

Windham School District
Board of Trustees
285th Meeting



Minutes

December 5, 2014

Austin, Texas

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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

**December 5, 2014
11:00 – 11:30 AM**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call to Order

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

I. Regular Session

- A. Consideration of Approval of Consent Items (*page 1*)
 - 1. Minutes of the October 9, 2014, WSD Board Meeting
 - 2. Personal Property Donations
 - 3. Excused Absences
- B. Superintendent's Report
- C. Report from the Chairman, WSD Board
- D. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Investment Representatives
 - 1. Resolution Amending Authorized Representatives for the Texas Local Government Investment Pool (TexPool/TexPool Prime) (*pages 2-3*)
 - 2. Resolution Changing Authorized Representatives for the Local Government Investment Cooperative (LOGIC) (*pages 4-6*)
- E. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding a Purchase Over \$500,000 (*page 7*)
- F. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Deletion of Windham Board Policy WBP-07.16, "Employee Dress Code and Grooming" (*page 8*)
- G. Human Resources Division Update

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**

Meeting No. 285

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, December 5, 2014, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Oliver Bell, Chairman
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III, Secretary
Judge Larry Gist
Eric Gambrell
Carmen Villanueva-Hiles
Janice Harris Lord
Larry Miles

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Terrell McCombs, Vice Chairman
Thomas P. Wingate

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Clint Carpenter, Superintendent
Paul Brown
Veronica Casanova
Mario Cotton
Latreace Craig
Michael Mondville
Mike Vickers

CONVENED

Oliver Bell, Chairman, convened the meeting of the 285th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, December 5, 2014, at 11:10 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.

Mr. Bell reported the WSD Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on posted agenda topics as provided in Board Rule 300.1. As no speaker registration cards were received by the board staff, no public presentations would be heard on posted agenda topics.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Bell recognized Mario Cicconetti, General Counsel with Senator Joan Huffman's office.

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 October 9, 2014, meeting, personal property donations, and excused absences for Janice Harris Lord and Carmen Villanueva Hiles both of whom were unable to attend the August meeting due to personal business.

Eric Gambrell stated that he would abstain from taking action on the consent items because his firm represents McGraw-Hill School Education and there is a personal property donation from this entity being brought before the Board for approval.

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

REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Windham Launches Computerized General Educational Development (GED) Testing

In November, Windham School District started computerized GED testing. Windham staff anticipated the change from paper based to computerized testing would be a challenge on many fronts. In addition to the dramatic increase in academic difficulty for the students, there are technical and logistical challenges for a large organization to properly implement a computer based testing format. This is particularly true in a correctional setting. The new testing model allows students to test on sections of the GED in which they have demonstrated required skills. They may take sections of the examination as they are ready rather than at predetermined mass testing times. This lowers test anxiety and shows more directly what a student knows about the content being tested. To prepare for Windham's transition, WSD employees Susan Norris, Supervisor of Counseling and Testing, along with Sophie Willis, Counselor Trainer, and Cora Huggins, Academic Supervisor, worked with Karin Ruppelius' Information Technology staff to provide the training needed to support the testing. This also required support and coordination with TDCJ wardens and correctional staff to ensure compliance with a safe implementation.

The week of November 17, Windham staff began testing at Lychner State Jail. In this new model, between four to eight students were testing at a time on various sections of the practice or actual exam, rather than 30-40 students all on the same exam as with the paper based testing. The students testing are allowed to go immediately from the required practice exam "GED Ready" to the actual test if their scores show a high likelihood of success. At Lychner, five students were tested on 20 "GED Ready exams". Subsequently the five students all scored in a range of "likely to pass" or "very close to standard" and qualified to take the actual GED exam. These students were tested on two sections of the actual GED exam, language arts and science, and on these tests, four out of five passed the language arts exam and three of five passed the science exam (seven out of 10 exams). These results were very exciting to the teachers of these students who have worked to prepare them for this difficult exam. It was also very rewarding to the academic, testing and IT staff to roll out a new complex testing format without significant technical problems.

With this initial testing a success, Windham will proceed to implement the training and subsequent testing at four to six campuses in January, February, April and May. It is planned to have 20 campuses testing with the computerized format by summer 2015. The campuses chosen for implementation in this first group will be state jails, transfer facilities and SAFPF units. These campuses have some of the highest need, and comparatively younger offenders may benefit from this accelerated testing opportunity prior to release. He thanked Windham administrative staff, the teachers, campus administration and support staff in IT as well as TDCJ administration for the successful implementation of computerized GED testing.

Chairman Bell asked if any of the other states that participated in the Region V Correctional Education Association (CEA) conference discussed the challenges or successes they are having regarding the implementation of the new computerized GED test.

Dr. Carpenter responded that the consensus was there are significant challenges on the new test. Some of the challenges include the academic rigor of the test and changes in the format for offenders who are not familiar with computerized testing. WSD has been aware of these challenges. Director of Instruction Veronica Casanova and her team have been working to develop curriculum materials. Results are ranging from about a six to 10 percent of former pass rates of the surrounding states that have already implemented the new GED.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD

1. Reentry Efforts

In recent discussions with TDCJ Reentry staff, offender families and former offenders, it was noted that many offenders had difficulty retrieving educational credentials earned while attending Windham programming. WSD has responded with new information found in the updated WSD webpage about Windham programs, connections to employers of former offenders, and access to resources not previously known by many of WSD's stakeholders and partners. To be supportive of the offenders returning to their communities, Windham has designed web address information cards and posters to be placed at visitation areas and parole offices. The information contained on these informational cards will direct interested individuals to the WSD webpage and the links for useful resources. Additionally, Windham has provided a web link for former offenders to help retrieve official copies of GED certificates. Along with this benefit, visitors to the webpage may view information about student graduations, jobs, success stories and programs with WSD. Visitors may also find links to college programs and other support which may benefit the offender after release and provide important information to offender families and prospective employers. Windham feels getting this information out to the community will help bridge the support offenders receive as they near release and support TDCJ Reentry once offenders are back in their home communities.

An outstanding young lady also spoke at the recent Region V CEA conference. She was a former offender, and her presentation was exceptional. One of the key things that she discussed was the challenge of obtaining the right type of employment. Mr. Bell said that he had asked Dr. Carpenter and Executive Director Brad Livingston to consider whether there is a way for TDCJ to have a greater interaction with the community to help with employment opportunities.

2. Fitness Challenge

Chairman Bell stated the first quarter of the 2015 Chairman's Fitness Challenge ended November 9. The announcement of the top participating teams will be released in the near future, and it looks like WSD will remain one of the top performing teams for the challenge. The second quarter challenge Countdown to the Super Bowl will begin January 19 and run

through March 1, with a goal of 225 points per week throughout the quarter. He thanked everyone for their participation in the challenge and encouraged them to continue to stay fit and healthy.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING INVESTMENT REPRESENTATIVES

1. Resolution Amending Authorized Representatives for the Texas Local Government Investment Pool (TexPool/TexPool Prime)

Paul Brown, WSD Chief Financial Officer, stated that due to a change in district personnel, WSD is requesting to delete Linda Goerdel and add Robert O'Banion as a representative for WSD investments. The resolution to amend authorized representatives for the Texas Local Government Investment Pool (TexPool/TexPool Prime) is submitted for board approval as presented.

Judge Larry Gist moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the resolution amending the authorized representatives for the Texas Local Government Investment Pool (TexPool/TexPool Prime) as presented.

Larry Miles seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

2. Resolution Changing Authorized Representatives for the Local Government Investment Cooperative (LOGIC)

Mr. Brown stated that due to the same change in district personnel, WSD is requesting to amend the authorized representative for the Local Government Investment Cooperative (LOGIC). It is being submitted for Board approval as presented.

Leo Vasquez moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the resolution changing authorized representatives for the Local Government Investment Cooperative (LOGIC) as presented.

Carmen Hiles seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

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

Mr. Brown called the Board's attention to page 7 of the board agenda. He stated that in accordance with WSD Board Policy WBP-02.00, district purchases and contracts over \$500,000 require board approval. During the budget briefings in August, staff informed the Board that approximately \$600,000 would be spent for new teacher resources that will be used over the next several years. These valuable resources will ensure that all students will receive instruction in skills aligned with the new 2014 GED.

WSD successfully negotiated the price down to \$539,629.52 and requested to award this purchase to McGraw Hill School Education.

Mr. Gambrell stated his firm represents McGraw Hill, and he would abstain from this vote.

Ms. Hiles moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the purchase over \$500,000 as presented.

Judge Gist seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote. Mr. Gambrell abstained from the vote.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING
DELETION OF WINDHAM BOARD POLICY WBP-07.16 “EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE
AND GROOMING”**

Michael Mondville, WSD General Counsel, informed the Board that WSD is requesting the deletion of WBP-07.16, “Employee Dress Code and Grooming.” The board policy will be replaced with a superintendent directive. The new directive will closely follow TDCJ Policy with the exception of uniform standards. He asked the Board to approve the deletion of the board policy as presented.

Janice Lord asked why WSD was considering changing the policy.

Mr. Mondville replied that WSD is following TDCJ’s policy, which is an executive directive (known as a personnel directive) handled by their Human Resources (HR) department. It seems the superintendent can issue a dress code standard that would not have to be elevated to the Board each time a minor change is needed.

Ms. Lord stated that she just wanted to make sure the district wasn’t abolishing the dress code.

Dr. Carpenter said the dress code would now be a superintendent’s directive. The dress code will be overseen by the WSD HR department.

Chairman Bell stated that this change will essentially make the policy an operational decision rather than a board decision.

Ms. Lord moved that the WSD Board of Trustees approve the deletion of WBP-07.16, “Employee Dress Code and Grooming” as presented.

Ms. Hiles seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION UPDATE

Dr. Latreace Craig, WSD Director of Human Resources (HR), stated she would be giving the Human Resources Division update, which includes current staffing information, HR statistics and recruitment initiatives implemented this year. Staffing for the 2014-2015 school year included:

- 1,112.4 positions across 83 campuses and 91 facilities
- 1,040.9 positions funded by Foundation School Program and Title I and II
- 93% of all positions dedicated to direct student contact
- WSD teachers averaging 17 years of experience

She said there are a variety of positions throughout the district that serve the campuses. Currently, 657 positions are dedicated as teaching positions. Teaching positions make up the majority of WSD positions. There are three regional administrators and 46 campus principals providing leadership for the 83 facilities. Sixty percent of the principals are responsible for two or more units.

The professional staff consists of 77 counselors, 13 diagnosticians and 22.4 support staff. Other campus staff includes 88 administrative assistants and aides, 18 library support and 43 testing staff.

Dr. Craig highlighted some of the HR statistics for the 2013-2014 school year. The HR division processed 173 new hires of which 17 were rehires, and 189 transfers. There were 149 volunteer applications, and 36 substitutes were processed. The district had an average of 125 vacant positions each month, 96 of which were teaching positions.

Dr. Craig stated there were many services that the HR division performs. One of these services is recruitment, and Mario Cotton, WSD Assistant HR Director, gave an update on recruitment initiatives.

Mr. Cotton discussed some of the recruitment initiatives implemented during this school year:

- Teacher Recruitment Award
- Bumper Stickers
- Partnerships
- Vocational Postings
- Non-Traditional Career Fairs
- Advertising

The Teacher Recruitment Award allowed teachers to have eight hours of administrative leave whenever they referred a teacher and it resulted in a hire. This initiative began in April and ended in July. Five out of seven referrals resulted in a hire.

Approximately 300 bumper stickers were purchased. They were placed on WSD cars throughout the state and distributed to the regions and at career fairs.

WSD partnered with Sam Houston State University (Huntsville) and the University of North Texas (Denton), in efforts to provide a training program for vocational teachers. This training would be provided to applicants that came to WSD and were not certified to teach. They would enroll at one of these universities through a probationary certification program, and obtain a teaching certificate.

He said HR also attended non-traditional Career fairs. Traditionally, WSD recruits at colleges and universities. An example of one of the non-traditional career fairs was “Red, White and You”, sponsored by the Texas Workforce Commission. This career fair was held November 13 at different locations across the state. Typically, veterans come in and meet with different individuals in an effort to obtain a career or employment. After talking to several of the veterans, it was evident they had obtained skills, while in the military, that WSD was looking for (i.e. diesel mechanics or small engine repair). These individuals can work for WSD and enroll in the alternative certification programs offered by Sam Houston State University or the University of North Texas. WSD was pleased to participate in these non-traditional career fairs.

In efforts to increase WSD diversity, district staff advertised with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). In Texas, there are 49 colleges and universities that are members of the HACU and seven colleges and universities that are HBCU.

As a result of the recruitment initiative, the teacher vacancy rate decreased from 10 percent to seven percent. This positively impacted WSD student contact hours. There was a 21 percent increase in contact hours when comparing September 2014 to the previous time last year.

Ms. Hiles thanked WSD staff for their recruiting efforts.

Mr. Vasquez asked if the vacant positions cause the district to offer fewer classes or do they cause the teachers to have more students in their classes?

Dr. Craig responded that vacant positions cause the district to offer fewer classes because the district is capped at the number of students that can be placed in each class. When the vacancies are filled, WSD is able to acquire more contact hours because more students are being served.

Mr. Vasquez suggested adding some sort of phrase to the bumper stickers that will catch people’s attention, such as “Fighting Crime Through Education”, and maybe something that would indicate WSD is state-wide.

Chairman Bell agreed with the comments made by the Board members.

Chairman Bell thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated the next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees would be Friday, February 20, 2015, at the Omni Hotel in Austin.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the 285th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

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Chairman

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Secretary

** Signature on file*

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.