

## Appropriations Committee Questions and Responses for March 3, 2026 Subcommittee Meeting

1. What role does CTECS play in the state manufacturing pipeline?

The Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) serves as a primary workforce development engine for the state’s manufacturing sector. Through industry-aligned technical programs, CTECS prepares high school students with entry-level skills, certifications, and hands-on experience that directly support Connecticut’s advanced manufacturing workforce needs.

CTECS schools feeding the Eastern Workforce Investment Board (EWIB)/Electric Boat (E.B.) manufacturing pipeline include:

- Grasso Technical High School in Groton
- Cheney Technical High School in Manchester
- Windham Technical High School in Willimantic
- Norwich Technical High School in Norwich
- Eli Whitney Technical High School in Hamden

These schools develop skilled, work-ready graduates who enter employment, apprenticeships, military service, or post-secondary education aligned to manufacturing and engineering pathways.

2. What programs does CTECS offer related to the pipeline? What locations are these programs offered at?

The following technical programs support Connecticut’s EWIB / E.B. manufacturing pipeline:

School	Program								
	Automotive Collision Repair	Automotive Technology	Carpentry	Diesel	Electrical	HVAC	Mechanical Design and Engineering Technology	Precision Machining Technology (Pilot year for direct employment to E.B. bypassing the EWIB/E.B. Pipeline)	Welding and Metal Fabrication (Direct employment to E.B. bypassing the EWIB/E.B. pipeline.)
Cheney	X	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Ellis	X	x	x		x			x	
Grasso	X	x			x		x		x
Norwich	X	x	x		x	x			
Vinal				x				x	
Whitney							x	x	
Windham	x	x			x	x		x	

### 3. Locations Where These Programs Are Offered

All programs are delivered within CTECS comprehensive technical high schools across eastern and central Connecticut, strategically located to support regional manufacturing employers.

Primary manufacturing pipeline contributors:

- Eastern CT: Grasso Tech in Groton, Norwich Tech in Norwich, Windham Tech in Willimantic
- Central CT: Cheney Tech in Manchester, Eli Whitney Tech in Hamden
- Vinal Tech in Middletown and Ellis Tech in Danielson (supporting programs such as Precision Machining, Diesel, Electrical, and Automotive)

### 4. Do you offer any after school programs?

The only evening program currently offered is welding offered at Grasso Technical High School. However, plans are currently underway to include an After School/Evening welding program at Cheney Tech this summer/fall.

### 5. How many students participate in these programs?

Student enrollment numbers vary by school and trade area. Collectively, these manufacturing-related programs serve hundreds of students annually across the CTECS system, contributing significantly to Connecticut's skilled trades workforce pipeline. On average CTECS has a total of 30 – 50 students signed to work at E.B.

### 6. Describe how this budget stabilizes special education costs?

This budget provides CTECS with personal services (PS) funding with which to hire approximately 25-35 special education paraeducators on its payroll. The need for paraprofessionals is driven by individualized educational plans (IEP) for each student. This year, the IEP-driven need for paraprofessionals has been roughly 80 per month. CREC, CTECS' third-party vendor, has been able to fill roughly 60% of this monthly demand with their hired workforce. As CTECS is able to increasingly staff its own roster of paraeducators, it should provide opportunities to more predictably meet demand for IEP-driven services.

The budget also provides operating expense (OE) funding that will help defray the cost of third-party special education services, a cost burden that had heretofore exceeded appropriated resources and required deficiency appropriations. This contractual expense for special educational services, which CTECS is required to provide, has been one of the main drivers of CTECS's operating deficiencies in recent years.

### 7. Will costs related to the CREC contract decrease as a result of the additional paraeducators? What will those decreases look like in the short term? The long term?

The paraeducators hired by CTECS should offset the need for paraprofessionals provided by CREC on a one-to-one basis in the future. However, to date, CREC has been unable to meet CTECS's full demand for paraeducators as driven by student IEPs, leaving the district to rely on other staff members, often paying for the additional duties or hiring certified substitute instructors to meet paraeducator demand. Therefore, it's possible that

paraprofessionals hired by CTECS would fill that needed capacity, and thus not result in a one-to-one offset of paraeducators as provided by CREC immediately.

Over the longer term, an increase in CTECS’s ability to hire its own paraeducators would result in a lesser reliance on third-party vendors for these services.

8. What is the long-term plan for shifting more special education services in-house? How many paraeducators does CTECS ultimately want to employ?

The Governor’s budget provides funding for CTECs to hire up to 35 additional paraeducators next fiscal year. Further transition of services will have to be considered in the context of future budget discussions, as it would require additional staffing resources and will depend on conditions in the market for paraeducators. Based on current enrollment, CTECs requires roughly 80 paraeducators. The exact figure will shift as special education enrollment levels shift.

9. Can you describe specifically what services CREC provides now, and what services CTECS anticipates CREC providing in the long term?

In addition to paraeducators, CREC hires Registered Behavioral Therapists, Occupational and Physical Therapists, and Nurses to serve CTECS’ students per their IEPs. We will continue to contract for these specialized services through CREC or other third-party providers in the future.

10. Can you provide a detailed breakout of your OE expenditures? Can you provide a detailed breakout of the FY 26 deficiency?

Please see below for a categorical accounting of CTECS’ projected FY26 OE expenditures (as of February, 2026). Please note that the sum of what has been spent/encumbered and what is projected for the balance of the fiscal year exceeds available funding by approximately \$6.9 million, thus defining CTECS’ projected operating expense deficiency.

Expense Category	Current Budget Allocated	Current YTD Spending/Encumbrance	Amt. Remaining	FY26 Projection	Amount Remaining
Utilities	\$7,988,101.52	\$7,824,651.96	\$163,449.56	\$3,175,348.04	(\$3,011,898.48)
Schools Discretionary	\$3,499,000.00	\$2,674,384.12	\$824,615.88	\$824,615.88	\$0.00
Facilities	\$3,250,000.00	\$2,590,778.46	\$659,221.54	\$1,909,221.54	(\$1,250,000.00)
Teaching and Learning	\$2,481,513.64	\$2,036,979.45	\$444,534.19	\$1,144,534.19	(\$700,000.00)
IT	\$2,340,000.00	\$2,290,005.52	\$49,994.48	\$1,378,605.77	(\$1,328,611.29)
School Lunch	\$1,623,480.00	\$1,623,480.00	\$0.00	(\$500,000.00)	\$500,000.00
Athletics	\$1,097,000.00	\$698,947.40	\$398,052.60	\$398,052.60	\$0.00
DESPP	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,100,000.00	(\$2,100,000.00)
CREC	\$4,312,410.24	\$4,312,410.24	\$0.00	\$3,659,241.12	(\$3,659,241.12)
Non-CREK Contracts	\$742,555.12	\$702,508.02	\$40,047.10	\$40,047.10	\$0.00
Unallocated	\$4,623,400.48	\$0.00	\$4,623,400.48	\$4,623,400.48	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$31,957,461.00</b>	<b>\$24,754,145.17</b>	<b>\$7,203,315.83</b>	<b>\$14,089,619.14</b>	<b>(\$6,886,303.31)</b>

11. Can you provide more detail on the adult education services CTECS currently provides, and how many students are enrolled?

Adult Learners (2025-2026)

CTECS operates two airframe mechanic and aircraft maintenance schools and a Tech Center that serve adult students in day time programs. There are approximately 100 adult students engaged in 2-year program aligned to FAA exams in airframe and power plant and 75 adult learners at Bristol Technical Education Center engaged in 7 courses over 1-2 years.

In addition, 7 schools provide adult education: Abbott, Bristol, Bullard Havens, Kaynor, Norwich, Prince, Whitney. There are currently 1,937 students taking more than 3400 courses.

Trade enrollment is as follows:

- Small Engine Automotive Technology 8
- Barbering 35
- Electrical 544
- Extension Student 670
- Hairdressing 16
- Heating and Cooling 270
- No Trade Selection 2
- Plumbing 362
- Precision Machining Technology 1
- Sheet Metal 29

12. Can you provide a detailed breakdown of what the additional adult education funding in the Governor's proposal will be used for? What locations will be impacted by this funding?

The Governor's budget provides \$500,000 in PS and \$500,000 in OE support to hire additional instructors to expand program capacity and resources for trade consumables and equipment as well as other supports for students in the programs. In particular, resources will be used to add slots or develop and support evening programs in HVAV, plumbing, electrical, welding and aircraft maintenance. CTECS will determine the locations for programming once final budget numbers are available but anticipates adding slots at minimum at the aero maintenance program at Brainard and Stratford airports, Bristol Tech, Eli Whitney in Hamden, Prince Tech in Hartford and Norwich Tech. Additionally, \$500,000 has been proposed to conduct a landscape analysis and plan to utilize federal Pell grant resources to support technical training at CTECS and other CT training providers and institutions of higher education.

13. What opportunities does CTECS believe exist to expand existing schools? To expand programming both for students who want a technical high school education, and students who are enrolled in a traditional public high school but would like to explore technical high school programs?

Given that CTECS' high school facilities are full with 11,700 students enrolled, we cannot expand our day time programming to meet additional demand. Therefore, we have been researching ways to leverage our infrastructure, industry partnerships, and expert instructors to expand our high demand technical training opportunities for interested high school students through afternoon and evening programming.

Our Bristol Tech model allows students to remain enrolled in their home high school for academics and attend CTECS in the afternoon or evening. CTECS current has 85 students enrolled in this program but could expand to additional high schools after school with resources dedicated to facilities, part-time instructors and additional trade consumables. Though dedicated to its own facility in Bristol, expansion of this model could utilize the existing high schools after hours. Initial planning has suggested that offering programming at Grasso Tech in Groton, Bullard Havens in Bridgeport, Platt in Milford, Cheney in Manchester could serve statewide needs for additional graduates in the trades aligned to regional industry needs. These programs would be offered to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, 4 days per week, over the course of 1-2 years. The graduates would earn their high school credits from their home districts while gaining credential hours toward certification, pre-apprenticeship or community college credit.

Additionally, CTECS can expand its programming for post-graduates through enrollment in these programs alongside the high school students and in our traditional adult programs. The Governor's proposed investment in adult education will start to expand these opportunities in the next fiscal year.

Afterschool and evening programs may also be good opportunities for skill building for students with disabilities who need transition programs after high school. These young adults can benefit from structured vocational training, supported skill development, and coordinated support services. CTECS can explore expanding opportunities for both its own high school students and those from other districts.

Further exploration is needed to identify the costs of these programs and available funding. Resources for these programs would need to supplement state general funds and could vary from fees paid by other districts, state and federal education or workforce development funds, employer or union sponsorships, or parent fees.

#### 14. What is CTECS doing to keep its programming up-to-date with evolving workforce needs in the state?

Per statute (4-124gg) each trade program must establish a committee (Program Advisory Committee—PAC) of local industry members and meet with them twice a year to ensure trade programming remains relevant and provides students with an employment network. Comprising 215 active school advisory committees that meet twice annually, the PACs bring together 1,077 industry partners, including both local small businesses and large corporations—to align curriculum with evolving regional industry needs. These collaborative efforts span 30 career pathways and 10 career clusters. In addition, the CTECS' Advisory Board reviews and reauthorizes trade programs on a 5-year cycle that considers changes in the industry and labor market as well as PAC input on needed programmatic changes. In addition to local PAC discussions, CTECS trade consultants have regular communication with industry associations and unions who provide input on needed skills and abilities of graduates. CTECS has a capital plan that includes investments in equipment to ensure programs have up-to-date equipment and materials.