

Vocational Instructor

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



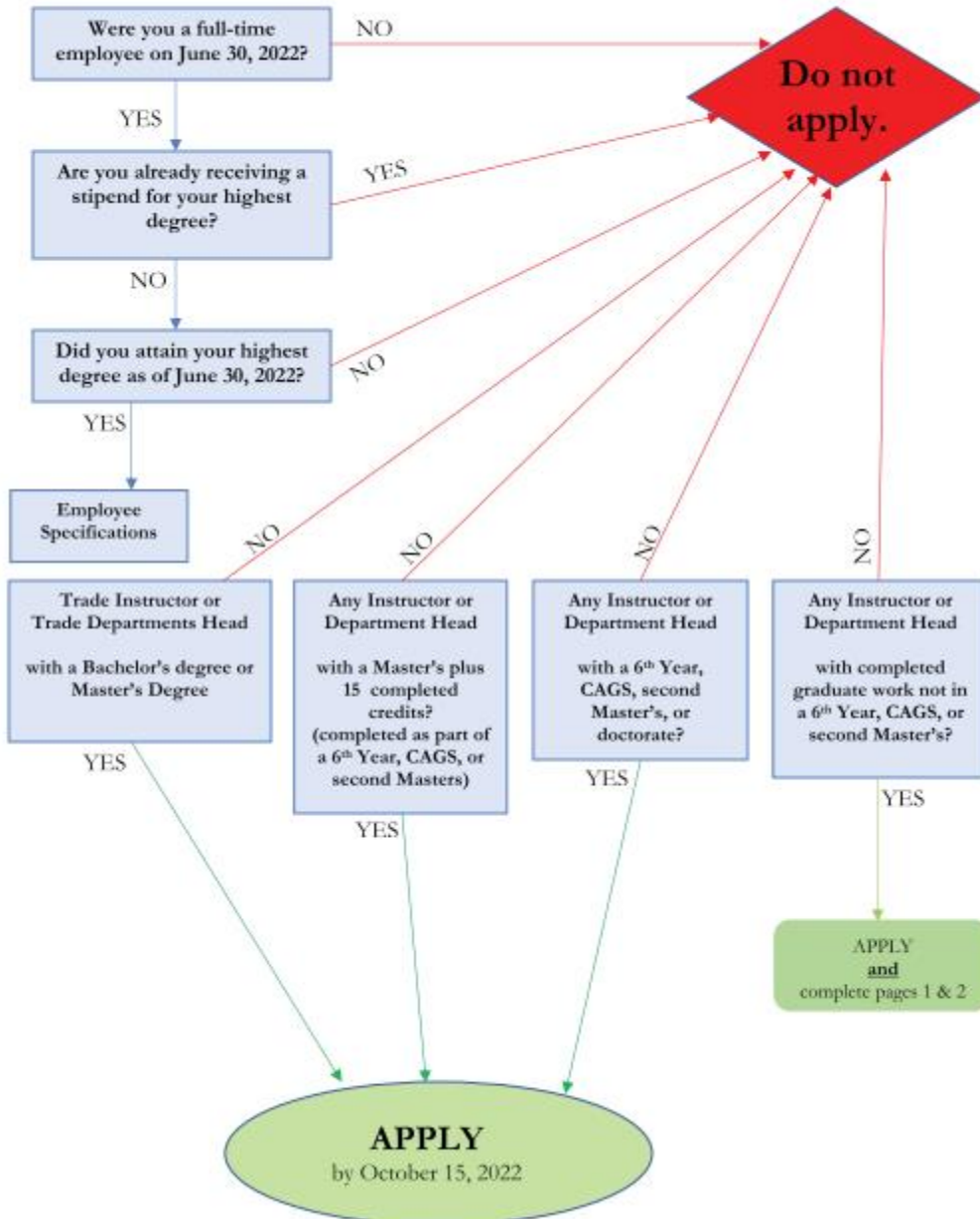
"It Pays To Be Taught By a Vo-Tech Teacher"

Volume MMXXII Issue 6

September 2022

Should I apply for Degree Stipend?

Start Here:



CALENDAR

- 9/14 Executive Council
- 10/5 Labor Management
- 10/5 Minority Teacher Committee
- 10/12 Executive Council
- 10/13 Health & Safety Visit - Ellis
- 11/9 General Membership

Full Time Officer Building Meetings

Paul, Makenzi, and Bob will be visiting every school this fall to share information and listen to members. All meetings will take place after school.

- 9/15 - Prince
- 9/20 - Eli Whitney
- 9/21 - Wright
- 9/22 - Cheney
- 9/27 - Abbott
- 9/28 - Bullard Havens
- 9/29 - Goodwin

- 10/4 - Ellis
- 10/5 - Oliver Wolcott
- 10/6 - Bristol
- 10/12 - Wilcox
- 10/13 - Kaynor
- 10/19 - Emmett O'Brien
- 10/20 - Platt
- 10/24 - Norwich
- 10/25 - Vinal
- 10/26 - Windham
- 10/27 - Grasso



Welcome and Welcome Back

by Paul Angelucci

Paul Angelucci is SVFT's President. He is a Plumbing Department Head from Bullard Havens. He is also an alum of our district.

I want to take a moment and welcome everyone back to school and welcome the 77 new teachers that walked in our buildings for the first time this year. That's a 200% increase over summer hires counting the last four years. Our district hires about 90 teachers a year on average and, as of today, we're at 80 with nine months left. This is a welcome change. I've met each and every one of our new educators and shared as much information as I could to make their start with us easier.

I'd also like to thank our members for not buying into one of the many anti-union groups that target our members to drop their union. This summer these groups did mailings to our members. We appreciate the heads up we received and continued support from our members.

Being an optimist, I really did think we'd have a less problematic summer and school start. The amount of payment errors which took place was higher than expected and consisted of: non-payment, summer work non-payment, over payment, incorrect amounts paid out, and the list goes on. In negotiations we fought hard to shore up tuition reimbursement for the future only to be sitting here still waiting for payments to go out.

The Governor's office has yet to name a permanent Executive Director. Dr. Solek is still an interim Superintendent and is also the interim Executive Director now. We are keeping a close eye on the process and we'll let you know of any developments. I decided to print the first newsletter this year so that all of our members would receive a copy. We want to ensure that all members that joined us before June 30th would not miss the DEGREE STIPEND. Since we are back to clocking in in the main offices, I figured you couldn't miss it in your mailbox. Most newsletters this year will be electronic to save trees and your dues dollars! They can always be found on our website.

Union Meetings – besides the monthly meetings your building reps hold, there are two general membership meetings one in November and one in May which are open to all members to attend. They are at 5:00PM and held at a centrally located school. The three full time officers will also be holding school meetings in the coming weeks. These have already approved by the principals thanks to Makenzi. Your rep will place a reminder in your mailbox with a location, hope to see you there!

Taking Care of Business

by Makenzi Hurtado

Makenzi Hurtado is SVFT's Vice President. She is a math teacher and Related Department Head from Prince.

I hope that you all had a restful summer. It seems that this school began at full speed, so I will get straight to business. There are several important, time sensitive issues of which I would like to remind members. The first is the **Advanced Degree Stipend** Application. This application was emailed out by HR and is due by October 15, 2022. It is also available on the SVFT website. Please make sure that you read the information that was sent. The requirements and timelines are very strict for Advanced Degree Stipend. Advanced Degree Stipend is paid in December for the prior school year. The second deadline is for **Sick Bank Enrollment**. Sick Bank Enrollment is open from 9/1/22 - 11/1/22. To be eligible, employees must complete the equivalent of (3) years of full-time service or (3) years and (66) days of part-time service. To become a member of the Sick Bank, eligible members must complete the Sick Bank Enrollment Form, which can be downloaded from the SVFT website. Each eligible employee who elects to participate shall contribute one (1) day from accrued sick leave to the sick bank. Days contributed to the bank shall thereafter be allocated to bargaining unit employees with catastrophic or extended long-term illness. Sick Bank has been a lifeline for countless members throughout the years. Sick Bank is one of the greatest examples of the power of a union. By investing one sick day, we can support members in crisis.

The last topic is **Tuition Reimbursement**. I continue to hear from members who are paying interest on tuition from as far back as 2020. Right now, we know that Lillian Rivera-Hicks has processed all tuition reimbursement applications. We also know that the funds for tuition reimbursement for 21-22 and 22-23 school year have been released. This means that there is \$1.15 million available for reimbursement. The problem at this time, is the number of payments that must be processed across the State. When our contract was accepted, every State Employee contract was also accepted. This means the State must process salary adjustments, retro payments, summer payments, and tuition reimbursement payments for over 37,000 employees. This is taking much longer than expected. We understand everyone's frustration in this matter. We continue to contact payroll on an almost daily basis to discuss individual issues. We have filed a grievance for this issue and will continue to fight for this money to be paid.

I look forward to seeing you all at our fall meetings!

Why You Should Never Violate Our Contract

by Bob Riccitelli

Bob Riccitelli is SVFT's Executive Union Representative. He is a Sustainable Architecture Department Head from Platt.

I have written many times about past practice and its importance. This is becoming more and more of an issue. Recently, we filed an arbitration and because of the past practice at multiple schools we had to withdraw because we would have lost.

This is not as uncommon as you would think. In fact, you probably have done this yourself. For example, maybe you missed a prep to cover for another teacher or developed curriculum or attended a training without compensation.

This becomes more serious when teachers in multiple schools are doing the same task. An example is the Department Heads planning and grading for long term (more than 5 day) absences or vacancies. Slowly, writing lessons and grading became part of the DH's responsibilities. Then COVID and the Silver Tsunami happened. Schools have many vacant positions, and it was expected for our DHs to cover. This led to DHs having 6, 7, 8 or even 9 preps. Our contract is very clear. 3 preparations or 2 subjects. General Education & Related DHs wanted to do "what was best" for the students but quickly became overwhelmed. This led to burnout for many of our DHs, who could not complete the actual requirement of their jobs because they were writing lessons and grading for vacancies.

We grieved this and the final remedy was to have a databank of lessons and grading rubrics, created by the consultants and shared through the intranet. This was all stated in a memo from the superintendent. DHs must not plan or grade or this remedy will fall apart again and be gone.

So, if you are asked or pressured into violating our Contract, please don't. You are potentially affecting every member in our bargaining unit. If you are unsure if you are violating the contract, contact your building rep, Bob, Makenzi, or Paul. If you are afraid of retaliation, we can file the grievance system wide if it is happening in other schools, or as the SVFT.

Beginning of Year Common Contract Violations

by Bob Riccitelli

At the beginning of the year there are 3 common violations: preparations, class size, and schedule changes. Preparations are the most common and most misunderstood. This applies to each cycle. Your schedule can have three preparations. Examples of preparations are algebra, geometry, honors, AP, ECE, computer apps, leadership, etc. Or they can schedule you for two subjects. These are by subject and grade level. The most common violation here is a teacher scheduled for 9th grade gym, 12th grade gym, 9th health and 12th grade health. That would be four subjects. Another example would 9th grade English, 12th grade English and freshman leadership. This is only three preparations but in two grade levels. If your administration schedules you for two subjects you are done. They cannot give you a freshmen leadership on top of the two subjects. A new preparation that we are seeing is enrichment. This is a preparation because you are expected to plan and teach this class. Some examples of periods that do not count as a preparation are academic access and learning centers.

Class size is much easier to understand. The maximums are as follows:

9th: 30 10th: 28

11th: 25 12th: 25

Remedial Classes and Reading Programs: 16

Schedule changes need to be investigated. The contract states schedule changes can be made within the first 2 weeks of school or for unforeseen conditions during the school year. For example, a change in Academic Department Heads (old DH was English and the new DH is social studies) or the elimination of a position such as administratively transferring a teacher with too many science teachers to a school needing one.

If you have one of these issues like these, please see your building rep. Issues are more easily settled within the building. If the issue is not resolved, we will get involved. If we need to file a grievance, it must be filed within 30 days of the violation.

Improving Communication with Action Network

Last year we noticed that many members were not receiving our emails. This happened despite us having their correct email addresses. The main reason that this happens is email servers block emails that they perceive as spam. It is imperative that we can reach our members with important information. This year we will be using Action Network to send all mass emails. This allows mass emails to be sent individually and they do not get tagged as spam. It also allows us to track if emails are delivered.

Some members will remember that we used Action Network in the past. If you unsubscribed from our email list, we can add you again.

***We will send our first email out on
October 1st.***

If you do not receive an email from us on that day, please reach out to our office manager and cc Makenzi:

lhochadel@svft.org
mhurtado@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.

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

Vocational Instructor

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

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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

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.