



FY 2025 - 2029

STRATEGIC PLAN

Schools in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice

INTRODUCTION

Authorized in 1969 by the Texas Legislature, Windham School District was established as the first comprehensive education system dedicated to serving a statewide prison population. Windham provides educational services to eligible individuals within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), offering a wide range of academic, career and technical education and life skills programs. By focusing on education and personal growth, Windham aims to reduce recidivism, enhance employment opportunities and positively impact communities and families across Texas.

Under Chapter 19 of the Texas Education Code, the district is required to develop a strategic plan that incorporates:

- 1) A mission statement relating to the goals and duties of the district;
- 2) Goals to be met by the district in carrying out the mission stated; and
- 3) Specified educational, vocational training and counseling programs to be conducted by the district to meet the goals stated in the plan.

The purpose of Windham’s Strategic Plan is to provide a clear framework for advancing the district’s goals and objectives over the next five years, beginning in fiscal year 2025. This plan aligns the district’s resources, initiatives and educational programs, serving as the foundation for both the District Improvement Plan and Campus Improvement Plans. Performance measures tied to these goals and strategies are outlined within the District Improvement Plan and evaluated annually to ensure progress and effectiveness. With a focus on strategic priorities, Windham aims to continually enhance its programs and services, ultimately benefiting its students, staff and the communities they serve.

MISSION

The mission of Windham School District is to guide, motivate and empower students through innovative educational pathways.

VISION

The vision of Windham School District is to be a leader in education by inspiring excellence and transforming lives.

Content current as of the 2024-2025 school year



STATUTORY GOALS

§19.003, GOALS OF THE DISTRICT Texas Education Code

1. Reduce recidivism;
2. Reduce the cost of confinement or imprisonment;
3. Increase the success of former [students] in obtaining and maintaining employment; and
4. Provide an incentive to [students] to behave in positive ways during confinement or imprisonment.

STATUTORY POWERS AND DUTIES

§19.002, In accordance with the Texas Education Code:

1. The district may establish and operate schools at the various facilities of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Section 19.002 ESTABLISHMENT,
2. Develop educational and vocational training programs specifically designed for persons eligible under Section 19.005: ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.
 - (a) Any person confined or imprisoned in the department who is not a high school graduate is eligible for programs or services under this chapter paid for with money from the foundation school fund. To the extent space is available, the district may also offer programs or services under this chapter paid for with money from the foundation school fund to persons confined or imprisoned in the department who are high school graduates.
 - (b) Eligibility under this chapter does not make a person eligible for a program or service under any other chapter.
3. Coordinate educational programs and services in the department with those provided by other state agencies, by political subdivisions, and by persons who provide programs and services under contract under §19.004: GOVERNANCE, LIMITATION ON POWERS, AND DUTIES.

1974

Windham employed 198 staff.

1990

Windham committed to the full-scale implementation of Computer-Aided Instruction.

1994

Regional offices established, with 45,000 students served across 51 campuses; staff expanded to 1,469.

Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 35, authorizing the creation of a school district within the Texas Department of Corrections. Dr. Lane Murray appointed as the first superintendent.

1969

Windham became the first education in corrections system to receive accreditation from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

1976

Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES) life skills program began as a pre-release program to better prepare individuals for reentry.

1993

STATUTORY BASIS

State

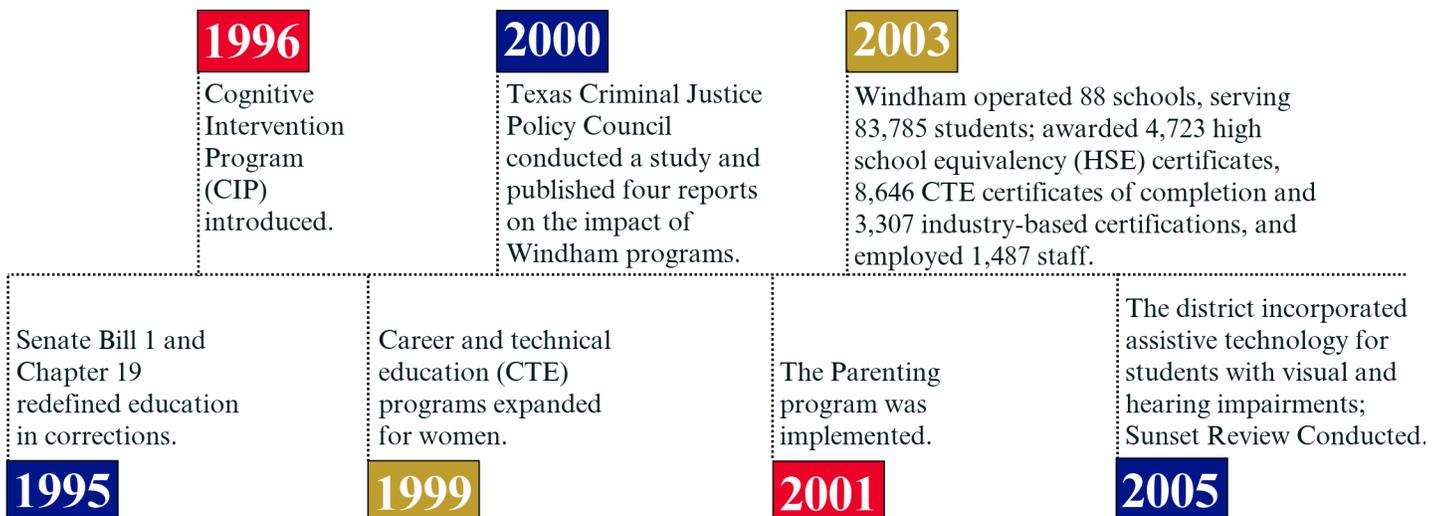
- Senate Bill 35 passed by the 61st Texas Legislature, effective March 1969 authorized the Texas Board of Corrections to establish a school district within the prison system.
- Senate Bill 1 of the 74th Texas Legislature, effective May of 1995 codified Windham in Chapter 19 of the Texas Education Code.

Federal

- Federal - P.L. 105-17 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Requires Windham to provide free, appropriate education to qualified students younger than age 22).
- Federal - Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (Prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in programs which receive federal funds).

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Windham serves men and women of varying ages that are incarcerated in state-operated adult prisons or state jails in Texas. Representing varied backgrounds in geography, age, gender, race and ethnicity, each student brings unique perspectives and needs to their educational journey. Each campus has a student advisor that is dedicated to helping students identify and build their educational foundations. Through assessments, including the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE®) and student interviews, student advisors discuss interests and employment history, which results in the development of career pathways. The Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) is customized to the student’s goals and educational requirements, offering recommendations for programs and classes based on a variety of factors including age, program availability, projected reentry date and educational service needs. Students also utilize the TABE® throughout the school year to track their academic progress and determine readiness to take the General Education Development (GED®) exam to earn their high school equivalency (HSE) certificate.

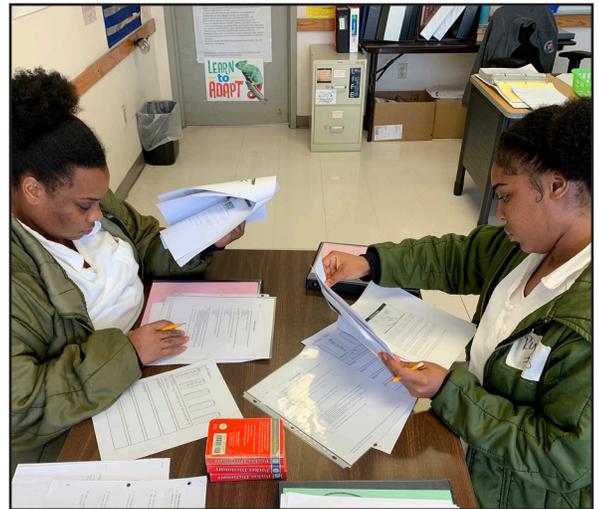


CAMPUSES SERVED

Windham provides services at 100 campuses serving men at 88 campuses and women at 12 campuses.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Windham provides different levels of competency-based instructional programs to address the individual needs of its diverse student population. Academic programs help students achieve an HSE certificate. Additionally, the district has two high school diploma (HSD) programs: the Matthew Gaines High School within the Ferguson campus and the Jovita González de Mireles High School within the Murray campus. Students in the high school program are able to earn dual credit through partnerships with postsecondary institutions, while working towards their HSD. Achieving an HSE or HSD opens doors to valuable opportunities, including enhanced employability, access to higher education pathways and the essential skills needed for a successful integration into their Texas communities. All coursework is aimed at demonstrating progress on academic achievement, with the ultimate goal being earning of an HSD or HSE certificate.



CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS

With over 40 CTE programs available, Windham offers a robust blend of hands-on training, in-depth classroom instruction and industry-based certifications. This comprehensive approach equips graduates with practical skills, boosts their employability and creates pathways to higher-earning careers. By gaining real-world experience and credentials that align with industry standards, students are better prepared to pursue meaningful careers and achieve long-term success.

2008

Served 82,449 students; awarded over 5,000 HSE certificates and 580 higher education degrees.

2012

Sunset Review conducted.

2015

Workforce team established, enhancing job placements; new CTE programs implemented.

2019

Introduced accountability system to track performance; began the Health and Wellness initiative; \$9.8 million funding increase approved.

Windham began covering industry-based certification fees, increasing student certifications by 43%.

2010

Educational services provided across 86 campuses.

2013

Expanded women's trade programs; fully transitioned to computer-based General Educational Development (GED®) testing to earn HSE certificates.

2018

LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS

Windham’s Life Skills programs play a vital role in helping students develop productive thought patterns and build essential interpersonal skills for lifelong success. By fostering healthier thinking, students learn to make responsible choices, build positive relationships and improve job retention. The programs also promote self-worth and boosts self-esteem, empowering students to become contributing family members, responsible citizens and valued employees. The Life Skills program includes three courses designed to support these efforts: Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success (CHANGES), Cognitive Intervention Program (CIP) and Parenting.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT) AND APPRENTICESHIP

Windham’s OJT and Apprenticeship programs offer students practical, hands-on learning aligned with industry standards. Through OJT, students gain valuable work experience and develop essential job skills in supervised settings, allowing them to directly apply classroom knowledge. The Apprenticeship program provides structured training and mentorship from experienced professionals, helping students master technical and soft skills for in-demand careers. Upon completion of Apprenticeship programs, students are awarded a nationally recognized Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship through the United States Department of Labor.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) enables all eligible students with disabilities to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment suitable to their needs (34 C.F.R. Part 300; 19 T.A.C. Chapters 75, 89). Following IDEA guidelines, Windham employs a strategic process to identify and support students within the district who qualify for special education services.

TITLE I

Windham provides essential supplemental curriculum and transitional support to students who are 22 years of age or younger, who are working towards earning an HSD or HSE certificate. These services focus on strengthening academic, workforce and life skills, boosting confidence and promoting engagement in learning, ensuring students receive the resources they need to succeed. Through targeted instruction and guidance, Title I services aim to bridge educational gaps, support personal growth and prepare students for successful futures, both in further education and in the workforce.

2021

Windham implemented the Family Literacy program pilot.

2023

Funding approved for 10% teacher salary increase; College and Career Readiness administrator added; the Wynne campus received the first Correctional Education Association accreditation; 2030 Plan launched; first digital publication of The ECHO; the Jovita González de Mireles High School transferred to the Murray campus.

Launched the Finding Understanding Through Using Resources in Education (F.U.T.U.R.E.) program for students in restrictive housing; established the Matthew Gaines High School within the Ferguson campus for men to earn their high school diploma (HSD).

2020

Established Jovita González de Mireles High School within the Woodman campus for women to earn their HSD; augmented/virtual reality pilot launched.

2022

Sunset Review conducted; Tuition reimbursement program launched; Texas Education Agency approved certification practicum for Educator Preparation Program candidates on Windham campuses.

2024

OVERVIEW OF THE DISTRICT

Texas Board of Criminal Justice – Windham Board of Trustees

The Windham Board of Trustees is composed of nine dedicated, non-salaried members appointed by the Governor to serve staggered six-year terms. This Board plays a crucial role in providing general oversight for the district, including the hiring and evaluation of Windham’s superintendent. Additionally, the Board is responsible for establishing policies and rules that guide the district’s operations and ensure its mission is effectively carried out.

Updated March 16, 2026



Eric J.R. Nichols
Chairman
Term Expires 2/2027



Faith Johnson
Vice-Chair
Term Expires 2/2025



Rodney Burrow, M.D.
Secretary
Term Expires 2/2027



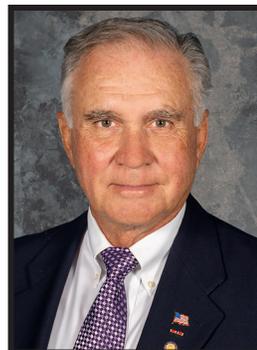
Sichan Siv
Member
Term Expires 2/2025



Tom Fordyce
Member
Term Expires 2/2027



Nate Sprinkle
Member
Term Expires 2/2029



Bill Welch
Member
Term Expires 2/2029

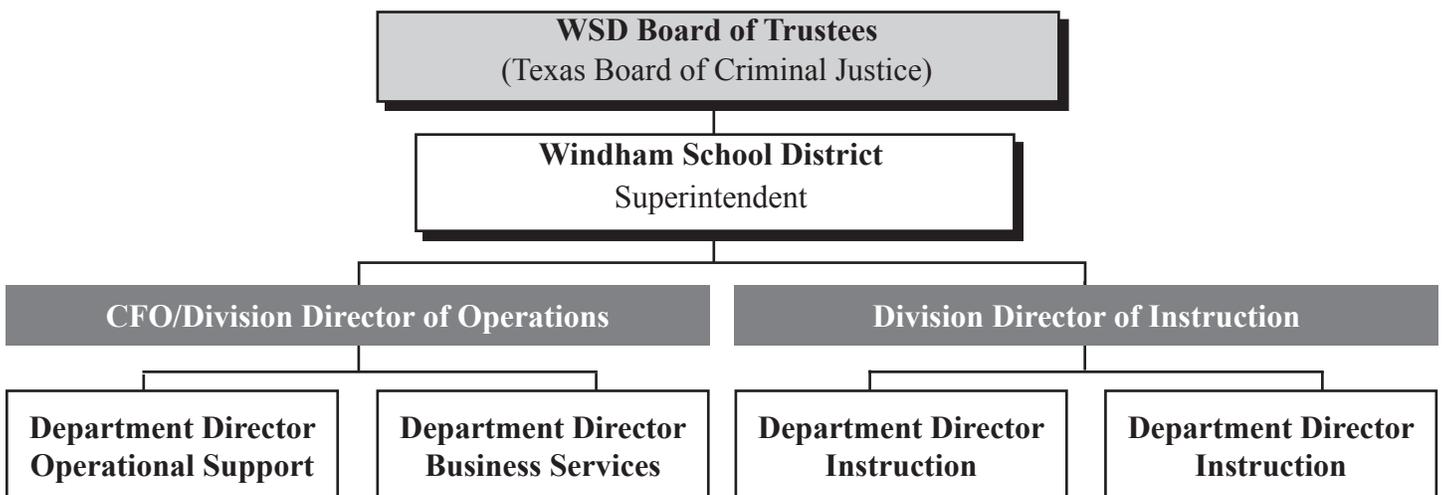


Sydney Zuiker
Member
Term Expires 2/2029



Martin Garza Jr.
Member
Term Expires 2/2031

Windham School District Organizational Structure



OVERVIEW OF THE DISTRICT



Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S.

Superintendent

The Superintendent, as the chief executive officer of the district, reports directly to the Windham Board of Trustees. The Superintendent's responsibilities include the implementation of comprehensive educational programs for individuals incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and implementation of appropriate measures to evaluate the effectiveness of Windham programs. The Superintendent has the authority to administer, organize, manage and supervise the daily operations of Windham. This includes, but is not limited to; authority to structure the organization of the district to improve operations; power to prescribe policies, procedures and regulations; delegation of authority to staff as appropriate; implementation of personnel policies; oversight of the fiscal management of the district; litigation settlement authority up to the prescribed amount; and employment, discharge and non-renewal or termination of employees. The Office of the Superintendent includes the general counsel, communications administrator, division director of operations and division director of instruction.



Robert O'Banion

Division Director of Operations

The Division of Operations supports campus planning, student attendance accounting, operational reviews, district and student achievement reporting, program evaluation and financial management. Additionally, Windham operates the Radio and TV shop within TDCJ. The Division of Operations oversees several departments, including Business Services, Human Resources, Information Technology and Operational Support.



Kevin Sawnick

Division Director of Instruction

The Division of Instruction oversees the district's educational programming, as well as numerous departments instrumental to student and district success: Assessment, Advisement and Records; Apprenticeship and OJT; CTE; College and Career Readiness; Library Services; Professional Development; and Special Education and Federal Programs. The Division of Instruction also supports all campus staff, including regional and campus principals.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1 Windham will provide high-quality instruction.

Objective 1.1. Support learning in all programs.

Strategy 1.1.1. Utilize professional learning communities for specific content areas.

Strategy 1.1.2. Identify and employ supplemental materials and activities to enrich instruction.

Strategy 1.1.3. Use key performance indicators and metrics to support student growth.

Objective 1.2. Provide purposeful professional development that supports educators in meeting the needs of students.

Strategy 1.2.1. Use multiple platforms to address the needs of various educator learning styles.

Strategy 1.2.2. Develop and utilize content-specific focus groups.

Goal 2 Windham will recruit, develop and retain highly qualified teachers and staff.

Objective 2.1. Enhance recruitment strategies to increase staffing to a 90% fill rate.

Strategy 2.1.1. Identify, communicate and implement innovative recruitment strategies.

Strategy 2.1.2. Improve the efficiency of the hiring process through technology and streamlined communication.

Strategy 2.1.3. Message competitive compensation packages.

Strategy 2.1.4. Implement a sustainable mentoring program that supports opportunities for growth and enrichment.

Goal 3 Windham will improve and promote effective communication.

Objective 3.1. Improve and promote effective communication with students.

Strategy 3.1.1. Use verbal, printed and electronic communications with person-centered language.

Strategy 3.1.2. Increase collaboration with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to provide information and resources to students.

Objective 3.2. Improve and promote internal communication.

Strategy 3.2.1. Identify and employ more effective verbal, printed and electronic methods to connect with Windham employees and improve the flow of communication between campus, regional and central office staff.

Objective 3.3. Improve and promote communication with external stakeholders, including district alumni.

Strategy 3.3.1. Use verbal, printed and electronic communications with person-centered language.

Strategy 3.3.2. Promote awareness of Windham programs among employers, legislators, governmental entities and community stakeholders.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Goal 4 Windham will integrate and enhance technology.

Objective 4.1. Improve bandwidth and connectivity for staff.

Strategy 4.1.1. Identify and secure additional funding to achieve appropriate connectivity speeds and access in classrooms for educators.

Objective 4.2. Ensure students' access to up-to-date knowledge and skills through the integration of technology.

Strategy 4.2.1. Monitor and update policies and guidelines for the use of technology for staff and students.

Strategy 4.2.2. Increase classroom technology, including access to approved web-based resources and secure networked technology.

Objective 4.3. Provide professional development in technology utilization.

Strategy 4.3.1. Provide ongoing support for staff to integrate secure technology into instruction.

Strategy 4.3.2. Expand the use of technology in professional development.

Goal 5 Windham will facilitate placement of graduates in apprenticeship, employment or postsecondary education programs.

Objective 5.1. Maximize pre-reentry employment opportunities.

Strategy 5.1.1. Implement career pathway plans for students.

Strategy 5.1.2. Enhance coordination of apprenticeship placement within TDCJ.

Strategy 5.1.3. Incorporate employability skills within all program areas.

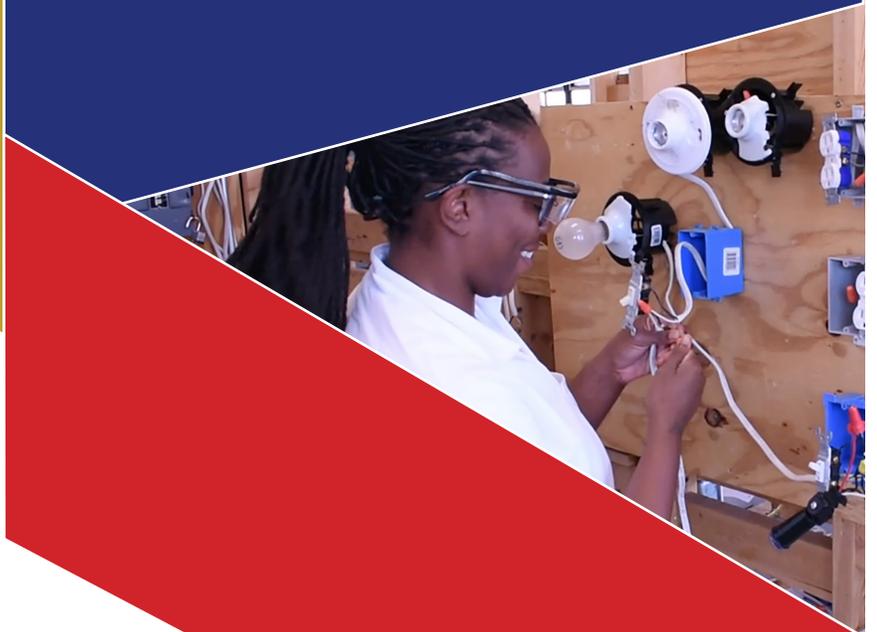
Strategy 5.1.4. Facilitate obtainment of occupational licenses for eligible students in regulated trades.

Objective 5.2. Provide students with post-reentry resources and support in securing gainful employment.

Strategy 5.2.1. Provide career and technical education programs with stackable credentials and pathways to postsecondary education at each campus.

Strategy 5.2.2. Collaborate with TDCJ to connect students and graduates with employers.

Strategy 5.2.3. Expand participation in skills demonstrations and career expos.



Windham School District
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