

CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM BOARD

**Draft Minutes of Meeting
February 16, 2016**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Connecticut Technical High School System Board (hereafter "Board") met on February 16, 2016 at 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT.

I. Oath of Office

Mr. Trefry welcomed new CTHSS Board member Mr. Peter Hoecklin and thanked him for his willingness to serve. Attorney Beatrice Tinty administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Hoecklin.

II. 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
Mr. Chris DiPentima
Ms. Karen Eichstaedt
Mr. Peter Hoecklin
Mr. Fitz Walker

Absent: Commissioner Scott D. Jackson
Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis
Commissioner Catherine Smith

Chairperson Trefry asked the Board members to introduce themselves.

III. Public Participation

Lisa Siembab, Executive Director of the Automotive Service Association of Connecticut spoke to the Board Members in advocacy of continuing the Collision Repair and Refinishing program at Henry Abbott Technical High School in Danbury. Ms. Siembab provided a letter of support and a handout to the Board members on the Collision Repair and Refinishing Industry Statistics on behalf of Henry Abbott Technical High School.

IV. Consent Agenda

There were no items on the consent agenda.

V. Executive Session

There was no executive session.

VI. Consideration of Minutes

The board voted unanimously that the minutes of the November 17, 2015 and January 19, 2016 (Informational) meetings be approved.

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

VII. Report of the Superintendent of Schools

February is National Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month

The CTHSS is celebrating CTE month in Connecticut at a number of Technical High Schools highlighting programs and solidifying Strategic Plan Goal Number One which is to develop relationships with business and industry partners.

Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman and Industry Partners from Berlin, CT Tour the Manufacturing Program at H.C. Wilcox Technical High School

On January 25, 2016 Superintendent Torres had the honor of hosting a tour of the manufacturing technology program at H.C. Wilcox Technical High School. Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman joined the tour along with industry partners from Berlin. The CTHSS is trying to develop partnerships for work based learning programs and job placements for students. Everyone was impressed with the students who gave the tour and the depth of knowledge they had of the Manufacturing Program.

An Afternoon with Superintendent Torres at Norwich Technical High School

On January 27, 2016, Superintendent Torres continued the tour and conversations across the state at Norwich Technical High School. This is the third year that the Superintendent has had afternoon conversations where she visits schools and meets with teachers and staff and hears from them about their concerns about the Strategic Plan or concerns they have at the school level. These meetings are a great way to receive feedback and suggestions.

Oliver Wolcott Technical High School Hosts a Partnership Meeting Luncheon with the Town of Torrington's Mayor Elinor Carbone

On January 28, 2016 Superintendent Torres had the honor of hosting a partnership luncheon meeting with Torrington's Mayor Elinor Carbone at Oliver Wolcott THS. The CTHSS is exploring a school renovation project for Oliver Wolcott. The Mayor requested to meet with the CTHSS to discuss new career pathways at the new Oliver Wolcott THS. The CTHSS is currently working with DAS and OPM on identifying a new site location.

East Hartford Superintendent Nathan Quesnel visits Howell Cheney Technical High School

Superintendent Torres continues conversations with Superintendents across the state in an effort to better educate school districts about the CTHSS Admissions Policy and Programs. On January 29, 2016, East Hartford Superintendent Nathan Quesnel toured Howell Cheney THS. Superintendent Torres discussed after school partnerships with his district.

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Board of Director's Board Meeting

On February 3, 2016 Superintendent Torres attended the CAS Board of Director's meeting where she serves as an executive member. The topic of conversation at this meeting was the high school graduation requirements. There is a task force at the state level that is exploring high school graduation requirements. Superintendent Torres is hoping to highlight more of CTE in the draft proposal.

J.M. Wright THS is Congratulated on their Outstanding Reading Growth

On February 4, 2016 Superintendent Torres visited J.M. Wright Technical High School to congratulate students on their impressive gains in literacy and give the Principal and the students the Superintendent's Reading Award.

A.I. Prince THS Hosts a Luncheon with the Construction Unions

On February 9, 2016, Superintendent Torres held a luncheon with a number of construction unions at A.I. Prince THS. This was a wonderful opportunity to network and solidify business and industry partnerships. The construction unions wanted to meet with the CTHSS to discuss opportunities for work based learning and job placement. They also shared their need in qualified students due to the industry's increasing demands and were provided a tour of the E-House.

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) has selected E.C. Goodwin THS Student Sylvana Gonzalez-Torres to receive the 2016 "Heart of the Arts Award"

E.C. Goodwin Student, Ms. Sylvana Gonzalez-Torres has been selected to receive the 2016 "Heart of the Arts Award. Superintendent Torres plans to have Ms. Gonzalez-Torres attend a future board meeting so the Board members can congratulate her as well.

Grasso Technical High School Renovation Update

Superintendent Torres updated the Board members on the stakeholder concerns about the new renovation project and career pathways for Ella T. Grasso Technical High School. Superintendent Torres and Principal Feeney have reached out to those stakeholders since the January Board Meeting. A team of home office consultants have attended a staff meeting and facilitated a discussion with the staff at Grasso about the career pathways and shared the vision of the region needs. Principal Feeney will continue to meet with local business and industry partners in order for folks to develop a better understanding of the direction of the CTHSS.

Superintendent Torres also commented on the Grasso THS program changes. Currently, there are four carpentry shops in Region 1. The new vision for Grasso THS is to move away from residential carpentry. Carpentry will be transitioned out and will be supported at the three schools in Region 1 which are Ellis, Norwich and Windham. The existing carpentry program at Grasso THS will be incorporated into the welding, metal fabricating and shipbuilding to ensure that the carpentry being developed is the carpentry Electric Boat needs. CTHSS staff will be meeting with union leaders in the coming weeks in order to assist in developing the curriculum.

Superintendent Torres also commented on the Hospitality and Culinary programs at Grasso THS and the new concept of combining the two programs. The needs of the casinos, hotels and local employers will still be addressed.

Chairman Trefry shared with the Board members that he is in support the regional approach with carpentry and combining the Hospitality and Culinary programs. Superintendent Torres is confident that with this change the CTHSS is creating an opportunity for continued growth.

Collision Repair Enrollment at Henry Abbott Technical High School

Superintendent Torres updated the Board members on the collision repair enrollment at Henry Abbott Technical High School. The past three year's enrollment has been very low. This year no students signed up for the shop. Superintendent Torres shared that this program needs to be marketed differently and the CTHSS needs to do a better job on how students and parents understand the career pathways of this program.

VIII. Items Requiring Action

There were no items requiring action.

VIII. Items for Discussion

A. Midyear Report on STAR Data

Foundational Imperative Number 9 of the CTHSS Strategic Plan which is: CTHSS graduates will be academically prepared so they have the option to attend college immediately after graduation or at some time in the future.

Superintendent Torres introduced Dr. Donna Risolo, Education Consultant who presented an update to the Committee members on the Winter Literacy Data Star Reading Assessment. Dr. Risolo's PowerPoint presentation included a description of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Reading Diagnostic Test, what STAR measures including student growth percentiles, data across the district and Spring 2016 projections. Her presentation also focused on gains/strides the CTHSS has made as a district in Literacy. Dr. Risolo also shared with the Committee members programs the CTHSS has started to celebrate reading including the National Education Association's Celebration: Read Across America.

Superintendent Torres and Dr. Risolo responded to questions to the Committee members raised about the winter reading data. Questions and discussion included the District's student learning outcome goals and measurement and the District's ambitious goal of 62 in Student Growth Proficiency, the Superintendent's school-wide initiative reading in the trades, reasons attributing to those schools who have scored higher and Emmett O'Brien's lower scores and measures in place for remediation. Scores at Bullard Havens are currently under observation due to staffing shortages and staffing shortages in general for the district could also be the cause for scores going down. Additional discussion included targeted intervention, the grade level the students are performing at and the average grade level equivalent students are graduating at.

It was requested that Dr. Risolo include in her next report to the Board that the scale score and the grade equivalent scores.

A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included in the official file of this meeting.

B. Budget Update

Superintendent Torres introduced Mr. Chasse, Education Consultant to the Board members who provided an update to the Board members on the latest information potentially impacting the district's operating and capital budgets for fiscal years 2015-16 and 2016-17. On February 3, 2016, the Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy presented his 2016 State of the State Address to the Connecticut General Assembly. In conjunction with the presentation, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) released the Governor's proposed midterm budget adjustments for the 2016-17 fiscal year which begins on July 1, 2016 and ends on June 30, 2017.

Among the proposals which could impact the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS): Creation of an Agency Operations budget in lieu of dedicated CTHSS funding; a potential reduction of 5.75% in the Agency Operations budget which could negatively impact the allocation provided to the CTHSS; additional payroll budget reductions in the State Department of Education's (SDE) - Central Office and the CTHSS; transfer of funding for fringe benefit costs from the Office of the State Comptroller to the agency; and potential reductions in bond authorizations.

The update also included the proposed midterm budget adjustments for FY 2016-17, the budget formulation, general operating budget reductions, additional general fund operating budget reductions, fringe benefit costs, and capital budget reductions.

Mr. Chasse provided an update on the 2015-16 fiscal year operating budget and a breakdown of vacant positions. Mr. Chasse also provided an update on the 2015-16 capital budget. On January 29, 2016, the State Bond Commission approved two (2) capital funding requests for the CTHSS. The first authorization provides approximately \$5.6M for the replacement of the roof at Windham THS – Willimantic. The second authorization totaling \$2,475,000 provides funding for the purchase of school transportation vehicles (STVs) for J.M. Wright THS – Stamford, replacement of plant vehicles used for snow removal and grounds maintenance and provides funding for various infrastructure repairs throughout the district.

The CTHSS continues to pursue capital funding for the replacement of trade and academic equipment and for the district's extended hours programs at A.I. Prince THS – Hartford, E.G. Goodwin THS- New Britain and W.F. Kaynor THS – Waterbury.

Discussion included, fringe benefits and how those are allocated to the CTHSS as a district, teaching vacancies and the Board's authority and inability to make decisions on these vacancies. Mr. Barrasso shared with the Board members concerns he is receiving from the unions with regards to commercial work.

Superintendent Torres has met with union leaders and members of the board regarding her concerns on the vacancies. Superintendent Torres will continue work with the Commissioner's office and colleagues in the SDE to seek the refill of these positions. Having 75 vacancies is a concern in terms of liability issues, and teaching and learning. The Board members expressed the same concerns specifically in regards to OSHA safety guidelines. The Superintendent clarified with the Board members that this is a process issue not a fiscal issue and that Goal Number 4.2 of the Strategic Plan is to create a Human Resources Division within the CTHSS. Superintendent Torres added that the CTHSS needs to look at a more efficient way of monitoring and recruiting to refill vacant positions similar to local districts.

The Board members recommended that this topic be a standing agenda item and further discussion follow at the March Quality and Policy Sub-Committee.

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

IX. Report of the Chair

X. Committee Reports

A. Quality and Policy

The Quality and Policy Subcommittee met on February 5, 2016. The Committee members were briefed on admissions and the recruitment efforts. The Committee members also had a discussion on vacancies and the ramifications.

The Committee agreed to hold the discussion on the trade reauthorization for the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Cluster, Health Science Cluster and the Human Services Cluster until the March 11, 2016 meeting.

B. Outreach and Finance

The Outreach and Finance Committee met on February 16, 2016 directly before the CTHSS Board meeting. The Committee members were briefed on the Adult Education Health Programs. Superintendent Torres added that the CTHSS is working with the BOR to continue to support these programs and serve the State of Connecticut while avoiding duplicity therefore leading to efficiency. The CTHSS does not have the infrastructure i.e. staff or the ability to process student loans, or credit card purchases. Superintendent Torres added that there is a meeting scheduled on February 25, 2016 with the BOR to explore ideas. The Superintendent will keep the Board updated on the next steps.

XI. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

XII. Adjourn

The CTHSS Board adjourned its meeting at 3:20 PM.

Prepared by: 

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