CareerTEC Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, October 15, 2026
CareerTEC *Conference Room*
2037 W. Galena Ave.
Freeport, IL 61032

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CAREERTEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The meeting of the CareerTEC Board of Directors was conducted under the following format Thursday, October 15, 2026, at CareerTEC, Freeport, Illinois.

I. ROLL CALL

President Jenny Keffer presided over the meeting. Present and responded to roll call at 1:31 p.m.: Supt. Jenny Keffer, Dakota District; Supt. Shanna Rufener, Durand District; Supt. Thom Rude, Orangeville District; and Supt. Mike Schiffman, Pearl City District. Also in attendance were Brian Greene, CareerTEC Director; Dean Balbach, Recording Secretary; and Jody Ackerman, retiring Bookkeeper and co-secretary. Absent was Supt. Anna Alvarado, Freeport District; and Supt. Carl Carlson, Pecatonica District.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Schiffman to approve the agenda; seconded by Rude. All in favor by voice vote of aye responses.
Motion carried 4-0.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Rufener to approve the Sept. 10 open-session meeting minutes; seconded by Schiffman. All in favor by voice vote of aye responses.
Motion carried 4-0.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS / PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no communications or public comments.

V. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. **Audit Presentation by Benning Group:** Kyle Polhill from Benning Group provided an overview of our FY26 audit. A draft version of the audit was emailed to the Board. Mr. Polhill reported that it was a clean audit with no journal entries needed. Bookkeeper Jody Ackerman was commended for her continued good work.

B. **CTEI**: The FY27 State CTEI allocation is $301,316. CareerTEC has not yet received FY27 CTEI payments. The payment schedule anticipated $53,112 in back payments for July and August and an additional $39,394 for September.

C. **Perkins:** Jody and Dean have started making purchases with FY27 Federal Perkins, which works on a reimbursement model. We received a $50 payment on Sept. 18. Perkins Grant is $83,368.

D. **Culinary Arts Certifications:** On Sept. 18, all 25 of our Culinary Arts students took the Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) exam. In total, 23 out of 25 students passed the exam (92% overall pass rate). This is the highest pass rate for instructor Steve Konefes since he started at CareerTEC in August 2013. If they received this certification, students are more attractive job candidates, improving the likelihood of being hired or promoted. The license demonstrates that these students possess leadership potential and positions them for roles with higher levels of responsibility, such as supervisor or manager positions.

E. **Construction Trades Certifications:** Between Sept. 2-8, 10 of 11 Construction Trades 1 students passed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10-Hour General Industry Course on their first attempt (90.9%); the only student to not pass re-took the exam and passed on his second attempt. The only Construction Trades 2 student passed the OSHA 10-Hour Construction Course on his first attempt, thus, 100% of students earned an OSHA certification. Every student who successfully completes a CareerSafe OSHA 10-Hour course receives an official Department of Labor OSHA 10-Hour card, which is valid for life.

F. **CTE Budget Advocacy**: ISBE has opened its hearings for the FY28 budget. These hearings are a key opportunity to advocate for Career and Technical Education (CTE) and share how increased investment will directly benefit Illinois students and employers. Invest CTE, which is tied to the System Directors Leadership Council (SDLC), is making two funding requests: 1.) Urge ISBE to recommend a $20 million recurring increase, raising Career and Technical Education Programs from $59.3 million to $79.3 million. This would increase per CTE participant funding from $177 per participant to $275 per participant, and 2.) Support continued investment of $50 million in Area Career Center capital projects. These funds have engaged communities in developing, expanding, and modernizing career centers; continued investment will help more communities add capacity and student access. Invest CTE strongly encourages each EFE to submit at least one written comment and to invite everyone to do the same. According to Invest CTE, the more diverse and numerous the testimonies, the stronger the case for CTE funding. I have emailed all educators in our region the important links and a guide to submit testimony. The "ISBE Budget Testimony Guidance" document in the email can easily be shared and submitted by anyone willing to advocate for this critical funding. Attached to the email also is the CTE White Paper, which provides a detailed rationale and common message for the funding request. The written-only budget testimony deadline is 11:59 p.m., Nov. 5, 2026. Greene encouraged all the schools to submit a written comment.

G. **Seat Allocation Policy:** While attending a Region 2 system directors meeting last spring, Greene learned of a policy that he thought CareerTEC should implement. The Whiteside Area Career Center allocates seats in programs based on the three-year average of enrollment to the career center from each school. Currently, the CareerTEC Intergovernmental Agreement states that enrollment is based on "the Member District's pro rata portion of grades 11 and 12 total enrollment in Member Districts as of October 1 of the previous school year." Greene believes it's more equitable to look at a three-year average of districts attending CareerTEC than simply looking at school enrollments.

H. **2027-2028 Course Catalog:** Freeport High School is moving its registration period from the spring to the fall and asked CareerTEC to push up its normal course catalog approval period. Notable changes for 2027-28 include …
- **Agricultural Science and Industry Capstone:** Changed Crop Science to Plant Science with new description. Students would still have capability to earn up to 14 dual credits after one year of class.
- **Computer Science and Information Systems, Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Industrial Manufacturing:** Changes to HCC fees.
- **Early Childhood Education:** Added PM section this year and plan to do same in SY28, assuming at least 20 students apply.
- **Health Occupations Youth Apprenticeship I:** Dual credits decreased from 8 to 7 credits for successfully completing the CNA theory and clinical training, beginning Jan 1, 2027. We will register our students with HCC in November to assure the possibility of 8 credits earned.
- **NJROTC:** While no changes are listed in our course catalog, Freeport has reported a decline in NJROTC enrollment and may be forced to drop the program unless it sees increases in order to offset expense of two instructors.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Motion to Approve Routine Items

Motion was made by Rude to approve the September bills and the destruction of closed-session recordings prior to April 1, 2025; seconded by Keffer. Roll call vote was taken with Keffer, Rufener, Schiffman and Rude all-in favor. **Motion carried 4-0.**

VII. CLOSED SESSION:

Motion made by Rude to go into closed session and seconded by Rufener All in favor with voice approval. **Motion carried 4-0.**

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of FY26 Audit Motion made by Schiffman and seconded by Rufener to approve the FY26 Audit, as presented by Mr. Polhill. Approval contingent upon FSD's Mark Bertolozzi's draft audit approval. Roll call vote was taken with Keffer, Rufener, Schiffman, Rude in favor.

Motion carried 4-0.

B. Approval of 2027-2028 CareerTEC Course Catalog
Motion made by Rude to approve the 2027-2028 CareerTEC Course Catalog; seconded by Keffer. Roll call vote was taken with Keffer, Rufener, Schiffman, Rude in favor. **Motion carried 4-0.**

C. Approval of New Authorized Agent for IMRF
Motion made by Rufener and seconded by Rude to approve Dean Balbach as CareerTEC's Authorized Agent for IMRF and he is given the authority to petition and/or vote on behalf of CareerTEC. Roll call vote was taken with Keffer, Rufener, Schiffman, Rude in favor. **Motion carried 4-0.**

Items D & E were combined into one action.

D. First reading of Proposed Changes to Student Allocation Policy

E. Approval to Reschedule Nov. 5 meeting to Nov. 12, 2026
Motion made by Rude and seconded by Rufener. All in favor by voice vote. **Motion carried 4-0.**

F. Approval of Closed Session Items: None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT
Next meeting will be Nov. 12. Motion was made by Rude to adjourn at 2:38 p.m. All in favor by voice vote. **Motion carried 4-0.**

Jenny Keffer

Jenny Keffer, Board President

Dean Balbach, Recording Secretary

Jody Ackerman
CO - Recording Secretary.