

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

**Minutes  
Full Board  
March 17, 2021**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (hereafter "Board") met on March 17, 2021 via Google Meet Virtual Conference.

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Robert Trefry called the meeting to order at 9:31am.

Present:                    Robert Trefry, Board Member  
                                 Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Board Member  
                                 George Anderson, Board Member  
                                 Christine Benz, Board Member  
                                 Lindy Lee Gold, Board Member  
                                 Duncan Harris, Board Member  
                                 Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Board Member  
                                 Fitz Walker, Board Member  
                                 Karen Wosczyzna Birch, Board Member  
                                 Commissioner Kurt Westby, Board Member  
                                 Eric Brown, Board Member

Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools

Absent:                    Jeff Aucker, Board Member  
                                 Fitz Walker, Board Member

Mr. Trefry welcomed Board members and guests and lead the pledge of allegiance.

**II. Public Participation**

Mr. Paul Angelucci – Vice President of SVFT

**III. Items Requiring Action**

**A. Policy and Quality Committee**

- Enrollment Policy – Application Process

Patricia Keavney-Maruca presented a motion to allow students additional time to get letters of recommendations from counselors due to Covid-19 restrictions. Subcommittee is in favor of making changes to policy to allow for students to receive additional time.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca moved, Ms. Lindy Lee Gold seconded, that the Board adopt the Youth Suicide Prevention and Intervention Policy.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Finance and Audit Committee**

Mr. Tefley provided details on new donations: Cruz Manufacturing for equipment, \$10,000 from the Eugene Atwood Fund to Norwich Tech to buy equipment, Alternative Energy Technologies for solar water donation materials.

Ms. Lindy Lee Gold moved, Dr. Kelli-Marie Vallieres seconded that the Board accept the donations on behalf of CTECS.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

**C. Industry Outreach Committee**

Mr. Trefry introduced Mr. Eric Brown to discuss reauthorization of the Bio-Science Career Cluster. Dr. Vallieres stated that the trade will no longer be offered at Prince Tech and offered additional information on limited access to job opportunities in the region. Grasso Tech's program should be reauthorized for 2 years based on DOL reports for in-demand careers in that region.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Ms. Keavney-Maruca emphasized that the lack of transport limits inner-city students' access to internship and work-based learning opportunities, asked that this be considered when planning a replacement trade for Prince Tech.*

*Commissioner Kurt Westby agreed that transportation is an important factor to consider, as rural students also have challenges with access to transportation.*

*Mr. Whibey detailed a 3-year process for phasing out the Bio-Science shop at Prince Tech.*

*Dr. Harris asked that DOL reports be shared to help with selection of replacement programs and discussed collaborative plans with Capital Community College and Prince Tech.*

*Dr. Anderson discussed the option to access skills based on the DOL report.*

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

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **IV. Consideration of Minutes of the December and January, CTECS Board Meeting**

Ms. Lindy Lee Gold moved, Commissioner Westby seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the December and January, Board Meetings.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Questions/Discussion included:

N/A

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

#### **V. Public Participation**

Mr. Paul Angelucci, Vice President of SVFT (Teachers Union) asked that the Board support and fund the minority teachers committee.

Mr. Trefry asked if Mr. Whibey could add this topic to the next Quality and Policy Subcommittee meeting for further discussion. The Board appreciates outreach and efforts of the SVFT (Teachers Union).

Questions/Discussion included:

*The Board shared their appreciation for the outreach and efforts of the SVFT (Teachers Union).*

## **VI. Students of Excellence Presentation**

Mr. Wihbey introduces Mr. Brent McCartney, CTECS Education Consultant, who oversees construction trades. Mr. McCartney introduced Ellis Tech masonry students, as well as Department Head Mr. Haden, an alumnus of Ellis Tech. Who shared an interactive video presentation showcasing the students and their construction process.

Questions/Discussion included:

*The Board members were impressed and inspired by the finished projects and the talent of the students.*

*Dr. Vallieres asks if students are able to choose projects and if they contribute to site management.*

*Mr. McCartney informed the Board that the shop participates in off-campus production and income from projects are used for the shop. The students are part of the entire process from selection, materials, the bid and customer service on site with clients.*

## **VII. Cultural Sensitivity Training**

Mr. Whibey introduces Ms. Taonya Stoute, head of professional development to present Dr. Richard Lemons, Executive Director for the Connecticut Center for School Change.

Dr. Lemons congratulated the faculty and students of Ellis Tech and shared how impressed he was with the masonry designs. Slated to begin in August, Dr. Lemons presents a curriculum for teachers and students related to inclusivity, equity and diversity.

Highlights:

- Build awareness of inequities

- Build capacity to support efforts
- Develop framework to support work
- Provide training and support to each of the 18 schools:
  - One (1) half-day session on establishing conditions to sustain equity
  - Up to one (1) half-day session to address challenges and obstacles over time
- Provide training and support to encourage student leadership development
- Provide definitions to important language used to bridge understanding:
  - Equality vs. Equity
  - Race
  - Lens of Systemic Oppression: Individual, Interpersonal and Systemic

Questions/Discussion included:

*Ms. Keavney-Maruca expressed that the lesson from Dr. Lemons should be embedded within their regular curriculum as the subject matter is relevant to their daily lives.*

*Dr. Lemons wants to ensure adult facilitators are fully trained and able to properly handle instructing students for learning and leadership opportunities.*

*Dr. Harris commended Dr. Lemons on the presentation, shared future plans for racial equity education and agreed with Ms. Keavney-Maruca's assertion that the lessons for inclusion should be woven into the culture of the organization.*

*Mr. Whibey affirms they will be addressing racial and gender equity.*

*Commissioner Westby commented on the ways to interrelate the programs we have available, and ensuring the finances are available to support these initiatives.*

*Mr. Brown expressed the concern for the long hard road ahead, and if that may lead to resistance.*

*Dr. Lemons stated that the lessons are cultivated with young people in mind. They expect push back and will educate facilitators on encouraging dialogue for the sustainable future.*

*Dr. Vallieres shared thoughts on environmental cues for implementing changes systemically.*

## **VIII. Report of the Superintendent**

### **A. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Jeffrey Wihbey, CTECS Superintendent of Schools shared an overview of his report.

A few highlights:

- Ramping up support teams for struggling students. The challenge of distance-learning has made an impact across the state. Due to the unprecedented social and emotional issues students are facing, the lowest grade a student can receive is a 50%.
- The Math Academic Return on Investment Committee looking at overhauling the process of mathematics instruction.
- Mr. Cronin asked for a brief report on admissions: Currently in good shape and ahead of schedule for next year. Trying to create greater equity in admissions process. Sent offers to 95% of seats and would to offer flexibility in the remaining positions for those who had difficulty in satisfying requirements due to Covid-19. Mr. Cronin will provide an update this summer with changes to the policy that will help with making future admissions more efficient. Mr. Cronin also shared his feelings on the enriching and authentic project-based programs of CTECS.
- CTECS new admissions policy is being implemented. It includes an online, centralized and parent driven process. Local and statewide marketing efforts continue to drive applicants to the new application. Over the next several weeks, applications will be reviewed and offer letters will be sent to families. Considering the impact of the pandemic, it has been very good timing and advantageous to have a fully virtual application process.
- Mr. Anderson inquired about the decline rate for student applicants. Mr. Cronin shared approximately 2,000-3,000 are not offered a place within their choice school out of approximately 5,000-7,000 applicants.
- Substantial improvements were made with enrollment of Special Education students at 17% enrollment.
- Distributed over 7,000 devices, utilizing the Everybody Learns Act of Reimbursement to fund the effort to equip all students.
- Assembled 4-Tier bond request list \$15 million, \$20 million, and \$25 million to replace trade shop equipment.
- Spring is ideal for bringing staff and students back into schools, however the schools are not prepared due to lack of safety and health professionals. Based on reports from various principals, there are challenges to ensuring regular sanitization of schools.

- Working with Department of Education Commissioner and Department of Administrative Services to fill staffing vacancies.
- Streamlining of tech organization across CT. Nervous about it being centralized to DAS. The school district should have a more localized control over IT staff, working on maintaining the ability to supervise and direct work moving forward.
- Closer connection to math and trade instruction. Push In Math support – full time math instructor, teaching relevant math concepts for the trade. Math/Plumbing teacher. It will assist with real-world connection for students to connect with their trades.
- Regional career tech opportunities – bringing students from other high schools to receive training education.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Dr. Vallieres offered support for obtaining staffing resources. She asked about Federal rescue funds and how it will be utilized.*

*Mr. Whibey shared his thoughts on technology upgrades. Extended day and extended year opportunities. There will be a skills gap for seniors due to distance learning. Trade instruction – current and incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders to start early and receive additional instruction to prepare them for the school year.*

*Mr. Trefry offered concern for next year's election and potential changes in legislature.*

*Mr. Brown expressed concern over priority of tech schools with Education Commissioner and if an invitation has been extended to attend Board meetings.*

**IX. Report of the Chair**

**X. Adjourn**

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

Questions/Discussion included:

*Board Members shared well wishes and said goodbye.*

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

