
**HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
INTERIM REPORT 2000**

**A REPORT TO THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
77TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE**

**DAVID LENGFELD
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Committee On
WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

December 11, 2000

DAVID LENGEFELD
Chairman

P.O. Box 2910
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The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney
Speaker, Texas House of Representatives
Members of the Texas House of Representatives
Texas State Capitol, Rm. 2W.13
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Speaker and Fellow Members:

The Select Committee on WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT of the Seventy-Sixth Legislature hereby submits its interim report including recommendations and drafted legislation for consideration by the Seventy-Seventh Legislature.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVID LENGEFELD, Chairman

Patrick Haggerty

Ray Allen

Harold Dutton, Jr.

Dan Ellis

Todd Staples

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 76th Legislature, the Honorable James E. “Pete” Laney, Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, appointed six members to the House Select Committee on Windham School District. The committee membership included the following: David Lengefeld, Chair; Patrick Haggerty; Ray Allen; Harold Dutton, Jr.; Dan Ellis; and Todd Staples.

During the interim, the Select Committee was assigned one charge by the Speaker:

1. The Select Committee on the Windham School District shall study the mission and programs of the Windham School District to determine if the goals of the district are clear and appropriate, and if the goals to reduce recidivism and improve reintegration into society are being met.

The committee has completed its hearings and investigations and has issued its final report. The members approved all sections of the report.

Finally, the committee wishes to express appreciation to the committee clerk, Katherine Arnold, for her work in preparing the report; to the staff of the committee members; to the agencies that assisted the committee and supplied valuable information for the preparation of the report, in particular, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Windham School District executive staff, Criminal Justice Policy Council, Texas Education Agency, and the citizens who testified at the hearings for their time and efforts on behalf of the committee.

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

INTERIM STUDY CHARGE

CHARGE The Select Committee on the Windham School District shall study the mission and programs of the Windham School District to determine if the goals of the district are clear and appropriate, and if the goals to reduce recidivism and improve reintegration into society are being met.



SELECT COMMITTEE STUDY OF WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT



SELECT COMMITTEE STUDY OF WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHARGE: The Select Committee on the Windham School District shall study the mission and programs of the Windham School District to determine if the goals of the district are clear and appropriate, and if the goals to reduce recidivism and improve reintegration into society are being met.

BACKGROUND

In 1969, the then Texas Board of Corrections established the Windham School District (WSD), the nation's first correctional school district. The statutorily established goals of WSD are to (1) reduce recidivism; (2) reduce the cost of confinement; (3) increase the success of former offenders in obtaining and maintaining employment; and (4) provide an incentive to offenders to behave in positive ways during confinement.¹ In addition to the statutory goals, WSD has as its mission the provision of appropriate educational programming and services to meet the needs of the eligible offender population in TDCJ and reduce recidivism by assisting offenders in becoming responsible, productive members of their communities.² To achieve its mission, WSD operates educational, vocational, and life skills training programs in various institutional and state jail units of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Because WSD operates within the confines of the Texas prison system and serves only incarcerated offenders, the functioning of the school district is far different from that of a free world public school district. First, of utmost importance is maintaining security, order and discipline within the unit. Therefore, administrators, instructors and students alike must abide by the strict security rules and regulations in place at the TDCJ Units. Also, the demands of an offender's prison work and participation in rehabilitation programs may create difficulties in providing educational services to the target population. Finally, should a student incur a disciplinary violation, he may have his classification status changed which may prohibit him from attending classes.

The second differentiation between WSD and free-world school districts is that WSD cannot educate every inmate because of capacity and funding constraints. For FY 1999, WSD was staffed to provide services for approximately 24,000 offenders at any one time, or 18% of the 131,256 offender population.³ In spite of this, WSD was able to provide services for over 56,000 offenders during FY 1999 due to turnover. Because WSD is limited in the amount of offenders it can educate at any one time, the district is forced to decide who has priority. Therefore, WSD has determined that those offenders with lower education achievement levels who are closest to release and are not a security risk receive priority for educational programs.

The Select Committee on Windham School District, chaired by Representative David Lengefeld, convened in four public hearings to hear testimony relating to the Windham School District, including, but not limited to, WSD funding, teacher issues, vocational education programs, Project RIO, and WSD governance. Three hearings were held in Austin, Texas on February 29, 2000, June 20, 2000 and August 29, 2000, and one hearing was held in Gatesville, Texas on April 11, 2000.

WINDHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE

The Windham School District is divided into five regions which parallel the regions of TDCJ. Each WSD region has an assistant superintendent who reports to the Superintendent of Schools. Like other public school districts, WSD is monitored by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Further, the TEA acts as a conduit for funneling both state and federal monies to fund the district.

Unlike a public school district, however, WSD does not have an elected school board. WSD is governed by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, who, for the purpose of administering Windham School District, is the WSD Board of Trustees. The TDCJ/Windham School District Board of Trustees is a nine-member, non-paid board appointed by the governor for staggered, six-year terms. The Texas Board of Criminal Justice/Windham School District Board appoints the Windham Superintendent. The board develops and defines policies of the TDCJ and WSD. In addition to the Board of Trustees, WSD also reports to the Board's Programs and Services Committee regarding programmatic issues.

Ms. Carol Young, Vice Chairman of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, offered testimony on June 20, 2000, concerning her participation on the Board and the communication between the Board and the WSD. In addition to serving on the Board since her appointment in 1995, Ms. Young also testified that she is a member of the Board's Programs and Services Committee and also acts as liaison between the Board and WSD. As an overview, Ms. Young offered an outline of the governing process of WSD with respect to the coordination of efforts between the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, its committees and the Windham Board of Trustees. Ms. Young stated that prior to every regularly scheduled board meeting, the programs and services committee as well as the Windham Board of Trustees meet to receive updates on the progress of WSD and to discuss any pending issues. During these meetings, the Superintendent of the district, Mr. Mike Morrow, gives the members a full report on the state of the school district and pending administrative issues. When questioned regarding the amount of time allotted to discuss WSD, Ms. Young stated that with respect to the full Board meetings, WSD may be allotted only 15 minutes to present and discuss any pending issues; however, with respect to the Programs and services Committee, much more time is devoted to discussing WSD. Ms. Young further testified that in approximately 3 meetings a year, the entire meeting is devoted to WSD.

In response to an additional question from the committee, Ms. Young testified that she believes the members of the Board have a good understanding as to what is happening with WSD. She testified that unlike a traditional public school board, the members of the Board of Trustees take an active interest in keeping track of the activities of WSD. Superintendent Morrow sends out monthly reports to the Board in the months between scheduled meetings to ensure the members are apprized of any issues, problems, concerns or successes. Further, Ms. Young testified all members are encouraged to contact either her or Mr. Morrow with any questions or concerns, and many take advantage of this option.

While the Windham School District may be a unique entity unlike any other school district in the state, Ms. Young does not believe that its governance is hampered in any way. Conversely, she believes that members take a more active role than in a regular public school district and, thus, are more involved with the inner workings of the district and have a better understanding of the programs and services it offers.

Unlike Ms. Young, Ms. Kay Ali, a former teacher with the Windham School District does not believe the Texas Board of Criminal Justice is effective in governing the district. In testimony offered on June 20, 2000, Ms. Ali testified that she believes the Board is not set up to appropriately handle the concerns of the teachers and counselors, and further she believes a concerted effort is made to avoid having to deal with problems which arise. Ms. Ali testified that in her opinion this lack of effective leadership has led to a decline in morale, which is an overall detriment to the District.

TEACHER ISSUES

Ms. Marjorie Wall, Legislative Liaison of the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA), addressed issues of concern of Windham teachers who are TSTA members. Ms. Wall stated:

- the Board of Windham sets personnel policies
- each employee works 220-226 days
- teachers must be certified
- salary is set by the board and may be commensurate with surrounding school districts
- employees are covered by TRS, Worker's Compensation and covered by health insurance under ERS

Windham teachers do not have or are not covered for:

- contracts for service
- right to due process under termination
- right to a hearing examiner
- right to appeal to the TEA Commissioner
- appraisal process
- duty free lunch
- planning and preparation
- staff development requirements
- minimum salary requirements

Windham teachers are covered by Chapter 19 of the Texas Education Code only and do not fall under Chapter 21 that covers public school teachers. Chapter 21 delineates in law basic due process rights and job protections that Texas public school teachers enjoy. Some of these are:

- the right to either a term or continuing contract;
- deadlines for notifying a teacher that his/her contract will be non-renewed and the right to a non-renewal hearing;
- the right to fair dismissal or, in other words, termination only for good cause;
- the right to be notified in writing of the reasons for termination, and the right, upon receiving a termination notice, to request an independent hearing examiner to hear their case. The independent hearing examiner hears both the board and the teacher's's side, and makes a recommendation to the board as whether the teacher should or should not be terminated;

-
- and
the right to appeal the decision of the board to the Commissioner of Education.

TSTA believes that Windham teachers, who have jobs that are more dangerous yet are very dedicated professionals who work hard to reduce the recidivism rate of prisoners, should also be afforded these basic due process rights and job protections.

In response to the testimony of Ms. Wall, the committee heard testimony from Mr. Mike Morrow, Superintendent of WSD. Mr. Morrow emphasized that WSD teachers must have at least seven years of teaching experience in order to be considered for employment. Further, Mr. Morrow stated that approximately 60% of WSD instructors possess advanced degrees (i.e. masters or doctoral degrees) and WSD has one of the lowest turnover rates, if not the lowest, of all school districts in the state of Texas. Mr. Morrow believes this may be due in part to the fact that all WSD teachers receive the benefit of state health insurance.

To address the concerns raised by Ms. Wall, Mr. Morrow stated that while WSD teachers do not fall under Chapter 21, the Board of Trustees for Windham School District has promulgated many policies and procedures which make similar provisions as those found in Chapter 21. Specifically, Mr. Morrow stated:

- WSD teachers do have and are protected by contracts as specified by Board Policy 7.05 Contract and Noncontract Employment.
- WSD teachers do have rights to due process for both terminations and nonrenewals, again under Board Policy 7.05.
- WSD teachers are appraised under the PDAS, the State-mandated appraisal system, as specified by Board Policy 7.18, Appraisal Policy.
- WSD teaches do have duty-free lunch; they are never required to have lunch with the offenders.
- WSD teachers are scheduled for one hour per day for planning and preparation, as specified by WSD procedures 7.09, Hours of Duty.
- WSD does have staff development requirements. Policy 7.13, Employee Training, specifies that ten days per year will be set aside for planning and staff development.
- WSD follows the state salary schedule. Every teacher was afforded the \$3,000 increase mandated by the last Legislative session.
- Teachers have contracts that are comparable to term contracts.
- WSD follows State guidelines for notification of nonrenewals and the right to a nonrenewal hearing as specified by Policy 7.05, Contract and Noncontract Employment.
- WSD Policy 7.05 also provides for termination for a good cause, and lists the reasons.
- WSD Policy 7.05 specifies that nonprobationary teachers will be notified, in writing, of the reasons for termination, and the right to a hearing.

WINDHAM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

BACKGROUND

As stated earlier, the Windham School District was established to provide educational programs for incarcerated offenders. WSD provides educational, vocational, and life skills programs to offenders in both the TDCJ institutional division as well as state jail divisions. To determine the effectiveness of the WSD programs, the Criminal Justice Policy Council conducted extensive research regarding the educational achievement of offenders, the effect education has on the ability of an offender to obtain post-release employment and finally the effect education has on recidivism rates. The CJPC studies focused on three main areas: academic programs, vocational education programs, and participation in Project RIO. In addition to the three areas studied by the CJPC, the committee also received testimony concerning life skills training (CHANGES and cognitive skills programs) which is currently being offered on many units.

ACADEMIC GAIN AND ACHIEVEMENT

To gauge the effectiveness of the Windham School District in providing academic educational gain and achievement for its participants, the Criminal Justice Policy Council, in the first part of its three tiered study of WSD, evaluated the educational achievement of inmates participating in WSD academic programs. The study followed 32,020 inmates released from TDCJ in FYs 1997-1998 and focused on their academic gain during their incarceration.⁴ For the purposes of this study, academic gain is defined as an increase in the offender's educational achievement score (EA) which measures the functioning grade level of the offender and achievement is defined as reaching a defined educational goal, such as learning to read. In addition, the study classifies inmates into groups by their EA scores: functionally illiterate offenders are those who have an EA score of below 6th grade level; non-readers are those who have an EA reading score of below 4th grade level and GED/College Path offenders are those with a 6th grade level or higher.

Dr. Tony Fabelo, Director of the Criminal Justice Policy Council, provided testimony to the committee regarding the CJPC study and findings. Prior to relating the findings of the CJPC study, Dr. Fabelo couched his remarks by stating that unlike a regular public school district, WSD operates under policy and operational constraints which alter not only the teaching provided by the instructors, but also the manner in which it is provided. Dr. Fabelo testified that participation in the program is limited by funding and facility space availability. Therefore, participation in the WSD programs is prioritized to those students who are two to three years from their release date. Additionally, security always takes precedence over education, sometimes to the point of limiting the amount of time which can be devoted to teaching. Dr. Fabelo further testified that the prison population is difficult to educate, due an average educational level of 6.6 grades, low IQ scores, and histories of mental illness and substance abuse.

Dr. Fabelo testified that the study identified of the 23,822 offenders who were eligible to participate in adult education programs, 68%, or 16,205, participated.⁵ Further, of the number of offenders participating, 78% of the non-readers participated compared to 74% of the functionally illiterate offenders and 63% of the GED/college path offenders. In terms of achievement, Dr. Fabelo stated that, overall, WSD students gained an average of 1.5 grade levels during their incarceration period and each student, on average,

participated in 604 hours of education programs during their incarceration period. Broken down, Dr. Fabelo testified that non-readers advanced an average of 1.5 grade levels in 894 hours, functionally illiterate offenders advanced 1.7 grade levels in 755 hours and GED/college path offenders advanced 1.2 grade levels in 431 hours. With reference to achievement, Dr. Fabelo testified that 46% of non-readers became readers, 40% of the functionally illiterate became functionally literate, 59% of the GED/college path offenders earned a GED or attended college classes, and 12% of those college eligible participated in college.

In light of all of the limitations, Dr. Fabelo testified that WSD performed well in key educational indicators. Specifically, Dr. Fabelo stated that WSD was able to prioritize services for offenders with the greatest need for education, increased participant educational achievement during their term of incarceration, provided educational services to a population that failed to achieve in the public school system, and offered GED testing to all eligible inmates regardless of participation.

ACADEMIC EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The second tier in the CJPC study of the Windham School District is the examination of the relationship between education in prison and post-release employment. In addition to looking at employment, the study also focused on the wages earned during the first year after an inmate was released from prison. The data for this report was obtained from the Unemployment Wage Record database maintained by the Texas Workforce Commission. Specifically, the report focused on 30,207 offenders release from TDCJ in FYs 1997-1998. Out of this number, 10,214 participated in WSD academic programs.⁶ Of the 10,214 who participated in WSD academic programs, 4,372 were GED path offenders, 5,842 were functionally illiterate and 2,254 were non-readers. After their participation in the academic program, 64% (2,783) earned a GED, 41% (2,421) became literate and 47% (1,062) became readers.

In general, Dr. Fabelo testified that the higher the educational achievement, the higher the average percent employed and the higher the average wages earned in the first year following release. Specifically, out of those who stayed a non-reader, 56% were employed at a wage of \$7,978 compared to 66% employed and a wage of \$7,928 (a decrease of \$50) for those who became a reader. Of those who remained illiterate, 61% were employed at a wage of \$7,582 compared to 72% employed and a wage of \$8,075 (an increase of \$493) for those who became literate. Finally, out of those who did not earn a GED, 72% were employed at a wage of \$7,954 compared to 77% employed at a wage of \$8,912 (an increase of \$958) for those who did earn a GED.

In conclusion, Dr. Fabelo testified that educational achievement in the Windham School District is directly associated with increased employment and wages earned after release; however, those in the non-reader and functionally illiterate study groups required the most hours of instruction, 1,005 and 827 respectively, and demonstrated lower employment rates and wage gains when compared to those in the GED study group. Dr. Fabelo suggested that it may be wiser for WSD to reverse the current prioritization practice in favor of those acquiring GEDs and vocational certificates in light of the wage gains and lower educational instruction hours demonstrated by the GED and vocational study groups.

ACADEMIC EDUCATION AND RECIDIVISM

The final tier of the CJPC study of the Windham School District involves examining the relationship between educational achievement in prison and post-release recidivism for inmates tracked for two years after their release. For the purposes of the study, recidivism is defined as the reoccurrence of criminal behavior or supervision violations resulting in a re-incarceration for inmates released from prison in fiscal years 1997 and 1998. The CJPC obtained re-incarceration data from the Texas Department of Public Safety as well as the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Specifically, this study tracks the re-incarceration of 25,980 first time release offenders who were released from TDCJ units between September 1, 1996 and May 31, 1998.⁷ When the study is further broken down to those participating in WSD academic educational programs, the study groups include 1,949 non-readers (47% of whom improved their EA reading score to 4.0 and above), 4,947 functionally illiterate offenders (41% of whom increased their EA score to 6.0 and above), and 3,731 GED/college path offenders (64% of whom earned a GED).

On August 29, 2000, Dr. Fabelo testified that overall, out of the 25,980 first time release offenders in the study, 21,806, or 84%, did not recidivate after two years, while 4,174, or 16%, did recidivate. In contrast, a study of all offenders for the same time period, including those released for the first time, reflects an overall 20% recidivism rate. When looking at the academic study group, or those who became functionally literate or earned a GED, of the 5,079 (59%) offenders who demonstrated academic achievement, 832, or 16%, recidivated compared to 660, or 18% of the 3,599 (41%) of offenders who did not demonstrate academic achievement.⁸ With respect to non-readers who became readers, the readers demonstrated lower recidivism rates.

In further testimony, Dr. Fabelo stated that the greater the increase in the offender's educational achievement score, the greater the reduction in recidivism. For example, those who became a reader and gained to a 4.0-4.9 EA demonstrated a 17% recidivism rate, compared to readers who gained to a 7.0+ EA and demonstrated a 9% recidivism rate. Overall, for all educational levels, academic achievement was associated with an 11% lower recidivism rate than non-achievement.

WINDHAM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

BACKGROUND

Career and technology education, commonly known as vocational education, is an integral part of the Windham School District and is widely utilized on various TDCJ units throughout the state. The vocational training in WSD provides occupational training and industrial certification in 40 trade areas which may lead to a vocational certificate. Secondary level vocational programs offer full length courses which provide 600 hours of training focused on industry standards and certification, while short courses ranging from 45-200 hours of instruction are designed to prepare offenders for prison jobs or provide basic skills prior to release. Students completing these programs may earn industry certifications in 31 trade areas and apprenticeship training programs are offered in 32 crafts, all of which are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition to secondary level programs, offenders may also participate in post-

secondary vocational programs which provide training in 19 course areas, are normally 6 months in length, and 20 semester hours of college credit are awarded for satisfactory completion.⁹

In order to participate in the vocational education programs, WSD recommends that an offender demonstrate an educational achievement level of 7.0 or higher, although some with an achievement level of 6.0 were allowed to participate. Further, those participants who did not have a GED must be concurrently enrolled in adult education courses to raise their educational achievement level to participate in vocational programs.¹⁰

Due to the wide use of vocational education within WSD and its benefits to offenders and TDCJ alike, the committee requested testimony regarding the process for admittance into the vocational education program, how the program coordinates with outside industries to provide after release positions, whether the vocational education program helps in reducing the recidivism rates for those who participate, and, finally, how the program works within the state jail system. Ms. Marjie Haynes, a representative from the Windham School District, offered testimony on June 20, 2000, directed at educating the committee about the vocational education program. Further testimony with respect to effectiveness of reducing recidivism and the effect achieving a vocational certificate has on post-release employment was offered by Dr. Tony Fabelo.

SITE SELECTION FOR VOCATIONAL COURSES

When determining where to locate a vocational course, there are three main items that WSD and TDCJ evaluate, stated Ms. Haynes. These items include the profile of the unit, the space available and possible coordination of courses with the Texas Correctional Industries (TCI).

Ms. Haynes testified that evaluation of the unit profile is the first step in determining whether a unit can support vocational education courses. Included in this evaluation is the type of population housed on the unit, specifically whether the unit is designated for primarily psychiatric patients, chronic care for medical problems, older offenders, etc. By doing so, Ms. Haynes stated, this determines whether there is an adequate eligible student population to validate placement of a vocational course on that unit. Considerations which might make a student not eligible for participation in a vocational course may include custody level, medical status and age. Ms. Haynes stated, for example, it would not be practical to place a construction sciences course on a unit which houses primarily older offenders with medical problems. Finally, the last concern in evaluating the unit profile is the interest demonstrated by the offenders.

Once the unit profile evaluation is completed, WSD and TDCJ must then determine whether there is adequate space to support the course. For example, certain courses may require extensive space and may have large utility requirements, such as courses in electrical, plumbing and ventilation. Further, bed space must be evaluated to decide whether placement of a course would be feasible based on the need to transfer offenders on and off the unit for participation in the program.

The final evaluation criteria is coordination with TCI in an effort to place vocational courses on units with corresponding factories and plants. By co-locating corresponding vocational courses and factories, WSD

and TDCJ can enjoy both cost savings as well as a ready population of offenders to utilize their skills and training.

PROCESS FOR ADMITTANCE

Ms. Haynes testified that in order to determine which vocational program best meets the needs and interests of the offender, an aptitude test must be administered. This test, known as a vocational assessment, is administered by counselors with WSD and measures both the offenders aptitude and interests. Once the assessment is completed, both the offender and counselor meet to discuss the results and the counselor offers the offender guidance as to which path is best suited to his or her interests and aptitude level. After all options are discussed, the counselor and offender then agree on the most appropriate career path and the counselor then submits the offender's name to a computerized waiting list for a specific vocational course.

Further, Ms. Haynes testified that vocational courses, like academic courses, are prioritized based on estimated date of release. Once an offender becomes eligible to participate in the course, the transfer desk at the Windham School District central office submits his or her name to TDCJ to have the offender transferred, if necessary, to the appropriate unit so the vocational training may begin. Ms. Haynes stated that enrollment is on a rolling basis, so once bed space permits the offender is transferred to the specified unit and once a vacancy in the program occurs, the offender is then enrolled.

STATE JAIL CHALLENGES

Ms. Haynes testified that placement of vocational courses on state jail units does present some challenges and difficulties. She identified areas such as limited space, lack of interest among offenders and lack of job assignments as specific problems facing the state jail system.

As stated by Ms. Haynes, both state jail confinees and transfer offenders are assigned to state jails; however, while both classification of offenders have need for vocational training, confinees have priority over transfer offenders, and in some cases, there is only enough capacity to train confinees.

Further, with respect to space, Ms. Haynes testified that state jails were not constructed with vocational shops, requiring the vocational programs to share space with the academic programs. This limits the vocational training to what are called "clean shop" programs, such as Business Computer Information Systems, Computer Maintenance Technician, Technical Introduction to Computer-Aided Drafting, or Custodial Technician.

In addition, due to the short, defined lengths of stay in state jails, Ms. Haynes stated that disciplinary consequences are only marginally effective for confinees who enroll in courses but do not attend or put forth effort. Also, even if they do complete a vocational course and receive a trade certificate, state jails offer very few job assignments for offenders to practice their vocational skills.

In spite of all of the difficulties surrounding locating vocational courses at state jail facilities, when asked

whether such courses should be discontinued Ms. Haynes stated she did not want to see that happen. She testified that the courses which are offered are done well and that every effort is made to utilize the offenders who are trained.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

In a study conducted by the Criminal Justice Policy Council, the role of education, both academic and vocational, played in the ability to gain employment upon release was studied.

With respect to vocational education, the study group consisted of 20,905 offenders who demonstrated an educational achievement score of 6.0 or higher upon release from prison and who were potentially eligible to participate in a vocational program.¹¹ Out of this, 6,679 offenders actually participated while 14,226 did not. In testimony presented by Dr. Tony Fabelo on June 20, 2000, out of the 20,905 offenders included in the study and the 6,679 who actually participated, 4,972 earned a vocational certificate compared to 1,707 who failed to complete their training. From those who did receive a vocational certificate, 77% gained employment within the first year after release with an average wage of \$9,530, compared to a 73% employment rate and average wages of \$9,116 for those who did not earn a certificate. Further, when comparing those who participated but did not earn a certificate to those who did not participate in any vocational training, participants were employed at a rate of 76% compared to 72% for non-participants. However, offenders who did not participate in vocational training earned \$9,217 compared to \$8,320 for participants.

Dr. Fabelo stated that while it is advantageous to future employment to obtain a vocational certificate, it is even more advantageous to couple that vocational certificate with a GED or high school diploma. Dr. Fabelo testified that offenders who earned a vocational certificate in prison in combination with an educational degree (GED or high school diploma) had higher employment rates and wages than inmates who only earned a vocational certificate.¹² For example, high school graduates who earned a vocational certificate were employed at a rate of 78% and earned \$11,676 in the first year after release compared to an employment rate of 75% and average wages of \$8,364 for those who completed only a vocational certificate and did not earn a GED.

In addition to studying the general ability of certificate earners to gain employment, the Criminal Justice Policy Council also studied the releasees ability to gain employment in their field of training. Dr. Fabelo stated in his testimony on August 29, 2000, that few offenders were able to gain employment consistent with their vocational training. The CJPC, in conjunction with the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC), studied 980 releasees who earned a vocational certificate in prison and were employed during the third quarter of 1999. Employers of these 980 releasees were contacted and 571 occupational surveys were returned demonstrating a 58% response rate.

In his testimony, Dr. Fabelo stated that out of the 571 releasees studied, preliminary results indicated that only 21% were employed in their vocational field of training.¹³ Further, Dr. Fabelo testified that offenders who obtained a machinist/welding vocational certificate were the most likely to obtain employment in their field of training. Specifically, out of the 49 offenders who earned a machinist/welder certificate, 21, or

43%, were able to obtain employment in this field. The second most successful were offenders who earned a certificate in carpentry/construction with 86 earning a certificate and 27, or 31%, obtaining employment in that field.

Dr. Fabelo concluded that offenders who earned a vocational certificate in conjunction with a GED or high school diploma earned a higher average wage and were more likely to be employed than those who solely earned either a GED or high school diploma; however, Dr. Fabelo further stated that offenders may not be able to obtain employment in their field of training.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND RECIDIVISM

In addition to studying the effects vocational education has on an offenders' ability to gain employment after release, the Criminal Justice Policy Council also studied the relationship between vocational training and educational achievement and recidivism. Comparisons were made between those offenders who were released without participating in WSD programs to those who did participate. Specifically with respect to vocational education, the study focused on 17,974 offenders who were eligible to participate in vocational training programs.¹⁴ Of this number, 5,701 participated and 4,213 earned a vocational certificate. As with the employment study, this group contains offenders who demonstrated an educational achievement score of 6.0 or higher upon release from TDCJ.

Dr. Fabelo testified on August 29, 2000, that the study results reveal offenders who earned a vocational certificate in prison as well as those who were eligible but did not earn a vocational certificate had similar recidivism rates, specifically 16% and 15% respectively.¹⁵ Further, out of the 13,761 who did not earn a vocational certificate, those who participated but did not earn the certificate had slightly higher recidivism rates than offenders who did not participate in vocational training at all, 17% (260 of 1,488) and 15% (1,810 of 12,273), respectively. When broken down by age, Dr. Fabelo stated that with the exception of young non-property offenders, inmates who earned a vocational certificate demonstrated higher recidivism rates than those who did not earn a certificate.

As stated earlier, earning a vocational certificate does not guarantee that an offender will be able to gain employment in his field of training. As Dr. Fabelo testified, in a study conducted by the CJPC and SOICC, only 21% of offenders were able to obtain employment in their field of training. Dr. Fabelo believes lack of employment in the field of training may explain why vocational training did not impact recidivism rates.

COORDINATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COURSES WITH PRISON INDUSTRY AND AFTER RELEASE POSITIONS

The Windham School District makes a concerted effort to ensure its vocational programs both meet industry standards and also coordinates its courses with existing Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) plants and factories, testified Ms. Haynes. For example, WSD coordinates its mill and cabinet making courses with the TCI furniture factory, coordinates its computer maintenance technician courses with the TCI computer recovery plant, and coordinates its welding courses with the TCI stainless steel plant. Further, vocational workers are identified through Project RIO counselors and reports which identify those

offenders who have completed vocational education or trade certificates.

With respect to employment opportunities after release, Ms. Haynes stated that several years ago, WSD brought in private sector businesses and industries to assist in evaluating the training programs that were provided. These advisors evaluated the equipment being used, the course curriculum, and teacher training and provided very useful suggestions and criticisms. These recommendations aided WSD in restructuring the existing vocational programs to ensure they were up to current industry standards and to make sure the training provided offered the offenders a good chance at gaining private sector employment upon release. Ms. Haynes further testified that as a result of this collaboration with private sector industries, partnerships have been formed resulting in the donation of tools and equipment, the provision of industry training for vocational instructors, and also actual employment opportunities for trained offenders upon their release. As evidence of this, testimony was offered by Mr. James O. Jennings, training coordinator for Kellogg-Brown and Root. Mr. Jennings, a 19 year employee, stated that he currently has 3 former offenders as employees, all of which were hired after conducting interviews of TDCJ offenders. Mr. Jennings testified that these employees receive high praise from both supervisors and clients for their attitude, politeness and skills. He further stated that the vocational education program is a win/win situation for both offenders and private sector and is a program that should continue to receive full recognition and support. In addition to the testimony of Mr. Jennings, Ms. Haynes offered written testimony from Zeig Electric, Inc., Halliburton, AGC of Texas, Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., Equipment and Engine Training Council, Kubota Tractor Corporation, Tyson Foods, Inc., and Red Simpson, Inc., all of which extolled the need for skilled workers and the excellent job they believe WSD is doing in providing them with skilled and well motivated employees.

In order to confirm that the vocational programs and training provided by WSD leads to realistic employment opportunities after release, Ms. Haynes testified that WSD analyzes state employment data and occupational projections from the Texas Workforce Commission on an annual basis. By doing so, WSD can make adjustments to the amount of training provided in specific areas and may also begin training in other areas which show a need for more skilled workers. In either case, Ms. Haynes stated that all vocational courses train the offenders to entry-level industry standards and upon successful completion, the offenders may receive industry-recognized certification in many trade areas.

PROJECT RIO

BACKGROUND

Prior to 1985, other than the education and skills training provided by the Windham School District, no program specifically designed to assist offenders in re-integrating themselves into society and obtain long-term full-time gainful employment for self-sufficiency existed. In response to this need, Project RIO (Re-Integration of Offenders) was started as a pilot program by the then Texas Employment Commission in 1985 and was funded through monies from the Governor's Discretionary Fund and Federal grants. From its inception, the mission of Project RIO has been to reduce recidivism and unemployment of ex-offenders by providing pre-release and post-release workforce skills, education, occupational skills, vocational skills, training, and opportunities through employment services provided by the state's workforce development network. After four years of demonstrating a positive impact on ex-offenders, Project RIO began

receiving state general revenue funds through a line item appropriation from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Project RIO also worked through interagency contracts between the Texas Employment Agency, Texas Department of Criminal Justice and Texas Youth Commission.

Project RIO funding remained the same until 1995 when the 74th Legislature enacted HB 1863. HB 1863 brought together 28 individual workforce programs from 10 agencies and created a new agency - the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). This bill also envisioned a statewide network of local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) responsible for planning the delivery of services that meet the unique workforce needs of each local community. Local plans coordinate workforce education and training, address employers' needs for qualified workers, and provide job seekers with an array of services at a single location.¹⁶ With the creation of the TWC, all funding for Project RIO is now funneled through the TWC to TDCJ and TYC. Through its continued partnership with TWC, TDCJ and TYC, Project RIO provides testing, counseling, guidance, case management, and job placement services to help reduce recidivism and more recently, LWDBs have assumed a greater role in training and employment services for ex-offenders.

Within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Project RIO is available to all offenders unless they are to be paroled out of state or have a verified Immigration Naturalization Service or felony detainer. Mr. Burt Ellison, Program Director for Project RIO testified on June 20, 2000, that workforce development specialists are located on approximately 85 units and serve to both place offenders in jobs within TDCJ as well as assist with employment upon release. While the offender is incarcerated, Mr. Ellison stated that the specialists conduct testing and assessment of the offenders and work with TDCJ to locate employment within the system consistent with their vocational training. Prior to release, the specialist then prepares a work packet containing a social security card, birth certificate, vocational certificate and a card with a toll free number for Project RIO to assist the offender with the employment process. In addition to help with gaining employment, Project RIO provides manuals geared at changing attitudes towards work and dealing with life problems. Mr. Ellison testified that this 7-volume set entitled Project RIO Occupational Direction works with cognitive intervention to aid an offender in learning alternate ways to deal with life stressors in an attempt to help them maintain employment and sustain economic stability.

As with the Windham School District programming, Project RIO services are prioritized by the offender's projected release date. Upon release, releasees can be served by Project RIO as often as is necessary until he or she can maintain full-time employment for self-sufficiency. Mr. Ellison testified that many offenders contact Project RIO immediately upon release so they can begin the process of gaining employment as soon as possible.

PROJECT RIO AND EMPLOYMENT

As a part of its study entitled Impact of Education Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Post-Release Employment, the Criminal Justice Policy Council studied the impact Project RIO has on the employment of offenders after release. Testifying before the committee, Dr. Fabelo related that releasees who were served by Project RIO did demonstrate higher employment rates; however, those releasees received on average lower wages than those not served by Project RIO.

According to Dr. Fabelo, out of the 30,207 offenders included in this study (offenders released in FYs 1997 and 1998) 9,960, or 33%, were served by Project RIO after release from prison, while 20,247, or 67%, were not.¹⁷ Out of the 9,960 offenders served by Project RIO, 86% were employed compared to 62% of those not served. Dr. Fabelo testified further that releasees participating in Project RIO had lower unemployment rates than those not participating, 14% versus 38%.

While Project RIO was showing success in placing releasees in jobs, the wages earned by those participating in the program were considerably less than those who did not participate. Dr. Fabelo stated that on average, the yearly wages for participants were \$1,794 less than non-participants (\$9,514 compared to \$7,720).¹⁸ Dr. Fabelo went on to testify that the low wages earned by those served by Project RIO were constant, regardless of the academic achievement or vocational certification of the individual. For example, out of the releasees who did not earn a GED or vocational certificate and were served by Project RIO, the average salary was \$6,958 in their first year of release, compared to \$8,773 for the non-participants. Further, out of the releasees who did earn a GED and a vocational certificate, the average salary in their first year of release was \$8,311 compared to \$10,272 for those not served by RIO.

Dr. Fabelo concluded that the consistently high employment rates and consistently low wages appears to be the result of placing priority on employment at any wage rather than on attempting to gain employment for an offender at a higher wage.

PROJECT RIO AND RECIDIVISM

As one of its goals, Project RIO aims at reducing recidivism rates for releasees by assisting them with employment training and life skills. As with employment, the Criminal Justice Policy Council also studied the ability of Project RIO to reduce recidivism rates for its participants. The recidivism study conducted by the CJPC tracked re-incarceration rates for 25,980 inmates released from TDCJ during FYs 1997 and 1998 from data provided by the Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas Department of Criminal Justice. This study eliminates 4,227 offenders who were included in the previous employment study due to their lack of two years on release.¹⁹ The findings of this study were presented by Dr. Tony Fabelo.

Like the study on Project RIO's impact on post-release employment, Dr. Fabelo testified that 33% (8,616) of the offenders participated in Project RIO. Of this, 86% (7,422) were employed at some time during the first year after release compared to 62% (10,812) of those not participating. Employed releasees who were served by Project RIO had a 15% recidivism rate, a rate equal to those who did not receive services. Further, Dr. Fabelo stated those who participated but remained unemployed had a 23% recidivism rate compared to 17% for those not participating. Dr. Fabelo concluded that while Project RIO does employ more inmates upon release, Project RIO participation does not bring about an overall reduction in recidivism; however, when the releasee population is further broken down, recidivism rates for high risk offenders who participate in Project RIO are lower than non-participants.

Dr. Fabelo stated that when evaluating offenders for release, the Board of Pardons and Paroles assigns each a rank of high, medium, or low risk based on the offenders' score on a risk assessment instrument.

With respect to those offenders served by Project RIO, 15% were high risk, 52% were medium risk and 33% were low risk.²⁰ For those not served by Project RIO, approximately 16% were high risk, 50% were medium risk and 34% were low risk. Out of those ranked as high risk, Dr. Fabelo testified that 21% of those served by Project RIO recidivated compared to 25% of those not participating. He further testified that there were no significant differences for those ranked as medium or low risk.

DIFFICULTIES WITH PROJECT RIO

While Project RIO has demonstrated an ability in placing offenders in jobs within TDCJ matching their vocational training and has assisted offenders with obtaining gainful employment upon release from TDCJ, testimony presented to the committee demonstrated some shortfalls with the program, specifically in the areas of coordination between TDCJ and TWC employees and the ability of potential employers to locate and interview potential employees.

When questioned about the ability of Project RIO to effectively assist vocationally trained offenders gain employment in their chosen field after release, Ms. Haynes testified that while she believes Project RIO has potential, problems do exist. Ms. Haynes stated that while the RIO specialists within TDCJ do an excellent job preparing the offenders for outside employment and preparing their employment packages, the following two problems have occurred:

- Potential employers have come to her complaining of an inability to locate potential employees for interviews possibly due to a lack of coordination with TWC and a breakdown in communication from the point of release from TDCJ to assisting the releasee gain employment; and
- The process of securing housing and transportation is a complex task, during which many releasees may fall through the cracks and may not effectively be helped by RIO.

To assist the employees of TDCJ and TWC to more effectively provide a link from potential employers to the releasees, Ms. Haynes offered two suggestions for change. First, a cooperative training session between TDCJ and TWC employees should be conducted so that problem areas can be identified and addressed and any cracks can be filled. Mr. Ellison assured the committee that a joint training session such as described by Ms. Haynes was scheduled to take place in August, 2000. Second, Ms. Haynes suggested the construction of a data base wherein all the information about the releasees could be entered, including vocational training and TDCJ work experience so employers could locate and contact potential new employees. Such a system could be accessed by potential employers, but would be strictly confidential, all releasees identified by a number only.

WINDHAM LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

CHANGES PROGRAM

The CHANGES program, which stands for Changing Habits and Achieving New Goals to Empower Success, teaches offenders parenting skills, money management, health maintenance and other life skills. To ensure its effectiveness in achieving change after release, the CHANGES program is primarily offered to offenders as a pre-release program.

COGNITIVE INTERVENTION

Cognitive Intervention is the process which interrupts the flow of criminal thinking and behavior and replaces it with pro-social thinking and behavior. The committee received testimony from Mr. Brian Cox, a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology with the Windham School District and coordinator for the cognitive intervention program. Mr. Cox testified that throughout his 20 years of experience in corrections, he has not seen a program as able to positively effect an offender and change his behaviors as the cognitive intervention program does.

To establish the program currently underway at TDCJ units, Mr. Cox stated that in 1996 he conducted research through the National Institute of Corrections. He studied various cognitive intervention programs underway in other states to determine how they worked, and proceeded to design the system currently in place at 40 institutional division schools and state jails in TDCJ. The current training is a sixty day program with both male and female offenders attending classes for three hours per day. The goal of these classes is to develop pro-social thinking and behavior. The program targets students with disciplinary cases or referrals from staff. While there are some attending these classes who have good disciplinary histories, the majority of the students are poor students academically and are poor problem solvers. Mr. Cox further testified that the program has been adapted for use in the areas of substance abuse and parole and is currently in use in nine states, including Texas.

Mr. Cox testified that there are two main tiers of cognitive intervention. First is cognitive restructuring in which the offender examines and changes his or her thoughts, attitudes and beliefs. Emphasis is placed on changing the content of thinking by looking at the “what” of thinking, or in other words, where have your thoughts and actions taken you. The second tier is cognitive skills training. According to Mr. Cox, this is the heart of cognitive intervention. Cognitive skills training is the process of developing social and thinking skills through learning skill steps. Mr. Cox stated that this training focuses on anger management, problem solving, stress management and goal setting.

Specifically with respect to the program in place on TDCJ units, Mr. Cox testified that his courses contain both cognitive restructuring and cognitive skills. The instructors focus on anger and stress management as well as interpersonal problem solving. To do this, both prison and free world situations are used for students to role play in order to learn how to deal appropriately with problems. Mr. Cox stated that utilizing role models for free world situations is essential due to the fact that many situations which are faced in the prison setting do not carry over to the free world setting.

What Mr. Cox believes strengthens his cognitive intervention program is that, unlike other states, it is conducted in a classroom setting versus a therapeutic model and is taught by certified teachers with class sizes of 25 students. The classes are conducted according to a scripted curriculum and all teachers undergo specialized training. All the teachers are carefully chosen with specific emphasis on their character and the belief in the effectiveness of the program and the ability of the students to achieve change. Further, Mr. Cox testified that all teachers undergo a 4 day initial training period as well as 2-3 day classroom training.

In describing the instructional method used, Mr. Cox stated that all the instructors utilize a five step approach. First, the instructor describes the need for the skill; second, the skill is modeled by the instructor; third, the students then role play the skill; fourth, the students are given feedback on their performance; and, fifth, the offenders are assigned homework to transfer the skills they learned to their daily lives and then report back to class.

In order to evaluate the success of the cognitive intervention program, Mr. Cox presented a study compiled by the National Institute of Corrections which evaluated the percent changes in recidivism for offenders who participated in a cognitive intervention program.²¹ The study reported recidivism rates for offenders who received criminal sanctions only, those who received inappropriate treatment, those who received unspecified treatment (education) and those who received appropriate treatment (cognitive skills training). The report revealed a recidivism rate increase of 7% and 6% for criminal sanctions and inappropriate treatment, respectively, and a 13% reduction for unspecified treatment. Of most importance, Mr. Cox testified, was the 30% reduction in recidivism for offenders who received cognitive intervention training. Mr. Cox further testified that in addition to rates of recidivism, studies were conducted by the Windham School District to evaluate criminal thinking and behavior.²² Specifically, with respect to behavior, Mr. Cox offered evidence that disciplinary cases tend to decline after participation in a cognitive skills program. Out of a sample of 649 students, 61% (395) had a reduced number of disciplinary cases, 29% (190) had an increased number, while 10% (64) demonstrated no change. When questioned about whether the decrease in disciplinary cases is a lasting effect of the cognitive skills program, Mr. Cox stated that the decrease in cases lasts about one year, and then the number of disciplinary cases begins to increase again. This increase in disciplinary cases has led to the piloting of an aftercare program to reinforce the training the offenders receive and to ensure the training will be carried over to the free-world environment upon release.

In addition to the reduction in disciplinary cases prior to release and recidivism rates after release, Mr. Cox also offered testimony regarding the cost savings the cognitive skills program provides TDCJ. With respect to the aforementioned study of reduction in disciplinary cases, Mr. Cox stated that TDCJ estimates each disciplinary case costs TDCJ \$175 per case.²³ The study revealed a reduction of 1148 in disciplinary cases, which provided an estimated cost savings to TDCJ of \$200,900.

Further evidence of the support the cognitive skills program has, Ms. Carol Young, a member of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, testified that out of all the programs offered by TDCJ and WSD, she believes cognitive intervention is one of the greatest leveraging tools available. Ms. Young testified that while you can teach an offender to read and learn a trade, if you don't change the way they think and react to situational stress, they are very likely to be back. Ms. Young stated that she is basing her support not only on presentations she has heard regarding cognitive skills training, but also on first hand observation of

students and teachers during visits to various units. Ms. Young believes rehabilitation is an important component to incarceration and believes cognitive intervention is vitally important to the rehabilitation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the testimony received, the Select Committee found that the goals of the Windham School District are clear and appropriate to its mission. The Select Committee further found that while the educational and cognitive skills program both brought about significant reductions in recidivism based on successful participation, the vocational training and Project RIO programs were not successful in reducing recidivism rates. Testimony revealed that both programs demonstrated similar recidivism rates for those who participated and for those offenders who did not participate; however, vocational training and Project RIO were found to increase the success of former offenders in obtaining and maintaining employment, and the cognitive intervention program was found to reduce the cost of confinement and provide incentives for offenders to behave in positive ways during their confinement.

In light of all testimony received, the Select Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. Conduct research into the establishment of a designated standing committee comprised of three Texas Board of Criminal Justice members to serve as a school board for WSD, whose duties would include, but would not be limited to, employee grievances.
2. Increase funding for the Windham School District so it may expand and improve programs such as the reading, GED and cognitive intervention which have already demonstrated a positive impact on reducing recidivism rates and assisting former offenders in gaining employment after release.
3. Conduct follow-up studies of Project RIO to determine (a) what can be done to place offenders in higher paying positions; and (b) whether joint training sessions have permitted TDCJ and TWC employees to better coordinate their efforts to ensure potential employers have access to all information necessary to interview releasees for potential employment.
4. Conduct research into how to better place offenders who earn vocational training certificates into post-release employment in their field of training.
5. Encourage completion of both a GED or high school diploma and a vocational training course to (a) increase an offender's ability to obtain gainful employment upon release, and (b) reduce the risk of recidivism.
6. In light of the 30% reduction in recidivism of offenders who participate in cognitive intervention programs, continue providing cognitive intervention programs as a part of the offender's individualized treatment plans.
7. To further reduce recidivism rates, consider prioritization of raising reading levels and acquisition

of GEDs, high school diplomas and vocational certificates relative to study results for wage gains and lower instructional hours.

ENDNOTES

1. V.T.C.A., Education Code, § 19.003.
2. Texas Department of Criminal Justice Internet Site, <http://windham.myriad.net/>, accessed October 25, 2000.
3. Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District, Dr. Tony Fabelo, Criminal Justice Policy Council, April 2000.
4. Ibid.
5. Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District, Dr. Tony Fabelo, Criminal Justice Policy Council, April 2000.
6. Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Post-Release Employment, Dr. Tony Fabelo, Criminal Justice Policy Council, June 2000.
7. Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Recidivism, Dr. Tony Fabelo, Criminal Justice Policy Council, August 2000.
8. Ibid.
9. An Overview of the Windham School District, Criminal Justice Policy Council, Dr. Tony Fabelo, February 2000.
10. Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Post-Release Employment, Dr. Tony Fabelo, Criminal Justice Policy Council, June 2000.
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14. Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Recidivism, Dr. Tony Fabelo, Criminal Justice Policy Council, August 2000.
15. Ibid.
16. Project RIO Strategic Plan Submitted to the Legislative Budget Board and Governor's Office of Budget and Planning, May 2000.

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17. Impact of Education Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Post-Release Employment, Dr. Tony Fabelo, Criminal Justice Policy Council, June 2000.
 18. Ibid.
 19. Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Recidivism, Dr. Tony Fabelo, Criminal Justice Policy Council, August 2000.
 20. Ibid.
 21. WSD Cognitive Intervention: Fighting Crime Through Education, Brian Cox, LSSP, Windham School District, June 20, 2000.
 22. Ibid.
 23. WSD Cognitive Intervention: Fighting Crime Through Education, Brian Cox, LSSP, Windham School District, June 20, 2000.

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Public Testimony of:

Dr. Tony Fabelo, Director, Criminal Justice Policy Council
Mr. Mike Morrow, Superintendent, Windham School District
Ms. Carol Young, Vice Chairman, Texas Board of Criminal Justice
Ms. Kay Ali, Former Teacher, Windham School District
Ms. Marjorie Wall, Legislative Liaison, Texas State Teachers Association
Ms. Marjie Haynes, Representative, Windham School District
Mr. James O. Jennings, Training Coordinator, Kellogg-Brown and Root
Mr. Burt Ellison, Program Director, Project RIO
Mr. Brian Cox, Program Coordinator, Cognitive Intervention Program, Windham School District