

Vocational Instructor

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



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

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Good News, Bad News

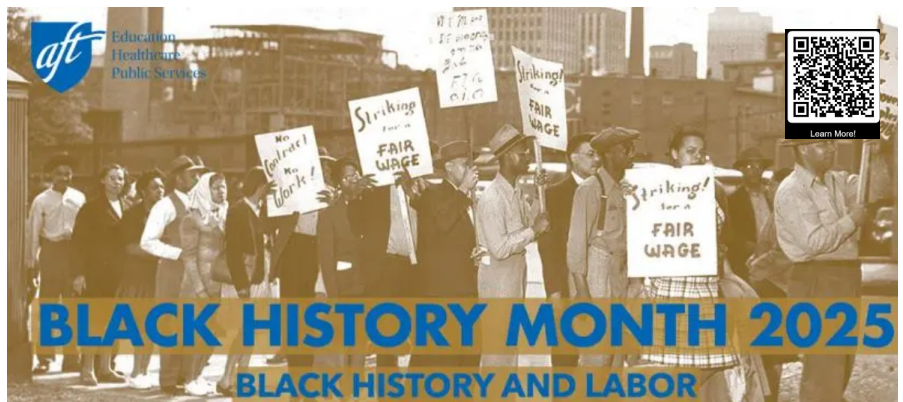
by Paul Angelucci, President

It's been very busy in our office and I want to update you on what's going on and what's coming in the near future. Let's start with the good news, when the biennial budget was released, the Governor stated that there was an additional \$12 million for CTECS to align with current spending. He also stated that there was money available for the new Windham Tech. We've been advocating/complaining long before the hard freezes and lack of supplies that our current funding was inadequate. We are closer than ever to obtaining a level of lay-off protection we've never had. It started two years ago when I gave testimony to return the red line positions that are automatically refilled when vacated, thanks to a current Bill this session. We are closer than ever to getting shop teachers paid for working their TTAC night events due to a current arbitration. We are also closer than ever to having the classes required for shop teachers reduced, thanks to Co-Chair of Education State Representative Leeper. I gave testimony 2 years ago against a Bill she had but now found common ground. The conversation and effort this session being put forward into fixing our special education situation is encouraging. Makenzi has sent out town hall dates, please try to attend. State Senator Sujata Wilcox and State Representative Maryam Kahn (who previously was a member at Prince in the Special Ed Dept.) are Co-Chairs and really looking to help us out. I gave supporting testimony on the 30th for the appointment of Dr. Pritchard to be our Executive Director. To date she has been reactive, leads with common sense, and has been making moves that were long overdue. One being quickly bringing in an outside firm to review current HR/Labor relations processes, moving along the Superintendent hiring process (she has stated they would like to see a placement by the end of March), moving board meetings back to the schools, and, equally important, the announcement of a Chief Financial Officer candidate. She understands what we need as an agency, and we'll be monitoring her progress closely.

Now the bad news, our state budget in Connecticut is about 17 to 20% Federal dollars, and with the current President threatening to withhold those funds it could affect us in many ways. There have been discussions around our Fiscal Guardrails, with them the state has a deficit, without them we would have \$1.4 billion surplus. That along with the attack on the Department of Education from the executive branch gives us much to worry about.

In the near future we will be sending out two requests for action that are very important: the first is a survey that is written by SEBAC, the State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition, that will have questions around the 2027 Health & Pension Deal we currently have. It will be sent by us and the return is to SEBAC. Any change in the current deal would need a ratification vote by all members. The second survey will be related to the Paid Family Leave Act. The Governor wants to offer it but wants it cost neutral. The thinking is it will cost us a half of a percent of income, and at the end of the year you can buy back that amount it cost you out of your accrued sick time. Again, this would have to be voted on by each individual union to opt in. There will be more to follow on both of these issues. In March there will be Legislative Breakfasts held in restaurants across the state. It's a good time for you to meet your legislators. It's a lot of fun and is set up like speed dating. The food is free and the conversation is helpful for our law makers to make the right decisions.

So please keep an eye on your e-mail and if you have any questions please give me a call 203-627-0710



We Are Not Alone

by Makenzi Hurtado, Vice President

A question I get asked frequently is, “What is the union doing about this situation?” What people usually mean is, “What are the officers doing about this issue?” Sometimes, the answer is simple because I, or other officers, are directly working on the issue. However, lately, this question has encompassed larger issues that go beyond our local scope. Many people are wondering about what will happen when the SEBAC Agreement expires in 2027. Others have questions about the president’s executive orders and how they will impact us.

As a local union, we focus on our mission statement (which can be found on the last page of this newsletter). But it's important to remember that we are part of several larger organizations that are working on these issues as well. Through meetings with our parent unions, we stay informed not only about the challenges faced by other unions, but also about the steps our parent unions are taking to address state, national, and even global issues.

SEBAC: State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition

SEBAC represents approximately 46,000 Connecticut state employees. They negotiate on our behalf for wages and pensions. As president of SVFT, Paul represents us within SEBAC, and I serve on SEBAC’s Racial Justice Committee. SEBAC advocates for our rights at the state level, and they also provide guidance on legislation that could impact our members.



AFT-CT: American Federation of Teachers – Connecticut

AFT-CT represents over 90 unions across Connecticut. As president of SVFT, Paul sits on the AFT-CT Executive Council, and I serve on the PreK-12 Council. Through AFT-CT, I also participate in the Accountability Index and Grading Policy Taskforce, as well as the Graduation Requirements Taskforce. These roles allow us to support other unions in Connecticut and gain support when needed. AFT-CT played a crucial role in our campaign to remove our last executive director.



AFT Connecticut
A Union of Professionals

This past weekend, AFT-CT held its annual Legislative Conference, where we learned about the legislative priorities for the current session. All members were invited to attend, and AFT-CT is our primary source for information on upcoming bills that will affect CTECS. In March, AFT-CT will host Regional Legislative Breakfasts where you can meet with your representatives — that means *you* have an opportunity to get involved!

AFT-CT also offers free training and resources to all its members. Our officers and delegates represent SVFT at AFT-CT conferences and delegate meetings, helping to ensure our voice is heard.

AFT: American Federation of Teachers

AFT represents more than 1.7 million members nationwide. Each summer, SVFT sends delegates to the AFT Convention, where we represent our members on a national scale. In 2024, we voted on AFT’s priorities for the next two years, which include both national and global issues. AFT has been working hard to oppose executive orders before they were even issued, and they continue to play a vital role in defending public education and teachers’ rights across the country.



AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

AFL-CIO: American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations

SVFT is also a part of the AFL-CIO, both nationally and in Connecticut. The Connecticut AFL-CIO represents hundreds of public, private, and building trade unions, with nearly 250,000 members across the state. On a national level, the AFL-CIO represents over 10 million members. As an

SVFT member, you are eligible to join your Area Labor Federation, which provides a great opportunity to collaborate with fellow union members in your region. Connecticut is divided into two areas, Western and Eastern, each with four local areas. You can choose to join the area where you live or where you work. I am a member of the Hartford Labor Coalition, and we are always looking for new members to get involved!

Please take a moment to follow our parent unions on social media or sign up for their newsletters. We do share highlights of their work and offerings, but there are many opportunities for you to join in or learn about the issues that are affecting us!

While our local union is focused on supporting our members, it's important to remember that we are part of a larger network of organizations working on issues that impact us all. Through our connections with SEBAC, AFT-CT, AFT, and the AFL-CIO, we stay informed and united in advocating for the rights of our members, both locally and beyond. Together, we have the strength to face the challenges ahead and ensure our voices are heard at every level. Thank you for being an active part of our collective effort.

FAQ - With an Answer!

Q - I just earned my Professional Certificate. What do I do with it?

A - Contract language can be found in Appendix A, Salary Placement on Change in Status.

The teacher's responsibility is to provide a copy of the professional certificate to the School Principal. We recommend sending it in email to mark the date.

The effective date will increase on the pay period on or after the date of the certificate IF the employee immediately provides the certificate. If the certificate is not immediately given, the start date will be the pay period after the certificate is given to the Principal.

Lack of Action from CTECS Labor Relations and Legal

by Bob Riccitelli , Executive Union Representative

We have a number of issues that CTECS Legal and Labor Relations is not responding to. These issues are broken down into two areas. Board Charges, which are agreements we have that CTECS is not upholding, and pending Arbitrations, which they are not responding to at all.

We just had a Labor Board Mediation for unfilled FOIA requests. CTECS Legal/Labor Relations has already broke the mediation agreement.

We have asked our attorney to file a Board Charge for the following Stipulated Agreements that CTECS agreed to and signed, but has not followed:

180 day math – This is an agreement that stops administration from scheduling more than one subject during a class period, i.e. cannot have Algebra 1 and geometry in the same class.

Trade team mentors – Mentors of trade teachers have always been paid 3/5 of the TEAM stipend, but in the last year, CTECS tried to only pay 1/2. After signing this agreement, CTECS should have paid mentors the remaining amount.

Multiple Mentees – Central Office misquoted TEAM by stating you can only be paid for one mentee, even if you have more. This was proven to be false. If you have two mentees you need to be paid for two.

Unlisted Stipend Positions – Every year teachers complete work, such as curriculum writing and then do not get paid in a timely manner. This is due to a lack of process in Central Office, but there is no excuse.

LMS/IT – Besides the issue with IT shops taking on repetitive, non-curricular based tasks, Central Office has not paid them for the production work as agreed upon.

Member based – I don't feel it is appropriate to discuss an issue that is for an individual member but let's just say they didn't honor the agreement, which is not monetary.

We presently have six Arbitrations pending, two of which CTECS Legal has not responded to.

One is for a member that was docked for tardies by the minute. CTECS has not responded to the American Arbitration Association (AAA). This has caused a delay. Our attorney is dealing with this issue.

The other is to start a Trade NHS. This is an Arbitration filed because a principal had direct dealing with a member. The amount of work is exactly the same as the NHS Advisor, but administration only wanted to pay less than a 1/3 of the NHS Stipend. Our proposal would give a set stipend equal to the NHS Advisor. All stipend position must be approved by the Superintendent before it can be implemented in a school. Again, CTECS Legal has not responded to AAA.

The other pending arbitrations are: Unpaid Substitute Orientations, Summer Paid issues (AGAIN), Open Position postings.

I have meetings on a weekly basis with Labor Relations and the full time officers have meeting with administration on a biweekly basis. We bring up these issues in a timely manner and try to follow the timelines in our contract. When we get no response from Labor Relations or Legal, these issues drag out much longer than they need to. I do not drop any issue until it is resolved.

SVFT/CTECS Teacher of the Year Program

NOMINATION FORM

2025 TEACHER OF THE YEAR
Due to School Committee by 2/19/2025

Nomination Criteria

1. Demonstrates excellence in your field.
2. Holds a Connecticut teaching certificate.
3. Be a full-time, part-time, or durational SVFT member.
4. Be an SVFT member in good standing.
5. Demonstrates commitment to professional growth.
6. Demonstrates commitment to school improvement.

Building Teacher of the Year winners have the opportunity to run for CTECS District Teacher of the Year and the District Teacher of the Year has the opportunity to run for Connecticut Teacher of the Year.

The following members are serving on the school's Teacher of the Year Committee and are NOT eligible for nomination this year:

-
-
-
-

NAME OF NOMINEE _____

ASSIGNMENT _____

State the reason(s) for the nomination: _____

**Some buildings create a Google Form for a Nomination Form.
Please check in with your Building Reps.**

Calendar



- 1/12 No School
- 1/14 Give Back Day
- 1/17 No School
- 1/18 Labor Management Meeting
- 1/20 Goodwin Health & Safety Visit
- 1/26 UTAC Meeting
- 3/6 Labor Management Meeting
- 3/12 Executive Council Meeting
- 3/13 Grasso Health & Safety Visit

Vocational Instructor

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

- President Paul Angelucci**
- Vice President Makenzi Hurtado**
- Executive Union Rep Bob Riccitelli**
- Treasurer Emily DelPiano**
- Secretary Jamie Lamitie**

439 Main Street
Wallingford CT 06492
(203) 793-7996

REMINDER!

Check your certification.
Make sure it is not expired!

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

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.