

**CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM BOARD**

**Minutes of Meeting  
February 28, 2017**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Connecticut Technical High School System Board (hereafter "Board") met on February 28, 2017 at 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, 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  
Ms. Karen Eichstaedt  
Mr. Peter Hoecklin  
Commissioner Catherine Smith

Absent: Mr. Chris DiPentima  
Commissioner Scott Jackson  
Mr. Fitz Walker

**II. Public Participation**

**III. Consent Agenda**

**A. Consideration of Minutes**

The board voted unanimously that the minutes of the January 17, 2017, CTHSS Board meeting be approved.

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

**IV. Executive Session**

The Board did not go into executive session.

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

**The New Platt Technical High School**

At the December 9, 2016 Subcommittee meeting on Quality and Policy and the December 13, 2016 Subcommittee meeting on Outreach and Finance, the career pathways for the new Platt Technical High School were reviewed. CTHSS Board members were provided at copy of the Platt Renovation Plan at today's meeting for their review and approval. The vision is to create a STEM center of excellence with the addition of Biotechnology and pre electrical engineering. Sustainable architecture would move to Region 2 or 3 as the CTHSS already has a sustainable architecture program in Region 1 of the state.

A motion was requested to formally approve the 14 career pathways and 8 Career Clusters at Platt Technical High School listed on page 5 of the plan as follows: Culinary Arts, Hairdressing & Cosmetology, Mechanical Design and Engineering Technology, Mechatronics, Precision Manufacturing, Biotechnology, Information Systems Technology, Automotive, Collision Repair and Refinishing, Pre-electrical Engineering and Applied Electronics, E-Carpentry, E-Electrical, E-HVAC, E-Plumbing, and E-Carpentry.

Commissioner Smith moved, Ms. Keavney seconded that the CTHSS Board to approve the reorganization of the trade clusters at the new Platt Technical High School as follows:

Culinary Arts, Hairdressing & Cosmetology, Mechanical Design and Engineering Technology, Mechatronics, Precision Manufacturing, Biotechnology, Information Systems Technology, Automotive, Collision Repair and Refinishing, Pre-electrical Engineering and Applied Electronics, E-Carpentry, E-Electrical, E-HVAC, E-Plumbing, and E-Carpentry.

and directs the Superintendent of Schools to take the necessary action.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Board members commented on how pleased they are in the direction the CTHSS is moving in having Career Centers of Excellence and a regional approach with the emphasis on STEM, Manufacturing and IST as these are what employers need.

#### **Association of Career & Technical Education (ACTE)**

Goal Number 3.1 of the Strategic Action Plan is to position the CTHSS as a leading force in Career and Technical Education both at the State and National level. On February 8, 2017, ACTE, a national delegation, visited A.I. Prince Technical High School in Hartford to get a better idea on what CT is doing in career and technical education. Mr. Trefry, Barrasso and Keavney who also attended added remarks about the day.

#### **Community Open House Career Technology Advisory Committee (CTEAC) Dinner**

On February 15, 2017, Vinal Technical High School hosted a community open house dinner with over 200 people in attendance in an effort to connect with business and industry partnerships. A number of trade advisory committee meetings took place at evening. Superintendent Torres was blown away at the number in attendance that evening.

#### **Connecticut Computer Science Summit**

On February 24, 2017, Superintendent Torres attended the 2017 CT Computer Science Summit hosted by E.C. Goodwin Technical High School in New Britain. This summit was in partnership with DECD and SDE. Superintendent Torres thanked Commissioner Wentzell and Commissioner Smith who have been instrumental in guiding and alerting the CTHSS of the workforce needed i.e. computer science, data, analytics, etc. in order to get these shops reflected in the strategic plan. Commissioner Smith shared comments about the day.

#### **CTHSS Discipline Data Mid-Year 2017**

Superintendent Torres provided a handout Midyear report on the CTHSS discipline data comparing data from 2012-13 to 2016-17 depicting in school suspension, out of school suspension, expelled and arrests. In school suspensions have seen a steady decline over the last five years. Out of school suspensions also appear to be significantly lower than last year. Several out of school suspensions were pending expulsion hearings when this data was analyzed, so the number of

expulsions for the first half of the year can be expected to rise, but this school year is still likely to be below last year's four-year low of 60 expulsions. Arrests and expulsions have decreased dramatically as well.

Discussion/questions included: The Board members requested data on how CTHSS compares to the rest of the high schools in the state of Connecticut. Commissioner Wentzell drew attention to the SDE websites Ed Site page and encourage a school by school comparison rather than district to district comparison. Commissioner was asked to explain the difference between a suspension and an expulsion. Superintendent Torres was asked to share what had attributed to this impressive decline. Superintendent Torres spoke to the quarterly score board and how important it is that all principals see each other's data and learn from best practices.

The CTHSS Board members congratulated the Superintendent on these very impressive declines.

### **Ellis Technical High School Becomes 1<sup>st</sup> Tech School to Win State Title in Wrestling**

Ellis Tech has become the first school ever win a state title in wrestling due in large part to Assistant Principal and Coach, Rafael Calixto. This win is also attributed to the hard work of youngsters who have exhibited team work sportsmanship and professionalism. Congratulations to Ellis Tech!

### **State's Accountability Index**

Superintendent Torres shared a preview of the State's Accountability Index numbers that have been released and she plans bring this topic to the Quality and Policy Subcommittee meeting for a closer look. Superintendent Torres added these numbers look very encouraging and positive giving the CTHSS another reason to celebrate. The overall accountability index for the CTHSS is 70.4 out of 100% an increase from last year. Superintendent Torres reported the CTHSS scored 100% in the graduation rate categories. The accountability index for the CTHSS in English Language Arts is 65.9 – the state's index is 67.7%. For Math, the CTHSS is 60.2% – the state's index is 61.4%. For Science, the CTHSS is 70.5% - the state's index is 57.5%. The CTHSS participation rate is over 98%.

The Board members congratulated the Superintendent on the accountability index numbers.

## **VI. Items Requiring Action**

### **A. Phasing Out Early Care and Education**

At the January 17, 2017 CTHSS Board meeting Superintendent Torres shared that the CTHSS is recommending the closing of the Early Care and Education program at Bullard Havens Technical High School, effective, June, 2019. On February 10, 2017, the Subcommittee on Quality and Policy met and recommended approval to the CTHSS Board to close the Early Care and Education Program.

As of June, 2017 the agency that runs the on-site preschool will suspend operations at Bullard Havens as a result of low enrollment. The low enrollment is due to the expansion of the preschool program in the Bridgeport Public Schools and the growing need of Bridgeport parents for full-time infant and toddler care. The closing of the preschool program will severely impact the ability for the Early Care and Education students to complete the training towards work and job readiness and the clinical practicum hours towards earning the Preschool Child Development Credential (CDA).

The CTHSS implemented the Early Care and Education program in 2001 in one location, Bullard Havens THS in Bridgeport to meet the high need for qualified day care teachers of preschool age children. A significant change in the Bridgeport community has shifted the focus for day care employment to infant and toddler care. The difficulty in providing students clinical practicum placements impacts the school district's ability to continue to offer the Early Care and Education program. CTHSS will not be able to provide intensive, rigorous job-readiness and work-readiness training without an onsite preschool.

The Early Care and Education program will not accept ninth graders in the 2016-17 school year. The program will phase out and close in June, 2019.

A motion was called at this time.

Ms. Keavney moved, Mr. Barrasso seconded that the CTHSS Board approve the closing of the Early Care and Education Program and directs the Superintendent of Schools to take the necessary action.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

A Copy of the executive summary is included in the official file of this meeting.

## VII. Items for Discussion

### A. Budget Update

Superintendent Torres introduced Mr. Chasse 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 41 full-time positions approved for refill by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) will be filled by March 17, 2017. The projections also assume an additional 50 full-time time general fund positions (including four durationals) currently awaiting approval to post will be filled by March 31, 2017.

The fiscal year 2016-17 revised budget is \$158,466,509 which includes total reserves of approximately \$1.5M for various collective bargaining payouts which have been placed on hold due to expiration of various collective bargaining agreements. Negotiations between the State of Connecticut and the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) continue. There is currently a \$800,000 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 district continues to pursue two critical bond allocations. A request for \$2,575,000 for various infrastructure repairs was submitted to the Department of Administrative Services - Construction Services for forwarding to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) in October 2016 and awaits State Bond Commission consideration. In the event that this request is not approved before the close of the fiscal year, the operating budget could be negatively impacted. An additional request for \$2,500,000 for classroom and networking technology equipment was submitted to the State Department of Education on January 9, 2017 for forwarding to OPM.

On February 8, 2017, the Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy issued his Recommended Operating and Capital Budgets for fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19.

The **operating budget** highlights include:

- Additional funding (\$266,098 and \$309,525) necessary to hire additional staff at J.M. Wright THS.
- The transfer of funding (approximately \$1.7M) from the State Department of Education to the CTHSS for the projected payroll costs of twenty (20) staff persons being transferred from the SDE to the CTHSS. These

staff persons include financial, human resource and information technology staff that already provide dedicated services to the school system. Superintendent Torres indicated that the CTHSS is still trying to determine with SDE Colleagues what these positions are.

- The proposed regionalization/centralization of school business offices resulting in the elimination of 35 positions at an approximate savings of \$2.7M. Superintendent Torres and Mr. Wihbey had a meeting with OPM and Ms. Demsey on February 23, 2017 and talked about the implications of the proposal. She provided examples/services provided including: production work, asset management, and electronic leave requests and internal audit issues,
- The continuation of the OPM holdbacks that originated in fiscal year 2016 and were annualized in fiscal year 2017 totaling approximately \$4.9M. Superintendent reminded the Committee members the impact is actually \$7.6 million counting the biennial. She also reminded that the \$4.9 includes the freezing 55 positions and curtailing operational needs. Commissioner Smith suggested a CORE system their currently have underway.
- The creation of a dedicated operating account for the CTHSS payroll and a separate operating account for all other services and supplies (including fuel and utilities).

The proposed **capital budget** would:

- provide no new capital funding during the biennial period;
- reduce previously-approved bond authorizations by \$5.5M, and
- eliminate the remaining \$8,066,000 for Extended Hours Programs.

Approximately \$20M in previously legislatively-authorized capital funding will be reprioritized to address the most critical needs – including the replacement of student transportation vehicles, technology and trade and academic equipment.

Questions/Discussion included: Overall positions are moving along quickly, reserves if not spent by June 30 go back to the general fund, clarification on the 20 positions from SDE to CTHSS, attrition, LEAN practice including Medtronic; concern of the number of substitute teachers if vacancies are not re-filled, the extended hours program and what the intent was, and the use of CTHSS Schools as training centers for corporations.

Superintendent Torres announced that she will be pursuing the refill of Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services for Special Ed and Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. The Committee members endorsed the pursuance of these positions.

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

## **B. Presentation on Workforce Trends in the State of CT**

Goal Number One (Enhanced Employer Engagement and Alignment with Industry Needs) of the Strategic Action Plan is to Partner with business and industry to develop career technical education programs that provide CTHSS students with the skills and work habits to be successful in a dynamic 21st Century work environment.

Framework for Success 1.4 is to respond to the changing needs of business/industry. In accordance with CT General Statutes Section 10-95h, review the Department of Labor projections and the Department of Economic Development strategic goals on an annual basis to determine state workforce needs.

Superintendent Torres introduced Patrick J. Flaherty, Assistant Director of Research and Information Office of Research and Information for the Connecticut Department of Labor to the Board members.

At the October 16, 2016 CTHSS Board meeting, Board members engaged in a conversation on how the board could be advocates for the system and impact public will. It was agreed moving forward that the Outreach and Finance Subcommittee would explore ways to create a value added report for the CTHSS and work with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA).

One of the next steps was to Connect with Mr. Patrick Flaherty, Economist for the CT Department of Labor, and a representative from DECD on future trends and projections;

Mr. Flaherty provided a PowerPoint presentation on the work force State of Connecticut projections, short and long term and gave the Department of Labor's perspective as to what areas the CTHSS needs to train for. As the CTHSS Board thinks about future program needs and how these align to the Strategic Action Plan efforts, the Board wants to be thoughtful about the decisions that are made as a system. Mr. Flaherty provided his insight that would help in these decisions.

Questions/Discussion included: Are online stores and Amazon warehouses popping up affecting retail numbers, clarification on durable vs non-durable. Highlights included: High wage employers are shrinking, new hires in manufacturing are dramatically increasing, ship and boat building demand, number of births have drastically fallen, low high school population (excess capacity), the need to get more young people into manufacturing,

Diane Curtis will forward an electronic version of the PowerPoint to the CTHSS Board members.

#### **A. Next Steps for Strategic Planning**

Superintendent Torres shared with the members Board members an outline of the next steps for strategic planning. The Strategic Action Plan is approaching the end of its third year cycle and a new three year plan needs to be drafted by the end of the 2016-17 school year. Superintendent Torres has met and discussed the outline with the Subcommittee on Quality and Policy at their February 10, 2017 meeting and the Subcommittee on Outreach and Finance at their February 28, 2017 meeting. At their meetings, it was agreed that the four goals should remain and that the CTHSS Board members need to look at the foundational imperatives and modify accordingly. It was also agreed that a retreat will be scheduled to accomplish this task.

Superintendent Torres walked the Committee members through the steps as follows:

The CTHSS Team Presents Annual Report and Three Year Cycle Report to the CTHSS Board by July 2017

The CTHSS Board Reviews mission, goals and foundational imperatives by July, 2017

The CTHSS Team reviews performance indicators for each goal by summer 2017

The CTHSS Team presents to the CTHSS Board a draft of Tomorrow's Framework 2018-21 by September 2017

The CTHSS Board continues review of draft document by October, 2017

The CTHSS Board approves Tomorrow's Framework, 2018-21 by November 2017

The CTHSS Board members endorsed the timeline and the outline plan for the next steps and commended the superintendent on all of her work thus far.

A copy of the Strategic Action Plan Outline is included in the official file of this meeting.

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

#### **A. SBE Update**

On behalf of the CTHSS Board, Mr. Trefry provided a letter of appreciation and support for the leadership of Superintendent Torres. It was requested that this letter be recorded and adopted into the meeting minutes and be part of the official board file. This recognition will also be shared with the State Board of Education.

Superintendent Torres thanked the Board members for this recognition and shared this with the Principals and teachers who are responsible for the day to day work at the schools.

**IX. Committee Reports**

**A. Quality and Policy**

The Quality and Policy subcommittee met on February 28, 2017. The Committee members recommended approval to the CTHSS Board to close the Early Care and Education Program. The Committee members also discussed next steps planning of the CTHSS Strategic Action Plan.

**B. Outreach and Finance**

The Outreach and Finance subcommittee met on February 28, 2017, just prior to today's Board meeting. The Committee members received an update on the budget, inventory and discussed the next steps planning of the CTHSS Strategic Action Plan.

**X. Public Participation**

**XI. Adjourn**

The CTHSS Board adjourned its meeting at 3:12PM

*Diane Curtis*

Prepared by:

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