

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

**Minutes
Full Board
June 16, 2021**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (hereafter "Board") met on June 16 ,2021 via Google Meet Virtual Conference.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Patricia Keavney-Maruca called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Present: 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
Robert Trefry, Board Member

Ms. Keavney-Maruca welcomed Board members and guests and lead the pledge of allegiance.

II. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

III. Students of Excellence

Mr. Jeffrey Wihbey, CTECS Superintendent of Schools, welcomed Dr. Ken Hilliard, principal of Kaynor Tech. Dr. Hilliard introduced senior members of Skills USA to greet the Board. Kaynor Tech has received national ranking from US News and World Report for being one of the best high schools in the country, as well as one of the best schools in Connecticut. Skills USA was a successful group this school year with each member receiving an award. Two members addressed the Board and shared their Kaynor Tech experience. Dreny graduated this year with a passion for Heath Technology and a bond with his fellow

classmates. Despite being unable to attend in-person for much of the year, through support in and out of school, 100% of the students were able to become CNA certified. Dreny plans to attend Fordham University and pursue a career as an APRN. Emma, a junior at Kaynor, studying Precision Machining Technology, discussed how she evolved as person because of Kaynor’s programs. Emma joined student council and established a student-led book club that embraces cultural diversity.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Brown offered appreciation to the students for inspiring the board and for sharing their experiences.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca wished the students good luck in their future endeavors and for their stories on how their school has positively transformed their lives.

Ms. Gold hoped for the students to return to Connecticut after college graduation to practice their field.

IV. Consideration of the Minutes of the May 19, 2021, CTECS Board Meeting

Commissioner Westby moved, Dr. Harris seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the May 19, 2021, Board Meeting.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

V. Action Items

A. Sound Production Trade Transition to Digital Media

Ms. Keavney-Maruca welcomed Dr. Nikitoula Menounos, CTECS Assistant Superintendent and Mr. Donald Mason, Education Consultant for Information Systems Technology Programs, to discuss the transition of Sound Production to Digital Media at Prince Tech. The team reviewed market data, competitive wages and in-demand jobs to determine the need for the expansion of this trade.

Sound Production has been met with inconsistent enrollment of students, difficulty finding teachers for the trade, as well as limited partnerships due to the smaller scope of the industry. For Digital Media to thrive at Prince, as it has at other schools, Mr. Mason detailed the changes that are needed for student success. Parents and students will be informed of the Sound Production trade being broadened to include other digital media options.

Improvement plans for current facility include:

- Converting sound stage to small studio
- Adding set to existing TV Studio
- Adding camcorders
- Replacing furniture to accommodate dual monitor workstations

Questions/Discussion included:

Dr. Aucker affirmed that Adobe is one of the most in-demand skills in digital media today.

Dr. Benz asked how many students are currently enrolled in Sound Production and what they expect of those numbers after the trade is expanded.

Commissioner Westby moved, Mr. Brown seconded the motion to approve the transition of Sound Production to Digital Media at Prince Tech.

Vote:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Adoption of the 2022 Meeting Schedule

Mr. Wihbey reviewed the schedule for 2022 with the Board. Board members will be notified in advance of changes to tentative dates noted on the schedule.

Mr. Brown moved, Commissioner Westby seconded the motion to approve the 2022 schedule of regular meeting dates.

Vote:

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

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. Students of Excellence Presentation (continued)

Mr. Wihbey welcomed Mr. Jonathan Giraldo, Department Head of Digital Media at Wright Tech. Mr. Giraldo detailed the great opportunities for students in digital media; they've been involved in showcasing shops around the state, providing students with real-world experience in content production.

Mr. Giraldo introduced students Kevin Ortiz, Danny Portillo and Brandon Espinosa to discuss their time in the Digital Media Department. Danny detailed the professional equipment they use to create projects as groups and individually. They have learned various aspects of film video making, studio production, graphic design, and photography. Kevin described the work-based opportunities through the school, and highlighted a field trip to NBC Sports that was a memorable behind-the-scenes glimpse into a career in media. The students presented a video created for O'Brien Tech's Electrical trade showcasing their project relocating electric meters to the outside of an apartment building.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Industry Outreach Committee

- **Board Trade Considerations for Prince THS**

Ms. Keavney-Maruca welcomed Mr. Eric Brown to discuss the Industry Outreach Committee. The committee was provided 6 trades (Precision Machining Technology, Mechanical Design & Engineering, Criminal Justice, Medical Assisting and Coding, Interior Design & Painting, Veterinary Science, Mechatronics) to replace the one being phased out at Prince Tech. Mr. Brown asked the staff to consider pros and cons of each suggestion, which will be presented during the September meeting.

- **Study of Pathways and Timeframe for Health Trades**

The committee is actively working on resolving challenges with pathways to Health trades, particularly Math and Science.

VIII. Report of the Superintendent of Schools

A. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Jeffrey Wihbey, CTECS Superintendent of Schools spoke about the difficult year it has been for everyone, most of all, the students. Summer will allow for CTECS to work on improving operations for staff and students during the next school year. Mr. Wihbey was proud of the efforts put forth from teachers and administrators, and acknowledged the growth and learning that was needed during the pandemic.

B. Credentials and Work Based Learning Update

A few highlights:

- Implementation of admissions policy, feedback loop to improve communication
- Student applications are accepted based on the same criteria with percentages of special education students meeting state average. Plans for new skill developments adjusting to expanding population.
- Work-based learning and job shadowing improved immensely with almost 900 students in the field learning their trades.

- O'Brien, Wilcox and Abbott Tech lead the way with credentialing students.

C. Pandemic Response Update

Mr. Wihbey was very proud of CTECS' proactive response getting vaccinations to staff and students. Mr. Wihbey acknowledged the hard work of Mr. John Woodmansee, Consultant for Health and Safety and Ms. Darlene Kirychuk, District Supervisor of Nursing Services.

Mr. Woodmansee and Ms. Kirychuk were introduced to present the Board with details on vaccination clinics. Through a collaborative effort, CTECS was able to utilize help from organizations like the Governor's office, local health programs, and hospitals to set up vaccination clinics for students and staff. Challenges arose due to issues with vaccine availability, proper storage, participation rate and parental concerns about possible health risks.

Mr. Woodmansee stated there is an opportunity for vaccination clinics off-site for the public during the summer, as there is likely to be more engagement from surrounding communities. Ms. Kirychuk informed the board that there was a discussion on whether to perform Covid testing or administer vaccines; latter proved to be a positive long-term option to ensure the health of all participants.

Questions/Discussion included:

Ms. Keavney-Maruca asked if schools will maintain a record of vaccinated students.

Mr. Woodmansee provided details on contact-tracing to prevent transmission, but numbers of students vaccinated at each school is not available due to privacy.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca asked if masks will be required at schools.

Mr. Wihbey states they hope to see low transmission rates so masks won't be required, but they will keep close watch of rates per county to make changes when needed.

D. Expenditure and Revenue Report

Mr. Wihbey welcomed Ms. Maura Kjar, CTECS Chief Financial Officer. Ms. Kjar stated CTECS has ended the year with under \$2 million in surplus, largely due to the personal services account. They will continue to move forward with plans for reallocating personal services funds to complete much needed repairs at several facilities. Revenue is now up 58%, as a result of grants received. Ms. Kjar also informed the board of expenditures by program and highlighted areas of growth and potential improvement.

Questions/Discussion included:

Ms. Keavney-Maruca asked if the state can request the money back.

Ms. Kjar informed the Board, the state could request the money back if invoices are not satisfied by the deadline, but the office is working hard to prevent that from occurring.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca affirmed the importance of having safe facilities for school sports, and appreciates the teachers who have assisted with additional duties.

E. Vacancy Update

Mr. Wihbey and Mr. Robert Sartoris, CTECS Director of Talent Management, reviewed the latest vacancy report for Board members. The report consisted of critical positions needed throughout the district. Mr. Wihbey plans to make a more concerted effort with recruitment to resolve teacher vacancies that have been a challenge for staff.

Questions/Discussion included:

Ms. Keavney-Maruca questioned if the number of vacancies included this year's retirees.

F. Looking to the Future Committee

Mr. Wihbey introduced Dr. Nikitoula Menounos, CTECS Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Menounos informed the Board that the committee is on hiatus for the summer. The committee consisting of administrators, consultants and teachers, plans to establish an SEL committee to address SEL programming, grading and teaching.

G. Separation Update

Mr. Wihbey welcomed Mr. Thomas Cronin, CTECS Director of Admissions. Mr. Cronin updated the Board on the July 1, 2022 separation date. Commissioner Russell Tucker has scheduled a meeting in July with CTECS leadership team to discuss operations and personnel decisions.

Questions/Discussion included:

Ms. Keavney-Maruca asked if the Board was needed to assist in the development of an action plan regarding policies and other guidelines.

IX. Report of the Chair

Ms. Patricia Keavney-Maruca mentioned attending two graduations and offered encouragement to Board members to also attend if they had not already. Ms. Keavney-Maruca was impressed with student presentations and their expressions of gratitude to their teachers and administrators during such a hard time for everyone.

X. Adjourn

Mr. Brown moved, Dr. Harris seconded, that the Board adjourn.

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

Meeting adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 11:33am.

Prepared by: Ms. Simone Bronson, CTECS