

Vocational Instructor

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



IT PAYS TO BE TAUGHT BY A
VO-TECH TEACHER!

Volume MMXXIV Issue 3

April 2024

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME!!!!

5PM - May 8, 2024

A. I. Prince Technical High School

Attend in person to participate or livestream from home.

Links will be sent to your personal email.

Join Us!

We hold two General Membership Meetings per year, one in November and one in May. This is an opportunity for any and all members to attend, hear directly from the officers, and ask questions. At the May General Membership Meeting our treasurer will also present the proposed budget for the 2024-2025 year and all members can vote.

We encourage all of our members to attend in person. This is a great opportunity to engage with members across the district and with the officers. We realize that all of our members have busy lives and want to provide an opportunity for members who cannot attend to listen in. We will provide a livestream of the meeting.

All participation, questions, and voting will take place in person. The chat on the zoom will only be enabled to take attendance. We will not be monitoring the chat or answering questions from the chat.

We do not share or post recordings of our meetings, but we do provide the minutes of the meeting on our website.

If you are planning to attend in person, please register so that we can ensure there is enough food and seating. <https://forms.gle/9ontSCFxDrY22BFW9>

The Zoom link and In Person Registration will be sent to your personal email address.

Labor/Management Committee Meeting Minutes - March 5, 2024

Labor/Management Committee meets four times per year. The minutes from these meetings are always shared in our following newsletter.

In Attendance

Management – Dr. Justin Lowe, Dr. Nikitoula Menounos, Rafael Palacio, Amy Correa

SVFT – Makenzi Hurtado, Bob Riccitelli, Rich Benedict, John Hemenway, Johanna Rios-Roldan

SVFT Agenda

1. Staff Rooms and Space

Makenzi shared that teachers have been told that they cannot have appliances like refrigerators and microwaves in their classrooms and that there will be walk-throughs to check for these. In several schools, teachers have also been told that they should not be eating in their classroom or throwing food waste in their classroom trash.

Dr. Lowe explained that appliances in room are fire hazards.

Makenzi explained that in most schools there is not enough space in the staff room refrigerators, not enough space for teachers to eat, and not enough time in a lunch period for teachers share one or two microwaves.

2. Professional Development

Rich shared that trade teachers need time to learn new technologies for their trade and need more time with trade teachers.

Makenzi also shared that quite a bit of time is spent on Vector trainings. While they are required, they are not improving teaching and learning.

Dr. Menounos explained that ost PD should be Marzano HRS Level 2. Vector training should be done after school, as well. Half day PD should not be on Vector training. Some Vector trainings do not need to be done every year and there will be an audit. Tonya Stoute is talking to PD Chairs on how to build effective PD plan with their principals. Next year full day April PD will be moved to the Fall and will be school based. There are more things that need to be front loaded.

Bob – We do get very mixed feedback from district PD, but most frustration comes from school level PD. Teachers feel they have been receiving most SEL PD at the school level and they are not getting much out of it. Teachers shared examples of blowing bubbles, coloring, yoga, mediation, etc. Teachers have so much on their plates and do not feel like their time is valued.

Rich shared that trade teachers needs are very different. Need more time with trade teachers to share and learn classroom management and instructional strategies. We do have many more mandated training for district PD, but it doesn't leave us time.

Makenzi shared that most of the trade teachers have said that they no longer have steering committee meetings and this was a great time for the teachers to share with their consultants what their needs were. Makenzi requested that the district reimplement these committees.

Dr. Menounos agreed that steering committees are valuable.

Johana shared that they put out survey for school psychologists for what they need for next year. Right now they all appreciate catching up on work, but PD is necessary.

Dr. Lowe asked where do you see SEL fitting into our PD moving forward?

Johana – In our building, a lot of our teachers feel it's a waste of time right now. They want something more related to their classroom.

3. No system to monitor Mac Labs

Digital Media and Graphics Shops across the district have Mac Labs and there is no system to monitor students, like there is for the PCs. Teachers are very concerned that they cannot see what students are doing at all times on their computers.

4. Title I Funding

All teachers, but trade teachers, in particular, are having a difficult time being approved for Title I.

Rich – I went to the two-day training, and it seemed to help more with academic. In the past it was much easier to have these things approved.

Amy Correa – Now that we are our own agency, we have been under very heavy audits. We are in a corrective action plan stage to see how Title I schools are using their funding. The purpose of Title I is to close the achievement gap. We now have a systematic process in place.

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Labor Management Minutes continued...

Rich – What are things that I can actually get?

Bob – If principals are not mandated to have certain people on the Title I team, it is not going to happen. If you want us to do the work, it needs to be directed to us.

Rich – I am going to ask my question again, as a trade teacher, what can I actually get from Title I?

Amy – Instructional materials, field trips

Makenzi – Can we have specific training times in the building?

Amy – I offer my support when I go to the buildings. I have times when I am in the building and teachers can come and meet with me.

Makenzi – This information does not seem to be getting to the teachers or they may not be able to access the support.

John – We have the resources, but it is extremely time consuming. We are not getting the support we need from the Business Office.

Dr. Lowe – We will address this at the principals' meeting. We need to make sure that the information is getting to who it needs to get to.

5. Teacher Burnout

John – student discipline does not seem to be there. There is a fear factor with the announcement of Restorative Practices that there will not be discipline or consequences. As we move forward with restorative practices, can there be shared information on

Amy – Are you saying that the administrators are not supporting teachers in low level discipline?

John – Yes and low-level discipline that is not addressed turns into higher level discipline issues.

Rich – Administrators need to know their teachers and support staff. When I call to have a student removed, I need to know that my principal is going to support me.

Amy – What is the fear?

Makenzi – The fear comes from not having a clear message on what restorative practices are and also that restorative practices will not be implemented with fidelity. When restorative practices are implemented with fidelity, you do see change and improvement, but in the past, it has been used as an excuse to not address behaviors.

Dr. Lowe – There is no message coming from our office that you cannot discipline because of restorative practices. Discipline and restorative practices go hand in hand. We are working to embed and train and model how this is going to work.

Bob – There is a feeling across the district of a lack of respect from parents, students, and management towards teachers. It is affecting morale. If this is not implemented correctly, morale will be worse. The feeling is that it is always coming down on us. We do not feel like we are getting the support we need.

Makenzi – Another issue that we have been receiving from every school, across discipline is a lack of response from CO staff when teachers reach out. Sometimes there is no response, sometimes the answer is non-response, sometimes the answer comes too late to be helpful. Would it be possible to have CO staff respond to email in five school days?

JL – We put out a policy at the beginning of the year and our expectation is that CO staff respond in 48 hours. We have been addressing this with specific staff and will continue to address it.

CTECS Agenda

1. Two Day Workshop on Grading

Dr. Menounos – Two day workshop in spring with Tom Schwimmer on grading. It is about looking at the low hanging fruit in terms of grading practices.

I used the volunteer sheet from Dr Lowe to see who was interested in grading and I will be using that list to invite teachers to attend the PD. It will not be a new grading policy. It will be learning about best practices for grading.

2. Trades

We are looking at the trades that have had years of low enrollment. It is very important that we follow the low enrollment plans.

Makenzi – While we know the low enrollment plans are not disciplinary, it does feel disciplinary. There are many different reasons why a shop may be low enrolled that are not the teacher's fault.

NM – It is not disciplinary, and we know there are many factors that go into this.

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Labor Management Minutes Continued...

Follow Up – Makenzi: The overall question to everything in the follow up is “Has there been any changes made to policies or procedures to help us?”

1. **Financial** - Dr. Lowe shared that the district will be hiring a CFO and the district is developing an online OF95 program.
2. **Time** - Dr. Menounos explained that the time between when the students leave and when the teachers leave should be used for Vector training and collaboration. Some schools are using this time well and others are not.
3. **Support for Teachers so They Can Support Students**
4. **Trade Teacher Collaboration Time**
5. **Busses**
6. **Consistent Safety Plans** – we know that there is a current safety plan that John Woodmansee presented to administrators, but it has not trickled down to the teachers. We are asking that all teachers be informed of the new plan and given a refresher every year.

Do you have issues that you believe are district wide that you would like to see addressed at a Labor Management Meeting? Our next meeting is on May 7th.

*Email Makenzi before May 1st and share.
mhurtado@svft.org*

AFT Robert G. Porter Scholars Program Deadline to Apply: April 26, 2024

This program offers four 4-year, \$8,000 post-secondary scholarships to students who are dependents of AFT members, as well as 10 one-time \$1,000 grants to AFT members. Grants can be used for continuing education and also for implementing programs or introducing tools in the classroom, workplace and/or community.

Application is available on the AFT CT website:

<https://aftct.org/>



AFT Connecticut
A Union of Professionals

presents to our members retiring under the Teachers Retirement Board:

TEACHER Pre-Retirement Webinar

April 20, 2024
SATURDAY

9:00am - 11:00am
Zoom

**SCAN TO
REGISTER**



Come understand your retirement plan and make sure you're making the right choices!

- There is no fee associated with this webinar.
- Link to webinar will be emailed, so please make sure to spell your email accurately when registering.
- Make sure to select the April 20th Webinar option:

Presented by



**CT's Trusted Speakers on
Teachers' Retirement**

SVFT 2024 Scholarship Program

The State Vocational Federation of Teachers Local 4200A is pleased to notify you of twelve (12) \$1,000 scholarships available to members' children who are currently high school seniors and planning to further their education or to begin work in their trade in the fall of 2024.



Include the following:

1. A completed application form
2. An official school transcript
3. One letter of recommendation from a teacher or community leader who knows you well enough to attest to your achievements and/or potential
4. A resume listing accomplishments, contributions and achievements in school, your community, and any other extra-curricular activities that are indicative of future success
5. A letter of intent in 250 words or fewer describing why you are applying for a scholarship and how the funds will be used
6. An essay of 250 words or fewer describing what you believe the role of labor unions should be in our state and country today

Please note: The 2024 scholarships will be awarded on the basis of vocational or academic promise. Applications must be received on time and complete to be considered.

SVFT 2024 Mini-Grant Program

The SVFT is also pleased to announce that up to \$1,000 in scholarship funds are available in the form of **mini-grants** to SVFT members for the purpose of professional growth.

To apply, send a typed essay fully explaining how the funds will be used and the expected professional growth. Make sure to include your name, your school, the amount you are requesting, and any information from the program.

Successful grant recipients will be required to submit a newsletter or website article explaining how the investment was used for professional growth. The purpose of this grant is to enable members to grow professionally, **outside of the activities funded by CTS-43 or the tuition reimbursement program.**

Applications for scholarships or mini-grants must arrive at the SVFT office
no later than Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 3pm.

439 Main Street
Wallingford CT 06492

Announcements of awards will be made on or about June 14, 2024.

Applications are available on our website, svft.ct.aft.org

Questions may be addressed to the SVFT Vice President, Makenzi Hurtado
860-371-6382 or mhurtado@svft.org

Full Time Officer Visits To Schools

Paul, Makenzi, and Bob will be visiting all schools this spring for after school meetings. Please look for information from your building reps on locations and times.

We look forward to seeing you, hearing your concerns, and answering your questions.

April

4/22—Emmett O'Brien

4/23—Kaynor

4/25—Goodwin

4/29—Bristol

4/30—Norwich

May

5/1—Grasso

5/6—Abbott

5/7—Vinal

5/13—Wright

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.