

Connecticut State Board of Education  
Connecticut Technical High School Committee  
Minutes of Meeting Held on  
December 21, 2011

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Connecticut Technical High School Committee (the "Committee") met on December 21, 2011, at A.I. Prince Technical High School, Hartford, CT.

Committee Members Present:	Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr., Chair Patricia Keavney-Maruca Charles A. Jaskiewicz Theresa Hopkins-Staten
State Department of Education	Patricia A. Ciccone, Superintendent Nivea Torres, Assistant Superintendent Robert Lombardi, Assistant Superintendent George Coleman, SDE Sheff Office James Chasse, CTHSS Consultant Beatrice Tinty, CTHSS Consultant Nikitoula Menounos, Principal, Norwich Tech and American Federation of School Administrators Member
A.I. Prince Technical High School	William Chaffin, Principal Brionca Heimbrach, Student Jameik Heron, Student
State Vocational Federation of Teachers	Janis Hochadel, President Ed Leavy

I. Chairperson Vrabely called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

Chairperson Vrabely welcomed everyone to the meeting. He acknowledged Mr. Chaffin, principal of Prince Tech and two Prince Tech students who were present for the meeting.

Brionca Heimbrach is a sophomore student in the plumbing and heating trade. Upon graduation she hopes to open a business with her dad and sisters.

Jameik Heron is a culinary arts student. He announced that he just got accepted into the Culinary Institute of America (C.I.A). He is president of his class and Skills USA. He intends to continue in the culinary arts upon graduation from C.I.A.

Mr. Chaffin talked briefly about recruiting; staffing at the school (which is almost fully staffed with teachers); enrollment – 750 and growing; the school-based health clinic which is up and running and utilized heavily by students; the approval for behavioral health services; and the Family Resource Center which is up and operating – the parents are happy with the availability to use the computers.

II. Executive Session – None

III. Consideration of Minutes of November 16, 2011 CTHS Committee Meeting

Mr. Jaskiewicz moved, Mrs. Keavney-Maruca seconded, that the Committee approve the minutes of the November 16, 2011 Connecticut Technical High School Committee meeting as amended.

Vote:	In Favor:	Vrabely, Keavney-Maruca, Jaskiewicz, Hopkins-Staten
	Opposed:	0

Abstained: 0

Motion carried.

IV. Public Participation - None

V. Consent Agenda – None

VI. Items Requiring Action - None

VII. Items for Discussion - None

VIII. Report of the Superintendent  
CTHSS Task Force Update

- A public hearing of the task force was held on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The speakers included legislators, teachers, graduates, business owners, and a former Superintendent, who spoke out against the proposal to transfer the Connecticut Technical High Schools.
- The Office of Policy and Management has been working to create a draft copy of the task force report which will then be transmitted to the members for review and input. A final vote on the report is tentatively scheduled on or about January 10, 2012.
- Superintendent Ciccone met on December 19<sup>th</sup> with Representative Mike Molgano and Stamford Mayor Michael Pavia. She shared the J.M. Wright Ad Hoc Committee report with them.
- Superintendent Ciccone scheduled a meeting with Commissioner Pryor on December 23<sup>rd</sup> to share her vision for the CTHSS.

#### Collaboration with Higher Education/Board of Regents

A meeting was held on December 12, 2011 with Paul Susen and members of the State Department of Higher Education and the Board of Regents to explore opportunities for an administrative articulation agreement that would enable the CTHSS to leverage existing financial and administrative systems in place at the State Department of Higher Education rather than duplicating services to serve our limited adult population of approximately 433 full-time adult students and 2,000 part-time apprentice students. Both parties have agreed to identify some potential hurdles that would have to be resolved before moving forward on such an agreement.

Additional meetings will be scheduled after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year.

#### Collaboration with the Department of Labor and the Office of Workforce Competiveness

Superintendent Ciccone made a presentation on November 30, 2011 to a Joint Meeting of the Education Committee, Labor Committee, and Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. She along with Commissioner Glenn Marshall from the Department of Labor and Commissioner Catherine Smith from DECD made individual presentations on the current linkages between the three (3) agencies and the need to further collaborate on the state's needs for an educated and highly skilled workforce to drive economic recovery. The report also provided the committees an update on the status of the district's continuing fiscal challenges in terms of position refills and access to legislatively approved bonding.

#### Bond Fund Update

The district received approval of a bond authorization of \$800,000 to enable the district to replace plant vehicles used for snow removal and other grounds maintenance work. The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) received approval of a bond authorization in excess of \$20 million for Capital

Equipment Purchase Funds. The Department of Education is scheduled to receive approximately \$2.4 million (from the \$20 million authorization) and the CTHSS will benefit both directly and indirectly. The CTHSS will directly receive approximately \$330,000 to enable us to purchase maintenance equipment such as lawn tractors/mowers, snow blowers, floor scrubbers/polishers etc. The CTHSS will also receive new technology equipment through the department's Bureau of Information Systems (BIS) that will be deployed in the administrative, business and guidance offices. As a result of the approval of the \$800,000 for the plant vehicles, the unallocated bond balance at this time is approximately \$1.4 million from our FY 2009 authorization (\$8 million) and approximately \$23 million from our FY 2012 authorization (\$28 million). We continue to submit monthly requests to access these unallocated funds in order to complete various infrastructure repairs and projects. A meeting with OPM will be held after the holidays to discuss the district bond situation and explore potential increases in the district's operating budget for plant repairs in lieu of the current practice of using bond funds for all plant repairs in excess of \$1,500 and given the state's need to limit debt financing costs.

#### School Lunch Update

The average revenue per operating day has increased by approximately 1.5% compared to a year ago. This is largely a result of continued increases in the number of students eligible for free/reduced meal benefits and higher levels of participation. As of November 30<sup>th</sup>, 46.6% (approx. 4,936) of the district's 10,600 students were determined eligible for benefits. The school lunch staff continues to explore opportunities to reduce food costs through direct communications with the state's prime contract vendors (i.e. SYSCO). Despite these efforts, as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, total school lunch operating expenses exceeded revenues/reimbursements by more than \$155,000. We continue discussions with the Office of Policy and Management regarding the financial performance of our school lunch and breakfast program.

#### Position Update

The Bureau of Fiscal Services has forwarded my proposed position refill plan to OPM. We are hopeful this will expedite the refilling of our vacant positions. As of pay period ending December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, the district continues to experience 72 full-time general fund vacancies.

#### IX. Other Matters

Mrs. Keavney-Maruca spoke of the district having a concrete data collection that supports the tech schools and follows the careers of graduates. Superintendent Ciccone stated that the technical high school system lacks staff to track graduates.

George Coleman spoke on Sheff as it relates to Prince Technical High School. He spoke of Prince Tech not meeting Sheff goals, the need for more integration and finding ways to work on racially balancing the school to meet Sheff goals.

Mr. Chaffin said that the school has worked tirelessly to get more suburban students to attend Prince. He spoke of the tremendous transportation challenges (length of travel time; lack of late buses for student athletics, clubs, etc.). He also spoke of the music production/recording trade and the tremendous opportunities for the students associated with that. He also touched on expanded recruiting sites; fairs; and summer programs for grades 6 and 7. He said there is interest out there – it's a matter of perception.

Committee members suggested that the district seek an effective public relations campaign and 'look outside the box and come up with radical ideas for recruitment' – parent engagement, different partnerships, morning academics/afternoon trades, focus groups, speak at homes and with the

community on the concept of what would it take to get your child to attend Prince Tech? What are the root causes?

A meeting will be scheduled with Mr. Coleman and CTHSS staff to discuss on ways to work to improve the Sheff goals.

X. Public Participation - None

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Minutes approved at the February 15, 2012 meeting.