

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to share with you the latest edition of *CTECS Works*. While this year has been full of unexpected challenges, I am proud to showcase some of the work that is still taking place in our schools. In addition to the stories within this newsletter, there are further system-wide accomplishments worth noting:

- CTECS' graduation rate is 97.2%; well above the state average.
- Our Student Workforce increased production revenue by 3.3% last school year; earning funds that went right back into the classroom.
- Adult apprenticeship courses saw a 13.5% enrollment increase. Learn more: cttech.org/adult-education
- Over 700 students participated in Work-based Learning (WBL) last year. Prior to school closures in March, we were on a trajectory to far surpass previous years' WBL participation numbers.

For most of 2020, our focus has largely been on adjusting our teaching model due to COVID-19. Teaching hands-on trade skills has not been easy, however, we've prioritized in-person learning opportunities whenever possible. For example, we made every effort to give 9th grade students in-person class time so they could select a trade they had personally experienced, and as you'll read on page 3, as soon as school opened we hit the ground running with WBL opportunities.

Hands-on experiences aren't the only thing on our minds. We are acutely aware of the toll on social emotional health, and in response, have added extra supports for students and trainings for staff to address these needs. Flexibility and compassion are part of every decision-making conversation we are having at the district, school and classroom level.

As long as COVID-19 remains a threat to our school communities, we will continue to try and improve our methods in order to give our students the outstanding education you have come to expect from CTECS.



STUDENT BUILT AIRPLANE TAKES FLIGHT

Several years ago, under the guidance of the Meriden Chapter of Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), H.C. Wilcox Technical High School students accepted the challenge of building an actual airplane.

The Vans RV-12 initially took flight in May 2020 and the students' accomplishment was celebrated publically at a press conference this August at the Meriden Markham Airport.

The aircraft, which took approximately four and a half years to build, was part of EAA's Teens to Flight Program. The students built nearly 95 percent of the plane with adults watching.

Every Monday and one weekend day a week, students met at a building at the municipal airport that the city allowed them to use.

"When they first came in, some of the kids didn't even know how to hold a file or drill correctly," said the students' advisor, Mark Scott of the EAA's Meriden Chapter. "They couldn't read plans and, as they went, you could see they were getting more and more confident."

Wilcox Tech students from many trades participated in the project, including Electronics, Plumbing, and Graphics. Building tasks included wiring, the engine build and affixing the wings.

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Students To Earn FAA License for Search and Rescue Assistance, Accepting Applications for Fall 2021 Class

STUDENT BUILT AIRPLANE TAKES FLIGHT CONT.

“Going to a technical high school you try all the different trade shops... and learn more than a regular public high school,” said Spencer Jenkins, a 2016 Wilcox Tech graduate from the Electronics program. “Looking back, all the hard work, even the challenging pieces, were easier because of skills I learned from tech school.”

Tyler Stout, who graduated from Wethersfield High School this year, also participated in the plane build. His father, Roy Stout, is a teacher at Wilcox Technical High School and served as a liaison between Teens to Flight and the school.

“I’ve really enjoyed the hard work and years of time I’ve put into the project,” said Tyler Stout. “Being with the

program from the beginning, seeing the plane start from just a wooden crate and seeing where it is now, at the end of the project...It’s also a great image of what a group of people, especially of mixed generations, races and genders can accomplish when we put our mind and efforts together.”

A notable feature of this plane is its tail number, which includes the letters WT - a tribute to Wilcox Tech.

Pictured on Cover:

Jaden Rogers, Wilcox 2019 Graduate, Graphics Technology

Spencer Jenkins, Wilcox 2016 Graduate, Electronics

Kieran McGeary, Wilcox 2019 Graduate, Electronics

CTECS CELEBRATES ALUMNI SUCCESS

Graduates of the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System are empowered to enter the global workforce; pursue apprenticeships; or pursue post-secondary educational opportunities. In this video series, hear from some of our alumni and learn how a technical high school education contributed to their success.



TECH SCHOOLS PUSH FOR HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITIES DESPITE PANDEMIC

Connecticut’s technical high schools took the challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and turned it into an opportunity to get more students hands-on learning experiences.

A large part of a technical high school education are the opportunities for students to participate in Work-based Learning (WBL), and since the pandemic began last spring, technical high schools have tried to place as many students as possible in WBL as soon as the school year began.

In the first marking period alone, nearly 300 students have been placed on WBL assignments, ranging from jobs in culinary to information technology to construction.

Through the WBL program, local employers can hire juniors and seniors and provide them with real-world work experience, as well as the responsibilities associated with having a job in their chosen field. WBL takes place during the school day and students not only receive credit towards their career technology, but they also get paid.

For Goodwin Tech junior Romeo Rich, he was able to start his work-based learning with DYNA Electric on June 1, a few months earlier than normal.

Chris Cyr, the president of DYNA Electric says, “For someone like Romeo, he can get his license by the time he’s 22-years-old and be making really good money without student loans.”

“Employers have embraced the opportunity to take on student learners early this year as they know that CTECS is training the next generation of essential workers,” said Heidi Griffin, CTECS Work-based Learning Coordinator. “CTECS is proud that we have been able to offer students the opportunity to participate in WBL from the beginning of the year. It has afforded students an opportunity to highlight and hone their skills with on-the-job training, even during a pandemic.”

One of the more significant advantages for companies hiring student learners is the opportunity to develop future talent. Most CTECS students are available for full-time employment after graduation and are more likely to advance through the company because of their extensive experience.

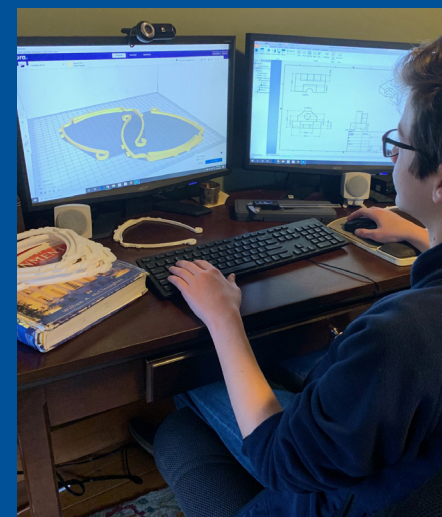
Interested in learning more?

Visit cttech.org/WBL or contact Heidi Griffen at Heidi.Griffen@cttech.org.

CTECS REDEPLOYS RESOURCES IN COVID-19 FIGHT

On March 13, 2020, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System announced that all schools were canceling in-person classes due to the public health effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As schools across the nation and throughout Connecticut shuttered their doors, CTECS responded rapidly and redeployed resources in the fight against COVID-19. Here are some of those stories.

CTECS manufacturing teachers stepped up to help meet the state’s need for personal protective equipment and volunteered their time to produce over 500 face shields for health professionals across the state.



CTECS collected all schools’ goggles, gloves and respirators, and worked with Connecticut Department of Developmental Services to distribute to first responders and health care professionals across CT.

While other high school seniors worried about their college prospects this spring, a small cohort of senior students in the Health Technology program worked on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic, stepping up to fill a need for health care workers in the local community. Many found employment at long-term care facilities, serving some of the most vulnerable populations. Some students were assigned to COVID-positive floors and reported to work wearing full personal protective equipment every day.

Criminal Justice and Protective Services program students from Vinal Technical High School utilized their emergency operations center training and provided weekly situation reports to over 10,000 state and federal responders. Additionally, the students provided a 23-page situation report daily to their teacher who was deployed to Travis Air Force Base supporting a medical mission for the Grand Princess cruise ship response, one of the first known cruise ship pandemic outbreaks in the United States.



FIRST VET TECH PROGRAM OPENS IN CT TECH SCHOOL

Vinal Technical High School, located in Middletown, CT, is the first CTECS location to introduce a Veterinary Science program for high school students. The program is designed to prepare students to enter directly into the workforce in the Veterinary Medicine field, or to further their education in a post-secondary school.

Program topics include Animal Welfare, Rights and Ethics; Veterinary Medical Terminology; Species Identification, Characteristics and Husbandry; Veterinary Restraint and Handling Procedures; Animal Anatomy and Physiology; Clinical and Laboratory Procedures; and more.

Pictured: Murphy the Black Lab helped teach freshman students about canine body language, how to approach dogs safely, and handling/restraining techniques.

STUDENT WINS NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE COMPETITION

Rene James, a Platt Technical High School Sustainable Architecture senior, won a national art competition sponsored by MadLab located in Norwalk. The competition featured 30 emerging and established artists from around the country.

“Architecture, as a discipline, is much

more than just creating a building,” says Rene. “It requires the ability to implement innovation in construction, and the ability to symbolize things, thoughts and emotions through design.”

Rene hopes to attend Rhode Island School of Design to put her architecture and creative skills to the test.



Check out the whole feature in Architype Magazine here: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/nxyjj/zbis/#p=30>



Pictured: Caylisse, a Criminal Justice and Protective Services student at Vinal Technical High School, takes an inaugural drone flight under the watchful eye of David Cruickshank, Criminal Justice and Protective Services Department Head.

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STUDENTS TO EARN FAA LICENSE FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE ASSISTANCE

Vinal Technical High School's Criminal Justice and Protective Services (CJPS) students will earn their Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Remote Pilot license this year, which will qualify them to operate a drone; a valuable skill in search and rescue operations. The CJPS program hopes to help Connecticut towns with storm damage assessments and finding missing people in the future.

Criminal Justice is a field that will enable students to develop an understanding of the techniques and principals that help improve safety and security of lives and communities. Upon completion of the program, students will be able to obtain an entry-level position in such fields as police, fire, EMS, dispatch, corrections, and the armed forces. This program is also offered at Bullard-Havens Technical High School.

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR FALL 2021 CLASS

Applying to a technical high school just got easier! Applications are now accepted online. Incoming freshman with an interest in the trades are encouraged to apply. Visit cttech.org/admissions. The application deadline for a first-round offer is January 4, 2021. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis after January 4.