

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

Meeting No. 337

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, August 25th, 2023 at the San Luis Resort and Convention Center in Galveston, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Eric J. R. Nichols, Chairman
Derrelynn Perryman
Hon. Molly Francis
Hon. Faith Johnson
Ambassador Sichan Siv
Dr. Rodney Burrow
Nate Sprinkle
Sydney Zuiker

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Bill Welch

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent
Robert O'Banion
Jon Lilley
Erik Brown
Danielle Nicholes
Charles Bell
Rachel Taylor
Erika Moore
Luann Pickett
Jeffery Flowers
Kimberly Calhoun
Azure Mach
Laurie Olivarez
Vanessa Dotson
Kimberley Tredway
Teresa Koonsman
Stephen Fredricks
Nicole Thompson
Elizabeth Casteen
Kevin Sawnick
Michelle Lewis

CONVENED

Chairman Eric J.R. Nichols convened the meeting of the 337th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, August 25th, 2023, at 8:31 a.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 Nichols 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 six Windham employees for Staff of the Year honors and Board introduction.

Ms. Nicholes began by recognizing Vanessa Dotson. She said Vanessa Dotson was born in Baltimore, Maryland, to parents Marvin and Carol Buckner and enjoyed an enriching childhood moving all over the United States while her father served in the United States Navy. She married her high school sweetheart, Jeb, in 1994, and will be celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary in January. She is the mother of two adult children, ages 26 and 20, and is currently enjoying life as an empty nester.

Ms. Nicholes stated that in 2004, Mrs. Dotson and her family sold everything they owned and moved to Fairfield, Texas, where they would spend the next 10 years working at a children's home for abandoned and neglected children. In 2014, her family relocated to Crockett, where her husband pastored a thriving local church.

Ms. Nicholes said that while raising her family and working for Crockett ISD as a paraprofessional, Mrs. Dotson went back to college and in 2018, finally received her Bachelors of Business Management from the University of Phoenix at the age of 40. She also earned her EC-12 CTE teacher certification that same year. She has experience teaching technology in the classroom to Title 1 students in elementary and junior high school. In June of 2023, Mrs. Dotson excitedly joined the Communications team at Windham to facilitate the implementation of Windham's 2030 Plan.

Ms. Nicholes said the Board may recall the four areas of Windham's 2030 Plan, educational programs, technology advancements, communication and culture and career and community. She said Mrs. Dotson has completed a certificate for project management since being employed with the district, and will be bringing together groups and subgroups to ensure the district meets their objectives and timelines effectively with feedback from staff.

Ms. Nicholes said one thing Mrs. Dotson would like them to know about her is that she never gives up. She has grit and tenacity and no matter how her day goes, she will always be seen with

a smile on her face and a positive word to share with others. Ms. Nicholes stated this was very true.

Ms. Nicholes asked the Board to please join her in welcoming Mrs. Dotson to the Windham team.

The Chairman asked Mrs. Dotson if she would like to say a few words.

Mrs. Dotson said she is honored to be a part of the Windham School District and to have joined the team. She said having been in education for 10 years, one of her big goals was always to make a difference in the world. She said she wanted to leave a mark for others and do something she was proud of. Mrs. Dotson said she really believes this is what they're doing at Windham School District, and just knowing that she gets to be a part of the 2030 Plan to help the district achieve their goals and targets is a huge honor and privilege that she is grateful for.

Chairman Nichols said that on behalf of the Board, he knows that she will play a valuable role as part of the great team in bringing the 2030 objectives to reality. He thanked Mrs. Dotson for her service.

Next, Ms. Nicholes recognized Kimberley Tredway. Ms. Nicholes said that Kimberley Tredway was born in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and has lived in Amarillo, Texas for the last 58 years.

Ms. Nicholes stated Mrs. Tredway has immense experience with working in insurance. She has earned a Texas Adjuster's license while working as an in-house claims adjuster for Comco Insurance Company, where she spent 3 years. She earned a Texas Agents Recording license and Solicitors license while working as the Office Manager at a State Farm agency for 15 years, and has worked at Corporate Systems for 10 years as an Account Specialist for both Travelers and The Hartford. She attended Amarillo College and earned her Phlebotomy certification.

Ms. Nicholes said Mrs. Tredway joined Windham School District in April of 2012, serving the last 11 years as the Administrative Assistant at the Clements campus. In this role, she uses her experience to keep the attendance and campus documents maintained and organized. The Clements campus staff relies on Mrs. Tredway for direction, in which she aids her team to function as a whole. She consistently stops what she is doing to meet the needs of the Clements campus staff, ensuring everyone feels valued and a part of a greater purpose. She is a vital member of her campus' team, and her colleagues say her joy and laugh is contagious throughout the education department. Mrs. Tredway considers her favorite part about working for Windham to be her campus, in which she believes they have the best staff in the state.

Ms. Nicholes said Mrs. Tredway has been married for 37 years and has two sons. In her spare time, she enjoys playing golf with her family, as well as in a weekly golf league. She has played in a Bunko group with the same ladies for 37 years.

Ms. Nicholes asked the Board to please join her in congratulating Mrs. Tredway on being named the Windham School District Support Staff of the Year.

Mrs. Tredway said she is located at the Clements Campus in Amarillo. She said as a high security campus they face many obstacles, challenges and many successes. With the help of their

external colleagues such as TDCJ and Amarillo College and their internal colleagues such as their regional principals, Windham admin office and Board members, they can accomplish their mission of keeping the public safe, providing their students with positive change, knowledge and skills to better their lives.

Mrs. Tredway said she is so proud and honored to be presented this award; She said she knows she is in a group of many colleagues that are as passionate as she is about their accomplishments for Windham. Their teamwork performance has the same goal: student knowledge and achievement, sometimes it takes persuading their students to take an educational path towards their future and success. She said she is privileged to help organize the student graduations, which she said is her personal favorite times of the school year. Seeing the graduates in their caps and gowns, some of them for the first time, shows their dedication. Their families being present is all the gifts they need to feel supported. She said her team hopes the students realize the journey to learn and achieve was worth the time and effort. The campus staff that help progress these students have put in countless hours for them to achieve their certificates.

Mrs. Tredway said the Clements campus staff consists of 18 committed individuals with 225 years of Windham experience. She said to imagine what they all have beyond just Windham. Mrs. Tredway said they support and help each other to provide a safe place for their students to attend and learn.

Mrs. Tredway said she would like to thank the people who are the ones that got her to where she is today, accepting the award. She thanked the Clements campus, and said their dedication to their students is inspiring. Mrs. Tredway thanked her first principal, Lynette Herring, who she said was a respected leader and was the one who hired her. She thanked her current principal, Ms. Elisabeth Snyder-Miller, who lets her be herself. She said she trusts her to get the job done, and she feels the same way about her. Mrs. Tredway said her principal cares and listens to her staff. Next, she thanked her regional principal, Ms. Erika Moore, for guiding them toward the success of their students and staff. She thanked the Board members for accepting their roles and making a difference for Windham. Mrs. Tredway thanked Ms. Hartman for being a proficient superintendent and making Windham better.

Mrs. Tredway thanked her family. She said she knows that they worry about her safety. Lastly, Mrs. Tredway thanked God for protecting her and giving her purpose.

Mrs. Tredway said those last few days have been an amazing experience that she will not forget, as well as her time with Windham. She said she believes everything happens for a reason and she is where she is needed and is supposed to be. She thanked everyone again for selecting her and making her a part of the meeting. She stated to be recognized for what she is doing is very rewarding. She ended by saying that Windham is changing lives.

Chairman Nichols thanked Mrs. Tredway and let her know she is exactly where she is supposed to be in so many ways. He congratulated her on her recognition of Support Staff of the Year.

Next, Ms. Nicholes recognized Teresa Koonsman. Ms. Nicholes said Teresa Koonsman was born in Denver, Colorado and spent her childhood in rural Lamar, Colorado. She has lived in Texas since 1991, where she has raised her three children, ages 21, 18 and 16.

Ms. Nicholes said Ms. Koonsman earned her bachelor's degree with a major in reading and a minor in physical education from Tarleton State University. She earned her Master of Arts in General Counseling from Midwestern State University. She is considering working on her Principal Certification in the fall. Ms. Nicholes said Ms. Koonsman has been an educator for over 20 years, holding roles such as a K-5th science and social studies teacher and K-3rd math. All positions were at a Title 1 campus and Title 1 school district.

Ms. Nicholes said Ms. Koonsman joined the Windham School District in March of 2019. She has taught High School Equivalency Prep, CHANGES, Parenting and currently is the student advisor at the Sayle Campus. Ms. Koonsman considers correctional education to be her passion, and she credits making the switch to Windham from the public-school system as one of the best decisions she has ever made. She makes it a point to remind her students daily that life and success are all about the choices we make, and that we get out of life what put into it. She leads students at the Sayle campus in the direction to make positive life changes to become contributing members of society upon their reentry.

Ms. Nicholes said Ms. Koonsman puts others' needs before her own. She said recently, upon the retirement of one of her colleagues, she stepped up to finish teaching a parenting class to ensure those students received credit for the course to the best of their abilities. She also provides extra means of support and encouragement for her students, by helping them apply for and understand the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process as they commit to furthering their education. Ms. Koonsman goes above and beyond her job duties to provide the best for her students, including pushing them to be the best they can. Ms. Nicholes said it is for this reason that she was selected as Windham School District's 2023-2024 Student Advisor of the Year.

Ms. Nicholes asked the Board to please join her in congratulating Ms. Koonsman.

Ms. Koonsman said the reason she chose teaching as her profession was because she wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. She said to say it has been a roller coaster ride would be an understatement.

Ms. Koonsman said she started her career with Windham School District on March 4, 2019. She said little did she know that this would be the adventure of her lifetime. She said she works in correctional education because of the impact of success they have with students. Ms. Koonsman said Correctional education is her passion because she believes every person makes mistakes and deserves a second chance. She expresses to the residents day in and day out that she did not get to where she is today by expecting things to be handed to her. She has worked hard to be where she is. Daily, she tells her students that success is not up to her or any other person, it all boils down to them. She said life and success are all about the choices everyone makes and you get out of life what you put into it. Ms. Koonsman said helping their residents see their worth inspires her to be a better person.

Ms. Koonsman said the choice for her to move from public education to correctional education has been one of the best decisions she has ever made. She said she loves working for Windham School District because of the support, passion, the leadership, and encouragement to continue to strive to be better. She thanked Ms. Moore for believing in her, encouraging, and guiding her along the way. She thanked Mr. Thacker and said she appreciates him and his leadership. Ms. Koonsman said she is forever thankful and grateful to work for Windham School District.

In closing, she said she would leave everyone with these words: “We should always strive to leave people better than we found them. It won’t always happen but aim for it anyway.”

Chairman Nichols said one of the great things about the recognitions is that it provides a window for the Board and for the public into the world of the women and men that are on the front line doing the good work every day. He said they very much appreciate the work she does as a student advisor because everyone on the Board recognizes the student advisory function is a tremendously important function in terms of the rehabilitative programs that they strive to maintain. He encouraged her to continue to pursue her Principal Certification. He ended by saying they very much appreciate her work.

Next, Ms. Nicholes recognized Stephen Fredricks. Ms. Nicholes said Stephen Fredricks was born and raised in Deer Park, Texas, just southeast of Houston.

Ms. Nicholes said when not at work, they can find Mr. Fredricks spending time with his two sons, Shane and Bailey, as well as his beautiful wife Billie. They can usually be found at the baseball field or on the lake chasing a ten-pound bass. She said he also is the Senior Pastor of the Polk County Cowboy Church and is currently pursuing a Masters in Theology from Southwestern Seminary.

Ms. Nicholes said Mr. Fredricks graduated from Sam Houston State University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. Following graduation, he settled into a career in construction, where he eventually rose to the level of Vice President of Construction for Bison Construction LTD. The economic collapse of 2008 caused his company to dissolve, resulting in him coming to work for the TDCJ Maintenance department.

Ms. Nicholes stated Mr. Fredricks’ career with TDCJ led him through various Maintenance and Texas Correctional Industries supervisory positions, however; his desire to impact the lives of those incarcerated led him to the Windham School District on February 1st of 2021. She said he is now intentional in his daily routine of teaching job skills and motivating his students to change their lives and mindsets. Ms. Nicholes stated that Mr. Fredricks has made it his personal mission to help men and women that are incarcerated become better versions of themselves, aiding them to discover their true passion and purpose. He finds it incredibly important to be intentional with the curriculum he is teaching, integrating his lessons into real-world applications that his students may face as they reenter their communities. Seeing his students succeed is the best part of his workday. She said Mr. Fredricks embodies what it means to care for others, and he encourages his students to incorporate this into all of their successes. She said it is for this reason that Mr. Fredricks has been named the Windham School District 2023-2024 Career and Technical Education Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Nicholes ask the Board to please join her in congratulating Mr. Fredricks on this accomplishment, and his dedication to changing the lives of the Windham School District students.

Chairman Nichols congratulated Mr. Fredricks on his accomplishment and asked if he would like to say a few words. Mr. Fredricks said he did not come up with any prepared words, but everything in his mind that he was going to say has changed. First, he thanked the Board for the recognition. He thanked his boss, who he said is the best boss on the planet. He said Rebecca Fulenwider is the best principal, and God put her in his life to be where he is. Secondly, he thanked his wife. Mr. Fredricks said she is the one that said to step away to do what he wanted to do, which he said is a groundbreaking moment in his life.

Mr. Fredricks said he gets the opportunity to wake up and go to work everyday at the best job in the world. He said the thing he decided to talk about very quickly was that the people he saw at the meeting and was able to meet are rock stars. He said they are the ones that do not care what they have to do in order for their students to succeed. Mr. Fredricks said he is so blessed to be a part of that. If he had to pick something to say to his students everyday it would be "Better is better." He stated that if they've learned a job skill, they've got something better; if they learned how to make a resume, that is better; if they have learned how to stand up and look someone in the eye to discuss with them, that is better. He encouraged is students not to let their past dictate their future, which he said he tries to teach them every day.

Mr. Fredricks said he gets to go to work and have fun at the best job on the planet. He said his students knew he would be attending the meeting, and he tells them every day that he will never know if he is a successful teacher unless his students do not return to TDCJ. It is because of this, he said if he knows he has been a success if he never sees his students again.

In closing, he thanked everyone for the opportunity.

Chairman Nichols said he couldn't have said anything better himself, and that it was an example for everyone in the public that it is one thing to actually go to the classes to see the type of technical and vocational training that is going on, but he said Mr. Fredricks captured that image very well for the rest of the public. He ended by saying the Board really appreciated his work.

Next, Ms. Nicholes recognized Nicole Thompson. She said Nicole Holley Thompson was born and raised on a farm in Paducah, Texas. She has been married for 33 years and has three grown children, a bonus son, and a bonus grandson. She said her family just recently welcomed their first granddaughter within the last week.

Ms. Nicholes said Mrs. Thompson is a first-generation college graduate from Texas Tech University with a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education (Mathematics and Computer Information Systems teaching fields). She stated in addition, she earned several graduate hours from the University of North Texas in technology applications.

Ms. Nicholes stated that Mrs. Thompson was a public-school teacher for 30 years (29 of those in

Paducah). She held roles in middle school math, computer literacy, and high school math and technology. Like everyone else in a 1A school, Mrs. Thompson wore many hats. Over the years, she coached volleyball, basketball, track, and cheer and was the UIL coach for the math teams from grades 4-12. She served as the varsity boys and girls basketball teams' statistician for ten years, and was integral in attaining a new sound system in the PHS auditorium, for which she became the coordinator. Mrs. Thompson was a senior class sponsor and directed the high school graduation and baccalaureate exercises for over 20 years, leading the graduates in song. For the past eight years, she has served as the secretary for the Paducah Ex-Students Association, handling a database of over 1000 people.

Ms. Nicholes said Mrs. Thompson joined the Windham School District in 2021. She said at the Roach campus, she primarily manages the Computer Assisted Instruction Lab and teaches math. She brings immense knowledge and dedication to her classroom. Mrs. Thompson makes it a priority to incorporate students with all backgrounds and learning abilities into each lesson, pushing her students to step out of their comfort zone in order to achieve a higher level of learning. As a Christian, she feels that teaching is a calling from God, and that helping these students receive their High School Equivalencies has been the greatest blessing of her teaching career. To celebrate their successes, she sings and plays the piano at each graduation ceremony.

Ms. Nicholes said her commitment to creating a positive learning environment for students is just one of many reasons that Mrs. Thompson has been selected as Windham School District's 2023-2024 Academic Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Nicholes asked everyone to please join her in congratulating Mrs. Thompson on this great accomplishment.

Chairman Nichols congratulated Mrs. Thompson and asked her to say a few words.

Mrs. Thompson said as a veteran math educator with 30 years of experience in public school, she has never seen so many incentives for teachers. Not only do they have phenomenal administrators like Ms. Hartman, Mr. Lilley, Ms. Moore, and Ms. Thompson, but they have been given monetary bonuses, raises, and opportunities to earn administrative leave. She thanked Ms. Hartman and the Board for making all of those possible including the trip to Galveston. She said in the two years that she has worked at Windham, she has been overwhelmed by the support.

Ms. Koonsman said teachers, generally, do not get the recognition they deserve. They've all been in the trenches and dealt with the day-to-day struggles of educating. She said correctional education is a whole new ballgame, including throwing in some roadblocks like needing an officer outside their door or having to carry their pen with them every second to protect it from being stolen, to the constant worry of count not clearing at the end of the day, all of which she said makes education that much more stressful. She said it has been a transition, to say the least. So, to be honored in this way, she said, is just beyond belief.

Ms. Koonsman stated that most of all she would like to give all the glory to God. She said she truly believes He placed her in her position. She prays for her students, their staff, faculty, officers, leaders, and unit daily. She said even though they work in unconventional surroundings, they have to be compassionate. They must show the men through their kindness that Jesus loves

them and wants them to have a better life. She said some of the men have never had anyone believe in them or tell them they are smart. She truly believes this is their calling as Christians and as Windham educators. She said she can't forget to thank her wonderful husband, Vance, her sweet mother, Patsy, who taught her to have a servant's heart, and her family, including her brand new, week-old granddaughter for all of their support.

Ms. Koonsman said this has been by far her best teaching experience. She said there is nothing more rewarding. For her, seeing those men in their caps and gowns with big, bright smiles as they march into graduation makes her cry every time. She said just knowing that she had a part in that compels her to want to assist more and more to achieve that same goal. She hopes that earning their high school equivalency (HSE) will be just the push they need to get out of the prison system and make something new of themselves. She said building citizens who will make positive contributions to society is the goal, and it is happening right now at Windham School District, with 3,000 HSE's just this year and still rising. She said there is the proof.

She closed by saying that it is with great humility that she accepts the award and she thanked everyone.

Chairman Nichols congratulated her once again for her recognition. He said she stated several things very well, including the mission of the Board in supporting educators such as herself and other professionals within the Windham School District. The Chairman said he very much appreciated her words about the need to make sure that those who are carrying out the work are fully supported and as a Board, they appreciate the recognition of the Texas legislature in allowing them to provide that support.

Finally, Ms. Nicholes recognized Elizabeth Casteen for her tremendous efforts to the men and women within TDCJ. Ms. Nicholes said Ms. Elizabeth Casteen is a life-long Texan, and is currently in her twelfth year in education. She graduated from Midwestern State University in 2011, where she earned her Bachelors of Science in Education. Ms. Casteen began as a special education teacher and later turned to middle school math, where she really grew to love teaching and building connections with her students.

Ms. Nicholes said that in 2014, Ms. Casteen began her Master of Professional School Counseling with Lamar University to pursue her passion in supporting all students through various stages of their lives. She graduated in December 2015 and began her first job as a school counselor in 2017, working with the same 8th and 9th grade students she taught in previous years. She wrapped up ten years at her Alma mater school district as a high school counselor and was proud to support students through one of their most trying and proud moments in life: graduation.

Ms. Nicholes stated that Ms. Casteen joined Windham School District in 2021 as the CHANGES teacher at the Allred campus. Teaching this course has been so rewarding for Ms. Casteen, who said teaching from a new perspective has helped her grow not only as a teacher, but evolve into a more understanding human.

Ms. Nicholes said Ms. Casteen believes that academic learning is most efficient once emotional needs are met, regardless of the student's age or ability. She said Ms. Casteen makes every effort

to prioritize all of her students' individual learning styles, and formats her lessons to support each of their needs. She is dedicated to seeing her students grow in their ability to open their mind to a world of new possibilities, regardless of their past. She said each day, Ms. Casteen greets her students with a smile, and as they exit her classroom, she leaves them with a simple reminder: "Make good choices!"

Ms. Nicholes said that it is because of her passion for teaching and equipping each of her students to produce their own tools for success, that Ms. Casteen was selected as the 2023-2024 Windham School District Dr. Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching Award Recipient, as well as the 2023-2024 Life Skills Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Nicholes asked everyone to please join her in congratulating Ms. Casteen on the immense accomplishment.

The Chairman congratulated Ms. Casteen and asked her to share a few words.

Ms. Casteen thanked everyone for having her colleagues, her family and herself at the meeting. She said that August 2nd, 2023 started her third year with Windham as the CHANGES teacher at the Allred campus in Iowa Park. The experience has added depth to her life and she said she is truly grateful for that.

Ms. Casteen said prior to teaching in corrections, she had the stereotypical idea of what happened in prison, as like shows in programs like Scared Straight or Orange is the New Black. She had no idea about academic, vocation, or life skills programs going on.

Ms. Casteen said she came from public school as a school counselor where children are struggling emotionally and socially in the fast-paced world. Her life skills position gave her the opportunity to teach the same type of topics she believes children need to learn.

She said coming to corrections was exactly what she needed. Ms. Casteen stated she has always had a heart for those who need a second chance. She doesn't believe she is the final judge and she said the least she can do is pay the same grace she has received forward to those who truly want it.

Ms. Casteen said she reads the book, *Oh the Places You'll Go!* by Dr. Seuss to all her students when they complete CHANGES and she thinks he wrote it for those who need another chance. She said she would love to read the whole book to the Board but she simply shared her favorite page. Ms. Casteen read: "You'll get mixed up, of course as you already know. You'll get mixed up with many strange birds as you go. So be sure when you step, step with care and great tact and remember that life's a great balancing act. Just never forget to be dexterous or deft, and never mix up your right foot with your left."

Ms. Casteen said she believes that Dr. Seuss is telling everyone to be prepared for obstacles in the form of people, places, and things, those are the strange birds, and to ask ourselves if our choices will meet our needs over time, not just immediately, which takes careful and tactful

decision making, with use of the tools that have been taught and using them with dexterity and deftness for maximum completion.

Ms. Casteen thanked the Board one again for continuously showing how much they value education and for the opportunity to represent Windham School District. She thanked Mr. Thacker, Ms. Moore and Ms. Hartman for their exceptional leadership. Ms. Casteen said it is truly an honor to be recognized for sharing her passion. She ended by telling everyone to have a great day and to make good choices.

Chairman Nichols congratulated Ms. Casteen on her double honor. He commented that her “Make good choices,” reference resonates with him as well.

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 June 23rd, 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

Instructional Model Updates

Superintendent Hartman said that in 2022, Windham School District implemented an Academic Teacher Focus Group, comprised of a representative from each of the district’s six regions, to provide recommendations and feedback to district leadership aimed at improving the experiences of teachers and students. Members represent the academic teachers on the campuses in their respective regions and bring topics of discussion to the monthly meetings for group consideration. She said the group then provides her with suggestions for review, consideration and potential execution. Recently, the Academic Teacher Focus Group emphasized the concern expressed by teachers of needing additional time to successfully balance their workload. Specifically, they noted the need to review student progress, update education plans and implement new initiatives, such as technology in the classroom. After meeting with Windham principals and regional principals to discuss a solution that allows teachers the opportunity to catch-up on items while supporting students, including planning innovative, individualized lessons and increasing team collaboration, the temporary 4x1 model was executed.

Superintendent Hartman said the 4x1 instructional model includes four face-to-face instruction days, Monday-Thursday. Each Friday, students receive individualized instructional packets, building on the in-person lessons, while staff complete assessments, planning and professional development. Employees are able to engage in learning communities with their peers while principals target support towards staff in need of growth. Students return packets to their teachers the following Monday for review. This updated instructional model is temporary and will be

assessed and phased out as principals and staff report the ability to maintain an equalized workload.

Superintendent Hartman stated the implementation of this short-term model is not only to elevate instruction within the classroom, but also grant campus leadership the ability to seek out potential employer partnerships and engage in staff recruitment. Principals are encouraged to access their communities to meet with industry representatives for discussion, including collaboration possibilities with the district, supporting the efforts to broaden the outreach of Windham stakeholders. In addition, the 4x1 model aids the Texas Department of Criminal Justice with combatting staff shortages by allowing education officers to cover other posts within the facility as needed on Fridays.

Superintendent Hartman said this updated instructional model has been adopted to allow time for staff to construct innovative lesson plans, with a goal of not only boosting student attendance and engagement, but also staff morale and retention. Windham campuses will follow a planned schedule to ensure the efficient use of the 4x1 model, with details including the culmination of feedback for students, defining learning objectives and producing clear instructions and materials for future lessons. Staff within each region will have the opportunity to collaborate and seek peer feedback, allowing for consistent improvement in the quality of education provided to Windham students. This particular model is designed to motivate staff to create activities, individualized and group instruction that correlate with Windham curriculum, encouraging students to apply what they're learning in the classroom to their futures upon reentry.

Superintendent Hartman stated that in order to successfully serve our students and Texas communities, Windham must continuously evolve to deliver exemplary educational opportunities. It is the district's goal that the 4x1 model will introduce our educators to fresh and exciting ideas that elevate Windham curriculum and programming, and deliver stronger instruction and outcomes upon return to a traditional schedule.

This concluded her report and she paused for questions.

Chairman Nichols stated he understands that this model is considered to be a temporary adjustment, and he asked Superintendent Hartman for insight on the increments on which this format will be evaluated going forward. Superintendent Hartman said the district plans to conduct evaluations between the time of the meeting and December 2023. She stated that as they phase back in, she anticipates the district to phase down to three Fridays a month, two Fridays a month and so forth. She said they may leave one Friday a month open for planning, as that seems to be very effective across public school districts as well.

Superintendent Hartman added that in the days prior to the meeting, herself and Jason Clark with TDCJ have had meetings with TDCJ's tablet vendor to implement and pilot the use of learning management within the resident tablets. She stated Windham's staff is excited for that possibility.

Chairman Nichols thanked Superintendent Hartman for her report.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Staff Activities Update

Chairman Nichols said that throughout the 2022-2023 school year, Windham School District staff have participated in a multitude of activities and events that broaden both their personal and professional goals and experiences. Windham recognizes the importance of building a strong team foundation, which in turn contributes to the overall success of the district and its students.

The Chairman said annual employee health and wellness challenges have motivated staff to practice active lifestyles and prioritize personal well-being. For example, during last September and October, Windham's Recreation and Wellness department partnered with various pharmacies around the state to bring opportunities to receive influenza vaccinations to both administration and campus staff members. Upon receiving their vaccination, Windham staff were eligible to earn administrative leave hours. Vaccinations are a preventive measure designed to improve health among staff, with an alternative goal of decreasing absences across the district.

Chairman Nichols stated Windham staff were most recently challenged to become more physically active by working in eight-person teams to collectively walk a minimum of 832 miles, roughly the distance to walk across the state of Texas, during an eight-week period. The Walk Across Texas Challenge, hosted by the Texas AgriLife Extension Agency, is designed to bring a sense of community among colleagues while simultaneously increasing physical activity efforts. The district set a goal of walking 75,624 miles overall. At the conclusion of the eight-week program, staff walked a total of 85,403.13 miles, marking the third year Windham staff have successfully completed the challenge. Participants earned administrative leave hours by successfully completing a minimum number of entries and mileage to promote engagement in actively challenging the district's health outcomes.

The Chairman said this school year, campuses across the district have prioritized participation in teambuilding events and activities. In May 2023, staff at the Woodman campus, located in Gatesville, centered their teambuilding around the practice of effective communication. The Woodman campus staff worked together to break out of an escape room, as well as untangle a human knot, in which they had to adequately work through difficult scenarios to succeed. The Lane Murray and Hilltop campuses joined together to participate in a soft skills workshop facilitated through the Texas Workforce Solutions, where they took part in activities and lessons to aid in the development of their professional soft skills. Following the workshop, the two campuses competed against each other in a game of laser tag, working as a team to strategize and communicate effectively. These activities, and others across the district, promote collaboration and problem solving as the teams work towards achieving a common goal.

Chairman Nichols said Windham's administration staff have also taken part in a number of morale boosters, such as Muffins for Mom and Donuts for Dad, in observance of both Mother's and Father's Day. The Chairman said these small acts of kindness and gestures of appreciation brought staff together to commemorate their roles as both parents and employees, celebrating a healthy work-life balance.

The Chairman said he knows he speaks for the entire Board when he says that each Windham staff member is incredibly valued and plays a vital role in both student and district success. The work done every day by the women and men of our district makes a difference in the lives of the students they serve and the families of those students and makes a positive impact on our Texas community as a whole.

This concluded his report.

Ambassador Sichan Siv commented that he was intrigued by the Walk Across Texas program. He said several years ago, Board members were invited to join that program. He asked to be invited to future wellness challenges, and Superintendent Hartman said the district would remedy that for the future, and stated that Windham has multiple physical activities throughout the year that all Board members are welcome to participate in.

CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AUDITS REPORT

Charles Bell, Department Director of Operational Support, presented that the Correctional Education Association (CEA) is a professional association of educators and administrators working in adult and juvenile correctional settings. CEA provides critical training, cutting-edge research and valuable networking opportunities to deliver effective, life-changing education and training to students. Windham School District recently began the accreditation process with CEA. In order to become CEA accredited, there are numerous steps and requirements that must be accomplished including extensive documentation and auditing processes. There are many benefits to being a CEA accredited district including completion of comprehensive program assessments by experts in the area of correctional education, improved staff morale through recognition of professional efforts and application of enhanced accountability and best practices resulting in a more productive environment for staff and students. In addition, CEA has a memorandum of understanding with the American Correctional Association (ACA) permitting audits for CEA accreditation to be accepted and applied to ACA audits.

Mr. Bell said CEA has established and continually updates a set of program standards. There are 61 total standards, 24 of which require mandatory compliance. In addition, campuses are expected to meet at least 90% compliance of the remaining 37 standards. Each Windham campus is required to be audited by CEA approved and trained representatives in order to meet and support accreditation status. Windham is developing a CEA audit schedule with the goal of achieving CEA accreditation on various campuses. Once a campus becomes accredited by CEA, a reaccreditation audit is required every three years. Through coordination with CEA and Windham's Operational Support department, each campus begins preparation and an audit date is scheduled. Prior to the audit date, each campus must develop a series of files that align with each standard to demonstrate compliance. During the audit, various district and campus level components are assessed including administration and management, personnel, education programs and services, instructional materials, technology availability and use, and sanitation. Auditors identify strengths and weaknesses and provide guidance for improvements. Following the visit, the auditors will submit a report and provide a recommendation to the CEA standards commission for review and final determination of CEA accreditation. Post-audit, Windham leadership explore the suggestions provided to determine appropriate implementation ensuring

the recommendations are conducive to the environment, staff and students.

Mr. Bell stated that the first CEA audit for Windham occurred on June 27, 2023 at the Wynne campus in Huntsville. Wynne staff, including Campus Principal Jason Evans and Regional Principal Luann Pickett, worked diligently in preparation for the auditors' visit. The auditors provided TDCJ and Windham staff with an in-briefing prior to the tour to review the audit process. Principal Evans then led a tour of the education department to include all program areas: academic, life skills, career and technical education, and the ECHO newspaper. This allowed the auditors to observe and experience first-hand the hard work that is being put forth by staff and students in each classroom as they work towards their goals. Upon completion of the campus tour, the auditors began the process of methodically reviewing each standard file to determine compliance. At the conclusion of the audit, the auditors presented an out-briefing to explain their findings. Following the Wynne campus review, the auditors were very complimentary of the educational services provided, the organization and structure of the files, the staff and the students. The auditors informed those attending the out-briefing that they determined 100% compliance with all standards and reported their recommendation to the Standards Commission would be CEA accreditation for the Wynne campus. During August, the Roach and Woodman campuses also completed their audits to become CEA accredited. In addition, the Cole and Moore campuses are scheduled for accreditation audits on August 30th and 31st, 2023, respectively.

Mr. Bell said through Correctional Education Association audits and accreditation, Windham continues to be a leader in correctional education. In addition, staff are able to enhance their understanding of policies and procedures, contributing to improved outcomes thus increasing staff satisfaction. Pre-audit and post-audit assessments are utilized to provide campuses the opportunity to reflect on program strengths and weaknesses, offering chances to mitigate any potential gaps through collaboration. He stated the district is extremely grateful for the support of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice as campuses prepare and complete audits. Mr. Bell said Windham is excited to continue working towards becoming CEA accredited on additional campuses and improving district processes, policies and programs for all staff and students.

This concluded his report and he paused for questions.

Chairman Nichols said the Board understands that CEA accreditation is very much of a team effort and the results that they are seeing speak for themselves. The Chairman said the Board appreciates everyone's hard work in achieving these results that are recognized in this way.

He thanked Mr. Bell for his report.

CELEBRATING TEXAS HISTORY: GALVESTON, TEXAS

Danielle Nicholes, Communications Administrator, presented that Galveston Island got its name in 1786, when Bernardo de Galvez, the Spanish Colonial Governor, ordered the first survey of the Texas Gulf Coast. The surveyor, Jose de Evia, named Galveston Bay in honor of the Governor, and the Island was later given the same name.

Ms. Nicholes said the history of Galveston is full of fascinating details including pirates, the title “Wall Street of the South” and the Galveston Hurricane of 1900. Of the island’s many visitors was the French Jean Lafitte, a pirate who built the small colony of Campeche on the island in 1817. As Spanish merchant ships passed through the Gulf, he used the colony as a base to dispose of contraband. After ten years, he burnt down the Campeche colony and fled. His treasures are rumored to remain buried on the Island.

Ms. Nicholes stated during the Texas Revolution, the harbor served as the port for the Texas Navy, and the last point of retreat for the Texas government. Following the war, in 1836, a Canadian fur trader by the name of Michel B. Menard purchased seven square miles of land. She said this became the City of Galveston and happened to be the same year that Texas gained Independence from Mexico and became a republic.

Ms. Nicholes said over the next several decades, Galveston’s port strengthened and served as a vessel for cotton to be distributed and farming supplies to be received. Galveston City was given the name “Wall Street of the South” due to the prosperous banking industry. However, despite the apparent success, the city faced multiple challenges, including a port blockage during the Civil War, the devastating outbreak of Yellow Fever in 1853 and the battle of Galveston in 1863. The City of Galveston remained strong and surged ahead. Of note, Galveston was the first city in Texas to have electric-powered houses and the first baseball game in Texas was played here. The oldest-daily newspaper in Texas, the Daily News, founded in 1842, still publishes from Galveston. In addition, as you may recall from our June presentation, Galveston is also significant in the history of Juneteenth, when approximately 2,000 troops arrived in Galveston Bay declaring freedom for over 250,000 people who were previously enslaved.

Ms. Nicholes said due to the geographical location on the Gulf Coast, Galveston Island is a notorious target for powerful storms. On September 8, the Galveston Hurricane of 1900 took the lives of many and forever changed the Island. With wind gusts of 120 miles per hour, the hurricane flooded the city and destroyed numerous homes, buildings and businesses. It is estimated that 6,000 people lost their lives to the Galveston Hurricane of 1900. Following the storm, Galveston City implemented numerous precautions to protect its communities and citizens against future weather events: a seventeen-foot seawall was built on the Gulf side, the grade level was raised and an all-weather bridge to the mainland was constructed.

Ms. Nicholes said in addition to the rich and informational history, Galveston is a popular vacation spot for friends and family. The Island is home to multiple exciting opportunities including historical home tours, Galveston Island State Park and the chance to see World War II battle ships at the Naval Museum. Ms. Nicholes stated the history of Galveston is significant and powerful. Overcoming numerous challenges and obstacles, Ms. Nicholes said the Island is pivotal in the development and progression of Texas as we know it.

This concluded her report and she paused for questions.

Chairman Nichols thanked her for her report and said the Board appreciates the welcoming, as always, from the Galveston community to representatives of the Board, Windham School District, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and meeting guests.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE WSD
BUDGET AND SALARY SCHEDULE FOR 2023-2024**

Robert O'Banion, Director of Operations and Chief Financial Officer, stated that this past legislative session was unprecedented in terms of funding for the state and Windham has seen benefits that are incorporated into the upcoming school year budget.

Mr. O'Banion said the district received increased revenue of \$6.4 million from the Texas Legislature to implement a 5% salary increase for all staff and continued funding for the 10% salary increase for teachers that was provided in September 2022.

Mr. O'Banion stated additionally, Windham received increased revenue of over \$900,000 from the Legislature as exceptional item funding to continue the Family Literacy program and expand our college and career readiness initiative that includes an administrator and six regional workforce program coordinators. He said the district is very appreciative of the Texas legislature for this support.

Mr. O'Banion said he would go over some areas within their 2023-2024 budget which is located behind 'G' in the Board binder.

Mr. O'Banion asked the Board to turn to page 3 in the WSD budget book. He said they will see the total revenue increased by \$8 million for fiscal year 24 for a total amount of \$77,885,572. He explained the fluctuations from the prior year include the increase he previously mentioned from the legislature. Additionally, the MOU funds with TDCJ revenue increased to \$5.9 million to reflect the 5% salary increase. Special Grant funds for fiscal year 24 are almost \$5.2 million, which is a slight decrease primarily due to decreased roll-forward on our Title I grant from prior years. He said the "all funds" budgeted expenditures increased for FY24 by 21% or \$15.4 million to \$90,589,238.

Mr. O'Banion said the most significant increase in expenditures for next year is to support the startup of 11 new campuses within TDCJ and privately-operated facilities. This expansion represents an increase in expenditures of \$6.3 million in payroll and operating costs.

Mr. O'Banion explained the district has also included funds in this budget for multiple program continuations and expansions.

He stated expenditures provide for over \$1 million to expand and improve technology and utilize one-time committed funds for students and staff. Increased expenditures of \$4 million for one-time expenses for added classroom space and administrative office improvements. Funding of \$480,000 for additional education specialist staff positions to focus on instructional technology implementation and professional development for campus staff.

Mr. O'Banion said also included is the expansion of an agreement with the Correctional Education Association to perform robust education audits at 18 locations that will meet American Correctional Association accreditation requirements.

Mr. O'Banion asked the Board to turn to the Personnel Schedule at the bottom of page eight, where they could see that the overall total FTEs increased from last year's budget by 91.5 to 1,186 FTEs for FY24.

He explained the remaining pages (9-13) of the budget book reflect the district's different salary plans.

Mr. O'Banion thanked the Board for their time earlier that month as they visited with each member about Windham's budget.

Additionally, he thanked Windham's Business Office and Human Resources team that contributed significantly to creating this budget. He said that they contributed significantly to this budget and made a huge difference in the success of the budget he presented.

Mr. O'Banion stated he would like to request that the Windham School District Board of Trustees approve the 2023-2024 budget for the Windham School District as presented and the salary schedule per Board Policy.

Mr. O'Banion paused for any questions.

Chairman Nichols thanked Mr. O'Banion and said that prior to the meeting, each member of the Board was fully briefed with respect to the proposed budget. He stated the Board very much appreciated that it takes a village to put together a budget of that scale and to work with the legislative process, which has been extremely supportive of the objectives and goals of the district.

Judge Faith Johnson thanked the Chairman and Mr. O'Banion. She stated she had a great time with himself and Superintendent Hartman during her briefing. She also thanked him for the clarification that he added to his presentation and expressed her appreciation.

Chairman Nichols asked the board for a motion.

Judge Faith Johnson moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the WSD Budget and Salary Schedule for 2023-2024 and authorized the Superintendent of the Windham School District to make transfers as necessary, as authorized by policy.

Judge Molly Francis seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
PROPOSED REVISION OF WSD BOARD POLICY 07.11, “LEAVES AND ABSENCES”**

Erik Brown, General Counsel, stated that the Board would find Board Policy 07.11, “Leaves and Absences,” located at tab H of their binders. He said the proposed revisions clarify which relationships constitute immediate family members for employee sick leave purposes. The rest of the revisions are non-substantive changes for clarity and conciseness. Mr. Brown paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman Nichols asked the board for a motion.

Dr. Rodney Burrow moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the proposed revision of the WSD Board Policy WBP-07.11, “Leaves and Absences.”

Derrelynn Perryman seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
PROPOSED REPEAL OF WSD BOARD POLICY 07.53, “ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE”**

Erik Brown, General Counsel, stated that the Board would find the Board Policy 07.53, “Administrative Leave,” at tab I of their binders. He said the proposed revisions clarify the family members for which an employee may receive bereavement leave upon the family member’s death. The rest of the revisions were made for clarity, conciseness and formatting. Mr. Brown paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman Nichols asked the board for a motion.

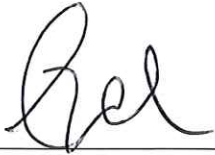
Ambassador Sichan Siv moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the proposed repeal of the WSD Board Policy WBP-07.53, “Administrative Leave.”

Dr. Rodney Burrow seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

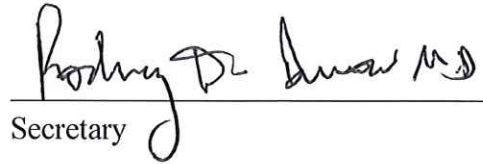
Chairman Nichols thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be Friday, October 13th, 2023 in Austin, Texas.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman Nichols adjourned the 337th meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 9:53 a.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.