

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

Meeting No. 320

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, October 30, 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
Michael Mondville
Robert O’Banion

CONVENED

Chairman Patrick O’Daniel convened the meeting of the 320th Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, October 30, 2020, at 11:46 a.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 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 August 14th, 2020 meeting, appraisers for the 2020-2021 school year, and a personal property donation.

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 Campus Visits

Ms. Hartman stated that in her role of superintendent, one of the highlights of her position is the opportunity to visit campuses and interact with students and staff. During the initial onset of COVID-19, it was difficult to leave the district's command center, and being readily accessible to receive and communicate updates was, and remains, a critical task.

Ms. Hartman stated that she was thrilled to be able to recently reinstate campus visits and meet with staff and students at 10 campuses within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. One noteworthy week included visits to the top three rated WSD campuses based on the accountability report card results. These "A" campuses are Cole, Moore and Johnston. Jon Lilley, Division Director of Instruction, and Ms. Hartman presented the WSD staff, TDCJ wardens and education officers, and students with campus-specific personalized recognition banners and trophies to be displayed at each unit and "Distinguished Campus" challenge coins detailing the names of the campuses. WSD and TDCJ staff and students were appreciative of the recognition and proud of their accomplishments. Ms. Hartman also wanted to thank Warden Cooper, who walked to each classroom with her and added words of encouragement directed at the students and teachers.

Superintendent Hartman reported that during each campus visit, she met with staff and provided WSD updates, discussed COVID-19 protocols, accepted feedback and answered questions. She is pleased to report that all WSD staff that she spoke with reported that they were happy to be back on campus with the students and felt safe with the established public health protocols. Some noted initial hesitation in anticipation of return to on-site services, but these concerns were addressed when they observed the stringent social distancing, use of masks and sanitation processes.

Ms. Hartman stated that another important component of her campus visits was the time spent in each classroom to speak with students. Students were provided with updates and asked for suggestions on how they felt WSD could improve services. Comments that came up repeatedly in academic, life skills, and career and technical education courses related to upgrades to technology, assistance with reentry preparation and employment leads in the community. Students expressed satisfaction with the new academic curriculum, and Ms. Hartman was pleased to see students using the new books and anticipating receipt of the new software that was authorized for purchase by the Board.

Superintendent Hartman said that following each campus visit, she debriefed with the WSD Administration team, which included discussion and task assignments on action items and timelines for follow-up with campuses. The WSD team truly believes many of our most innovative ideas come from students and teachers, and the district look forward to briefing the Board in the near future regarding ongoing improvements.

Ms. Hartman reported that she is proud of the accomplishments of the students and staff and look

forward to continuing campus visits to provide support and clarification, identify best practices and continue process improvements, and thank the staff for their efforts.

Chairman O'Daniel thanked Ms. Hartman for her report and asked her to speak to the precautions she has been taking prior to campus visits.

Ms. Hartman explained that prior to each site visit, she gets a COVID-19 test. She reported that she maintains social distancing, uses an N95 mask, and sanitation processes. In WSD's education departments, Ms. Hartman stated that the district is using the Texas Education Agency's protocol which requires social distancing for students and staff, use of cotton mask, and sanitation. The class sizes are limited, and Windham is utilizing a hybrid onsite instruction model. Every student gets to come to class, and they have supplementary instruction with packets.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WSD's Family Literacy Program

Chairman O'Daniel reported that the Windham School District (WSD) recently began recruitment efforts for the new Family Literacy Program that will serve incarcerated parents at five campuses for both women and men. The program will be led by Family Literacy Unit Coordinators who will be responsible for facilitating instruction and services for incarcerated parents with economically disadvantaged school-age children by providing opportunities for the incarcerated parent to become an effective, supportive, active partner in his or her child's education with the goal of eliminating generational incarceration and increasing student growth of both the parent and child.

Mr. O'Daniel stated that the program components include recruiting eligible participants, verifying interest and permission from caregivers, facilitating parenting skills classes, coordinating participation in parent-teacher conferences with school districts, developing appropriate classroom and parent-child activities, and facilitating opportunities for remote and future on-site interactions between the incarcerated parents, children and caregivers to apply the skills learned in parenting classes.

The Chairman said that within a week of implementation of the Family Literacy Program, the Unit Coordinators developed, edited, and finalized the following forms:

- Resident Recruitment Form
- Resident Questionnaire Form
- Caregiver/Guardian Consent Form
- School District Consent Form

Chairman O'Daniel stated that these forms are used in recruiting potential candidates, screening them for eligibility, and obtaining consent from the child's caregiver and school district. In addition, the WSD will be initiating partnerships with interested school districts in various Texas counties to provide this program. Participation in a Windham School District program-academic, life skills or career and technical education, is required for eligibility.

The Chairman said that with this program, WSD aims to provide incarcerated parents the skills, resources, and opportunities they need to be engaged, supportive advocates in their children's education. Effectiveness of this program will be measured by numerous factors such as child and parent classroom behavior, academic performance, and parent child interaction. Windham School District is excited about the progress that has been made and the successes to come in the Family Literacy Program.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE REVISION OF WINDHAM BOARD POLICY WBP-07.53, "ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE"

Michael Mondville, WSD General Counsel, said that Windham Board Policy WBP-07.53, "Administrative Leave" is being revised to allow the Superintendent to grant administrative leave for 15 workdays each school year for a veteran to obtain medical or mental health care as approved by the Veterans Administration. Mr. Mondville stated that it is the same as provided to all other state employees in the Texas Government Code. He requested that the Board approve the policy as presented.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

Eric Nichols moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the WSD Board Policy WBP-07.53, "Administrative Leave" as presented.

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

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING COMMITTED FUND BALANCE

Robert O'Banion, WSD Chief Financial Officer, stated that WSD is requesting approval from the Board to commit funds from our balance in the amount of \$3.5 million dollars. This request is in accordance with the Texas Education Agency guidelines allowing a school district to commit, through Board action, a portion of its fund balance for a particular purpose.

Mr. O'Banion said that this requested commitment has two components. The first, and most significant, is for the expansion of technology and technical infrastructure for student instruction in the amount of \$3.25 million dollars. These funds will support our technology plan of expanding student computer lab functionality, to include secure online access for specific sites, student tablets for the youthful learner population, devices for family literacy program interaction during parent-teacher conferences and virtual reality goggles. These items will support student instruction and assessment for high school and high school equivalency courses and career and technical education industry certifications. Some of the items we're pursuing include virtual reality goggles to simulate instructional activities. Possible simulations include dissecting a frog in a science class, and real-world activities, like visiting a grocery store, interacting with employers, using touchless faucets, reading a mock bus route map and utilizing other public transportation. These activities will prepare Windham students to reenter Texas

communities, and become familiar with some of the technological advancements that have taken place in recent years. The technology plan is a three-year plan that begins with pilot sites followed by expansion. These multi-year initiatives will be incorporated into our annual budgets.

Mr. O'Banion stated that the second purpose of this commitment is for claims and judgements against the district in the amount of \$250,000 dollars. Suits against the district are infrequent; however, based on past experience, it is prudent to allocate a contingency amount for the possible settlements or awards that might be incurred. The Texas Education Agency recommends a school district unassigned balance should be equivalent to 2 to 3 months of operating expenses. The district's unassigned balance will be within this recommendation after applying this commitment. Mr. O'Banion paused for questions.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

Faith Johnson moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Committed Fund Balance as presented.

Derrelynn Perryman seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.

Chairman O'Daniel thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be Thursday, December 17, 2020 via video conference.

ADJOURNED

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman O'Daniel adjourned the 320th meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 12:03 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.