

The Solidarity Report

Your weekly VUE Update

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“In most cases, being a good boss means hiring talented people and then getting out of their way.”

- Tina Fey

Member Spotlight: Ms. Jamie Menard!



- * **18th year teaching in Volusia County Schools!**
- * **Currently teaching 3rd grade ELA & Social Studies at Deltona Lakes Elementary**
- * **DLE 2025 Teacher of the Year Nominee**
- * **Yearbook Club Sponsor**
- * **Wounded Warrior Project Supporter**
- * **Gratitude America Supporter**
- * **Favorite Quote: “It matters not what someone is born, but what they grow to be” ~ Albus Dumbledore (Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone)**

Ms. Jamie Menard is always on the go. Jamie prides herself on being involved in the things that matter. She has a compassionate heart, and she cares deeply for her students and her community. Her involvement in the Wounded Warriors Project and Gratitude America exemplify her commitment to providing for the needs of others. Through these programs, Jamie is serving our disabled veterans and helping them turn their struggles into strengths. As a veteran teacher, she does the same for her students. She is a fun-loving gal, who makes learning exciting and engaging. Her commitment to her students goes well beyond the elementary experience. Jamie shared, *“I enjoy going to graduation each year to watch my former students cross the stage. It is an honor to be able to see what my students accomplished, knowing the impact that I had on them in just the short amount of time I had them in their early educational years.”* Thank you, Ms. Jamie Menard, for your commitment to your students and your community. We are amazed by your non-stop energy, and we are always excited to see where your passion and enthusiasm take you. Solidarity!

District Update

Mark Your Calendar: Due to the ERPL this month, only one additional meeting is allowed to occur in February. This applies to meetings before school and after school. PLCs follow a different standard. At the middle school level, this applies to the PSP time that is provided before the student academic day. If you have questions, please reach out.

- **Monday, Feb. 19th – Presidents Day** – Student/Teacher holiday.
- **Wednesday, Feb. 21 – ERPL #7** – This district-based early release learning is scheduled to share additional information from the ESE Department.

Longevity Payments: Longevity payments for eligible instructional employees will be provided in the February 15th paycheck.

VCS Instructional Transfer Fair: There have been many inquiries about the Instructional Transfer Fair. Please know that due to the potential rezoning that may occur for the 2024-25 school year, there is the potential for significant movement within the district. If you are interested in transferring, you might want to consider participating in the fair. If you participate, there is no obligation to take another position if you receive an offer, and your current assignment cannot be given away just because you explore potential options via the fair. The HR Department has shared the following dates:

- Displacement and Non-reappointment notification window opens Monday, April 1st
- Displacement notifications begin Wednesday, April 3rd
- Transfer Fair Opens, Wednesday, April 3rd
- Non-reappointment notifications begin Thursday, April 4th
- All notifications must be completed by Friday, April 5th at 5:00 pm
- Transfer Fair closes Wednesday, April 10th

As the date draws near, we will provide the eligibility requirements to participate in the Transfer Fair. If you are displaced due to the loss of an allocated unit, please contact the VUE office and we will ensure that your contractual rights are followed. The contractual language regarding displacements is found in Article 15 section C. You can access the Instructional contract here, <https://www.ourvue.net/contract-salary-scheduled/index?&ztv1=9&zsid=13>

Meeting with Dr. Balgobin: On Wednesday afternoon, we will convene our monthly meeting with the superintendent. The agenda includes ESE issues & concerns, Reading Endorsement incentives, Latinos In Action, and AVID programs. We will provide a summary of the meeting in next week's report.

VUE Membership Update

The threat to our contract is significant and continues to intensify by the actions of the school board and their attorney. Here is an update on the latest proceedings.

On January 31st, the attorney representing VUE filed a "Motion to Strike" the school board's allegation that VUE had filed incorrect and inaccurate information on our recertification application with PERC. As you know, we followed the guidance provided

by PERC at the time of our filing and made sure to have our documentation reviewed for accuracy by FEA prior to submission.

On February 7th, the attorney hired by the school board filed a “Response to the Motion to Strike”, which alleges that not only did we submit inaccurate and incorrect information relating to the density for the instructional unit, but she is now adding to her argument that we did not file a representation-certification petition (request to hold an election) for instructional personnel prior to the expiration of our registration (October 24, 2023). The school board’s attorney does not choose to elaborate beyond the statement that the representation-certification petition was not filed, but we understand what she is trying to infer on behalf of the members of the school board.

The intent of the actions of the five members of the Volusia County School Board, through their attorney, are crystal clear. They want VUE gone. In a way it makes sense.

Why would they want a group of informed personnel who are empowered to speak the truth about the working and learning conditions within VCS?

Why would they want teachers and staff to stand up for reasonable expectations for themselves and students?

Why would they want individuals who are bold and courageous enough to speak publicly about the failures of district leadership to create environments that are conducive to employee retention and student success?

Why would they want VUE to remain in place now that AFSCME has been decertified?

Why would they want to be obligated to follow a contract that provides rights, privileges, and protections for teachers and support staff?

The answer to all of these questions is the same. **THEY DON’T**. The members of the school board have remained silent while these attacks continue to be waged against us. Those who we once thought were our friends have seemingly turned their backs on the teachers and support staff in this district. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*" The silence and inaction of members of the school board is costing them more than they realize.

We are fighting not only in this moment, but for the future of OUR UNION. We must respond powerfully by continuing to recruit. We have seen an amazing response during the last three weeks, and we cannot stop now. We want to give a special acknowledgement to the following schools for significant membership growth during the last month:

- Palm Terrace Elementary 8% increase in membership
- Coronado Elementary 6% increase in membership
- T. T. Small Elementary 6% increase in membership
- Forest Lake Elementary 5% increase in membership
- Sunrise Elementary 5% increase in membership
- Volusia Online Learning 5% increase in membership

We must move all schools and worksites to at least 50%. For many schools that means just one or two new members. Your VUE member representative is here to assist you in getting your site to this threshold. We are counting on everyone to help with this work. Ask your steward about your density or reach out to the office to find out what you can do to ensure that your school or worksite meets the goal.

Ask a colleague to join today. It is as easy as clicking the QR code and completing the online application. THIS IS NOT A DRILL!



Upcoming VUE Professional Learning **REGISTER TODAY!**

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

ESE: IDEA/IEP

Course # 72058
Section #108190
Time:

Dates:

Monday, February 26, 2024
VUE Office
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

ESE: Building Relationships w/ Adults

Course # 72061
Section #108191
Time:

Dates:

Monday, March 4, 2024
VUE Office
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

Managing Behaviors in the School Community

Course # 71630
Section #108379
Time:

Dates:

Monday, Mar. 4, 11, 18, 2024
VUE Office
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

ESE: Building Relationships w/ Students

Course # 72229
Section #108374
Time:

Dates:

Monday, March 11, 2024
VUE Office
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

ESE: Classroom Strategies

Course # 72059
Section #108375
Time:

Dates:

Monday, March 18, 2024
VUE Office
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

ESE: Student Behavior

Course # 72060
Section #108376
Time:

Dates:

Monday, April 1, 2024
VUE Office
5:00 pm –8:00 pm

Free Income Tax Assistance

VITA
VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

FEBRUARY 1ST - APRIL 15TH 2024
FREE TAX ASSISTANCE FROM TRAINED VOLUNTEERS.
APPOINTMENT ONLY

FLAGLER COUNTY LIBRARY
2500 Palm Coast Pkwy
NW, Palm Coast, FL 32137

G.W. COMMUNITY CENTER
201 E. Drain St. Bunnell,
FL 32110

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
4110 S. Ridgewood Ave.
Port Orange, FL 32127

DR. JOYCE M. CUSACK RESOURCE CENTER
489 W. Mathis St. DeLand,
FL 32720

STETSON UNIVERSITY - LYNN BUSINESS CENTER
345 N. Woodland Blvd.
DeLand, FL. Room 318

FOUR TOWNS YMCA
280 Wolf Pack Run,
Deltona, FL 32725

FIFTH THIRD BANK COMMUNITY ROOM
1030 W. International
Speedway Blvd. Daytona
Beach, FL 32114 2nd Floor

BETHUNE COOKMAN UNIVERSITY
151 N. Lincoln Ave. Daytona
Beach, FL 32114
College of Business Second Floor

JOHN H. DICKERSON CENTER
308 S. Martin Luther King
Jr. Blvd. Daytona Beach,
FL 32114

MID-FLORIDA COMMUNITY SERVICES
592 S. Volusia Ave.
Pierson, FL 32180

DAYTONA STATE COLLEGE - NEW SMYRNA BEACH
941 10th St. New Smyrna
Beach, FL 32168 Building
1 Room 135

QR CODE
UNITEDWAYVFC.ORG/VITA

2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Help.
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
United Way
Volusia Flagler Counties

SCAN TO BOOK APPOINTMENTS
OR CALL 211

The United Way will once again offer free income tax preparation assistance to members of our community. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program offers FREE tax preparation services. Volunteers are IRS certified and trained to identify taxpayer's eligibility for federal tax credits to help families get the most accurate returns.

Many taxpayers who are eligible for free tax preparation also are eligible for the EIC (Earned Income Credit) and the CTC (Child Tax Credit). EIC/CTC are two of the best anti-poverty programs offered by the federal government.

The Campaign for Working Families provides this free service in Volusia and Flagler Counties yearly with the intention of providing assistance to help families with income up to \$54,000 file accurate tax returns.

VUE Black History Month Contest.

In honor of Black History Month, the Volusia United Educators are sponsoring a contest open to all Volusia County Schools students. Two (2) winners will be selected at each level of instruction (elementary, middle, and high school).

Students are eligible to win a \$50 gift card.

The topic of this year's contest is "African Americans Contributing Positively through Performing Arts." The categories include visual arts and essay. For more information, please contact Dr. Lekita Howard at Lekita.howard@floridaea.org.

African American History Contest 2024
Sponsored by Volusia United Educators

THEME
"African Americans
Contributing Positively
through
Performing Arts"

Win a \$50.00 Gift Card

In honor of Black History Month Volusia United Educators is sponsoring a contest. The theme is "African Americans Contributing Positively through Performing Arts" (music, singing, dance, acting, recitation, etc.). There are two categories: Essay and Virtual Art. One winner will be chosen in each category(2) for elementary, middle, and high.

-Original work only
-Essays must be typed
-Submission deadline February 23rd

-Must address the theme
-\$50 word minimum
-Winners announced February 29th

Submit entries to: Dr. Lekita Howard
1381 Educators Road
Daytona Beach, Florida 32124
lekita.howard@floridaea.org

VUE Visits

Last week, our Friday lunch visit took us to Tomoka Elementary School. The fabulous teachers and staff at Tomoka are currently working at the former Osceola Elementary school site. They are eagerly anticipating returning to their community and starting the next school year in a brand new facility. The change in the physical layout of the school

will be significant, but the teachers and staff will continue to provide the same care, compassion, nurturing, and dedication to their students and parents.

Thank you to everyone who was able to stop by and say hello. We truly enjoyed our time with you.



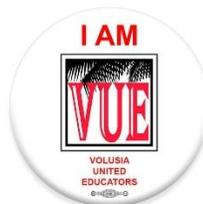
Next week, we will be in the schools listed below. If we are scheduled to visit your school, please make sure to stop by to say hello! 😊

- Monday: Indian River Elementary, and Timbercrest Elementary
- Tuesday: Pine Ridge High
- Thursday: Pride Elementary
- Friday: Silver Sands Middle



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!

