

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

**Minutes  
Full Board  
October 16, 2019**

**Draft**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (hereafter "Board") met on October 16, 2019 at A.I. Prince Technical High School, 401 Flatbush Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Robert Trefry called the meeting to order at 10:15am.

Present: Robert Trefry, Board Member  
Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Board Member  
Karen Eichstaedt, Board Member  
Lindy Lee Gold, Board Member  
Commissioner Kurt Westby, Board Member  
Jeffrey Wihbey, Superintendent of Schools

Dial in: Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Board Member

Absent: Fitz Walker, Board Member

**II. Welcome**

Mr. Trefry welcomed Board members and guests and thanked Principal Mello for his hospitality.

Principal Mello gave a brief update on school activities and events. He highlighted the success of the Round Table Discussion with Governor Ned Lamont involving vaping. He shared the student did an outstanding job and encouraged Board members to watch the telecast of the event.

**A. Students of Excellence Presentations**

Principal Mello introduced Senior Students, Yomar Rivera, Plumbing, and Anlisse Vega, Cosmetology and they presented PowerPoints on the work they learned in their trades, success and future goals after graduation.

The Board members were very impressed with their presentations and thanked the instructors and students for sharing their work.

## **B. SkillsUSA Recognition**

Mr. Wihbey introduced Ms. Heidi Griffen, Education Consultant to the Board members. Ms. Griffen provided an overview of the SkillsUSA competition results. Ms. Griffen introduced students who won medals at this year's SkillsUSA National Competition held this past summer. Mr. Wihbey and the Board recognized the students, their parents, and WBL employers who were present at the meeting. They were presented with certificates and took photos with the Board Members.

### **The students earned bronze medals**

1. Donald Ducas – Graphic Communications
2. Levi Brush Moon – Plumbing
3. Ian Mannings – CNC Milling

## **III. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

## **IV. Executive Session**

The Board did not meet in executive session.

## **V. Consent Agenda** *(Any item may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of a Board member)*

### **A. Consideration of Minutes**

#### **September 18, 2019, Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) Board Meeting.**

Ms. Gold moved, Ms. Eichstaedt seconded, that the Board adopt the minutes of the September 18, 2019, CTECS Board Meeting.

Vote:	In Favor:	Eichstaedt, De Filippis, Gold, Keavney-Maruca, Trefry, Westby
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Walker

Motion carried unanimously.

## VI. Items Requiring Action

### A. Perkins Grant

Mr. Wihbey gave an overview of Ms. Halls Perkins Grant presentation from the Outreach and Finance Subcommittee meeting held earlier in the day. Ms. Hall was available for any questions. She reiterated that the three grants were additional allotments to the original Perkins Grants received.

Ms. Gold moved, Mr. Westby seconded, that the Board approve the submission of the three grants applications.

Vote:	In Favor:	Eichstaedt, De Filippis, Gold, Keavney-Maruca, Trefry, Westby
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Walker

#### Questions/Discussion included:

*Mr. Trefry shared his excitement for the new grants. Especially, the After-School Opioid grant.*

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

## VII. Committee Reports

### A. Quality and Policy – Ms. Karen Eichstaedt

The Quality and Policy Subcommittee met on October 16, 2019 just prior to today's CTECS Board meeting. The committee held discussions on the districts SAT scores, literacy goals, and vacancy update.

### B. Outreach and Finance – Ms. Patricia Keavney-Maruca

The Outreach and Finance Subcommittee met on October 16, 2019 just prior to today's CTECS Board meeting. The committee had a discussion on new Perkins Grants available to the district. The committee did not received an update on the CTECS expenditure and revenue report due to staffing insufficiency.

#### Questions/Discussion included:

*Mr. Trefry shared his thoughts on the need for strategies for students to engage in high level math in order to be success on the SAT.*

*Mr. Westby shared his comments on the importance of teaching kids to think, read, and write critically.*

*Ms. Keavney-Maruca stressed the need for fiscal staff to provide a critical component of accountability.*

*Mr. Westby also shared that DOL also received funding for opioid related services. He encouraged the opportunity to collaborate across agencies to provide the best supports and avenues for students.*

*Mr. Trefry asked Mr. Wihbey to give an update on the fiscal constraints for the district:*

*Mr. Wihbey shared the following:*

- *Currently interviewing for an ACFAS – manger level fiscal officer.*
- *In the processes of hiring two AFAOs – fiscal operations staff for CTECS,*
- *Fiscal department goal: Looking to have 4 fiscal operations staff, 4 accountants, and 2 fiscal supervisors to oversee those units as well as a CFO position.*
- *Currently working with DOL and SDE to secure these roles.*

*Mr. Wihbey continued to share that the number of staff and budget is no small operation. The district manages a 156 million dollar budget with limited staff making it extremely difficult to operate strategically without understanding the implications of the fiscal decisions being made. Leaving the district vulnerable to make decisions without sound accounting principles due to staff insufficiencies. Mr. Wihbey noted that SDE is also short on fiscal staff due to retirements. Mr. Wihbey cautioned the Board that it does put the district in peril not having the requisite fiscal positions in place.*

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

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

Mr. Wihbey shared an overview of his report.

A few highlights:

- Throughout September Mr. Wihbey visited every CTECS location to greet students, tour classrooms, and hold meetings with union stewards and administrative teams. Commissioner Cardona joined in on a few of the back-to-school visits.
- On November 6, 2019, Mr. Wihbey will be presenting CTECS's strategic operating plan, *Working for Students and Connecticut's Future*, to the State Board of Education.
- New Trades added in the 2019-20 school year: Diesel and Heavy-Duty Equipment Repair at Vinal Tech, Guest Services Management for grade 11 and 12 at Grasso Tech.
- The first 2019-20 school year edition of the CTECS Works e-Newsletter was released.
- Vinal Technical High School's Criminal Justice and Protective Services program will hold a ribbon cutting for their first-of-its-kind Emergency Operations center on Monday, December 9, 2019 at 9:00am.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Mr. Trefry recommended having Dr. Stephen L. Ross, UConn and or Dr. Shaun M. Dougherty, Vanderbilt University join a future Board meeting to share the profound impact CTECS has on students across Connecticut.*

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

**B. Separation Timeline**

Legal Director, Susan Scott prepared a well sketched out independence timeline that breaks down the timeframes and guidelines for successful separation from CSDE. CFO of CSDE, Kathy Demsey, and Gary Pescalito provided the CT Technical and Career Centers – Agency Separation document, which outlines the necessary positions by department for successful separation. Mr. Wihbey reviewed these two documents with the Board and shared his vision for the anticipated separation.

A few highlights:

- Formation of the CTECS Separation Committee.
- Human Resources staffing vision: 3 Business Partners and 3 Labor Relations Specialist – Currently just 1 Labor Relations Specialist.
- Total Technical Adjustments for the 27 positions would be around 1,889,393.00.
- Different strategies to reduce costs could be considered by OPM to move up the separation date.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Ms. Gold shared her concerns with the budget having enough problems with teaching positions unfilled. How is the district going to absorb the cost of new positions and balance education, was the question she posed. Ms. Gold suggested a request for additional funds from OPM.*

*Mr. Wihbey shared the priority of staffing will always be to fill teaching positions at the schools. Holding off on some positions and consolidating positions are two strategies being used.*

**C. Advocacy Agenda**

Mr. Wihbey led the discussion by asking Board members to think long and hard about specificities for advocacy. Few examples: Budget, Special Education needs. Mr. Wihbey

shared the urgency in gaining the necessary supports to move the district forward successfully.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Ms. Gold shared her thoughts on having other state agencies (OPM and DAS) assist with identifying extra resources to help with non-instructional supports in order to prepare for separation.*

*Mr. Westby shared his thoughts on the Workforce Board and how the Technical schools are the critical piece of the state's wellbeing for Connecticut's workforce. Mr. Westby continued to share that the most important thing to accomplish is to meet the needs of the industries that are growing.*

*Mr. Wihbey advised revisiting the CTECS introduction letter sent to the Governor. Mr. Wihbey also shared his confidence in the support being provided by the Commissioner of SDE, Dr. Miguel Cardona.*

*Mr. Trefry reiterated the responsibility of the Board to advocate for the district to provide the best for students. He requested to continue the conversation at the next Board meeting.*

**D. LEAN Process**

Mr. Joseph Uccello gave the Board an overview of strategies that came out of the Lean process meeting for fiscal hiring. Meeting attendees: 5 business managers from the technical schools, central office staff, and fiscal staff. They reviewed the accounts payable processes and noticed unnecessary steps, and limited access for staff to disperse payments. The LEAN process will be an ongoing initiative.

Questions/Discussion included:

*Ms. Gold asked about the internal and external auditing processes.*

**IX. Report of the Chair**

Mr. Trefry expressed the need for timely delivery of Board materials so members have time to review and process.

Mr. Trefry acknowledged that October 16, 2019 was National Boss Day. The Board and CTECS Central Office Staff presented Mr. Wihbey with a plaque in recognition of outstanding leadership. The plaque was created and designed by the Goodwin Precision Machining Technology students.

Mr. Wihbey thanked the Board, CTECS staff, principals, teachers and unions for all their tireless support throughout the district. Mr. Wihbey shared, "He has a great team."

**X. Adjourn**

Mr. Trefry moved, Ms. Gold seconded, for the Board Meeting to adjourn.

Vote:	In Favor:	De Filippis, Eichstaedt, Gold, Keavney-Maruca, Trefry, Westby
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Walker

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47am.

Prepared by: Ms. Ronke Stallings, CTECS