

Vocational Instructor

Local 4200A ~ AFT, AFTCT, & AFL-CIO

Volume MMXII Issue 4

"It Pays
To Be Taught
By a Vo-Tech
Teacher"

MAY 2012

Teacher Retirement System Deductions

At the end of March, the SVFT sent a letter to all SVFT members who are also members of the Teachers Retirement System (TRS). The letter caused some confusion that dates back to the beginning of the SEBAC agreement that was ratified in 2009. Effective July 1, 2009, all new employees (and effective 7/1/10 all employees with fewer than five years of service) were required to make a contribution of 3% of their biweekly salary toward retiree health care for a total of 10 years.

TRS members who were new employees after July 1, 2009, or who had fewer than five years of service as of July 1, 2010, should see a deduction code "OTRS" on their paystub. Originally in communications with Human Resources, the amount deducted under this code was identified as 1.25% as stated in the SVFT letter. It has since been correctly identified as 1.75%. The total TRS contributions - coded TRSRegPay - equal 7.25% of the annual salary: 6% retirement, 1.25% health care. The SEBAC 2011 agreement provides that State employees who are members of the TRS should receive credit for the 1.25% they already pay into TRS for retiree health care. Therefore, effective September 9, 2011 (check date October 7, 2011), State employees who are members of TRS only contribute 1.75% (3% minus 1.25%) of their compensation to the Retiree Health Fund, not 3%.

As pointed out in the recent email from Art Levin, please remember that the contribution rate is 7.25% of a member's annual salary, taken over 20 pay-periods, but the actual contribution rate from the bi-weekly salary is 9.461%. State employees are paid over 26.1 pay-periods a year, but the TRS contributions are taken out of only 20 paychecks. The last paycheck of the 2011-2012 school year from which TRS contributions will be taken is the check received on Thursday, June 14, 2012. It is important to note that regular TRS contributions are not taken during the summer, but the 1.75% contribution to the Retiree Health Fund will continue over the summer.

The SVFT apologizes for any confusion regarding this matter and thanks the Human Resources Department for helping to clarify the above. If you have any questions, please contact Art Levin at art.levin@ct.gov.

Collaboration Works

By Jan Hochadel

In a time of uncertainty in education, it is reassuring to know that there is still collaboration occurring to help teachers grow and improve. On Tuesday morning, April 17, the different stakeholders in TEAM – mentees, mentors, and district facilitators – met to audit the process within the CTHSS. Leading the discussions was Claudine Primack from the State Department of Education. Mentees made some very important insights as to how the process was successful, and improvements that could be made. They shared practices such as observing other teachers and discussing effective practices. Mentors discussed practices that worked for them, such as working together to research material that could be used in their reflective essay. Both mentors and mentees emphasized the importance of scheduled collaboration time, in accordance with TEAM requirements and the scheduling mandates. Beginning teachers who are provided this time tend to be more reflective and therefore are more successful. It was discouraging to see that the process broke down far more

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SVFT General Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 17, 2012

**@ Wilcox THS
Oregon Road, Meriden**

**6:30 pm
Tiered Lecture Hall**

Each school that has at least 5 members attend will receive additional funds for the end of the year celebration!

"Collaboration" Continued

often than it should. Too many schools do not schedule the time they are mandated to provide, and some mentors did not put in the hours they were assigned – and paid – to do. The meeting provided information from the people actually going through the process that could be used to strengthen the program in our system. Ms Primack will use the comments from the meeting to draft a letter to the Superintendent with recommendations for next year. The openness and honesty – true collaboration that involves listening to one another – will make TEAM a better program next year.

I have recently attended various PEAC meetings on the proposed State teacher evaluation framework. The two primary teachers' unions, AFT and CEA, have representatives, as well as administrators, superintendents, and Department of Education consultants. Everyone has his or her own perspective, and everyone has areas of expertise. Had I not attended, it is likely no one would have considered the unique concerns of our trades or adult education. When I expressed my concerns and suggestions, people were willing to listen and consider how the framework could be changed. Everyone knows that no one person could understand all the needs of every district, so we are willing to work together and compromise. The process is working. The only roadblock is the time required by legislation to complete the process.

The SVFT officers met on April 27 with the leadership of the AFSA, the administrators' union. We discussed a number of issues – the training and implementation of TeachScape, scheduling and contracts for TEAM, retiree coaches, and other items. If we did not always agree, we at least better understood each other's positions, and tried to work toward a mutual understanding. Because we listened to each other, we were able to find areas of agreement and better serve our members.

Collaboration can be difficult. It is hard to give up power, to set aside entrenched positions, to consider weaknesses in one's own opinions. But collaboration is vital to the growth and benefit of our system and thus the lives of our members. Our professional lives are better when we work in a healthy, thriving system. Teachers are used to collaborating; they work together in teams, they work with students, and they work with administrators. Teachers encourage students to work together on projects, and know how to foster collaborations. Teachers seek more collaboration – with teachers from other schools, with other teachers in different disciplines in their own buildings, and often with their union. Every day I see evidence that collaboration works.

Good Jobs-Green Jobs

By Pat Ciarleglio

On April 2, 2012, I had the privilege and honor of presenting at the Good Jobs-Green Jobs conference in Philadelphia along with two of my SVFT colleagues-- Jamie Lamitie, Norwich Tech Electrical Department Head, and Brent McCartney, Goodwin Tech Carpentry Instructor. We were part of a representative group of AFT members from across the country that was invited to present on providing training for the "green work force." America's new level of interest in all things "green" includes a greater desire to provide training and retraining to students and displaced workers in the field of green jobs. Through our presentation, we were able to highlight the green initiatives currently being implemented within our district, such as the nation's first e-house. People were amazed with the tremendous amount of skill and in-depth knowledge our fellow teachers bring to the students, along with our ability to do all the things we are doing in-house. We were also able to emphasize the things that make us unique as a technical high school system, such as being the only state funded technical high school system in the country.



The conference shined a spotlight on our dedicated and talented instructors who readily obtained the skills necessary to foster the green movement in our schools. The instructors were able to write curricula and designed an implementation plan for infusing the cross walks into the Carpentry, HVAC, Plumbing & Heating, and Electrical Curricula to help better prepare our students for the Green Workforce. One advantage that our system possesses is that we are able to design/construct, and implement all from within in-house. Our talented Architectural and CADD programs are able to design the stations for both the weatherization and building analysis labs used for the ARRA worker re-training program. These same programs are also able to utilize their LEED training in designing the E-House (Renewable/Energy conservation lab). The Carpentry departments are then able to construct the labs. Our Plumbing and Heating, along with our Electrical trades, are able to outfit the structures with renewable technologies. Finally, our HVAC programs are able to install the energy star rated appliances, including heat pumps that use environmentally friendly refrigerants. This cohesive system is what separates us from other institutions, and also gives our students the real world experience that business and industry requires. Other institutions were in awe of our capabilities. In particular, a community college from another state explained that when they installed their solar photovoltaic array, they had to subcontract it out for installation, at a great expense.

It was a great experience sharing information about our system and all the great things that we are doing. We were able to showcase the hard work of our students and staff in the green technology arena. I believe that everyone was impressed with the amount of technical skill my fellow colleagues possess, as well as their foresight and enthusiasm towards instructing the future generation of skilled trades people in our state. My fellow teachers who had the opportunity to attend this conference were extremely appreciative and gained a tremendous amount of in-depth knowledge on what districts across the country are doing, and we are eager to bring this knowledge back to Connecticut to implement some of these ideas into future designs. Hopefully, we will have the opportunity to present again in the future the details of our new generation e-houses as well as report on how we have incorporated the knowledge that we have learned at this conference in our designs.

The Best of the Best!

The SVFT congratulates the outstanding members who were elected their school's Teacher of the Year. It is an exceptional honor to be selected by colleagues as a professional who exemplifies excellence in education. On Tuesday, May 15, 2012, the SVFT Teacher of the Year Committee and the SVFT leadership will recognize the newly selected CTHSS Teachers of the Year at a banquet in their honor at the Baci Grill in Cromwell.

The Connecticut Technical High School System's Teacher of the Year will be selected from the candidates listed below. Central Office will be sending the application for the system's teacher of the year to each school's winner. All recipients are expected to complete the application for the honor of being selected to represent The Connecticut Technical High School System's Teacher of the Year for 2013. The completed applications will be screened at the SVFT office by SVFT Vice-President, Greg Beyer; 2012 CTHSS Teacher of the Year, Michelle Formato; and two CTHSS representatives.

Four finalists will be interviewed at Central Office in early June, and the CTHSS 2012 Teacher of the year will be announced soon after that. Good luck to all of our teachers of the year.

| School | Teacher | Subject Area |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Abbott | Maria Carpanzano | Hair/Cosmetology |
| Bristol | Steven Hanecak | Manufacturing |
| Bullard-Havens | Peter Carter | Science |
| Cheney | Laurie Rivers | English |
| Ellis | Krysty Frye | English |
| Goodwin | Mary Beth Kelliher Vendetti | ELL |
| Grasso | Tony Baker | Mathematics |
| Kaynor | Brian Griswold | Culinary Arts |
| Norwich | Mary Ellen Lunt | Mathematics |
| O'Brien | Susan Schryver | PE/Health |
| Platt | Eileen Barnes | Social Studies |
| Prince | Rubi Hinds | Fashion Merch. and Entrepreneurship |
| Vinal | Kim Morris | Special Education |
| Whitney | Cynthia Giancaspro | Science |
| Wilcox | Felicia Williams | Mathematics |
| Windham | Robert Motekaitis | Culinary Arts |
| Wolcott | Tamara Connors | English |

Entitlement Period for Lateral Transfer

The entitlement period for lateral transfers to vacancies is now open, but will only remain open until May 15th. Anyone interested in changing schools for next September should pay attention to the CTHSS website, cttech.org. Notification is also provided through the school email.

To be eligible to transfer, an SVFT member:

- Must have worked three full years of full-time employment in the system, or the pro-rated part-time equivalent of three years for 32-hour employees, 3 years and 66 days).
- Must have been in their current position for at least two years
- Does not have an unsatisfactory evaluation or be in the supervisory assistance segment of the evaluation process

Part-time employees who meet the first condition may transfer only if no eligible full-time employee seeks to transfer into that position. Promotions are not considered transfers, and thus an employee must fill out an application. For more details, review Article 11 of the contract.

Labor History: Danbury Hatter Case

By Ed Leavy

Recent news stories, from the rolling back of hard-won collective bargaining rights in states throughout the country to the string of pro-business and anti-labor Supreme Court decisions, make it feel like the combination of business, government, and the courts has never been more unified in defeating the interests of working men and women. History shows us that these forces have confronted labor for decades, and only the willingness of workers to support one another has allowed labor to move forward. The 1908 Supreme Court decision against the AFL in what became known as the Danbury Hatter's Case is an example of working people helping each other in the face of entrenched interests.

In 1902, the National Hatters of North America began efforts to unionize D.E. Lowe & Company. Despite their efforts, company owner Dietrich Lowe refused to even meet with union representatives. The workers went out on strike, and Lowe hired replacement workers. The Union went to Lowe's regular retailers and asked them not to carry Lowe's products. They also had the AFL list Lowe's on the "We Don't Patronize" page of the AFL newsletter. Lowe filed an injunction against the Union and the AFL for interfering with his business.

The Supreme Court ruled on the case in 1908 that the AFL's boycott was an illegal restraint of trade under the Sherman Act. Labor leaders were outraged. The strike and the boycott did not directly prevent Loewe's from doing business in the way the Sherman act had previously been understood to prohibit. The decision threatened to make all strikes illegal, crippling the one tactic labor had to create leverage in negotiations.

The news for the D.E. Lowe workers who had joined the union continued to get worse. Under the provisions of the Sherman Act, Lowe sued the workers for triple economic damages. The company even attached the individual bank accounts of the workers, and the courts supported the action. More than two hundred workers saw their homes threatened with foreclosure. Rather than let the workers face financial ruin, the AFL agreed to pay the damages by holding two "National Hatters Day," in which AFL members individually agreed to donate an hour's pay to the besieged workers. Danbury representatives to the CT General Assembly remember the anniversary of these days by wearing hats to the Legislative Office Building.

Though the case is over 100 years old, the details are eerily familiar. Workers take appropriate steps to address their working conditions. Companies unwilling to negotiate in good faith have their intractable positions defended by conservative courts. Union members join together to protect the members who are now vulnerable because of the just action they took. Then, as now, unions must be sure that in the struggle to move forward, we protect what we already have, and no one is left behind as a casualty of the struggle.

Most of the information for this article is from [There is Power in a Union](#) by Philip Dray

New Website Coming Soon

This spring, the SVFT will debut its new and upgraded website. Our site will fully utilize our relationship with our affiliates, AFT and AFT-Connecticut, in delivering more comprehensive content in a streamlined and easy-to-navigate layout. You will still be able to access all the information you have come to expect from www.svft.org, including the contract, seniority list, and the calendar of events. Our new site will incorporate news of interest to members on the local, state, and national levels. In this legislative climate, where information changes almost daily, the new site will allow the SVFT officers to continuously update members on items of critical importance as the information becomes available. Combined with our e-mail messaging capabilities, our new website will keep members better informed. Once the new site launches, member feedback on its layout, content, and ease of navigation would be greatly appreciated.

SVFT Accepts Award



Doug Boucher, Kaynor Science Teacher, accepts award for SVFT

Every year, the AFT recognizes affiliates with the Workers' Memorial Day Award for their efforts to protect their members and students from occupational and environmental hazards. This year, the AFT presented the award to the State Vocational Federation of Teachers (SVFT). The SVFT has taken the long view in its efforts to improve conditions in their institutions. The local and its leadership understand that finding solutions to eliminating hazards and dangerous exposures in schools will take time and commitment. The SVFT continues to actively support a state-wide health and safety committee, and work cooperatively with the administration to tackle occupational health and safety issues. These efforts are paying off. The SVFT has begun a campaign to assure that members understand their rights under the Connecticut Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CONNOSHA) and report work-related injuries and illnesses. The local wants to make sure that teachers receive the training and equipment they need to stay safe. Every technical school is inspected according to an agreed upon time-line. The SVFT has the ultimate goal of genuine changes in policy and practices as well as the school buildings and equipment that will guarantee students and staff a safe and healthful learning and working environment.



Ed Leavy and Cheney Welding Instructor Kathy McGirr at the Plumbers' Union Hall



Carpentry Department Heads, Jeff Pulaski (Vinal) and Mike Cyr (Goodwin) at the Carpenters' Union

MAY 2012

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| 4/30 | 5/1 Whitney School Visit | 5/2 CT State Board of Education Meeting 10:00am @ SDE | 5/3 Windham School Visit | 5/4 9:00am SVFT Executive Committee Meeting |
| 5/7 Teacher Appreciation Week New London Mayor Visit to Norwich & Grasso THS | 5/8 Teacher Appreciation Week Wolcott School Visit | 5/9 Teacher Appreciation Week SVFT Council Meeting @ 5:00 pm | 5/10 Teacher Appreciation Week 5:00pm AFT-CT Executive Committee Meeting | 5/11 Teacher Appreciation Week 9:00am CPEF Executive Committee Meeting |
| 5/14 Bristol School Visit | 5/15 TOY Banquet 5:30 pm Baci Grill, Cromwell | 5/16 CT Committee Meeting 10:00am Bullard-Havens THS | 5/17 6:30 pm General Membership Meeting @ Wilcox | 5/18 AFT-CT Convention Saturday, 5/19 |
| 5/21 Health & Safety Wolcott THS | 5/22 UTAC Meeting @ 4:00pm SVFT Office | 5/23 SVFT/AFSA/CO Meeting @ 10:00am at Central Office | 5/24 PEAC Meeting 9:00am | 5/25 |
| 5/28 NO SCHOOL Memorial Day | 5/29 Labor Management Meeting at SVFT 9:00am | 5/30 | 5/31 | 6/1 9:00am SVFT Executive Committee Meeting |
| 6/4 | 6/5 PEAC Meeting 9:00am | 6/6 CT State Board of Education Meeting 10:00am @ SDE SVFT Council Meeting @ 5:00 pm Baci Grill | 6/7 | 6/8 SVFT Officers' Retreat |

Teachers with Skills

No day better shows the dedication of the CTHSS teachers and the skills they develop in their students than the day of Skills USA. From the hundreds of students gathered at Prince, Cheney, and Platt to the many dozens at union halls throughout the state, every site showed students proud of the expertise they bring to their craft and teachers proud of their students. Congratulations to everyone who participated. Special congratulations to those students who are going to Kansas City to compete in the Nationals, and the teachers and advisors who helped them get there.



Masonry Instructors from Prince THS, Joe Corbett and Bob Jacabacci, shown at the Masons' Union Hall



Goodwin HBC Instructor Rita Macri, shown with her students and their work at Prince



Plumbing Department Heads Dave Sorrell (Emmett O'Brien), Ed Eagan (Bullard-Havens), and Paul Angelucci (Wilcox) at the Plumbers' Union Hall

