

Vocational Instructor

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



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

Volume MMXXII Issue 3

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Thank You!

By Paul Angelucci

More than 85% of you voted on our contract, the highest percent of AFT Unions, with a 95% approval. Over 500 of you showed up for our presentation on the contract. I thank you for showing up and thank you most for your patience during this long, grueling process. The legislative vote is scheduled for April 25th but may have to be postponed, ironically due to staffing shortages. The \$2500 payment is scheduled to be paid out in the pay period after the contracts are passed, the \$1000 payment is scheduled for July 14th. There is currently no timeline for the retro payment for the step or 2.5% general wage increase. We sent a link on Friday with a letter you can edit as well as a link to find your representative to show your support in their taking care of State workers.

I want to thank Makenzi for pushing the issue of mental health awareness with Dr. Solek. I believe one of our half day PDs might be duty free because of those conversations. I hope that your time off during this April break is as restful and peaceful as humanly possible!

Again, I want to welcome the 98 new teachers that have joined us this year! I signed up 26 teachers over the summer and 72 teachers once the school year started. I signed these teachers up in parks, coffee shops, and on front porches. I am looking forward to signing up even more teachers this coming year!

I can't forget to thank the teachers that make SKILLS what it is. On Friday it was great to see our kids celebrating their accomplishments from the prior week. This is my challenge to all teachers, trade or academic: Next year the awards ceremony should be returning to the evening. I encourage you to attend. It truly is an evening that sums up how great our system is and how awesome our kids are!

Paul Angelucci

Of the 37000 SEBCA members, 2600 contacted their legislators about the contract vote. We cannot stress enough how important it is for members to contact their legislators. We are working on a "click to call" next, but you can still use the link that we sent out.

Changing the Narrative: Platt Tech Celebrates Black Excellence

This year four teachers at Platt Tech decided it was time to change the narrative of Black History. Mislal Lake and Genesis Ryant, special education instructors, began the conversation. They both felt that there was always a focus on slavery and oppression when talking about Black History. Students had shared that, “We never celebrate the amazing things.” Mislal and Genesis, along with hairdressing instructor Michelle Gil and sustainable architecture department head Sara Bruno, decided to create a display and presentation that focused on amazing Black people who had made a difference in the trades that are represented at Platt Tech. They shared the stories of people like Adrienne Bennet, the first Black female master plumber in the United States, and Henry Boyd, a carpenter and former slave who became famous for his bed frame design. Hairdressing students added the history of Black hair to the display. The effects were instant. Students throughout the building began having conversations about Black people that they did not know existed until this point. Genesis Ryant explained that you could see the pride in students. This display and presentation reminded students and teachers that Black History is full of courage, resilience, and determination. We look forward to seeing how this can grow at Platt Tech and throughout the district!



Sara Bruno, Genesis Ryant, Mislal Lake, Michelle Gil



Labor/Management Minutes - March 1, 2022

1. Introductions

Paul Angelucci, Makenzi Hurtado, Bob Riccitelli,
Krista Miller, Charles Rolle, Monica Rogers
Dr. Ellen Solek, Rafael Palacio

2. SVFT

a. Mask Mandate

Dr. Solek: the mask symbolizes so much for so many people: this COVID journey, personal choice.

There was quite a lot of parents sharing their opinion. 100% of emails were asking for mask optional or no mask.

3. CTECS

a. Communication

b. Curriculum

Developing a system where teachers are able to share their own needs for professional development. We need to utilize our online resources so that teachers are able to focus on their own needs. We are adults and professionals and should be able to choose what we need.

4. Follow Up

a. Special Education Concerns

Members still concerned that they are non-compliant.
Paul: We have had at least one special education teacher and two special education department heads have already left the district.

Krista: We are counting students right now, but we really need to count hours. We also have the expectation of working in the trades and this is new. We do not have enough staff for this. If we are going to continue to accept more students with a range of disabilities, we need to focus more on the trade side as well. There is just not enough time for the teachers to do what they need to do.

Charles: We were warned, but we had no idea the level that we would be dealing with. The trade teachers have not been prepared. As a parent of seniors at Wilcox, I have seen all students are being affected by the number of special education students and the lack of support for those students.

Krista: I do not think that people who are suing us realize how dangerous it is for some students with to be in.

Dr. Solek: When we discuss our most severe safety cases: If you have students you have every right to request a PPT and explain that it is not the right

placement for the students. If the parent disregards, this becomes a DCF issue. This is a hardball approach and is not a recommendation for all students, but if the placement is a danger to the student or others, you have that right.

Dr. Solek and Javette are meeting with State officials to make sure they understand that the tools were not provided for CTECS when they mandated the influx of special education students.

Another issue: The new special education teachers coming into our district are seeing the ability to barter for their salary. They understand the competition. As much as we need special education teachers, I ask SVFT to not encourage a bartering approach because it is a Pandora's box. I believe that teachers deserve to make so much more money that they do, but we have a contract. This creates a problem because people will walk away from our offers because we are not matching salaries.

Online recruitment approach will be set up with IN-DEED. We will run job fairs, day-to-day recruitment fairs, etc. This does not solve the immediate problem, but Javette is working on getting more paras and paras that are specifically trained in behavior issues. We hope that this will help the more immediate issues.

Paul: We appreciate your position that a teacher can and should request meetings. We have shops where children can lose limbs in a second. SVFT does not engage in bartering. We, as a district, are #7 in the State for pay and we have the best benefits. The district is doing better than they ever have in hiring. More than half of the academic teachers hired this year are special education teachers.

Makenzi: Admin needs more training on what our special education teachers do and how much time it takes for them to do their jobs. There seems to be a huge misunderstanding in the amount of time it takes special education teachers to complete paperwork and case managing tasks. There is a lack of understanding of how hours work and how special education teachers need to be scheduled. The teachers end up having to take time to explain this to their administrators.

Krista: And now they are implementing a new IEP system for next year. There will be a learning curve for all teachers, not just new teachers. I wish that the people in central office would listen to people like me and not just look at us and think "You're just a teacher."

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We are setting ourselves up and it is dangerous. There are constantly people acting like advocates and looking for lawsuits. Right now we are on the constant defense, rather than spending our time focused on the best for our students.

Paul: We would appreciate a small meeting with Javette.

b. New curriculum roll outs

Curriculums are not complete.

Curriculums do not have room for the work that needs to be revisited or visited because of COVID.

Makenzi: The 9th grade math curriculum is still not done. It is March. It is very frustrating. Every time I have talked to someone about curriculum, they keep saying it is going to be done and it is not. Teachers cannot plan for the rest of the school year because they do not have the end of the curriculum. There are parts that are still in draft form. I requested that we not require the math midterm because teachers received it so late and knew that they had not taught the respective material yet. Even though the scores did not “count” for students. It still takes up time. It still causes stress to students. The data was meaningless. It is concerning to me that it seems to be getting pushed down. People are concerned about next year because, even though they say it is going to be down, teachers are seeing that it doesn’t get done.

Krista: And it is not Sped friendly at all. There is no room for extra practice, scaffolding. The pre-algebra students are doing skills that are in goal 5 of algebra I.

Charles: On my end, they do not take into account the effects of COVID either. It is part of my SLO for shop, kids are expected to do skills and they did not step foot in a shop the year before. They are expected to produce certain products and implement specific parts of a curriculum, without giving time to revisit.

Makenzi: This is something that we talk about on a regular basis. Rather than something coming from CO saying “this is what all teachers in a department will do” we have every teacher in every school trying to solve the problem on their own.

Dr. Solek: Has this every happened in CTECS? Perhaps the construct of the district does not allow for this. Maybe we need to look at a more regional model.

Bob: When I went to school at Platt, we traveled by shop. Then they stopped doing that.

c. Issues when DH position is vacant or absent for long periods of time.

Makenzi: I spoke to one of the teachers that this is affecting. He is a shop teacher and doing the work of the DH. He will not get paid for it because he does not have the certification, but he also will not stop doing the work because he cares about the students and the shop.

One of the things that he told me was that his consultant did not know that he did not have a DH. Even if we cannot fix every aspect of this, if we can improve communication so that consultants and supervisors can provide timely support, that will be a great help.

Paul: Even a regional approach would be helpful.

Bob: For years Paul said that we should have a course to help DHs and offer training on these issues.

Dr. Solek: It would even be helpful to have electronic versions of these types of things to help teachers and DHs.

Paul: I wanted to also say that, Ellen, that I appreciate your email to principals, asking for minutes from meetings with building reps. I will be asking for the same. This is comforting for us because we have never had this level of accountability before.

Dr. Solek: We [Dr. Solek and Union Full Time Officers] meet every Friday and it would be helpful to have a synopsis and approach issues that are district-wide.

d. Lack of administrative intervention to student behavior.

Paul: Our schools are silos. Some are good and some are not. We need to see the accountability and follow through.

Makenzi: I think a lot of schools have protocol on paper of what is supposed to happen with student discipline, but the teachers are not seeing that in action and the communication is not happening with teachers.

Monica Suggestion: Building Rep on SAT... helps teachers understand the process

Makenzi: The question teachers have is what type of oversight do we have with our buildings? If we know that something not happening, like SAT meetings.

Paul: My philosophy has always been that labor and management are like conjoined twins and we need each other to survive. I have received a lot of lip service from other superintendents, and I know that this will not happen overnight, but I am hopeful. Morale is tie to middle management.

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Dr. Solek: We are, geographically, the largest and one of the largest populations. We do need more structure. We are sitting in a district that has had a tremendous amount of transition. There has been no opportunity to develop processes. We are working really hard to develop the processes now.

e. Social emotional well-being of staff

Wednesdays or PD time

Paul: We need this to come from the district. The pressure teachers are getting about their SLOs is too much. We need you to be fair about what our students can do and what our teachers can do. We need some understanding.

Monica: We are seeing completely different expectations from different APs even in the same building.

Makenzi: We all appreciate your message, but it is not trickling down the line. I had a conversation with Dr. Menounos last week about how DHs at different schools or in different departments in the same school are getting completely different expectations. We are frustrated because what we hear from you is completely bastardized by the time it gets to the schools. You may send out an email that is very clear and then we hear 17 different things from our teachers.

Dr. Solek: Maybe the uniform across the state is unrealistic. Maybe we need to look at a construct that allows for regionalization.

Makenzi: I have to disagree. I don't think the solution is regionalization. I think that the solution is transparency and accountability.

Paul: I am having a ratification meeting on Zoom. You can do this. Coming from us is hearsay. Comin from you is important. You can have a Zoom and just give them words of encouragement. This would do wonders for morale.

Charles: After our last meeting, when you told us to add some levity. I did! I took a break and gave my students a break because of the suggestion from you last meeting. It came from you. And I felt okay doing it because I knew it came from you. And the effects were exactly what you wanted them to be.

Makenzi: Has there been any movement on the Wednesdays or giving teachers more unmanaged time during PD?

Dr. Solek: We are working on teacher autonomy during professional development and growing our PDEC committee and improving representation.

Makenzi: But is there any time that we can find for teachers to have unmanaged time? I appreciate teachers being giving choices on their PD, but that also comes with accountability. I think that teachers just need time to do whatever they choose they need to do.

Paul: We know you appreciate your staff. We are asking you to have a meeting with your teachers and give them one day or a PD day free. I am going to leave it with that request.

Good News Travels Fast

Ellis Tech was featured in the Killingly Villager: Friday, March 4, 2022.

*Ellis Tech students
hold largest food drive in
17 years*



Photo Courtesy

Ellis Technical High School students sort donated cans of food for donation to The Friends of Assisi Food Pantry.

DANIELSON — The 17th annual H.H. Ellis Technical High School student-organized food drive concluded this week. Combined, students collected 15,000 pounds of food and \$9,600 in cash and gift card donations; the largest collection the school has ever seen.

Plumbing and Heating students at Ellis Tech

collected the most donations out of the schools 11 trade areas. Local representatives from the United States Air Force recognized the students achievement by donating a tool box, and gave special recognition to grade 10 plumbing and heating student Nia Jordan for her outstanding dedication to the food drive.

Ellis Tech students

were scheduled to deliver the donations to the Friends of Assisi Food Pantry located at 77 Water St A, Danielson, on Tuesday, March 1 at 10 a.m. Students unloaded the truck of donations and met with the food pantry director, who explained how the community accesses the pantry.

SVFT Officer Elections take place on May 11, 2022. Voting will be in person, before and after school.

SVFT Vice President Candidate Statements

Makenzi Hurtado

Sisters and Brothers,
I am writing to ask you to re-elect me as Vice President. It has been a privilege to serve you as VP. In these short five months, I have worked hard to achieve the goals that I set forth in October.

I have improved communication between the SVFT Executive Committee and members. I have created a new Facebook page, added new, recurring articles to our newsletter that spotlight our members and our schools, and organized the presentation of our contract. I continue to develop simple ways to collect information from members to best serve you. I believe it is the responsibility of the VP to represent members with professionalism and tenacity. I represent you in meetings with the superintendent, administration, legislatures, union affiliates, and the board. In this short time, I have developed positive working relations with all these groups. I listen to members and take feedback to heart, so that I can represent you honestly. I have been and will continue to be relentless in supporting you. Over the next three years, we will be preparing for 2027 and the survival of SEBAC. You need a candidate who is invested far beyond 2027. It is imperative that you have a VP who is willing to listen, grow, and adapt to a changing environment, while maintaining the strength of our union and demanding the respect that we deserve as professionals. I believe that I am the person to do this.

Thank you for your support,
Makenzi

John Pascone

As a proud and passionate life-long union member, 20 + year teacher and department head and son of a 35 year member of the IBEW, I have been fortunate and grateful to have been able to participate in both public and private sector unionism. I did not delay to walk the picket line in my early 20's for the Carpenter's Union Local 1302, quickly learning the impact of solidarity and further built upon that value after accepting the position of patternmaker's apprentice. Discovering the importance of giving voice to my colleagues, I continued to involve myself in the union and rose through the officers chairs, ultimately becoming the president.

As an involved building representative at Ellis Tech, I have volunteered on multiple SVFT committees including grievance and arbitration, constitution and bylaws, contract negotiations (previous chairperson), political action, and on a previous district labor management team. I have proudly served my union members by holding the position of AFT delegate, as well as door knocking, protesting budget cuts in Hartford, vehemently contending right to work legislation. I have not hesitated to testify at the Capitol or provide media interviews; I was honored to be asked to share my personal story at the AFT U&I In Union Campaign regarding how my experience as a union member enabled me to negotiate benefits that directly and financially supported my family while I was recovering from life-altering injuries.

Your vote for Vice President will allow me to continue fighting for the rights our members!

SVFT Secretary Candidate Statements

Daniel DelPiano

Sisters and Brothers,

My name is Daniel DelPiano, I am running for Secretary of the SVFT and I would like to share a little about myself so you can get to know me better. I have been an active member in the SVFT since 2009 when I accepted the position of Computer Applications Teacher at Platt Tech. I am currently a Math Teacher and Related Department Head at Eli Whitney. My first opportunity to work on the behalf of all the SVFT membership was on the 2011-2016 contract Negotiations Committee. Since then, it has been my honor to serve on or chair several committees including Negotiations, Grievance and Arbitration, and Constitution and By-Laws. With my experience on committees and as a former building representative at Platt Tech and as a delegate to the AFTCT, I am well suited to serve our union as an officer.

In addition to my experience in the SVFT my background with technology makes me well suited for the role of Secretary. In the position, I will work to update the website to make it more useful to you as a member. Additionally, I have experience working with databases that will allow us to better use our email lists to communicate with the members.

As your Secretary, I know the SVFT will continue to become a stronger and more supportive union. I hope I have your support.

In Solidarity,
Daniel DelPiano

Jamie Lamitie

Hello fellow SVFT members! I am proudly running for SVFT Secretary and am seeking your support. I am Jamie Lamitie, a 1993 graduate of Norwich Technical High School. Immediately after graduation, I entered the workforce as an electrical apprentice with IBEW Local 35 in Hartford.

After ten years with Local 35, I began teaching electrical courses in the evenings through the CTECS' Adult Education Program. After 12 years with Local 35 I became a full-time electrical instructor with CTECS. I have been teaching in the system for 16 years and am currently the Electrical Department Head at Norwich Tech.

I have been a building union representative for the past 9 years. I have regularly been a part of Contract Negotiations, Health & Safety and Labor Management Committees. I have witnessed and experienced the challenges our teachers face daily and am compelled to do more to help enact positive change for our members. This has led me to pursue a larger role with the SVFT.

My experience within the SVFT and CTECS, coupled with my leadership experience, my dedication, passion, my tech savvy, and responsiveness make me a great candidate for the SVFT Secretary position. I am hopeful to have your support and look forward to serving you.

Committee Experience and Accomplishments:
Contract Negotiations Committee
Labor Management Committee
Health and Safety Committee
Building Union Rep
Electrical Curriculum Development Team
CTECS TOY - 2018
Norwich Tech TOY - 2018
Grasso Tech TOY - 2009
IBEW Local 35 member since 1993

Scholarship

Each year SVFT awards eight \$1000 scholarships to high school seniors who are children of SVFT members. The scholarships are awarded based on vocational or academic promise.

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. 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 can be found on our website. They can also be requested by emailing Makenzi Hurtado.

The deadline to submit an application is May 13, 2022. Applications and supporting documents must arrive at the union office by 3pm, addressed to:

SVFT Scholarship Committee
439 Main Street
Wallingford CT 06492



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Vocational Instructor

*is the monthly newsletter of the
State Vocational Federation of Teachers*

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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

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. Please email Makenzi at mhurtado@svft.org if you have something great to share.

What else do you want to see in the Vocational Instructor? Please let us know!
Email Makenzi at mhurtado@svft.org.