

Connecticut State Board of Education
Connecticut Technical High School Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held on
February 15, 2012

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Connecticut Technical High School Committee (the "Committee") met on February 15, 2012, at Windham Technical High School, Willimantic, 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 James Chasse, CTHSS Consultant Marc Hussey John Murphy Heidi Balch Pamela Charland
Windham Technical High School	Kirk Murad, Principal Julie Paul, Office Assistant Luis Ortiz, Student Precious Baker, Student
State Vocational Federation of Teachers	Janis Hochadel, President Edward Leavy

I. Chairperson Vrabely called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Chairperson Vrabely welcomed everyone to the meeting. He acknowledged Mr. Murad, principal of Windham Tech and two Windham Tech students who were present for the meeting. All members present introduced themselves.

Jasmine Baker is a senior student in the health technology trade and has already been certified as a nursing assistant. Upon graduation, she plans to attend St. Joseph College to pursue a career in nursing. She would like to become an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN).

Luis Ortiz is a senior student in the architectural technologies trade. He currently participates in the Work Based Learning program (WBL), which allows him hands-on work in his trade. He intends to continue in the architectural field after graduating from Windham Tech.

II. Executive Session – None

III. Consideration of Minutes of December 21, 2011 CTHS Committee Meeting
Chairman Vrabely moved, Mrs. Hopkins-Staten seconded, that the Committee approved the minutes of the December 21, 2011 Connecticut Technical High School Committee meeting as amended.

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

Motion carried.

IV. Public Participation

There will be a new governance committee within the State Department of Education, consisting of four members that will be chaired by the governor. The committee will report to the superintendent. The CTHSS would like to see more funding for the technical schools and direct connection with different types of trades and the business community. The State Vocational Federation of Teachers (SVFT) encourages direct input by the Trade Technology Advisory Committee (TTAC) members. The goal of the State Department of Education is to enhance education in Connecticut, which would provide more job opportunities and help to keep careers in Connecticut. The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) approved four loans, which will benefit the state's needs for an educated and highly skilled workforce to aid economic recovery. There is a growing need for trade skills. However, it was noted that there is a need for blueprint reading to be taught in the technical schools.

V. Consent Agenda - None

VI. Items Requiring Action
Reauthorization of Trades

The Culinary Arts trade is up for reauthorization, along with Baking, Tourism, Hospitality and Guest Services Management, Fashion Merchandising and Entrepreneurship, Hairdressing, and Marketing, Management and Entrepreneurship. New collaboration efforts with the TTAC committee are on the ground and developing a qualified workforce pipeline. The trades are reviewed every year, trade by trade, school by school, to see how the trade is attracting and maintaining student interest and meeting labor/businesses projected needs. It was stated that the three most important skills, which should be the focus of all trades, are reading comprehension, critical thinking, and active listening and learning. It was requested that the trades be reviewed by CBIA as well.

Chairman Vrabely moved, Theresa Hopkins-Staten seconded, to accept the reauthorization of trades.

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

Motion carried.

VII. Items for Discussion

Chairman Vrabely initiated a lively discussion on the issue of trade selection and meeting the needs of Connecticut's businesses and industries. Improvement for the trade technologies system was discussed. Are the trade schools better off having two instructors for each shop? It was determined that it is dependent upon the number of students versus the number of instructors. Are the trades maximizing Adult Education? Developing a partnership with the community colleges is a vital piece for the growth of trades. The need for manufacturing jobs directly impacts the technical schools. Again, capacity issues and the budget determine the ability for growth in this trade.

Proposed for the CTHSS budget is a \$9.6 million reduction. This cut would create difficulty for trade growth. Specifically, the need for manufacturing skills is expanding in the business industry. If capacity and/or renovation needs are not met, the enrollment number would be the same, if not smaller. More options need to be reviewed and implemented to increase the interest of students in the manufacturing trade. It was stated that the trade schools' role should be able to steer the students and provide opportunities for the students to learn about all the trades in

order to choose the one to pursue. The exploratory phase in the technical schools plays a vital role in the students' decision. Students need to be enticed to excel and, most importantly, follow their passion. Instructors need to be passionate and use resources to encourage students' interest in a specific trade. The quality of instructors and lobbying for more space, more equipment and materials in the manufacturing technology would provide more opportunities and better preparation for students to work in the community. Principal Murad added that Windham Tech is currently number one in the district with the most students participating in the Work Based Learning program. Expanding adult learners to teach would supplement the classrooms and trades. Research shows bringing in trade veterans to the technical schools would increase students' interest in the manufacturing trade.

VIII. Report of the Superintendent

The Board of Education met on February 10, 2012 to discuss ideas to supplement the proposed \$9 million budget cut. The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) recommended reducing positions, including plant maintainers by 16. Superintendent Ciccone reported 36 positions would be held vacant. This would impact the capacity issue and would have a severe impact on enrollment. If the number of plant maintainers were reduced, it was questioned how the buildings would be adequately maintained. James Chasse reported the annualization savings for the \$9 million budget reduction in regard to building maintainers. There would be no savings for SEBAC, no raises in the next year, and the elimination of overtime. It would be difficult to identify more savings for the \$9 million cut. Principal Murad added that Windham Tech is an old building and the maintenance department is short staffed. If there are more building maintainer cuts, the building will not be maintained properly and eventually the existing maintainers will eventually get worn out and hurt. Discussion continued regarding the environmental effect this would have on the tech schools and how this would impact the safety of the schools. Assistant Superintendent Lombardi emphasized the need for advocates to raise alarm on this. Board members are advocates and need to make the Commissioner, Governor's office, the Task Force and OPM aware of the negative impact. It was suggested by Charles Jaskiewicz that the Board of Education members draw up a letter with a list of deficiencies seen as significant needs of the technical schools with a proposed plan of action and present it to the Commissioner. Theresa Hopkins-Staten stated she was not in favor of a letter, but rather a meeting. The CTHSS staff was asked to prepare a list of deficiencies and projects necessary in buildings, especially those unrenovated.

VIII. Other Matters

Admission Policy – Process

A preliminary explanation of the Admission Policy Process was begun, but tabled for another meeting due to the governor's visit.

X. Public Participation – None.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.