a correctional institute and the first female superintendent in a school district in Texas).
- 1974** WSD employed a staff of 198.
- 1976** The district was the first corrections education system to receive accreditation from a regional accreditation association (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools [SACS]).
- 1979** WSD employed a staff of 376.
- 1988** The district employed a staff of 569.
- 1989** WSD eliminated Physical Education, Art and Music programs.
- 1990** WSD committed to the full-scale implementation of Computer Assisted Instruction.
- 1992** The district employed a staff of 871. The district was funded under Article III, Item 17 of the General Appropriations Act, and a contact hour rate for funding was established.
- 1993** Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) reintegration/life skills program began as a pre-release program to better prepare individuals for release.
- 1993** Schools Behind Bars: WSD and Other Prison Education Programs, a performance review of the district by the Texas State Comptroller, was published.
- 1994** WSD served 45,000 students on 51 campuses; employed staff of 1,469.
- 1994** WSD established regional offices.
- 1995** Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1 (The Comprehensive Education Act) and Chapter 19, Schools in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
- 1996** The district implemented the Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP).
- 1999** The district restructured career and technical education courses for incarcerated women, adding new programs.
- 2000** Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council conducted a study and published a series of four reports:
- 1) An Overview of the WSD;
  - 2) Educational Achievement of Inmates in the WSD;
  - 3) Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the WSD on Post-Release Employment; and
  - 4) Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the WSD on Recidivism.
- 2000** Select Committee on the WSD produced “Interim Report to the 77th Texas Legislature.”
- 2001** WSD introduced Perspectives and Solutions, a cultural diversity/tolerance program designed to assist incarcerated individuals with adjustment as they enter a correctional environment.
- 2001** The district implemented the Parenting program.
- 2001** The Texas Education Agency (TEA) conducted a Title I Program Monitoring review.
- 2003** WSD operated 88 schools, serving 83,785 participants; awarded 4,723 high school equivalency (GED) certificates, 8,646 vocational certificates of completion and 3,307 industry recognized certifications issued, and employed 1,487 staff members with an additional 135 Project Re-Integration of Offenders (Project RIO) personnel.
- 2003** The TEA conducted a district Effectiveness and Compliance (DEC) visit.
- 2003** The Texas Legislature decreased funding for the district by approximately 19 percent, which resulted in a reduction-in-force and a substantive organizational restructure, effective September 1, 2003.
- 2005** The district incorporated assistive technology for students with visual and hearing impairments.
- 2005** A Sunset Review of WSD was conducted.
- 2006** WSD conducted its initial effectiveness study of career and technical education in relation to post-release employment as required by the Texas Education Code, Chapter 19 and the Texas Labor Code, Chapter 306 (79th Texas Legislature) and submitted the report to the Legislative Budget Board.
- 2007** The TEA conducted an extensive site and field review of WSD as required by Rider 79 Article III of the 2005 General Appropriations Act. This review evaluated the structure, management and operations of the district and the impact of its programs. The report was submitted by the State Commissioner of Education to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and members of the Texas Legislature.

# Historical Perspective

- 2008** As of August 31, 2008, the district served approximately 82,449 students in its literacy, career and technical education and life skills programs. Continuing Education served an additional 8,205 students through its post-secondary programs. In addition, 5,039 participants received a GED, 509 associate's degrees were awarded, 56 bachelor's degrees were awarded, and 15 students had a master's degree conferred. WSD employed a staff of approximately 1,264 with an additional 121 Project RIO personnel.
- 2009** Twenty percent of the incarcerated population in state-operated Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) facilities participated in some type of WSD educational program on a typical day.
- 2009** WSD conducted an effectiveness study of its vocational programs and submitted its annual report to the Texas Legislative Budget Board as required by Texas H.B. 2837, 79th Legislature, R.S. (2005).
- 2010** WSD began paying industry certification testing fees for eligible students, enabling more students to obtain industry certification and contributing to a 43 percent increase from the number of certificates issued in SY 2008-2009.
- 2011** The Texas Legislature reduced funding for the WSD by approximately 27 percent. Effective September 1, 2011, the district implemented a reduction-in-force eliminating 271 positions, including 31 percent administrative positions and 20 percent of teaching positions, restructuring the organization from four regions to three, closing eight school campuses and increasing the number of campuses under the supervision of individual principals.
- 2011** WSD submitted a self-evaluation report to the Sunset Commission, highlighting the educational programs and services provided by WSD, in preparation for the legislatively-mandated Sunset Commission review of WSD in 2012.
- 2012** WSD contracted with Sam Houston State University (SHSU) to conduct an evaluation of WSD education programs. The study measured the effect of program participation on the likelihood of recidivism, along with employment outcomes such as wages.
- 2012** WSD participated in an assessment process conducted by the Sunset Advisory Commission.
- 2013** WSD provided educational services on 86 facilities across the state. More than 60,000 residents received WSD educational services in SY13.
- 2013** The Division of Program Monitoring and Interventions from Texas Education Agency conducted on-site visits to evaluate implementation of the special education program.
- 2013** WSD released a new, more dynamic version of its website ([www.wsdtx.org](http://www.wsdtx.org)). The website continued to be used as one of the district's main avenues to provide our stakeholders with the latest information.
- 2014** Educational services were reestablished on five facilities that closed educational programming in 2012 resulting in services being provided on a total of 89 TDCJ facilities.
- 2014** The WSD entered into partnership with Mullin Independent School District to provide an avenue for eligible young women at the San Saba facility to earn a high school diploma.
- 2015** The WSD established a workforce team that significantly increased employer engagement and meaningful student job placements.
- 2015** The WSD added and implemented robust career and technical education programs that led to teacher tours and training through major employers so that student learning experiences more closely replicated the workforce. CTE efforts led to a significant increase in certifications and additional opportunities for incarcerated women.
- 2015** WSD introduced enhanced technology through the use of ELMO visual presenters and computer-based high school equivalency testing.
- 2016** WSD expanded educational opportunities for residents in July 2016 with year-round school by implementing Elective Personal Enrichment Courses (EPEC).
- 2016** WSD expanded use of Odyssey instructional software to include GED/High School level for all campuses.
- 2017** WSD revised CTE course curriculum to expand opportunities for vocational students.
- 2018** WSD began program expansion for women in trades in which they were historically underrepresented.
- 2018** WSD completed the statewide conversion to computer-based high school equivalency testing.
- 2019** WSD implemented a comprehensive accountability system to track performance on critical measures and strengthen effectiveness in all program areas.
- 2019** WSD added a Facebook page (@wsdtx) to increase communication with all stakeholders.
- 2019** The 86th Texas Legislature approved an appropriations increase to WSD of \$9.8 million for the biennium 2020-2021 to provide for salary increases and program expansion in the areas of vocational programs for women, apprenticeship, industry certification and year-round school.
- 2019** The WSD began the Health and Wellness initiative.

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# Statutory Authority

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## Statutory Goals for Windham School District

§19.003, GOALS OF THE DISTRICT Texas Education Code

1. Reduce recidivism;
2. Reduce the cost of confinement or imprisonment;
3. Increase the success of former inmates in obtaining and maintaining employment; and
4. Provide an incentive to inmates to behave in positive ways during confinement or imprisonment.

## Statutory Powers and Duties

§19.002, In accordance with the Texas Education Code:

1. The district may establish and operate schools at the various facilities of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Section 19.002 ESTABLISHMENT,
2. Develop educational and vocational training programs specifically designed for persons eligible under Section 19.005: ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.
  - (a) Any person confined or imprisoned in the department who is not a high school graduate is eligible for programs or services under this chapter paid for with money from the foundation school fund. To the extent space is available, the district may also offer programs or services under this chapter paid for with money from the foundation school fund to persons confined or imprisoned in the department who are high school graduates.
  - (b) Eligibility under this chapter does not make a person eligible for a program or service under any other chapter.
3. Coordinate educational programs and services in the department with those provided by other state agencies, by political subdivisions, and by persons who provide programs and services under contract under §19.004: GOVERNANCE, LIMITATION ON POWERS, AND DUTIES.

## Statutory Basis

### State

- Senate Bill 35 passed by the 61st Texas Legislature, effective March 1969 authorized the Texas Board of Corrections to establish a school district within the prison system.
- Senate Bill 1 of the 74th Texas Legislature, effective May of 1995 codified the WSD in Chapter 19 of the Texas Education Code.

### Federal

- Federal - P.L. 105-17 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Requires WSD to provide free, appropriate education to qualified students younger than age 22).
- Federal - Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (Prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in programs which receive federal funds).

# Windham School District Student Service Procedures

All of WSD's students are men and women who are incarcerated in one of the state-operated adult prisons or adult state jails. The incarcerated population includes men and women with ages as young as 14 to well into their 90s. They encompass a diverse population in terms of geography, age, gender, race and ethnicity. As one would expect, the average profile of a district student differs greatly from the traditional public school student.

To best achieve its mission, the district has adopted a strategy of targeting individuals incarcerated who are most likely to recidivate. WSD has implemented an Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) for identifying and tracking the educational program and progress history of each participant. This ITP specifically and clearly targets which programs are most appropriate for the participant.

## *The ITP process is as follows:*

- Newly-received individuals are reviewed to identify educational programming needs. Recommended programs are documented on the ITP by the use of a two-digit key rating system. The "Need" key reflects the individual's need for a particular program. The "Priority" key prioritizes the individual's placement based on such factors as age, projected release date, and program eligibility criteria.
- In general, those less than 35 years of age who do not hold a verified high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate are a priority for enrollment in academic classes. Individuals less than 35 years of age who lack vocational training and are within five years of projected release are a priority for enrollment in career and technical educational programs.
- Life Skills courses, designed to address communication and employability skills and criminal thinking behaviors, may also be recommended on the ITP based on resident need.
- Refusing to appropriately participate in programming or refusing to attend may result in a Program Refusal notation on the ITP. Students are counseled regarding the potential consequences of a Program Refusal, including disciplinary action and the negative impact on parole considerations.

## Student Participation Information

Windham School District Academic Programs FY 2018		Windham School District Career and Technical Education Programs FY 2018	
<u>Programs</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Programs</u>	<u>Participants</u>
Literacy	28,411	Career & Technical Education	21,178
CHANGES/Pre-Release	19,841	Vocational Certificates of Completion	24,940
Title 1	1,013	Industry Certificates Awarded	33,451
English as a Second Language	536	Apprenticeship Program	77
Cognitive Intervention	15,712		
Parenting & Family Wellness	1,237		
Elective Personal Enrichment Classes	7,807		

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## Overview of the District

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### Texas Board of Criminal Justice – WSD Board of Trustees

The WSD Board of Trustees consists of nine non-salaried members who are appointed by the Governor for staggered six-year terms. The Board is responsible for providing general oversight and the hiring of WSD's superintendent. The Board is also responsible for setting rules and policies that guide the district.

#### Windham School District Board Members

##### **Patrick O' Daniel**

Chairman of the Board

Term Expires 2/2023

Austin

##### **Derrelynn Perryman**

Vice-Chairman

Term Expires 2/2021

Fort Worth

##### **Judge Faith Johnson**

Member

Term Expires 2/2025

Dallas

##### **Rodney Burrow, M.D.**

Member

Term Expires 2/2021

Mount Pleasant

##### **Pastor Larry Don Miles**

Member

Term Expires 2/2023

Amarillo

##### **E.F. "Mano" DeAyala**

Member

Term Expires 2/2023

Houston

##### **Eric Nichols**

Member

Term Expires 2/2021

Austin

##### **Judge Molly Francis**

Member

Term Expires 2/2025

Dallas

##### **Ambassador Sichan Siv**

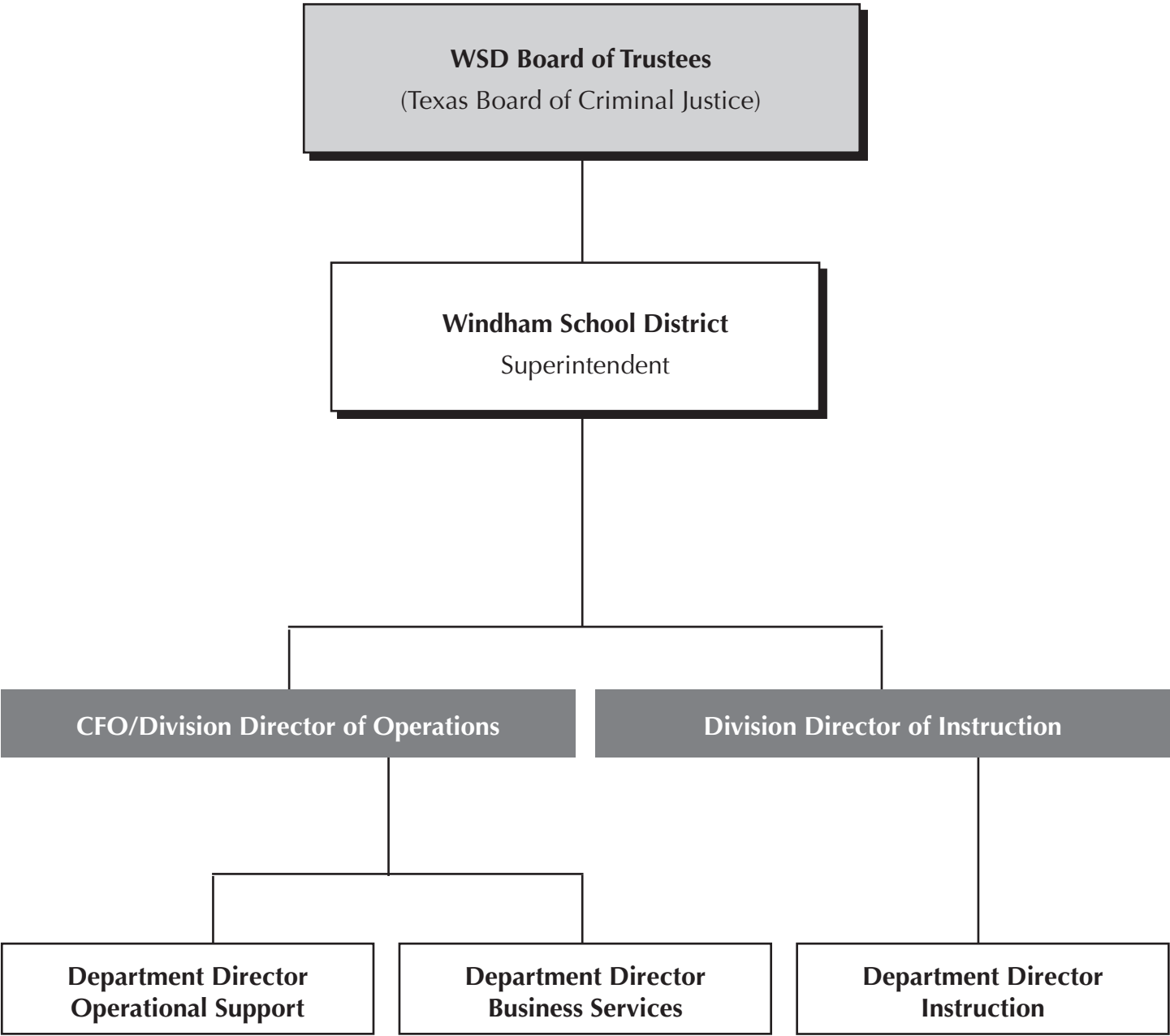
Member

Term Expires 2/2025

San Antonio



Windham School District  
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



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## Overview of the District

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### Superintendent

**The Superintendent**, as the chief executive officer of the district, reports directly to the WSD Board. The Superintendent's responsibilities include the implementation of comprehensive educational programs for individuals incarcerated in the TDCJ and implementation of appropriate measures to evaluate the effectiveness of WSD programs.

The Superintendent has the authority to administer, organize, manage and supervise the daily operations of WSD. This includes, but is not limited to, employment, discharge, and non-renewal or termination of employees; power to prescribe policies, procedures, and regulations; authority to structure the organization of the district to improve operations; oversight of the fiscal management of the district; litigation settlement authority up to the prescribed amount; delegation of authority to staff as appropriate; and implementation of personnel policies.

### Division of Instruction

**The Division of Instruction** designs programs and services to meet the unique needs of incarcerated adults. Literacy programs provide adult basic education for students functioning below the sixth grade level and secondary level adult education for those who are working toward attainment of a high school equivalency certificate. Career and technical education programs provide vocational training to entry-level industry standards. Life skills programs include pre-release preparation, cognitive intervention, and parenting. Divisional staff create and deliver professional development tailored to meet the needs of the unique student population. Staff research current instructional strategies, researched based tools as well as instructional technology. The Division of Instruction has direct oversight of the WSD Counseling, Testing and Records Department which coordinates all student testing and placement for the district. The Division also oversees the volunteer program for the district as well as the operation of 94 libraries for the TDCJ.

### Regional Principals

**WSD is divided into ten regions:** Alamo Star, Central, Gulf Coast, Northeast, North, Panhandle, Sam Houston, Southeast, Tri-County, and West Texas. Regional principals oversee the daily operations of educational programs at each of the TDCJ units through coordination of district activities with the unit principals. Additionally, they assist, implement, and support school administrator coaching, supervision of assigned principals, instructional leadership services, and district school improvement efforts to execute the goals of the district.

### Principals

**Principals** are responsible for implementing educational programs at each campus, with the majority of principals overseeing two or more campuses. As instructional leader of the campus, principals create and implement campus improvement plans, evaluate instruction and oversee a rigorous testing program to meet the educational needs of the unit population.

### Unit Staff

**WSD employs staff at 90 facilities across the state** to provide educational services to eligible students. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: principals, administrative assistants, academic teachers, career and technical teachers, life skills teachers, special education teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, Health and Wellness staff, Library Services staff and assessment personnel.

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## Overview of the District

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### Division of Operational Support

**The Division of Operational Support** oversees campus planning, student attendance accounting, operational reviews, district and student achievement reporting, program evaluation and records retention. Operational Support coordinates internal and external research and serves as the educational liaison to private prisons, Parole and American Correctional Association initiatives. In addition, the WSD operates the Radio and TV shop for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

The following are overseen by the Division of Operational Support: the Department of Administrative and Business Services, the Department of Human Resources, and the Department of Information Technology.

**The Department of Administrative and Business Services** facilitates the planning, management, and reporting necessary to provide financial support of education and recreation programs. This department includes the areas of Budget, Purchasing, Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program, Warehousing, Accounting, Accounts Payable and Payroll Processing.

**The Department of Human Resources** develops and implements activities and programs relating to recruitment, staffing, employee classification, compensation and benefits, as well as employee relations, employee recognition and training on human resources policies and procedures.

**The Department of Information Technology** provides reliable and secure technology solutions in support of the district's mission. The IT staff maintains over 100 computer labs and all instructional and administrative networks and computers across the state. WSD IT provides system, network, and database administration, evaluates and implements new educational software and develops applications to support the users throughout the district.

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## Workforce

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### Ethnicity

WSD's overall employee profile is in compliance with Federal and State guidelines governing diversity in the workforce. The district continues to strive for increased diversity in the workplace.

### Qualifications

All instructional staff, including principals, counselors, diagnosticians, librarians, and teachers, hold professional credentials issued by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification.



*The Windham School District provides appropriate educational programming and services to meet the needs of the eligible population in the TDCJ. WSD believes that its legislatively mandated goals to reduce recidivism, reduce the cost of confinement or imprisonment, increase the success of individuals, who were formerly incarcerated, in obtaining and maintaining employment, and provide an incentive to individuals to behave in positive ways during confinement or imprisonment will be directly impacted by the successful achievement of its educational goals, objectives, and strategies.*

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## Strategic Planning Process

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### June 2019

- ★ Committee of representatives established to develop the goals, objectives, and strategies for the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan.

### July 2019

- ★ District conducted a two-day strategic planning session with a committee comprised of representatives from divisions/departments across the state.
- ★ District's goals, objectives, and strategies for the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan created by the committee of representatives.

### August 2019

- ★ Committee of representatives refined goals, objectives, and strategies for the District's 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan.

### September 2019 - March 2020

- ★ District representatives along with administrative leadership finalized District's 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan.

### TBD 2020

- ★ The WSD's 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan presented to WSD's Board of Trustees for review and approval.



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## Goals, Objectives and Strategies

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**Goal 1:** The WSD will provide high-level instruction and develop critical thinking through guided curriculum.

**Objective 1.1** Support learner standards across all content areas.

**Strategy 1.1.1** Update specific goals and objectives to align with standards.

**Strategy 1.1.2** Identify and provide a variety of supplemental materials that support the guided curriculum.

**Strategy 1.1.3** Align performance indicators in the accountability system to measure student success.

**Objective 1.2** Provide opportunities for quality professional development that support educators in meeting learner expectations.

**Strategy 1.2.1** Provide multiple delivery methods for professional development.

**Strategy 1.2.2** Develop and utilize content-specific expert teams.

**Goal 2:** WSD will recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and staff.

**Objective 2.1** Implement recruiting strategies to reduce the vacancy rate.

**Strategy 2.1.1** Identify, communicate and implement innovative avenues in recruitment efforts.

**Strategy 2.1.2** Improve the efficiency of the hiring process by utilizing technology and open communication.

**Strategy 2.1.3** Offer a competitive compensation package.

**Objective 2.2** Utilize strategies to retain staff.

**Strategy 2.2.1** Define and implement a consistent mentoring program.

**Strategy 2.2.2** Provide extensive training on curricular resources and instructional strategies.

**Strategy 2.2.3** Develop a professional learning environment which supports opportunities for growth and enrichment.

# Goals, Objectives and Strategies

**Goal 3:** The WSD will improve and promote effective communication.

**Objective 3.1** Improve and promote effective communication with students.

**Strategy 3.1.1** Use verbal, printed and electronic methods to communicate information and opportunities.

**Strategy 3.1.2** Provide resources and employment fairs.

**Objective 3.2** Improve and promote effective internal communication.

**Strategy 3.2.1** Use verbal, printed and electronic methods to communicate with WSD employees.

**Strategy 3.2.2** Increase and improve the flow of communication between campus, regional and central staff.

**Objective 3.3** Improve and promote effective communication with external stakeholders, which include former students.

**Strategy 3.3.1** Use verbal, printed and electronic methods to communicate with stakeholders, including former students.

**Strategy 3.3.2** Promote awareness of WSD programs among employers, agencies and community stakeholders.

**Goal 4:** WSD will integrate and enhance technology.

**Objective 4.1** Investigate and implement appropriate correctional educational equipment and software programs.

**Strategy 4.1.1** Develop district Instructional Technology Committee to research potential educational equipment and software to address district needs.

**Objective 4.2** Support students' achievement and acquisition of 21st-century knowledge and skills through the integration of technology.

**Strategy 4.2.1** Update and enforce policies/guidelines for the educational use of technology for staff and students.

**Strategy 4.2.2** Increase existing classroom technology to include secure web-based and wireless technology.

## Goals, Objectives and Strategies

**Objective 4.3** Provide diversified professional development to increase skills in utilizing technology to enhance student achievement.

**Strategy 4.3.1** Provide standardized training for staff to integrate secure technology into instruction.

**Strategy 4.3.2** Expand the avenues for the provision of professional development through technology.

**Goal 5:** WSD will facilitate meaningful employment of students.

**Objective 5.1** Maximize pre-release employment opportunities.

**Strategy 5.1.1** Investigate and establish a transition and career pathway framework for all students.

**Strategy 5.1.2** Develop processes for coordinating apprenticeship placement within Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

**Strategy 5.1.3** Incorporate employability skills within all program areas.

**Objective 5.2** Provide students with post-release resources and support in acquiring gainful employment.

**Strategy 5.2.1** Expand participation in career fairs with stakeholders.

**Strategy 5.2.2** Develop a system of communication with former students and employers to convey employment opportunities and resources.

**Objective 5.3** Enhance collaboration among employers, agencies and community stakeholders.

**Strategy 5.3.1** Improve communication with WSD and TDCJ stakeholders.

**Strategy 5.3.2** Provide additional opportunities for participation in internal employment fairs.

**Strategy 5.3.3** Enhance consistent buy-in with external stakeholders.

**Strategy 5.3.4** Develop an advisory committee of stakeholders to make recommendations for meaningful employment for our students.





**WSD**

Windham  
School  
District

Windham School District  
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