

# The Solidarity Report

Your weekly VUE Update

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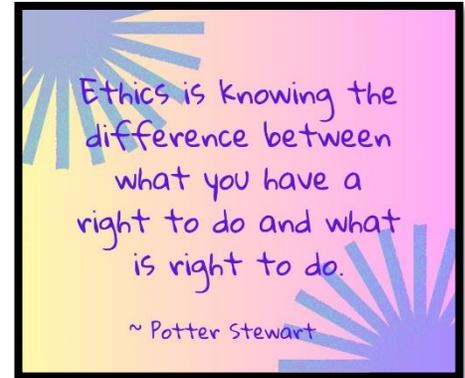
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## Spotlight: Ms. Theodora “Teddi” Drager!

- \* **23<sup>rd</sup> year working as an educational support professional with VCS!**
- \* **Currently working as an Office Specialist III /Principal’s Secretary at Sugar Mill Elementary**
- \* **Favorite Quote: “Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.” ~ Mother Teresa**

Ms. Theodora Drager is a hard working dedicated professional who is determined to help others. Teddi, as she is known by most people, began her career with VCS as a paraprofessional in 2000. She transferred into the role of principal’s secretary in 2007 and has held this position for the last 13 years. Teddi shared, *“I believe that if I support our teachers and the administration of Sugar Mill with all the little things, they are then able to focus all of their energy on our students. My hope is that by doing my best to take care of day-to-day items, such as payroll, HR issues, benefits, etc., that I may take some of the stress off everyone and make a positive contribution to our school community.”* Teddi does more than just take care of the “little things”, she has her finger on the pulse of the school. We know first-hand that it is the little things that matter the most. Without the attention to detail that Teddi provides, our teachers, students, staff, and administrators at SME would not have the resources they need to be successful. Teddi is also an advocate within the community. She enjoys baking and cooking for the elderly and she loves nature. Teddi has participated in “Cleaning” events at state parks and national forests. Thank you, Ms. Theodora “Teddi” Drager, for your kind and caring heart. Your desire to help others by ensuring that everything is in order and running smoothly is a benefit to all. Solidarity!

## District Update

**Teacher Duty Day:** Today is a duty day. The instructional contract states, “*During duty days scheduled within the student year, at least one half (1/2) of each such day shall be reserved for use by the teacher for activities and job responsibilities such as, but not limited to, class planning and preparation, required paperwork, parent conferences, team planning, and record keeping. The principal shall have the discretion to require attendance at faculty meetings, department meetings, grade level meetings, curriculum meetings, in-service meetings, PLC etc., during the balance of the work time during such duty days scheduled within the student year. Such meetings shall be scheduled to be completed prior to lunch. On duty days, teachers shall be given an uninterrupted one-hour lunch period.*” If your administrator is holding a meeting, it can last no longer than 3 hours 15 minutes, and it must be completed prior to lunch. You should not be asked to attend IEP, 504 or PST meetings, and parent conferences can only be held if YOU have scheduled the meeting. Our unmanaged planning time is being threatened, and we must hold fast to the negotiated protections that we have fought so hard to earn. If you have questions about your schedule for the TDD, please contact the office. Support professionals do not have the same language as instructional personnel; however, the purpose of this day is to provide a paid opportunity for support professionals to participate in professional development and work in the classroom to better support our students.

**ERPL this week:** Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> is the 2<sup>nd</sup> ERPL for the school year. This learning time is scheduled as a “school based” ERPL. This means that the pd provided should be directly tied to the school improvement plan. We are working to ensure that all pd provided to instructional personnel is directly related to their job roles. There is nothing worse than spending 2 hours of your day in a meeting that has no return on the investment of your time. We appreciate your patience as we work to make this shift.

**Focus Financial:** The VUE staff continues to navigate this new process through labor management meetings. As we work with the district, we continue to point out that teachers should not be expected to perform duties that are not related to teaching. The contract states this in Article 9. Instructional personnel should spend their time planning and preparing to deliver instruction, remediation, and differentiation to ensure that all learners have access to the curriculum. We are moving this item forward and will speak with the superintendent on this issue this week.

**Salary Increase & Supplement Payments:** There has been a bit of confusion regarding the timeline for salary increases and supplement payments resulting from the contract settlement. Payments will be received in the following order:

- October 31<sup>st</sup> – Retention supplement (lump sum payment) to eligible individuals
- November 15<sup>th</sup> – salary increases reflected in paychecks
- November 30<sup>th</sup> – salary retro from July 1, 2023
- February 29<sup>th</sup> – Longevity supplement (lump sum payment) to eligible individuals

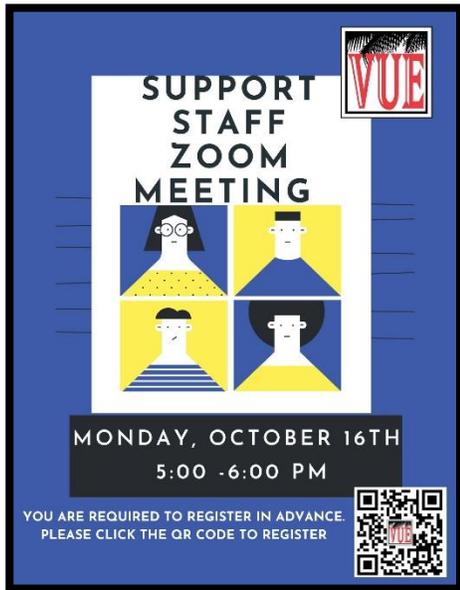
## Labor Management Update

Your VUE staff is working diligently to bring issues and concerns within our classrooms and worksites forward to district leaders. Labor management meetings occur twice a month and are used for collaborative problem solving. Ms. Workman and her team work directly with VUE to create solutions and improve communication. Here is a brief overview of some of the issues we are currently working to address:

- The directive to create math improvement plans for level 1 & 2 students at the secondary level -we have learned that approximately 100 students were moved into advanced math due to overcrowding in their originally assigned class. This is problematic on many levels, and we are concerned about the impacts this will have on both teachers and students.
- Scheduling and expectations for district assessments - this issue affects the entire district and has recently been discussed by the school board. We know that the Chair of the board is concerned with the amount of district generated testing that is currently required. Although we cannot provide relief from state mandated assessments, we do have control over district assessments. There will be much more on this topic.
- Paraprofessionals writing referrals- we have previously established that paraprofessionals are able to write referrals. We are following up to ensure that a process has been created that provides access to referrals outside of the Focus system.
- Townhall meeting for ESE personnel – we are working to select a date and location for this important meeting.
- Plan of support for school-based personnel – teaching and supporting student achievement has never been harder. We know that even on our best day it feels like we are barely keeping our heads above water. We are concerned that some teachers and staff who have reached out for help are not receiving it. We are having very intentional conversations with the district regarding how to support teachers and staff. If you need help, please let us know. Do not continue to suffer in silence. Let us know what you need, and we will work to put these supports in place. We know that one of the most frequently identified reasons teachers and staff separate from VCS is due to the lack of support. We can fix this!

### Support Staff Impasse Zoom meeting **TONIGHT!**

VUE is hosting a Zoom meeting for support professionals this afternoon **beginning promptly at 5:00 pm**. The purpose of this meeting is to develop a plan of action to prioritize reaching an agreement for our support professionals. We need to know what you are ready and willing to do to put an end to this impasse.



We cannot move forward without your input, and it is apparent that VCS is not making the settlement of the contract for support personnel a priority.

If you are interested in participating in the Zoom meeting, please click the link below. **You will be required to register in advance for this meeting.** We are committed to fighting for you, as we know that EVERY member of our VUE family is important. An injury to one is an injury to all. Please take a moment to register for this opportunity to come together and develop a plan. We cannot do this without you!

<https://aft.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYtcuigpZgpGdeF5SSbev-UU2ln6UnYasYe>

## VUE Advocacy



This past weekend, VUE was very busy. A team of advocates attended the FEA Delegate Assembly to continue the work of our union at the state level. We want to acknowledge the commitment the following VUE members have shown to protecting and prioritizing the work of our public schools; Paulette McKibbins-Shed, Valerie Jessup, Vernell Williams-Spar, Karen Weinrich, Robert Rice, and Tony Plowden.

Additionally, your Executive Vice President for Support Professionals, Valerie Jessup, wrote and advocated for a new business item that requires FEA to develop model language for local unions to provide paid collaboration time for Educational Support Professionals to review and plan for students' accommodations. We know that paras

directly impact student success, and there should be paid time within their contractual day to allow planning for the accommodations identified in the IEP. The motion was overwhelmingly passed by the body of the Delegate Assembly. We want to congratulate Valerie on this powerful step forward to acknowledge the work of our support professionals.

VUE was recognized for the increase in membership that has occurred over the last year. We won two awards, the Gold Award for overall growth and the Platinum Award for growth in our instructional unit. We want to thank Ms. Sheila Butchart and the hard

working members of the VUE Membership Committee. We know that increasing our membership is how we build power and influence. We want to send a HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who has worked to recruit and retain members. We cannot stop now! Recruitment is a 365 day a year job, and we must continue this positive momentum!



Also occurring at the same time as the DA, your VUE Government Relations Committee participated in community outreach during the Port Orange Family Days event.

We want to thank Ms. Sarah Marzilli and the members of the GRC who took time from their weekend to provide books to the children in the Port Orange community. The GRC also helped spread the word about the good work VUE is doing in our schools!

SOLIDARITY!

## **Upcoming VUE Professional Learning**

Your union continues to provide top notch professional development led by our members. These courses are free to VUE members.

### **ESE: Module #1 IEP/IDEA**

Course # 72058  
Section #107122  
Time:

### **Dates:**

October 30, 2023  
VUE Office  
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

### **ESE: Module #2 Building Relationships: Adults**

Course # 72061  
Section #107123  
Time:

### **Dates:**

November 6, 2023  
VUE Office  
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

### **ESE: Module #3 Building Relationships: Stdnts**

Course # 72229  
Section #107126  
Time:

### **Dates:**

November 13, 2023  
VUE Office  
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

**NEW  
COURSES  
FOR 2023!**

**ESE: Module #4 Classroom Strategies**

Course # 72059  
Section #107159  
Time:

**Dates:**

November 27, 2023  
VUE Office  
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

**ESE: Module #5 Student Behaviors**

Course # 72060  
Section #107160  
Time:

**Dates:**

December 4, 2023  
VUE Office  
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

In Solidarity,

Elizabeth Albert  
President



# *SOLIDARITY, UNITY, AND STRENGTH!*

As a member of the **Volusia United Educators** you will join with your colleagues to share your voice and expertise to shape the future of our profession.

Through **Solidarity, Unity, and Strength** of our membership, **VUE**:

- Is a leader in our schools and community on Public Education issues
- Fights to improve working conditions and pay for teachers and educational support professionals in Volusia County
- Provides top notch professional development and training for members
- Communicates weekly with our membership
- Stands for high quality Public Schools

Additionally, when you join **VUE**, you will receive many benefits from our **VUE** office and our state and national affiliates such as:

- Discount auto insurance
- Discounts on credit cards, cell phone service, car rentals, etc.
- Discount legal services
- And much, much more

In Florida you have a choice to make; you can unite with your colleagues as we make our Public Schools the best they can be, or you can stand alone.

*The Volusia United Educators; Teaching Today's Children for Tomorrow's Future!*

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To join VUE, click the QR code below and complete the VUE Fastrack form to become a member today!

