

CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM BOARD

**Minutes of Meeting
July 8, 2016**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Connecticut Technical High School System Board (hereafter "Board") met on July 8, 2016 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Trefry called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

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

Absent: Mr. Chris DiPentima
Commissioner Catherine Smith
Mr. Fitz Walker

Mr. Trefry opened the meeting by asking the Board members to share their thoughts on the current climate events in the country and how these might serve as a learning opportunity for our students. Superintendent Torres will meet with the Leadership Council before school starts to develop a plan that will unify the CTHSS community and build bridges with local and state police. Students will be afforded an opportunity to express themselves. Superintendent Torres thanked everyone for their suggestions.

II. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

III. Consent Agenda

A. Consideration of Minutes

The board voted unanimously that the minutes of the June 21, 2016 meeting be approved.

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

IV. Executive Session

There was no executive session.

V. Report of the Superintendent of Schools

2016 Edition of Doing Business in Connecticut

Superintendent Torres shared an article from the [2016 Edition of Doing Business in CT](#) and the positive press the district has received for a number of initiatives including the E-House and the amount of students trained in green technology.

Summer Manufacturing Programs & Partnership with the CT Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT)

The CTHSS is serving over 200 students across the state this summer. The program is funded through the DECD Manufacturing Innovation fund and offers opportunities for seventh to ninth graders to explore manufacturing as a viable career opportunity. The program is held over two-week periods now through mid-August at A.I. Prince, E.C. Goodwin, Kaynor, Platt, and Emmett O'Brien Technical High Schools and CCAT.

SkillsUSA Results – CTHSS Students Earn High Honors National Skills Competition

Superintendent Torres announced there was a scoring error and the press release will be reissued. Norwich Tech student Daria Stifel who was ranked 10th was actually ranked number 1 earning Gold first place in electrical construction wiring.

First Aid/CPR/AED Training

Starting with the class of 2018 all graduation seniors will have first aid, CPR and AED training certification. A plan will be developed over the summer.

Four Immigrant's Stories – Republic American News Article

Superintendent Torres shared an article from the Republican American of stories of immigrants coming from four corners of the world. Dr. Daisy Cocco De Fillippis, CTHSS Board Member and President of Naugatuck Community College was featured in the story.

After Superintendent Torres shared her report with the Board, Commissioner Jackson asked a question if CTHSS students are offered opportunities to go out into the field for hands on work. Superintendent Torres explained that all 11th and 12th grade students do indeed have the opportunity to do production work under the supervision of a licensed instructor. Superintendent Torres invited Commissioner Jackson to visit a production site this upcoming school year.

VI. Items Requiring Action

There were no items for action.

VII. Items for Discussion

A. Tuition Increase

Superintendent Torres informed the Board members that there is no action at this time on tuition increase and today's report is being presented for discussion only in an effort to inform the board where the CTHSS is in terms of budget planning for next year. Superintendent Torres reported she has been working very closely with SDE colleagues and OPM regarding the budget.

Superintendent Torres introduced Mr. Chasse to the Board members. Mr. Chasse reported that the CTHSS continues to analyze their operating budget and look for opportunities to reduce costs and ways to enhance the revenue generation to support the operation of programs. The CTHSS currently operates two (2) aviation maintenance technician programs. The Stratford School for Aviation Maintenance and the Connecticut Aero Tech School both serve approximately 50 adult students.

The traditional staffing level in each of these programs is one (1) department head, two (2) full-time instructors, and one (1) permanent part-time (32 hr. per week) instructor. The salary costs for these positions are currently expensed to the district's general fund operating budget while the fringe benefit costs are expensed to the Office of the State Comptroller.

The annual staffing costs are approximately \$11,760 (\$588K/50 students). In order to successfully graduate from the program, a student must attend the program for eighteen months. Thus, calculating the cost of the program over eighteen months results in per pupil instructional costs of approximately \$17,640 (\$882K/50 students). The current program tuition rate is \$6,576 (paid over the eighteen months). Thus, the State of Connecticut subsidizes the program at an approximate rate of \$11,064 per student.

Other educational providers of aviation maintenance programs generally charge a program tuition rate of \$20,000 - \$30,000. Given the holdback of \$4.9M in the district's operating budget for fiscal year 2016-17 and with additional budget reductions expected for fiscal year 2017-18, a tuition rate increase is being considered.

Superintendent Torres shared that on Wednesday, July 13, 2016 a follow-up conference call has been scheduled with OPM and SDE colleagues to seek guidance on the budget for SY 2017 and to discuss the costs to operate the aviation sites. During the call, the Superintendent plans to share the questions being raised about potentially enrolling students in the fall who have the financial means to pay and/or are sponsored by their employer. The concern was raised that this decision would only benefit a segment of the population and exclude potential students who can only attend with financial aid support (Title IV).

The Board members thanked Superintendent Torres and Mr. Chasse for putting this report together in a way that is responsive to the public. The Board understands that the cost of these programs are not reflective to what the market is. Commissioner Jackson offered some financial support through his apprentice department. Superintendent Torres stated that there is no intent to close these programs. A preliminary decision was made to not to enroll a class for the fall pending resolution of the status with the US Department of Education. The CTHSS is not authorized to issue Pell Grants to students. Superintendent Torres thanked everyone who has reached out the CTHSS to offer assistance in continuing these programs.

Commissioner Wentzell indicated that their legal department is currently working with the Federal Government and legal options are being explored on how to become approved as a post-secondary institution. Commissioner Wentzell also stated that the SDE is working with the Board of Regents for Higher Education and exploring the possibility of memorandums of understandings with other agencies that are able to process Pell Grants.

Based on the program's cost structure, the Board discussed a potential tuition increase for new students entering the aviation program. The new tuition rate would be \$20,000 subject to the final approval of the Outreach and Finance Subcommittee and the Board at a future meeting. There was overall consensus for this proposal.

A copy of the Aviation Program Cost and Tuition Rate report is included in the official file of this meeting.

B. Budget Update

Superintendent Torres introduced Mr. Chasse to the committee members who presented an update on the Budget.

The district's operating budget for fiscal year 2016-17 is subject to a holdback of approximately \$4.9M in response to a continued decline in state revenues.

On Tuesday, June 28, 2016, Superintendent Torres, Mr. Trefry, Ms. Keavney and Mr. Chasse met with OPM Secretary Benjamin Barnes, OPM Deputy Secretary Susan Weisselberg, Liz Donahue, Policy Director for the Governor's office, and Kerry Kelly (OPM Budget Staff) to discuss a wide variety of critical issues including the

district's operating budget for FY 2016-17 and efforts to reduce operating costs; school staffing and funding for after school programs.

Due to anticipated summer retirements and other separations from state service, the district's full-time general fund vacancy count is approximately 177 positions. The district continues to pursue refill of critical instructional and operational positions. A total of 49 positions will likely remain vacant for the entire fiscal year. In the past two weeks or so, the OPM has approved for the posting of at least 50 instructional vacancies and that number changes on a daily basis. The latest round of budget holdbacks has resulted in a reevaluation of the district staffing needs for the upcoming school year and a complete line item by line item review of the non-personnel budget.

The CTHSS is looking to identify additional opportunities to reduce operating costs in: school sports programs; instructional substitute usage; and overtime.

Superintendent Torres shared with the Board members three main exercises the CTHSS will be engaged in over the next few weeks with respect to reducing operating costs. These include a review of school sports programs, instructional substitute usage, and overtime. She plans to identify a percentage (a goal) in order to achieve the new 4.9 million dollar reduction. At the September 20, 2016 CTHSS Board meeting, the Superintendent will provide the Board an update on the position fill rate and its impact on the operating budget and a status report on reduction efforts with school leaders.

The Board members thanked Superintendent Torres, Mr. Chasse, SDE Commissioner Wentzell, Ms. Demsey and OPM for all of their hard work and support.

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

VIII. Report of the Chair

Mr. Trefry Board announced plans for a Board retreat to be held during the September 20, 2016 CTHSS Board meeting. This will be an extended meeting where metrics will be established that will relate to the Strategic Action Plan and to determine next steps.

IX. Committee Reports

A. Quality and Policy

There was no report on Quality and Policy. The Committee did not meet in July.

B. Outreach and Finance

There was no report on Outreach and Finance. The Committee did not meet.

X. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

XI. Adjourn

The CTHSS Board adjourned its meeting at 1:20PM.

Prepared by: 
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