



Windham School District Partners with Rock and Roll Academy

An innovative partnership between Windham School District (WSD), and Rock and Roll Academy (RRA) to implement a social emotional learning music program in the youthful offender program (YOP) at O.B. Ellis Unit in Huntsville, TX has met with great success. YOP is comprised of 16- and 17-year-old offenders and is administrated by WSD, a non-geographical school district that serves Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The activity-based, pro-social RRA program was implemented through TDCJ's Rehabilitation Programs Division (RPD).

The partnership was envisioned by Dr. Clint Carpenter, WSD superintendent, to act as a "hook" to reengage YOP students in an educational experience, as well as create an incentive for positive behavior. Travis Henderson, WSD Operations, reiterated Dr. Carpenter's vision, "Going into this program we wanted it to be an incentive. We wanted the guys to be there, we wanted the guys to want to be there, we wanted them to behave so they could come, and do what they needed to do to be able to come to this class. I think we've seen that."

Correctional Facility Feedback

Warden Kelly Strong, Senior Warden at the Ellis Unit, stated her goals for the program, "We hope that Rock and Roll Academy is an outlet for our students and our offender population to release some of the emotional issues they have had in their lifetime and that it takes them away from the criminal element and we see their true hearts and souls."

YOP Corrections Officer Crocker observed the RRA is indeed changing offender behavior, specifically in how students treat one another, "The music has drawn them together; those who separate usually in class, have come together with the music."

YOP students also point to Rock and Roll Academy as motivation to change behavior toward their peers. "It's a bonding experience for us. Before, I probably wouldn't have talked to some of these people in here. But now with this, we're all communicating. All with music."

Character-Building Program

Designed to build confidence, character, and community, RRA employs a Rapid Success Learning Model™ allowing students with no musical background to experience a proscribed series of quick social and musical accomplishments. RRA Facilitators create a Shared Learning Environment utilizing the Four Facilitator Modes, a series of non-verbal teaching techniques that empower peer-to-peer learning. RRA delivers a hands-on, active, pro-social program where students develop musical and social emotional competencies, a sense of ownership, and self-regulating behaviors.

Program survey data highlights the outcomes possible through delivering an effective social emotional learning, music-based curriculum in a secure facility. Students expressed a positive change in their day to day life, their self-perception, and in their ability to manage their emotions, develop healthy relationships, and respond better to the things going on around them.

Industry Certification Alignment

Windham and Rock and Roll Academy are building on their initial success by tying the C-Tech Industry Certification for Smart Home Audio and Cabling to RRA content around audio waveform and electric instrument-wiring in order to bridge music learning with vocational skills.