

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

245th MEETING

The Windham School District Board of Trustees met in session on Wednesday, March 26, 2008, at the Hilton Hotel in Austin, Texas.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christina Melton Crain, Chairman
Oliver Bell, Vice Chairman
Gregory (Greg) Coleman, Secretary
Eric Gambrell
Pastor C. L. Jackson
Janice Harris Lord
Terrell McCombs
Tom Mechler
Leopoldo (Leo) Vasquez, III

WINDHAM STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Debbie Roberts, Superintendent
Marjie Haynes

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL
JUSTICE STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brad Livingston
Bryan Collier
Melinda Bozarth

CONVENED

Christina Melton Crain, Chairman, called the meeting of the Windham School District (WSD) Board of Trustees (Board) to order on Wednesday, March 26, 2008, at 1:35 p.m. in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, the Open Meetings Act. A quorum was present and the 245th meeting of the Board was declared open.

Chairman Crain reported that the Board was committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on topics posted on the meeting agenda, as well as public comment on issues within its jurisdiction as provided in Board Rule 300.1. Persons interested in providing presentations at the meeting were required to complete a registration card and submit it at least ten (10) minutes prior to the meeting's posted start time. As no cards were received prior to the required deadline, the Board would not hear public presentations on posted agenda topics or public comments at this meeting.

RECOGNITIONS

Chairman Crain acknowledged Kyle Mitchell from the Governor's Office who was in attendance and thanked him for his interest.

DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING CONSENT ITEMS

Chairman Crain called the Board's attention to the Consent Items on the agenda (Attachment A), which consisted of the minutes of the January 23, 2008 meeting, multiple employment requests, appraisers for the 2007-2008 school year and approval of excused absences.

Chairman Crain asked if there were any comments, objections or amendments to the Consent Items. Noting there were none, she stated the Consent Items were approved as submitted.

PRESENTATION ON THE EVALUATION OF WSD VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Chairman Crain introduced Marjie Haynes, WSD Director of the Division of Instruction, who provided a PowerPoint presentation (Attachment B). During the 79th legislative session, HB 2837 was passed, requiring the WSD to conduct an evaluation and analysis of vocational training services.

The bill requires WSD to address:

- The type of training services provided,
- The type of employment obtained upon release,
- Whether employment was related to training received,
- The difference between earnings on the date employment and the first anniversary of that date, and
- Employment retention factors

WSD submitted data to the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) in December 2006 and December 2007. The LBB then published reports in January 2007 and January 2008.

For the January 2008 report, release data from April 1, 2005, through March 31, 2006, was used. Of the 69,883 offenders released during that time period, 43% were excluded primarily due to lack of valid social security numbers or detainers. Ms. Haynes reviewed the outcomes of the effectiveness study with the Board.

Findings concluded that:

- Offenders who had attained a GED or high school diploma retained employment longer than those who had not.
- In the Prison/State Jail Group, offenders with college degrees who completed vocational training gained employment at a higher rate than those with college degrees who did not receive vocational training.

For offenders in the vocational completion group, college degrees and industry certifications were the two (2) highest retention factors. Currently, fees associated with obtaining an industry certification are the responsibility of the offender and many offenders cannot afford these fees. Based on the study's findings, it appears that the provision of funding to pay industry certification fees for offenders could potentially yield a significant return on investment.

Future considerations include:

- Identifying Social Security Numbers (SSN), which are necessary to identify employment and earnings, remains a concern.
- Approximately 28% (19,409) of the releasees excluded were due to invalid SSNs.
- Alternate methods of identifying SSNs or employment and earnings should continue to be explored.

WSD must continue to review workforce data from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), align Career and Technical Education (CTE), provide training in areas that lead to employment for ex-offenders, make sure the District continues to enroll students in appropriate CTE Courses, continue to study the importance of industry certifications, and do everything possible to help offenders obtain industry certifications.

Chairman Crain stated that this report will be invaluable as WSD goes into the next legislative session. The report will allow the leadership to see the benefits of vocational training.

Leo Vasquez stated that, as he recalled, the report's findings were not as impressive as in previous years and asked Ms. Haynes if she had compared this data with prior years.

Ms. Haynes responded that WSD has only been doing this report for two (2) years and she did not recall a more significant difference in the previous year's report. Last year, the report looked at one (1) group, while this year's report divided that group into two, with three (3) more subgroups located within each of those groups. This report is a little more complicated than last year's report but she did not feel it was significantly different.

Ms. Roberts stated that an analysis was done on the aggregate data of the offenders who received vocational training as opposed to those who had not received training. Those offenders who had participated in (and completed) vocational training earned an aggregate of \$10 million more in their first year of employment. When industry certification is added to the training, those offenders earned about \$7 million more than their vocationally trained non-industry certified counterparts. WSD plans to include this information in the next report.

With the amount of offenders excluded, Janice Lord asked if the report's findings would really be valid, and if WSD could tell in each subgroup where the differences were statistically significant in terms of real statistical research as opposed to just percentages.

Ms. Haynes responded that WSD did not run this information through a statistical software package. WSD was asked to provide the data to the LBB. The LBB took the data and developed a report. She was not aware if the LBB conducted any type of statistical testing.

Oliver Bell noted WSD had a smaller number of exclusions during this reporting period, which would indicate WSD is headed in the right direction.

Tom Mechler questioned that if an offender gained employment without going through the TWC, would their employment data be included in this report. Ms. Haynes responded that it would not be part of the report.

Chairman Crain asked Ms. Haynes to send a link to the LBB report to Susan McHenry in the Board Office so she could forward it to the Board members.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Roberts informed the Board that she and Ms. Haynes had attended the Correctional Education Association (CEA) Leadership Forum, March 8-11, 2008, in Annapolis, Maryland. Ms. Haynes made the same, previously reviewed, presentation at that conference along with delegates from Florida and Indiana, who had completed similar reports in their states.

As part of the CEA meeting, Ms. Roberts participated in a meeting of the state correctional directors of education from across the nation and noted that a very interesting piece of information was shared. The eligibility criteria for the Youthful Offender Grant may be expanding to cover offenders as high as 35 years of age. If so, this will expand the number of offenders that WSD is able to serve. In addition, there may be a funding increase associated with the expansion.

The WSD statewide administrators' meeting was held in Austin, February 19 and 20. This was the first statewide meeting since 2002 and provided an opportunity for all administrators, primarily principals, to meet in one (1) place. It was a great success and numerous positive comments about the content of the conference were received. Overwhelmingly, principals sited the ability to network as the most beneficial aspect of the conference. At this point, the District plans to continue these meetings every other year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

As noted earlier, no cards were received therefore, no public comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Crain adjourned the 245th meeting of the WSD Board of Trustees at 2:14 p.m.