

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

Meeting No. 354

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, June 19, 2026, at the Texas Prison Museum in Huntsville, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Eric J.R. Nichols, Chair
General Bill Welch, Vice-Chair
Sydney Zuiker, Secretary
Honorable Faith Johnson
Ambassador Sichan Siv
Pastor Nate Sprinkle
Tom Fordyce
Martin Garza, Jr.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dr. Rodney Burrow

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent
Robert O'Banion
Kevin Sawnick
Erik Brown
Danielle Nicholes

CONVENED

Chairman Eric J.R. Nichols convened the meeting of the 354th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, June 19, 2026, at 12:08 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. 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 April 16, 2026 meeting, school district permits and personal property donations.

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

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Creating Kind, Collaborative Communities

Chairman Nichols presented that he often hears individuals speak about how basic human kindness is at times in short supply. He noted that from his perspective, he can understand that sentiment and he pointed out some of the conflicts. The Chairman said it is refreshing to take a moment to recognize and celebrate the ways in which the Windham School District is committed to creating environments where shared responsibility between district staff and members of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) population for creating positive human relationships and interactions.

The Chairman said these efforts began with Kristi Krings, Chief Executive Officer of Rachel's Challenge, presenting at Windham's Statewide Professional Development in July 2025 has grown into a meaningful process to strengthen campus culture through connection and compassion.

Chairman Nichols said Rachel's Challenge is a nonprofit organization established in the aftermath of the Columbine High School tragedy in honor of Rachel Scott—the first victim—and all those who lost their lives that day. In the wake of her passing, Rachel's family uncovered her remarkable legacy of kindness, compassion and intentional outreach to others. He said that her family soon realized that her story could serve as a powerful catalyst for changing how individuals treat one another and how they view themselves.

The Chairman presented that Rachel's Challenge envisions schools filled with hope, environments free from harassment, violence and self-harm, where teachers are empowered to teach and students are inspired to learn. Chairman Nichols noted the core characterization of the organization's mission, achieved through student wellness programs.

Chairman Nichols stated following the overwhelmingly positive feedback from district staff who attended her powerful breakout session at the Statewide Professional Development, Windham leadership met with Ms. Krings and the Rachel's Challenge team to explore opportunities for implementation within the district. He noted that the Dominguez campus was selected as a pilot site, where several initiatives have since been launched with strong participation from both students and staff.

The Chairman said Ms. Krings and John Harrell, Windham's 2026 Volunteer of the Year and Rachel's Challenge Board member, spent three days in classrooms at the Dominguez campus

providing training to educators and students. He presented that as a result, 30% of the student population expressed interest in leading efforts to extend kindness and compassion outside of the classroom through the Friends of Rachel (FOR) Club.

Chairman Nichols presented that at Dominguez, the FOR Club functions similarly to what is recognized in the community as the big brother/big sister-style mentorship model, supporting new students and residents as they transition into the Dominguez campus. He explained that club members actively promote positivity throughout the campus, with examples that include creating monthly messages of encouragement through chalk art in common areas and participating in structured team building activities during meetings.

The Chairman said the campus has also implemented a student and staff recognition board supported by Windham's Positive Behavior Recognition form. He explained that this initiative highlights individuals who demonstrate exemplary behaviors such as collaboration, leadership, teamwork and problem-solving. Both students and staff may be recognized, and FOR Club members help identify honorees during their meetings, reinforcing a culture of appreciation and encouragement.

Chairman Nichols presented that one of the most impactful initiatives has been the club's donation box. He said residents purchase items such as hygiene products from their unit commissary and contribute them to a shared donation box. Club members maintain an inventory log and establish criteria for distribution, supporting that items are provided to individuals who have expressed a need.

The Chairman said looking ahead, additional initiatives are being explored, including a potential cornhole tournament sponsored by the FOR Club. He noted that this event would pair officers and residents as teammates, promoting positive team building in a professional yet engaging environment.

Chairman Nichols presented that participation and enthusiasm for these efforts have steadily grown across the Dominguez campus. He said not only have many residents expressed a strong desire to join the FOR Club, but campus staff and TDCJ personnel, including correctional officers, have also shown interest in becoming involved.

The Chairman noted that plans are underway to expand Rachel's Challenge programming to additional campuses. He said district leadership continues to meet regularly with Ms. Krings and the Rachel's Challenge team to evaluate current efforts and plan for future initiatives. Chairman Nichols stated that the Board expresses its high appreciation for Windham's efforts to expand the positive impact of this program across its campuses and the broader student population.

Chairman Nichols asked Superintendent Hartman if she had any additional comments about the program. Superintendent Hartman said that when Ms. Krings and Mr. Harrell came to the Dominguez campus to deliver the aforementioned three-day training, herself and Robert O'Banion, Windham's Chief Financial Officer, stopped by the training to observe. She explained that she wasn't sure how students would react to the information provided to them through Rachel's Challenge and she said that their reactions were genuine with true interest conveyed.

The Superintendent presented that the district has recently requested more information from Ms.

Krings regarding expansion, with the next program location identified as the McConnell campus in the Beeville area. The Chairman said the Board looks forward to the continued rollout of the program.

This concluded the Chairman's report.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Initiatives, Celebrations and Process Improvements

Superintendent Kristina Hartman presented that for her report, she would be discussing recent student and staff activities, cross training opportunities, postsecondary developments and meaningful advancements across Windham School District. These activities reflect the continued commitment of the district to celebrate meaningful holidays and events through staff and student activities, collaborate and expand program access and availability.

The Superintendent recognized Juneteenth and the Chairman's recent campus visit in which he engaged with students participating in various activities. She explained Windham's monthly Student and Staff Activities themes. She noted that the district encourages participation across campuses through art, poetry, celebratory posters and meaningful classroom instruction. Ms. Hartman said students really enjoy highlighting Juneteenth, its historical significance and this important moment in the nation's story. She wished everyone a Happy Juneteenth to all present and those celebrating across Texas and the nation.

Superintendent Hartman moved forward by presenting on her recent visit to the Huntsville District Parole Office. During this visit, she said she observed the intake process for a new parole client and commended the parole officers for their dedication and efforts. She explained that the particular client she observed earned his Commercial Driver's License prior to incarceration and noted that they had a discussion regarding his upcoming required Department of Transportation physical and what he needed to do in order to fulfill that.

The Superintendent said she also participated in a meeting with a client preparing to transfer to another county, talking about some of his experiences and challenges presented to him. She noted that his parole officer offered great encouragement.

Superintendent Hartman presented that she accompanied staff to the Walker County Jail to meet with clients in custody and described those experiences. She said that her final stop during this observation was joining a home visit. The Superintendent thanked Division Director Monica DeValasco, Deputy Director Irvin Washington and their teams for organizing this meaningful visit and for their efforts.

The Superintendent noted several action items identified from this experience. She said some of the areas identified include providing documentation to verify educational levels, with student consent; serving as a resource for clients interested in postsecondary education and piloting the use of the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE®) for clients who report needing updated scores.

Next, Superintendent Hartman reported that recently, Windham participated alongside TDCJ

colleagues, Central Texas College and Texas Woman's University (TWU) in a joint graduation at the O'Daniel campus. She noted that earlier in the week, the district joined a legislative tour of campuses in the Gatesville area, where one of the student ambassadors was also a graduate of TWU. The Superintendent said that the representatives from the Senator's office shared that the Senator was also a graduate of TWU, defining the commonalities within the different settings.

The Superintendent presented that during the graduation, Rehabilitation and Reentry Division Director April Zamora got on stage and signed the approval letter for a master's degree program through the University of Houston — Clear Lake at the O'Daniel campus.

Finally, Superintendent Hartman presented updates regarding professional development opportunities. Ms. Hartman said in response to direct feedback from campus principals, the district has launched a series of Principals' Academies, organized by Leadership and Development Education Specialist Dr. Ashley McKelvey. She said this year, there were two academies with the focus on creating a collaborative space for newer campus leaders to receive targeted support, ask questions and develop in key areas.

Ms. Hartman said that Windham recently hosted its first Math Academy in response to one of the most frequently identified areas of need among academic teachers. Educators across the district have expressed a desire for both deeper content knowledge and effective strategies to engage and motivate students in math. She thanked the Academic and Instructional Technology team, led by Administrator Paul Gathright for putting together the great agenda for this professional development.

The Superintendent presented that the Student Advisors' Conference, held in Waco and themed *Connecting, Guiding and Inspiring: the Advisor Advantage*, brought together student advisors from across the district. She said the conference, led by Administrator Andrea Krueger, provided important updates on career pathway assessments and student guidance strategies. Superintendent Hartman said attendees were also introduced to the Workbay application, which will be used to identify student interests and strengths to create training and career paths. She explained how student advisors will have access to the application.

Superintendent Hartman noted the continued efforts of the district, its staff and partners to continue expanding similar initiatives to those reported.

This concluded her report and she paused for questions.

Chairman Nichols commented on modernization related to his recent visit to the Wynne campus. He said that the campus was in the process of receiving their wireless access. The Chairman explained his experience with a virtual reality headset during one of his shared activities with the staff and students, where the headset wasn't receiving proper connectivity to function. He gave thanks to the legislature for funding provided for the district's connectivity initiative in the way that it impacts essential programs. The Chairman also thanked the efforts of TDCJ's Information Technology team.

Vice-Chair Bill Welch asked the Superintendent about delays with the learning management system and if this affects the district in any way. She said she is not aware of the learning

management system discussed by TDCJ and the district plans on connecting with the agency on that topic.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING CONTRACTS OVER \$500,000

Robert O'Banion, Chief Financial Officer, presented that he was requesting approval for two purchases over \$500,000. He said the first was for student instructional software and the district recommended this purchase to the Aztec Software company. The contract total is \$6,984,169.53 and he said will renew licensing at 97 campuses across the district to support student academic achievement. Mr. O'Banion noted that the contract also includes 10 license renewals at Title I sites that support students who are under the age 21. He said this purchase was being made through the Education Service Center Region 6 Purchasing Cooperative in Huntsville, Texas. He said consistent with all purchasing cooperatives, the contract is bid and negotiated through the Education Service Center without any fees to the Windham School District.

Mr. O'Banion presented that this license agreement is for a total of five years beginning in September 2026 and ending August 2031. He noted the method of delivery to students transitions from offline to online to align with the district's connectivity plan. He said this multi-year agreement will secure pricing and ensure the continuity of instruction for five years. He explained this software provides diagnostic, prescriptive, computer-based instruction to support and enhance the academic and Title I programs.

Mr. O'Banion presented that the second purchase was for software licensing for student testing. He noted that the district recommended this purchase to Data Recognition Corporation (DRC). He said this contract total was \$744,000 for a license subscription to use DRC online and offline Tests of Adult Basic Education® to assess educational functioning levels of Windham students. He explained the assessment is approved by the United States Department of Education National Reporting System for Adult Education and follows the Texas Workforce Commission Adult Education and Literacy Testing Guidelines. He said the agreement is for a total of three years, beginning in September 2026 and ending August 2029.

Mr. O'Banion said funding for both of the purchases would be included in the recommended Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

Mr. O'Banion paused for questions.

Pastor Nate Sprinkle asked for clarification on budget and purchasing timelines for the first purchase outlined. Mr. O'Banion explained that the purchases would be included in each year's recommended budget and the district will be invoiced on a yearly basis for payment over the contracted number of years for the purchase. Mr. O'Banion also noted the cost efficiently related to selecting the contract timeline.

Pastor Sprinkle also asked for clarification regarding the learning system's online versus offline models. Mr. O'Banion explained that this is an offline, computer-based model for instruction. He

said now, the district will be able to transition to the online, computer-based model and he explained the benefits of that transition.

Chairman Nichols asked the Board for a motion.

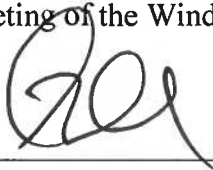
Vice-Chair Welch moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the contracts over \$500,000 as presented.

Pastor Nate Sprinkle seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to vote.

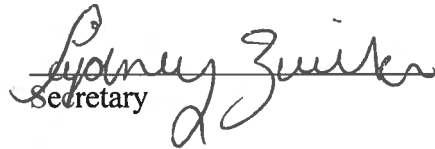
Chairman Nichols thanked everyone for attending the meeting and announced the next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be on August 27-28, 2026 in Bryan, Texas.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman Nichols adjourned the 354th meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 12:43 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.

