

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

**Minutes  
Full Board  
April 21, 2021**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (hereafter "Board") met on April 21, 2021 via Google Meet Virtual Conference.

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Robert Trefry called the meeting to order at 9:04am.

Present:                    Robert Trefry, Board Member  
                                 George Anderson, Board Member  
                                 Jeff Aucker, Board Member  
                                 Christine Benz, Board Member  
                                 Eric Brown, 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

Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools

Absent:                    Fitz Walker, Board Member  
                                 Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Board Member

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

**II. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**III. Students of Excellence Presentation**

Mr. Wihbey welcomed Mr. Pat Ciarleglio who introduced Mr. William Zisk, a teacher for 36 years from the Vinal Tech electrical program. Mr. Zisk stated that the biggest challenge was teaching during Covid and being able to give hands-on experience to his students. Seniors, Daisy May Smith and Michael Lee, discussed the work-based learning program, specifically in-house and outside production projects. Daisy and Michael were thankful for have chosen a technical high school, as their peers had not found the same success and direction when choosing a career path. About 40% of Mr. Zisk’s students are actively employed in their chosen field.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Mr. Trefry asked the students about their plans after graduation.*

*Dr. Benz inquired about the students’ schedules.*

*Dr. Harris asked about what advice the students would give to middle schoolers on why they should choose Vinal.*

*Mr. Trefry wished the students further success after graduation.*

**IV. Committee Reports**

**A. Policy and Quality Committee**

- **Revision of the Gift and Donations Policy (Action Item)**

Mr. Trefry introduced Mrs. Susan Scott, CTECS Legal Director, to discuss the revised Gift and Donations Policy. This will enable the superintendent to accept on behalf of the board, and the Fiscal department will submit quarterly reports to the Board. Mrs. Scott briefly went over the guidelines, indemnification of the donor and designated authority.

Ms. Lindy Lee Gold moved, Commissioner Westby seconded the motion to approve the revised policy.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

- **Math SAT Update**

Mr. Trefry presented Dr. Nikitoula Menounos to introduce Mx. Alex Pitsas to discuss the Fall's Math SAT results. Mx. Pitsas stated that the participation rate was significantly lower due to Covid and went over the predictive target vs. the actual percentage to display readiness for college Math courses. Overall, based on the SAT criteria, the majority of students have not met the standard, and need skill strengthening.

- **Instructional Audit**

Mr. Wihbey introduced Dr. Menounos to present the Instructional Audit of Math. Dr. Menounos worked with the District Management Group (DMG) out of Boston to provide quantitative and qualitative measurements to gain the full scope of how Math instruction can be improved.

Highlights:

- Begin Pre-assessment for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders, placement according to level and incorporate Math intervention for additional instruction.
- Development of Math pathways according to students' future plans in the workforce and for college success.
- Professional development of teachers to be utilized as Math coaches and create systems to monitor Math programming.

Mr. Wihbey went on to discuss plans to obtain more data, dispatch teachers to work with students based on their learning needs, as well as the implementation of new methods to ensure students fully grasp updated instructional concepts.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Dr. Vallieres discussed the learning gap between students of varying levels starting around third grade, and the importance of applying Math techniques to relatable scenarios for students.*

*Mr. Wihbey has plans to hire additional Math teachers at the Title I schools, and develop curriculum to merge trade and essential Math to be learned concurrently.*

*Mr. Brown asked for clarity on if the focus was more towards improvement of SAT scores or to prepare for their post-high school plans.*

*Dr. Vallieres and Dr. Harris discussed the goals to improve SAT scores, as well as provided information on the multi-measured techniques used to determine Math placement in higher education.*

*Dr. Birch went on to explain that the CT community colleges do not require the SAT for entering students. Students' transcripts are used to determine placement as an Accuplacer test may not be the most accurate determination of learning level.*

- **SVFT Minority Teachers Committee Update**

Mr. Wihbey introduced Mr. Robert Sartoris to discuss the goals of the committee. There is a statewide need to hire culturally diverse teachers. There is an outreach plan to attract more minority teachers, as well as focus on the recruitment process in a strategic and thoughtful way to increase diversity in the THS system.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Dr. Birch presented a question about alternative routes to certification.*

*Dr. Harris asked for clarity on the racial breakdown of CTECS teachers.*

*Dr. Anderson was comforted to know diversity is being addressed in many ways and affirmed that representation and diversity are important with teachers, and in roles of leadership within the school system.*

*Mr. Wihbey provided data regarding the breakdown of African American teachers in the state (4%) compared to CTECS (4.6%), Latinx teachers, state average (4.1%) CTECS (6%). They will work to increase the numbers to reflect the schools' populations.*

*Mr. Trefry requested Mr. Wihbey provide information on the process to become a certified trade teacher. Eight years of trade experience is required and they are given 10 years to obtain the necessary education.*

## **B. Finance and Audit Committee**

- **Expenditure and Revenue Report**

Mr. Trefry introduced Mrs. Maura Kjar to discuss the expenditure report compiled to give a detailed view of how the budget is spent according to program allotment, and student enrollment.

## **C. Industry Outreach Committee**

Mr. Trefry introduced Mr. Eric Brown to discuss the 2-year reauthorization of the Bio Science and Environmental Technology programs at Grasso THS and the phasing out of the program at Prince THS.

Mr. Wihbey provided clarity on the role of the Superintendent regarding the 5-year plan to expand Health Technology programs to 3 additional schools (Ellis THS, Goodwin THS, Bristol THS) as well as adding LPN and RN professions to the curriculum.

Ms. Lindy Lee Gold moved, Dr. Harris seconded, that the Board approve Health Technology Trade reauthorization that includes expanding the program in 3 additional schools.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **V. Consideration of the Minutes of the March 17, 2021, CTECS Board Meeting**

Ms. Lindy Lee Gold moved, Commissioner Westby seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the March 17, 2021, Board Meeting.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **VI. Items Requiring Action**

##### **A. Governor's Workforce Council Update**

Mr. Trefry introduced Dr. Kelli-Marie Vallieres who provided an update on the Council. The central focus of the latest meeting was to discuss industry participation, such as IT and manufacturing. Emphasis made a commitment to hire 200 IT people in the Hartford area over the next several years and challenged other companies to do the same.

##### **Key Points:**

- Career awareness and post-secondary placement
- Career pathways for at-risk students
- Improvement of data systems for job-seekers and employers state-wide
- Alternative certification program to get teachers and professionals with 4-year degrees certified to teach trade classes.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Mr. George Anderson discussed ongoing plans to partner with agencies/companies to get involved with workforce development.*

*Mr. Wihbey expounded on the success and effectiveness of the Governor's Workforce Council.*

*Dr. Aucker discussed the renewed emphasis on alternative talent pools and the importance of putting programs in place to assist with reskilling potential employees in CT.*

*Mr. Anderson provided clarity on Synchrony, a Stamford-based company that is the largest provider of point-of-purchase consumer financing.*

## **VII. Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

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

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

A few highlights:

- The trade remediation programs at Bullard, Whitney and Prince that have allowed students to stay after school and obtain necessary hands-on training in their trades has been a success.
- An update on the CDC 6-foot requirement had been shortened to 3-feet which allowed for more students to be reintroduced into the classroom.
- The school climate survey is underway and the data is expected to be available in the upcoming weeks.

### **B. Pandemic Response**

Mr. Wihbey introduced Ms. Darlene Kirychuk, head of the Nursing Department, to discuss updates on staff vaccinations. Community Health Center and Optimus are working with CTECS to set up clinics for student vaccinations.

### **C. Credentials and Work Based Learning Update**

Work-based learning internship totals have increased to 531.

#### **D. Vacancy Update**

Mr. Wihbey asked Mr. Sartoris to provide a vacancy update. There are approx. 170 open positions and there are a number that fall under health and safety. There will be an emergency move to bring in the needed health and safety certified employees and a recruitment specialist from Department of Administrative services will be supporting with the process of filling the vacancies.

#### **E. Looking to the Future Committee Update**

Mr. Wihbey introduced Dr. Menounos to update on the committee. Their current goal is to have 100% of students return full-time. They have found a vendor that will work with students in the fall and assist the teachers with a checklist of questions to connect with students.

### **VIII. Report of the Chair**

Mr. Trefry presented a resolution in honor of Mr. Ed Leavy, SVFT President. Mr. Trefry expressed gratitude for Mr. Leavy's many contributions to CTECS for 36 years, and wished him continued health and happiness during retirement.

Ms. Gold moved, Dr. Vallieres seconded, the motion to approve the resolution

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Trefry presented the Board with the option to have in-person meetings in the future and went over the number of board members that have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. They will revisit this discussion at a later date.

### **IX. Adjourn**

Mr. Trefry requested a motion to adjourn.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Board Members shared well wishes and said goodbye.*

Ms. Gold moved, Mr. Trefry seconded, that the Board adjourn.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:33am.

Prepared by: Ms. Simone Bronson, CTECS