

**Wichita Falls Independent School District
Welding Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 12, 2016
11 a.m., Carrigan Career Center**

CALL TO ORDER

Michelle Wood, WFISD's CTE specialist, called the Welding Advisory Committee Meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Gary Cunningham, Carrigan welding teacher
Terry Anderle, Pratt Whitney inspector
Michael Stanford, Sharp Iron
Jessica Bennett, WFISD counselor at Wichita Falls High School
Kitty Howard, Workforce Solutions
Stephen Davis, Rider teacher and FFA advisory
Don Morgan, LRW retired
Joey Davis, used to own McGinnis Welding Supply, now manages the store
Synthia Kirby, Carrigan principal
Ann Work Goodrich, WFISD communications specialist
Michelle Wood, WFISD

BUSINESS

The group elected a chair (Michael Stanford) and a secretary (Kitty Howard) to direct the meeting. A WFISD employee may not hold these positions, according to rules put forth by the Perkins Grant, which sponsored the meetings.

OVERVIEW

Michelle Wood introduced the forum, explaining that the district was trying to survey the community for its best ideas for the CTE Center. The district sought the community's input

on sequencing of courses, equipment, supplies and anything related to its career courses.

COURSE SEQUENCES

As part of its CTE Program, WFISD will offer 25 career pathways. Students begin, as 8th graders, taking career surveys and learning where their interests intersect with jobs. They fill out surveys, responding to questions like, “Do you like to work outside?” and “Do you like to work with your hands?”

They’ll be given 40 sample careers, which may include obscure jobs like chimney sweep or window washer.

Later in 8th grade, they will pick an endorsement that hopefully incorporates their interests and what they have learned about themselves in the surveys.

Welding is in the Manufacturing Track. Students begin in 9th grade by taking the “Principles of Industrial Trades” class OR the “Principles of Agriculture Science.”

The Principles of Industrial Trades is a new course offered for the first time. It focuses on identification of tools, earning a (safety) OSHA certificate, learning how to use a tape measure, and giving an overview of framing, electrical work, and plumbing. “We’re trying to find out their true interests so in the upper level courses we don’t have to reteach,” said Mrs. Wood.

The Principles of Agriculture Science class has been a part of the WFISD course line-up for many years.

Then a student may choose from seven different pathways. Manufacturing is one. A student may choose welding.

At one time, WFISD was planning for a Machining pathway at the CTE Center. But things changed. The job market for it fluctuated. Relatively few students expressed interest in it. Vernon College, which has machining coursework and all the necessary expensive equipment, saw a dip in enrollment that made it possible for WFISD to partner with them to offer it instead.

“To spend \$500,000 on equipment for a relatively small group when, down the road from the CTE Center is Vernon College, which already has it, gave me cold chills,” said Mrs. Wood. Now, instead of shuttling students to the CTE Center for machining classes, they will be shuttled to Vernon College.

“We will still be serving kids, still helping the community – just not paying for it,” said Mrs. Wood.

“I think it’s great that you’re going to offer it again,” said Michael Stanford.

Mrs. Wood said that most kids don’t know what machining is. Most people recommend taking welding first, she said.

“If you have different ideas or think we’re not looking at it the right way, let us know,” said Synthia Kirby, Carrigan principal. “We value your input.”

Mrs. Wood said that at one advisory meeting, participants recommended switching the courses offered at the 11th and 12th grades, and the switch was made because it did look more logical. So she, too, welcomed input.

Gary Cunningham agreed, saying he always welcomes the comment, "Have you thought of this?" There are so many good ideas out there that he may very well NOT have thought of it.

"Do you have any course that takes up layout?" asked Don Morgan. He explained that he often sees welders who can weld, but they can't actually build anything.

Stephen Davis said his ag courses next year will focus on helping students build projects to show. "We'll be fabricators first, welders second," he said.

"There are so many simple things about layout," said Mr. Morgan. "People bring me pretty little test plates but I get no purchase orders for test plates."

Mr. Cunningham said kids come in without basic understanding of tools and supplies. "We do a lot of blueprint. When they try to put it together, it's difficult," he said.

Mrs. Wood said that by moving welding courses down to the sophomore level, it will help students by starting them in the trade earlier, giving them three years, not just two years by the time they graduate. Many welding seniors lose their senior year to some sort of a work program. Others will say they graduated from WFISD's welding program, but if they left in their senior year for an internship or work program, "really they did it for a year instead of getting Welding 2," she said.

Mr. Cunningham said the state has taken welding out of the ag coursework and put it into welding courses. So students will learn welding here (at Carrigan) and "build stuff in ag."

The state is also interested in students getting that “piece of paper,” said Mr. Cunningham. The state wants students to earn certifications: The NCCR (a training program from ABC contractors), the Sense AWS (an outline with three levels from the American Welding Society), the D1.1 (Structural Welding Code for steel) and the D.9 (Sheet Metal Welding Code for nonstructural applications). “We do build stuff,” he said. “It’s hard to get through everything the state wants and build stuff.”

Welding classes are shorter than they used to be, said Mrs. Kirby. They once were five hours, then three hours, now two hours. Juniors attend welding class from 7:25 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. Seniors attend welding class from 12 p.m. to 2:54 p.m. Next year, there will be three sections of welding, all 110-minutes long.

By reducing the length of the welding classes, it opened the class up to more students, said Mrs. Wood. If the class was too long, students were forced to abandon band or sports in order to fit it into their schedules, and so they wouldn’t – because they wanted a mix of classes.

Mr. Stanford said he saw that problem close up. He tried to talk his own teenage daughter into taking welding just to expose her to it, even though she wouldn’t make it a career. She tried to fit it in but he found she would have to commit to it so wholeheartedly that it wasn’t worth all the other classes she would sacrifice. “She wants all this other stuff,” he said. “They’ll make the decision on what they might miss out on.”

Mrs. Wood agreed that students don’t want to give up athletics or band. Reducing the class length “helps retention by reducing the periods they take up.” Students don’t take the long view,

considering that a welding class will give them a skill that can help them make money throughout their lifetime, she said.

Mr. Stanford explained his family's dilemma. "She's panicked, 'I gotta pick a career path!' She's doing Business and Industry," he said. They know that if she doesn't like it, she will have to switch by her sophomore year.

The room erupted in applause for a parent who was tracking alongside his daughter with the district's rules. "Good parents!" said Kitty Howard.

One option is to do certain classes as electives, not as endorsements. That might be preferable for some who want to expose themselves to a lot of different classes.

ENROLLMENT

The enrollment for welding is "very high," said Mrs. Kirby. There will be 40 first-year welders. There will be 20 in each section, which is a large group. A new section was opened at Rider.

Sixty-seven students picked Welding 1. There will be two sections at Carrigan and one at Rider. "It's not quite as full as it sounds," said Mrs. Kirby, who expects one or two students to drop out in the first week. "We're definitely in good shape."

She said she hopes that any student who will drop welding will pick up another Carrigan track that still has room to grow.

"We have a pretty good reputation in the community," said Mr. Cunningham of the Carrigan welding program. However, some students graduate with a 1F welder card; others with a 3G. He

looks for ways to help the student who has no talent in welding but who works hard in class.

In the welding program, it's important that students get the opportunity to have a practicum or an internship, particularly those who will leave in their senior year to work. "Putting them in internships is better than having them go work at McDonalds," said Mrs. Wood. If they work 15 hours a week, they earn three credits toward graduation.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Cunningham showed off packets for NCCER (training program from ABC contractors) that he will show students. The packets illustrate welding job skills, such as a 6010 pad (a pad of beads made by a type of electrode that run over and over on a plate), cornering and the boxing technique. When he tests them, "They get three chances to get it the way I want it," he said. He will pull out the name of a skill at random to test them.

He also hosts, "Weld-off Wednesday." They will all do a 3G by 9 a.m. They are to be placed on a table without names, and he ranks them #1, #2, and #3. "They WANT those competitions," he said.

Mr. Cunningham said he has six pages of checklists. When a student shows proficiency on a skill such as padding, he will show him MIG "and let them work on something until everyone else gets up to a certain point."

The Sense AWS School certifies students in three levels from the American Welding Society and gives them a certificate.

TEKS skills, which are required by the state, are all listed. "I check it off as I hit it in class," said Mr. Cunningham.

Students will also address the EG.2, which is the AWS training guide for Level 1, said Mr. Cunningham.

He also mentioned the CWI, which is the Certified Welding Inspector, which is a "very very difficult test," he said. The WIT book is the Welding Inspection Technology Book for one of the three tests for the CWI.

Mr. Stanford asked, "Do you saw?" He said that at Sharp Iron, they would rarely hire a welder and put him to work at welding before putting them on a saw or burn table.

Mr. Cunningham said his classroom also has a burn table. But the focus of his class is learning how to run a bead. "That's this course," he said. There's nothing in the state-required TEKS about building anything, but of course that's part of what students need to do, so "it's a balancing act."

"You don't have them enough hours," said Don Morgan.

Mr. Cunningham said he thinks the WFISD welding class does a good job and approaches the skills the way a college would, teaching them how to weld and how to apply their skill to a project. At Vernon College or Odessa, they never build anything, he said.

"They're not any better coming out of Vernon College," said Mr. Morgan.

Certifications for welding students that are currently available:
OSHA

9.1

1.1

The Canadian Welding Bureau is trying to get WFISD to use its \$35,000 program but they “don’t want to train the trainer so we can certify the kids,” said Mr. Cunningham. They are insisting that they come down in person to certify students. Their models, however, “are awesome,” he said.

Mrs. Wood asked the group what they looked for when they hired.

“Work ethics,” said Mr. Morgan.

Mrs. Wood said the soft skills of ethics are taught in all the CTE programs, but did they have suggestions “of something we can actually teach them?”

One participant said that the last two welders he knew of who were hired as welders were not required to run a bead. They passed a welding test to work on parts. “They want to train them.”

Mr. Cunningham said he wished he knew how every company in town certified its welders.

Stephen Davis said there were only two certifications, and that most companies used uncertified welders.

Mr. Stanford said “we always 3G test. They will become a welder’s helper long before being put on a complex project, even if they were No. 1 in their class. They will run a bead for awhile, and we’ll watch that. We teach them how to fit.”

Mr. Morgan said that many employers believe new hires have to have on-the-job training. A lot of jobs don't need certification," he said.

Mr. Cunningham said not every kid who comes to his class has the ability to be a good welder. "I can't expect they know what a Philips head screwdriver is," he said. "We just have to teach more stuff."

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are two student organizations at Carrigan: Skills USA and the National Technical Honor Society.

Mr. Cunningham said Carrigan students participate in Skills USA regularly. "It's not trophy hunting. It is allowing kids to have experiences," he said.

One student who dressed as if he were rebelling and would seem uninterested in anything academic eventually scored second in his skill in the state of Texas. "Many see success for the first time," he said. "I'll take as many as they let me take."

Recently, he had a student place 6th or 7th at a Hereford, TX competition. At a Tulsa contest, 240 students competed. Placing in the top 25 is considered prestigious. "We (won) 8th and 13th places," said Mr. Cunningham.

In district competition, one student earned a 2nd place and one team earned 1st place this year, he said. The first place team went on to place second in state. "They lost (first place) by three points," he said.

At the Brownwood competition, WFISD students won first, third and 11th places. "We've had a good year," said Mr.

Cunningham. “And these aren’t necessarily the same kids” winning all the awards.

Involving students in the National Technical Honor Society, an honor society for kids in CTE, “is more of a struggle,” he said. They must achieve a 3.0 grade point average in all their classes, not just welding. However, the group has some fun together. This year they went to Dallas to eat at Medieval Times, and they did a fundraiser, enabling them to travel to Branson, Missouri. They painted the Carrigan hallways to help pay their way.

Mrs. Kirby said she hopes the NTHS will grow and become huge once the CTE Center opens.

Mr. Stanford asked how many students were in both. The Skills USA competition is “no different than going to UIL. It gives kids a chance to compete and shine,” he said.

SUPPLIES

The district is building the CTE Center, which will house all CTE programs. Welding and agriculture programs will all get completely new facilities.

The district is replacing welders, buying some last year and delaying more purchases so they won’t have to be carted over to the CTE Center.

Having more welders will be advantageous for students, who lose things when they switch machines. “When kids switch stuff, even grinders, stuff gets lost,” he said.

At the new CTE Center, he will keep TIG and flux core in one area and MIG and stick in another so “stuff won’t get lost,” he said.

Mr. Cunningham said he will “beg, borrow and plead” for donations to his program and many have helped him. He loves scrap. “We’ll take anything you will give us.”

Supplies are expensive, he said. One TIG joint test costs \$130 for a piece of core inch plate. “It’s \$1.80 for one test, one time. When you go from 20 kids to 40 kids, it adds up. We test on 3/8ths plate, which is very expensive.”

The new CTE Center will have garage doors that open into a yard.

An exterior storage solid fence will be erected “so you can’t see that trash – er, treasures – that are being stored,” said Mrs. Wood.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Age is not a problem but gender is. The district has had three girls enroll in the afternoon welding class and one in the morning. Girls will sign up for welding and collision repair.

By not making classes so long and schedules so tight, more girls will consider these classes, said Mrs. Wood.

Mrs. Kirby said the welding classes are very diverse ethnically. Welding classes have students who are classified 504, special education, and second language learners – an adequate representation.

Mr. Stanford asked if the CTE Center will be handicap accessible.

There are no stairs in the welding area, said Mrs. Wood.

Mrs. Kirby said that architects must follow typical ADA rules. Nothing can be stored at a second level without elevator access.

“We’d do anything we could to accommodate someone who is capable of taking the class,” said Mrs. Kirby.

The next advisory meeting will be in September 2016.

The meeting ended at 12:03 p.m.

