

STATE VOCATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Vocational Instructor

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



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

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IMPORTANT REMINDER: CHECK YOUR CERTIFICATION!



You are responsible for maintaining your certification. You will not be reminded when it is expiring. If your certification expires, CTECS will drop you to substitute pay and you will be required to pay back time you were not certified and paid as a teacher. You will also have to repay any sick days and health insurance from that time.

Finding Gratitude and Balance this 'No'vember

by Makenzi Hurtado, SVFT President

November is always a month to reflect on things for which I am thankful. As your new president, I am able to see firsthand the hard work and dedication of our members and the strength of our union. This year, I am especially grateful for the time and work of our committee members. Every week, I see members spending their own time to improve our union and our district. I am grateful for all of the new teachers who have taken their own time to attend the First Cut Forum to learn and improve their craft. I am thankful for all the members who have reached out to me to share their concerns and suggestions. Our union grows stronger because of you, your voices, and the work that you do.

Our contract negotiation sessions continue on a biweekly basis, and SEBAC continues to negotiate pension and healthcare. We entered negotiations with strong contract language but also an understanding that working conditions have deteriorated for our members over the past few years. Too often, our members are bullied or guilted into work that goes beyond our contract language. Members are constantly picking up the slack for mismanagement or no management. The result is burned-out members. Our language is strong, and it does protect you, but only if you know your rights and stand up for them. If you need us, we are here to support you.

On Saturday, a friend shared with me that it is "No'vember. I was reminded that it is okay to say "no" to stressors and things that drain me. This is not something that I am particularly good at. It is a common problem for educators. We serve our students and want what is best for them. We say yes until we are drained and done. So this month, I will keep reminding myself and you that it is okay to say "no." It is okay to protect your peace and create balance for yourself. Our strong contract and our strong union protect you. If you are being asked to go above and beyond and struggling to say "no," give your building rep a call or text. Call me or another officer. We can talk you through it and help you.

Lastly, I am thankful to serve and represent you all. Last month, Pratt & Whitney toured Vinal Tech and CT AeroTech. Paul attended the Vinal tour, and I attended the CT AeroTech tour. Without question, the best part of my job is when I am able to see our members in action. The educators on these tours did us proud. At the end of both tours, Wayne McCarthy, President of IAM Local Lodge 700, shared that at both schools, he was most impressed by the expertise of our teachers and the care they give to their students. I couldn't have said it better myself. Thank you for the work you do, the expertise you bring, and the care you give your students.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours!



SOLIDARI-TEA

Makenzi will bring her tea and you bring yours!

Join Makenzi for an informal discussion on the work she is doing and share your experiences in the district. While this is an open forum, I ask that you limit personal questions that can be asked through email, text, or phone call.

We will meet the last Monday of every month at 4pm on Zoom (shared via email).
Save the Dates: 11/24, 12/22, 1/26, 2/23, 3/30, 4/27

Power in Participation

by Paul Angelucci, SVFT Vice President

I want to thank the 128 members I texted in September that became eligible for Sick Bank and who heeded my advice and joined the Sick Bank. The peace of mind and benefit it provides far outweigh the cost of one sick day.

For Substitutes you need to reach out to HR regarding sick time you might have. After 120 days of work (after 1/1/2025) you are entitled to accrue sick time. Makenzi reminded Dr. Pritchard the district needs to be tracking this and have a procedure in place to show accumulated hours on your pay stub just as it's done for full-time and part-time employees. Tuition reimbursement is, for the first time ever, is being paid out during our salary freeze due to negotiations. This is thanks to Makenzi, who negotiated it into the extension agreement. Make sure you're submitting your forms two weeks before the class start date.

I want to thank the people who voted in the last election, but I know we can do better, there could be another election in January, and I urge you to take the time that day either before school starts or at day's end to stop at the table and cast your vote. There is always information in our newsletters on the candidates who are running.

I'll be retiring at the end of December, and I want to take a moment to express what an honor it's been to serve you and teach in the district that as a boy gave me the tools to accomplish every goal I set out for. When I became an officer, my main goal was to leave it better than I found it. As school unions go, you're in great hands with Makenzi at the helm and we're in great shape to tackle the road ahead.

Doing Extra Work Hurts Us All

by Bob Riccitelli, SVFT Executive Union Representative

It seems to be that time of year again when teachers are being asked to plan lessons or grade work for an absent colleague or when substitutes are asked to create lessons for the classes they're covering. Both of these practices are more often than not unacceptable.

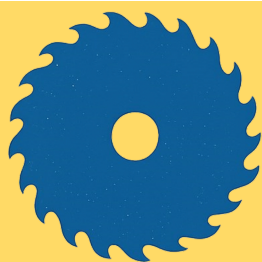
Administration may assign you to create lessons or grade papers for an absent teacher, but only during your administrative time. Please do not take on any additional work beyond that. When we do extra work outside our contractual duties, we send the wrong message—that it's acceptable for CTECS to continue practices that should be fixed. We cannot get you paid for this extra work.

If you take on one extra task today, what makes you think they won't add another tomorrow? When we cover for systemic problems, we remove the pressure for CTECS to find real solutions. We must stand together and draw clear boundaries to protect our time, our workload, and our professional standards.

This also applies to Department Heads. Although the prior Department Head stipulated agreement has sunset, it only clarified what is already contractual. Department Heads are not to write lessons or grade work for an absent teacher. There are several reasons for this: it could require work outside your certification area, it could push you over your contractual workload limit, and it undermines the standards we've all fought to protect.

Lastly, a reminder about your Weingarten Rights: if you are called into a meeting and it feels even remotely disciplinary, stop the meeting and request union representation immediately. This is your right—please use it.

Standing together and enforcing our rights protects all of us.



THE FIRST CUT FORUM

you need as you start your journey in trade education.

Mark your calendar! 6pm Meetings

Reminders will be sent out in advance with the Zoom link, making it easy to join. We will use the same link every month.

November 17—*TEAM*

February 9

December 15—*Certification*

March 16

May 18—*In Person Meet & Greet*

Monthly Virtual Mentor Sessions for New Trade Teachers

This year, the SVFT will be hosting monthly virtual meetings for new trade teachers, facilitated by Jamie Lamitie. These sessions are open to any trade teachers in their first few years of teaching. Each meeting will highlight a different topic, while leaving time for open discussion and questions.

The **First Cut Forum** is a place to build your teaching "toolkit", connect with colleagues, and get the support

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Hip Hop for the Homeless

By Joseph Battaglia, Cheney English Teacher

Over a decade ago I started my upstart community concert series, labeled Hip Hop for the Homeless. It started back in 2014 - when I reached out to friends, peers and venues in order to plan a multi-city tour in CT that benefits displaced persons and people in need - during our harsh Winter months, and the difficult holiday season. What started as a small grassroots movement a decade ago, has grown into a very exciting and entertaining function that has incredible reach and tons of goodwill!

I cannot believe the tour has made it this long, and to be honest, it wouldn't have been possible without local press coverage. Covid made it very difficult for us performers and creatives two years ago, and we had to shift to fully remote performances and streams. But the last 4 years we bounced back and have been able to get back to live performances thanks to the venues who have collaborated with us. Alongside our personal struggles, the homeless population has been almost neglected entirely, as more and more people are fearful of contact tracing. I am continuing to dedicate much of my time and efforts to raise awareness and funds for this cause. We have 8 shows coming up in December, in 8 different towns that will benefit these charities in these following cities:

All shows begin at 8pm.

12/4 - New Haven @ Three Sheets - benefits Columbus House

12/5 - Simsbury @ Hoops n Hops - benefits Simsbury Food Pantry

12/6 - Norwich @ Strangebrew Pub- benefits TVCCA Shelter

12/12 - New London @ The Oasis Pub - benefits New London Homeless Hospitality Center

12/13 - New Britain @ Unknown Clothing - benefits The Friendship Center

12/18 - Hartford @ Black Eyed Sally's - Benefits TBA

12/19 - Manchester @ The Main Pub - benefits MACC Charities

12/20 - Hartford @ Parkville Market - benefits Hands on Hartford



The amazing fact about our tour, is that "it gets better & bigger each year!" Each year we see higher attendance and raise more and more money, incrementally. Not only that, but our shows help to change the narrative of what a hip hop show is. More and more people are comfortable coming to our events, and we attract a crowd that is not indicative of a typical hip hop concert. So many of our shelters depend on the money we bring in every December, and there is no multi-city tour like this in CT in any other genre. Many of our venues are also restaurants which allow all ages children with an adult - so I am able to share our outreach with current and former students.

If you would like to support or attend, please go to the website: www.HipHopfortheHomeless.org
We hope to see you there!

Labor Management Committee Meetings

→ Do you have concerns that are not related to our contract language?

Four times a year, our Labor Management Committee (one trade teacher, one academic teacher, and one support service teacher) meet with management to bring forward issues that are affecting members across the district.

Please share your concerns with your building representatives or Makenzi, so that we can represent you in the room. This year our meetings are scheduled for:

September 15, 2025

December 16, 2025

March 18, 2026

May 13, 2026

→ **Past minutes were always shared in our newsletters. Go look at past issues to see what we were working on! Moving forward we will post our minutes on our website.**

Important Reminders

Tuition Reimbursement is still being paid. Lillian Rivera Hick's email address is tuition.reimbursements@cttech.org. If Lillian does not respond that your email is received, please check that you used the correct address.

Calendar

11/13 CTECS Board Meeting

11/13 Prince Tech Health & Safety Visit

11/17 First Cut Forum

11/24 Solidari-TEA

11/26 Early Dismissal

11/27 Thanksgiving

11/28 No School

12/10 Executive Council

12/11 Eli Whitney Health & Safety Visit



Vocational Instructor

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

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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.

... Thank You ...

VETERANS

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

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