

Questions for Nominees to the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System Board

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January 30, 2025 | 2025-R-0039

Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) ([CGS §§ 10-95i, -95k & -95s](#))

[CTECS](#) operates 17 high schools, with an [enrollment](#) of more than 11,000 students, that offer a range of career and technical education programs in addition to the courses found at regular comprehensive high schools. It also operates two aviation mechanics and maintenance technician schools for adult learners (in [Hartford](#) and [Stratford](#)) and an education center for high school upperclassmen and adults (in [Bristol](#)). Through legislation, CTECS is now an independent state agency and is no longer part of the State Department of Education (SDE). The agency is led by an executive director, who is appointed by the governor.

The board advises the CTECS executive director and superintendent, the agency's educational head, on matters relating to vocational, technical, technological, and postsecondary education and training. Also, it must establish specific achievement goals for students at each grade level and measure the performance of each CTECS school. Every five years the board must adopt a long-range plan of CTECS's priorities and goals and submit the plan to the Education; Finance, Revenue and Bonding; and Appropriations committees. The law requires the board, every five years, to establish a schedule to evaluate and reauthorize the system's existing trade programs and consider adding new trade programs. The board must also maintain a rolling three-year capital improvement and equipment plan that must be annually submitted to the same three committees mentioned above.

In addition, the board must submit a biennial report to the Education Committee that includes an assessment of student outcomes and demographic information on CTECS applicants, enrolled students, and graduates.

Questions

1. CTECS became fully independent of SDE as of July 1, 2022. As a member of this relatively newly reconstituted board, are there particular challenges you expect to face as CTECS begins down its own path as an independent agency?
2. Why do you want to serve on the board? What will be your priorities and what to you hope to accomplish?
3. One of the board's duties is to evaluate and reauthorize the system's existing trade programs, do you believe there are programs that should be added? Are there some that should no longer be offered? How does the board coordinate the trade program offerings with the needs of the various industries seeking trained workers?
4. Another duty of the board's is to maintain a rolling three-year capital improvement plan and to annually submit this plan to the Education; Finance, Revenue and Bonding; and Appropriations committees. One project, the renovation of [Bullard-Havens Technical High School](#) in Bridgeport, has been authorized by the legislature, and then reauthorized several times as the project has changed in scope. Can you tell us about this project's progress?
5. When students graduate from CTECS, they also earn a Connecticut Technical Education certificate, which can be in the form of a state occupational license or an industry-recognized credential. What are some of the most successful licenses and credentials that are enabling the graduates to gain employment?
6. [Work-based learning](#) allows students using the skills they have learned at a technical high school to work for an employer and get paid during the student's trade instructional time. Are there more students seeking work-based learning opportunities than are currently available? What steps is CTECS taking to keep the program at full strength?
7. School districts all across the state are facing a teacher shortage and a shortage of other necessary staff. How is the system handling this? Is there a shortage of qualified staff for certain trades in particular?
8. Recently the SDE and the State Board of Education have launched an investigation into CTECS admissions policy regarding special education students. There is concern that CTECS is in violation of federal special education law regarding its policy for admissions and the education of these students. Are you familiar with the issue and do you see a role for the board in resolving it?

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