

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

Meeting No. 349

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Tuesday, August 19, 2025 at the Cambria Hotel Austin Uptown 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
Bill Welch
Sydney Zuiker

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent
Robert O'Banion
Erik Brown
Charles Bell
Jamie Sanders
Rachel Taylor

CONVENED

Chairman Eric J.R. Nichols convened the meeting of the 349th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at 9:02 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 June 26, 2025 meeting and excused absences.

There being no other comments, objections, or amendments to the Consent Items, the Consent Items were approved as submitted.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE WSD BUDGET AND SALARY SCHEDULE FOR 2025-2026

Robert O'Banion, Chief Financial Officer, presented that earlier in the year, the Texas State Legislature passed a budget that included significant revenue increases for Windham. He expressed appreciation to the legislature for this additional funding and support. He described several of the areas effected, including staff salaries, one-time supplemental funding toward internet connectivity within classrooms, continued revenue for additional information technology staff and operational revenue for campus expansion. Mr. O'Banion presented the district's total revenue increased by \$12.2 million for fiscal year 2026 for a total amount of \$93,512,642. He included information on an increased revenue from the memorandum of understanding funds with TDCJ, \$9.4 million, to support the implementation of the Sunset Bill, SB2405, of a new \$2.9 million MOU between TDCJ and Windham for the district to administer postsecondary programs across campuses. Additional noteworthy updates provided by Mr. O'Banion include multiple one-time expenses for various initiatives, an updated Personnel Schedule and Windham's updated salary plans. He once again thanked the Board for their support and for taking the time to meet with the district prior to the meeting to go in-depth with the 2025-2026 Budget and Salary Schedule.

The Chairman said he wanted to express sincere gratitude on behalf of the Board to the entirety of the legislature and Texas State officials for their recognition of what Windham does, their appreciation and support. He asked Mr. O'Banion how the partnership with TDCJ will move forward in regard to this new funding for connectivity. Mr. O'Banion presented that each campus is reviewed thoroughly with TDCJ partners to ensure that the best plan is designed for implementation with safety and security in mind. Superintendent Hartman noted just how much TDCJ's Information Technology team has been instrumental in aiding Windham ensure that this resource is being used efficiently and does not duplicate services. The Superintendent explained just how students and staff will benefit from this funding for connectivity.

Other members of the Board, including Pastor Nate Sprinkle, noted their appreciation for conversations prior to the meeting regarding the budget process and making it easy to understand.

Chairman Nichols asked the Board for a motion.

Board Member Sydney Zuiker moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the WSD Budget and Salary Schedule for 2025-2026 as presented.

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Tracking Progress: A Focus on Windham Performance Measures

Superintendent Hartman presented that this report will bring a closer look at Windham School District's performance measures. She noted that these metrics provide a clear view of how district programs impact student learning, skill development and overall efficiency across Windham programs. She said they continue to hold their monthly data meetings to closely monitor outcomes, discuss added measures of support for teachers and modify or set goals. She introduced Ms. Jamie Sanders, who she noted would help her read the report. She asked Ms. Sanders to proceed.

Ms. Sanders presented that student contact hours within Windham School District are a critical metric in gauging educational engagement across the district. These hours are calculated using the number of full-time employee (FTE) positions at an 85% fill rate, assuming full (100%) student attendance and a minimum enrollment threshold in classes. She said this formula is used because the district utilizes the minimum enrollment as written in policy, and it helps the district estimate the volume of direct instructional time delivered to students, ensuring accountability.

Ms. Sanders explained that another important measure of academic achievement is the cumulative number of students earning a high school diploma (HSD) or high school equivalency (HSE) certificate. She said this figure is determined from the average number of academic students served in previous school years and the percentage of those students who successfully earned their HSD or HSE during that time. By maintaining historical averages, she said the district can project outcomes and set realistic goals. Ms. Sanders noted that HSD and HSE completions are also measured as a percentage of participants who attempted all four components of the General Education Development (GED®) exam, which results in an HSE certificate upon successful completion. The fiscal year (FY) 2024 year-to-date figure offers a snapshot of academic attainment for students actively engaged in testing and completing educational goals.

Ms. Sanders said that Windham's academic programs encompass all students currently engaged in non-career and technical education (CTE) instruction to include literacy, high school equivalency preparation, high school and life skills. She noted that the number of students served in academic programs reflects FTE projections for FY2026, again assuming an 85% fill rate and average student-to-teacher ratios. This calculation helps determine how many individuals are receiving foundational education in literacy, math, life skills and other subjects.

Ms. Sanders presented that parallel to this, the district also supports a robust CTE program. She said the number of students served in CTE training includes participants enrolled across all programs. Similar to academic figures, CTE enrollment projections are based on FY2026 FTEs at an 85% fill rate and the average ratio of students to teachers. She noted these students receive instruction in high-demand, high-wage trades and industries, equipping them with job-ready skills.

Ms. Sanders said Windham also tracks the number of industry-based certifications earned by students throughout its CTE programs. She presented that using the average number of certifications obtained in prior years, the district anticipates approximately 1.35 industry-recognized credentials per CTE students. These certifications serve as tangible proof of workforce readiness and are aligned with both national and state industry standards.

Ms. Sanders reported that in order to evaluate the financial efficiency of district programs, Windham monitors the average cost per contact hour. She said this figure is calculated by dividing the FY2026 Legislative Appropriations Request amount by the estimated number of contact hours targeted for the fiscal year. It provides insight into how effectively resources are being utilized to deliver instruction.

Ms. Sanders explained that literacy remains a foundational goal of Windham's academic programs. She said the percent of students who complete a literacy level is measured by dividing the number of year-to-date (YTD) academic completers by the number of academic participants in FY2024. She noted that this metric highlights progress in closing educational gaps among adult learners.

Ms. Sanders presented that a separate, outcome-focused indicator measures the percentage of individuals reentering their communities during the year who were served by the district. She said that by using an average from FY2022 and FY2023 (FY2024 data was unavailable at the time of calculation), this metric reflects the reach and relevance of the district's programs for those transitioning back to their communities.

Ms. Sanders reported that Windham recently refined its definition of a CTE course completer. Windham has focused on ensuring that students completing CTE programs have demonstrated all of the skills in the curriculum and appropriate repetition of skills to ensure quality completers. This raises the rigor and value of program outcomes. The completion rate for FY2024 YTD is calculated by dividing the number of CTE completers by the total number of CTE participants, giving a more accurate representation of program success.

Superintendent Hartman concluded by presenting that with analyzing student academic and CTE outcomes, along with the efficient use of resources, Windham promotes continuous improvement across all programs. She said as they move forward, this data will continue to guide the district's decisions, align their efforts with strategic goals and ultimately enhance the educational support they provide to students across the state of Texas.

This concluded her report and she paused for questions from the Board.

The Chairman noted that it would be helpful for the Superintendent to explain the span of industry-based certifications that Windham offers to students. Superintendent Hartman explained that Windham offers over 40 CTE programs across 10 career clusters recognized by the Texas Education Agency. She detailed Governor Greg Abbott's launch of a new website that compiles all Texas workforce data to identify credentials of value in terms of employment projections. She explained that the district upholds an annual review and noted the district's appreciation for its

CTE educators, as well as those operating within the postsecondary programs.

Chairman Nichols asked the Superintendent to highlight the evaluation of these CTE programs. She said that district leadership attends campus tours to directly talk with students to receive feedback. Staff have the opportunity to provide feedback by utilizing the district's annual staff survey. She highlighted the district's new initiative, a Marine Technician program due to employment outlooks and workforce needs.

Vice-Chair Faith Johnson mentioned her appreciation of tracking student achievements and feedback to fully educate staff on the impact of the programs district educators are teaching.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Statewide Professional Development Summary

Chairman Nichols presented that during the last week of July, some of his fellow Board members and himself had the opportunity to attend Windham School District's 2025 Statewide Professional Development (PD): Pathways to Professional Excellence, which brought over 1,100 employees from across the state together. The PD took place in Dallas, Texas July 29-31, and said it was three days packed full of professional development, resources and valuable networking.

The Chairman said that the conference began on July 29 with an opening keynote. He reported that it was a privilege to share words of encouragement and gratitude on behalf of the Board, alongside Board Member Sydney Zuiker and Pastor Nate Sprinkle, each recognizing the exceptional educators who make a difference across the district. He said Bryan Collier, Executive Director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) also provided words of thanks to Windham staff for all that they do in support of TDCJ and its mission. He noted that Superintendent Hartman followed with key updates, including district outcomes, highlights from the 89th Texas Legislative Session, important information on student accommodations and more. The Chairman said her remarks set the stage for a powerful testimony from Windham alumnus Mr. Keidrain Brewster. Sharing his inspiring journey from incarceration to becoming a successful motivational speaker and entrepreneur, he said Mr. Brewster's story energized the audience and provided a compelling start to the three-day professional development event.

Chairman Nichols presented that the event continued with an energizing general session titled "The Blueprint: Bold Action, Smart Agility," which was delivered by nationally recognized speaker and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The BOLD Direction, Ms. Charlotte Stallings. He said Ms. Stallings challenged Windham staff to shift from a reactive mindset to one of purposeful momentum, encouraging them to not only navigate change but to lead it. Whether leading a campus, mentoring students or driving innovation behind the scenes, the Chairman noted that attendees left this keynote session with renewed motivation and an action-oriented mindset to turn intention into meaningful progress.

Chairman Nichols said the professional development built in six breakout session opportunities across two days. Offering a wide range of universally relevant topics, he noted the agenda allowed

staff to choose sessions that interested them, each featuring unique insights and perspectives from outstanding speakers. The overall topics for these breakout sessions were chosen as a result of direct staff feedback based on their needs both in and out of the classroom.

The Chairman presented that, led by Mr. Cesar Trevino, Information Technology (IT) Administrator; Mr. Paul Gathright, Windham's Academic and Instructional Technology Administrator; and Mr. Fred Cook, TDCJ's Chief Technology Officer and Information Technology Division Director, the IT panel showcased the district's latest tech initiatives, from enhanced digital tools to updated policies on connectivity and data privacy. He said this panel emphasized how innovation and responsible tech use within the correctional environment are transforming instruction and improving student outcomes across the district in collaboration with TDCJ.

Chairman Nichols explained that staff also had the opportunity to attend Rachel's Challenge with Ms. Kristi Krings, Rachel's Challenge CEO. He said Ms. Krings shared powerful strategies to create safer, more empathetic school environments inspired by the legacy of Rachel Joy Scott, a victim of the Columbine tragedy. He noted that this session focused on addressing bullying and mental health challenges through connection, compassion and intentional acts of kindness. He presented that the district has received extremely positive feedback on this session and plans on launching two pilots next school year.

The Chairman said the session titled, "Be the 1 in 15...The Importance of Mental Health First Aid Training," led by Ms. Alison Boudreaux and Ms. Amy Sanders of the Gulf Coast Center, emphasized the importance of mental health first aid for educators, teaching session participants to recognize signs of mental distress and how to offer initial support. He said staff were empowered to respond confidently in a crisis, learning how to better support the students they are serving within their classrooms and beyond.

Chairman Nichols presented that all career and technical education (CTE) instructors teaching courses with National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER®) curriculum attended the HammerMath session, presented by Mr. Perry Wilson, Founder and President of If I Had a Hammer, Inc., and Ms. Jennifer Wilkerson, NCCER® Vice President of Innovation and Advancement. Tailored to describe a real-world approach to teaching Math within a CTE context, he said this session gave instructors creative tools to make the subject more relevant and retainable for students within industry trades and was a favorite of the CTE teachers and Chief Financial Officer, Robert O'Banion.

The Chairman stated that all academic, special education and high school teachers attended a breakout led by Ms. Konnette Koen, Inclusive Practices Specialist, and Ms. Amberly Walker, Coordinator for Federal Programs from Education Service Center Region 12. The pair delivered an interactive session titled "Bridging Voices: Integrating Language Supports and Inclusive Practices for Diverse Classrooms," equipped for Windham teachers that introduced supportive and English as a Second Language teaching practices through tools such as Universal Design for Learning and culturally responsive techniques. He said by utilizing community-based examples and collaborative activities, educators gained an innovative toolkit that enhances accessibility, communication and engagement that ensures every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Chairman Nichols noted that the Pathways to Postsecondary breakout session, led by Ms. Ashley Koonce, College and Career Readiness Administrator, and Mr. Mark Lewis, Postsecondary Education Evaluation Coordinator, detailed how Windham partners with TDCJ and higher education institutions to expand postsecondary access to students. He said this session covered program development, campus support roles and strategies to boost enrollment and awareness among the TDCJ population.

The Chairman stated that the TDCJ Stakeholder Panel featured Inspector General, Lance Coleman; Chief of Programs, Jason Clark, and directors representing Rehabilitation and Reentry; Correctional Institutions Division, Classification and Transportation; Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics; Facilities and Parole. Each shared updates on initiatives and fielded questions submitted by Windham staff in advance of the conference. He said the panel encouraged collaboration between TDCJ and Windham, promoting open dialogue and shared commitment to student success. They also learned several “fun facts” about each panelist during the discussion. The Chairman said the district is incredibly thankful for OIG, TDCJ and its leaders for participating in this highly informative breakout.

The Chairman presented that Mr. Brian Patrick, TDCJ’s Office of the Independent Ombudsman Director, delivered a presentation titled, “Verbal Judo.” He said this engaging session taught staff how to de-escalate conflicts using empathy and intentional communication. Mr. Patrick showcased how this concept helps educators remain calm and in control, promoting respectful interactions across unique environments.

Chairman Nichols said that Ms. Tiffany Johnson, Executive Director of Victoria College, led a high-energy workshop on reducing negativity in the workplace and building stronger teams titled, “Positive Teams, Powerful Results: Combating Negativity and Building a Drama-Free Workplace.” Through practical exercises and mindset shifts, he noted that session attendees learned to enhance professionalism, resolve conflict and create a drama-free work environment.

The Chairman presented that the “Getting \$mart about Money” breakout session, led by Ms. Stallings, was a financial wellness seminar tailored just for educators, offering advice on budgeting, saving and debt management. He said Ms. Stallings empowered staff to take control of their finances and plan for a secure future.

Chairman Nichols stated that highlighting how personal responsibility and collaborative relationships drive professional effectiveness, Mr. Gary McGuey of Franklin Covey Education encouraged self-reflection and a commitment to continuous growth through his session, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.” Regional and campus principals also attended his second session, “Four Essential Roles of Leadership,” which emphasized that as the world evolves, leaders have to keep laying the foundation for extraordinary results by consciously leading themselves and their teams with intentional alignment.

Chairman Nichols noted that in the interactive “Mastering Communication for Workplace Success” session, Ms. Catherine Netter, Professional Development Center Specialist at the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL), utilized the U.S. Department of

Labor's *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum to emphasize how strong communication enhances professional relationships, minimizes misunderstandings and boosts workplace efficiency.

Lastly, The Chairman presented that Dr. Suzanne Newell, Chief Education Strategist for GTS Technology Solutions, led a forward-focused breakout on generative artificial intelligence (AI), guiding attendees through its basic concepts, safe classroom applications and future workforce development. He said staff learned how to “speak the language” of generative AI and explore its responsible use in education.

Chairman Nichols stated that the final day of the 2025 Statewide Professional Development brought a powerful close to an energizing and impactful event. He said the morning began with a general session and special recognition ceremony honoring Windham staff through annual service awards, celebrating years of dedicated service and excellence across campuses and departments. He noted that one of the day's most moving moments came during the Alumni Panel, where four Windham alumni shared their personal second chance journeys, answering questions and offering heartfelt testimonials about how Windham's programs helped shape their paths to success. Their stories underscored the life-changing potential of education and the lasting impact of the district's dedicated educators across the district.

The Chairman said the event concluded with a keynote from Chef Jeff Henderson, whose inspiring journey from incarceration to becoming an award-winning chef and bestselling author challenged attendees to reflect on their own purpose and the role they play in unlocking human potential. He said his message of resilience, redemption and reinvention left the audience uplifted and ready to return to their campuses recharged and resolute in Windham's mission.

Chairman Nichols stated that Windham's 2025 Statewide Professional Development event was a powerful reminder of the passion and purpose that drives the district's mission. He noted that follow-up items and priorities over the next year stemming from the conference include developing an AI policy and securing training for staff and students; piloting Rachel's Challenge, increasing opportunities for Windham alumni to engage with current students and reviewing staff feedback from the conference survey to promote continued meaningful and effective professional development.

The Chairman said over the course of three days, staff from every corner of the district came together to learn, grow and reconnect with the deeper meaning behind their work. From thought-provoking keynotes and practical breakout sessions to moments of recognition and inspiration, the event equipped attendees with renewed energy, fresh ideas and a shared vision for student success. He said as Windham continues to evolve and lead across education in corrections, the spirit of collaboration and commitment demonstrated in Dallas will serve as a lasting kickstart for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year ahead. He thanked Superintendent Hartman and all Windham staff for turning the idea of the professional development into a reality.

This concluded his report and he paused for questions.

Superintendent Hartman thanked the Board for allowing the district to commit funds a year prior for this event. She noted all of the positive feedback received about the conference as a whole and

the breakout sessions. She thanked the TDCJ panel participants, including TDCJ's Deputy Director of the Information Technology Division Mr. Fred Cook, for their insight. She thanked particular Windham staff for helping make the conference happen. She noted that once they receive staff feedback from the survey, they look forward to bringing that in front of the Board at a future meeting.

The Chairman noted his appreciation for members of the Board participating in the conference.

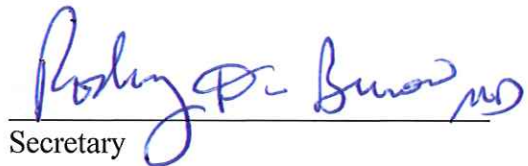
Chairman Nichols thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be October 16-17, 2025 in El Paso, Texas.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman Nichols adjourned the 349th meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 9:58 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.