

CTECS WORKS

News from the Connecticut Technical Education & Career System (CTECS)

June 2019



Students demonstrate their masonry skills during one of many SkillsUSA competitive events.

SkillsUSA Sends 85 Students to Nationals

Nearly 1,000 students from the state's technical high schools put their technical and occupational skills to the test during the SkillsUSA 42nd Annual State Leadership Conference and Skills Championship; a day of specialized contests that simulate on-the-job challenges.

"SkillsUSA challenges students' leadership skills, occupational knowledge, and technical expertise," said SkillsUSA CT Executive Director Heidi Griffen. "Many students compete beginning in grade nine and it's remarkable to see them improve over the years."

SkillsUSA is a national organization where students, teachers and industry representatives work together to empower members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens, while improving the quality of the country's skilled workforce.

"We all know there is a huge skills gap in the U.S. right now, with 3.5 million employers stating their employees don't have skills to complete their job to a satisfactory level," said Kyle Leupold, SkillsUSA state President and Vinal Tech Information Systems Technology student. "With SkillsUSA, students gain leadership, communication and teamwork skills; skills that ultimately will be an economic driver down the road."

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Message from the Superintendent

As an educator, this time of the school year is very rewarding. Our students have grown in many ways over the course of the year – personally and academically – and it's a joy to watch. Many students choose to showcase the skills they have learned in statewide and national competitions. In this *CTECS Works* edition you'll read about the annual SkillsUSA competition, Harley-Davidson's Battle of the Kings, and many other accolades bestowed upon our students.

In addition to the competitions and recognitions, this is also a time of year to celebrate the success of the nearly 2,300 tech school graduates who are moving on to careers, college or military service. We have students attending West Point and Yale; students that have signed on with companies like Sikorsky; others that have joined trade-labor unions; and many who have been placed in highly technical skilled-jobs in the workplace.

Despite the different paths our graduates take, they all have one thing in common – leadership and employability skills. Our school system prides itself on equipping our graduates with the skills to succeed, while providing a talented workforce that is responsive to state and industry needs.

Thank you for your support during the 2018-2019 school year. I wish you and your family a safe and relaxing summer.

Jeffrey Wihbey
Superintendent of Schools



Photo courtesy of The Hometown Foundation, Inc.

Bristol T.E.C. Teams with Yankee Harley-Davidson for World-Wide Competition

Bristol Technical Education Center students partnered with Yankee Harley-Davidson of Bristol, CT, for a unique, real-world training opportunity: helping build the coolest custom motorcycle in the world as part of the 2019 “Battle of the Kings” competition, sponsored by Harley-Davidson.

This year, U.S. trade school students were invited to join their local Harley-Davidson dealership for the builds, with the goal of inspiring the next generation of skilled tradespeople to join the world of motorcycling. The challenge was to take a standard Harley-Davidson model and turn it into something unique.

Nearly 40 dealers from across the nation competed to create a custom model in either dirt, track or chop, using Harley-Davidson parts and accessories, with a budget no bigger than half the cost of the original model.

Over a 3-month time frame, the Bristol Tech/Yankee Harley-Davidson team took a 2019 Road Glide and transformed it into a red, white and blue, all-American spectacle; customizing color, exhaust, and even the handlebars. Under the guidance of experienced, local Harley-Davidson mechanics, students were introduced to the creativity, customization expertise and technical precision of motorcycle customization.

The public will decide the ultimate winner of the U.S. Battle of the Kings bike build. The winning team will travel to Italy to compete for the title of World Champion.

Learn more about Battle of the Kings and cast your vote at https://customkings.harley-davidson.com/en_US.

Visit <http://bristol.cttech.org/index.html> for school program information.

Students participated in 72 different timed contests, proving their expertise in occupations such as electronics, computer-aided drafting, manufacturing, automotive service and culinary arts.

For Luke Johnston, SkillsUSA state Parliamentarian and Wilcox Tech Information System Technology student, SkillsUSA isn't just about proving his technical skills.

“For me, the real value in SkillsUSA comes from stepping out of your comfort zone,” said Johnston. “The competition teaches you how to improve, and shows you your own potential.”

Among both competitors and volunteers, increased confidence and laying the groundwork for future success was a common theme.

“I got involved my junior year, and wish I would have started earlier,” said William Cross, Cheney Tech alumnus and competition volunteer. “The person I am today is because of SkillsUSA. If I started earlier, I'd be two years ahead of where I am now. SkillsUSA was the best part of my whole high school experience by far.”

Cross currently works for Marcus Communications as a technical engineer and was hired right out of high school. Cross says that once he had SkillsUSA experience on his resume, it was easy to get companies to notice him.

Vinal Tech alumnus and current Middletown salon owner Nicole LaTerra agrees.

“As a business owner I look for employees who have competed [in SkillsUSA],” said LaTerra. “I know that it's the elite who compete. I also know that they have passion and drive, and that's what I want in an employee. The competition prepares students for what they will be doing in real life.”

On competition day, contests are run with the help of industry experts, trade associations and labor organizations, who test student competencies against industry standards. Over a million dollars in industry and education contributions are donated for the event including volunteer time, equipment and materials.

“When we think about the skilled-trade gap, we know that SkillsUSA is the answer,” said Griffen. “Our industry partners know this as well. Year after year they participate in setting up competitions, serving as judges and donating materials all for the chance to meet the best of the best.”

SkillsUSA winners will receive industry-related scholarships to a variety of colleges and tool prizes that support students' employment or education. First place winners will compete in the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Louisville, KY this June.

View a full listing of CTECS winners, visit <http://www.cttech.org/assets/uploads/201819/skillsusact19winners.pdf>

What Our Students Are Saying...



“Through my trade I've learned problem solving, leadership and teamwork skills.”

– Adam Densman, Norwich Tech, grade 12, Graphic Communications



“The teachers are motivated to work here...they know everyone, they are here for us. Here, each student is important.”

– Cicily Telesco, Henry Abbott Tech, grade 12, Hairdressing and Cosmetology

CTECS Celebrations - Students, Staff & Schools!



Governor Ned Lamont met with manufacturing students as part of his visit to **A.I. Prince Tech** in Hartford in February.

The Bridgeport Rotary Club honored **Bullard-Havens Tech** guidance coordinator Tracy Ganino and student Jilianna Leiva with the "Service Above Self" award in recognition of their dedication to serving others.

News Channel 8's *What's Right with School's* featured **Eli Whitney Tech's** electrical shop. Watch the episode at <https://bit.ly/2G0fdhZ>

The New London Police Department donated an electric buggy to **Grasso Tech!** The car will be fixed up by automotive, painted by collision repair, and used by bio-science and environmental technology to transport plants and tools around campus.

Congrats **Emmett O'Brien Tech** for placing 2nd statewide in the 2019 Girls Go CyberStart competition - an initiative to inspire young women to explore careers in the field of cyber security!



Work-based Learning (WBL) is offered as a way for students to work on real projects with real companies and gain hands-on career development experience. Pictured above, **Ellis Tech** electrical student Savannah, employed at Loos & Co. through WBL, is installing new lighting for a building renovation.

Technical high schools don't just prepare you for a trade, they prepare you for life! Seniors at **H.C. Wilcox Tech** 'played' the game of life with mock entry-level salaries to determine the best living arrangements, phone plans, transportation and insurance.

Henry Abbott Tech junior Emelin Flores was selected as a 2019 Governor's Scholar! The Governor's Scholars Program recognizes academically talented Connecticut high school students.

Howell Cheney Tech seniors Isabel Lindsay and Justin Diaz won the Congressional App Challenge for the 1st District with a program that teaches basic driving skills through simulating driving. It's the fourth consecutive year that Cheney has won the prize.

In partnership with Emmy-award winning home-improvement series *This Old House*, and power tool company Festool, **J.M. Wright Tech** opened their doors to the community to share information about the skilled trades - a critical step in attracting a new generation of workers to bridge the skills gap.

Health Technology students at **Norwich Tech** are working to stamp out the stigma associated with mental illness! They participated in the 16th Annual Brain Dance Awards sponsored by the Institute of Living and walked away with several awards. Lena DeLaurentis, Julia Robert & Nicole Sanchez (1st, Academic category); Haley Bogle, Mirissa Durfee & Madison Samokar (3rd, Academic category)



E.C. Goodwin Tech was awarded The College Board's Female Diversity Award for AP Computer Science Principles. Providing female students with access to computer science courses helps ensure gender parity in the industry's high-paying jobs.

Plumbing students from **Oliver Wolcott Tech** installed a new water fountain at Torrington Parks and Recreation in support of the 5210 initiative. The specialized fountain allows a user to directly drink or fill a water bottle.

Platt Tech junior Ethan Feldman, an Information Systems Technology student, was selected to present his product to NASA designers and engineers at the Johnson Space Center as part of the NASA HUNCH program. He competed against 173 school teams nationwide. Ethan developed software that can identify objects and provide information in real time for space station astronauts.

Vinal Tech's Criminal Justice and Protective Services (CJPS) program participated in the 2019 West Hartford Unified Command Training Drill. The training was an invaluable opportunity for hundreds of first responders to train together using CJPS students as simulated victims of a major catastrophe. Students were exposed to dozens of careers available to them within the trade.

Kaynor Tech hosted Dr. Henry Lee, one of the world's leading forensic scientists, to share his career experience with students. Forensics is offered as part of the science curriculum in grades 11 and 12 at Connecticut's Technical High Schools.

Windham Tech's Book Buddies value community connections and early literacy! Several students traveled to Windham's Natchaug Elementary School for reading and activities with the local youth.

Thanks to Red Baron Holdings out of Groton, CT, for their generous donation of a Piper Seneca PA-34-200T aircraft to the **Connecticut Aero Tech School!** This plane will be used as a maintenance trainer for various aircraft systems such as retractable landing gear, engine operation, anti-ice, and more.

Sixteen **CTECS** visual and performing arts seniors were honored at the Connecticut Association of Schools 24th Annual High School Outstanding Arts Award Banquet in recognition of their scholarship and leadership qualities.

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Responding to In-Demand Careers

Renewed national interest in public safety and security are expanding opportunities for employment in law, public safety, corrections, and security. Vinal Technical High School currently hosts the **Criminal Justice and Protective Services (CJPS)** trade at the school, and with career opportunities expanding statewide, Bullard-Havens Tech will add this trade in the 2019-2020 school year. CJPS prepares students for a range of careers in law enforcement, crime scene analysis, forensic science, public safety, and more.



According to the Department of Labor job outlooks, health care is projected to add the most jobs through 2026, driven by the state's aging population. Nine Technical High Schools currently have a **Health Technology** program, and A.I. Prince Tech will add the trade in the 2019-2020 school year. Students enrolled in the Health Technology program are given instruction in health care safety, nutrition, legal/ethical/moral concerns, and medical terminology.

Watch Now: CTECS Works Video Series Launch



The *CTECS Works* video series highlights the real work performed for real customers by students from CTECS schools. In this episode, we feature HVAC services performed by Platt Tech at a residential dwelling. Video production was done by Wright Tech Digital Media students. Watch now: https://youtu.be/RrntkNAG_q8

Tech Schools Recognize Seniors Entering the Skilled Trades During May Signing Days



The skills gap continues to be a major crisis in the U.S. with 83 percent of companies reporting a moderate to serious shortage of skilled workers. In order to help close this skills gap and promote the training of younger tradespeople, Cheney Tech, Ellis Tech and Norwich Tech were three of 300 schools nationwide hosting the first-ever SkillsUSA National Signing Day in collaboration with Klein Tools in May.

In a style similar to "National Signing Day" events for high school student athletes, technical high school seniors, along with thousands of other students across the country, signed their "letters of intent" for a job offer, apprenticeship or advanced technical training. These seniors were applauded by school administrators, teachers, elected officials, SkillsUSA advisors, family and friends as they announced their career plans and commit to careers in residential wiring, building trades and renovations, HVAC or plumbing.

Many other technical high schools held similar signing days during May and June in recognition of students entering the workforce, military, or college.

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