

Vocational Instructor

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



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Unions Are Under Attack, But We're Stronger Than Ever

by Paul Angelucci, President

Members in SVFT and across teacher unions in Connecticut have received postcards telling them their union owes them a refund or how to opt out of your union. In Ohio, Maryland, and other states these mailings are being sent using local leaders or the president's names. This is illegal and legal action is being pursued. I'm proud to say out of the 1250 members, we have only three freeloaders. I know that word seems harsh, but a case was brought to the highest court in Connecticut this year against Local 4200 A&R, for using that term. The court ruled in favor of the union. Nationally the approval rating of unions now is at 71%, up from 64% before the pandemic. AFT CT now has 39,000 members, nationally we stand at 1.7 mil. members and growing. I attended the Public Employee Convention in Baltimore this past month and I can tell you being in a labor friendly state where active members are involved at all levels in politics shapes our well-being.

We've been very busy this year as we close out 2023, which saw a change in Superintendent, new processes, new staff, and more attacks on our language than any other year. It's been a team effort and that starts with you, and I thank you! We've seen an increase in the number of members that will text or pick up a phone and call us and let us know what's going on, or what's on your mind, and we want more!

The coming year we'll be entering our last year of the current Contract and entering negotiations for our language, which I'll explain in detail next month. I'll be part of negotiations for wages for 24'-25' through SEBAC.

Our committees have been very active. We broke a record for an AFT CT. delegate meeting with members showing up, as well as at the National Convention in DC. SVFT has the most positional diversity and diversity in general on all committees that we have ever had, and it's a model that we will continue to grow on! We need to know what's going on with all stakeholders, and you'll see that in the coming months regarding contract negotiations. I've been an officer for almost 7 years now. When the JANUS case ruled in December of 2016, I started signing members up as it was no longer an automatic deduction. I've met new teachers in their classrooms, front porches, coffee houses, parks, during the pandemic trucks stops, etc. I've enjoyed all 615 encounters, except 1 who refused to sign, and, yes, that teacher is a freeloader! When I started as a new shop department head in 2006 the on-boarding consisted of throwing you the keys to the shop and telling you where it was located. Having never taught a day in my life it's a rough start. It's why I do what I do. I disagree with the Executive Director who, at the Convocation 2022, in front of 300 plus teachers said the backbone of this district is the Central Office staff. The backbone of this district are the teachers and everybody that keeps these buildings running so we can teach. Everyone has a favorite teacher from their childhood, I've even seen people name maintenance staff, but I can't recall anyone naming a Central Office staff member who had a positive lasting impact!

Happy Holidays! Rest, enjoy the time off, and see you in January!



Health & Safety Is More Than A Visit

by Makenzi Hurtado , Vice President

Every month our Health & Safety Committee visits one school. We tour the shops and science labs to ensure our members are working in safe conditions. This is an opportunity for members to share concerns. We visit each school, every other year.

As a union, we also respond to health and safety concerns outside of the regularly scheduled visits. Sometimes, for our older buildings like Oliver Wolcott or the old Platt, this means scheduling an extra visit of the entire school. In other cases, we visit certain areas or are able to advocate through phone calls, meetings, and written notices. At most schools, the BMSs are working hard, but dealing with the same OF95 issues, red tape issues, and staff shortages that we deal with. Health & Safety visits are never meant as a "gotcha" for anyone. The goal is to work together to ensure great working conditions for everyone.

This year we have been addressing issues of extreme temperature, air quality, mold, sound systems that do not work, inconsistent safety protocol, and a teacher being assigned to a maintenance closet full of rusty tools and unmarked liquids, just to name a few.

If you have any concerns for your health and safety, please do not hesitate to reach out to your building reps and me. Not only do you deserve a safe and healthy workplace, but your working conditions are your students' learning conditions. And we want the best for them!

Following Directives Even If You Disagree

by Bob Riccitelli , Executive Union Representative

What do you do if your superior gives you a directive that you believe is wrong, either contractually or ethically?

You must listen to a directive from your Assistant Principal, Principal, Director, Manager, or Supervisor. If you do not, you can be written up for insubordination. This will make the issue more complicated and much more difficult to grieve.

If you are asked to do something that is wrong or incorrect and it leads to a legal issue, do not worry. You are covered by Article 25 – Indemnification. This means CTECS will not hold you responsible for any legal actions taken. Be sure you get the directive in writing or send an email to the person that gave you the directive restating what you were told.

If you believe this is a violation of the contract, you should still follow the directive and you should contact your building representative immediately. It's always good to do a little research. Look at the contract to see which article may have been violated. Also look at Article 2 to see if it is a management prerogative. If the contract was violated, we will file a grievance. But if it is not a violation, we can file a complaint with Labor Relations.

Understanding Your Pay Stub

Below are examples of SERS Tier IV deductions and TRB deductions. Look in the bottom left corner of your paystub to see your own. The amounts below are an example. Retirement deductions are a percentage of your pay, so they are different for everyone. If you do not see deductions, please reach out to Makenzi immediately.

BEFORE-TAX DEDUCTIONS			BEFORE-TAX DEDUCTIONS		
Description	Current	YTD	Description	Current	YTD
SERS Tier 4 Shortfall	70.77	424.62	TRSRegPay	414.77	6,793.24
SERS Tier 4	176.92	1,061.52	TRSRetHF17	67.42	1,646.37
Ret Health Fund 2017	106.15	636.90	Primary Care Access	144.46	3,336.78
Expanded Access	219.90	1,319.40	Dental Basic	11.28	269.68
Dental Enhanced	9.53	57.18			
Sr4/HyDCEE	35.38	212.28			

SVFT Members, endorsed by AFT-CT, Win Local Elections!



Joe DeLucia

Norwich City Council

On election day, SVFT member Joe DeLucia, the Architecture Department Head at H. H. Ellis Tech, was re-elected to the Norwich City Council for a fourth term. Joe is the current President Pro-tempore of the seven-member council, which includes the city's mayor, and he anticipates being re-elected to that leadership position in the new term. Joe said that he was proud to be endorsed by the Norwich Firefighters Local 892 of the IAFF, and by AFT-CT, and the Southeast CT AFL-CIO. According to campaign documents, Joe also received strong union support from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the CT Building Trades Council, and the North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. #unionstrong

Joe touted and appreciated the support of the voters. He believes that it reaffirms the work he has done to deliver honest budgets, common-sense public safety policies, and inclusive local governance. Joe pointed to the work he and his Democratic caucus have done to invest \$385 million in the city's schools and distribute nearly \$30 million in ARPA dollars as just two of several examples of his even-handed leadership. Joe expects that the issues of the upcoming term will be challenging; he said, "but the strong D-team brings the varied and diverse skill sets needed to meet those challenges and bring success and prosperity to the residents and businesses in Norwich."

Jennifer Norman

Griswold Board of Education

Dr. Jennifer Norma, English teacher at H.H. Ellis Tech, recently won a run for her local Board of Education. She has often been asked why she chooses to serve in this role. Jennifer believes that all of our children deserve to have access to high-quality, high-performance schools. A Board of Education has the honor to provide the oversight and management to help our schools reach their goals. It is a privilege to serve on a team that does this work.

Working collaboratively with other board members and the superintendent, Jennifer will work to secure a strong budget that ensures equitable practices and continued investment, provide oversight to the curriculum process and development, and to manage effective policies that govern the core functions of the school district. She believes that the best approach to change is to adopt and adapt to the needs of those we serve. As a member of a strong board, Jennifer believes they will continue to grow already strong initiatives and continue a steady practice of growth. She is excited to begin this work!



Calendar

12/13 Executive Council
12/14 Prince Health & Safety
12/20 CTECS Board Meeting
12/22 Early Dismissal
12/25 - 1/1 Winter Break
12/29 Advanced Degree Stipend is Paid
1/4 Trade Advisory Committee Meets
1/9 Labor Management Committee Meets
1/10 Executive Council Meeting
1/11 Vinal Health & Safety
1/15 Martin Luther King Jr Day
1/22 MTC Meeting



Advanced Degree Stipend

Share Amount: \$519.46

Paycheck Date: 12/29/2023

See Appendix F of the Contract for Details
Contact Makenzi with any questions.

svft.ct.aft.org

Any information you need is on our website!
Do you have suggestions for additions to our website?

Email our Secretary, Jamie Lamitie:
jlamitie@svft.org

Future Articles

We would like to have a "School Shout Out" article and a "Member Spotlight" article in each newsletter.

Invite us to attend an event or share something from your school that makes you proud.

What else do you want to see in the Vocational Instructor? Please let us know!

Email Jamie at jlamitie@svft.org

Vocational Instructor

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SVFT Mission Statement

The SVFT is an organization of professional educators that promotes excellence through the mutual adherence to policies, documents, and procedures negotiated with the CTEC. We work to guarantee that the contract is followed and positive working conditions are maintained. This organization shall be to provide a safe and positive teaching environment for all by:

1. Maintaining the integrity of the contract, the Vocational Technical High School System, and the solidarity of the union.
2. Ensuring all members are protected by the contract and equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to make them successful.
3. Protecting the jobs of our members and strengthening our system.
4. Providing members opportunities to further their education and receive quality professional development.
5. Responding quickly to the emerging changes to the workplace and technological challenges.
6. Handling all interactions with fairness and integrity.
7. Striving for productive, open communication between the SVFT leadership and our membership.
8. Building and improving relationships with our union affiliates and local labor councils.