

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

Meeting No. 326

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Friday, October 29, 2021 at the Sheraton Hotel in Austin, Texas.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Robert O’Banion, acting Superintendent  
Jon Lilley  
Cesar Trevino  
Michelle Owen

**CONVENED**

Chairman Patrick L. O’Daniel convened the meeting of the 326<sup>th</sup> Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Friday, October 29, 2021, at 9:00 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.

**RECOGNITIONS**

Jon Lilley, Director of Instruction, introduced Ted Watts, who is the Career and Technical Education Administrator for the district.

Mr. Lilley said that Ted Watts is Windham’s Career and Technical Education Administrator and has worked for Windham for 20 years. Over his tenure, Ted has worked as an Electrical Trades instructor, HVAC instructor, and Career and Technical Education Specialist, before promoting to his current position in 2019.

Jon said that prior to joining Windham, Ted worked in the construction industry as an Electrician and HVAC technician. Ted has held his Texas Class A State HVAC license since 1983 and owned and operated his own mechanical company for 16 years.

Mr. Lilley stated that Ted's passion for Windham and Career and Technical Education is infectious. Ted often says that working for Windham is the most rewarding job he has ever had.

Mr. Lilley then asked those in attendance to please join him in thanking Ted for his dedication and 20 years of service to the district.

Mr. Watts stated that his role with Windham has been a great opportunity for the past 20 years. He stated that the demand in the first twenty-one years in the industry for trained employees brought him to the position he is in now. In his experience, he could not find trained employees. He stated that you had to hire the employees and then train them.

Ted said that he had family in TDCJ and suggested the idea of training the individuals so that they could have a chance. Mr. Watts stated that he went back into education in 1993 at Dallas Baptist University to become an educator. He said that he tried public school for two years. He stated that he had a passion for the teaching, but did not have a passion for what he was teaching at that point.

Mr. Watts said he gets up every morning and wants to go to work, which is special. He then thanked the Board members for everything that they do and representing Windham.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Watts for his service.

Jon Lilley then introduced Charlene Moriarty, who is the Workforce Administrator for the district.

Mr. Lilley said that Charlene Moriarty began working for the district 35 years ago in Library Services. During her career with Windham, she has worked in numerous departments including the Career and Technical Education department, Communications, Legal Counsel Department, Operational Support, and Regional Administration.

Jon said that Charlene is a huge asset to the district. During her career in the CTE department, she has helped the district increase the number of apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and employer agreements.

Mr. Lilley then asked those in attendance to please join him in thanking Charlene for her 35 years of service to the district.

Ms. Moriarty thanked the Board and Windham for all the years she has worked. She stated that she has enjoyed them and look forward to the next few years.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Moriarty.

## **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 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 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**

### **Correctional Education Association Conference**

Mr. Robert O'Banion, acting Superintendent, stated that after two years of hard work, Windham School District hosted a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in correlation with the Correctional Education Association's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary as part of CEA's International Conference this past August. These celebrations were postponed for one school year due to the protocols for gatherings associated with COVID-19. In honor of the anniversaries, the conference theme was "Polishing Diamonds & Gold: Celebrating, Honoring, & Expanding Upon a Successful Legacy."

Mr. O'Banion said that as the conference was held in Austin, Texas, Windham staff, who are members of the Texas Chapter of CEA, chaired the host committee on behalf of the chapter, putting in countless hours to make the four-day conference a huge success. More than 325 correctional education directors, instructors, support staff and vendors from across the country gathered to discuss innovative ideas and best practices in correctional education so participants can better help support students to reintegrate into their communities.

Mr. O'Banion stated that the district was honored to kick the conference off with a welcome by Windham School District Board of Trustees Chairman Patrick L. O'Daniel, Texas Department of Criminal Justice Executive Director Bryan Collier, and Windham Superintendent Kristina Hartman. All three guests detailed Texas' commitment to educating and preparing incarcerated individuals to rejoin Texas communities. These opening remarks set the tone of the conference, and WSD is grateful for their participation.

Mr. O'Banion said that following the opening session, a panel discussion was held in reference to the multi-agency and district partnership to support occupational licensing and employment featuring Bryan Collier, Executive Director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice; Superintendent Hartman; Brian Francis, Executive Director of Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation; and Courtney Arbour, Workforce Development Division Director of Texas Workforce Commission. During this session, panelists explained the partnership between the entities was designed to support pre- and post-release success by offering technical training for students in high-demand fields, helping students receive their occupational licenses, and assisting in obtaining and maintaining employment in their field training upon return to their communities. Each representative detailed the role their entity plays in the Memorandum of Understanding dedicated to improving student success.

Mr. O'Banion said that Windham was well represented throughout the conference as district staff presented on their respective areas. In total, eight presentations were given by Windham staff on popular topics such as family literacy, accountability, and career pathways. The presentations showcased some of Windham's innovative programs and inspired other participants.

Mr. O'Banion stated that throughout the conference, CEA recognized the regional Teachers of the Year, which included recognition of Windham's Teacher of the Year, Cheri Barlow. These educators were guest of honors at the conference's Teacher of the Year Gala. Additionally, Windham held a private ceremony to recognize Ms. Barlow as well as Windham's Career and Technical Education Teacher, Academic Teacher, Principal, and Support Staff of the year.

Mr. O'Banion said that during the annual state directors meeting, Superintendent Hartman was elected as the President of the Council of State Directors for CEA. In this new role, Ms. Hartman will work with other state directors to address national priorities including employment of formerly incarcerated individuals; certification pathways, recognition and recruitment of correctional educators; terminology in corrections, technology and juvenile justice/youthful learners. Superintendent Hartman will also share and gain invaluable knowledge from other state directors about best practices, services provided, and correctional education while also sharing successful and innovative practices in Texas.

Mr. O'Banion said that the conference provided attendees an opportunity to speak with vendors and industry partners about state-of-the-art technology-based resources designed to improve correctional education. Windham staff at the conference were able to meet with exhibitors and make recommendations about how these resources can improve Windham's educational services.

Mr. O'Banion concluded that overall, the CEA conference highlighted that Windham is a leader in correctional education. Through the conference, WSD was able to promote the hard work of Windham's teachers, support staff, and administrators while creating new opportunities for the district and students. Mr. O'Banion thanked the Board and opened the floor to any questions. There were none.

The Chairman thanked Mr. O'Banion.

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

### **Family Literacy**

Chairman O'Daniel stated that Windham School District's Family Literacy Program reached new milestones in September as it enrolled its second cohort of students. The program is focused on breaking the cycle of generational incarceration by providing incarcerated parents opportunities to become active partners in their children's education.

Mr. O'Daniel said that last year, Windham surveyed over 10,000 residents of TDCJ about generational incarceration and the results showed a concerning pattern. More than half of

participants surveyed indicated that at least one of their immediate family members was incarcerated while they were growing up and attending school. Additionally, participants were asked how many children they have and the total response showed a total of almost 13,000 children at home.

Mr. Chairman said that to help combat this epidemic, Windham School District created the Family Literacy program to teach incarcerated parents how to support their children and help them succeed academically. The district piloted the program in March of 2021 across four campuses. At the end of the fiscal year, the district expanded the program to three additional campuses. Now, there are approximately 150 total students enrolled in the program.

The Chairman stated that the two-year program is broken into multiple phases. In the first phase, students complete a parenting class to teach them skills that will help them support their children and be involved in their children's education. Windham acquired new curriculum for the parenting component of the program. This curriculum focuses on modules such as discipline versus punishment, technology troubles, reunification and encouragement. In addition, the incarcerated parent learns about educational benchmarks in various grade levels, reviewing their child's homework, and reading to their child.

The Chairman said that the second phase of the program allows students to use the knowledge and skills gained to interact with their children, their children's teacher, and their children's caregivers. During this phase, Windham Family Literacy Coordinators arrange interactive activities such as parent-teacher conferences and book readings on virtual platforms.

Mr. O'Daniel stated that to complete the parent-teacher conferences, Windham collaborates with the school districts and the children's caregivers. These conferences allow the incarcerated parent to be an active participant in their child's education by hearing directly from the teacher about their child's academic performance in class and areas they can help their child improve.

Chairman O'Daniel said that the second activity allows the incarcerated parent a chance to interact with their children through a book reading. In this activity, Windham purchases a book for both the resident and their child for them to read together at the same time on a virtual platform. Prior to reading the book with their child, the incarcerated parent learns skills they can share with their child about pointing out the main characters, recalling information, and understanding the life lessons of the book. This literacy activity allows both the parent and their child to bond over a shared experience of reading the book together. After the reading, the incarcerated parent is able to review the recording of the video, assess areas their child can improve, and follow up with their child about the findings.

Mr. Chairman said that in the third and final stage of the program, students continue interacting with their children and begin mentoring new program participants.

Mr. Chairman said that although the second cohort of students are just starting the program, the first cohort of students are well into the second phase of the program. To date, 10 students have participated in parent-teacher conferences, and two students have completed the book reading activity with their child. These interactions have been eye-opening to both the incarcerated students as well as the program coordinators.

The Chairman stated that as a special treat for the Board, he would like to share a video recording of the literacy activity. In this recording, one of the students will be reading a book with his son.

*A recording was played of a Family Literacy student reading a book with his child via Zoom.*

The Chairman concluded that from the video, it is apparent that the Family Literacy Program is a valuable component to improving the relationship between incarcerated parents and their children. In the future, Windham hopes to expand the program by partnering with higher education, school districts, and non-profit community organizations to provide more resources to participants and children of the program.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE**

Cesar Trevino, Information Technology Supervisor for Windham, thanked the Board for the opportunity to present and stated that his presentation would cover the Windham School District Information Technology Plan and its updates.

Mr. Trevino stated that in October 2020, Mr. O'Banion requested \$3.25M in committed funds for a three-year technology plan that includes the expansion of technology and technical infrastructure for student instruction. The multi-faceted technology plan started with pilot sites and will be expanded to other campuses. These multi-year initiatives will be incorporated into our annual budgets.

Mr. Trevino stated that as technology improves, it is imperative the district stays abreast with the latest advancements to ensure curriculum meets current standards. As WSD students return to their communities, the district wants to ensure that they are prepared and familiar with technological developments over recent years. The three-year technology plan will allow WSD to do this by expanding technology and technical infrastructure for student instruction.

Cesar said that specifically, the plan will enhance student computer lab functionality, including secure online access for specific sites; increase laptops for teachers; and provide devices for interactive activities for the family literacy program. In addition, Windham is preparing to launch a new program that incorporates virtual reality goggles to simulate instructional activities. Possible simulations include dissecting a frog in a science class, interacting with employers, and using an ATM. These items will support student instruction, assessment for high school and high school equivalency courses, and career and technical education industry certifications.

Mr. Trevino said that as the district is one year into this three-year plan, he would like to provide an overview of the current IT initiatives.

Cesar stated that a key component of this plan is the expansion of WSD student computer lab functionality and technology. To improve Windham's computer labs, a process was started that will replace technology components, such as servers, thin clients, and network switches, at 21 campuses. The items replaced at these campuses will be repurposed in other educational areas.

At the Matthew Gaines High School, IT installed 20 laptops and implemented a process to provide secure, online access to educational resources and testing websites. This online access will allow students to obtain the credits needed to achieve their high school diploma. For the first time this past June, students took the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, also known as the STAAR test, online and received outstanding results. Due to the success of the High School Program at the Matthew Gaines High School located at the Ferguson campus and the recent passage of House Bill 30, Windham is expanding the high school program to the Ellis, Hilltop, and Woodman campuses. Computer labs at these campuses will be updated similarly to the Matthew Gaines computer lab to serve students obtaining their high school diploma.

Mr. Trevino reported that to assist in academic and Career and Technical Education programs, Windham will distribute 355 laptops to teachers with pre-loaded content to be used in the classroom and working remotely, as necessary. Information on these laptops will include instructor material, resources for high school equivalency, resume template in compliance with House Bill 918, and an electronic job application for students. IT is in the final process of preparing these laptops for distribution in November.

Cesar said that Windham is integrating virtual reality software into the curriculum to help students become more familiar with technology they will encounter upon reentry into their communities. Windham has selected two vendors that can provide virtual reality content for WSD academic, CTE, and life skills programs. The first vendor, Tech-Labs, provides content geared towards vocational scenarios and workplace safety training. The second vendor, PIXO, will partner with Windham to generate content based on instructional needs and day-to-day activities such as job interviews and using the self-checkout at the supermarket.

Mr. Trevino said that as it was reported in this Board meeting, the Family Literacy program helps students become active partners in their children's education. Part of this includes Windham participants interacting with their children, their children's caregivers, and their children's teachers via virtual platforms. Information Technology assisted with this implementation by providing laptops, tablets, web cameras, as well as internet access. Through this equipment, Windham students are able to participate in parent-teacher conferences and read books with their children.

Mr. Trevino concluded that Windham's Information Technology team and other district staff are always exploring additional ways to bring vital resources to the district's students. Recently, IT has started exploring new initiatives including a pilot program to provide CTE students Chromebooks to test for their third-party, industry certifications; Augmented Reality; and 3D Educational resources. Through the implementation of software, equipment and solutions such as those mentioned in this presentation, the IT department is able to help support the district in accomplishing its vision, mission, and goals. Mr. Trevino paused for questions.

Chair member Eric Nichols commented that whenever they visit units and see the IT resources, it is apparent that they need to be augmented, but they do not oversee the fantastic work that is being done on both the educational and vocational fronts. Mr. Nichols stated that they appreciate the initiative and said that everything seen from preparing inmates that are students in the

Windham School District for a life in the free world is very uplifting. Mr. Nichols said that they appreciate all the work that is being done by Mr. Trevino and his department as well as the honorees and the others in the Windham School District that are making the programs happen.

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A  
RETENTION STIPEND FOR WINDHAM EMPLOYEES**

Robert O'Banion, Director of Operations, presented a Resolution to the Board requesting a retention stipend for Windham School District staff. He stated to please turn to tab F of the Board packet, where a copy of the Resolution can be found. The document outlines an expenditure of district funds to provide compensation to staff to encourage retention while meeting workplace challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. As noted in Superintendent Hartman's August report to the Board, Windham experienced an increase in staff retirements and resignations in 2021. Mr. O'Banion stated that he believe the stipend will be a positive gesture and support employee retention. It is important to note that exempt employees within WSD do not earn overtime or comp time for increased hours worked during business days, and WSD staff has worked diligently to meet the needs of the district. The resolution would authorize a \$1,250 one-time payment for future duties to all staff employed in the district on December 6, 2021 who continue employment through May 31, 2022. Lapsed salaries will be used to fund the stipend, which will be provided to staff in December. WSD asked for Board approval of this resolution. Mr. O'Banion paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Judge Molly Francis moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the Resolution for a Retention Stipend for the WSD employees as presented and that the Chairman and Secretary sign the resolution for the retention stipend for WSD employees.*

*Judge Faith Johnson seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.*

**DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE  
ANNUAL REVIEW OF WSD BOARD POLICY WBP-11.12, "INVESTMENT POLICY"  
AND RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE INVESTMENT POLICY**

Robert O'Banion, WSD Chief Financial Officer, referenced tab G in the Board packet and said that he is presenting the Windham Board Policy 11.12 known as the "Investment Policy" for annual review. He stated that this is in accordance with Chapter 2256 of the Texas Government Code, Public Funds Investment Act, requiring the Investment Officer to report to the Board of

Trustees any updates to conform with the Government Code. He stated that he is pleased to report that there are no substantive changes to the policy, only minor adjustments to the dates and member names, and a slight edit to a hierarchical reference. The District asks for Board approval of the policy as presented along with a resolution adopting the investment policy. Mr. O'Banion paused for questions. There were none.

Chairman O'Daniel asked the board for a motion.

*Sichan Siv moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the annual review of WSD Board Policy WBP-11.12, "Investment Policy" and resolution adopting the investment policy as presented and that the Chairman sign the resolution adopting the policy.*

*Dr. Rodney Burrow seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.*

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

Michelle Owen, Department Director of Business Services, stated that WSD is requesting approval for a purchase over \$500,000. She stated that WSD recommend awarding this purchase to Aztec Software totaling \$872,500 for student instructional software licenses. This contract will renew licensing at 84 computer lab sites across the district to support student academic achievement. The contract also includes 13 license renewals at Title I sites that support our 21 and under students. This purchase is being made through the Education Service Center Region 19 – Allied States Cooperative in El Paso, TX. Consistent with all of the district's purchasing cooperatives, the contract is bid and negotiated through the educational service center who does not charge any fees to the Windham School District. This license agreement is for a ten-month period beginning November 2021 and extends through August 2022. This software provides diagnostic, prescriptive, computer-based instruction to support and enhance the academic and Title I programs. Funding for this purchase is included in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. Mrs. Owen then paused for questions. There were none.

*Eric Nichols moved that WSD Board of Trustees approve the WSD Board Purchase and Contracts over \$500,000 as presented.*

*Judge Molly Francis seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously when called to a vote.*

Mr. Chairman abstained from voting on the discussion, consideration, and possible action regarding purchases and contracts over \$500,000.

Chairman O’Daniel thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees will be Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in Huntsville, Texas.

**ADJOURNED**

There being no further business for the regular session, Chairman O’Daniel adjourned the 326<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Windham School District Board of Trustees at 9:35 a.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.*