

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

Meeting No. 335

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 at the Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol in Austin, Texas.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Patrick L. O’Daniel, Chairman  
Derrelynn Perryman, Vice Chairman  
Pastor Larry D. Miles, Secretary  
Hon. Faith Johnson  
Ambassador Sichan Siv  
Dr. Rodney Burrow

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Hon. Molly Francis  
Eric Nichols

**WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent  
Robert O’Banion  
Jon Lilley  
Erik Brown  
Kevin Sawnick  
Danielle Nicholes  
Shelby McVey  
Erika Moore  
Azure Mach  
Laurie Olivarez  
Luann Pickett  
Jeffery Flowers  
Kimberly Calhoun  
Ted Watts

**CONVENED**

Chairman Patrick L. O’Daniel convened the meeting of the 335<sup>th</sup> Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, at 4:48 p.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the *Open Meetings Act*. A quorum was present and the meeting was declared open. During the regular session, the Board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register. 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**

Danielle Nicholes, Communications Administrator, recognized Shelby McVey, Communications Coordinator.

Mrs. Nicholes said Ms. McVey joined Windham School District in September of 2022 as the Social Media and Communications Intern. In this role, Ms. McVey produced written content for the 2021-2022 Annual Performance Report, participated in collaborative team meetings, interviewed former students for success stories and was a means of support for the Communications team. In February, Ms. McVey began her new position as Communications Coordinator for Windham. Mrs. Nicholes said that in her current position, Ms. McVey said Shelby works diligently to gather and develop content for press releases, drafts articles for Windham to include on the website and in the ECHO, as well as assist with coordinating board reports and presentations. Ms. McVey also acts as the liaison between Windham and outside partners and the Windham School District Board of Trustees.

Mrs. Nicholes stated that Ms. McVey graduated Cum Laude from Texas A&M University in May of 2022, earning her bachelor of arts in Journalism with minors in Communication and Agriculture Communication. During her time at Texas A&M, Ms. McVey served as Editor-in-Chief and Social Media Manager of The Battalion, the Texas A&M University newspaper, where she led a team of dedicated journalists to produce groundbreaking and newsworthy content and worked closely with other news networks in the Bryan-College Station area.

Mrs. Nicholes said in her free time, Ms. McVey enjoys traveling with her friends and keeping her Australian Shephard puppy, Colley, out of trouble.

Mrs. Nicholes asked the Board to please join her in congratulating Ms. McVey on her accomplishments.

Chairman O'Daniel congratulated Ms. McVey.

## **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 February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting, 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**

### **Legislative Updates**



Superintendent Hartman stated since the convening of the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature on January 10, 2023, Windham School District has been hard at work communicating the district mission, successes and needs. Windham leadership has attended, and at times testified, at numerous hearings with committees that hold direct interest to the district including Senate Finance, Senate Education, Senate Criminal Justice; House Appropriations, Subcommittee Article III; House Public Education and House Corrections. In addition, the district has been in communication with legislative offices to discuss bills and matters related to correctional education.

Superintendent Hartman said due to Windham's unique funding structure, it is important to meet with members to discuss student demographics, programs and services, and district funding. Freshmen legislators may be unfamiliar with the district and the differences between correctional education systems and K-12 Independent School Districts. Windham identifies and meets with newly-elected legislators to ensure that they receive the information necessary to make well-informed decisions. By testifying before committees and meeting individually with legislative offices, Robert O'Banion, Director of Operations and Chief Financial Officer, and Ms. Hartman emphasize Windham's purpose, contributions and needs to ensure that legislators understand the district's mission and goals. This legislative outreach contributes to the support of Windham requests and preferences.

Superintendent Hartman said Chapter 19 of the Education Code provides Windham School District's funding through the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Foundation School Fund. Windham's base appropriation is currently \$131.2 million for the biennium, which includes \$6.2 million to maintain the 10% teacher salary increase and \$9.6 million for an additional staff salary increase of 5% for each of the next two years.

Superintendent Hartman stated that Windham requested an exceptional item of \$4.2 million to fund educational services for students in restrictive housing, career and technical education expansion, family literacy and a workforce coordinator program. The workforce coordinator program relies on six staff positions to coordinate pre-release employment for students by training and completing occupational licensing applications to achieve TDCJ and Windham's goal of 95% prerelease employment by 2030.

Superintendent Hartman said Windham is tracking several bills of interest. House Bill (HB) 3813, filed by Representative DeAyala, would help ensure that dedicated Windham employees continue to receive quality Employees Retirement System (ERS) health benefits upon retirement. HB 3813 would harmonize the law with the expectations of Windham employees and prior practice and allow for the application of Independent School District service credit in the unique situation that Windham employees find themselves in.

Superintendent Hartman presented that HB 786, filed by Representative Meza, would require Windham to identify and report statistical information regarding illiteracy and dyslexia among students under the age of 22 in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The bill would require Windham to submit a report with findings and legislative recommendations to key stakeholders.

Superintendent Hartman said finally, SB 2158, filed by Senator King with a companion, HB



4921, filed by Representative Murr, would authorize the implementation of an adult education high school pilot program through a partnership agreement with an adult high school charter school.

Superintendent Hartman stated that the district is also closely monitoring public educator salary increases, as well as the potential availability of a TEA grant that covers the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) fee for hiring retirees. Windham leadership will continue to monitor these bills to ensure that the district is included in discussions and bill language.

Superintendent Hartman said Windham's utmost priority is to ensure that legislators and committee members are well informed about the activities and needs of the district and are provided the opportunity to ask questions and receive accurate information. It is imperative that Windham continues to highlight the incredible work of the district's educators and staff, as well as the students that are enriched by Windham programs as they prepare to successfully reenter the workforce in Texas communities.

Superintendent Hartman thanked the Board for their ongoing and steadfast support of the Windham School District.

This concluded her report. Superintendent Hartman paused for questions. There were none.

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

### **Second Chance Month**

Chairman O'Daniel stated that in 2018, the White House declared April as Second Chance Month, signifying the accomplishments of individuals who were formerly incarcerated.

The Chairman said Windham School District is honored to celebrate this monumental month, as it directly impacts Windham students and alumni. Not only does this month emphasize the value of rehabilitation and reentry resources; it also provides reassurance for safer communities. Windham strives to spread awareness and unlock opportunities for those who are, or have been, incarcerated, and the district continues to recognize and celebrate their great achievements.

Chairman O'Daniel said Windham champions the importance of second chance employment and works diligently to communicate the benefits of hiring graduates by issuing a press release in the month of April to heighten awareness and strongly messaging student technical and life skills acquired through participation in Windham programming. The district collaborates with April Zamora, Director of Reentry and Integration, and other TDCJ division directors in addition to a number of state agencies and associations to secure resources and establish connections that are necessary for students to be successful. In addition, partnerships are established with local businesses to refer eligible students for consideration when filling vacancies. The district aligns with TDCJ's 2030 goal of 95% employment prior to reentry and looks forward to implementing virtual interview opportunities in the near future so that students secure employment in their

fields of training. Through the district's career and technical education (CTE) programs, students are able to earn licensing, workforce instruction and necessary skills that allow them to validate their career readiness, making them quality candidates for employment.

The Chairman presented that in the 2021-2022 school year, Windham students earned 12,395 CTE certificates, as well as 17,634 industry-based certifications. A second chance is an opportunity for individuals to demonstrate their growth, personally and professionally, and Windham equips students for success through robust programs.

Chairman O'Daniel said Windham also provides cognitive-based life skills courses to address thinking errors and assist students in developing healthy mindsets. The district believes in the importance of introducing students to healthy habits that they can lean on as they face unforeseen struggles post reentry. Through collaboration with TDCJ Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics (MAL) and college partners, Windham students have had the opportunity to engage with businesses and employers through Skills Demonstration and Career Expo events. To increase opportunities for students to practice community interactions, Windham will add components such as hand shaking, eye contact and public speaking practice to life skills course instruction.

The Chairman said the district is proud to support students and magnify their journeys following reentry. Each year, a number of success stories are featured in the Annual Performance Report (APR), highlighting the opportunities and successes that Windham alumni have achieved since completing Windham programming and returning to their communities. Monica Broadus, a 2021-2022 APR Success Story, was one of the first to graduate from Windham's Recreational Vehicle (RV) Service Technician program. Currently, Ms. Broadus is one of the top service technicians for Clear Creek RV Center in Abilene, Texas. Through second chances afforded by Windham and her employer, Ms. Broadus has been able to create continuous growth in a career path she loves.

Chairman O'Daniel stated Ms. Broadus said, "I got really confident and I realized that I actually retained the [information from the course]. I was shocked at what all I had learned."

The Chairman said that today, she credits her employer for giving her a second chance to create an impactful future for herself.

Chairman O'Daniel quoted Ms. Broadus who said, "I absolutely have loved it. They are great people to work with and for. This has been totally a life changer, like the RV program."

The Chairman stated that another Windham alumnus, Joseph Sivadon, earned a success for himself following his time in the district's welding course. Since reentering into his community, Mr. Sivadon has worked on monumental projects, such as the Gerold Desmond Bridge in Long Beach, California, and the Raiders, Rams and Rangers stadiums.

Chairman O'Daniel said it has been eight years since his reentry, and Mr. Sivadon is still actively working to further his education. Currently, he is working towards earning his engineering degree with hopes of one day becoming a teacher.



The Chairman quoted Mr. Sivadon saying, “I passed my Certified Welding Inspector exam on the first try. I was able to skim through the first 10 to 15 pages of the study guide because it was all Windham curriculum. Education is life changing.”

Chairman O’Daniel said Windham celebrates Second Chance Month by collaborating with former students and graduates, giving them a platform to empower current students in the classroom. District staff often invite former students to speak at district conferences and participate on panels to share their stories of reentry, including how education has played a role in their lives. For the second year, Windham looks forward to hosting a panel including former students and district leadership, generating discussion on their journey since returning to their communities, including challenges and successes. Windham alumni have been invited to speak at graduations to educate current students regarding what to expect when embarking on their second chance journeys, successes and words of motivation. In addition, students who showcase exemplary growth are featured on the district’s social media pages, cultivating further support and outreach. Campuses across the district will be observing Second Chance Month through classroom instruction and activities.

The Chairman said the district and its stakeholders will continue to celebrate the accomplishments of these individuals as they move forward. Happy Second Chance Month!

This concluded his report.

### **2021-2022 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Danielle Nicholes, Communications Administrator, and Kevin Sawnick, Department Director of Instruction presented on Windham’s 2021-2022 Annual Performance Report. Mrs. Nicholes stated that Windham strives to prepare students for success through robust program opportunities. Mrs. Nicholes stated that it is a privilege to share the district’s annual performance report with the board highlighting September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 through August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

Highlights included:

- Windham serves students that reside within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice facilities across Texas that need educational interventions ranging from academic and high school equivalency programs to advanced technical training and life skills programs to prepare them for entry into the workforce and higher education enrollments.
- The annual report indicated that characteristics of an average Windham academic student entering Windham programs include: dropped out in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 5<sup>th</sup> grade functional level, 33 years old.
- Approximately 50,000 students received Windham educational services in SY22.
- Information gathered through this testing process is used to create an Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) for each resident. Windham students take the TABE® tests

throughout the school year to monitor their educational progress and determine qualification to take the GED® test.

- 18,770 students participated in adult education academic programs; 1,994 students took the high school equivalency exam in SY22. Of that group, 83% were awarded a high school equivalency certificate. Windham also has life skills programs that are dedicated to helping students refocus thinking, develop life skills, enhance cognitive skills, and obtain employment. In SY22: 15,249 students participated in the CHANGES program; 9,711 students participated in the Cognitive Intervention program; and 1,319 students participated in the Parenting program.
- CTE programs utilize hands-on training, classroom instruction and industry-based certifications, Windham aims to decrease recidivism rates by supplying students with increased experience and employment opportunities.
- In SY22, 12,395 CTE certificates and 17,634 industry-based certifications were earned. Windham is working with college partners to develop prior learning agreements for the award of college credits for Windham level one certificate programs that crosswalk with college courses.
- In the 2021-2022 school year, Windham had 26 occupations across the state registered with the Department of Labor, and over 500 registered apprentices.
- In the 2021-2022 school year, Windham made great strides in the advancement of its high school program at both the Matthew Gaines (Gaines) campus in Midway, Texas, and the Jovita González de Mireles (Mireles) campus in Gatesville, Texas. During SY22, eight men received their high school diplomas from the Gaines High School and 18 women were enrolled in the start-up phase at the Mireles High School.
- Windham serves students within the district who meet eligibility requirements for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. During the 2021-2022 school year, 509 students received special education services.
- During the 2021-2022 school year, Windham took steps to enhance support by incorporating an updated regional principal model. This model promotes a more purposeful, campus-focused leadership approach. The updated framework includes six regions, with a regional principal assigned to lead and serve each region.
- 2021-2022 technology advancements include academic teacher laptops, augmented reality, and simulators for welding and truck driving instruction for Windham students.
- Windham's collaborative partnerships include Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Texas Workforce Commission, Workforce Solutions, the Department of Family Protective Services, Lee College, Central Texas College, Bulkley Trucking, and Women's Storybook Project of Texas. Each partnership provides a foundation to support student success and are centered around collaboration, progress and student accomplishments.
- Windham School District's comprehensive accountability system is designed to assist district employees with monitoring campus data. While tracking key activities to provide



educators with essential information, campuses can ensure effective program implementation. Windham received the rating of “accomplished” for the 2022 school year. In addition, the district undergoes a biennial evaluation, in compliance with requirements outlined in the Texas Education Code, to assess the effectiveness of district programming.

- The report showed that: those who completed a Windham program were 17.6% less likely to recidivate than their matched samples; those students who completed the Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) were 39.1% less likely to recidivate than their matched sample; those who completed CTE and a life skills program were 25.8% less likely to recidivate than their matched sample; those who participated in Windham programs secured employment on average 6.5 weeks sooner than their matched sample; those who completed academic programming improved reading skills by 2.23 grades, math skills by 2.45 grades and overall scores by 2.36 grades. Of those who completed career and technical education programs: 23.1% were less likely to recidivate than their matched sample, and 78% secured at least one job related to their training.

Mr. Sawnick said Windham is excited to communicate the progress and efforts put forth by district staff and students during the 2021-2022 school year. The district is consistently evaluating and improving programs and opportunities available to students with the goal of inspiring them to work towards achieving success upon returning to their communities.

This concluded their report and they paused for questions. There were none.

### **CELEBRATING TEXAS HISTORY: TEXAS STATE SYMBOLS**

Danielle Nicholes, Communications Administrator, said that she was excited to stand before the board today to present on the next topic in Windham’s Texas History series: Texas symbols and their backgrounds. Texas has 76 of its own official symbols, not including the Texas flag. Each symbol went through the same process in order to be deemed “official.” The extensive process involves an elected state representative or senator submitting a proposal during legislative session, appearing before committees, and being signed by the Texas governor, if approved by both branches. She stated that today, she will inform the board about the state flower, flag, insect and gem.

Mrs. Nicholes stated that it is likely that when you think of Texas, you think of a bluebonnet. In 1901, the legislature signed a bill approving the *Lupinus subcarnosus*, a species of the bluebonnet, as the state flower. Over the next 70 years, it was discovered that there are many species of the bluebonnet, including the *Lupinus texensis*, which is known to be a showier species of bluebonnet. After many campaigns for change, the 1971 Legislature amended the statute to include the *Lupinus texensis* and any other variety of the bluebonnet that has not yet been discovered.

Mrs. Nicholes said dating further back than the state flower is the state flag. The official flag of Texas was adopted in 1839 by the Third Congress of the Republic of Texas. Flag specifications



included "a blue perpendicular stripe of the width of one-third of the whole length of the flag and a white star of five points in the center thereof and two horizontal stripes of equal length and breadth, the upper stripe of white, the lower of red, of the length of two thirds of the length of the whole flag." It wasn't until 1933 that the 43<sup>rd</sup> Legislature passed a statute clarifying the requirements of the star on the flag. From that point forward, the star, from topmost to lowest points, shall be one-third the depth of the blue field. Each component of the Texas flag has significance: like the United States flag, the red represents courage, the blue loyalty, and the white purity and liberty.

Mrs. Nicholes presented that another meaningful Texas state symbol is the monarch butterfly, which is known as the state insect. Texas is home to more than 400 butterfly species, with the monarch being the most recognizable with its rust-orange-colored wings and intricate black detail. Adopted in June of 1995, the legislature states "The monarch butterfly is as beautiful and memorable as a Texas sunset, soaring above all other insects in its nobility and determination, and its unique relationship with Texas makes it a truly appropriate symbol of the majestic spirit of the Lone Star State." Mrs. Nicholes stated that she is certain that she can speak on behalf of numerous Texans when she says it is a beautiful sight to see the monarch's biannual migration through Texas to and from Mexico.

Mrs. Nicholes said the final official state symbol that she will highlight today is the Texas state gem, the Texas Blue Topaz. Designated by legislature in 1969, the gem's blue color is a natural occurrence and can be found in Central Texas, especially west of Mason. Following this designation, in 1977, the gem was given an official state cut. The "Lone Star" cut was designed by two native Texans and is intended to reflect a five-point star, the lone star.

Mrs. Nicholes said each of the 76 official Texas state symbols have a unique, impactful meaning that contribute to the states' wholesome reputation and deep running pride. Their significance holds a special place in Texas' history and journey to become the great state that it is today.

This concluded her report and she paused for questions.

Ambassador Sichan Siv asked if Texas had a national food or drink. Mrs. Nicholes stated that the national dish of Texas is Chili. Ambassador Siv asked what we would consider Texas' national dress to be, if it would include jeans and a cowboy hat. Mrs. Nicholes said she considers that to be appropriate, and she will look into that subject. Ambassador Siv commented on the Texan 'look.'

Chairman O'Daniel thanked Ambassador Siv and asked for any follow up questions. There were none.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING BOARD RESOLUTION FOR NOMINATION OF KRISTINA J. HARTMAN, ED.S. FOR TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS' SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR**

Robert O'Banion, Division Director of Operations and Chief Financial Officer, stated on behalf

of the Windham School District Board of Trustees, he is very pleased to present this Resolution for the nomination of Kristina J. Hartman for the 2023 Texas Association of School Board's Superintendent of the Year. Superintendent Hartman's exemplary and visionary leadership is instrumental in improving student performance on Windham campuses. Her compassion and dedication to the district is the driving force behind Windham's success and accomplishments. Mr. O'Banion stated that it is because of these tremendous efforts that he present this Resolution on behalf of the Board nominating Kristina J. Hartman as the 2023 Texas Association of School Board's Superintendent of the Year.

Chairman O'Daniel paused for any questions. There were none.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Judge Faith Johnson moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the resolution for the nomination of Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S. for Texas Association of School Boards' Superintendent of the Year as presented.*

*Ambassador Sichan Siv seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to vote.*

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING  
PROPOSED REPEAL OF WSD BOARD POLICY 07.03, "EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL  
FILE"**

Erik Brown, General Counsel, stated that the Board would find the proposed revision to Board Policy 07.03, "Employee Personnel File" at tab H of their binders. Windham proposes to repeal this policy because much of the policy is outdated and duplicative of other policies and directives. Revisions of this policy that continue to be relevant to Windham operations are included in the revisions to Superintendent Directive 10.10, records management. Mr. Brown paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Vice Chairman Derrellynn Perryman moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the proposed repeal of the WSD Board Policy WBP-07.03, "Employee Personnel File".*

*Pastor Larry Miles seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.*

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING  
PROPOSED REPEAL OF WSD BOARD POLICY 07.41, "PRINCIPAL TRAINEE"**

Erik Brown, General Counsel, stated that the Board would find the proposed revision to Board Policy 07.41 at tab I of their binders. Windham proposes to repeal this policy because the position of principal trainee has not existed for several years, and there is no plan to create



another principal trainee position in the foreseeable future. Mr. Brown paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Pastor Larry Miles moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the proposed repeal of the WSD Board Policy WBP-07.41, "Principal Trainee".*

*Judge 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 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 in El Paso, Texas.

**ADJOURNED**

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman O'Daniel adjourned the 335<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 5:23 p.m.

  
Chairman

  
Secretary

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