

**Windham School District
Board of Trustees
254th Meeting**



Minutes

**October 7, 2009
Austin, Texas**

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Omni Austin Hotel Southpark – Omni D, E, F
4140 Governor’s Row
Austin, Texas 78744**

**October 7, 2009
1:15 – 2:15 PM**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Convene Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board)

I. Regular Session

A. Recognitions

1. Tribute to Dr. Lane Murray
2. WSD Outstanding Teacher Honorees
3. Employee Service Awards

B. Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding Consent Items

1. Minutes of the August 20, 2009, WSD Board Meeting
2. Personal Property Donations
3. Approval of Excused Absences

C. Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding Annual Review of WSD Board Policy, WBP-11.12, “Windham School District Investment Policy” and Resolution Adopting the Investment Policy

D. Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding the Elimination of the Division of Continuing Education and the Creation of the Division of Information Technology

E. Superintendent’s Report – Transition of Project Re-Integration of Offenders (Project RIO) to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)

F. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board

Adjourn WSD Board

The WSD Board may discuss and/or take action on any of the items posted on this meeting agenda. The WSD Board may also convene into Executive Session on any of these matters when attorney-client privilege is warranted.

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

254th MEETING

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Wednesday, October 7, 2009, at the Omni Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Eric Gambrell
Pastor C. L. Jackson
Janice Harris Lord
J. David Nelson
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Oliver Bell, Chairman
Terrell McCombs

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent
Linda Goerdel
Kevin Ainsworth
Toni Beckett
Beryl Bishop
David Chagoya
Bob Evans
Greg Gathright
Lamar Iverson
Joe Jones
Bambi Kiser
Don Lawrence
Luann Pickett
Jane Spivey
Mike Vickers

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL
JUSTICE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brad Livingston
Bryan Collier
Melinda Bozarth
Frankie Reescano

CONVENED

Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman, called the meeting of the Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Wednesday, October 7, 2009, at 1:20 p.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the Open Meetings Act. A quorum was present and the 254th meeting of the board was declared open. During the regular session, the board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register

Mr. Mechler recognized Kyle Mitchell of the Governor's Office and Susan Dow from the Legislative Budget Board as special guests in attendance and thanked them for their continued support.

Mr. Mechler reported the board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on topics posted on the meeting agenda, as well as public comment on issues within its jurisdiction as provided in Board Rule 300.1. Persons interested in providing presentations at the meeting were required to complete a registration card and submit it at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting's posted start time. As no cards were received prior to the required deadline, the board would not hear public presentations on posted agenda topics.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Mechler called the board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda which consisted of the minutes of the August 20, 2009, meeting, personal property donations and approval of excused absences.

Mr. Mechler asked if there were any comments, objections or amendments to the Consent Items. Noting there were none, he stated the Consent Items were approved as submitted.

TRIBUTE TO DR. LANE MURRAY

Debbie Roberts, WSD Superintendent, stated that it was an honor for her to participate in the tribute to Dr. Lane Murray because she was one of the many whose life was influenced by her. Ms. Roberts then explained the positive role model Dr. Murray was in the early 1970s to generations of women entering the criminal justice field. In 1973, Dr. Murray was the only female administrator with responsibility for a systemwide program in the Texas Department of Corrections; there were not even female wardens at the time. Dr. Murray became the proof that a woman could be successful in the criminal justice field. She persevered and she made the WSD what it is today. A short video interview with Dr. Murray was shown.

Mr. Mechler stated that in August, the State of Texas lost a true icon in the field of Education. Dr. Lane Murray was an incredibly remarkable woman. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is truly indebted to her and the board is honored to recognize her accomplishments, leadership, and professional endeavors. Mr. Mechler provided a brief

biography of Dr. Murray, listing more of her academic and professional accomplishments.

Mr. Mechler noted her leadership, encouragement, and professionalism, made Dr. Murray an inspiration, role model, and mentor to employees both within WSD and across the state.

Upon her retirement in 1993, Dr. Murray left behind a model correctional education program that has endured the test of time. It remains a major rehabilitation program in the TDCJ, and continues to be highly respected throughout the nation.

Mr. Mechler introduced Dr. Murray's children: Mark Murray, Stone Murray and Dr. Joyce Boatright. He expressed his deepest sympathy in their loss. Dr. Murray touched the lives of so many and left an indelible mark on Texas history. She will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

Mark Murray stated that he and his sister and brother would like to thank the board, Superintendent Debbie Roberts, and the entire faculty of the WSD. Their mother, after her retirement, continued to think of everyone associated with WSD as her extended family and he was sure that she would be "pardonably proud" of the unique honor that was bestowed on her. She would also be very proud of the finalists of the excellence in teaching award as "shining examples of what she wanted to create and sustain."

Mr. Mechler and Ms. Roberts presented each of Dr. Murray's children with a framed resolution. In addition to the resolution, in honor of her devotion to education, the WSD renamed its teacher of the year award the Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching Award.

WSD OUTSTANDING TEACHER HONOREES

Ms. Roberts stated that she was pleased to honor the WSD Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching Winner and Finalists. She welcomed each honoree and their family members and friends, along with all of the staff in attendance.

These remarkable teachers have been honored through WSD's Fourth Teacher of the Year initiative. In 2008, more than 60 excellent teachers were nominated by their peers at the units for the award, and 12 regional semi-finalists were selected through a challenging screening process. Windham Regional Committees observed the 12 teachers in their classes, and then selected four finalists. The WSD Excellence in Teaching Committee visited each finalist in their classroom over the summer, observed them teach a lesson to their students, and interviewed them about their roles as correctional educators.

Ms. Roberts noted these finalists demonstrated outstanding professional qualities, expertise, and skills in their teaching observations and interviews. They are role models for positive life changes to their students. They personify the exceptional qualities of WSD teachers found in every part of Texas.

The finalists are featured in a special booklet, which was presented to the board members, as well as in a framed poster, which was given to Mr. Mechler.

Ms. Roberts presented Clem Rocha the Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching Award. He works with offenders at the Dominguez State Jail in San Antonio and is a Career and Technical Education instructor who teaches the Technical Introduction to Computer-Aided Drafting. He came to WSD from the industry profession and is a veteran WSD educator of 14 years.

The other finalists and their nominating units were:

- Rosie Shepherd of the Huntsville Unit. Ms. Shepherd teaches Special Education and Computer Assisted (Academic) Instruction classes.
- Terry Ferguson of the Havins Unit. Mr. Ferguson teaches CHANGES and Literacy classes.
- Opal Rabalais of the Plane State Jail. Ms. Rabalais is a literacy instructor for offenders who are working toward GEDs.

Ms. Roberts presented them all with certificates and stated that the district was very proud of these teachers and their accomplishments, as well as the hundreds of dedicated educators they represent in WSD classrooms.

EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

Mr. Mechler stated that the board annually recognizes WSD employees who have dedicated 20, 25 and 30 plus years of service to the State of Texas. These individuals represent the strong commitment of the district staff system-wide. He along with the rest of the board members and Ms. Roberts expressed their deepest gratitude for the continued service of these employees. During the 2008-2009 school year, 23 Windham employees attained 20 years of service, 10 employees attained 25 years of service and two employees attained 30 years of service. As a symbol of appreciation, these individuals will receive a board certificate along with a personal letter of gratitude.

(Attachment A – Employee Names).

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ANNUAL REVIEW OF WSD BOARD POLICY, WBP-11.12, “WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT INVESTMENT POLICY” AND RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE INVESTMENT POLICY

Linda Goerdel, WSD Chief Financial Officer, reported, in accordance with Chapter 2256 of the Texas Government Code, Public Funds Investment Act and in conjunction with the Board’s

responsibilities as the Windham School District Board of Trustees, WBP-11.12, Windham School District Investment Policy, was presented for annual review. The only changes recommended to the policy were minor formatting changes and the date of the policy. Board approval was requested.

Eric Gambrell made a motion to approve the revisions to WBP-11.12 “Windham School District Investment Policy” and the Resolution Adopting the Investment Policy as presented.

Leopoldo Vasquez seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

(Attachment B – WBP-11.12. Signed copy of policy is available upon the submission of a written request.)

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE
ELIMINATION OF THE DIVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AND THE
CREATION OF THE DIVISION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Ms. Roberts stated that during the last TDCJ board meeting, the board approved a request by Brad Livingston, TDCJ Executive Director, to create a new TDCJ division with responsibility for reentry initiatives, including oversight of the Project RIO program. Oversight for Project RIO had previously been the responsibility of the WSD’s Division of Continuing Education. The transfer of these responsibilities created an opportunity for WSD to make some changes in organizational structure that she feels will make WSD more effective. Ms. Roberts recommended the elimination of the Division of Continuing Education and the creation of the Information Technology Division. The Division of Operational Support would assume responsibility for those functions previously performed by the Division of Continuing Education, which includes college, recreation and radio and TV, but would no longer oversee the information technology function.

This recommendation does not change the number of WSD divisions nor does it have an impact on the budget.

Mr. Vasquez moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the recommendation to eliminate the Division of Continuing Education and approve the creation of the Division of Information Technology within the Windham School District as presented.

Mr. Gambrell seconded the motion which passed unanimously when called to a vote.

(Attachment C – WSD Organizational Charts)

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Ms. Roberts informed the board that over the last several weeks WSD staff has been meeting with representatives from the TDCJ Reentry and Integration Division to plan for the transfer of oversight of the Project RIO program from WSD to TDCJ. She has personally met with Dee Wilson, Reentry and Integration Division (RID) Director, and Gerald Garrett, RID Deputy Director, to discuss transition issues. She added that WSD is excited about the mission of this new division and the opportunities that it offers for the continued growth of the Project RIO program. The desire is to make the transition as smooth as possible for staff and for the offenders that they serve. WSD understands that offender success is largely dependent on successful reentry. WSD looks forward to continuing this positive working relationship beyond the initial transition stage.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD

Chairman Oliver Bell was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, there was no report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

As noted earlier, no cards were received; therefore, no public comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Mechler adjourned the 254th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees at 1:52 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, TDCJ Executive Services.