

**CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND CAREER SYSTEM BOARD
Hartford, CT**

**Minutes
Full Board
October 21, 2020**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (hereafter "Board") met on October 21, 2020 at A.I. Prince Technical High School, 401 Flatbush Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Robert Trefry called the meeting to order at 9:07am.

Present: Robert Trefry, Board Member
 Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Board Member
 Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools

Virtual/Dial in: Christine Benz, Board Member
 Eric Brown, Board Member
 Lindy Lee Gold, Board Member
 Duncan Harris, Board Member
 Fitz Walker, Board Member
 Commissioner Kurt Westby, Board Member

Absent: Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Board Member

II. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

III. Welcome

Mr. Trefry welcomed Board members and guests and thanked Principal Mello for his hospitality.

Principal Mello gave a brief update and highlighted a few of the school's achievements and events. The school recently held its first ever virtual Shop Selection Night due to COVID-19 restrictions. Mr. Mello enthusiastically shared how staff and students worked collaboratively to provide video content which highlighted each shop for parents.

A. Students of Excellence Presentations

Principal Mello introduced senior students, Alyssa Williams (Culinary trade), and Kailey Gordon (Culinary trade). They both presented PowerPoints highlighting the skills and work they attained in their coursework. The students shared their successes, and future goals after graduation.

The Board members were very impressed with their presentations and thanked Mr. Mello and the students for sharing their incredible work.

B. Teacher of the Year Recognition

Mr. Wihbey, SVFT, and the Board recognized the following teachers throughout the district for their significant contributions to the success of their schools and students and their commitment to excellence in their profession:

Abbott Tech	Steven Bova - Manufacturing Technology
Bristol TEC	Rob Ellis – Automotive Technology
Bullard-Havens	David Witter – Culinary Arts
Cheney Tech	Mallory Walsh - Spec Education Instructor
Ellis Tech	Cassandra Green - Reading
Goodwin Tech	Loren Rozanski – Social Studies
Grasso Tech	Kathleen Rowsam - English
Kaynor Tech	Brian Stasaitis - Special Education Instructor
O'Brien Tech	Raymond Moran – Information System technology
Platt Tech	Daniel Quinn – Social Studies
Prince Tech	Michael Levandowski - Mathematics
Vinal Tech	Ryan Barnes – Culinary Arts
Wilcox Tech	George Wruck - Electronics
Windham Tech	Patricia Long - English
Wolcott Tech	Dominic Pellegrino - Mathematics
Wright Tech	Robert Kucharski - Physical Education & Health

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Wihbey shared how the limitations of COVID-19 restrictions did not permit a formal, in person celebration this year.

Mr. Trefry shared his excitement for the list's diversity in the trades' areas. He went on to commend the teachers for doing tremendous work during such difficult times.

A copy of the list is included in the official file of this meeting.

IV. Consent Agenda *(Any item may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of a Board member)*

A. Board Orientation

Mr. Trefry introduced Mr. Wihbey to present the Board Orientation PowerPoint. The presentation included key information about the CTECS organization, while highlighting the necessities of the Board and its direct influence on the success of the organization.

A few highlights:

- Mission and Vision
- Organizational Chart
- District Profile
- Cluster and Trades
- Work Based Learning
- Graduation Rates
- Chronic Absenteeism
- CTECS Strategic Operating Plan
- Foundational Imperatives
- Annual Report

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Trefry shared the anticipation of additional Board members pending the receipt of official appointment letters.

Mr. Brown requested a breakdown of the Career Clusters by trade and by school.

Mr. Wihbey agreed to share the requested information at the next meeting.

Ms. Gold shared her thoughts on the need for additional community outreach for Asian students.

Dr. Harris requested clarification on the female to male trends throughout the district.

Mr. Trefry suggested a close review of the trades and their appeal to both female and male students.

Ms. Gold suggested a look into offering Bio-Career pathways in the southern area of the state.

Mr. Wihbey replied he would look into the trade reauthorization process for guidance.

Mr. Brown asked for clarification on how students participate in out of state work based learning sites during the day.

Mr. Wihbey shared the example of Wright Tech in Stamford and its close proximity to New York.

Dr. Harris asked for clarification on the supervision process during student workforce business.

Mr. Wihbey answered, instructors and staff are always onsite with students to ensure a safe, educational, production experience for all involved. Mr. Wihbey added, he also joins production sites to assess standards and progress.

Mr. Wihbey encouraged Board members to visit the districts social media sites to access videos and articles which showcases the great work students are accomplishing across the state.

Mr. Trefry shared his thoughts on the student's work ethic and their resilience in trades and academics. He commended the programs for providing a safe space for trial and error; allowing for students to grow and take lessons learned into the workforce.

Ms. Keavney shared her enthusiasm for the soft skills students gain during their experience at the technical schools. (Time Management, Work Ethic, Professionalism)

Mr. Wihbey noted the districts graduation rate is 12 points ahead of the states average. He continued to share his enthusiasm on how CTECS graduates break the cycle of poverty in one generation.

Ms. Gold shared conversations with students and her surprise when they share ideas from their 10 year plan. "Their focus and center at such an early age is remarkable."

A copy of the Board Orientation PowerPoint is included in the official file of this meeting.

B. Annual Report

Mr. Wihbey enthusiastically shared the CTECS 2019-2020 Annual Report.

We are honored to present the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) 2019-2020 Annual Report. Within this report are summary highlights of the work accomplished over the last year toward achieving CTECS's five agency goals, as outlined in CTECS Strategic Operating Plan. This reflects a sampling of our best efforts to deliver high-quality instruction to nearly 11,000 Connecticut students, while supporting the workforce needs of Connecticut business and industry.

The next step is to present and seek the support of the State Board of Education.

A few highlights:

- The District at a glance
- School and Locations
- Partnership List
- Strategic Plan Goals
- Financial Report
- COVID-19 Response

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Trefry requested clarification on MARZANO.

Mr. Wihbey responded, it is a professional development tool that is a research think tank on teaching and learning. All analysis is based off data that fosters great teaching practices and protocols.

Mr. Wihbey commended Dr. Menounos on all of her efforts in developing the districts teaching and learning.

Ms. Keavney requested more information on the Facilities Carpentry trade.

Mr. Wihbey responded the program focus was on facility management.

Mr. Brown requested clarification on the financial reports salary and fixed costs.

Mr. Wihbey explained how budget cuts cause limited options for cost savings in other budget areas.

Mr. Trefry commended Mr. Wihbey for all of his efforts and thanked him for presenting the orientation presentation and the annual report.

A copy of the Annual Report is included in the official file of this meeting.

V. Items Requiring Action

A. Wellness Policy

This item was tabled to the next Board meeting for review, discussion, and recommendations.

B. Healthy Food Certification

Mr. Wihbey introduced, Kevin Benham, Food Services Director, who gave an overview of the Healthy Food Certification and the challenging financial and staff implications the certification would have on the district.

CTECS has opted to not participate in the past primarily due to the financial impact of the decision. While the district would receive approximately \$75,000 in new revenue based on \$.10 per meal, the increased costs to the district to ensure compliance surpassed the additional revenue that would have been earned. These costs included higher food costs for healthier products and increased staffing requirements.

The district’s school lunch program currently operates at an annual loss of approximately \$2,500,000 with much of the costs beyond the control of the district as the salary and fringe benefits are subject to collective bargaining agreements negotiated statewide.

It should be noted, however, that the CTECS will continue to maintain current federal nutritional standards in its school meals and a la carte options.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Trefry shared the district has not participated in the certification in the last 8 years due to the financial implications.

Mr. Benham reiterated the compliance challenges, especially with limited staffing.

Ms. Gold moved, Dr. Harris seconded, that the Board approved to opt out of the Healthy Food Certification.

Vote:	In Favor:	Benz, Brown, Gold, Harris, Keavney-Maruca, Trefry, Walker, and Westby
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Vallieres

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Admissions Policy

Mr. Trefry introduced Tom Cronin, Director of Admission, who provided a brief overview of the CTECS Admissions Policy and the Administrative Procedures for 2020.

The admissions policy guides the recruitment, application, and enrollment process for new students. Admission to CTECS' technical high schools is a centralized, state-wide process that ensures fidelity and coherence throughout all components of the admissions process. CTECS provides equal educational opportunities to all qualified students in compliance with state and federal law.

The basic components of the admissions process are:

1. Awareness
2. Recruitment
3. Application Period
4. Review of Applications
5. Initial Acceptance
6. Information Gathering
7. Final Acceptance
8. Onboarding
9. Exploratory
10. Trade Assignment

Each year, applicants from across the state of Connecticut exceed more than twice the number of available student seats. It is the responsibility of the Director of Admissions to ensure that all qualified applicants are treated fairly and equitably in an admissions process that follows the guidelines established by CTECS' Board policy as well as applicable state and federal law.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Brown asked for clarification on the Alternative Online Application process.

Mr. Cronin explained how select schools within the district require a RSCO application which is a separate application from the CTECS application. Families can submit both application during the process.

Mr. Wihbey shared how the application process allows a regional view for enrollment and the benefits when it comes to low enrollment locations.

Ms. Keavney shared the importance of transportation in the enrollment process.

Mr. Wihbey praised the local schools and their support with transportation needs.

Mr. Brown shared his cautionary thoughts on the term "Guidance Counselor" vs. "Career Counselor" or "School Counselor" used as an identifier within the policy.

Ms. Gold shared her experience with the norm culture title "Career Counselor"

Mr. Wihbey shared his interest in the title and agreed to get back to the Board with an official answer.

Mr. Trefry reiterated the importance of appropriate documentation to ensure a just and fair enrollment process.

Ms. Keavney moved, Mr. Brown seconded, that the Board adopt the Admissions Policy.

Vote:	In Favor:	Benz, Brown, Gold, Harris, Keavney-Maruca, Trefry, Walker, and Westby
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Vallieres

Motion carried unanimously.

A copy of the Admissions Policy and the Administrative Procedures is included in the official file of this meeting.

VI. Report of the Superintendent of Schools

A. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Wihbey shared an overview of his report.

A few highlights:

- Several professional development initiatives took place over the last month: Creating Proficiency Scales for Grading; District Wide Professional Development - Teacher Choice Day; The Art and Science of Teaching for new district teachers; and New Administrator Orientation.
- New curriculum was developed for Information Technology programs. Adult education evening apprentice programs also developed new curriculum, and for the first time are offering courses in an online format. Approximately 50% of adult students enrolled this fall are taking courses online.
- CTECS is developing an online application for the fall recruitment effort. We anticipate a reduction in data entry and an ease of application for families. Moving to an online application will also ensure less touch points, reducing health risks as well.

- Considerable efforts continue to be made to better serve our most impacted learners during this unprecedented pandemic. Where appropriate, PPT's are being convened to adapt student programs to best meet individual learning needs and ensure gains are realized.
- The second video in CTECS new alumni video series was released. The purpose of this series is to convey to prospective students the success possible with a technical high school education, and to further engage with CTECS alumni. View 1984 Electrical graduate Tony Rizzo's story here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJout0ZySGs>

Questions/Discussion included:

N/A

A copy of the Superintendents Report is included in the official file of this meeting.

B. Pandemic Response Team Update

Mr. Wihbey shared an overview of the members and the purpose of the CTECS Pandemic Response Team. He provided a brief update on what their areas are doing in support of the CTECS district's students, families, and staff, during the current COVID-19 Pandemic.

A few points:

- Nurse Vacancies / Limited Staffing
- Contact Tracing / DPH Conference Calls
- Schools have been in Phase 3 and Phase 4 due to uptick in COVID cases
- Creative ideas to provide additional Instructional planning time for teachers
- Ongoing Review

Questions/Discussion included:

N/A

C. Certifications and Work Based Learning Update (WBL)

Mr. Wihbey shared an overview of the monthly Credentials and Work Based Learning reports.

Traditionally CTECS does not allow students to participate in WBL until after the first marking period (December) however due to the pandemic has allowed students to go out immediately. We have suspended Job Shadowing at this time, and if schools are in Phase 3 for virtual learning we have suspended WBL for the safety of the students.

A few points:

- Currently 284 students are participating in work based learning
- In December of 2019, 517 students participated in work based learning
- 51 Students are currently in the electrical trade

Questions/Discussion included:

Ms. Gold requested clarification on how students receive classroom hour credits for work based learning (WBL).

Mr. Wihbey responded, he would look into the specifics of that information.

A copy of the Certifications and Work Based Learning Reports is included in the official file of this meeting.

D. Expenditure and Revenue Report

Mr. Wihbey introduced Ms. Maura Kjar, Chief Financial Officer to review the expenditure and revenue report.

The latest report reflected the following items:

- COVID-19 Expenditures
- COVID-19 Overtime
- Revenue
- Personal Services by Region
- Operating Expenses by Region
- Per Pupil Cost by Region

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Trefry and Mr. Wihbey both thanked Ms. Kjar for her report.

A copy of the Expenditure and Revenue Report is included in the official file of this meeting.

E. Vacancy Update

Mr. Wihbey introduced Mr. Robert Sartoris, Director of Talent Management to present the latest vacancy report to committee members.

Mr. Sartoris reviewed a list of critical positions needed throughout the district.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Wihbey shared the State of Connecticut is currently in a hiring freeze. Specifically, a budget deficit mitigation strategy, meaning, all vacant positions are on hold until further notice.

Mr. Sartoris added vital positions such as nurses, custodians, and clerical staff are currently on hold.

Mr. Sartoris continued to explain how health and safety, and sanitation are critical to the districts operation. Gaps in positions such as these could cause school closures.

Mr. Wihbey shared joint work with the SDE Commissioner and SDE Deputy Commissioner to provide support in getting some of the necessary positions for the district.

Mr. Wihbey shared priority positions are teachers, nurses, and custodians.

F. Separation Committee Update

Mr. Wihbey introduced Ms. Susan Scott, Legal Director to share updates on the Separation Committee.

Susan shared there was limited progress due to COVID-19 related responsibilities and the limited availability of other state agencies to respond to request due to COVID-19.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Trefry shared he is looking forward to more information in the future.

VII. Report of the Chair

A. Committee Structure

Mr. Trefry addressed the Board and gave an overview of the Board subcommittee descriptions. He asked Board members to review the committees list, as designations would be forthcoming.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Trefry explained he would update the committee descriptions list and sending them out for review.

Ms. Keavney and Mr. Wihbey shared examples of how action items would come from the subcommittees with recommendations before receiving official votes from the entire Board.

Mr. Trefry suggested subcommittee meetings should be virtual and prior to the Board meetings to keep timeframes short.

Ms. Keavney suggested virtual meetings a week prior to the actual Board meeting.

Mr. Wihbey agreed.

VIII. Adjourn

Mr. Trefry thanked everyone for joining the meeting and requested a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Keavney moved, Ms. Gold seconded, that the Board adjourn.

Vote:	In Favor:	Benz, Brown, Gold, Harris, Keavney-Maruca, Trefry, and Walker
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Vallieres, Westby

The meeting adjourned at 11:48am.

Prepared by: Ms. Ronke Stallings, CTECS