

Vocational Instructor

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



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

Volume MMXXIV Issue 6

November 2024



An Update as of 11-07-2024 by Paul Angelucci, President

With the speed in which things change around here I thought the title fitting. Just some highlights, as of now. The Governor appointed a new board chair and I immediately reached out to her for a meeting. There is currently a posting for a permanent superintendent as well as a chief financial officer, both of which we've been asking for since last year (or longer).

We continue to hear of software subscriptions that are no longer available due to payment issues, and many other ways our teachers and students are affected by the lack of leadership. These issues are first on the list once new leadership is in place. I can tell you we sent a clear message to the Governor that what's taken place in our district is indefensible and won't be tolerated. There is much work to do this coming year including contract

negotiations, working with new leadership, and defending the daily attacks on our contract language.

I want to once again thank every member who stood up for our students and our district in our vote. I want to publicly thank Pat Keavney, outgoing board chair and 35 year SVFT member, for her continued support in the removal of the executive director. I want to publicly thank John DiSette - President of A&R Local 4200, Jody Barr - Ex. Director of AFSCME Council 4, Carl Chisem - President of SEIU Local 511, David Glidden - Ex. Director of CSEA CEIU Local 2001, and Rebecca Simonsen - Vice President of New England Healthcare District 1199/SEIU. These union leaders stood with us asking for the removal of our Executive Director. The only union leader in our entire district who wouldn't stand with us and sign our letter was Javette Allen, President of AFSA the American Federation of School Administrators. We'll continue to keep you informed and if you have any questions for me please give me a call 203-627-0710.

How the Headlines Changed in ONE MONTH thanks to the hard work and solidarity of our members and our fellow union siblings!

NEWS // EDUCATION

CT tech school teachers plan no confidence vote for CTECS executive director: 'A breaking point'

By **Natasha Sokoloff**, Staff writer
Oct 1, 2024



NEWS // EDUCATION

'A fresh start': CT tech schools set for leadership overhaul after turmoil

By **Natasha Sokoloff**, Staff writer
Nov 4, 2024

Preparing for Negotiations

by *Makenzi Hurtado, Vice-President*

This school year began with many challenges, from issues affecting our members within our district to local and national elections. We all have a lot on our minds, and we know that everyone is concerned about upcoming negotiations. Although our current contract runs from September 1, 2021, to August 31, 2025, we did not ratify the contract until March 2022. As a result, we didn't see many changes until the summer of 2022. We also had to ratify a wage package for the current school year in March 2024. Since the ratification of our last contract, we have been working hard to protect both the new language we negotiated and the longstanding language that has been essential to our work.

In January, we shared a tentative timeline for the upcoming negotiations. Of course, various factors will influence this timeline, and we've already had to make some adjustments. Initially, we set a short window for accepting proposals from members, but we extended this period until November 1st to give everyone ample time to share their ideas. From June to November, we received 60 proposal forms. Some of these were repeats, submitted by different members, but all are being reviewed carefully. We are now working with our attorney to vet these proposals. It is important to note that not every proposal can be negotiated, and if we determine a proposal is not negotiable, we will notify the member who submitted it and explain why.

After reviewing all the proposals, we will send a survey to all members, asking you to rank them according to priority. This will help us gauge the importance of each issue to our membership. Based on the survey results, we'll meet with our negotiating committee and our attorney to decide which proposals will move forward.

Negotiations can officially begin in January 2025. Our attorney will formally request to bargain with the district, and we will begin setting ground rules and dates for the negotiation sessions. We are excited to have a strong, diverse team representing our members at the table. This team includes representatives from nearly every position in the district—veteran members who have spent their entire careers here, as well as newer members with experience from other districts who bring fresh perspectives. We assembled this team to ensure that we hear all voices and leverage the expertise of every group within our union.

Once our negotiating team decides which proposals to pursue, we will communicate those decisions with all members. However, once negotiations begin, we will not be able to discuss specific details publicly. This is a standard part of the bargaining process to ensure fairness and maintain a productive negotiating environment.

We know many of you are wondering how the current state of the district will impact negotiations. There are still many unknowns, such as who will be negotiating on behalf of the district and what proposals they will bring to the table. What we do know is this: we are united, we have a solid plan, and we're ready to stand firm for what's best for our members. We are particularly excited to begin negotiations with Eric Chester as our attorney. Eric has extensive experience negotiating contracts and has secured great outcomes in some challenging negotiations. Eric also already represented us and defended our contract through successful labor charges and arbitrations. We also have an excellent negotiating team, chosen for their ability to represent the diverse needs of our members. Many of them wear multiple hats, so they will bring a broad range of insights to the table. Our officers, too, bring valuable perspectives, contributing ideas that will strengthen our collective voice in negotiations.

As we move forward, we want to thank everyone for their continued support and, most importantly, their participation. This is a collaborative process, and your involvement is critical to our success. Together, we will ensure that our next contract reflects the hard work and dedication of every member in our district.

Labor/Management Committee Meeting Minutes

Labor/Management Committee meets four times per year. The minutes from these meetings are always shared in our following newsletter.

In Attendance SVFT – Paul Angelucci (President), Bob Riccitelli (Executive Union Representative), Rich Benedict (Platt), John Hemenway (Wright), Johanna Rios-Roldan (Eli Whitney)
CTECS – Dr Ellen Solek (Executive Director), Dr. Justin Lowe (Interim Superintendent), Dr. Nikitoula Menounos (Assistant Superintendent), Rafael Palacio (Labor Relations)

1. SVFT

- Lottery

Paul expressed his concerns about not having enough support staff.

Ellen stated we will be holding off the lottery system until next year.

Justin stated he is also concerned about meeting the needs of the students emotionally, educationally, and financially.

Follow Up from 2023-2024 School Year

- Lack of Buses

Rich stated the number of buses has decreased and the quality of buses is horrible. The lack of reliable transportation has had a major impact on production work.

Justin stated there are 139 buses. He was told by Lou Camacho only 5 were out of commission.

Ellen said would like us to tell her what schools are short buses and how many.

Justin says there are fire code issues with the electric bus charging stations.

- Trade Credentials

Rich explained the missing certifications, like iCar in Collision, and other shop programs not working have had a major impact on the quality of the students' education.

Justin stated the second quarter allotment has been distributed. This allotment will cover the other shop programs. This should be very soon.

Niki stated that the second quarter should fund the rest of the academic programs as well.

Ellen just repeated what Justin and Niki said.

- Consistent Safety Plans Across the District

John explained that Wright Tech has new security gates for pedestrians and cars. The car gate works fine for vehicles but badge access for gates can trap pedestals.

Paul said not having enough secretaries to man phones is a safety concern for many reasons. Students are no longer allowed to have their cell phones. This is causing concerns for parents that were told if they want to get a hold of their child to call the office. Teachers also need to be able to reach the office immediately during an emergency.

Justin already made a presentation to OPM to obtain more funding.

Ellen agreed the Justin did a great job with this presentation.

John brought up the fact that every school has their own safety plan.

There should be one plan through the district. This way when teachers or students transfer or visit another school, they are familiar with the safety plan.

Justin said the threat assessment plan will be consistent. Woodmansee is working on it.

- Supporting Teachers So They Can Support Students

Johanna expressed concerns about post COVID needs and training for teachers to deal with student behavioral issues. Teachers need more strategies than just restorative circles.

Ellen said she will work to get teachers these supports.

Niki asked how work with Joe Brummer was going at Whitney. Johanna feels it is going well, and she would recommend using it at other schools.

Ellen reiterated what Johanna and Niki stated.

Ellen stated the district is talking to SDE about making the entire district Title 1. She expressed concern that if the district doesn't follow through, it could shortchange our district.

Justin is working with Niki on teacher and DH onboarding, better use of the funding allocation and reinstating qualified school business managers.

- Trade Teachers Need Collaborative Time (between shops and between schools)

Rich gave examples of why this is important to be able to spend time with other shops at other schools to get ideas and help new instructors.

Paul stated Brent McCartney is working on the onboarding & will bring the data to the table.

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Labor Management Meeting Minutes continued...

- Professional Development/Vector Trainings
John said Jayme Beckham at Wright Tech is allocating time for Vector training, but not all principals were.
Justin released a memo to Principals to supply a two-week block after school for this training.
John also stated that the PD environment was poor quality. (Location, sound, conference room set-up.
Niki stated SVFT members were unprofessional. Speaking of unprofessionalism, Bob stated that counseling meeting was switched from 8:30 to 8:00 after the end of the school day the day before the meeting.
Also, teachers still do not have access to ALEKS, Activity Learn, or other programs.
Niki stated this will not be funded for a while if at all.

2. CTECS

Ellen stated OPM oversees our fiscal expenses. Peter and Holly from OPM and Justin & Ellen meet bi-weekly. Frontloaded ESSER funds of \$28 million ran out. Ellen had been saying to them for the last two years this was going to be an issue. OPM is not working against us. The legislation will not give us the \$6.5 million she asked for while they were in session. Ellen stated Justin did a great job presenting to Secretary Beckham of OPM. Justin expressed or needs for secretaries, instructors, supplies, & Bond Funding. OPM was good with his presentation. Special education costs are going up. CREC could supply paraeducators, school psychologists, social workers, and special education instructors. The CREC budget went up to 12.8 million.
Secretary Beckham met with Ellen and Justin for a two-hour tour of Grasso. Now Ellen wants to invite anyone that wants to see our schools.



On November 6, 2024, Dr. Rachel Riendeau, Windham Tech's General Education Department Head and social studies teacher was recognized as a state semifinalist for Connecticut Teacher of the Year.

TRANSFER WINDOW IS OPEN

August 15 - March 15

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

TRANSFER RIGHTS information is in Article 11, Section One of our contract.



Calendar

11/22 Early Dismissal
11/23 No School
11/24 No School
12/10 Trade Advisory
12/11 Executive Council
12/12 Abbott H&S Visit
12/18 MTC Meeting
12/18 Labor Management



Vocational Instructor

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

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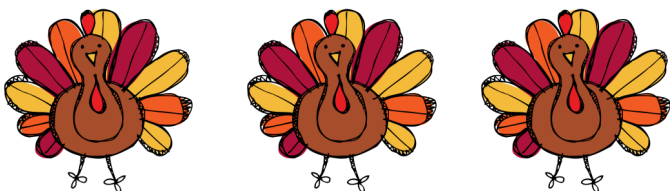
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svft.ct.aft.org

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 welcome member articles in our
newsletter.
We reserve the right to edit articles. We
reserve the right not to publish articles
for any reason.***

What else do you want to see in the
Vocational Instructor? Please let us
know!

Email Jamie at 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.