

## Questions for the Nominee for Executive Director of the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System

By: John D. Moran, Principal Analyst  
April 24, 2023 | 2023-R-0080

### Executive Director of the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) ([CGS §§ 10-95i, -95q, and -95r](#))

[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 ([Hartford](#) and [Stratford](#)) and an education center for high school upperclassmen and adults ([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 executive director (1) hires the superintendent of the system, (2) receives advice and recommendations from the CTECS board, and (3) is responsible for the operation and administration and financial accountability of CTECS in matters relating to the central office, system-wide management and other noneducational matters. Any person appointed to be executive director must have experience in educational systems.

### Questions

1. The law creating CTECS as an independent agency calls for a system executive director, the equivalent of a state department commissioner, and a superintendent, to serve as the chief educational position overseeing the schools and training programs. This also means that the

superintendent answers to the executive director, who is appointed by the governor. But since CTECS became an independent entity, you have been serving as both superintendent and the interim executive director. Has this been a challenge? Are there plans to hire a superintendent?

2. As of July 1, 2022, CTECS became fully independent of SDE. As the first executive director of this newly independent agency, are there particular challenges you are facing?
3. When you appeared before the Appropriations Committee last week, you noted there are approximately 100 teaching and administrative vacancies at CTECS and that vacancies for trade instructors are particularly hard to fill. Can you tell us how you hope to recruit more qualified teachers and instructors? Currently, how are you able to teach the various trades without the necessary instructors?
4. Almost every year, the CTECS system has students on waiting lists hoping for a spot. At the same time, we know there are many in the skilled workforce, whether at Electric Boat or Pratt and Whitney, who are expected to retire soon and add to the demand for these workers. Does CTECS have any plans to expand its capacity beyond the roughly 11,000 students it has today?
5. By law, the system must regularly evaluate and reauthorize its existing trade programs. Do you believe there are programs that should be added? Are there some that should no longer be offered? How does CTECS coordinate the trade program offerings with the needs of the various industries seeking trained workers?
6. CTECS also has the duty 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 over a period of years as the project has changed in scope. Another renovation project, [Windham Technical High School](#), was approved and then reauthorized twice, most recently two years ago. Can you give us a progress report on these projects?
7. 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 graduates to gain employment? Do you know what percentage of these graduates remain in Connecticut?
8. [Work-based learning](#) involves 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. Your 2020-2021 [annual report](#) shows that as of June 2021, there were 661 students involved in work-based learning through CTECS. Has the pandemic decreased the number of

opportunities for students in this program? 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 or even expand it?

9. In recent years, advocates for special education students have argued the CTECS application process has prevented many special education students from attending a CTECS high school. In 2021, the legislature changed the law to create a new planning and placement team process for special education students before the student enrolls in CTECS. Has this change led to an increased enrollment of special education students?
10. What are your long-range goals for CTECS?

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