

Vocational Instructor

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



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

Volume MMXXII Issue 7

October 2022



Prince Tech's Cheryl Tuttle (pictured) and Windham Tech's Kristi Munley decorated gift bags for children who are hospitalized during the holidays. These bags go to children in Connecticut hospitals all over the state.



CALENDAR

- 10/12 Executive Council
- 10/13 Health & Safety Visit - Ellis
- 11/8 Election Day
- 11/9 General Membership 5pm
Reps In Person
Members via Zoom
- 11/10 Health & Safety Visit - Bristol
- 11/11 Veterans' Day

More Questions Than Answers

By Paul Angelucci, President

As this school year gets underway, we've seen the results of staff shortages on the faces of all members. Even though hiring is up almost 200% from last year, the hiring process is still broken. There are employees, both in Labor Relations and Human Resources, who have moved on in the last month causing additional slowdowns. We have schools with up to 14 openings and substitutes are increasingly harder to find. The district has had hiring fairs in several of our schools for substitutes and we signed a one-year stipulated agreement allowing the district to contact private agencies for substitutes when there is a need.

The Governor has yet to name an Executive Director and a search for a permanent superintendent will start soon. I want you to know that we are keeping an eye on all these moving parts while making sure our contract language is not violated and taking steps to improve it as the year goes on! If you're asked to do something that is outside of our contract language, please tell your building rep or call us. Our district is 5400 square miles, 10,900 kids, and 1248 teachers. It's a lot to cover but we are just a phone call away.

For our new members every year the November and May Executive Council Meetings are General Membership Meetings. These meeting are open to all members, and we encourage members to attend. The Building Reps are in person but from now on we'll let the members attend via ZOOM. With childcare pickups, eldercare, and travel issues from being such a large district, I think this is the best way to have as many of you present as possible. As it is now if each school has five members attend that school receives an additional two hundred dollars for their year end use. I don't think any school should miss out and it almost guarantees we'll have a quorum.

Lastly, in early April we're going to hold info-sessions for anyone interested in being more involved in the union. Committees are up this year and basic info on what goes on etc. will be offered. If you're interested contact me by email or cell phone pangelucci@svft.org or 203-627-0710. Thanks for all you do and hopefully we'll see you via ZOOM at our November General Membership Meeting! Nov. 9th at 5:00 pm!

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.

- 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

“Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, this country, and this world.”

Sharon Salzberg

Knowledge is Power

By Makenzi Hurtado, Vice President

Throughout my time as a teacher, I have worked with many different administrators. Some valued teachers, and some did not. Some listened to teachers, and some did not. Some respected and worked within our contract, and some did not. Over the past year, as I visited schools and talked with teachers and administrators, I became more and more aware of how important it is for our members to know the contract. It is your contract. Administrators are not going to ask you if they can break contract language and they are not going to remind you when you are owed something. We cannot see everything that is happening in every building. Even building reps cannot know what is happening in every classroom. Every member must educate themselves on their rights. Come to us when you have an issue. Let your building reps know. We will help you. We will support you.

I consider myself to be a proactive person. When I see something becoming a problem, I jump to work on a plan to avoid it. If something is already a problem, I want to be at the table coming up with a solution. At every school we visit and every meeting we attend, I see people like this. But I also see the same problems across the district and at every school there are problem solvers working on them alone. We need to communicate and share and work together.

Four times a year, we sit across the table from management and share issues that exist across the district. Our Labor Management Meetings are a time for us to speak freely on behalf of our brothers and sisters on issues that are not contractual. Our first Labor Management Meeting was held on October 5th and the minutes are in this newsletter. Two issues that have already come to my attention for our January 10th meeting are the rising prices of materials and stagnant shop budgets, and the new lesson plan initiatives. Over the next few months, we will gather information and facts to bring with us to these meetings. Any evidence you can share would be greatly appreciated. I know that there are other issues that exist across the district. Please feel free to share them with me. mhurtado@svft.org



It's Not Just Preps You're Giving Up

By Bob Riccitelli, Executive Union Officer

There seems to be confusion over preps so let me explain. Each day you should have one prep period. Administration can take one prep per week. You must go to your business manager and fill out a missed prep form. You must be paid \$31.00 for that prep. This is covered in our contract under Article 7, Section 2a(3). If you are asked to cover more than one class in a given week on your prep, please document the directive, and let me know. You cannot be insubordinate, but I will file a grievance.

The reason this is happening more often is COVID and teacher vacancies. Right now, if schools have already used everyone's preps in one week and do not have enough substitutes, they are forced to close. Many members reached out to us, and we listened to their frustration, concerns, and suggestions. We offered a stipulated agreement to Central Office to help rectify this issue. It states that if a school is short teachers and there are not enough substitutes to cover, administration can take all prep periods for teachers and call an early dismissal. Teachers will be able to leave 15 minutes after the students leave. Our compensation would be the half day. As I write this, we are waiting for CO to sign the agreement.

We understand the pressure and desire to keep the buildings open. We also have seen teachers taken advantage of when we do not have the language to protect them or when past practice negates our language. When teachers choose to do things outside of our contract, we risk losing important contract language.

Did you know?

Fun Fact from our Contract:

You can make a one-time 5 sick day donation to the Sick Bank within the first five years that you are a member of the Sick Bank.

Article 4, Section 4i(1)

Labor/Management Committee

October 5, 2022

1. Introductions

SVFT: Krista Miller (Eli Whitney), Kelley Benzing (Norwich), Paul Angelucci, Makenzi Hurtado, Bob Riccitelli
CTECS: Dr. Ellen Solek, Rafael Palacio, Dr. Nikitoula Menounos

2. SVFT Concerns

a. Plato vs Actively Learn

Kelley Benzing shared that many buildings have multiple long-term vacancies, and they are using Actively Learn. This requires the substitute to know what they are looking for and requires a lot of prepping. There are also not enough activities for the students.

Dr. Menounos said the price for Plato is a la carte. Actively Learn is one price. AL positives: standards based, has auditory for ELL or Special Education, digital library.

Makenzi acknowledged that this is helpful as supplement for a class with a teacher, but it is not helpful for the substitutes.

Dr. Solek said that she and Dr. Menounos will touch base on Plato and what we own and why there are inconsistencies in different schools.

Dr. Menounos: Evette oversaw Plato and all her knowledge left with her. Now it is Margaret Sanchez and Tim Viens

b. School Nurses Vacancies – Health Tech Covering

Bob: There are schools with nurse vacancies and students are being sent to Health Tech.

Dr. Menounos agreed that this absolutely should not be happening. There is a principal meeting Thursday and Dr. Menounos will address it there.

Bob: Their licensing does require them to intervene if they are sent someone, so we need to make sure they are not being sent.

Paul asked who has the School Based Health Clinic. Whitney, Prince, Norwich, Grasso is getting it.

Dr. Solek shared they filled nursing vacancies at Wright Tech and Norwich Tech.

Dr. Solek asked for the specific schools where this is happening.

c. Title I funds being denied

Bob: Title I schools need extra resources. This year Title I requests are being denied in every subject. This is extremely frustrating for teachers and DHs in these buildings.

Dr. Menounos: We are being careful because of our auditing of Title I funds. Principals received their first training on Title I funds. Some things are denied because the supervisor or Joe Campbell checks to see if it duplicates the services of subscriptions that CTECS already pays for. Justifications need to be met.

Krista: At Eli Whitney, it was for SAT Prep resources. And school goals are based on SAT and PSAT.

Makenzi: Teachers don't even know what they have access to and are not given proper log in information.

Can the district share current subscriptions?

d. Revision of policies and curriculum after the start of the year, including SEL assignment

Kelley: Curriculum updated throughout the year. Last year English got a new curriculum on the first day of school. There is not a lot of time to prep for this. Units of curriculum are not complete in a timely manner.

Krista: Special Education does not have access to Reveal.

Kelley: Units in book and units online don't match. There are not enough teacher books. A lot of time is needed to prepare for a new curriculum.

Kelley: It would be helpful to have a list of what we have access to.

SEL: At Norwich there was an SEL class that had a curriculum, but they didn't consider the prep included. At Wright Tech they have SEL periods without guidance.

Dr. Menounos will follow up. There is a curriculum for SEL called OneDer.

Makenzi: We need to wait when things are not complete. We cannot keep implementing things that are not complete.

Dr. Solek and Dr. Menounos agreed.

Paul asked how close we are to having a Science Consultant. Dr. Menounos shared that there is a preferred candidate and he will start on October 7th. He will have an executive principal mentor. He will begin in charge of science and then transition into leading Health/PE, and then Health Tech.

3. CTECS

a. Shortages

Dr. Solek shared that they are trying to find new solutions to our vacancies and substitute shortages.

Paul asked for clarification on the process because there are so many people that are told they are preferred candidates and then don't hear anything for months.

Dr. Menounos said they had a meeting about onboarding. They are trying to figure out where it is getting bogged down. It is a frustration on all levels.

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Labor Management Minutes

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4. Follow Up

a. New Special Education platform

Krista: Gave the example that she had to do a manifestation and it was not available on the platform. The positive is it is a nice-looking document. It is very easy to read for parents. It takes 6-7 days to complete an IEP. These used to take 45 minutes to complete. There are no good user guides. All the guides regurgitate the same information. Special education only had until August 30th to complete all incoming freshmen. IEPs exist, but they cannot be uploaded to SEDS properly.

If a sending district does not use Frontline, the DH had to hand type each IEP. There is no common language. There are no drop-down options. Everything must be hand typed.

Dr. Solek said that CT SEDS was the top of the agenda at the superintendent's state meeting. This is an issue across the State.

Dr. Solek will reach out to Bryan Klimkiewicz. She will advocate for help for our teachers.

Makenzi: What types of guidance or support can we give our special education teachers now?

Dr. Solek: What is Javette telling you?

Krista: We created a form to share problems and the programmers are helping with the problems. At Eli Whitney they have allotted more time for Special Education teachers to complete this work.

Bob asked that this happens in other schools.

b. Role of Managers/Consultants/Supervisors/Directors and Chain of Command

This is an ever-changing document. They are working on a revision.

Dr. Menounos reiterated that teachers listen to their Building Principal.

Supervisors/Directors can do observations. All of their information/concerns should funnel through the principal.

Connecticut AFL-CIO LABOR TO LABOR WALKS

OCTOBER & November 2022

Join your fellow union members for canvassing when we will knock on union household doors to talk about issues and educate members about labor's endorsed candidates. Before you go out canvassing, you will receive training, a prepared script, and a list of union households in a neighborhood. You can pair up with another union volunteer.

We will supply coffee, donuts, and bagels too!

Saturday, October 15th – 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Hamden and the Naugatuck Valley: Labor Canvass for Ned Lamont, Jorge Cabrera (SD 17) & Kara Rochelle (HD 104)
Meet at: Operating Engineers 478, 1965 Dixwell Ave., Hamden

New London: Labor Canvass for Joe Courtney, Ned Lamont & Martha Marx (SD 20) Meet at: L&M Nurses Local 5049, 43 Converse Place, New London

Vernon: Labor Canvass for Joe Courtney, Ned Lamont & Lisa Thomas (SD 35) Meet at: Home of Ole Hermanson, 25 Cold Spring Dr., Vernon

Waterbury: Labor Canvass for Jahana Hayes & Ron Napoli, Jr. (HD 73) Meet at: Waterbury Fire Fighters Association, 1551 Thomaston Ave., Waterbury

Saturday, October 22nd – 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Danbury: Labor Canvass for Jahana Hayes, Ned Lamont & Julie Kushner (SD 24) Meet at: Danbury DTC, 161 Main Street, Danbury

Meriden: Labor Canvass for Jahana Hayes, Ned Lamont & Jan Hochadel (SD 13) Meet at: Meriden Federation of Teachers, 35 Pleasant Street, Meriden

Bristol: Labor Canvass for Ned Lamont, Greg Hahn (SD 31), Andrew Rasmussen-Tuller (HD 77)/ Mary Fortier (HD 79)
Meet at: Bristol Labor Federation, 61 East Main St., Bristol

New Milford: Labor Canvass for Jahana Hayes, Ned Lamont, & Eva Bermúdez Zimmerman (SD 30) Meet at: Home of Eva Bermúdez Zimmerman, 39 Greenview Road, New Milford

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Saturday, October 29th – 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 Bridgeport: Labor Canvass for Richard Blumenthal/Ned Lamont Meet at: LIUNA 665, 269 Federal St., Bridgeport

Hartford: Labor Canvass for Richard Blumenthal/Ned Lamont Meet at: Hartford Federation of Teachers, 85 Buckingham St., Hartford

New Haven: Labor Canvass for Richard Blumenthal/Ned Lamont Meet at: Operating Engineers 478, 1965 Dixwell Ave., Hamden

Saturday, November 5th – (2 Shifts/location 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM)
 Danbury: Labor Canvass for Jahana Hayes, Ned Lamont & Julie Kushner (SD 24) Meet at: Danbury DTC, 161 Main Street, Danbury

Meriden: Labor Canvass for Jahana Hayes, Ned Lamont & Jan Hochadel (SD 13) Meet at: Meriden Federation of Teachers, 35 Pleasant Street, Meriden

Sunday, November 6th – 1:00 – 4:00 PM
 Hamden and the Naugatuck Valley: Labor Canvass for Ned Lamont, Jorge Cabrera (SD 17) & Kara Rochelle (HD 104) Meet at: CWA Local 1298, 3055 Dixwell Ave., Hamden

New London: Labor Canvass for Joe Courtney, Ned Lamont & Martha Marx (SD 20) Meet at: L&M Nurses Local 5049, 43 Converse Place, New London

For more information, please contact Alex Kolokotronis, Legislative and Political Organizer at 917-603-2389 or akolokotronis@ctaflcio.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.