



PA House of Representatives
Republican Policy Committee

414, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 260-6144

Rep. Joshua D. Kail
Chairman

PA House Republican Policy Committee Hearing
“Creating Educational Pipelines to Prosperity”

September 19, 2023, at 10 a.m.

Wallenpaupack High School
2552 US-6
Hawley, PA 18428

- 10:00 a.m. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance
- The Potential Panel**
- 10:10 a.m. Mary Beth Wood
Executive Director, Wayne Economic Development Corporation
- 10:15 a.m. Joann Hudak, Ed.D.
Chairperson of the Board, Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance
- 10:20 a.m. Questions for The Potential Panel
- The Path Panel**
- 10:50 a.m. Tony Seiwel
Business Manager, Laborers’ International Union of North America (LiUNA)
- 10:55 a.m. Keith Gunuskey
Superintendent, Wallenpaupack Area School District
- 11:00 a.m. Questions for The Path Panel
- 11:30 a.m. Closing Comments

Mary Beth Wood
Executive Director
Wayne Economic Development Corporation (WEDCO)
mbw@wedcorp.org, 570-253-2537

Chairman Kail, Representative Adams, and members of the Policy Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to make comments on the critical issue of Career and Technical Education, adult training, and workforce development. I testify today as a member of the economic development community and as a person deeply involved in workforce development efforts in Wayne County.

Just as we need enabling infrastructure to grow our communities - such a roadways, utilities, and industrial sites - we need educational infrastructure to address the “people side of economic development.” Job creation is a measure of success in economic development – jobs are filled by people. In Wayne County, we take the approach that workforce development is economic development.

In 2005, Wayne Economic Development Corporation (WEDCO) spearheaded the formation of Workforce Wayne, now known as the Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance, a state designated Community Education Council. At that time, WEDCO had started development of the Sterling Business & Technology Park, which is projected to create 1,200 jobs at full build out. Wayne County had no chartered CareerLink®, no Career and Technical Center, and no Community College, in fact, little way to connect education to business and economic growth activities. There was an immediate recognition that the lack of a CTC was a disadvantage to our students, businesses, and economic development efforts. Nearly 20 years later, a brick-and-mortar CTC has still not been realized, although significant progress has been made in building relationships with our businesses and educational institutions.

A discussion on Career & Technical Education is timely. The Unemployment Rate for Wayne County, Pennsylvania, and the nation stands at 3.5% - essentially full employment. This is a concern when we consider the development pressures brought on by the response to the pandemic. As the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority spearheads the distribution of BEAD funds, there is an acknowledged shortage of consultants and fiber engineering firms to design and expand networks."A “Workforce and Talent Management Study” by The President’s National Infrastructure Advisory Council, which examines the challenges facing the critical infrastructure workforce as it relates to the IJJA, recommends “reshaping cultural perceptions of technical careers...” A recent housing assessment by Wayne County shows the county has a significant housing shortage – a situation felt throughout the region. Our construction companies and contractors need trained employees to meet their current retention needs and to respond to the needs within our society. Yet Wayne and Pike are not able to contribute adequately due to the lack of a CTC.

In preparation for this hearing, I spoke with two of our premier manufacturers - Sutphen East Corporation and Boyce Products, Ltd. Sutphen East Corporation is an affiliate of Sutphen, the oldest continuously owned and operated fire apparatus manufacturer in the United States. Sutphen East specializes in pumpers and tankers and their fire trucks are found throughout the nation. The company has 72 employees and recently expanded their Wayne County plant because of high sales volume. Boyce Products Ltd. employs 34 and is a custom contract furniture & fabrication company that specializes in integrating technology with the highest level of craftsmanship. If you are watching a CNN news program, most likely the news set in the background was produced in Wayne County, Pennsylvania. Both manufacturers are seeking welders and metal fabricators, machine operators, and finishers –

occupations that are also on the Pocono Counties High Priority Occupation list. Both companies advocate for CTC training. Student skill development and industry certifications are obvious advantages. Both, however, stressed the importance of local education – not requiring an individual to leave his or her community to receive training.

Wayne and Pike have Industry Profiles that are typical of the Pocono Counties, that is higher employment in service areas, such as Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Accommodation and Food Services. Our Stourbridge Project Business Incubator and Sterling Business & Technology Park are economic development projects that were specifically built to alter our Industry Profile by attracting quality jobs in under-represented industries, such as Professional and Technical Services, Manufacturing, and Warehousing and Transportation.

For example, the Commonwealth as a whole averages 6.7% of its employment in the Professional & Technical Services industry. No county within the 7-county NEPA Alliance region comes even close to that employment percentage – in fact, we average about one-third of the State's percentage. Yet as a region, the wage for this sector averages over \$67,000, which is substantially higher than the Average Wage for all industries. Growth in this industry would be supported by a CTC.

Likewise, the addition of 300 jobs in the Manufacturing sector would raise Wayne County's employment percentage in that industry from 4.2% to 6%, much closer to the State's 9.7%. If wages also rose to match the region's average wage for Manufacturing, over \$30 million would be added to our economy just in wages alone. WEDCO currently has four projects in various stages of development within the Sterling Business & Technology Park that are projected to create over 300 jobs. As they move forward, we will most certainly work extensively with our workforce partners to identify and engage employees. It will be critical that we identify the skills necessary for these new employment opportunities and relate this to our educators.

To achieve our economic development goals, we need people. From the time of Wayne County's peak employment in 2008, just prior to the Great Recession, through the pandemic, Wayne experienced a 12.5% decrease in our Civilian Labor Force. Recent data published by the US Economic Development Administration shows all of Wayne County as being distressed as it relates to the Prime Age Employment Gap—those aged 25 to 54 who are not engaged in the labor force. Economic developers, educators, workforce developers, and government must work together to identify the social determinants of labor market participation – childcare, housing, recovery and reentry programs, and educational barriers. The fact that Wayne County has no CTC, no community college, and no four-year degree granting institution affects all aspects of job retention, job attraction, business vitality, and personal growth and fulfillment. Today's discussion is extremely critical, it is timely, and we ask all for your support in helping to address our educational and workforce development challenges.

Joann Hudak, Ed.D.
Chairperson of the Board, Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance

The Challenge

Most communities in Pennsylvania, including the Northeast Region, and across the nation are challenged by having many young adults who are not fully prepared for the demands of postsecondary education and training, skilled employment, and civic participation.

In addition, existing adult workers may not have the resources to keep up with the education and training demands of a changing workforce. As a result, individuals, families, educators, employers, and the community are experiencing unemployment and underemployment, skill gaps in the workforce, slow economic growth, and low college completion rates. A widespread problem for our local employers is they are unable to find workers who 1) want to work; and 2) have both the soft and technical skills needed for employment.

- **Building a Sense of Urgency: Workforce and Education Challenges**
- **The Skills Gap**
- **Pennsylvania's Middle Skills Jobs**
- **How high-quality career and technical education programs can create pipelines of students to in demand/high priority occupations.**
- **The development of high-quality adult careers and technical programs. Currently there are no technical training providers/facilities in Pike and Wayne counties for adults either entering the workforce or seeking to gain skills needed in the current workforce.**

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND CAREER TECH/ADULT EDUCATION, AND LABOR PARTNERSHIP

HOUSE GOP POLICY HEARING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

WALLENPAUPACK AREA HIGH SCHOOL



CAREER AND TECH CENTER FACTS

- Wayne and Pike Counties are the only two counties in Pennsylvania that do not have a CTC
- Delaware Valley, Wallenpaupack, Wayne Highlands, Western Wayne petitioned the state in 1970 and received approval for a Wayne/Pike CTC
- Planning meetings occurred in 2004, 2009, 2014 to build a CTC
- The four schools function as comprehensive high schools
- Participation in our CTE programs are strong



CURRENT CTE PROGRAMS

- **Delaware Valley:** Automotive, Building Trades, Culinary Arts, Diversified Occupations, Early Childhood, Electrical, Healthcare Occupations, Marketing
- **Wallenpaupack Area:** Automotive, Building Trades, Health Assisting, Institutional Food Workers (Culinary Arts), Engineering, Childcare, Homeland Security, Rehabilitation Aide (ESSM)
- **Wayne Highlands:** Carpentry, Health Professions, Agriculture, Diversified Occupations
- **Western Wayne (Pathways):** Automotive, Building and Manufacturing, Construction Trades, Engineering, Computer Programming, Precision Products (Welding)



JUSTIFICATION FOR A NEW CTC

- Opportunity
- Our Districts are at capacity with space and do not have the room to expand current programs
- Keep home district connection
- Adult education





PLAN FOR THE WAYNE/PIKE CTC

- CTC as an independent school as outlined in JOC
- In-kind support
- Main campus and three prospective satellite campuses
- New program capabilities:
 - Computer Programming
 - Aviation
 - Diesel Mechanic
 - Small Engine Repair
 - Welding
 - K-12 Education
 - Logistics, Materials and Supply Chain Management
 - HVAC





CTC-BUILDING SIZE AND ESTIMATED COST

- 70,000 sq ft. CTC
- \$40,000,000
- Optional: \$10,000,000 for land acquisition and site prep





GOALS OF THE WAYNE/PIKE CTC

- Highly trained, skilled workforce
- Adult learning and career education
- Support HPO of Northeast Pa
- Enhance student achievement in fiscally responsible manner
- Every student can call the Wayne/Pike CTC their home



Wayne/Pike Career and Technical Center

Overview

Of the 67 counties comprising Pennsylvania, Wayne, and Pike Counties are the only two counties in the state that do not have a Career and Technical Center available for their students and community. It is without question that this is a detriment to the entire Pocono Counties region. The lack of adequate funding and years of planning and preparation to build a CTC in Wayne and Pike Counties has yet to be realized. The need for a CTC is evident throughout both counties as businesses, governments, and economic development organizations have partnered to advance the workforce. There is recognition that today's skill-based economy demands technical training, and there is a will within the communities of Wayne and Pike Counties to address this demand at the highest level. We must explore the feasibility of building a facility to adequately prepare our students for future employment and for the Northern Poconos to remain competitive.

History

The school districts of Wallenpaupack Area, Wayne Highlands, Western Wayne, and Delaware Valley petitioned the State of Pennsylvania in 1970 to permit the building of the Wayne/Pike CTC. Many of the exact needs for career and technical careers and development persist today. The significant barrier for students to access neighboring CTCs is the distance that students would have to be transported to neighboring counties. It is not feasible for the students, parents, or school districts.

Additional planning meetings occurred between the districts in 2004, 2009, and 2014. In 2009, the Districts invited WEDCO (Wayne Economic Development Corporation) to join this initiative. Feasibility studies and interest inventories were completed, prospective site locations were evaluated, and implementation phases were outlined. However, with a lack of funding, groundbreaking was never started.

Current Programs and Processes

Without the benefit of a CTC, all four districts have worked within their financial limitations to create an environment where some students can access career and technical programs. For the 2022-2023 school year, the following programs are offered within each district:

Current Approved CTE Programs:

Delaware Valley: Automotive, Building Trades, Culinary Arts, Diversified Occupations, Early Childhood, Electrical, Healthcare Occupations, Marketing

Wallenpaupack Area: Automotive, Building Trades, Health Assisting, Institutional Food Workers (Culinary Arts), Engineering, Childcare, Homeland Security, Rehabilitation Aide (ESSM)

Wayne Highlands: Carpentry, Health Professions, Agriculture, Diversified Occupations

Western Wayne (Pathways): Automotive, Building and Manufacturing, Construction Trades, Engineering, Computer Programming, Precision Products (Welding)

Since there is no CTC, programs are unnecessarily duplicated. Consolidating programs would create additional programs, thus incorporating more students and providing more opportunities.

Over the last few years, to expose students to programs in each of the districts, students were offered the opportunity to join a CTE program in neighboring Districts. Although a terrific idea for a short-term fix, only a handful of students have chosen to take advantage of this offering. In researching why students are not pursuing the option, the answer is the same for all students, "no one wants to give up their school and their friends to join a neighboring district." A CTC would solve this issue as students could attend their home district for half of the day and then report to the CTC for their specific program.

Plan Moving Forward-Location(s)

A site analysis conducted in 2009 identified a primary location that would be most feasible to build a CTC. This site is a prime location with utilities in place, specified roads for ingress and egress, and additional space for future expansion. The Wallenpaupack Area School District owns the land, and the parcel is adjacent to the Wallenpaupack Area North Primary School. The Wallenpaupack Area School District Board of Directors is willing to provide this land as an in-kind donation/support to make the CTC a reality. One potential conflict with the location of this site is the fact that it would be built on Wallenpaupack property, next to a Wallenpaupack school building. It is mission critical that the Wayne/Pike CTC promotes neutrality to sending districts, students, and communities. Ideally, should funding resources be available, the districts are interested in locating the CTC in a more centrally located area. Most of the CTE programs will be held within the newly built CTC.

In addition to the CTC, three satellite campuses will be operated and maintained under the Wayne/Pike CTC umbrella. Delaware Valley High School would serve as one satellite campus as they have recently invested in their CTE programs. Wayne Highlands would be recognized as a second satellite campus as they would keep their Agriculture Program at their high school as they constructed a newer greenhouse a few years ago. Wallenpaupack High School would be a third satellite campus as recent upgrades to the Culinary Arts and Rehabilitation Aide facilities were completed.

Plan Moving Forward-Programs

With the consolidation of current programs, new programs would emerge. Those programs may include (but are not limited to): Computer Programming, Aviation, Diesel Mechanic, Small Engine Repair, Welding, K-12 Education, Logistics, Materials and Supply Chain Management, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC). The programs established would be available to the community to allow an adult learning program to function alongside the student program.

The projected enrollments in the two counties have decreased over the last several years, although the CTE programs within each school have remained steadfast. A state-of-the-art CTC with new CTE programs will attract more significant numbers of secondary and adult students.

Plan Moving Forward-Building Size and Estimated Cost

The approximate size of the new Wayne/Pike CTC is determined by the delivery model, along with the specified programs. It would range between 50,000 SF to 70,000 SF with an approximate cost of \$30,000,000 to \$40,000,000, including instructional equipment. Should land acquisition be a factor and site prep work be required, approximately \$10,000,000 in additional funding may be required.

Plan Moving Forward-General

Creating the Wayne/Pike CTC would reverberate in Wayne and Pike Counties. Businesses looking to relocate or expand to the Poconos could do so knowing that a workforce is ready to assist with their transition. The CTC would be utilized 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure the community can access the building. Having an accessible CTC for the adult learners of Wayne and Pike Counties will provide educational and career opportunities that are currently unavailable. Local colleges and technical schools have already expressed interest in hosting classes within a CTC for the residents. **Programs such as CDL driver certification, equipment operators, correction officers, nurses/nurse's aide and first responders (Firefighting, EMS, Law Enforcement) will be incorporated into the CTC to support the high priority occupations of Wayne and Pike Counties.**

The objectives of the CTC are to enhance student achievement and provide opportunities for our students in a fiscally responsible manner (affordable). CTE brings relevance to academic subjects, and CTE students frequently perform better on academic assessments when CTE teachers and academic teachers work together on curriculum integration. In addition, the National Center for Dropout Prevention at Clemson University has identified CTE as a necessary intervention that significantly reduces high school dropout rates.

It is with great intent that the Wayne/Pike CTC would be a building, or center, unto itself- not bound by one district over another. The building design will be unique, the colors will be impartial, and a new mascot will be chosen. The goal will be to ensure that every student, regardless of their district, can call the Wayne/Pike CTC their home.




Greg Frigoletto, Superintendent
Wayne Highlands School District



Brian Blaum, Superintendent
Delaware Valley School District



Matt Barrett, Superintendent
Western Wayne School District



Keith E. Gunuskey, Superintendent
Wallenpaupack Area School District