

# CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM BOARD

## Minutes of Meeting December 13, 2016

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Connecticut Technical High School System Board (hereafter "Board") met on December 13, 2016 at Henry Abbott Technical High School, Danbury, CT.

### **I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Trefry called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Robert Trefry, Chairperson  
Mrs. Patricia Keavney-Maruca, Vice Chairperson  
Mr. John Barrasso  
Ms. Gina Chiarella  
Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis  
Mr. Chris DiPentima  
Ms. Karen Eichstaedt  
Commissioner Scott Jackson  
Mr. Peter Hoecklin  
Commissioner Catherine Smith

Absent: Mr. Fitz Walker

Mr. Trefry thanked Principal Butkus for hosting today's meeting. Ms. Butkus welcomed the Board members and guests and introduced Ms. Janice Joly, Abbott THS Literacy Lab Instructor and the following freshmen who read a short paragraph they wrote about how they, like Malala, find ways to promote peace, love, and tolerance and how they have been successful in the face of adversity.

Lyana Barnes, Hairdressing Student  
Myles Glover, Electrical Student  
Gabe Sawtelle, Carpentry Student  
Enzo Lopes, Mechanical Design and Engineering Student  
Aiden Howell, Precision Machining Student

Students also shared examples of things they do differently now after watching the documentary, "I am Malala."

### **II. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

### **III. Consent Agenda**

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

The board voted unanimously that the minutes of the November 15, 2016 CABE Retreat Meeting and October 18, 2016 CTHSS Board meeting be approved.

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

#### **IV. Executive Session**

The Board did not go into executive session.

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

##### **A.I. Prince Technical High School's First Community Open House**

On November 17, 2016, the CTHSS held a successful community open house event at A.I. Prince THS. The purpose of this event was to connect with local, social and community agencies to ensure awareness of the number of programs the CTHSS offers. Superintendent Torres thanked Mr. Trefry for attending.

##### **CT Association of Boards of Education and CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CABE/CAPSS) Convention**

On November 18, 2016, the CTHSS presented on the Strategic Action Plan at the CABE/CAPSS Convention at the Mystic Marriot in Groton CT. The presentation was very well received. Superintendent Torres was accompanied by CTHSS Education Consultant Dr. St. Onge and Vinal Tech's Principal Mr. Shellman.

Superintendent Torres commented that keynote speaker Tony Wagner, spoke about focusing on qualitative data not necessarily quantitative data and looking at the high school diploma based on performance measures and merit badges. Superintendent Torres feels that the CTHSS Student Profile highlights this. Mr. Wagner's session was timely and reaffirmed the work the CTHSS has accomplished.

##### **CT General Assembly's Joint Standing Meeting of the Education, Labor and Higher Education Committees**

On November 30, 2016, the Education, Labor and Higher Education Committees held their Joint Standing meeting to review agency reports on the State's Technical High School System. The key areas focused on were success, investing in career and technical education and continuing to foster partnerships. The CTHSS was joined by Howard Jenkins of Electric Boat and Mr. John Beauregard from the Eastern Workforce Investment Board who spoke about the partnerships and relationships developed with them. Superintendent Torres felt the presentation was very well received by all and highlighted some slides of the presentation which included emphasis on enrollment and looking at enrollment from 7:30AM to 9:00PM at all of the technical high schools. The Committee was happy to see that the CTHSS is capitalizing on the state's assets, looking at opportunities with community colleges, creating apprenticeship programs, partnerships, etc.

Superintendent Torres thanked the Commissioners of the Department of Labor and the Department of Economic Development for their presentations and collaborative effort.

Mr. Trefry commended Superintendent Torres on an outstanding presentation and asked the Superintendent to elaborate more on the topic of expansion and capacity. The CTHSS is in the process of conducting an internal study to determine the possibility of increasing enrollment by 600 students. Members of the Joint Standing Committee requested follow up.

##### **CTHSS Strategic Action Plan Annual Report to the State Board of Education**

On December 7, 2016, Superintendent Torres presented the Strategic Action Plan Annual report to the State Board of Education. The focus of the presentation was on female students and STEM related fields. Superintendent Torres was joined by Windham Technical High School students: Miss Brook Bauer – 12th Grade Precision Manufacturing Technology And Miss Amanda Abbruzzese – 12th Grade Precision Manufacturing Technology as well as Howell Cheney Technical High School student Miss Keri Trigo – 12th Grade Diesel & Heavy Duty Equipment Repair. Their presentations to the State Board of Education were very well received.

Mr. Trefry commended Superintendent Torres on another flawless presentation! He also stated there was a lot of support from the Board regarding expansion of CTHSS programs.

#### **Emmett O'Brien Technical High School Visit**

On December 8, 2016, Emmett O'Brien THS hosted the Principal Leadership Council's monthly meeting and principals had an opportunity to visit the school. Superintendent Torres commended the staff, students and Principal LeBouthillier's leadership in being able to create a winter wonderland to celebrate all of the CTHSS principals. Board members will also have an opportunity to visit Emmett O'Brien when they host their ribbon cutting in the spring of 2017.

#### **Meeting with SDE, DAS and OPM on CTHSS School Construction Projects**

On December 9, 2016, the CTHSS had the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from the Department of Education, Commissioner Wentzell, Department of Administrative Services Commissioner Currey, and Office of Office of Policy and Management staff regarding the CTHSS school construction projects. There will be a follow-meeting on December 14, 2016 to discuss the school renovation and facilities projects. Superintendent Torres thanked Commissioner Wentzell for her support. The future of many of the CTHSS school renovation projects will be dependent on the state's fiscal situation.

#### **Retirement Announcement**

Mr. Robert Axon, Principal of Oliver Wolcott Technical High School, Torrington, has announced his intent to retire effective February 1, 2017. Mr. Axon leaves Oliver Wolcott with a graduation rate of close to 99 percent, a nationally recognized family engagement program and one of the highest literacy scores in the District. Superintendent Torres congratulated Mr. Axon for his stellar performance and wishes him the best in his retirement.

#### **Value Added Exercise Follow-up Work**

The CTHSS recognizes there is still a lot of work to do as a result of the Outreach and Finance Subcommittee meeting with CBIA on November 15, 2016. Superintendent Torres plans to update the Board members on a number of follow-up items in January including: connecting with Mr. Patrick Flaherty, DOL Economist to schedule a session, creating talking points about the CTHSS for the Board and continue marketing and outreach efforts with CTHSS alumni.

#### **2016 SDE Graduation Results for Review**

The CTHSS has recently received from the SDE the 2016 Cohort graduation results for review. Once again, the CTHSS graduation rate is holding steady at 97 percent. Superintendent Torres highlighted that last year, E.C. Goodwin had 87 percent Hispanic students and 100 percent of them graduated. Grasso Tech had 55 Hispanic students and 100 percent of them graduated. Emmett O'Brien had 35 Hispanic students and 100 percent of them graduated. Platt Tech had 100 percent graduate rate in all overall categories. Prince had a graduation rate of close to 98 percent. Windham and Oliver Wolcott both tied having a 99 percent graduation rate.

Superintendent Torres commended all of the principals for their leadership and commitment to the CTHSS Strategic Action Plan.

### **VI. Items Requiring Action**

There were no items requiring action.

### **VII. Items for Discussion**

#### **A. Budget Update**

Superintendent Torres introduced Mr. Chasse, Education Consultant who provided an update on latest information impacting the district's operating budget for fiscal year 2016-17. The district continues to pursue the refill of critical instructional and operational positions.

Mr. Chasse provided a breakdown of the current vacant positions. The latest projections assume that 35 full-time positions approved for refill by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) will be filled by January 20, 2017. The projections also assume an additional 50 full-time time general fund positions (including two durationals) currently awaiting approval to post will be filled by February 3, 2017.

The fiscal year 2016-17 revised budget is \$158,466,509. There is currently a \$500,000 reserve for emergency building repairs in the event that additional bonding is not approved before June 30, 2017 to ensure funding is available in the event of unforeseen winter weather costs due to maintenance vacancies.

The projected surplus is subject to change as a result of ongoing collective bargaining negotiations between the State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) and the State of Connecticut.

Further rescission actions that might be taken during the 2016-17 fiscal year will greatly impact strategic planning efforts and require further programmatic reductions.

The State Bond Commission meeting scheduled for December 9, 2016 was cancelled. The district continues to pursue a bond allocation of \$2,575,000 for various infrastructure repairs. In the event that this request is not approved before the close of the fiscal year, the operating budget could be negatively impacted. I have notified OPM of this concern and will continue to update the Board. The next regular meeting of the State Bond Commission is tentatively scheduled for January 27, 2017.

Questions and discussion included: the new agreement between SBAC and the State of CT still requiring legislative approval if approved will allow the state to delay some sizeable contributions to the state and teachers retirement plan that will allow the state to continue to invest in operational costs.

A copy of the Budget report is included in the official file of this meeting.

## **B. International Astronomy Research Program Update**

Ms. Butkus introduced Ms. Susan Kelly, Science Instructor at Abbott THS. Ms. Kelly joined Abbott tech with a varied background in science education. Her research experience in STEM related curriculum as well as her collaboration with NASA has ensured a stimulating and enthusiastic educational program for the students at Abbott. In April of 2016, Ms. Kelly was honored to represent the United States at the European Geophysical Union Workshop in Vienna Austria where her astronomy research for grades K-12 was highlighted. Ms. Kelly has also been very involved in the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards and has attended numerous workshops related to this new paradigm of teaching science.

Ms. Kelly shared a brief PowerPoint presentation with the Board members on the astronomy research program that she recently developed and piloted and discussed her experiences at this important event.

Ms. Kelly was asked by the Board members to describe the content and topic of the research and the outcome.

A copy of the Global Collaborative STEM Education PowerPoint is included in the official file of this meeting.

## **C. CTHSS Student Profile: Employability Assessment**

College and Career Readiness, Page 24 and 25 of the CTHSS Strategic Action Plan states: Beyond demonstrating mastery of core academic skills and knowledge in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, the district has identified target indicators as measures of career readiness and preparation. The target indicators represent a

progression of career-related experiences and performances in subject areas over the course of a student's career in the CTHSS. Life Ready – work ready, job ready, career ready and college ready.

Superintendent Torres introduced Mr. Richard Shellman, Principal of Vinal Technical High School and Dr. Barbara St. Onge, CTHSS Education Consultant to the Board members. Superintendent Torres asked Mr. Shellman and Dr. St. Onge to present on the employability workplace assessment calling attention to the CTHSS Student Profile work-ready quadrant. Superintendent Torres commended both Mr. Shellman and Dr. St. Onge for their committee work in bringing teachers and administrators together to discuss the importance of this assessment in adequately preparing the students for the workplace or WBL experience.

Mr. Shellman led a discussion on an Article from Pearson entitled "Employability Skills Gap" based on the Hart Research Associates survey Falling Short? College and Career Success, January 2015". The info graph identified the top skills employers seek, but college grads may lack on the road to employability.

Mr. Shellman and Dr. St Onge provided an update on what the CTHSS is doing to adequately prepare students to enter the workplace.

Their presentation included an overview of the employability assessment which comprises ten standards and sixty-seven competencies in the areas of communication, career research skills, personal finance, information technology, workplace skills, interpersonal skills, conflict management, problem-solving and problem-solving. To address these competencies, every school has identified what subject area and grade level the skills are taught to help the committee determine if are any gaps that need to be addressed. The district has also developed a digital course in Google Classroom which serves as a resource for teachers in providing lessons and activities to address these skills.

Questions and discussion included: how mature is this assessment tool and stages of development it has been through including revisions? Comments included the importance of productivity and to appreciate that there are four generations currently in the workforce. It is important to provide a context to include how millennials communicate when addressing these skills.

Ms. Eichstaedt commended Superintendent Torres, Dr. St. Onge and Mr. Shellman on their presentation and added that that the CTHSS represents the model and mission of what every educational institution ought to be.

## **VIII. Report of the Chair**

### **A. SBE Update**

Regarding the SBE update, discussion occurred under Item V. Report of the Superintendent: CTHSS Strategic Action Plan Annual Report to the State Board of Education and CT General Assembly's Joint Standing Meeting of the Education, Labor and Higher Education Committees. Mr. Trefry reiterated that the Superintendent's presentations were well received and there is much support for the expansion of CTHSS programs. Mr. Trefry also commented on how impressed he was with the students he met during lunch and their progress with the ALEKS program.

## **IX. Committee Reports**

### **A. Quality and Policy**

The Quality and Policy subcommittee met on December 9, 2016. The Committee members received a presentation on the career pathways at the new Platt Technical High School. Nivea – do I mention what Mr. Jackson stated about the learning opportunity for students to see professionals in their field during the renovation project?

**B. Outreach and Finance**

The Outreach and Finance subcommittee met on December 9, 2016, just prior to today's Board meeting. The Committee members received a presentation on the career pathways at the new Platt Technical High School. Mr. Barrasso, thanked Mr. Kapitulik and Commissioner Jackson on a sizeable apprenticeship grant, a large portion of which will be utilized by students in the aviation maintenance program.

Mr. Trefry requested that the Committee Chairs both provide a hand out at a future meeting on the technologies for Platt Tech.

**X. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**XI. Adjourn**

The CTHSS Board adjourned its meeting at 3:00PM

Prepared by:   
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Diane M. Curtis, Administrative Assistant  
Connecticut Technical High School System