



Solidarity Report

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them.
~ John F. Kennedy

Are You Ready to Cross the Line?

In life, there are moments that change everything. The birth of a child, graduation from high school, marriage/divorce, overcoming an illness, etc.

With each of these experiences, we have a choice. We grow from the experience, or we remain where we are.

Sometimes our circumstances seem overwhelming, but with every challenge, we must make a choice, do we stay in neutral, or do we cross the line?

The current state of VCS is troubling. District leaders are clearly disconnected from the needs of those doing the work. Teachers and staff do not feel valued, respected, supported, or understood. When we attempt to bring issues and concerns to the members of the school board, efforts to censor and squash our voices are made by putting pressure on principals and supervisors to “meet with disgruntled employees.” Clearly, District leaders do not want the truth to be told. They are fearful of transparency and want us to fall in line and do as we are told.

Silence is not the answer.

It is time for each of us to make our choice. Do we cross the line and work together to make things better for ourselves, our colleagues, our students, and our communities, or do we sit idle and hope that things will change?

For me, I’m crossing the line! In the words of Angela Davis, “*I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change; I am changing the things I cannot accept.*”

There are two school board meetings remaining before the close of the school year. We must show up, speak out, and stay focused on our goal. We must commit to working hard to show others that the Volusia United Educators will not be silenced. We are THE EXPERTS within VCS and our voice MUST be heard. The smallest of actions can result in a huge difference.

At 211 degrees, water is hot. At 212 degrees, it boils. And with boiling water, comes steam, and with steam, you can power a train!

Just one extra degree can make a difference. With a little effort, we can push through the challenges we face to let the board members and District leaders know that we will not accept the way things are within our district, and that we are close to the boiling point.

Will you join me at Tuesday’s school board meeting?

We need our members to turn out and speak up.

Can you spend an hour at DAC on Tuesday night to show the board that you are engaged in this work and that our district needs to focus on the things that matter? Will you commit to being present and holding the board and district leaders accountable?



Are You Ready to Cross the Line? cont.

If you are ready to cross the line, meet me at DAC at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, May 14th. The first round of public participation begins at 6:00 pm. If you are interested in speaking to the board, please contact me at elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org.

VCS is in a moment of truth; we are in a moment of truth. Will we allow the disrespect, censorship, lack of support, and lack of focus to continue, or will we cross the line to fight for what we know is right? If you want things to change, the choice is yours. Solidarity.



Labor Management Update

On Wednesday afternoon VUE met with VCS to discuss labor/management issues. A list of the issues discussed, and the responses received are below.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

-Changes to the end of year for 11 and 12-month employees. Communications have been ongoing since the board voted to include Juneteenth as a holiday. The extension of the work year is a result of the board approval. * If you have a conflict as a result of this change, please contact the VUE office. We will provide assistance as needed. The district would not agree to implement this change in the 24-25 school year.

-Displaced support staff & the placement process. The HR department is meeting this week to finalize the list of displaced personnel. The process will include a survey to all displaced support staff requesting feedback on preferences to consider for placement, such as but not limited to east/west side of the district, and level (elementary, middle, high, or district placement). Your VUE staff is closely monitoring this process and working with our members and the HR department to make this as smooth as possible. Please contact the VUE office if you have questions.

-When will the difference in premium contribution vs. plan cost be returned to the individuals on the employee only HMO free plan? The payments will be made after the end of the school year. The target date is June 27, 2024.

-Is there a district requirement to use Ed Modified through the end of the year for all ESE documentation? The individuals at the pilot schools have been asked to take an in-depth dive into Ed Modified in order to provide additional feedback on improvements prior to the district-wide roll out in 24-25. However, individuals are **NOT MANDATED** to do this. The option is being provided in order to make improvements.

Invoice Payments

We continue to receive emails and phone calls regarding the extreme delay in the processing of payments for additional duties paid on invoice (tutoring, collaborative planning, subbing, etc.).

We work with the payroll department on a case-by-case basis as members reach out, however, the problem is district-wide and we believe that many members continue to wait for their pay in silence, hoping that they will be paid with the “next check.” It does not matter what or where you teach, this is a systemic issue.



Invoice Payments cont.

We brought this topic forward during labor management. We understand that the folks in the payroll department have a lot of plates spinning, and we believe that this disastrous situation is the result of district decisions to try to do more less.

When we discussed this with the district, their response included the following explanation; **when an individual earns additional income (subbing, etc.) the payroll clerk at the school begins the process by completing certain sections of the invoice. This includes the stringline, which determines the funding source (all the same for subs, school sites are different). Currently, there is no identified common error. The payroll department has created a tracking document to identify problematic invoices and/or commonalities in order to provide support to school sites.** When we asked about training, we were told that training has been provided several times, and that new hires are trained on a one-to-one basis. Additionally, Online resources are available to assist payroll clerks.

Finally, the conversation included a discussion on the timing of the receipt of the invoice by the payroll department. We were told that payroll has a 30-day payment policy, **IF** the invoice is correctly submitted. If the invoice has errors, it is returned to the sender to be corrected. This delays the processing of the payments. We asked if there was a tracking system to follow up on the invoices that are returned to the sender, but it was not clear if such a system exists.

If you are participating in additional work that is paid outside of your salary, we strongly recommend that you track your hours. This is very helpful if we need to advocate for you. To their credit, the folks in the payroll department have been very helpful when we contact them, and have provided transcripts of invoice payments, but it is always better to be prepared. If you are waiting on a payment for additional work that is more than 30 days past due, please contact your payroll clerk and the VUE office. This is a serious issue and we are ready to advocate for you.

Retiring Soon?

by CJ Allen

Are you retiring soon? Want to Continue your enthusiasm for public education while supporting the teachers who are “left behind”?

Say no more; we can help you continue your good work!

If you are currently a VUE member and are getting ready to retire, or a retired educator/support staff from any other state, come join us at VUE Retired.

We meet monthly during the school calendar year- so you have lots of time for travel. We share lunch, social time and benefit from informational programs that will keep you brain happily in gear while supporting our fellow educators.

Contact: CJ Allen cj-english@msn.com
386.212.4245 for more information.

FEA- Retired Innovation Grants



COMING SOON!!

Florida Education Association-Retired
\$150 INNOVATIVE GRANTS

Are you an FEA member? Do you have an idea that would benefit your students? Is there a project you would like to do in your classroom that you otherwise cannot afford?

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE AUGUST 1

See your Building Rep or contact your FEA-Retired District Director for a quick and simple application!



Suncoast Credit Union Financial Wellness Webinar

MASTERING YOUR MONEY

Tackling Rising Prices and Credit Challenges:

Discover strategies to maintain financial stability despite rising prices. We'll explore short- and long-term goals to help you thrive.

Learn how your money management today can influence your credit standing tomorrow.

Join us for an insightful webinar discussion to help improve your financial wellness in today's economic environment.

TUESDAY, MAY 21 5:00 – 5:45 PM

Don't miss out on valuable tips and practical advice. Reserve your spot today!

[CLICK HERE](#)
or scan the QR code to register.



VUE Member Appreciation

A big Thank You to those who could join us for our annual Member Appreciation Celebration. We had one of the best turn outs to date. If you were unable to be there, you were missed and we hope that you know how much we appreciate you and all that you do. Our union is strong because of YOU! Solidarity.



In Solidarity,

Elizabeth Albert

Membership QR Code
Ask a friend to join today!

