

# Vocational Instructor



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

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

Volume MMXXVI Issue 2

March 2026

## A Show of Solidarity *by Makenzi Hurtado, President*

On March 12th, 550 state employees gathered at the State Legislative Office Building to send a message to the Governor. All state employees deserve fair contracts and state agencies need to be fully funded to ensure strong public services. It was a great showing of strength and solidarity.

We have reached a tentative agreement with CTECS management on our contract. It has been a long process and I cannot thank our negotiation team enough for the time and care they put into fighting for all members. I would also like to thank all of our membership for their patience and trust. I am looking forward to sharing all of the details with you.

We will be holding an information session on the tentative agreement via Zoom on Monday, March 30th at 6pm. We will then have a question and answer session on Tuesday, March 31st at 6pm. The ratification vote will take place on Wednesday, April 1st, before and after school. If our contract is ratified, it will be submitted to the General Assembly to be voted on. If it is not ratified, we will go back to negotiations.

Please take the time to attend our meeting and vote on this very important issue. Your voice matters!



## 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.



## 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: 4/27

## May General Membership May 6th, 2026 - 5PM Platt Technical High School

Executive Council members will be in person. General Membership is encouraged to attend in person. All participation will be in person. We will live-stream for members that cannot attend, but we will not interact virtually.

## Meet Your New Executive Union Representative



### Years and schools at CTECS:

Melanie Perry was elected Executive Union Representative in February 2026 and began her term on March 9. She has worked for CTECS since 2005, serving as an English instructor at Goodwin, Library Media DH and Interim AP at Wolcott, and General Education DH at Platt. She also served as a Building Representative at Goodwin and Wolcott.

### Why did you become an officer?

I became an officer because our union needs leaders who are experienced, committed, and willing to collaborate but ready to fight when necessary. In recent years, I have noticed that active member participation has decreased. We see fewer people at General Membership Meetings, lower voter turnout in elections, and many members expressing frustration with feeling unseen and unheard. I believe dedicating myself to full-time union work is the best way to bring a more proactive, systems-forward approach to our union's mission. I want to help our members become more engaged and empowered to stand united and strengthen our collective voice.

### Fun fact about yourself:

I'm the youngest of five siblings, and all of us chose careers in human services—three educators, a therapist, and a police officer.

### Something you would like our members to know about SVFT:

Our members may not always realize the leverage SVFT has compared to many other local teachers' unions—leverage that comes from the size of our membership and strength of our contract. New administrators and district leaders who come into CTECS from LEAs are often surprised by how well our members know the contract and how seriously they take its enforcement. When we work together to uphold contract language and advocate for positive working conditions, we protect member rights while promoting safe and productive learning environments for our students.

## 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 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.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87103483988?pwd=3zwhYVJjG4UeFNboavIFCINoTRrpvE.1>

**April 20**

**May 18—In Person Meet & Greet**

## 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 Bob, so that we can represent you in the room. Our last meeting is May 13, 2026. Minutes are available on our website.

### Important Reminder

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

**Join your officers at these important events. Enjoy a meal and share your concerns with State Representatives and State Senators from your area.**

AFT Connecticut



A Union of Professionals



# SAY IT TO THEIR FACE

Join AFT Connecticut & SVFT to speak with **your representatives** about **your priorities** at this year's annual legislative meetings.

## New Haven - 3/14

10 AM - 12:30 PM

Wilbur Cross High School

## Central - 3/21

9 AM - 11 AM

Back Nine Tavern

## Hartford - 3/21

12 PM - 2 PM

Margarita's, East Hartford



## **SVFT 2026 Scholarship Program**

The State Vocational Federation of Teachers Local 4200A is pleased to notify you of twelve (12) \$1,000 scholarships available to members' children who are currently high school seniors and planning to further their education or to begin work in their trade in the fall of 2026.



### **Include the following:**

1. A completed application form
2. An official school transcript
3. One letter of recommendation from a teacher or community leader who knows you well enough to attest to your achievements and/or potential
4. A resume listing accomplishments, contributions and achievements in school, your community, and any other extra-curricular activities that are indicative of future success
5. A letter of intent in 250 words or fewer describing why you are applying for a scholarship and how the funds will be used
6. A response to the following prompt in essay format in 250-400 words. Essays will be run through an AI and plagiarism checker. Choices:
  - Interview someone in a union and write about how it has benefited their life and family.
  - Make sure to share the union that they are a member of.

**Please note:** The 2026 scholarships will be awarded on the basis of vocational or academic promise. Applications must be received on time and complete to be considered.

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## **SVFT 2026 Mini-Grant Program**

The SVFT is also pleased to announce that up to \$6,000 in scholarship funds are available in the form of **mini-grants** to SVFT members for the purpose of professional growth.

To apply, include the following:

The application coversheet

Respond to the following statements:

Explain how the requested funds will be used.

Explain the expected individual professional growth.

Explain how your growth in this area will benefit your school and/or the school community and/or SVFT.

Flier/information from program and a breakdown of specific costs. We do not accept links to websites.

Successful grant recipients will be required to submit a newsletter or website article explaining how the investment was used for professional growth. The purpose of this grant is to enable members to grow professionally, **outside of the activities funded by CTS-43 or the tuition reimbursement program.**

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## **Applications are available on our website, [svft.ct.aft.org](http://svft.ct.aft.org)**

Applications for scholarships or mini-grants must arrive at the SVFT office

**no later than Friday, May 15, 2026 at 3pm.**

439 Main Street

Wallingford CT 06492

Announcements of awards will be made on or about June 5, 2026.

Questions may be addressed to the SVFT Vice President, Bob Riccitelli



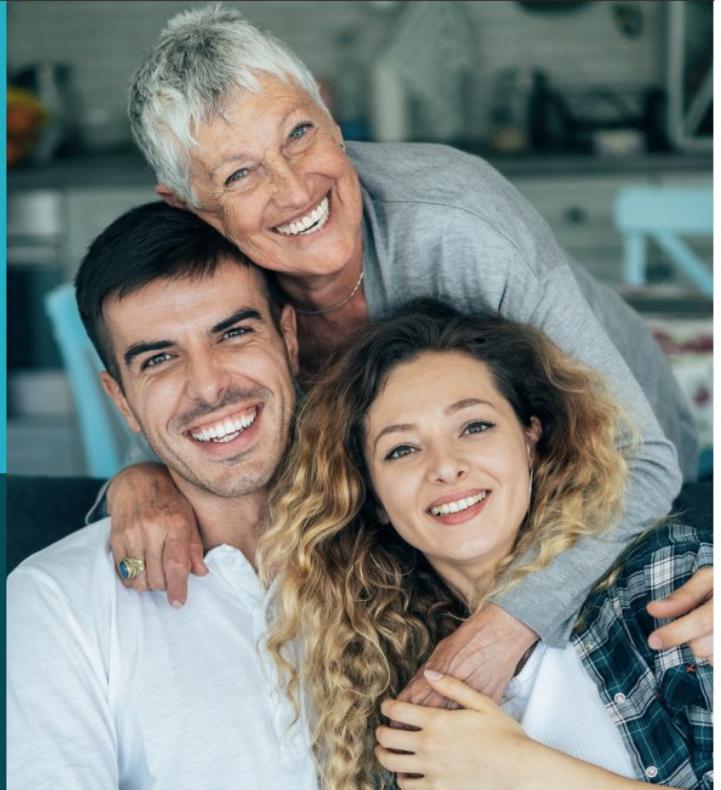
**AFT Connecticut**  
*A Union of Professionals*

presents to our members retiring  
under the Teachers Retirement Board:

# TEACHER Pre-Retirement Webinar

**April 25, 2026**  
SATURDAY

**9:00am - 11:00am**  
**Zoom**



**Come understand your  
retirement plan and make sure  
you're making the right choices!**

- There is no fee associated with this webinar.
- Link to webinar will be emailed, so please make sure to spell your email accurately when registering.
- Make sure to select the April 25th Webinar option:

**SCAN or CLICK  
to register**



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# Calendar

- 3/21 Central CT AFTCT Legislative Meeting
- 3/21 Hartford AFTCT Legislative Meeting
- 3/27 SKILLS DAY
- 3/30 Contract Information Session
- 3/31 Contract Q&A
- 4/1 Contract Ratification Vote
- 4/1 Executive Council
- 4/23 Platt Health & Safety Visit



**Come see our students compete on March 27th!**



**[svft.ct.aft.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:jlamitie@svft.org)

## 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

## 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.