

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

Meeting No. 329

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, April 22, 2022, at the Sheraton Hotel in Austin, Texas.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Patrick L. O’Daniel, Chairman  
Derrelynn Perryman, Vice Chairman  
Pastor Larry D. Miles, Secretary  
Hon. Faith Johnson  
Eric Nichols  
Mano DeAyala  
Ambassador Sichan Siv

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Dr. Rodney Burrow  
Hon. Molly Francis

**WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kristina Hartman, Superintendent  
Dr. Amanda Hernandez  
Elizabeth Ochoa  
Robert O’Banion  
Erik Brown

**CONVENED**

Chairman Patrick L. O’Daniel convened the meeting of the 329<sup>th</sup> Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, April 22, 2022, at 4:24 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 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.

**RECOGNITIONS**

Dr. Amanda Hernandez, Communications Administrator, introduced Ms. Elizabeth Ochoa, who is the principal of the Travis and Halbert campuses.

Dr. Hernandez said it was her honor to introduce Ms. Elizabeth Ochoa. Ms. Ochoa joined the

Windham School District as a Testing Specialist in October 2021, prior to promoting to her current position. In her role, she supports the teachers and staff at her campuses, ensuring they have the tools they need to achieve the common goal of empowering students through education.

Dr. Hernandez said Ms. Ochoa has a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master of Education Administration, both from the University of Texas at El Paso. She holds multiple certifications for fourth through eighth grade including Generalist, Mathematics, Bilingual Education Supplemental Spanish, and English as a Second Language Supplemental as well as her Principal certification.

Dr. Hernandez stated prior to joining Windham, Ms. Ochoa worked in public education in various clerical positions, as a sixth grade monolingual and bilingual math teacher, eighth grade math teacher and instructional coach for approximately 20 years.

Dr. Hernandez asked the Board to please join her in recognizing Ms. Elizabeth Ochoa, principal of the Travis and Halbert campuses and thanking her for her relocation from El Paso to Austin to serve our educators and students as their instructional leader.

Ms. Ochoa thanked the Board for the recognition.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Ochoa and congratulated her.

### **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 February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting, appraisers for the 2021-2022 school year, excused absences and personal property donations.

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

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

#### **Community Partnerships**

Superintendent Hartman said gainful employment is vital to former students succeeding upon return to their communities. Windham School District is dedicated to not only providing their students with access to educational programs, but assisting them in finding and securing meaningful employment to support themselves and their families. Through collaborations with TDCJ Reentry and community partners, the district is able to help students begin their careers in their field of training.

Ms. Hartman reported that the team works diligently to find new partners and establish agreements that further enhance the lives of the district's students. When seeking employee partnerships, Windham evaluates the company, including compensation, benefits, career

opportunities and culture to ensure students who obtain employment with these companies will have positive work experiences. Recently, Windham has developed three new employee partnerships that provide additional opportunities to students across the state.

The Superintendent said as the nation faces a shortage of 80,000 truck drivers, the district has developed partnerships that connect former students with employment opportunities in the transportation field. Two such recent agreements were with WM and Bulkley Trucking.

Ms. Hartman said WM, formerly known as Waste Management, is the leading provider of comprehensive waste management in North America, providing services that range from collection and disposal to recycling and renewable energy generation. This Fortune 500 company has over 45,000 employees and provides an array of benefits, including medical insurance, retirement, and full-tuition coverage for employees and their dependents.

Superintendent Hartman said WM's Innovative Employment Pathways (IEP) program recruits individuals who face persistent barriers to employment, including those impacted by the criminal justice system. The district recently established an IEP partnership with WM to directly hire graduates of Windham's commercial driver's license (CDL) program to full-time, permanent jobs at the WM hauling facilities. Currently, the district has former students working for WM and others interviewing for employment. These individuals have credited Windham's CDL program and partnership with WM as changing their lives and providing them an opportunity they have never had: the ability to provide for themselves.

## **WM VIDEO PLAYED**

The Superintendent said Bulkley Trucking is a refrigerated, long-haul carrier specializing in time and temperature sensitive freight. The company partners with Bulkley Trucking CDL Training School to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to be professional drivers. Bulkley Trucking strives to offer rewarding career paths and second chances to those seeking to start a new chapter of their lives and provide a better standard of living for their families and themselves. The company provides employees with bonuses, paid vacation, insurance and a work-life balance.

Ms. Hartman said Windham and Bulkley partnered to ensure the curriculum and instruction taught by the district meets the needs of employers that employ individuals in the transportation industry. The agreement between the two entities also creates a process for WSD students to apply for employment with Bulkley Trucking.

Superintendent Hartman stated that similarly, the district is in the process of developing a community relationship agreement with Amazon. Amazon aims to continually raise the bar of customer experience by using the internet and technology to help consumers find, discover and buy anything, and empower businesses and content creators to maximize their success. As an employer, Amazon provides an array of benefits including flexible work schedule, health insurance, retirement, tuition reimbursement, and on-the-job training for career advancement.

Ms. Hartman reported that due to the exponential growth of the company, Amazon consistently

needs new employees to fill positions in their warehouses and fulfillment centers. In the proposed agreement between Windham and Amazon, the two entities will collaborate to provide students nearing release with information and resources related to the vast employment opportunities available at Amazon. At WSD's upcoming Career and Technical Education (CTE) conference, Amazon will speak with the district's instructors about the opportunities available to students at the company.

Ms. Hartman said community partnerships are integral to fulfilling the district's goal of facilitating the meaningful employment of students. The district is working to expand the number of partnerships and employment opportunities available to students. As such, WSD has established a new position dedicated to cultivating these relationships and establishing Memorandums of Understandings. Through these agreements, Windham can develop pipelines for students to apply and gain employment with these companies who are willing to prioritize the district's candidates.

Superintendent Hartman concluded that the district is grateful to these community partners, and the TDCJ Reentry Division, who works collaboratively with the district every step of the way to help restore lives of the district's students through educational and employment opportunities.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Hartman and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

## **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN, WSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **Health and Wellness Initiatives**

Chairman O'Daniel asked, "How can we live better, healthier lives?" Research has shown that there are eight dimensions of wellness pivotal to achieving this goal. Wellness focuses on establishing a well-balanced lifestyle rooted in emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and social well-being. Windham School District's Department of Recreation and Wellness provides health and wellness educational opportunities for residents and staff based on these eight dimensions of wellness.

The Chairman said staff who live a balanced, healthy lifestyle are happier. Researchers have noted that happy workers are up to 12% more productive at work. To encourage staff to improve their overall health, Windham's Recreation and Wellness Department provides monthly, quarterly, and annual wellness opportunities. This year, the department has increased the number of challenges provided to staff to boost wellness and morale across the district.

Mr. Chairman reported Walk Across Texas was a state-wide challenge completed by the district that encouraged staff to increase physical activity. In this challenge, staff created teams of eight and tracked the number of miles walked. To complete the program, each team had to walk 832 miles in eight weeks, equivalent to walking across the state of Texas. The district had 330 participants, who walked a total of 52,319 miles.

Chairman O'Daniel said Get Fit Texas is another state-wide initiative aimed at increasing

physical activity amongst staff. The goal of this challenge is to complete 30 minutes of exercise a day, five days a week, for 10 weeks. Staff can mow their lawn, walk their dog, complete yoga exercises, attend high intensity interval training or anything in between to get in their daily workout. This program is a challenge between agencies and entities across the state. Windham had 523 participants in the program, completing a total of 919,585 minutes, or 15,326 hours, of exercise. The challenge recently wrapped and winners were announced. The Windham School District's competition category included other agencies with 1,001-5,000 full time employees (FTE's). WSD's bracket included 21 agencies, with Windham coming in second place! Out of 523 participants, 36.4% staff completed the challenge. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice also proved successful in their bracket consisting of eight agencies with 5,000 or more FTE's by coming in third place. Out of 2,176 participants, 4.9% of TDCJ employees completed the challenge! Thank you to all staff who participated in this year's Get Fit Texas challenge!

Chairman O'Daniel said the Board established the Chairman's Challenge to educate WSD and TDCJ staff about nutritional best practices and inspire healthy eating habits. This program consists of three parts across one year: the first 10-week section teaches new techniques; the second 10-week section is practicing the newly acquired skills; and the last 32-week section is maintenance of all skills learned. Each week, staff watched educational videos and set goals to improve their behavioral and eating habits. At the conclusion of the first 10-week section, 207 Windham employees participated in the program, with 68% completing all 10 weeks. Together, they lost 544 pounds. As the second 10-week section recently closed, the district is still awaiting the final results from the Wondr Health organizers. The Chairman indicated that he, too, is participating in this challenge. He thanked all the participants for the hard work and lost weight.

The Chairman reported two new monthly challenges established this year were "Lunch and Learn" and "Floating February." For the Lunch and Learn, staff watched two educational presentations during the month of February outside of work hours. The first presentation was a Question-and-Answer session about COVID-19 with an infectious disease expert. Dr. Tony Ho, Assistant Professor at UT Health San Antonio, answered frequently asked questions from staff related to the pandemic, elaborating on topics such as vaccines, masks and spread. The second presentation celebrated Black History Month as Dr. Bernadette Pruitt spoke about the Legacy of the Great Migration. Dr. Pruitt, who is an associate professor in Sam Houston State University's History department, discussed the influence of the Great Migration on the culture of the Houston area.

Chairman O'Daniel said Floating February was established to boost hydration and water intake among staff. In this challenge, staff drank 64 ounces of water a day. Water is essential to helping bodies function properly. Increasing water intake helps bodies regulate temperature, lubricate joints, and protect body tissue. Researchers have noted that it takes seven weeks to establish a new healthy habit; therefore, staff must drink the minimum water intake five days a week for seven weeks.

The Chairman said Windham also promotes health by encouraging staff to be up-to-date on their vaccinations and annual physicals. The district provides incentive for staff to receive their COVID vaccination, COVID booster and flu shot as well as an annual physical by their doctor. Vaccinations and physicals improve health among staff, decreasing absences across the district.

Chairman O'Daniel stated wellness challenges have boosted morale and wellness among staff across the district. Noticing this, Windham has increased the number of opportunities offered to staff this year, with monthly activities planned for the remainder of the school year. One of these activities is a financial literacy course for staff aimed at increasing their knowledge about financial wellness such as providing tips for creating a budget or planning for retirement. These programs encourage staff to become more active, learn new wellness concepts, and develop healthy habits.

The Chairman said in addition to staff, the Recreation and Wellness Department provides educational opportunities and activities to its students. The department recently launched a wellness education campaign across the district. Regional Wellness Coordinators will be facilitating monthly wellness classes for students encompassing the eight dimensions of wellness, the first of which being nutrition that is scheduled to begin within the next month. The team is also launching a pilot program to expand the district's wellness opportunities at one women's and one men's campus. In this pilot, a full-time coordinator will facilitate and teach an Introduction to Wellness course that focuses on the eight dimensions of wellness. In addition to teaching, the coordinator will create individualized wellness opportunities for the campus, including challenges, recreation activities, and resources for nutritional education.

The Chairman concluded by increasing opportunities for district and TDCJ staff and students, Windham hopes to improve health and wellness across the state.

### **DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING PURCHASES AND CONTRACTS OVER \$500,000**

Robert O'Banion, Chief Financial Officer, stated the district recommends rewarding this purchase to Aztec Paxton Publishing. The total purchase price is \$532,998. Additionally, the district included a note to request a 10% cost variance to prevent any delays in delivering materials to students. This purchase is broken into two parts. The first is the academic student workbooks to prepare students for the high school equivalency test. This component of the purchase is \$192,583. It includes student workbooks in the areas of language arts, math, science, social studies, and it also includes two teacher guides. The second component of the award is also academic student workbooks. However, these are to prepare the students to take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). TABE is a measurement and assessment tool to identify the student's educational achievement level and assess their readiness to take the high school equivalency test. The TABE purchase component is \$340,414. This purchase is being made through the local government purchasing cooperative, known as Buy Board, which is administered by the Texas Association of School Boards. Consistent with all of WSD's purchasing cooperatives, the contract is bid and negotiated through the cooperative with no additional charge to district. Funding for this contract is included in this year's fiscal budget. Mr. O'Banion paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Ambassador Sichan Siv moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the purchases and contracts over \$500,000 as presented.*

*Eric Nichols seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.*

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING BOARD RESOLUTION FOR NOMINATION OF KRISTINA J. HARTMAN, ED.S. FOR TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARD'S SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR**

Robert O'Banion said on behalf of the Windham School District Board of Trustees, he is very pleased to present this Resolution for the nomination of Kristina J. Hartman for the 2022 Texas Association of School Board's Superintendent of the Year. Superintendent Hartman's exemplary and visionary leadership is instrumental in improving student performance on WSD campuses. Her compassion and dedication to the district is the driving force behind Windham's success and accomplishments. It is because of these tremendous efforts that he presents this Resolution on behalf of the Board nominating Kristina J. Hartman as the 2022 Texas Association of School Board's Superintendent of the Year.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Honorable Faith Johnson moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the resolution of nomination of Kristina J. Hartman, Ed.S. for the Texas Association of School Boards Superintendent of the Year as presented.*

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

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING BOARD RESOLUTION FOR RETENTION STIPENDS AND COMPENSATION INCREASE FOR WSD EMPLOYEES**

Superintendent Hartman said she is very pleased to present this Resolution to the Board requesting a retention stipend, contract renewal stipend, and staff compensation increase for Windham School District staff. She asked the Board to turn to the copy of the Resolution in the Board packet. The document outlined an expenditure of district funds to provide compensation to staff to encourage recruitment and retention. Recognizing the recent increases in fuel and food prices in addition to supporting employee retention and increasing staff morale, she believes the stipend and compensation adjustment will be a positive gesture in recognition of the hard work and dedication of WSD staff. The district's staff has worked diligently to meet the needs of the district. The resolution would authorize a \$2,500 one-time payment for future duties of all staff employed in the district on May 2, 2022 who continue employment through December 31, 2022. The Resolution also outlines a \$2,500 one-time payment for all WSD teachers employed in budgeted, allocated positions who renew their contract with WSD by August 1, 2022 and

continue employment with WSD through December 31, 2022. In addition, WSD expects all certified educators to fulfill the terms of their 2022-2023 contract. Lastly, the Resolution increases employee compensation equal to 10% of the current salary schedules effective September 1, 2022. The proposed salary increase adequately reflects the hard work put forth by WSD staff and the economic changes in the communities. Ms. Hartman asked for Board approval of this resolution. She paused for questions.

Mr. Eric Nichols asked if the legislature has seen fit to provide the additional funding for the 10% increase. Ms. Hartman indicated that WSD had several unit closures which eliminated positions. The 10% is in large part to those closures.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Honorable Faith Johnson moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the resolution for retention stipends and compensation increase for WSD employees.*

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

#### **DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING REVISION OF WSD BOARD POLICY 07.05, "TERM CONTRACT EMPLOYMENT"**

Erik Brown, General Counsel, stated that currently Windham employs certified professional educators as well as high level administrative staff by contract. These revisions will allow the district to discontinue the use of administrative staff contracts for the 2022-2023 school year. All employees will continue to have recourse the grievance process, and all other job protection afforded to district employees. Windham will continue to employ professional educators by contract. The new policy titled "Professional Educator Contracts" reflects this change. The rest of the revisions generally are conforming changes in reorganization for conciseness, clarity, and style. Mr. Brown paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Eric Nichols moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the revision of the WSD Board Policy WBP-07.05, "Term Contract Employment".*

*Mano DeAyala 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 Friday, June 24th, 2022 in McAllen, Texas.

**ADJOURNED**

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman O'Daniel adjourned the 329<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 4:56 p.m.

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Chairman

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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.*