

# The Solidarity Report

Your weekly VUE Update

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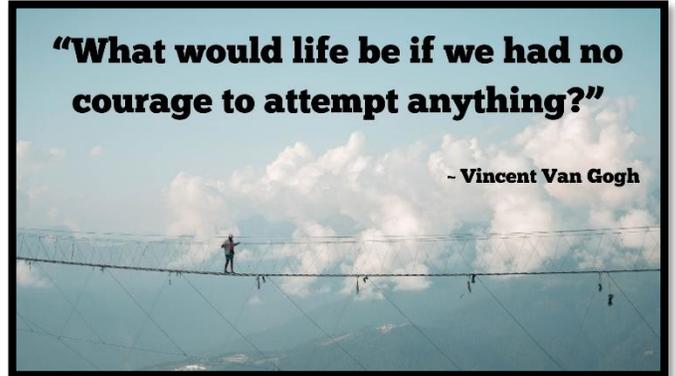
October 9, 2023

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**“What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?”**

- Vincent Van Gogh



## Spotlight: Ms. Vivian Ayala!



- \* 17th year working as an educational support professional with VCS!
- \* Currently working as an Office Specialist III at Olson
- \* VUE Steward
- \* Support Bargaining Team Member
- \* Olson Sunshine Events Committee Member
- \* Avid VCS Wellness Challenge Participant
- \* Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church Volunteer
- \* Favorite Quote: “Faith is the first factor in a life devoted to service. Without it, nothing is possible, with it, nothing is impossible”  
~ Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune

Ms. Vivian Ayala is a kindhearted sweet individual who is always willing to lend a hand and offer support. Vivian first moved to Florida in 2006 and she was determined to work in an environment where she could help people. Vivian began her career with VCS working as an ESOL paraprofessional at Volusia Pines Elementary. She shared, “*this gave me the opportunity to help students learn the English language so that they could excel in their education and in our society.*” Vivian now works as an OS III for the Director of School Way Café. She is dedicated to lifting others up and is an advocate for her colleagues, and the elderly at her church. As a first year VUE steward, Vivian has jumped in with both feet and has been a strong voice for support professionals during bargaining. She is also working hard to ensure that the voice of the VUE members working at Olson is heard. Vivian is also a true fan of the VCS Wellness Challenge. She participates every year and encourages her colleagues to do the same. Thank you, Ms. Vivian Ayala, for your kind spirit and your positive outlook. You are a shining star, and we appreciate the light that you bring to those around you. Solidarity.

## **District Update**

***ESE Expectations:*** As we continue to work through changes with how documentation of services provided to our students with disabilities is recorded and monitored, we have received many questions this past week from general ed teachers about tracking accommodations. As general ed teachers, we have always provided accommodations to our students. However, it is apparent that now we are being required to provide evidence of these supports in a more formalized and precise manner. We are being told that it is now a requirement to record the accommodations provided for each ESE student in the class each day. For some teachers, this could be up to 50 or more students a day. We have not been given any additional time to complete this requirement and communication in some schools seems to be lacking. We have reached out to Ms. Wiles to discuss the interval for recording the accommodations, and we are also working to confirm that the district has a template that teachers can use for this purpose. However, as we know from previous conversations with Ms. Wiles, the tracking and monitoring tools created by the ESE department are not mandatory, and as stated in an email from the ESE department, "**If you already have a system in place that meets the criteria, we are not saying you must now use these tools. Please work with your administration if you have questions about the required items for documentation compliance.**". Elizabeth is looking for opportunities to shadow ESE teachers to learn first-hand how these changes impact our members. We are also working to schedule a Townhall meeting with Ms. Wiles and ESE Department leaders. As new information is made available, we will immediately share it with you, and we thank you for your patience while we sort this out. We know that you are frustrated, and this seems like one more thing, but we are working hard to make the changes you need in order to ensure that your focus is on planning and preparing to meet the needs of the students. We should not spend our time completing forms instead of planning.

***Key Control:*** Did you know.....the district has released an updated Key Control Procedure that requires an individual who loses their keys to file a police report AND pay for the replacement of the key? It is very important that we are aware of the cost of certain keys, for example, the cost to replace a "Zone or School Master" key is \$100 and a "Grand Master" is \$500. We understand that we must be responsible with our keys, and should be careful to ensure compliance with the expectations for use, but are we to the point where we need to be threatened with an exorbitant replacement cost if we happen to lose a key? If you are concerned about the information in the newly released district memo related to "Key Control" expectations, please consider refraining from checking out a key. You cannot be forced to take a key. If you would like to discuss this, please contact your VUE member representative.

***No Meeting Week – This week is a NO MEETING WEEK*** due to the Teacher Duty Day/Student Holiday scheduled for Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, no meetings can occur with the exception of IEP, 504, or PST meetings. First quarter grades are due on Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. If you have students who are not making sufficient progress, it is a good idea to make parent contact.

***MOUs*** – We have recently signed two new Memorandums of Understanding with VCS. The first is to establish the supplement amount for the individuals working as Volusia Mentor Teachers. The supplement amount is \$1,805.00 which aligns with the max amount of compensation earned by a grade level/department chairperson. The second is to include Theatre/Drama and Dance teachers in the Performing Arts Stipend. The stipend

amounts are the equivalent of those earned by Choral & Orchestra Directors. We are happy that this additional work could be completed. When we bargain the whole contract next year, we will prioritize enhancing all of the stipend payments and the supplements provided within Article 26.

## **Support Staff Impasse & Zoom meeting**

Volusia County Schools declared impasse with VUE Support on Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. This decision occurred after only three bargaining sessions that totaled approximately eight (8) hours of work. The equivalent of one full work day.

The salary and compensation proposal from VCS included a 2% salary increase that would be realized through a step and adjustments to the longevity schedule. The VUE salary and compensation proposal included a 3% salary increase realized through a step and salary enhancements that reduce compression for our mid-career and veteran support personnel. We believe, after an indepth analysis of the district Annual Financial Report from 2022-23 and the District Summary Budget for 2023-24, as submitted to the Florida Department of Education, that the funds are readily available to prioritize the compensation of the individuals who run our schools/district, and support our students with disabilities. It is all about priorities!

It is time to take bold and visible action. VUE will host a Zoom meeting for support professionals on **Monday, October 16 beginning promptly at 5:00 pm**. The purpose of this meeting is to develop our plan of action. We need to know what you are ready to do to make reaching an agreement a reality. We cannot move forward without your input, and it is apparent that VCS is not making reaching an agreement 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.**

<https://aft.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYtcuigpzzpGdeF5SSDbv-UU2ln6UnYasYe>

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 very important opportunity to come together and develop a plan. We cannot do this without you!

## **FEA Reading Exam Review**

**Attention!!! Attention!!!** Are you looking to pass the Reading K-12 Exam?? Need a little refresher/support to prep for the test? If so, register below to join us on October 28th, and November 4, 2023, for the Reading K-12 Exam Review. This course will provide an overview of the knowledge and skills you needed to pass this exam.

Don't delay, register today! The registration deadline is October 24<sup>th</sup>.

<https://forms.gle/ZxXOck8bemgzjXLd8>

## Educators Choice: Here to Help

Educators Choice is one of the many partners that we have through our ownership in Creative Benefits for Educators.

Take a moment to explore all that is available to you as a member of OUR UNION. Visit <https://cbeducators.com/> today to learn about how you can tap into the resources available to you to secure your financial future and provide protections for the things matter the most.

**What is your financial goal?**

Saving for retirement? Building an emergency fund?  
Creating and growing passive income?  
Starting a business? Owning a home? Raising a family?

Educators Choice, powered by Suncoast Credit Union, has financial wellness resources to help you work towards your goals.

**Educators Choice**  
Financial Guidance & Planning  
Powered by Suncoast Credit Union  
Federally insured by NCUA. Equal Housing Opportunity.

Explore how we can help at [EducatorsChoice.com](https://EducatorsChoice.com)

The advertisement features a yellow background with a black border. At the top, the question "What is your financial goal?" is written in a mix of black and orange fonts. Below this, six red boxes contain common financial goals: "Saving for retirement?", "Building an emergency fund?", "Creating and growing passive income?", "Starting a business?", "Owning a home?", and "Raising a family?". In the center, there is a line graph with an upward-sloping arrow and four stylized plants of increasing size, each with a dollar sign on its stem. The Educators Choice logo, which includes a bee icon, is on the left. At the bottom, there is a call to action to visit the website.

## Reading Opens the World

On Saturday morning, AFT, FEA, VUE, Mayor Derrick Henry and the City of Daytona Beach, the NAACP, Sisters Build Network, Joe Hearn Events, First Book, and several other partners came together to provide free books to our children and educators and to promote literacy.

Each child was given 10 new books and each educator could select up to 50 books for their classrooms.

Hundreds of families turned out for this incredible event, which resulted in a waiting line that wrapped around the Dickerson Center for more than three hours!



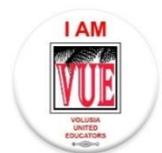


At 10:00 am there were 32,000 books in the building and by 2:00 pm there were 0! This event was a phenomenal success, and we are so very grateful to the members of VUE who turned out to volunteer. We were also excited to see many of our colleagues, current and former students, current and former elected officials, and members of the community in attendance.

We cannot express our gratitude to AFT and First Book for providing the books and to Mayor Henry for hosting. Let's make sure that this becomes an annual event!  
**READING OPENS the WORLD!**

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!

