

Vocational Instructor

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



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

Volume MMXXIV Issue 4

June 2024



Congratulations to
Dr. Rachel Riendeau,
our District Teacher of the Year!



Back Row: Paul Angelucci, Rachel Riendeau, Chris Reilly, Kim Adams, Mario Longo, Mark Boland, Chris Morgan, Kristen Braccia-Hufnagel, Matthew James, Keith LeBouthillier

Front Row: Stephen Sorel, Ashley Camera, Karina Torres, Caro Marrero, Jake Walsh, Arthur Greene, RoseAnn Vaughan, Makenzi Hurtado, Tashua Troiano (TOY Committee Chair), Jamie Lamitie

Not Pictured: Russ Stockton, Kathryn Boyer

A Quick Recap

by Paul Angelucci, President

The '23-'24 school year was a busy one for us. We leveled and won a labor charge regarding sub-contracting our certified teaching positions out. We had a favorable ruling regarding TRB and our SAIL instructors. We also started this year with the record-setting largest number of freshmen Union Committee Members, who did a fantastic job on all fronts! We also gave testimony on several bills that would benefit our members, and the district.

In the advocating department, we support our current interim Superintendent Dr. Lowe for the position. We've seen positive change and would like this process to move along. The coming year will be a busy one, as well, with the new evaluation program, negotiating, and hopefully working with a permanent superintendent on the steady basis we've developed. The new school year will see the beginning of negotiations for our next contract. All members will be a part of the process, from writing the proposals (see page 2), to voting on your favorite ones to move forward. As we enter the last year of our current contract, we will receive our wage increase of 2.5%, plus a step, (if you've completed 92 days of a school year), or top step bonus. All members will receive a new pay scale for the year including the appendix positions as soon as central office/payroll produces it.

I hope this summer is whatever you need it to be! I would say re-charge your battery but, some like me, may need a total rebuild or replacement. I hope this summer is your best yet!

See you in August!

Preparing for a New Evaluation

by Makenzi Hurtado, Vice President

For my entire teaching career, I have participated in an Evaluation and Support Plan that did neither of those things. All year the PDEC Committee has been meeting to develop a better system. Our union was represented well on the committee by six educators who were committed to creating something that is more practical, supportive, and educator focused.

The new plan will be a work in progress and the committee will continue to meet over the next two years to tweak it, when necessary. This will be a learning experience for every person in our district.

I do believe that educators will see that the purpose of this new plan is for us to be able to identify areas in our craft where we can grow and for us to receive the support and professional learning to achieve that growth.

Contract Negotiations Proposals

In the February *Vocational Instructor*, we shared a tentative plan for the Contract Negotiation process. Throughout this process there will be several different times when we ask members for their input.

If you have a proposal that you would like the committee to review and consider, you must complete the Proposal Google Form.

This is the only avenue that we will use to accept proposals.

Please do not email proposals to officers, your building representatives, or committee members.

<https://forms.gle/1Cx3fgBAUVSwSn2R6>

This link will also be sent in email and will be available on our website.



Congratulations on Completing Your 20 th Year		Congratulations on Completing Your 25 th Year	Congratulations on Completing Your 30 th Year
Patricia Ahlers	Elizabeth Keith	Nancy Axon	Gilda Puccio
Gregg Antoch	Amanda Kiszka-Curtis	Jeffrey Belanger	Andrew Taddei
Gabriel Ardito	Eric Krebs	Elizabeth Boudreau	
Jennifer Audette	Diane Law	Shawn Carpenter	
Terri Bambakidou	James Lilienthal	Eva Esposito	
Jeffrey Bemis	Christopher Lynch	Deborah Freedman	
Daniel Burns	Pleshette Markel	Andrew Ipkovich	
Frances Chappa-Rivera	Rebecca Marra	Brian Malota	
Brian Charron	Jill Menghi	James Milliken	
Tamara Connors	Sarah Minei	Margaret Moreau	
Victor Cooper	Deborah Mongillo	Michelle Primavera	
Deborah Diamond	Suzanne Niemiec	Kristine Stone	
Robert Dimenna	Danielle Quinlan	Raymond Tanguay	
Gregory Falla	Daniel Quinn	Mark Vincent	
Kristine Ferrare	Christopher Reilly		
Laura Flowers	Monica Rogers		
James Gallow	Stephen Schomaker		
Vincent Grimaldi	Ericka Shevchenko		
Bruce Haney	Brendan Smith		
Robert Hany	Jacqueline Sullivan		
Lisa Henriquez	Raymond Stawski		
Lisa Higgins	Amber Stolz		
George Hughes III	Amy Tavares		
Joseph Iannone	Michelle Theriault		
Lillie Johnson	Sandeep Tibrewal		

Thank you for your years of dedicated service. Your passion and commitment have shaped countless lives and made a lasting impact on our district and union. We appreciate all that you do to inspire and educate future generations.

After Retirement

By Bill Selski, ret 2009

Congratulations! You are approaching your retirement from the CTECS system. You have been preparing for this moment throughout your career. The summer break is easing you into the next school year, but this time, you won't be counting the days until that first day back. Instead, it will be a continuation of your summer break.

Your retirement coincides with your fellow teachers heading back to the classroom. This is when your days will transition into retirement. No more waking up to an alarm to get to the classroom. Now, you can look at the clock and decide what your schedule will be for the day.

Yes, you will be busier than you thought. Make that to-do list and prioritize it. Then, reverse sort it to tackle the easiest tasks first. When the list shortens, you will feel a great sense of accomplishment.

Keep in touch with your fellow retired teachers by continuing your affiliation with the SVFT through the SVFT-R. The "R" stands for retiree. The dues are less expensive, and you can gain valuable knowledge from your fellow retirees at the twice-a-year meetings central to the state. Participate in the social get-togethers offered by the chapter.

If you are retiring this year, be on the lookout for an email from Cheryl Christie Collett, President of SVFT-R. You can also reach out to her at cccsvft@gmail.com

Labor/Management Committee Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2024

In Attendance:

Labor: Rich Benedict (Platt), John Hemenway (Wright), Johana Rios-Roldan (Eli Whitney), Makenzi Hurtado, Bob Riccitelli

Management: Dr. Nikitoula Menounos, Rafael Palacio

SVFT Issues

District Phone Policy and Yondr Pouches

John - Request - District Wide Policy to adopt the pouches. As much as we have a policy, the practicality of managing it is not feasible anymore. It cannot be an individual teacher or student policy anymore. There is so much evidence that these devices are detrimental to learning. School districts are adopting them across NY, RI, MA, and CT. The student keeps the pouch. In case of an emergency, they can be ripped open. It would be part of their equipment that the district provides.

Puts the focus back on teaching and learning.

Fights are not only be coordinated, but recorded with the devices.

Johanna - There is a lot of new research on the negative effects; on sleep disturbance, anxiety and depression, decreased attention and focus. It does affect our students' mental health. Our students are not comfortable doing things in the building because they don't want to be recorded. This includes small things like answering questions or asking questions, and bigger things like participating in school activities.

Bob - Just recently a student was recording a teacher without the teacher knowing. He is looking to catch the teacher doing something, but in the process was also recording conversations the teacher was having with students, parents, and colleagues.

John - Yondr will work with administration to coordinate the whole process to ensure that it is effective.

Dr. Menounos - I believe in having a process, policy, and procedure for anything we do. As of 4/18, we approved \$30,298.50 using RESCO funds, for 819 pouches for Prince. We will see how this works at Prince and then move forward. We can't just give out pouches. We need to have a PD plan.

Vape and Substance Policy

Request - District Wide Policies on vaping, consequences, substance use, what to do if a student appears to be impaired

Makenzi - Drug Recognition Expert Request - Each building have an administrator or nurse who is trained to identify when a person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Rich - There is an inherent amount of risk already in a shop. To have an impaired students escalates the level of safety.

Bob - If we can have a focus group so that administration can understand what teachers are going through.

Makenzi - Like with many things, we have different policies and procedures in every school. We have some schools where students are sent back to class after taking a nap. We have schools where teachers are not allowed to send students out if they believe they are impaired, but have to wait for an administrator to come to the room and make a determination.

Johanna - At Eli Whitney we do have a process. The student is sent to the nurse, the nurse assesses if the student is under the influence, if yes, the student is sent home and a consequence follows. If a student is found under the influence, we are developing a process and substance abuse protocol for the student to complete.

Dr. Menounos - I will talk to John Woodmansee and the district attorneys.

Trade Teacher Start of Year Time

Rich - Request - Teachers be given time to set up their shops

Trade teachers estimate it takes at least 20 hours to set up a shop.

Setting up a shop includes: the space, the business aspect, the classroom, the equipment, the supplies.

If time is not given before school starts, time is taken away from student learning.

CTECS Issues

PD in May for Grading - needed to be postponed until September. The invitation list is huge.

Professional Development

Don't know if you can submit the Marzano without your name/email.

Professionalism is the expectation and addressing concerns in a professional manner.

If PD is virtual, the teacher is expected to be in their building at their regular start time. Travel time is only allotted for PD in different buildings.

Placement Testing

Bob - Saturday placement English/math - has to be their per diem hourly rate. We have agreed that all placement testing will be paid in the pay period after July 1st. This includes the prorated hours needed to grade.

Follow Up

- Busses - Dr. Menounos will talk to Dr. Lowe and Mr. Camacho
- Financial - iCar won't give the seniors their certification tests until the state pays. We are requesting training when the new Electronic OF95 comes into play.
- Support for Teachers So They Can Support Students
Dr Menounos - beginning of year PD with TESOL teachers rolling out strategies. There will be summer PDs available this and teachers are paid their per diem hourly rate to attend. They are two hour sessions across the district.
Johanna - We have students that need daily living skills, adaptive skills, etc that are part of their IEP. We don't have the strategies or classes to support these students.

DCF Issues

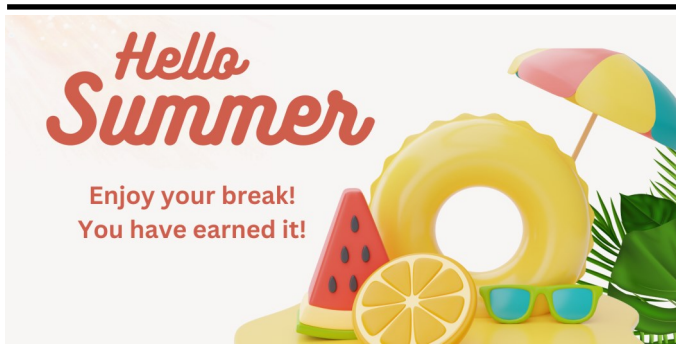
by Bob Riccitelli, Executive Union Representative

In my final article for this year, I want to inform you about the new practices of DCF. I have been told they have a newly trained squad of investigators just for teacher issues. These investigators just show up at the building and ask to speak with the teacher. We have seen this a couple of times recently. It is my advice, and our Attorney's advice, to never speak to DCF alone. Just give the DCF worker my number (203-640-8147) and I will coordinate the interview between me, you, our lawyers and DCF. Don't say anything else, even if it seems like a casual conversation, DCF can use anything you say in the case. You are under no obligation to speak with a DCF investigator without representation. Don't think "I have nothing to hide so I'll just talk with them". This is what we are here for. Use us.

On a more positive note: this year is going to an end very soon. It has been another very challenging year. After the last day of school, you have no obligation to work, including checking emails. You work tirelessly all year long and you need time to rest and recharge your batteries.

Take this time OFF from work, you earned it.

Have a great summer recess.



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

is the monthly newsletter of the
State Vocational Federation of Teachers

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Vice President Makenzi Hurtado
Executive Union Rep Bob Riccitelli
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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.