

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the**  
**STATE BOARD OF CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION**  
**HELD AT THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CAREERTECH,**  
**1500 WEST SEVENTH AVENUE,**  
**STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA**

**September 29, 2025**

The State Board of Career and Technology Education began its special meeting at 2:01 p.m. Monday, September 29, 2025, at the Oklahoma Department of CareerTech, 1500 West Seventh Avenue, Stillwater, OK, and the meeting was also streamed on YouTube. Notice was properly given, and the final agenda was posted at 1:06 p.m. on September 25, 2025, in accordance with 25 O.S. § 311(9).

Members of the State Board of Career and Technology Education present and all appeared in person:

- Mr. Brent Haken, state director, ex-officio nonvoting member
- Mr. Ryan Deatherage, Kingfisher
- Mr. Peter Dillingham, Enid
- Mr. Randy Gilbert, Tecumseh
- Mr. Leonard McCullough, Tulsa
- Mr. Rob Seeman, Morris

Members of the State Board of Career and Technology Education who were absent:

- Mr. Ryan Walters, state superintendent of public instruction and chair of the board
- Mr. Zachary Archer, Hammon
- Mr. Michael Brown, Lawton
- Ms. Shaelynn Haning, Tulsa

Attendees from the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education and other guests:

See Attachment A.

**1.01 CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Mr. Brent Haken called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m., and Ms. Ashley Rink called the roll and ascertained there was a quorum.

**1.02 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, SALUTE TO THE OKLAHOMA STATE FLAG  
AND A MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Led by Mr. Brent Haken.

### **1.03 OPENING COMMENTS**

State Director Brent Haken welcomed attendees and thanked the board for attending the special meeting. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to finalize the agency's appropriations request prior to the Oct. 1 statutory deadline.

No action was taken.

### **1.04 DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

State Director Brent Haken recognized three guests who introduced themselves as students completing hours for their master's programs. He provided updates on recent activities:

- Attendance at the National Council of Local Administrators Conference in St. Louis, which offered valuable professional development for CareerTech administrators.
- A virtual health care career expo coordinated by the health science education division, CareerTech's media team and the Oklahoma Hospital Association. Approximately 1,700 students participated statewide.
- A tour of Great Plains Technology Center and the FISTA facility, highlighting the positive impact of CareerTech programs on workforce development and job creation.
- The Oklahoma CareerTech Foundation's recent distribution of \$99,000 in Otha Grimes scholarships.

Director Haken also announced that the November board meeting at Mid-Del Technology Center, home of the Tinker Tech program that provides exclusive training for Tinker Air Force Base personnel. Board members planning to participate in the tour following the meeting will need to complete the required clearance process in advance.

No action was taken.

### **1.05 MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 21, 2025, REGULAR MEETING**

A motion was made by Mr. Peter Dillingham and seconded by Mr. Leonard McCullough to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2025, regular meeting.

Voting Results:

- Mr. Rob Seeman, yes
- Mr. Leonard McCullough, yes
- Mr. Randy Gilbert, yes
- Mr. Peter Dillingham, yes
- Mr. Ryan Deatherage, yes

Motion carried.

## **2. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION**

### **2.01 Discussion and First Reading of the FY26 CareerTech Business Plan – Mr. Russell Ray, Director of Communications.**

Mr. Russell Ray presented the draft FY26 CareerTech business plan and highlighted major updates, including record-breaking CareerTech student organization membership, which has increased for the fourth consecutive year to 123,000 members, a 14% growth over last year. He noted that TSA and FCCLA led the growth with 38% and 15% increases, respectively.

Mr. Ray reviewed key data showing that CareerTech students earned 34,771 industry certifications in FY24, compared to 38,290 higher education diplomas. He emphasized the affordability of CareerTech training, noting an average cost of \$15.34 per certification versus \$16,000 in student debt for higher education degrees.

He shared several highlights from the plan:

- A partnership between Caddo-Kiowa Technology Center and Western Farmers Electric Co-op to deliver 33 customized training sessions for 570 employees
- Recent *CareerTech Champion* stories showcasing the success of Oklahoma CareerTech graduates, including Kaitlyn Kirksey (FCCLA), Tyler Roberds (Green Country Technology Center/BPA) and Elizabeth Worley (Western Technology Center)
- A recent editorial collaboration between Director Haken and the communications division, published on the front page of the *Tulsa World*, highlighting the value and success of Oklahoma's CareerTech system

Mr. Ray also reported that the CareerTech website was recently recognized by the Office of Management and Enterprise Services as the best among all state agencies for branding consistency, content, and usability, with approximately 300,000 monthly page views. He credited web manager Karen Hart and the agency's content authors for their work maintaining the site.

Board members commended Mr. Ray and his team for their efforts in promoting CareerTech's achievements statewide.

No action was taken.

## **3. MANAGEMENT ACTION ITEMS**

### **3.01 Discussion and Possible Action on the FY27 Appropriations Request – Mr. Brent Haken, State Director of Career and Technology Education.**

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Mr. Brent Haken presented the draft FY27 appropriations request, noting that the proposal is intentionally bold to address system growth. He stated that CareerTech represents approximately 3% of the combined education budget (higher education, common education and CareerTech) and reviewed each major component of the request:

- **Flex Benefit Allowance:** \$1.3 million to meet statutory requirements and cover growth in staffing and related health insurance costs
- **Workforce Training:** \$31,650,000 requested to support enrollment growth (target of ~40,000 full-time students within two years) and continued scaling of full-time training capacity. Last year's figure was \$41,650,000 with a \$10 million appropriation increase received
- **K–12 CareerTech Program Support:** Proposed expansion of program support, including supplemental 411 funding (\$1,000-\$1,500 increase per teacher tied to performance/reporting) and 412 program support; estimated total additional need of \$5.5 million
- **Technology Center Expansion Incentive (one-time):** Recommended increase from \$5 million to \$10 million to help non-served communities join tech center districts and accelerate program startup. Historical data on prior outcomes will be provided to the board
- **Career Exploration (staffing/regional outreach):** Proposed increase from \$15.5 million to \$20 million and removal of the “one-time” designation to establish regional staff/coordination, expand ICAP/early career exposure for grades 6–12 and strengthen school-tech center partnerships
- **Apprenticeships:** Not currently a separate line item; plan to fund apprenticeship coordinators at each tech center (~\$3 million) and additional supports (~\$1.5 million) for a total potential investment of \$4.5 million; funding may be supplemented via grants or workforce training allocations

Board members discussed filling geographic “white spaces,” mentorship and employer engagement, sustainability of one-time investments, and the importance of measurable outcomes. Mr. Haken noted the communications and outreach benefits (awareness, website recognition, champion stories) and committed to providing supporting data to staff the legislative presentations and hearings.

Action:

Mr. Ryan Deatherage moved to approve the FY27 appropriations request with the following amendments: increase the Technology Center Expansion Incentive to \$10,000,000 (one-time) and increase Career Exploration to \$20,000,000 (remove one-time designation). Mr. Randy Gilbert seconded the motion.

Voting Results:



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Mr. Ryan Deatherage, yes  
Mr. Peter Dillingham, yes  
Mr. Randy Gilbert, yes  
Mr. Leonard McCullough, yes  
Mr. Rob Secman, yes

Motion carried.

Mr. Haken stated staff will finalize the request for submission; present the proposal to the House, Senate and governor's office; provide supporting data; and notify the board of upcoming live-streamed hearings.

**3.02 Update and Possible Action on FY26 Lottery Grant Awards (Technology Centers) – Ms. Cori Gray, Director of Student Success.**

Ms. Cori Gray presented an update on the FY26 lottery grant awards for technology centers. She explained that CareerTech has managed lottery grants for nearly two decades and traditionally paid out grants in arrears. This practice arose from initial funding shortfalls in 2006 and 2007, which demonstrated the need to ensure funds were available before allocation. Since 2007, CareerTech has experienced a steady flow of lottery grant income.

Ms. Gray described a proposed change from the arrears format to a real-time allocation process. This approach would allow funds to be distributed more quickly and efficiently. She noted that an additional \$1.6 million is available for distribution to technology centers immediately.

She reviewed the current competitive grant process and the proposals submitted in the prior spring that were not funded. Seventeen proposals totaling \$50,000 each remain unfunded. Ms. Gray noted that several technology centers have committed to providing matching funds to cover the requested amounts.

Board members discussed the benefits of moving to a real-time funding cycle, including providing technology centers additional time to plan and adjust for cost changes, and ensuring that funds are used promptly rather than remaining idle.

**Action:**

A motion was made by Mr. Leonard McCullough to approve the FY26 lottery grant awards for technology centers using the proposed real-time allocation process. The motion was seconded by Mr. Randy Gilbert.

**Voting Results:**

Mr. Rob Seeman, yes  
Mr. Leonard McCullough, yes  
Mr. Randy Gilbert, yes  
Mr. Peter Dillingham, yes  
Mr. Ryan Deatherage, yes

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Motion carried.

Ms. Gray stated that staff will continue to work on the K–12 side of lottery grants and will present recommendations for additional awards once the allocation process is finalized.

**3.03 Update Discussion and Possible Action to Enter Executive Session pursuant to Authority: 25 O.S. 2021, § 307 (B)(1) for the purpose of discussing the employment, hiring, or appointment of an individual salaried public employee for the position of director of school accountability, including but not limited to compensation, job duties and performance expectations – Mr. Brent Haken, State Director of Career and Technology Education.**

- a) **Vote to Enter Executive Session.**
- b) **Executive Session pursuant to 25 O.S. 2021, § 307 (B)(1).**
- c) **Vote to Acknowledge Return to Open Session.**
- d) **Discussion and Action regarding matters, including those discussed in executive session, including but not limited to, the employment, hiring, or appointment of an individual salaried public employee for the position of director of school accountability.**

Mr. Haken presented the agenda item regarding the employment, hiring or appointment of an individual salaried public employee for the position of director of school accountability, including compensation, job duties, and performance expectations. He informed the board members that they could choose to enter executive session pursuant to 25 O.S. 2021, § 307(B)(1), or discuss the matter in open session. The board elected to continue discussion in open session.

Mr. Haken recommended appointing Mr. Brent Meek, currently serving as performance auditor, to the position of director of school accountability. He explained that Mr. Meek would assume responsibilities related to school accreditation and accountability, including areas the agency plans to expand, such as oversight of K-12 school calendars and other school accountability processes. Mr. Haken noted that Mr. Meek would take on these duties in addition to his current role and outlined the proposed payband 17 for the position.

A motion was made by Mr. Peter Dillingham to approve the appointment of Mr. Brent Meek as director of school accountability at payband 17. The motion was seconded by Mr. Randy Gilbert.

**Voting Results:**

Mr. Ryan Deatherage, yes

Mr. Peter Dillingham, yes

Mr. Randy Gilbert, yes

Mr. Leonard McCullough, yes

Mr. Rob Seeman, yes

Motion carried.

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Mr. Haken confirmed that Mr. Meek's current position would not be backfilled at this time.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Mr. Ryan Deatherage, yes  
Mr. Peter Dillingham, yes  
Mr. Randy Gilbert, yes  
Mr. Leonard McCullough, yes  
Mr. Rob Seeman, yes

Motion carried.

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Career and Technology Education will be held Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at The Oklahoma State Department of Education Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

A copy of the minutes is on file at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.



Lindel Fields, State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction and Chair of the Board



Ashley Rink, Executive Assistant  
to the CareerTech State Director and  
Secretary of the CareerTech Board

