

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

**Minutes
Full Board
October 20, 2021**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (hereafter "Board") met on October 20 ,2021 at Kaynor Technical High School and via Google Meet Virtual Conference.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Robert Trefry called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

Present: Robert Trefry, Board Member
 Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Board Member
 George Anderson, Board Member
 Jeff Aucker, Board Member
 Christine Benz, Board Member
 Todd Berch, Board Member
 Eric Brown, Board Member
 Lindy Lee Gold, Board Member
 Duncan Harris, Board Member
 Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Board Member
 Karen Wosczyzna Birch, Board Member
 Ellen Solek, Superintendent of Schools

Absent: Fitz Walker, Board Member

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

II. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

III. Welcome

The board welcomed Dr. Ken Hilliard, principal of Kaynor Tech. The school has received national recognition for the accomplishments of their students as being one of the top high schools in the nation and one of the best schools in Connecticut. Dr. Hilliard introduced peer mentors, Jared Hickey, an Automotive and Collision Repair Technology student, and Keri Maheu who is studying Culinary Arts. Jared was homeschooled previously and was drawn to Kaynor because of the variety of shops in the school, increasing the number of potential opportunities he would have after high school. Keri also chose Kaynor because of the opportunities to experience different careers and receive hands-on experience. Jared plans to maintain a career in automotive and continuing his education at a 4-year college. Keri plans to pursue psychiatry and especially enjoyed helping freshman students become acclimated to the school.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Trefry stated that many valedictorians have come out of culinary and attributes their success to hard work and an ability to meet deadlines that are a regular occurrence in culinary arts. Additionally, he stated that many students in the tech schools must immediately fix issues that are presented when something is wrong, leading to an ability to experience failures and have the fortitude to overcome them.

Ms. Keavney asked how Jared was introduced to the school as a homeschooled student.

IV. Students of Excellence

Mr. Don Mason was introduced to discuss progress in the development of the Information Technology Trade. They will be focusing more on industry recognized skills and creating articulation agreements with local colleges. Currently at Prince, they have the opportunity to earn 18 credits towards their degree at Capital Community College. As the CT colleges become more unified, this will provide flexibility for students to go anywhere and be ready for their careers. IT is an expansive field so it is difficult to prepare students for all aspects of the industry. Mr. Mason stated the IT curriculum is three years of exploration with chances to gain real world knowledge for all students; including those currently underrepresented in the field. There are plans in the works to partner with Amazon and Google.

Questions/Discussion included:

Ms. Birch asked about what certifications are being offered.

Mr. Anderson asks about cyber security certifications as he has noticed a need for programmers, coders, and mobile app developers.

Dr. Auker stated that his organization is committed to hiring 250 new employees. They are focused on looking at non-traditional ways to enter the industry. He spoke of plans to set up field trips for students to experience what it is like to be in the IT workforce.

Keavney-Maruca mentioned that transportation for work-based learning is an issue for many schools.

Mr. Berch asked how much work-based learning is available to students and about the correlation between STEM and IT for future career development.

V. Subcommittee Reports

A. Policy and Quality

Mr. Trefry introduced Ms. Keavney-Maruca who presented the Board with the need to appoint a Designated Authorized Signature for the nutrition program as there is a new superintendent and must be approved by the Board before moving forward.

Ms. Keavney-Maruca moved, Dr. Wosczyzna Birch seconded, that the Board appoint Dr. Solek as the Designated Authorized signature.

Vote: In Favor: Anderson, Aucker, Benz, Birch, Brown, Gold, Harris, Keavney-Maruca, Vallieres, Trefry and Wosczyzna Birch.
Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0
Absent: Walker

The motion passed unanimously.

B. Finance and Audit

- **Pell Grants Update**

Mr. Joseph Uccello spoke to the Board regarding Pell Grants. There is an 100% increase this year to about 75 to 80 applications from 36 applications in 2021.

- **Expenditure and Revenue Report**

Ms. Maura Kjar was introduced by Mr. Trefry.

Key Points:

- Revenue up 12.6% from last year
- 8% increase in expenditures including increases in expenses for utilities and special projects.
- Premises repair and other administrative costs down from last year
- Projected surplus of just under \$300,000
- Details provided to the Board regarding the budget of each program as well as the total number of students enrolled and teachers assigned to instruct.

- **ESSR Funds**

This is the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Fund, which is a grant provided over the course of 3 years ending in September 2021. Ms. Kjar discussed plans to bring in 36 positions for behavior support.

- **Donations**

Ms. Kjar presented the Board with an increase in fees for athletic services. There has been no increase since 2014.

Questions/Discussion included:

Mr. Anderson asked about how much of the surpluses mentioned were pandemic related.

Dr. Berch thanked the Fiscal staff for all their hard work.

Dr. Wosczyzna Birch moved, Mr. Berch seconded, that the Board approve the increase in fees for athletic services.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Industry Outreach

Mr. Trefry discussed bringing in employers to talk about a trade each month and recently, a gentleman who graduated from Goodwin Tech spoke about students he hired to work and how beneficial his tech education was to his career.

VII. Report of the Superintendent of Schools

A. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Solek was privileged to meet and dialogue with district employees. She met very talented educators and leaders that are passionate about the programs and practices the organization has to offer. She discussed seeing a strong future for collaborations with organizations outside of CTECS for higher education. Dr. Solek presented the Board with two of her goals for the year: Strategic planning for redevelopment with the Board and composing a written plan for the separation from the Department of Education in 2022 and foster exciting educational leadership opportunities.

B. Vacancy Update

There are 249 vacant positions with 98 having received OPM approval. The projected salary for the vacant positions is over \$15 million. They continue to place the emphasis on getting instructors into the schools. Dr. Solek's initiative moving forward to meet with members of OPM and DAS to effectively develop working relationships as they create positions crucial when CTECS separates from the district.

Questions/Discussion included:

Ms. Gold asked about the response of the Board towards the situation at Eli Whitney and was concerned about how the issue was escalated to involve media attention.

Due to confidentiality reasons limited details could be shared. However, Dr. Solek assured the Board of the plans to support the community by pursuing a full investigation as well as supporting students and parents with counselors to discuss the matter and additional concerns they may have.

VIII. Report of the Chair

Mr. Trefry added that despite the media's involvement in the ongoing situation at Whitney, the privacy of the students and staff must be respected so there is limited information the Superintendent can share with the Board.

After the Board meeting on November 17, 2021, there will be a session held to discuss the Board's imperatives to ensure students are ready for career and/or college.

IX. Adjourn

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

Vote: In Favor: Anderson, Aucker, Benz, Birch, Brown, Gold, Harris, Keavney-Maruca, Vallieres, Trefry and Wosczyzna Birch.
Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0
Absent: Walker

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:51am.

Prepared by: Ms. Simone Bronson, CTECS