

# The Solidarity Report

Your weekly VUE Update

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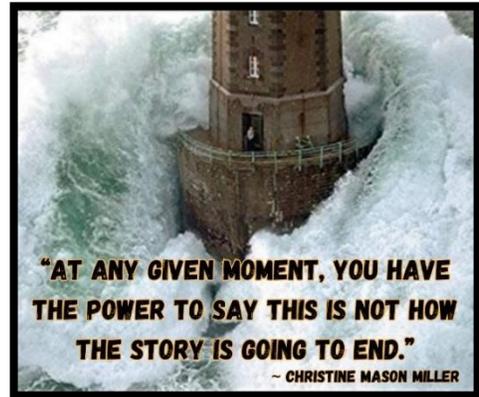
[www.ourvue.net](http://www.ourvue.net)

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## Member Spotlight: Mr. Stephen Gold!



- \* 5<sup>th</sup> year teaching in Volusia County Schools!
- \* Currently teaching American History at Mainland High School
- \* VUE Steward
- \* MHS Academic Team Sponsor
- \* MHS Spirit Club Sponsor
- \* MHS 2025 Teacher of the Year Nominee
- \* Favorite Quote: “Years ago I recognized my kinship with all living things, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on the earth. I said then and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.” ~ Eugene Debs

Mr. Stephen Gold is an early career educator who is making a positive impact in his school and community. Stephen is a kind and considerate individual who understands the importance of relationships. Stephen shared, “I take it upon myself to try to make sure all the students know me, and I know them, and that they know I care about them both as a student and a human being.” Stephen also understands the importance of solidarity and unity in the workplace. As such, he has taken a leadership position within VUE and is now a steward. Stephen is also giving back to his community as a part of the local theatre group in Volusia and Flagler Counties. He has been in several performances at the Daytona Playhouse! He is also a writer and avid record collector. He loves coffee shops and is often called a “hipster” by his colleagues! Thank you, Mr. Stephen Gold for your dedication to your students, colleagues, community and VUE. You are the coolest hipster we’ve ever known. Solidarity! 😊

## District Update

**Mark Your Calendar:** Due to the ERPL this month, only one additional meeting is allowed to occur in March. 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.

**ERPL #8** – The final early release professional learning will occur on Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. This learning is scheduled as a school-based learning and should align with your school improvement plan.

**No Meeting Week-** The week of March 18<sup>th</sup> is a no meeting week due to the end of the third quarter. No meetings are allowed this week with the exception of PST, IEP, and 504 meetings.

**Teacher Duty Day-** Friday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> is a Teacher Duty Day. Grades are due at the end of the day. **This is NOT a workday for paraprofessionals.**

**Spring Break:** Spring Break will occur Monday March 26 through Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Middle School Changes:** The rumor mill is up and running at top speed about potential changes for the 2024-25 academic year. One of the rumors we are hearing is the return of the 7 period day for middle schools. We have asked about this change but and have received conflicting information, so we are including it on the agenda for the meeting with the superintendent. We will report back to provide the information we receive during the meeting.

**Important VSET Reminders:** Please make sure to mark your calendar with the following information:

- **Friday, March 8-** Teacher Deliberate Practice Plans Due (end of day)
- **March 15-** last date to complete VSET Observation cycles
- **March 22-** Teacher's Final Self-Assessments Due; Evaluator feedback on DPPs is due (end of day). **IMPORTANT: Category 2 teachers who did NOT complete a mid-year self-assessment MUST provide evidence for ALL components in Domains 1 and 4 in the final self-assessment.**
- **April 1-19-** Year End Evaluation Conferences

To access additional resources that will help you with the completion of your self-evaluation and the end of the year procedures, please click the following link, [https://volusia.truenorthlogic.com/ia/empari/tab/VSETHelp?\\_ct=VSETHelp](https://volusia.truenorthlogic.com/ia/empari/tab/VSETHelp?_ct=VSETHelp). Please note the “Guiding Questions for Domain 1 and Domain 4” document. This is new this year and is intended to provide support with the final self-assessment evidence. Also, new this year is the VSET End of the Year power point. This step-by-step guide will assist you with completing the VSET process. We want to acknowledge and thank Ms. Fedigan for her collaboration and willingness to work through problems that occurred with the implementation and communication of the new VSET process for category 2 teachers.

**Reasonable Assurance Statement:** We have recently learned that teachers and staff have been asked to sign a statement indicating that they acknowledge that they are not eligible for unemployment benefits during school breaks, which includes the summer break. When we inquired about this new practice, we were told that several individuals have been negatively impacted due to receiving unemployment benefits during the summer and then being required to repay the money. We have concerns with the language in the statement and have sent it to FEA for review. If you are asked to sign this

acknowledgement during your VSET evaluation, we recommend that you DO NOT sign anything that states “I understand,” but you *can* sign a statement that indicates that you have “received information” or “information has been shared with you”. We will send out an update when we have discussed this further with FEA. The statement is called “Reasonable Assurance.”

***Meeting with the Superintendent:*** Wednesday, March 6 is our scheduled meeting with the superintendent. We have included the following items on our agenda:

- **ESE** – we are requesting the agreements/settlements with the DOJ and/or DOE that explicitly state that the reporting forms we have been mandated to complete are required.
- **LGBTQ+ Guide for Inclusive Schools** – due to recent changes in the law, we are requesting that VCS create official guidance to educate and inform students and staff of the changes in the law and the policies that VCS has developed as a result. There are many questions, and not enough answers in this area.
- **Middle School Changes** – if VCS is planning to return to a 7 period day, what will this do to allocations, will the “Teaming” concept continue?
- **Allocations for 2024-25**- we will ask about potential cuts and reductions across the district and how this will be accomplished with the current 115 vacancies for instructional personnel and the more than 100 vacancies for support staff.
- **New initiatives and communication with VUE** – we will reference several new initiatives that VCS has brought forward without contacting VUE in advance. Many of these items will impact the bargaining unit and therefore must be bargained prior to implementation. We will ask for a proactive approach vs. the current process that does not include collaboration.

## **VUE- ACTION ALERT**

***“The future depends upon what you do today.”  
~ Mahatma Gandhi***

The words of Gandhi could not be more appropriate!

Any way you cut it; this has been an exceedingly difficult year. We have attempted to work collaboratively with the district, and it has not produced the results for which we had hoped. We have spoken with the members of the school board multiple times and asked for their support, and it has not been given. We have seen organized labor, retirees, and community members speak with the board about working on the issues that matter, and they refuse to acknowledge the requests. I have asked four of the five board members to rescind the action they have taken against VUE, and they have done nothing.

Now, the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) has ordered the school board to ***“file a response by no later than March 7, 2024, as to whether it is challenging the Union’s registration under section 447.305(7), Florida Statutes (2023).”***

The board must now respond to show their true intentions. Do they support the employees who work tirelessly to help every student succeed, or do they truly desire to see VUE gone?

Now is the time to take action. We must do all in our power to influence the members of the school board to stop meddling in our recertification process. We are asking every member and potential member who values their contract to send an email to the board urging them to respond to PERC that they are not challenging VUE.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!** Please click the link below and send an email to the members of the board **NOW!** Please be sure to include your PERSONAL EMAIL in the contact information section. We are using the *fastaction* system from FEA. This system will allow all of the board members to receive your email with one click.

Also, we are asking that you customize the message if possible. It is more powerful if you write your own message, but we have included a template to help with talking points.

Email link: <https://secure.ngpvan.com/EqC57KE4REeY0-ozPsoLIA2>

Please share this action request with your colleagues. We began this work on Friday evening, and as of this morning, more than 500 emails have been sent to the board.

We have until Thursday to obtain the outcome we want. We must move quickly to let the board know that we are not going to sit quietly by while they attempt to take away our contract.

Also, we need to continue to recruit. You can use the QR code to help a colleague join. Please remember that it is now a two-step process and completing the online application (portal) is just the first step.



This is an exciting time of our union. We are being tested and whether we win or lose is up to us. As for me, I plan to fight with all I've got to save our rights, our protections, our contract, and OUR UNION!

Who is ready to stand with me and FIGHT for the things that we care about?  
SOLIDARITY!

## **NEA RA & AFT Biennial Delegate Elections**

NEA RA & AFT Biennial Delegate Elections Nominations are being accepted for the NEA Representative Assembly and the AFT Convention. The NEA-RA will be held in Philadelphia, PA., on July 3 – 7, and the AFT Convention will be held in Houston, Tx on July 22 -25. The VUE Executive Board has allocated funds to cover costs associated with the NEA-RA and AFT Convention for the automatic delegates only (President & Executive VPs).

Candidates for delegate positions must be members in good standing for a year prior to the conference, but all costs of travel, food, and lodging must be paid by the individual. Nomination forms can be obtained from the VUE office by emailing [beth.friedl@floridaea.org](mailto:beth.friedl@floridaea.org) or by calling 386-238-1605. Nomination forms must be completed and returned to the VUE office no later than 4:00 pm, Friday, March 15, 2024 (faxes or emails will not be accepted). An election will be held, if necessary, Wednesday, March 20, 2024. If you have any questions regarding the conventions or the delegate nomination process, please contact the office.

## **VUE Elections**

The VUE Elections Committee is announcing the timeline and offices that will be elected for a three (3) year term beginning on July 1, 2024. The deadline to submit Nomination Petitions for officer positions is Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

This year, we will elect the following officers:

- President
- Executive Vice President for Instructional Staff
- Executive Vice President for Support Staff
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership Vice President
- At-large Vice President for Support Staff
- 10 Constituent Vice Presidents

Any member in good standing for at least two full years may run for an officer position. To qualify as a candidate for one of the officer positions, interested members must obtain a nomination form from the VUE office and return the completed form, with at least 20 signatures of VUE members, representing at least 3 different schools, to the VUE office no later than 5:00 pm on Wednesday, March 20, 2024. Faxes or emails are not accepted.

Should elections be necessary, elections for the officers will take place on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. If you have any questions, or if you would like to obtain a nomination form(s), please contact [beth.friedl@floridaea.org](mailto:beth.friedl@floridaea.org) or call the VUE office at 386.238.1605.

## **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: 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

**Grand Canyon University Scholarships & Programs**

**NEW Teacher Preparation Scholarships**

**Online bachelor's or master's degrees  
at GCU's National Center for Teacher Preparation**

Grand Canyon University (GCU) is addressing America's teacher shortage with generous scholarships. Our pledge is to provide affordable and accessible education for aspiring educators.

***Why Choose GCU?***

**Affordable:** • Generous New Scholarships: Opportunities for qualifying school district employees seeking initial teacher licensure in select online bachelor's or master's degrees in education

**Flexible:** • Online Coursework: One class at a time online, <sup>1</sup> allowing you to network with peers and faculty nationwide

• Local Field Experiences: Field experience hours and student teaching opportunities in your current district<sup>2</sup>

**Supportive:** • Quick Transcript Evaluations: Unofficial evaluation within 24 business hours after submitting transcripts for a personalized graduation plan including a preliminary schedule and anticipated date of graduation, provided the schedule is followed

• Academic Support: Guidance around licensure prep — including support with teacher certification exams

- After College: Lifelong teaching support and resources thanks to GCU's College of Education Promise

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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## VUE Visits

The VUE staff visited Deltona Middle School last week to provide lunch to our members and potential members. We had a wonderful time and fantastic conversations with the outstanding folks who work at Deltona Middle.



We also want to take a minute to thank the outstanding individuals who took time out of their busy schedules to attend last week's school board meeting. While we have posted a few pictures on our social media page, we wanted to provide a list of all the schools who were represented and acknowledge the support that we received from our union brothers and sisters.

The following schools were represented on Tuesday night:

- Campbell Middle School
- Chisholm Elementary
- Deland High
- Deltona High
- George Marks Elementary
- Pine Trail Elementary
- Seabreeze High
- Spirit Elementary
- Spruce Creek Elementary
- Starke Elementary
- Sugar Mill Elementary
- Sunrise Elementary
- Taylor Middle/High
- VAATT
- Woodward Ave. Elementary

The following unions and affiliates were also represented and stood in solidarity with VUE:

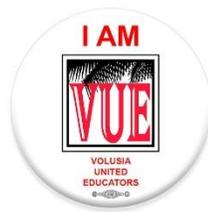
- Florida AFL-CIO
- AFSCME Retirees
- Communication Workers of America (CWA)
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
- Laborers International Union of North America (LiUNA)
- UAW Retirees
- VUE Retirees

It was a big night for us, and we are grateful beyond words for the support that was provided as we fight for our contract. **SOLIDARITY!**



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!

