

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

Meeting No. 347

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, April 25, 2025 at the Renaissance Austin Hotel in Austin, 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
Sydney Zuiker

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

General Bill Welch

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent
Robert O'Banion
Kevin Sawnick
Erik Brown
Danielle Nicholes
Luann Pickett
Jack Herrington
Garland Whetzler
Rachel Taylor
Isabel Figueroa
Daniel Johnson III
Nathan Tenny

CONVENED

Chairman Eric J.R. Nichols convened the meeting of the 347th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, April 25, 2025, at 8:49 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.

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.

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 21, 2025 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.

RECOGNITIONS

Division Director of Instruction Kevin Sawnick recognized Ms. Luann Pickett. He said Ms. Pickett is recognized for her promotion to department director of instruction with Windham School District. He presented that she has been an integral part of Windham School District since 1990, dedicating over 35 years to fostering student success. Mr. Sawnick said that throughout her tenure, Ms. Pickett has served in various roles across nine campuses district-wide, including study aide, testing specialist, teacher, assistant principal, college coordinator, campus principal and most recently, East Texas regional principal. In February 2025, she was promoted to department director of instruction, overseeing the Assessment, Advisement and Records; Special Education and Federal Programs; Library Services and Professional Development departments. He said Ms. Pickett holds a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies from Stephen F. Austin University and a Master of Education from Sam Houston State University. He noted that as regional principal, Ms. Pickett successfully cultivated a well-rounded team of principals capable of advancing within the district; three of her former principals now serve as regional principals themselves. He asked the Board to please join the district in congratulating Ms. Pickett on her well-deserved promotion and thanking her for her unwavering dedication to Windham School District.

The Chairman congratulated Ms. Pickett on her promotion and noted that it was well-deserved. He asked if she'd like to say a few words. Ms. Pickett said she greatly appreciates the opportunity to serve and support the district. She talked about the mission of the district being integrated into the classrooms and she is honored to support educators and students for success. She thanked the Board once again.

Next, Mr. Sawnick recognized Mr. Jack Herrington. He presented that Mr. Herrington was being recognized following his recent promotion to East Texas Regional Principal. He said that Mr. Herrington has dedicated his adult life to serving his community through education. He began his career in K-12 public schools as a Social Studies teacher while also coaching football, track and golf. Mr. Sawnick noted that in Mr. Herrington's later years in public education, he transitioned into administration, serving as an assistant principal at elementary, junior high and high school campuses. His exceptional leadership at Huntsville ISD earned him multiple Hornet Hero awards, recognizing his outstanding contributions to the district.

Mr. Sawnick presented that inspired by the words of J. Bunyan — "You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you" — Mr. Herrington sought new ways to make a lasting impact. He said this led him to join Windham School District in June 2016

as a student advisor at the Ferguson campus. In May 2021, he was promoted to principal of the Ellis and Byrd campuses, where he played a key role in mentoring new principals and contributing to the district's Principals' Focus Group. Mr. Sawnick said during his time as principal, Mr. Herrington worked closely with TDCJ to bring the Telecommunication Connectivity course to students within the Youthful Learners program at the Ellis campus. He also initiated a GED® testing program at Byrd, enabling students to progress toward earning their high school equivalency certificates while in transient status. He noted that as principal, Mr. Herrington's campuses consistently earned high accountability ratings, showcasing his commitment to excellence in education.

Mr. Sawnick noted that Mr. Herrington holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology from Texas A&M University, where he graduated from the Honors program, and a Master of Education in Administration from Sam Houston State University. Mr. Sawnick said outside of work, Mr. Herrington enjoys hiking, playing Scrabble and pickleball and traveling with his family. As the new regional principal for the East Texas region, Mr. Herrington looks forward to continuing his commitment to educational leadership and student success. He asked the Board to please join him in congratulating Mr. Herrington on his promotion.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Herrington and congratulated him on his promotion. He asked Mr. Herrington to say a few words. Mr. Herrington thanked the Board and Superintendent Hartman for his recognition. He said they serve best in the classroom with the teachers and students, and he looks forward to continuing to progress success for educators and students.

Ms. Danielle Nicholes, Communications Administrator, approached the podium to recognize Ms. Isabel Figueroa. She said the district was proud to recognize Ms. Isabel Figueroa, Dominguez campus Integrated Education and Training Academic teacher. She said Ms. Figueroa began her career in corrections with TDCJ at the Stringfellow (formerly known as Ramsey II) campus, where she served in the Classification department for two years. She left the agency briefly to complete her undergraduate studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio before returning in 1995 as the unit grievance investigator at the newly-opened Dominguez campus. She said there, she held several roles, focusing on equipping residents with soft skills and documentation crucial for employment upon reentry.

Ms. Nicholes presented that Ms. Figueroa pursued an alternative teaching certification and upon completion of the program, she began her teaching career with the district. During her tenure, Ms. Figueroa taught CHANGES, Literacy and Title I supplemental services for 10 years. She noted that Ms. Figueroa currently serves as the Integrated Education and Training academic teacher for the Certified Production Technician program. She said Ms. Figueroa's dedication has earned her multiple nominations as the Dominguez campus Teacher of the Year, both in 2014 and 2020. She presented that Ms. Figueroa has been married to her husband, Raul, for 40 years and is the proud mother of two and grandmother of six. She said beyond work and her family, Ms. Figueroa is actively involved in fundraising efforts for the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo's scholarship program, Kash for Kids.

Ms. Nicholes said that Ms. Figueroa finds immense fulfillment in her role as an educator in corrections, driven by her passion for teaching and a genuine desire to see her students succeed

upon reentry. She asked the Board to please join her in thanking Ms. Figueroa for her outstanding service, the positive impact she makes each day and the many years she has devoted to the success of the district and the state of Texas.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Figueroa for her current and future contributions. He asked if she'd like to say a few words. She expressed sincere gratitude. She noted that she enjoys seeing the light behind students' eyes upon educational success and she appreciates the work her and her colleagues are doing to benefit students' reentry opportunities.

Lastly, Ms. Nicholes recognized Mr. Daniel Johnson III. She said Mr. Johnson brings over 26 years of construction and maintenance experience to his role as a Certified Production Technician instructor at the Dominguez campus. She noted originally from Norfolk, Virginia, Mr. Johnson began his construction career at 18 as a cement apprentice, progressing to become a cement finisher by age 24. Transitioning into maintenance, he served as a maintenance supervisor for multiple residential communities in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia.

Ms. Nicholes presented that before joining Windham School District in 2023, Mr. Johnson spent two and a half years as a maintenance electrician at the Dominguez campus. She said he initially joined the district as a Telecommunication Connectivity instructor and later moved into his current role within the Integrated Education and Training program. She said known for his outstanding leadership and commitment to student success, Mr. Johnson wholeheartedly embraces the district's mission with pride. He finds great fulfillment in witnessing the daily transformation of students' lives through the district's programs.

Ms. Nicholes noted that outside of work, Mr. Johnson enjoys listening to music, spending quality time with his family, watching documentaries and coaching his son in sports. She asked the Board to please join her in thanking Mr. Johnson for his outstanding contributions to Windham School District.

The Chairman once again thanked Mr. Johnson and noted the amazing transformation of lives that Mr. Johnson sees daily through his work. He asked if Mr. Johnson would like to say a few words. Mr. Johnson expressed his gratitude for the recognition.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Enhancing Educator and Student Engagement: Outcomes and Opportunities

Superintendent Hartman presented that Windham School District is dedicated to supporting educational and reentry success for students across its 100 campuses. She said in April, the district celebrates Second Chance Month, honoring the transformative impact of its programs in helping justice-involved individuals integrate into their communities through education, skill development and workforce preparation. She noted the Annual Performance Report (APR) highlights four alumni success stories — Angela Gilbreath, Chase Barrett, Anthony Willis and Mary Martinez — who have built meaningful careers after completing Windham programs.

Superintendent Hartman presented that student engagement was spotlighted through events like the East Texas Art Extravaganza and the Bookmark Contest, which celebrated creativity and personal expression. She also provided legislative updates, noting that Windham continues advocating for its certified educators to be included in public school salary increases, with district leaders regularly testifying before state committees.

Superintendent Hartman presented the district also launched a new Employee Engagement app to strengthen internal communication and support staff involvement. She described key features, and included information over the Community Cleanup Challenge, encouraging staff to engage in service projects while having the opportunity to earn administrative leave.

Ms. Hartman stated throughout these initiatives, Windham remains focused on preparing students for successful futures by providing education, career training and second chances that lead to meaningful community contributions. The Superintendent thanked TDCJ for all of their of the district and its students. This concluded her report and she paused for questions.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Hartman. He asked a follow up question regarding the Employee Engagement app. In relation to Mr. Chase Barrett's Success Story and how he earned his occupational license through the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and Windham, the Chairman asked Superintendent Hartman for an update regarding occupational licensing processes. She responded by saying that great progress has been made through collaborative partnerships and legislative support to change the process to where students can apply for licensure prior to reentry. She also commented on three bills currently going through the legislature regarding occupational licenses.

Ambassador Sichan Siv asked questions related to Bookmark Contest posters and participation in the district's Culinary Arts program and expansion. There were no further questions or comments.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Production Technician: Integrated Education and Training Model

The Chairman report that the Windham School District Board of Trustees is proud to spotlight yet another transformative program that is making a lasting impact on students within Windham School District and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). He stated the Certified Production Technician Integrated Education and Training (IET) program at the Dominguez campus in San Antonio is designed to equip students with essential skills for employment within the manufacturing industry. Joining him to deliver this Chairman's report were Mr. Garland Whetzler, Dominguez campus principal, and Mr. Nathan Tenny, Certified Production Technician instructor.

First, the Chairman recognized Mr. Whetzler, who brings over 12 years of impactful experience in education and leadership to his role as principal at the Dominguez campus. He noted that before joining Windham School District, Mr. Whetzler served as assistant principal at Harris Middle School in San Antonio ISD, where he led the Social Studies department to top STAAR scores for

two years. He also taught U.S. History and coached at Lanier High School, leading the girls' soccer team to their first district title in over a decade. The Chairman said that Mr. Whetzler completed two tours at Guantanamo Bay and supported families during Operation Pacific Passage following the Fukushima disaster. He noted that he holds a Bachelor of Arts from Columbia College and a Master of Education Leadership from Trinity University, with certifications in Principal EC-12 and Social Studies 7-12. The Chairman noted that at the Dominguez campus, Mr. Whetzler has been key in maintaining an "A" accountability rating, building college partnerships and advancing student placement processes. Known for his dedication to staff and student success, Chairman Nichols stated he also enjoys family life, coaching soccer, attending dance recitals for his daughter and playing paintball.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Whetzler for his service and asked if he'd like to say a few words. Mr. Whetzler thanked everyone for the honorable recognition. He said they will continue to push Dominguez to be the best it can be and create positive outcomes for students.

Next, the Chairman recognized Mr. Tenny. He said Mr. Tenny began his career with Windham School District in 2016 at the Briscoe campus teaching Electrical Trades and OSHA 10, later moving to Torres to teach Construction Fundamentals and eventually to the Dominguez campus where he now leads Telecommunications Technology and Certified Production Technician courses. He said he has played a key role in developing the Certified Production Technician program. Mr. Tenny holds a Texas Educator Certificate in Trade and Industrial Education (6-12) from the University of North Texas and is certified by NCCER, C-Tech, Manufacturing Skill Standards Council and is an OSHA authorized trainer. He said Mr. Tenny is committed to preparing students for workforce integration. He noted that outside of work, he enjoys family time and fishing at the Gulf.

The Chairman asked Mr. Tenny to continue his portion of the report. Mr. Tenny presented the Certified Production Technician course, developed by the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council (MSSC), equips individuals with essential manufacturing skills, placing an emphasis on safety, quality practices and processes and maintenance knowledge. He said the program incorporates the IET model, which combines academic instruction with technical skills training to ensure participants gain both theoretical knowledge and practical experience simultaneously. IET is a collaboration between educational institutions, workforce development agencies and employers, ensuring that training meets real-world job requirements. Additionally, he noted that IET provides support services for students and graduates, including mentoring, tutoring and job placement assistance, helping alumni successfully transition into the workforce. IET instruction is contextually tied to specific skills needed in the manufacturing field, making learning relevant and applicable.

Mr. Tenny stated that students in this program acquire extensive knowledge across four key modules — Safety, Quality Practices and Measurement, Manufacturing Processes and Production and Maintenance Awareness. He said they begin by mastering the identification of personal protective equipment (PPE) and understanding various fire types, along with selecting the appropriate extinguisher. Moving forward, he said students delve into interpreting engineering drawings for manufacturing and grasping concepts related to quality costs. They gain hands-on experience in precise measurement techniques using dial calipers, outside micrometers, metric

rules and U.S. customary machinist's rules.

Mr. Tenny presented within manufacturing processes and production, students become adept at identifying and safely handling a variety of tools including wrenches, levers and screwdrivers. He said they learn practical skills such as cutting metal stock using a horizontal band saw and drilling metal stock with a drill press, then threading using a tap and die among other tool-related tasks. Additionally, students develop maintenance proficiency, learning procedures like lockout/tagout and engaging in both basic and advanced maintenance scenarios. He said this includes operating AC/DC Electrical Skill Boss units, installing and adjusting pillow block bearings and correctly mounting electric motors with precise alignment and fastener selection.

Furthermore, Mr. Tenny stated students acquire competence in calculating gear ratios, gear drive speeds and gear drive torques, as well as applying these calculations to sprocket ratios, belt drive ratios, belt drive speeds, chain drive speeds, belt drive torques and chain drive torques.

Mr. Whetzler approached the podium. He presented that upon completion of the course, graduates prepare to take the MSSC Certified Production Technician exam, which validates their skills and enhances employability. He said this certification fosters job stability and the opportunities in a growing market. Mr. Whetzler noted that in Texas, the demand for skills technicians is strong, fueled by manufacturing growth, heightened safety standards and advanced technology, across diverse sectors including the automotive, electronic and food production fields. He said the average salary for a production technician in the state is anywhere from \$18 to \$22 an hour, with top earners averaging over \$54,000 annually, according to ZipRecruiter.

Mr. Whetzler stated the MSSC IET program was made possible through grant funding from the Texas Workforce Commission, including the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant that was used to purchase equipment and the IET grant, which funds staff training and a case manager position. He said the case manager is responsible for connecting graduates with employment opportunities prior to reentry and following up on outcomes. Mr. Whetzler said as educators, they are deeply grateful to TWC for their invaluable support, which enables them to develop life-changing programs. He said the district looks forward to progressing the development of a Certified Production Technician program for women at the Plane campus.

The Chairman concluded the report by presenting that as the district continues to strengthen its partnerships with postsecondary institutions, the Certified Production Technician program serves as a valuable pathway for students to pursue an associate degree in logistics, opening doors to advanced career opportunities. On behalf of The Board, he thanked Mr. Whetzler and Mr. Tenny for sharing their expertise and all of the valuable information on the IET Certified Production Technician program. This concluded the report and the Chairman paused for questions from the Board.

Vice Chair Faith Johnson commented on the average salary reported. Mr. Whetzler explained the different levels of employment within the field and the salaries that accompany that. Judge Johnson also requested information regarding student testing within this program. Mr. Whetzler provided testing information, noting that Windham School District students are testing above both the national and state averages. He gave specific data related to this. Judge Johnson thanked Mr.

Whetzler for all of the great information. The Chairman asked Superintendent Hartman if she had any comments to add. She thanked the Dominguez campus staff for all of their great work and she commended them for their participation in the report.

2023-2024 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Communications Administrator Danielle Nicholes and Division Director of Instruction Kevin Sawnick presented the 2023–2024 Annual Performance Report (APR) for Windham School District, themed "*Redefining Education in Corrections*," highlighting the district's transformative efforts in correctional education during the reporting period of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024.

Ms. Nicholes stated Windham School District served approximately 50,000 students during the school year. They said the typical Windham academic student enters the program with an average reading level equivalent to the 5th grade and is about 32 years old. Students often require workforce training and support for behavioral and learning needs. She said the district also provided special education services to 536 eligible students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and offered accommodations for students with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. These accommodations included extended testing time, private or small-group settings, frequent breaks and oral administration of assessments, among others.

Ms. Nicholes said academic programming at Windham continued to show strong engagement and outcomes. She presented a total of 20,138 students participated in adult education programs. Students demonstrated measurable skill gains across all academic areas, with 5,029 meeting reading standards, 4,621 meeting math standards and 3,758 meeting language standards. She said of the 3,333 students who took the GED® exam, 80% earned a high school equivalency certificate. Windham's two high schools — Matthew Gaines High School and Jovita Gonzalez de Mireles High School — served 140 students in total, graduating 41 seniors. Additionally, she said Windham partnered with the Goodwill Excel Center to pilot an adult high school diploma program at four campuses: B. Moore, Coleman, Connally and Diboll.

Ms. Nicholes presented Windham's life skills programming reached more than 25,000 students and focused on cognitive development, soft skills and employment preparation. Specifically, she noted 15,581 students participated in the CHANGES program, 7,629 engaged in the Cognitive Intervention program and 2,310 took part in the Parenting program.

Mr. Sawnick presented that in the area of career and technical education (CTE), Windham offered more than 40 courses across eight career clusters during the 2023–2024 school year. He noted these efforts led to the earning of 10,012 CTE certificates and 13,888 industry-based certifications. He said apprenticeship and on-the-job training also played a crucial role in workforce readiness. In collaboration with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Windham supported 30 Department of Labor-registered occupations statewide. Mr. Sawnick noted a total of 1,289 individuals participated in these programs, with 217 successfully completing the required hours to finish the program.

Mr. Sawnick said the Family Literacy program saw continued growth and impact. He stated over 600 children were registered with parental consent, and the number of completed interactive reading and homework assignments rose from 221 in 2023 to 632 in 2024. Family Literacy Day events were hosted at seven campuses, incorporating caregiver feedback and showing notable increases in children's academic interest and progress.

Mr. Sawnick presented that Windham maintained a strong accountability system, using data to guide program and campus-level decision-making. For the 2023–2024 school year, the district earned a rating of “accomplished.” As required by the Texas Education Code, he said Windham undergoes a biennial evaluation to assess program effectiveness. He noted that the APR includes data on recidivism, alumni employment and academic progression.

Mr. Sawnick noted additional highlights from the report included initiatives across various regions, such as online testing expansions and new employer partnerships. He said the College and Career Readiness department launched its inaugural College and Career Day at the Wynne campus, introducing students to CTE pathways and engaging postsecondary partners like Lee College. He presented that the department also streamlined the Criminal History Evaluation Letter (CHEL) process to ensure students pursue licensable careers. A total of 441 CHELs were submitted to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation for review.

Mr. Sawnick said technology upgrades were prioritized across the district. Windham successfully piloted internet-based GED®, TABE® and NCCER testing at five campuses, improving both accessibility and efficiency in scoring and reporting.

In conclusion, Mr. Sawnick presented that the 2023–2024 Annual Performance Report reflects Windham School District's commitment to redefining correctional education through purposeful planning, innovation, and continuous improvement. He said these efforts empower students to achieve personal and professional success as they prepare for integration into Texas communities. This concluded their report and they paused for questions.

Chairman Nichols thanked both of them for their report. He commented on the average characteristics of Windham students and how they affect student outcomes. The Chairman also asked if there were plans to extend availability of life skills programs to larger volumes of the TDCJ population. Superintendent Hartman stated that the life skills programs are cognitive based, commenting that the district is piloting specific chairs for students in Restrictive Housing to participate in group facilitation. She also stated that the district is looking to add portions of the life skills curriculum into academic programs. She noted potential changes to curriculum is also in the works and under review. The Chairman ended by bringing attention to the outstanding numbers presented for students earning certifications. Chairman Nichols thanked them again for their presentation.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
PROPOSED REVISION OF WINDHAM BOARD POLICY — 07.18, “PERFORMANCE
EVALUATION SYSTEM”**

Erik Brown, General Counsel, stated proposed revisions include non-substantive changes for clarity, conciseness and style. He paused for any questions.

Chairman Nichols asked the Board for a motion.

Judge Molly Francis moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the revision of Windham Board Policy WBP-07.18, “Performance Evaluation System.”

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

Chairman Nichols thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be Friday, June 27, 2025 in Bryan, Texas.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman Nichols adjourned the 347th meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 9:59 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.