

CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND CAREER SYSTEM BOARD

Minutes of Meeting – April 24, 2018

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board (hereafter “Board”) met on April 24, 2018 at 39 Woodland Street, Hartford, CT due to a water main break at Henry Abbott THS. A telephone was also set up at Henry Abbott THS, 21 Hayestown Avenue, Danbury, CT in the event of public participation.

I. Call to Order

Mr. Trefry called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

Present: Mr. Robert Trefry, Chairperson
Ms. Gina Chiarella
Ms. Karen Eichstaedt
Commissioner Scott Jackson
Commissioner Catherine Smith
Mr. Fitz Walker

Absent: Ms. Andrea Comer
Mr. Peter Hoecklin
Mrs. Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Vice Chairperson
Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis

II. Public Participation

III. Welcome

IV. Consent Agenda

There was no vote of the consent agenda IV.A. Consideration of Minutes of the March 20, 2018 CTECS Board Meeting.

V. Executive Session

There was no executive session.

VI. Items Requiring Action

There were no items requiring action.

VII. Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Discussion

A. Budget Update

Superintendent Wihbey introduced Mr. James Chasse, CTECS Education Consultant who provided an update on the latest information impacting the district’s operating budget for fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19. The district’s payroll operating account (SID 12519) is expected to finish the current fiscal year (FY 2017-18) with a surplus of approximately \$1.1M (or less than one percent of the holdback adjusted payroll budget of approximately \$128.4M).

As previously noted, this projected surplus has largely been achieved due to the large number of unfilled positions and the delayed transfer of staff from the State Department of Education (SDE) to the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) as explained below.

CTECS continues to update the payroll financial model on a biweekly basis will provide updates to the Board.

Mr. Chasse summarized the latest available operating budget information by payroll, fuel and utilities, and supplies and services. The payroll cost projections of approximately \$127.3MM includes funding for full-time (\$109.3MM), part-time (\$15.2MM) and other payroll costs (i.e. separation costs, overtime and longevity - \$2.8MM). It also reflects projected savings from state furlough days. At this time, CTECS believes that the current operating budget for services and supplies will be sufficient to meet project costs. As previously discussed, the ongoing fiscal challenges are expected to continue during the new fiscal year (FY 2018-19) which begins on July 1, 2018.

On February 7, 2018, the Governor issued his proposed operating budget allotment adjustments for the new fiscal year. As displayed in the chart that follows, the CTECS would receive approximately \$1.8M more than was received in its fiscal year 2017-18 operating budgets after the \$4.9 M holdback (11-17-2017), however, as a result of the SEBAC 2017 agreement, **more than \$5.2M in new payroll costs** will be experienced during fiscal year 2018-19.

These new projected costs include:

- \$3.2M for lump sum and/or top step bonuses to qualified employees;
- \$1.0M from the elimination of the three furlough days;
- \$0.7M for advanced degree stipends to qualified teachers/department heads;
- \$0.3M for the July 2018 longevity payments (delayed from April 2018)

As a result, assuming that CTECS maintains a vacancy rate of *190 Full time positions, CTECS is already projecting a preliminary deficit of approximately \$3.2M in the operating budget.

The State Department of Education continues to engage in dialogue with leadership from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to advocate for additional funding for the projected SEBAC costs. Funding may be made available from the Reserve from Salary Adjustment account at OPM.

It should be noted that the potential exists for further growth in the projected deficit for fiscal year 2018-19 if:

- The district does not maintain its current vacancy rate of approximately *190 full-time positions;
- The normal attrition rate of 3% - 4% is not achieved (which creates turnover savings);
- Any of the employees entitled to the Rowland Settlement opt to separate from state service during the year.

A preliminary analysis has determined that the district's proposed appropriation for FY 2018-19 would have to be increased by approximately \$9.4M in order for the district to fill critical instructional and operational positions thereby reducing the vacancy count down to the 65 positions that have been held vacant for the past two fiscal years.

The State Bond Commission held a special meeting on Friday, April 13, 2018 at which the district received approval of an allocation totaling \$4,358,360. The approved allocation includes \$2.8M for the purchase of technology equipment (including Chromebooks for the 2018-19 freshman class) and approximately \$1.6M for various infrastructure repairs across the district.

A balance of \$7.2M remains in unauthorized capital funding which is targeted for additional infrastructure repairs, student transportation vehicles, trade and academic equipment and technology equipment purchases during fiscal year 2018-19 - as now new capital funding is scheduled.

Mr. Wihbey reviewed the Expenditure and Budget History Report for FY 2014-2018 that was included in the Committee members packets. The report depicted expenditure levels less than what they were five years ago. Mr. Wihbey also noted that the budget for FY 2019 would have to be increased by approximately \$9.4M to fill the *125 vacancies causing a \$9.4M deficit. Mr. Wihbey stated that these amount of vacancies creates great concern to him and it will be difficult for CTECS to open the next school year with this large amount of vacancies.

Mr. Chasse was requested to prepare a comprehensive operating budget analysis for the current FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19 in order to enhance the Boards ability to assist in the hard decisions that need to be made.

Commissioner Jackson shared his report from the April 24th Outreach and Finance Subcommittee meeting with the Board members. During the Committee meeting, strategies were discussed to address the concerns regarding the budget shortfall and the need to better align resources with the programs offerings differently than we have in the past and how it impacts enrollment, staffing, planning, professional development, etc.

Commissioner Jackson also shared how CTECS is being very cautious in the dollars spent and expects this to continue into the future. The *190 vacancies continue to be a challenge. If CTHSS cannot provide a quality education for the students, enrollment numbers will reflect this. In some cases schools are over-enrolled and students can seek the opportunity to attend a technical high school a little farther away than anticipated. In addition to needing maximum enrollment, CTECS needs Educators.

Mr. Trefry added that unless the Legislature decides to put some additional funds into the schools, this will mean the Superintendent and his staff will have to make some hard decisions, and over the summer figure out how to most efficiently provide the service and instruction for the students that are currently in the programs. This could lead to some difficult decisions such as, not taking a freshman class at a school, reducing the number of shops in a given school so those instructors can help out another school to do other things to try and balance the financial and instructional needs at the same time. The Board members offered their assistance with this process to ensure CTECS makes sure they maximize the investment the State of CT has made in the facilities over the past several years and that the schools are not under-utilized. CTECS needs to keep track of the enrollment and the factors driving enrollment including the nature of the facilities, program offerings, and the availability of quality instructors.

Mr. Chasse re-clarified that if CTECS were to fill some of the open positions with funding currently available, they would not have the funding to pay those employees the following year.

**** Note: Of the 190 vacancies, the district is only perusing refill of 125.***

A copy of the Expenditure and Revenue Report and CTECS Expenditure and Budget History report FY 2014– FY 2018 is included in the official file of this meeting.

B. Theory of Action and;

C. Big Observations from Entry Visits

Superintendent Wihbey has conducted all but two of the entry visits (Bullard and Windham) and referred back to his Theory of Action Hypothesis that was developed earlier in the year. The Superintendent has already started to come to some conclusions. He called attention to the second bullet of the Theory of Action in the Board members packets entitled, "If processes and resources are strategically directed to hiring, developing, and

retaining the best teachers and other certified staff, then organizational capacity will be developed driving positive student outcomes”. This came true during every entry visit, every stakeholders group.

Superintendent Wihbey also called attention to the second document in the Board members packets entitled, “Potential Strategic goals & Strategies Work List” and shared the following seven concepts and solutions from stakeholders that resulted from the visits:

Concept #1 Recruit, Hire, Develop, Retain Best Certified Staff

Work list based on feedback included:

- Comprehensive Staffing Plan
 - Develop system efficiencies
 - LEAN process for hiring so prioritized positions can be filled in a reasonably timely manner
 - Strictly prioritize staffing according to student enrollment standards
 - Define master schedule process and parameters
- Teacher Induction
 - Redesign teacher evaluation system whose primary purpose is teacher development
 - The system will acknowledge and supports growth
 - Teacher/Admin. PD alignment with instructional goals
 - Non-tenured teacher evaluation
 - Hire in timely manner to support student needs

Mr. Wihbey heard over again the vacancies that exist create long-term substitute situations and also the absences that happen over long periods of time direly effect student learning and opportunities for students to advance themselves. CTECS has expended approximately \$900,000 this year in long-term substitute costs. Other areas heard over again is the need for a stronger teacher induction process, how we welcome instructors into the teaching profession and how we prepare them to become better teachers and provide better learning for the students. The teacher evaluation process also came up frequently. Mr. Wihbey clarified the mechanisms of the teacher evaluation process and shared that staff would like to have more involvement with pier coaching and formative feedback being provided from other people to improve their progress.

Concept #2. Engage Industry & Labor Coherently

Work list based on feedback included: Design programs & Curriculum to prepare students for success and closely match program development to labor market

- Purposeful Outreach
- Create and maintain industry database centrally

Mr. Wihbey shared feedback from the trade advisory stakeholder focus groups. Overall, the feedback was positive but they all stressed the importance of soft skills. The Professional Development and Evaluation Committee can engage in looking into the feedback from the visits. Additional feedback included in engaging with business and labor coherently, purposeful outreach, and the development of a centralized database. Mr. Wihbey felt it important that the Board Chair, the Commissioners of DOL and the DCED share in the participation of the plan.

Concept #3. Communication of Vision

Work list based on feedback included: externally, internally, and purposeful interest based outreach efforts directed at potential families.

Concept #4. Design High Leverage Central Office

Work list based on feedback included: cohesion of systems, develop accountability systems, create student learning targets, refocus structures also emphasizing teaching and learning rather solely on curriculum and information;

Concept #5. Career and College Ready Graduates

Work list based on feedback included: redirect resources to efficiently support mission and goals.

Concept #6. Science Based Research Intervention (SRBI)

Work list based on feedback included: create academic and behavioral pyramid of interventions.

Concept #7. Better Recruit According to True Interest

Work list based on feedback included: develop and include aptitude and interest inventory process in student recruitment and placement into trade areas.

Board members thanked Mr. Wihbey for sharing his efforts and congratulated Mr. Wihbey on a job well done. A recommendation was made to take note of these observations and ensure they are not forgotten. Mr. Wihbey plans to make a formal presentation to the full board and codify the results.

Other Matters

CTECS Process Flow

Mr. Wihbey announced that at next month’s board meeting, Mr. Joseph Uccello, CTECS Management Analyst III will report on the CTECS Hiring Process Steps. Mr. Wihbey opened the discussion and shared a six page landscaped document taped together depicting all of the steps it takes and the people it takes to hire a school teacher at the CTECS. He has asked Mr. Uccello and Mr. Chasse to monitor how much time is spent on each step in order to have more accountability and transparency to the process. Mr. Wihbey has been meeting regularly with OPM and SDE staff regarding the amount of time it takes to re-fill positions. OPM has recommended the district investigate the state’s lean process to reduce the hiring timelines. Mr. Uccello reviewed the CTECS Process flow chart for non-instructional and instructional positions– a copy of which was included in the Board members packets. The process includes over approximately 46 steps to hire a non-instructional position and 43 steps to hire an instructional position. Mr. Uccello also shared that if auto-refill for select positions were to be re-instated, 75% of the steps for those positions would be eliminated.

Mr. Wihbey announced that discussions are underway to develop a prioritization system in order to re-fill code red positions that need to be hired immediately.

VIII. Report of the Chair

A motion was called to add the following item to the agenda:

Request to Legislative Leaders to Delay the separation of CTECS from CSDE under (Public Act 17-237).

Commissioner Jackson moved, Ms. Eichstaedt seconded to add the agenda item, Request to Legislative Leaders to Delay the separation of CTECS from CSDE under (Public Act 17-237).

Vote:	In Favor:	Chiarella, Eichstaedt, Jackson, Smith, Trefry, Walker
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Comer, De Filippis, Hoecklin, Keavney

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Trefry led the discussion about sending a request to Legislative Leaders to Delay the separation of CTECS from CSDE under (Public Act 17-237).

Mr. Trefry shared, working in conjunction with CSDE and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), a comprehensive central office structural plan has been created, which includes the addition of approximately 99 staff positions. Without filling these positions, the goal of separation from CSDE will not be achievable. Of the 99 positions, it is believed that 40 could be deployed from elsewhere in the system, or transferred from CSDE. To fund the balance of the additional positions needed, the system would require roughly \$4-\$5 million dollars.

In addition to the staffing concerns outlined above, Public Act 17-237 also laid out a multi-step process for separation which includes the appointment of an Executive Director to oversee the operation, administration and the financial accountability and oversight of the system in matters relating to the central office, system-wide management and other non-educational matters.

The Board members engaged in a discussion and shared their thoughts about having this separation delayed until they are clear that the budget will support such a separation.

After the discussion, a motion was called at this time.

Commissioner Jackson moved, Commissioner Smith seconded that the Board proceed with the Request to Legislative Leaders to delay the separation of CTECS from CSDE under (Public Act 17-237).

Vote:	In Favor:	Chiarella, Eichstaedt, Jackson, Smith, Trefry, Walker
	Opposed:	0
	Abstained:	0
	Absent:	Comer, De Filippis, Hoecklin, Keavney

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Trefry thanked everyone for being in attendance today.

IX. Committee Reports

A. Quality and Policy

The Quality and Policy Subcommittee did not meet.

B. Outreach and Finance

Commissioner Jackson shared his report under Agenda Item VII.A. Budget Update.

X. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

XI. Adjourn

The CTECS Board adjourned its meeting at 2:35 PM

Prepared by:



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Connecticut Technical Education and Career System