

# Vocational Instructor

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



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

Volume MMXXII Issue 4

May 2022

## Almost There

By Paul Angelucci

The only thing I can say with certainty is that we are grateful for you in this chaotic year. The list of uncertainties seems to grow weekly. We are waiting to hear who will be our Executive Director beginning on July 1st and if we will be keeping our interim Superintendent; and the list goes on. I'm currently looking for clarification with our legal counsel on the hiring guidelines with respect to our new language of preference over outside hires, as well as the degree stipend pay out, and that list goes on as well. The new contract is at the printer now for the final format layout. Every member will have a new copy in their mailbox in the first couple days of school. Prior to that once the final layout is approved by both sides, it will be available on our website at [www.svft.ct.aft.org](http://www.svft.ct.aft.org) under Key Documents. We anticipate there being a learning curve with our district becoming its own line item agency but we want you to know we are keeping our eye on the process all along the way. Once the new Executive Director is selected, I will ask for a meeting and share our view of the needs and strengths of district and offer to meet regularly as we do with our interim Superintendent. I walked into Bullard Havens Tech 44 years ago as a wide-eyed freshman having no idea the impact this system would have on my life, and can't begin to tell you how appreciative I am. I'm hyper vigilant on its continued success. It's over 100 years old for a damn good reason. My goal is to help its caretakers as much as humanly possible!

## Teacher of the Year



Windham Tech's Rebecca Reyer was named CTECS Teacher of the Year on May 2, 2022.

## In Solidarity

I remember the first time that I sent an email to membership, I thought “How do I end this? Oh yeah, in solidarity.” I have reflected over this whole year about what that salutation means to me.

The first time I met Bob was to confront him because I did not feel like the union was doing what was in my best interest or my school’s. In all honesty, if you bring up the specific issue, I will still argue why I was right. But the fact of the matter was I wasn’t following the contract. This was a time when I learned that “in solidarity” didn’t always mean everyone stood behind me, it also meant I had to stand behind everybody else.

Following the contract can be frustrating in the day-to-day. There are so many solutions that we see that would be so much easier to implement without our contract language. We see a benefit to our subject or our school without realizing the ramifications to our entire body. But our contract is our line in the sand. It is the line that we all stand behind in solidarity. This year especially we have heard the frustration of our brothers and sisters when their schools close for staff shortages. And we have heard the struggle of teachers who have been asked to go outside of contract language in covering, the guilt when they say no because the school may close. It’s not an easy decision and it feels like a loss either way. But the contract serves the greater good and the long game.

My second year of teaching (in another district), we had a shortage of teachers. They asked for volunteers to teach an extra period. I was young, earnest, and the payoff they offered sounded great (it wasn’t). How bad could one extra class be? After a few months, I started noticing that people were constantly asking me if I was feeling alright. I wasn’t sick, but I was exhausted. By the end of the year, I joked that I looked like I’d gone to war. I learned the hard way why our union leadership fought so hard for our language.

Sometimes “in solidarity” manifests exactly how we imagine it. We saw our contract pass with record voter turnout and undeniable support. We have seen participation in our virtual meetings soar. This year I have seen members stand up for each other, represent each other, and offer support when tragedy strikes.

I am proud of how our members come together at these times. It always reminds me that we are stronger together and we can make great changes when we support each other.

*Makenzi Hurtado*

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## Bob Riccitelli – New Contract Language

There are many language changes in our new contract that positively affect our members. One article that affects members the most during this time of year is Transfer/Promotion language.

My intent for this article is to simplify that article. You should refer to Article 11, Vacancies for all the details.

The Transfer/Promotion period is now from August 15 to March 15. If the Vacancy is due to a retirement, the transfer/promotion window extends from March 15 to June 15. For postings that fall outside the transfer/promotion window, current employees who are otherwise equal in qualifications have preference over outside hires.

The Academic DH selection process has not been changed; however the Trade DH selection has. The order is as follows:

- Lateral transfer of a DH in good standing. If there is a more senior instructor who applies for the promotion, the position will go to interview.
- If no DH applies, the 5 most senior instructor applicants will be interviewed.

This contract language is new for everyone, union and human resources alike. We anticipate some growing pains and confusion. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

## Recognizing Years of Service

Congratulations on Completing Your 20 <sup>th</sup> Year!	Congratulations on Completing Your 25 <sup>th</sup> Year!	Congratulations on Completing Your 30 <sup>th</sup> Year!	Congratulations on Completing Your 35 <sup>th</sup> Year!
Ignacio Vega Israel Velez Dianne Higginson Yolanda Norris John Pascone Sadi Sanchez Ines Rodriguez Zayra Rivera Mari Camacho Dawn Murphy Peter Rivera Marie DiTaranto Julie Criscuolo John Hoyle Lisa Wagner Alexander Walkuski Rodney Irizarry Kenneth Leggo Maureen Banack Diane Blake Sally Markiewicz Jessica Collelo-Bibeau	Daniel Mingay Michell Amann-Wojenski Lisa Lombardo David Cronin JoAnn Tamaro Vicki Curtis Matthew Keen Christopher Jones Joseph Petroro Lucille Chaves-Horvath Jerome Grant Sue Mias Polly Innerarity Esther Camerota- MacNeill Michael Bantle Donald Bartels	Krystin Konow Maria Carpanzano Joseph Scarduzio	Peter Dzialo Deborah Krodell

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### News from The SVFT Retiree Chapter

After a two-year hiatus, the SVFT Retiree Chapter has brought back its Award Program. The SVFT Retiree Chapter Award is presented to a graduating senior who exemplifies the education and opportunity given to students of CTECS and demonstrates the skills and knowledge gained that uniquely prepare them for their future. The \$500.00 award is directed to the plan the student has for post high school . For example; if the recipient is beginning an apprenticeship, the funds would be applied to fees or tools needed. The award review committee met on May 10, at the SVFT office. After careful review of the application materials submitted, the group selected the 2022 SVFT Retiree Chapter Award. The recipient's name will be publicly revealed during their school awards program. The officers of the chapter thank Linda Russo, Clare Rheiner, Joe Cefaratti, and Mary Sheehan for their efforts on the review committee.

## May 3, 2022 Labor Management Meeting Minutes

1. **Attendance:** Charles Rolle, Krista Miller, John Hemenway, Paul Angelucci, Bob Riccitelli, Makenzi Hurtado, Dr. Ellen Solek, Dr. Nikitoula Menounos, Javette Gianneli-Allen

### 2. SVFT

#### a. Materials for 12th Grade construction trade DSAs

Charles Rolle shared that construction trades have not received their materials for their DSAs. The hands-on portion is over 70% of the grade. Schools have not yet received the needed materials or a plan what to do without the materials.

Dr. Menounos shared that the shops that are overseen by Brent McCartney will receive their materials. Shops that are overseen by Pat Ciarliglio will not receive the materials as the costs are over \$100,000. Mr. Ciarliglio has put together a steering committee to develop a longer written portion to make up for the hands-on portion.

#### b. Principals on Hiring Committee

Paul Angelucci shared that some members have applied for positions at a different building and their current principal was on the interview committee.

Dr. Solek acknowledged that this would be uncomfortable for a teacher and should be avoided.

Dr. Menounos explained why that sometimes happens. There are specific criteria of who must be represented on the interview panel. Sometimes they are the only principal available that fit the criteria.

Paul also shared that he was frustrated because there are people that in the hiring process and taking other jobs because HR is not communicating with them. Even if the process takes a long time, there needs to be communication. Javette shared that they are working on keeping communication going, but there are positions getting stuck in the process. Paul acknowledged that Carla is swamped and may need support.

Dr. Solek shared that there is now a way for CO to see where hirings are in the process. She said that SVFT should have access to this document as well. At this point HR will remain at 450 Columbus and not move to 35 Woodland.

#### c. New Special Education Platform

Krista Miller shared that we are all aware that we are getting a new IEP platform. On top of increasing caseloads, teachers are getting to the point where they are drowning. There is not enough time in the day to get the work done to the legal standard.

Dr. Solek acknowledged that the issue is not necessarily the new platform but the time that will be needed. She shared that CO is discussing ways to have “Wellness Wednesday” time that will also give teachers time to work. This is a work in progress and not final, but something that the superintendent wants to do.

Makenzi Hurtado clarified that we understand that the district does not have a choice but to implement this, but we are looking for what the plans are for: training teachers, giving teachers time that will be needed to write these IEPs, and how students will be supported if these teachers need to work on paperwork or training rather than being in class with students.

Javette Gianneli-Allen is the Director of Special Education and joined this meeting specifically to address SVFT’s concerns. There is a committee that is working on this transition. Training has already begun through the State and all schools have been involved. The State broke down each component of the IEP and have 1-hour trainings for each component. All trainings by the State were after school hours. Javette shared the information but told all members that it was voluntary. All schools will be on a training schedule in the fall. Javette will set the schedule (approx.: Aug – Jan). Javette also shared that they must do Restraint and Seclusion Training.

In the summer the State Department will be giving a 4-hour “Expert Training” to CTECS only. This is not to become an expert, but to have someone ready in the building. Two members from each building will go and get a stipend of \$500.

Makenzi asked if teachers schedules would be modified to allow them time to do these trainings and how does that balance with supporting students’ hours? Javette explained that the district is working to hire more Educational Assistants. There will be 36 open positions for Educational Assistants through a grant. Paul asked if these

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would come from CREC. Javette explained they would not. Right now all para-educators come from CREC, but CTECS would like their own. Right now para-educators do not exist as a title in our system. Sped DH and Principals will determine how and when teachers train.

Makenzi asked when will teachers have time to write the actual IEPs. Javette explained that CTECS changed their dynamics because our Special Education teachers need more IEP writing training and need to be calibrated. In the Scheduling Recommendations, DHs will be the primary IEP chair. They will run the IEPs and they will write the IEPs. Makenzi shared that DHs and teachers she has spoken to have voiced concern because in a PPT you want the case manager there.

Javette shared that she has been surveying the Special Education DHs. She said that some are happy and understand the role and it is similar to an LEA model. CTECS is working on calibrating DHs and then they will lead their teachers. They will still invite case managers to the meetings, but they will stay only for their report. Makenzi pushed back that it is not realistic that case managers would come in, give a report, and then go back to class. Javette explained that Makenzi's comment implies that every parent and student has a great rapport with the case manager and that is not always the case. Makenzi shared that that should be the goal. Javette explained that a case manager should not be in a PPT for two hours. They should be following their schedule.

Paul asked for clarification on Restraint and Seclusion Training, he asked if it was for all Special Education teachers. Javette explained that it was required on a yearly basis, but first a team of administrators are being trained in the summer. They will train teachers in the building. CTECS will be its own training center.

Dr. Solek explained that we are in a perfect storm. Special Education has been a shortage area for at least ten years, the State keeps added unfunded mandates, and there is no time. She shared that Javette is doing a great job managing this.

d. Pre-AP training

Makenzi shared that the issue is similar to the Special Education issue. There is quite a bit of training. What is the plan for implementing Pre-AP in English and Social Studies? When will teachers be trained and how will the building be covered while they are out?

Dr. Menounos explained that Pre-AP is a summer training.

Makenzi asked if all the schools are required to do Pre-AP because the emails said it was optional.

Dr. Menounos said that the majority have chosen to do English Pre-AP.

Makenzi asked Who decides whether a school will do Pre-AP and then who decides who attends summer training?

Dr. Menounos explained that the building principal decides, after a conversation with teachers. If the building principal wants to do Pre-AP, but teachers are not able to train in the summer, then the school will not do Pre-AP. No one can be forced to go to summer training.

John Hemenway asked if some schools will be implementing training during the school year.

Dr. Menounos said she will be looking into this option.

### **3. Follow Up**

a. Curriculum roll outs

John asked if there were updates on the math curriculum and assessments.

Dr. Menounos explained there is a committee of five teachers working on grade 10 curriculum. Right now only three are able to work on curriculum due to staff shortages. Right now Margaret Ortiz and Jen Jarmon are overseeing math. Heidi Griffin is overseeing science. There should be a new math supervisor in a few weeks.

Makenzi also shared that while we have been focused on math, other subjects are also not user friendly or complete.

Dr. Menounos explained that English and technical education curriculums are online.

Krista also explained that the math curriculum is paced too fast for students this year. There does not seem to be a way to provide feedback on the curriculums.

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Makenzi also shared comments that she received about other curriculums. They show a pattern. When the new English curriculums came out, only two units were available to teachers. When Big History was introduced, it was not complete. It is very hard for teachers to plan for a year when they have no idea what their end goal is. We have heard schools saying that they think that are implementing Pre-AP in the fall and they have nothing yet. It is overwhelming for teachers to think of implementing a new curriculum next year, without resources, especially when they know students are still recovering academically from the past few years. It is a trend that we are giving teachers curriculums right before they have to teach them and we would like that trend to stop. Is it at all possible to wait to implement these curriculums until they are complete?

John also wanted to share his experience on the NEASC committee for his school. CTECS does not have a common format for curriculum across disciplines. It is hard to look at school wide and grade level learning goals. John also explained that while the science standards were adopted in 2018, all science has is a list of standards and a document with a toolbox of activities. There is nothing prioritized or unpacked. It is impacting when you think that at 17 different schools, all teachers are taking the time to do this themselves.

Makenzi acknowledged that we have had many consultants/supervisors retire. In many other districts they have committees that review curriculum on a regular basis. We would like to see this when we have the staffing for it. Dr. Solek said that we need to be more creative about how we address these issues. Right now we do not have enough time for all of the things that we need to do. It is doable, but we need to figure out how. We have all been in survival mode, but we need to get some normalcy. Dr. Solek agreed that we need to give all teachers a complete roadmap, so they can hit the ground running. We need to do this, while also prioritizing keeping teachers in the classroom.

b. Role of managers/chain of command

Paul shared that right now in CO there are many different titles. We do not know the difference between directors, consultants, supervisors, managers, and associate consultants. Have teachers ever been shown an explanation of who's who and who they work for?

Dr. Menounos responded that teachers work for the school principal.

Paul agreed, but there is confusion now.

Dr. Solek asked if it would be helpful to give SVFT the make-up of CO, to share with members.

Makenzi shared that while we appreciate having that information, she believes that the information should come from CO. It is important for the communication from CO to the employees.

Dr. Solek said that the principals in each building can break down the roles and functions. She is meeting with principals on May 12th and will ask them to share that information.

Dr. Solek also addressed the second issue of teachers not knowing who a person is or their purpose when they enter a classroom. Questions, concerns, issues should always go through the principal.

Makenzi also asked if people from CO can also provide why they are in the room/shop.

Charles shared an example of a person who walked in his shop, filming with his phone.

Dr. Solek shared that we do live in a time when we need to be more cautious about people we don't know entering our buildings and our rooms. You have every right as a classroom teacher to identify themselves and their purpose.

Javette shared that there is an increased effort at CO to get into classrooms and sometimes people from CO do not send an email ahead of time because they do not want to interrupt.

Makenzi shared teachers would prefer the email, as a head's up. We have asked for this since the start of the year and it is still not happening.

#### **4. CTECS**

a. Dr. Solek shared that while teachers used to be able to give students hugs and pats on the back, CO are starting to see a change in environment. Teachers should not be showing affection through physical contact. Dr. Solek is concerned that as we see students' anxiety levels on the rise, we are seeing responses from students that are very worrisome. Please caution all members to avoid touching students.

**Not Receiving Emails  
from SVFT?  
Check your junk mail  
and promotions folder  
and  
add us to your contacts!**



### **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](mailto: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](mailto:mhurtado@svft.org).

### **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