

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

Meeting No. 318

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, June 26, 2020 via Zoom Video Conference.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patrick O’Daniel, Chairman
Derrelynn Perryman, Vice Chairman
Larry Miles, Secretary
Mano DeAyala
Hon. Molly Francis
Hon. Faith Johnson
Sichan Siv
Eric Nichols
Dr. Rodney Burrow

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent

CONVENED

Chairman Patrick O’Daniel convened the meeting of the 318th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, June 26, 2020, at 12:12 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 was declared open.

Chairman O’Daniel reported 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.

RECOGNITIONS

There were no recognitions.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

The Chairman called the Board’s attention to the Consent Items on the agenda, which consisted of an excused absence for Pastor Miles from the February 25, 2020 meeting due to personal business.

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Windham School District's Response to COVID-19: Distance Learning

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent of Windham School District, reported the Windham School District (WSD) shifted school operations from the traditional classroom and library settings to a distance learning model on March 20, 2020 and to a hybrid model for summer instruction at facilities without restrictions on June 1, 2020 under COVID-19 protocols for Texas schools.

Ms. Hartman stated immediately following closure of classrooms for on-site instruction in March, WSD initiated daily briefing calls with all district principals and the administration leadership team. TDCJ Deputy Division Director of the Correctional Institutions Division, Eric Guerrero, participated in the daily calls. He communicated updates both to and from WSD so that principals, regional directors and wardens all received the same information, which supported successful implementation and continuity of instructional and library services. Staff quickly adjusted to providing instruction for academic, career and technical education and life skills programs with individualized packets developed by teachers. This instruction included the parole-voted CHANGES program.

She said teachers worked diligently to develop individualized lessons and provided feedback on graded assignments followed by remedial lessons or new concepts, as appropriate. Packets were assigned hours based on the content that aligned with the number of hours that the students would have attended in class so as not to delay program access or completions. New enrollments continued, particularly for those in WSD parole-voted programs. In addition, WSD has been able to pilot program access to populations that have not historically been served due to custody and housing restrictions, which WSD intends to expand in the future.

Ms. Hartman said library access was identified as a critical component of resident engagement and success, and TDCJ staff worked with WSD to provide book carts to the dorms or visits to the library in small groups with appropriate social distancing.

Ms. Hartman reported in response to the Governor's Executive Order and Texas Education Agency guidance related to summer instruction and student interaction, WSD implemented a small group instruction and assessment model that began June 1 at facilities that were not on restriction. Classroom capacity was set at 11, including the teacher, and social distancing of at least 6 feet between students was implemented along with rigorous housekeeping and sanitation procedures and use of masks by all. Students now report to class on a rotating schedule and continue distance learning activities for remaining class hours. Both the teachers and students are thrilled to be back in class. As facilities come on and off restriction, staff adjusts the instructional model in alignment with public health guidelines. WSD is proud of the efforts of both staff and students for their outstanding efforts during the distance and hybrid learning models. Working together with TDCJ during these unique circumstances has demonstrated that with flexibility, dedication and communication, the end result is still excellence in education.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Windham School District's Use of Technology During COVID-19

Chairman O'Daniel reported in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order for Texas school closures, the Windham School District (WSD) shifted the majority of district operations to a teleworking environment. A quickly-paced transition to the enhanced use of technology followed. Campus principals were immediately issued laptops with virtual private network (VPN) access to district resources and the education department copiers to send lessons for pickup and distribution by TDCJ education officers. A corporate Zoom account was purchased to hold meetings via videoconferencing to coordinate efforts between staff members. Other staff members opted to use Google Duo or Teams, which offer similar capabilities. TDCJ kindly provided an additional five conference lines for staff to communicate at the facility, regional and statewide level, which have been booked solid each day.

The Chairman stated WSD has continued to interview applicants for vacancies using videoconferencing technology, and provided New Hire orientation and security training each month via Zoom to ensure a continuity of services and support for students. The WSD Human Resources Department added a requirement for candidate possession and proficiency with appropriate home technology as a condition of employment. In addition, the Professional Development Department has presented a weekly schedule of training opportunities that occur via conference call, Zoom or recorded presentations. Some of the topics have been CHANGES facilitator training, Motivational Interviewing, career pathways for college and career readiness, trade-specific vocational topics, use of technology, and The Science of Well-Being, presented by Yale Professor Laurie Santos.

Chairman O'Daniel said WSD saw the need for enhanced communication with stakeholders and hired a communications intern to manage social media efforts. As a result, WSD now holds a communications call each day to discuss and solidify messages in all communications areas for students, staff and the community. The District has added LinkedIn and Twitter, and has seen a significant increase in Facebook followers. The superintendent provides brief video updates on WSD efforts and addresses frequently asked questions to reach a broader audience. In addition, WSD implemented "Thank You Thursday" in which principals are featured on Facebook each week to thank their students, teachers and TDCJ facility staff. In addition to recognizing staff for their efforts, "Thank You Thursday" gives the families of students the ability to virtually meet the principals that support their loved ones as the campus leaders.

The Chairman said the Information Technology Department has been instrumental throughout the teleworking process and has resolved over 1,000 service requests related to remote work. Teachers, some of whom had little experience on computers, have become familiar with the technology needed to satisfy their duties. When asked about the use of technology, one vocational teacher stated, "The computer used to be my enemy. We are not friends yet, but we are starting to get along," as he proudly detailed his newly acquired proficiency with various software components.

Chairman O'Daniel concluded that teleworking as a result of COVID-19 is not something that WSD ever envisioned, but through challenging times, has resulted in process improvements tied to communication, instruction, professional development and human resources. As a unique

district with a statewide reach, the ability to connect with and support campuses has, through the challenge of COVID-19 and enhancement of technology, become more efficient and effective.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman O’Daniel adjourned the 318th meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 12:24 p.m.

Chairman*

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.