

Windham School District
Board of Trustees
266th Meeting



Minutes

October 14, 2011
Austin, Texas

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Doubletree Hotel – Phoenix South
6505 North IH-35
Austin, Texas 78752**

**October 14, 2011
2:00 – 2:30 PM**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call to Order

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

I. Regular Session

A. Recognitions

1. WSD Outstanding Teacher Honorees
2. Employee Service Awards

B. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Consent Items

1. Minutes of the August 18, 2011, WSD Board Meeting
2. Personal Property Donations
3. Excused Absences

C. Superintendent's Report

D. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board

Adjourn

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**

266th MEETING

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, October 14, 2011, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Oliver Bell, Chairman
Tom Mechler, Vice Chairman
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Judge Larry Gist
Eric Gambrell
Janice Harris Lord
Terrell McCombs
J. David Nelson
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent
Kevin Ainsworth
Allen Bourque
Denise Bushart
Veronica Casanova
Jim Gardner
Linda Goerdel
Marjie Haynes
Connie Huddleston
Bambi Kiser
Michael Mondville
Sandra Nash
Susan Norris
Luann Pickett
Mike Vickers

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

Bryan Collier
Melinda Bozarth

CONVENED

Oliver Bell, Chairman, called the meeting of the 266th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, October 14, 2011, at 2:23 p.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the *Open Meetings Act*. During the regular session, the board conducted business from the agenda posted in the Texas Register. A quorum was present and the meeting of the board was declared open.

Chairman Bell recognized Judge Dale Spurgin, of Jones County, John Newton from the Legislative Budget Board, and Chloe Lieberknecht and her team from the Sunset Advisory Commission.

The chairman reported the Windham School District Board of Trustees was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on posted agenda topics 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 ten minutes prior to the meeting's posted start time. For this meeting, no speaker registration cards were received by the board staff prior to the required deadline. Therefore, no public presentations would be heard on posted agenda topics.

RECOGNITIONS

Debbie Roberts, WSD Superintendent, stated that it was a pleasure to honor Windham School District's Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching winner and finalists. She noted there is nothing easy about teaching behind prison walls and these teachers have done an outstanding job of changing lives through education. She welcomed each honoree and their family members and friends, along with all of the WSD and TDCJ staff in attendance to celebrate these outstanding teachers. She asked the four honorees to stand.

Ms. Roberts commented this award is Windham's top honor for outstanding correctional educators and the official introductions would be made by the Excellence in Teaching Committee later in the presentation.

This is the fifth time for the WSD Excellence in Teaching initiative to take place. Last year, 79 excellent teachers were nominated by their peers at the units for this award, and 12 regional semi-finalists were selected through a challenging screening process. Windham Regional Committees observed the 12 semi-finalists teaching their classes and then selected the four top finalists that are to be honored at this Board meeting.

The WSD Excellence in Teaching Committee then visited each of these finalists in their classrooms, observing them teach a lesson to their students and interviewing them about their roles as correctional educators.

The Excellence in Teaching Committee makes the final selection. The committee consists of Bambi Kiser, Public Information Officer; Kevin Ainsworth, South Texas Regional Administrator; Luann Pickett, Estelle Unit Principal; and Susan Norris, Counselor Trainer. The committee members introduced the finalists.

Ms. Kiser began the official introductions, noting that these teachers demonstrated outstanding professional qualities, expertise and skills. They personify the exceptional qualities of WSD teachers found in every part of Texas. The finalists were:

- Ms. Dolores Able, Gulf Coast Regional Finalist, who teaches basic writing and speaking skills to ESL students at the Terrell Unit.
- Ms. Cathy Farris, North Texas Regional Finalist, who teaches Literacy I classes at the Estelle Unit.
- Pam Gibson, West Texas Regional Finalist, who teaches Literacy II and III at the Ware Unit.

Ms. Kiser introduced the 2011 Lane Murray Excellence in Teacher Award winner Sara Maxwell. Ms. Maxwell was the South Texas Regional Finalist; she teaches Personal and Family Development at the Crain Unit.

Chairman Bell presented each finalist with a certificate. Applause and photos followed.

Ms. Roberts thanked the committee and stated the district is very proud of these teachers and their accomplishments. She said they represent hundreds of dedicated educators in Windham classrooms. She asked everyone to join her in expressing congratulations and appreciation to the Excellence in Teaching honorees.

Chairman Bell congratulated the winner and finalists. He stated that their nomination by their peers and their selection through the rigorous screening process says a lot about their devotion to teaching. He has been to numerous Windham events and visited classes in progress, and noted there is no way a person would not be moved when attending a graduation ceremony. He thanked the teachers for the service that they do for Windham, TDCJ, and the state of Texas.

EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

Chairman Bell commented 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 systemwide. He, along with the rest of the board members and Ms. Roberts, expressed deep gratitude for the continued service of these employees. During the 2010-2011 school year, 11 Windham employees attained 20 years of service, two employees attained 25 years of service, two employees attained 30 years of service, and two employees attained 35 years of service. The names of these employees will be submitted for inclusion in the official minutes of this board meeting. The Board of Trustees congratulated each of these employees and thanked them for their unwavering loyalty and dedication to the citizens of Texas. 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 CONSENT ITEMS

Chairman Bell called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda which consisted of the minutes of the August 18, 2011, meeting, personal property donations, and excused absences.

Chairman Bell 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.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Roberts informed the Board that Windham's participation in the Sunset Advisory Commission Review has begun. The District has submitted the Windham Self-Evaluation Report. The last two days were spent meeting the Sunset staff and giving them an overview of what Windham does. Windham is happy to participate in the review and understands, as educators, there is always room for improvement. She said WSD is always looking for ways to

enhance services. The district tries to focus on what is best for the students and ultimately the state of Texas. In order to do that, the district must continue to make improvements. WSD is looking forward to this process and hopes to find ways for Windham to become more effective and efficient. Ms. Roberts concluded by stating that the final report is due in April.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN

History of Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching Award

At the beginning of this meeting, the 2010-2011 outstanding WSD teachers were honored and the Lane Murray Excellence in Teaching Award was presented to Sara Maxwell. As this award emphasizes excellence in teaching, Chairman Bell shared a few brief comments regarding its history with respect to it being named for Dr. Lane Murray.

Dr. Murray began her teaching experience in 1942, after earning her doctorate from the University of Houston. In 1960, she became the first woman to hold a full-time faculty position at Texas A&M University's College of Education.

In 1969, state funding was provided to operate schools within the prison system, and Dr. George Beto, the TDC director at that time, hired Dr. Murray to serve as the school's first superintendent. She held the position for more than 24 years. At that time, Dr. Murray was the only female administrator in the agency. She was also the only female school superintendent in the state of Texas.

Working in coordination with TEA, Dr. Murray developed a unique school program suitable for delivering educational services to high school dropouts and to those that suffered low or no literacy skills within Texas prisons. Dr. Murray implemented many requirements that exceeded TEA requirements. This included a teaching staff of trained and certified professionals and a competency-based curriculum for adults that included appropriate job training. Her focus for the district was on program results, organization, innovation, and comprehensiveness.

Her pioneering leadership and professionalism lead to Dr. Murray being named to the National Advisory Committee on Adult Education by President Gerald Ford. She was also honored as the 1984 recipient of the American Correctional Association's E.R. Cass Correctional Achievement Award. In addition, Dr. Murray was twice elected as the national president of the Correctional Education Association. She was selected as one of the Outstanding Women in Texas, and she was acknowledged as a Texas legend when inducted into the 1988 Texas Women's Hall of Fame.

Dr. Murray believed in excellence, she believed in educators making a difference, and she believed in changing the lives of offenders. In presenting and honoring the WSD top teachers each year, we instill Dr. Murray's legacy of excellence and achievement. We encourage WSD teachers to do their best and to make a difference by providing offenders with a chance to change their lives and have hope for a future.

Chairman's Fitness Challenge

The FY 2012 Chairman's Fitness Challenge for TDCJ and WSD employees will kick off soon. This year's challenges will have an Olympic flair, with the first quarter being titled "Training for the Gold." He encouraged all employees to join in the challenge and work to stay healthy through physical fitness activities.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the 266th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

*Signature on file

Chairman

*Signature on file

Secretary