

The Solidarity Report

Your weekly VUE Update

1381 Educators Rd.

Daytona Beach, FL 32174

(386)238-1605

www.ourvue.net

Issue 21 Number 15

November 13, 2023

In This Issue:

- **Member Spotlight**
- **District Update**
- **Legislative Update**
- **VUE Republican Cadre**
- **ESE Townhall Confirmed**
- **NEA Educational Support Professionals Webinar**
- **eDues Reminder**
- **Upcoming VUE Professional Learning**



Spotlight: Ms. Terri Schmidt!



- * **23rd year teaching in Volusia County!**
- * **Currently teaching the Math Lab at Deland Middle School**
- * **VUE Steward**
- * **DMS 2025 Teacher of the Year Nominee!**
- * **DMS Mentor for new teachers**
- * **Actress with Community Theater Groups**
- * **Favorite Quote: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." ~ Psalm 46:1**

Ms. Terri Schimdt is a kindhearted, altruistic, and compassionate individual. She is always eager to lend a hand and is the epitome of a team player. Terri has more than two decades of experience teaching the children of Volusia County. She has dedicated herself to improving the lives of her students and her colleagues. Terri has recently been reassigned from her math lab position to temporarily taking over a math class until a teacher can be hired. Terri accepted this assignment with a smile on her face and shared that she enjoys, *"giving students the opportunity to become more comfortable and confident with understanding math."* Terri supports her colleagues by assisting with technology and testing. Terri also participates in the Trap, Neuter, and Release program in her community to help control the stray cat population. Thank you, Ms. Terri Schimdt for your kindness and unending concern for others. Your strength, empathy, and compassion for your students and colleagues is making a positive impact every day. Solidarity!

District Update

Mark Your Calendar: **only one (1) meeting before/after school is allowed this month.** If you are scheduled for team meetings or faculty meetings more than once in November, please contact your steward or VUE member representative. You cannot be mandated or pressured to attend a “voluntary” meeting and you must be provided the information shared in the meeting if you choose not to attend.

No Meeting Week: this week is a Block Out week due to Interim Reports (Wed. 11- 15), PLCs may occur on Thursday, 11-16. The block out includes parent conferences unless scheduled by the individual teacher and meetings before the student day in middle schools.

Thanksgiving Week: November 20th – 24th – Schools Closed for the holiday.

Assessments & Pacing: We continue to work with the district to find a solution for inadequate instructional time and unrealistic pacing expectations for covering content required for district assessments. We know that the REA department has a very rigid testing schedule that is impacting teachers’ ability to cover all the standards that are being tested. The data that is produced from these tests is inherently flawed due to the lack of instructional time provided to teachers to cover all the tested benchmarks. We are continuing to push the district for more flexibility and an adjustment to the pacing calendar that acknowledges the reality of the classroom.

Legislative Update

Committee weeks are well underway in Tallahassee. Last week was an exceptionally busy week as education issues were at the forefront of much of the work. The following information was shared in FEA’s Frontline newsletter.

Deregulation Update: as part of last year’s universal voucher bill (HB 1) the legislature will be taking a close look this year at ways to decrease burdensome regulations on public schools.

The Department of Education and the [Senate PreK-12 Education Committee](#) both shared ideas on deregulation this week, and the two sets of ideas are quite far apart.

The Senate PreK-12 Education Committee is proposing three deregulation bills:

1. [SPB 7000](#) will focus on reducing regulations for personnel.
2. [SPB 7002](#) will focus on reducing regulations for finance, budgets, administration and oversight.
3. [SPB 7004](#) will focus on reducing regulations related to assessment and accountability.

The Committee is slated to take up each of the three bills at their next meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 15. The text of the bills are not yet available. They must be made public at least 48 hours before the meeting, and you’ll find them on [our website](#) as soon as they are public.

However, the committee has released a [comprehensive list of topics](#) to be addressed in the bills. When looking at the list you'll see issues that FEA, our members, and our local unions have been fighting for including:

- Allowing instructional personnel to earn long-term contracts,
- Eliminating restrictions on salary that have resulted in compression of salary schedules.
- Eliminating mandatory 3rd grade retention for students receiving a Level 1 in reading on FAST.

The [DOE's recommendations](#) meanwhile seem largely focused on reducing administrative paperwork with little concern for ideas to increase teacher retention and little focus on student learning. The DOE has signaled they will not be supportive of all the changes proposed by the Senate PreK-12 Education Committee.

Finally, in the [House Education Quality Subcommittee](#) meeting members of both parties pressed the DOE on why their proposed changes didn't do a better job of treating all publicly funded schools the same. In particular, there were many questions about why public schools are labeled with grades using an A-F scale while publicly-funded private schools receive no such grade. Adam Miller from the DOE had no coherent answer for these questions.

VUE Republican Cadre

Our union is comprised of diverse individuals who bring a wealth of experiences and talents to our organization. This is what makes us strong. As such, we are interested in reestablishing our VUE Republican Cadre.

Members of the cadre will be trained to advocate on behalf of VUE members with lawmakers on issues related to our public schools. Opportunities will be provided to cadre members to travel to Tallahassee during the upcoming legislative session to advocate during committee meetings and directly with the members of the Volusia delegation. Training for this advocacy work will be facilitated by FEA.

If you are interested in joining the VUE Republican Cadre, please contact Elizabeth at elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org.

ESE Townhall Confirmed!

VUE and VCS will cohost an ESE Townhall meeting to provide an opportunity for teachers and staff to ask questions, provide input, give feedback, and make suggested improvements to the documentation and reporting requirements for students with disabilities.

The first townhall will be held on Tuesday, December 5th at Deltona High from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm in the Learning Commons (media center). The eastside meeting will be held on Monday, December 11th at Mainland High from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm in the Performing Arts Center.

We encourage you to attend one of these meetings if you have questions or concerns about documenting ESE accommodations, tracking progress toward goals, service models, or any other item related to ESE. We are encouraged about the opportunity to offer this face-to-face collaboration session. Since time will be limited, we encourage you to arrive early, if possible, as we will begin promptly at 5:30 pm.



NEA Educational Support Professionals (ESP) Webinar

ESPs have the power to effect change by building meaningful connections with everyone in the school community including teachers, specialized instruction support personnel (SISP), students, and families. Join us to hear from Pamela Johnson, Academic and Behavioral Intervention Specialist and 2023 NEA ESP of the Year, and learn the importance of building authentic relationships, how to make these connections, and how to empower other ESPs to become more engaged in their roles as leaders and professionals.

Register at, https://www.mobilize.us/nea_espq/ to attend the webinar on Thursday, November 16, 2023, from 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm.

eDues Reminder

As a reminder, if you have enrolled in eDues, the dues deductions are scheduled to align with each VCS payday. As we approach the holiday season, please be reminded that your VUE dues will be deducted on the scheduled pay dates.

The remaining pay dates for this calendar year are:

- Wednesday, November 15, 2023
- Thursday, November 30, 2023
- Friday, December 8, 2023
- Friday, December 15, 2023

If you are planning to separate from VCS, take a leave of absence, or change bank accounts, it is your responsibility to inform our office. If you are interested in shifting to a cash pay membership instead of using the ACH eDues, we can assist you with this process.

Thank YOU for sticking with our union and for your support through this very challenging time. 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 #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

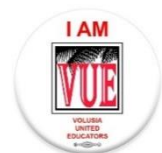


On behalf of the VUE staff we want to state how thankful we are for our members and for the unity and solidarity you have shown during this unprecedented time.

We wish each of you a healthy, happy, and safe Thanksgiving.

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!

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

