

Mr. Nicastro,

As a veteran manufacturing teacher at Bristol T.E.C., I agreed wholeheartedly with many of the statements you made in your March 7<sup>th</sup> article. The need for the type of skilled tradesman our system produces has never been greater. As noted in the article, “the lack of young people who see a career in manufacturing as a viable future” is an enormous obstacle to the long-term stability of Connecticut’s economy. Bristol T.E.C is one of the CTHSS schools that address that concern.

Your comments make your conclusion that the CTHSS schools would better be run by the local Boards of Education difficult to understand. Yes, we have struggled to get adequate funding from the State. However, as you noted, “local or regional school districts that will inherit a VoTech school will have to find a way to absorb the cost.” It is very unlikely that Bristol – or Hamden, or Ansonia, or any of the towns that “inherit” a school – will have the necessary funds to support not only students from their own towns, but the 20 or so sending towns that feed each school. What they will assuredly not have is the experience of running true technical and education. They will not be able to share the expertise from school to school that our current system fosters. They will not be able to have the technical consultants that facilitate curriculum alignment, professional development, or common assessments. Inevitably, these schools will devolve into industrial arts programs that are little better than what the local schools provide. True technical-vocational education will end as we know it in the state.

You correctly identified the need for technical education, and discussed some of the problems we have faced. However, the solution you accept will only make the problems worse. We need the State to support the CTHSS, not disband it.

Ben Russell

Bristol T.E.C.