

Pre K-12 COVID UPDATE



The [CDC guidelines](#) for 3 foot distancing is late breaking news. We released a statement from Boards Of Education Union Coalition. Here is a letter [from AFT](#) to CDC and Dept. of Education.

AFT Connecticut At Work: State Advocacy

Taking Action to Protect Student & School Staff Health in Connecticut

We used every tool available to successfully secure vaccination opportunities for our members, as well as COVID care benefits so we don't burn through sick days. We also generated a discussion and assurances of our privacy rights with regard to vaccination status. Our goals shift to the summer and the fall, while we work in powerful coalitions with education partners to seek full

funding for ECS, strategic and intelligent

implementation of Social and Emotional learning strategies, an improved evaluation system, and implementation of appropriate learning models with restrictions on concurrent teaching for the fall.



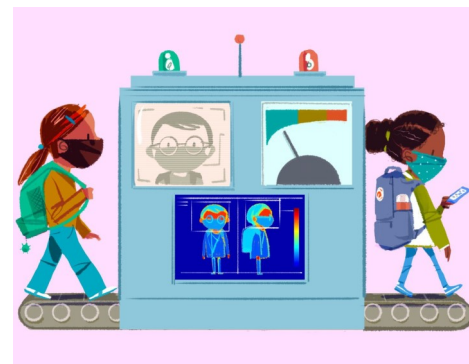
AFTCT Podcast

Our state federation president and the head of Connecticut's AFL-CIO in late February co-hosted a discussion on federal policies impacting working families. [Click here for our latest podcast episode with Jan Hochadel and Sal Luciano's interview of Congressman Jim Himes.](#)



AFT At Work: National Advocacy

On March 12, The AFT and NEA joined forces to release a report, Learning beyond COVID. The framework outlines five priorities that can serve as a guide for nurturing students' learning now and beyond COVID-19 including learning, enrichment and reconnection for this summer and beyond; diagnosing student well-being and academic success; meeting the needs of our most underserved students; professional excellence for learning and growth; and an education system that centers equity and excellence. [Read more here.](#)



State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CSDE

Approved the appointment of Charlene Russell-Tucker as Connecticut's Acting Commissioner of Education after Miguel Cardona was sworn in as U.S. Secretary of Education. Discussed the report [The Condition of Education in Connecticut 2019-2020](#). Highlights include continuation of previously noted trends: decline in enrollment, race/ethnic composition of teaching force does not mirror that of students, disproportionality of suspensions/expulsions and chronic absenteeism, 4-year high school cohort graduation rates are rising, and graduation rate gap shrinking. The proportion of general ed teachers to instructional and non-instructional support teachers is changing, with more support staff and fewer gen ed, reflecting declining enrollment and increasing numbers of students with needs.



Connecticut Vax Facts Q & A Webinar



The Board of Education unions coalition hosted an online discussion about COVID-19 vaccine. The forum took place five days before school-based vaccinations rolled out and is very informative. [Watch it here.](#)

A COVID vaccine “Open & Honest discussion”



organized by SEBAC was scheduled on March 23, 5:30 p.m., with a portion dedicated specifically for school employees, and opportunities for questions to be submitted.

PEAC 2.0:

Meetings in April and May. First topic of discussion will be moving forward with last year’s flexibilities that are currently in place. SDE wants what can be extended to go to the SBOE as soon as possible so districts can know what’s in store for 21-22 and 22-23 school year. SDE is meeting with RESCs and other stakeholders outside of the PEAC committee to hold public forums starting in the Spring to get feedback on TEVAL. The PEAC committee is small and SDE wants to make sure other perspectives are heard. Public forums could include educators, administrators, etc. and surveys of PDECs. Ed organizations can hold forums as well. SDE will create similar protocols for all forums and the aim is to be as transparent as possible. Plan is to publicly post feedback from forum meetings and PDEC surveys. Forums may extend through late Spring into the Summer and Fall.



Questions & Answers

How can I help the cause, as a rank-and-file member? Three ways: 1. Reach out to offer written testimony on upcoming legislation. 2. Send us a short paragraph stating why the concurrent teaching model can be harmful to students. 3. Send us a short paragraph why virtual learning only works for some. 4. Send us a short paragraph stating how the Evaluation process worked or did not work. We need to hear from you. We need to educate legislators.

Vaccines for students or staff....will they be required? State Officials recently confirmed that the vaccines were available under an emergency authorization from the FDA, which does

not allow for them to be required as a condition of employment. Also, they are not yet approved for use in young people. If and when the FDA authorization updates from emergency use to fully approved, things may change.

Is my vaccination status private information that I don’t have to reveal?

State authorities have confirmed that district officials may have the right in some instances to ask employees if they are vaccinated, such as while they are contact tracing after a school exposure. District officials must be cautious with the information and handle it with sensitivity to privacy. It is very clear that a school official doesn’t have the right to ask follow up questions, such as “Why” or “Why not?” There are circumstances under which you must answer honestly if you are vaccinated,

such as if the district is considering whether you are to be quarantined due to an exposure, and if the district is asking this information with the appropriate safeguards for the protection of your privacy. If you are unsure, discuss with your union leader.

What and who is SEBAC?

SEBAC stands for State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition. These include AFTCT, and non-AFTCT bargaining unit leaders who join forces to increase efficiency and improve outcomes in bargaining with the state of CT for state employees.

What do I need to know as a teacher after I’m vaccinated? If you are fully vaccinated and you are not symptomatic, you do not need to be quarantined or tested after an exposure. More important details [can be found here](#) from the CDC.

Quote from AFT’s NEA’s:

“[Learning Beyond COVID-19: A Vision for Thriving in Public Education](#)”



“As educators, we approach all things related to our students’ learning and well-being from a positive and affirming place. Terms like “learning loss” or “COVID

slide” have become popularized but are misguided. Because they are deficit-oriented, they diminish our students and paint an inaccurate picture of how deep and purposeful learning occurs.”



UPCOMING PROF. DEV.

- March 31: [Recovery for All Action](#) (Hartford)
- April 6: [Financial Planning Webinar for All Members](#)
- April 24: [Teachers' Pre-Retirement Webinar](#)

CT AFL-CIO: [2021 Workers' Memorial Day Scholarship](#)