

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

**Minutes of the Full Board
May 19, 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 9:05am.

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
 Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Board Member
 Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Board Member
 Commissioner Kurt Westby, Board Member
 Karen Wosczyzna Birch, Board Member

Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools

Absent: Fitz Walker, 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 Don Mason, the Education Consultant for Information Technology trades. Mr. Mason informed the Board about the Computing Challenge sponsored by the Lieutenant Governor for Connecticut students. Grasso Tech had several participants including Leslie Melendez and Bernard Gordish. The students presented the Board with the valuable skills they've learned, their achievements at Grasso Tech. They have provided Helpdesk services to school staff, and prepared technology for events which has been an

enriching learning experience. Both Leslie and Bernard have future career plans to utilize skills in IT and discussed the value of the credentials they've earned.

Mr. Wihbey introduced the meeting's host Dr. Annabelle Diaz, principal of Goodwin and CTECS graduate.

Initiatives Goodwin is working on:

- They are having their first career fair with the Minority Construction Council for Goodwin and Prince 11th and 12th grade students.
- Expanding Advanced Placement opportunities with Biology, Algebra, English and Social Studies

Questions/Discussion included:

Dr. Aucker offered encouragement to the students regarding their educational accomplishments being in line with the current demands for a successful career in IT.

Mr. Harris asked the students about any strengths that came from remote learning this school year.

Dr. Benz had questions about how the students prepared to assist with the IT help desk and what they learned in the role.

IV. Executive Session

Motion to enter an Executive Session to discuss written communication, protected under attorney client privileged regarding teacher negotiations progress and invite the Superintendent, Jeff Wihbey and the Legal Director, Susan Scott.

Dr. Birch moved, Mr. Brown seconded the motion to enter an executive session with Superintendent, Jeff Wihbey and the Legal Director, Susan Scott.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

V. Committee Reports

A. Policy and Quality Committee

- Healthy Food Certification (Action Item)

Ms. Keavney-Maruca introduced Mr. Cavallaro to provide information on the annual certification. Mr. Cavallaro informed the Board that the increased cost per meal would exceed the revenue. CTECS will continue to maintain current federal school lunch standards. Through audit by the Office of Child Nutrition, they noted that the program is understaffed for its size. The subcommittee recommends they do not participate in the program.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca moved, Mr. Brown seconded the motion to not participate in the program.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

- CTECS Separation

Mr. Wihbey welcomed Attorney Susan Scott, CTECS Legal Director, to discuss the reasons for the planned separation for CTECS scheduled for July 1, 2022.

A few highlights:

- Mission clarity for CTECS and CSDE – Increased capacity for partnerships.
- Ensure appropriate oversight, resolving and inherent conflict of interest.
- Improved operational efficiencies – Streamlining of the current hiring/recruitment, contracts and fiscal practices.
- Greater fiscal control – less vulnerability to rescission.

Questions/Discussion included:

Dr. Vallieres asked if this separation will alleviate the issue of CTECS foreign language requirement.

Mr. Brown asked if CTECS has the support of SDE with the separation date of July 2022.

Dr. Benz posed a question about the negative effects/risks involved in separating.

Mr. Wihbey emphasized the importance that CTECS establish sufficient internal staff prior to the separation.

B. Finance and Audit Committee

- Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) Proposal (Action Item)

Mr. Trefry welcomed Maura Kjar, CTECS Chief Financial Officer. Ms. Kjar informed the Board of a \$2.4 million surplus in the personal services account. The committee asks for approval to use the funds for building repairs, upgrades and safety concerns related to sports facilities at several schools.

Ms. Kjar provided details on why costs for certain programs are higher, some due to enrollment and equipment costs that will be recouped as years progress.

A few highlights:

- Revenue is down 3.7% compared to 2020
- They are down in federal grants, school lunch and production
- They are on target with budget spending
- Next year they will be working on the reauthorization on the culinary and hospitality trades
- \$14,224 spent per student according to the report, that equates to 7 students for all staff and 11 for full time instructional staff.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Brown inquired if an increase in numbers of teachers would result in increased expenses.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca asked if the cost for culinary included the operational costs to run the entire program.

- Platt THS Donation – Swistek AS20 Swiss Style CNC Machining Center with 20mm lemca Barfeeder (Action Item)

Mr. Wihbey introduced Christine Stisser, Central Office Intern to present the Board with a donation to consider. Ms. Stisser informed the board of a Milford manufacturer, Swistek Machinery, that has offered to donate a brand new Swistek CNC machine valued at \$75,000 to Platt THS. Students do not normally have access to this equipment so this gift would allow the students to receive valuable training. Ms. Stisser provides further details on a commitment from the distributor to deliver and set up the machine for shop use.

Mr. Trefry moved, Dr. Birch seconded the motion to approve the gift of machinery to Platt Tech.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Industry Outreach Committee

- Adult Education Update

Mr. Trefry asked Mr. Brown to discuss the committee's work related to the Adult Apprenticeship initiative. Pat Ciarleglio went on to provide details on updates, such as added programs, online accessibility, and student enrollment.

A few highlights:

- There were 2,510 enrolled for the 2020-2021 school year
- They are expanding the barbering program to be offered at additional schools due to the success.
- The offer of online courses has been beneficial for enrollment, as many students would have been unable to participate.
- CTECS apprentices make up a large percentage of the market according to data provided by the Department of Labor.

Questions/Discussion included:

Dr. Birch asked if there are other models for apprenticeships they are considering or adding other disciplines.

Commissioner Westby added that with more federal grants available to CTECS, they expect to add new options and programs for CTECS students.

VI. Consideration of the Minutes of the April 21, 2021, CTECS Board Meeting

Ms. Gold moved, Commissioner Westby seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the April 21, 2021, Board Meeting.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Report of the Superintendent of Schools

A. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Jeffrey Wihbey, CTECS Superintendent of Schools shared that all schools have resumed in-person learning with approximately 75%-80% opting to return to school in the coming year. Mr. Wihbey adds that they plan to hold prom festivities for students, as well as ceremonies for graduating seniors; both, with strict social distancing rules in place. Mr. Wihbey welcomes the Board members to attend the upcoming graduation ceremonies.

B. Pandemic Response

Mr. Wihbey informed the Board of the ongoing efforts to make vaccinations accessible to students and their parents.

C. Credentials and Work Based Learning Update

Mr. Wihbey introduced Kerry Markey, Director of Communication to present the collaboration with the Digital Media Tech shop at Grasso and the Norwich Tech Automotive shop to discuss the benefits of hands-on learning and production. The video also expounded on the successful post high school careers of graduates. Additionally, the Norwich Tech automotive group was the National Champions of auto repair at the New York auto show.

Dr. Vallieres was introduced by Mr. Wihbey to discuss the Office of Workforce Strategy and the plans to prepare students for in-demand careers that will be marketable in the future.

A few highlights:

- Implementation of trade relevant Math.
- Social/Emotional Learning.
- Aligning to industry demand.
- Recruitment of teachers to match demand.
- Teacher evaluations connected to their individual instruction.
- Development of pathways for higher learning catered to the student's needs.
- Increased funding for CT schools through ARP ESSER

Questions/Discussion included:

Ms. Keavney-Maruca suggested CTECS put more of a focus on showcasing green technology.

Ms. Gold added that Cyber Security should be included in the Information Tech trade.

Dr. Aucker provided details about his company planning to hire 250+ non-BA holders for IT jobs within the state over the next year.

Dr. Harris informed the board of an influx of DOT and construction jobs that will be available soon, and asked that there be a plan to strategically align CTECS talent with future openings.

Mr. Trefry received consensus from the Board that the goals of the strategic plan are supported in full by the other members.

D. Vacancy Update

Mr. Wihbey discussed the surplus being due to 178 vacancies during the school year. They plan to be close to fully staffed before the start of the next school year and have been assigned 2 recruitment analysts to support with staffing by the Department of Administrative Services.

E. Looking to the Future Committee Update

This item was tabled.

VIII. Report of the Chair

Mr. Trefry informed the Board that Ms. Keavney-Maruca will be chairing the meeting in June and raised the motion to remove the July's meeting from the calendar. The August meeting will be tentative.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca moved, Mr. Brown seconded, that the Board remove July's meeting from the calendar.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Adjourn

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

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

Meeting adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 11:33am.