

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

Meeting No. 343

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Thursday, August 22nd, 2024 at the Plaza Hotel Pioneer Park in El Paso, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Eric J.R. Nichols, Chair
Hon. Faith Johnson, Vice Chair
Dr. Rodney Burrow, Secretary
Hon. Molly Francis
Ambassador Sichan Siv
Tom Fordyce
Pastor Nate Sprinkle
General Bill Welch
Sydney Zuiker

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent
Robert O'Banion
Jon Lilley
Danielle Nicholes
Laurie Olivarez
Jason Evans
Luann Pickett
Jeffery Flowers
Azure Mach
Kimberly Calhoun
Raul Nuques
Ofelia Jiminez
Maria Diaz
Rachel Taylor

CONVENED

Chairman Eric J.R. Nichols convened the meeting of the 343rd Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Thursday, August 22nd 2024, at 3:12 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. The meeting recessed at 3:12 p.m. and reconvened into Executive Session at 3:21 p.m. At 3:40 p.m. Chairman Nichols adjourned the Executive Session and reconvened regular session at 3:46 p.m. During the regular session, the Board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register.

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.

RECOGNITION

Superintendent Hartman recognized Mr. Jon Lilley, Division Director of Instruction. She stated with over 20 years of experience in the public-school setting, and over 35 years in education, Jon Lilley joined Windham School District in October, 2009 as a counselor at the Moore campus. Ms. Hartman said he holds multiple degrees including a Bachelor of Business Administration with a Major in Personnel Management, Master of Science with a Major in Secondary and Higher Education and Minor in Business Management, Master of Education in Elementary Education, and numerous lifetime certifications: grades 1st through 8th Elementary Self-Contained, grades 1st through 8th Elementary English, pre-kindergarten through 12th grade Mid-Management Administration and pre-kindergarten through 12th grade Counseling.

Ms. Hartman said Mr. Lilley's philosophy of education reads: "I strongly believe that all students can learn; that each student must be taught at their instructional level; that the joy and excitement in learning are as important as the teaching skills which are taught; that teachers must know the curriculum to be taught and a variety of ways to present it; and that teachers, administrators and students must be partners in education."

Superintendent Hartman stated that since joining the Windham team, Mr. Lilley has held multiple roles including counselor, principal, department director of instruction and his current role as division director of instruction, which he has held since 2019. During his tenure, he has helped countless students achieve educational goals and has guided talented staff with commendable leadership. His passion, experience, knowledge and dedication have been instrumental in successfully navigating the district through numerous advances and exciting initiatives. She said these efforts include ensuring campuses were equipped to continue providing services during the pandemic as well as resources for supplemental instruction to combat student learning loss. Additionally, he spearheaded the development and execution of the Student Ambassador Program. This initiative stemmed from employer feedback received at Skills Demonstration and Career Expos, where employers were impressed with students' skill sets but noted a lack of confidence in their interactions. The program allows students to enhance their confidence by greeting visitors in their classrooms and explaining their enrolled courses. Windham's Student Ambassador program has been showcased at national and international conferences and has been adopted by several organizations and agencies. Furthermore, Ms. Hartman said he led the coordination of the Bluebonnet region, and has overseen the implementation and achievement of high standards for high school diploma and equivalency completions. She presented that Mr. Lilley, recognizing the significance of the Windham mission, has always made himself available to take on supplemental duties that require significant travel and time.

Superintendent Hartman stated that as Mr. Lilley steps into retirement, the district extends their heartfelt gratitude for his invaluable efforts, unwavering support, and boundless knowledge, all of which have significantly contributed to the district's growth and student excellence.

A video was played highlighting Mr. Lilley's time with Windham.

The Chairman, on behalf of the board, thanked Mr. Lilley for his years of service and wished him well in his retirement. Chairman Nichols commented on his leadership and all of Mr. Lilley's contributions to the district. He asked Mr. Lilley to say a few words.

Mr. Lilley thanked Windham's leadership, district and TDCJ staff, students and his family for providing him the opportunity to dedicate his career and his life to serving those the district serves. He described the accomplishments he has received throughout his career, as well as the dedication he put into his career with Windham.

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 14th, 2024 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

Student Pathways

Superintendent Hartman presented that Windham School District actively supports its students in exploring career pathways that align with their interests, aptitudes and the employment outlook in Texas. By providing access to a range of career clusters, which are annually reviewed to meet the needs of high-demand, high-wage industries, the district ensures students are prepared for the workforce. Over 18,000 students, many of whom lacked a high school diploma or basic academic skills, participated in these programs during the past school year. This engagement is crucial in helping students make informed decisions about their educational and career paths, considering factors like age, time in TDCJ, and individual goals.

Ms. Hartman stated that both the high school diploma and high school equivalency (HSE) pathways offer unique advantages, tailored to the diverse needs of adult learners. The high school diploma option, traditionally available for school-age children, now includes accelerated and online learning opportunities, allowing some students to graduate with both a diploma and an associate's degree. She said Windham has extended this option to younger students at specific campuses and partnered with the Goodwill Excel Center to provide an adult diploma program for students aged 26 to 50. This accelerated program is ideal for those needing focused instruction and the time to complete the necessary coursework and exams.

Superintendent Hartman said for students who prefer a quicker route to graduation, the high school equivalency pathway is a streamlined option that allows for swift transitions to postsecondary education or employment. The GED® exam, which serves as the basis for the HSE certificate, is a rigorous test aligned with traditional high school standards. She stated Windham has a strong track record of success in this area, with 83% of students who took the exam in the 2022-2023 school year earning their HSE certificate. Both the HSE and the high school diploma open doors

to further education and career opportunities, with Windham guiding students to the option that best fits their circumstances.

Ms. Hartman stated that Windham employs a comprehensive approach to preparing students for the HSE, using tools like the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE®) and GED® Ready tests to track progress. She said the district emphasizes mastery of content over simply meeting minimum requirements, providing varied instructional formats and resources such as Aztec Learning Management software. She mentioned that this approach helps students build the knowledge and skills necessary for success, while also addressing any concerns about academic preparedness and the challenges of testing. The district also offers Title I and special education services to eligible students, ensuring that all have the support they need.

Superintendent Hartman said to further support students' transition to the workforce, Windham has established the College and Career Readiness department, focusing on career readiness, occupational licensing, and postsecondary pathways. This department collaborates with TDCJ to facilitate interviews with employers and ensure that students can find meaningful employment in their fields of training after graduation. She presented that Windham is also working to accommodate students with medical restrictions, ensuring they can succeed in various trades upon reentry into their communities. She said through its structured programming and partnerships, Windham equips students with the tools, skills, and connections needed to achieve their educational and career goals, ultimately contributing to their communities and personal success.

The Chairman asked Ms. Hartman to introduce the team from the Sanchez campus. Chairman Nichols asked Ms. Ofelia Jimenez, the Sanchez campus principal, to describe how students at her campus are utilizing the different pathways available to them. Ms. Jimenez presented that they see the most success when students earn both their HSE and CTE certificates, which is much more effective. She commented on the average student age, and how they have an orientation session to talk to students about resources and their educational needs or goals. Ms. Jimenez also commented on the CTE programs available at the Sanchez campus. The Chairman thanked Ms. Jimenez for her comments.

Chairman Nichols asked Superintendent Hartman if any professional development was taking place during her trip to El Paso. She stated that Windham's regional principals met for their end-of-year briefing, and several professional development opportunities took place. Ms. Hartman said this also served as a great opportunity for regional principals to view other campus operations in areas they may not be familiar with. She stated this was a great opportunity for them to take back ideas and share them with staff from their regions.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Family Literacy Program

Chairman Nichols stated that the Windham School District Board of Trustees strives to highlight active programs within the district that are making a difference within the lives of students and their families. He said Windham School District's Family Literacy program is designed to empower incarcerated parents to actively engage in their children's education, aiming to improve

both academic and behavioral outcomes and reduce generational incarceration.

The Chairman called to the podium Ms. Maria Diaz, the Sanchez Family Literacy Coordinator, who was recognized as a representative of the program. He recognized Ms. Diaz for her contributions since joining the district in 2012, serving as a parole officer following her time with the district, and rejoining Windham at the Sanchez campus in 2022 as the Family Literacy Coordinator. The Chairman said Ms. Diaz is known for her innovative ideas and compassionate efforts, she is a valued member of the Sanchez team, fostering meaningful connections among program participants, their children and caregivers. He stated that they are deeply grateful for the lasting impact she has made through her unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of the students and families the district serves.

Chairman Nichols presented that the Family Literacy program is divided into three phases aimed at enhancing parenting skills and encouraging active involvement in a child's education. He said Phase I focuses on teaching essential parenting skills and the importance of educational involvement. Phase II allows parents to practice these skills through interactive activities like book readings and parent-teacher conferences. Phase III emphasizes ongoing parental engagement, where parents plan and participate in their child's education throughout the school year. He stated participation is carefully screened, requiring caregiver approval and cooperation from the child's school district.

Chairman Nichols stated since transitioning from a pilot program in the 2022-2023 school year, Windham's Family Literacy program has demonstrated remarkable progress. He said last year, the program facilitated 20 parent-teacher conferences and 200 interactive activities, including book readings and homework assignments. This academic year, the number of conferences has increased to 27 and interactive activities increased to 684, reflecting heightened engagement.

The Chairman said Family Literacy Days, introduced at various participating campuses, have become an integral part of the program, offering opportunities for parents, caregivers and children to engage in literacy activities and build stronger family connections. He said these events include arts and crafts, literacy games and meaningful interactions, along with a Caregivers Focus Group that allows caregivers to share experiences and provide feedback. He stated that the positive feedback from these events indicates improvements in children's reading habits, academic performance and social and emotional health.

Chairman Nichols said Windham's Family Literacy program continues to make significant strides in promoting educational involvement among parents who are incarcerated, thereby working towards breaking the cycle of incarceration and creating a brighter future for participants and their children.

The Chairman asked Ms. Diaz to provide additional comments on the Family Literacy program. Ms. Diaz said that seeing the fathers that she works with interact with their children, reading and witnessing their emotional bond is a great part of her job. She then expressed several words of thanks to key individuals.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE WSD
BUDGET AND SALARY SCHEDULE FOR 2024-2025**

Mr. Robert O'Banion, Chief Financial Officer, stated that the state legislature provided crucial funding over the past year, enabling two 5% salary increases for all staff, which contributed an additional \$3.3 million in revenue for the upcoming fiscal year. The district's total revenue for FY25 increased by \$3.4 million, bringing it to \$81,272,691, due in part to these salary adjustments and other funding changes.

Mr. O'Banion said the FY25 budget also reflects a 6.5% increase in expenditures, totaling \$96,439,823. He stated this includes one-time expenses such as \$1.3 million for a statewide professional development event, \$100,000 for an employee tuition and certification reimbursement program, \$250,000 for expanding career and technical education programs, \$2.2 million for technology improvements and approximately \$2 million for administrative office enhancements. Additionally, \$5.8 million is allocated for ongoing operations of 11 new campuses added in September 2023.

Mr. O'Banion concluded by acknowledging the contributions of the Business Office and Human Resources team in creating the budget and requested the Board of Trustees to approve the 2024-2025 budget and the associated salary schedule.

The Chairman asked Mr. O'Banion to elaborate further on the process that takes place each year to ensure the budget is appropriated responsibly. Mr. O'Banion described the lengthy process that the district goes through when building the budget for each school year for the campuses, departments and programs. In regards to career and technical education programs, the Chairman asked Mr. O'Banion if funding is part of the base budget or if they are a part of exceptional item requests. Mr. O'Banion said they are included in the base budget and he described the process and details of this. He also gave a list of some of the programs that will be funded with this budget. Superintendent Hartman stated that they are working with TDCJ to identify additional programs to add to the list of programs.

Judge Faith Johnson moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the Windham School District budget and salary schedule for 2024-2025 and authorize the Superintendent of the Windham School District to make transfers as necessary as authorized by policy.

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

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE WSD
SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT**

Chairman Nichols presented that during Executive Session, the Board of Trustees discussed the recommendations regarding the Superintendent's contract and the contract overall. The Chairman commented on the salary amount for the Superintendent, which reflects the 5% salary increase as mentioned earlier in the meeting, as well as the length of the contract.

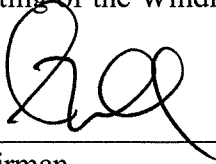
Dr. Rodney Burrow moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the contract for the Superintendent of the Windham School District, effective September 1st, 2024 and ending August 31st, 2029, to include an annual salary of \$199,500.

General Bill Welch seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

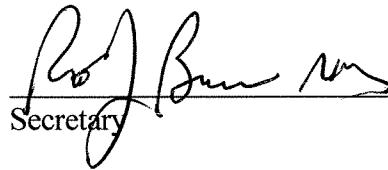
Chairman Nichols thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be Friday, October 11th, 2024 in Bryan, Texas.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman Nichols adjourned the 343rd meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 4:47 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.