



The Solidarity Report

Your weekly VUE Update

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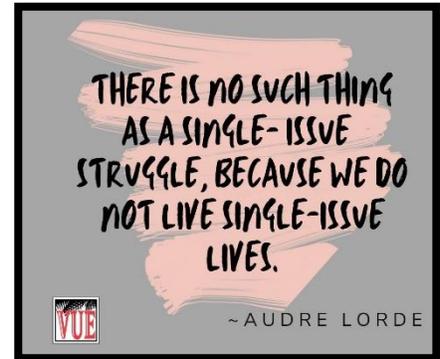
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August 14, 2023

In This Issue:

- Member Spotlight
- District Update
- Membership Update
- VSET Correction
- Open Enrollment
- Annual Leave Balances
- FEA DA Nominations
- And much more....



Spotlight: Ms. Valencia Robinson!

- * 29th year working as a teacher for Volusia County Schools!
- * Currently teaching for Volusia Online Learning (English/History)
- * Creator of the Online African American History Course for Florida
- * National Speaker/Patient Advocate, American Cancer Society
- * Board Member; Florida Breast Cancer Foundation, the National Breast Cancer Coalition, & the Light Collective
- * Favorite Quote: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." ~ Philippians 4:13

Ms. Valencia Robinson is the epitome of strength and determination. Valencia began her career with Volusia County Schools *the day after*, she graduated from Bethune Cookman University. It is no wonder that her 4 children showed the same grit and perseverance as they each graduated with their AA degree from DSC at the same time, they received their high school diploma. Valencia shared that she believes, "*We are able to do things we never dreamed were possible and survive things we wish we never had to face...*" As a breast cancer survivor, Valencia now works on the national level to bring awareness of the number of African American women who are diagnosed and who pass away due to advanced late-stage breast cancer. She is the co-founder of Women of Color Wellness Alliance whose mission is to provide support to women of color diagnosed with breast cancer, who live with heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Her goal is to help **ALL** women of color achieve optimal wellness. Valencia believes in a future where every woman of color is thriving and healthy. Thank you, Ms. Valencia Robinson, for your strength, determination, and the light that you are bringing to our world. Solidarity.

District Update

As mentioned in last week's HOT TOPICS update (<https://www.ourvue.net/hot-topics/index>) there are several new laws taking affect this year. If you have not yet read the HOT TOPICS, we encourage you to do so. The district has provided the following guidance thus far:

VCS Cell Phone Policy: As a result of HB 379, student use of all wireless communication devices **is prohibited during instructional time unless express permission is granted by the teacher and only used for instructional purposes.** This includes cell phones, tablets, earbuds, and smartwatches. All wireless communication devices must be stored in a backpack or purse during instructional time. This new policy will be in effect beginning Monday, August 14, 2023. Any student who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

VCS Restroom Policy: The district has added the following policy as a result of HB 1521: *Safety in Private Spaces Act*. The policy includes the following:

- Requires schools to limit bathroom and changing facility usage to biological sex at birth or offer a unisex option.
- Schools must establish disciplinary procedures in their codes of student conduct that apply to those students who willfully enter the bathroom or changing facility that differs from the gender category they were assigned at birth and refuse to depart when asked by instructional, administrative, security, or student disciplinary personnel.
- Students who violate the law will be disciplined in accordance with the procedures implemented in the school's code of student conduct.
 - First Offense = Warning and parent contact
 - Second Offense = Discipline referral
 - Additional Offenses = Follow Progression in the Code of Conduct

VCS Vaping Policy: VUE and VCS agree that there is no place within our schools for vaping. The policy created by the district suggests the following consequences for vaping in our schools. The district has suggested:

- Vapes – Possession – 5 Days Suspension – 1st Offense
- Vapes/Usage - Including Drugs – 10 Days Out of School Suspension – Refer to District Student Placement Committee (DSPC) – 1st Offense

The discussion at the board workshop related to these policies included concerns about consistent enforcement across the district for all policies, the availability of gender neutral restrooms on all campuses, and the recognition that vaping is an addictive practice and if the district response is to utilize out of school suspension as a consequence, the student will be at home vaping and the addiction will not be addressed. After an interesting conversation spearheaded by Ruben Colon, who is a Respiratory Therapist for Advent Health, the conversation shifted to consider an in-school suspension option which would require the student to complete modules focused on living a tobacco free/vaping free life. The Cell Phone Policy will continue to be refined via the committee process. Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Patty Corr has created a committee of administrators to further develop the policy. The results will be presented to the board at a later date.

AP Psychology: There has been a great deal of controversy related to the curriculum for the AP Psychology course. When the DOE initially moved to ban this course from our public schools, FEA and tens of thousands of educators, community activists, parents, and

other stakeholders across our state moved quickly to share their objection to the removal of this course. The concern was the content related to sexual orientation and gender identity. In order for the AP Psychology course to remain eligible for college credit, the content cannot be altered. Within 24-hours, the Florida Commissioner of Education, Mr. Manny Diaz, Jr. sent a letter to superintendents advising that the DOE “is not discouraging districts from teaching AP Psychology.” Further stating, “In fact, the Department believes that AP Psychology can be taught in its entirety in a manner that is age and developmentally appropriate and the course remains listed in our course catalog.” However, there are at least six districts, including VCS, who will no longer offer AP Psychology. VCS will offer AICE and IB Psychology. We are monitoring this situation and we will provide additional information if the situation changes.

Supervisory Duty: Unless part of a rotational supervisory duty that has been created following the contractual language found in Article 9, section J of the instructional contract, any supervisory duty that you are asked to do, must be paid at the contractually agreed upon supplement rate of \$955. Supervision of students is not “added on” as other duties as assigned under other supplemented duties. For example, if a supplement is agreed upon for Middle School Team Lead, that does not mean that the individual is also expected to perform morning or afternoon supervision under the MSTL supplement. The supplements are identified in the contract and are paid for the performance of specific duties. The ability to merge or blend supplements does not exist and would be considered a violation of the contract. If you have questions about supervisory duty or supplements, please contact your steward or your member representative.

Membership Update

Preplanning proved to be a very good week for recruitment and conversion to eDues. We’ve seen substantial numbers of members convert to eDues or opt into the check pay method. Our numbers are growing, but we cannot let up. We must continue to strive to hit the 60% density threshold. If each school were to have 6 individuals either convert to eDues, or if they are a potential member, join VUE, we would hit our goal.

We can meet and exceed the density requirement if we all do our part. Ask a colleague who has not yet enrolled in eDues to convert today or ask a colleague to join. If we do not hit our mark, we could lose our union. No Union, No Contract!

VSET CORRECTION

Last week, we shared the amended process that will be used for VSET. In reporting the changes for category 2 teachers with 3 or more years of continuous service resulting in proficient or better IPS evaluations, we reported that the teacher could opt back into the traditional/full observation cycle if preferred. What we neglected to mention is that if the individual opts back into the full observation cycle, administration is still required to complete the 2 informal observations required in the new process. Please see below.

Category 2 (3+ years of continuous service, with proficient or better IPS evaluations)

- 2 informal observations – minimum of 15 minutes in length – must show evidence for all components in Domains 2 and 3 – can occur in first, second or third quarter
- Teacher reflection Domains 1 and 4 (year-end) – third quarter
- 1 final evaluation (required by the state) third quarter

We apologize for the error and any confusion it may have caused.

Open Enrollment Information

Open enrollment ends this Friday, Aug. 18, 2023 @ 11:59 pm.

You must participate in open enrollment, even if you are not making any changes. Failure to confirm your benefits, could result in the loss of your VCS benefits. You must have your employee ID number to complete the enrollment process.

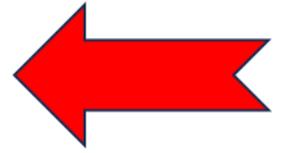
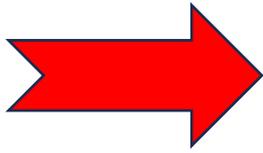
Open enrollment is the only time you may make changes to your insurance and benefits for the plan year. This year, all benefit-eligible employees can enroll using:

- **Online via primeBENEFITS self-service** make your elections from your computer at: <https://vcs.primebenefits.io/>
- **ONE-TO-ONE PHONE Call:** Schedule an appointment with a Benefits Counselor to learn about your benefit options and enroll over the phone at a time that's convenient for you below (Please have your employee ID number ready when enrolling): Volusia Employee Benefits Enrollments https://book.appointment-plus.com/d66zx4b4/?service_id=5857
- **VPORTAL:** Click on the *primeBENEFITS* tile in your VCS Vportal account.

To decide what is best for you and your family, please take a moment to review the information that is available on the district's annual enrollment website:

<https://www.vcsedu.org/directory/departments/human-resources/risk-benefits-management-department/annual-enrollment> .

Enroll today, it takes literally minutes to enroll if you have your documentation ready!



Annual Leave Balances!

The contract for VUE Support professionals includes the following provision:
250 day or more employees shall accrue annual leave at the rates set forth in paragraph A above (www.ourvue.net/contract-salaryscheduled/index?&zsaid=10). Such employees shall be permitted to accumulate annual leave up to a maximum of 480 hours for the purpose of terminal pay. For the purpose of determining the annual leave available for use, annual leave may be accumulated to a total of 624 hours. Employees working less than (8) hours per day shall be permitted to accumulate annual leave on a prorated basis.

No hours in excess of this amount may be carried forward from September 30 of each year.

If you work 250 days or more, we are recommending that you review your current leave balance. Now is the time to determine if you need to use your leave so that it is not lost in September. If you need assistance, PLEASE contact your VUE member representative.

FEA Delegate Assembly Nominations

VUE is accepting nominations to attend the FEA Delegate Assembly that will be held at the Rosen Center in Orlando. The FEA DA will take place on October 12-14, 2023. If you are interested in attending as a delegate for VUE, please contact Beth at beth.friedl@floridaea.org to obtain a petition. All petitions must be received in the VUE office by 4:00 pm, Wednesday, August 23, 2023.

0% Interest Loan from LAUNCH Credit Union

Once again, our friends at Launch Credit Union are offering the 0% Interest Loan to VUE members. This loan is so very helpful for those last-minute items that you need for yourself or your classroom.



This exclusive interest free loan is for VUE members only. You can borrow up to \$600 and take up to 6 months to pay it back. Credit qualifications are required. Call Launch today, at 800-662-5257, option 3, or apply online at www.launchcu.com .

Do not delay, act now in order to take advantage of this offer. If you need proof of your VUE membership, you can take a screenshot of a pay stub showing your dues deduction or ask the loan professional to contact our office, (386) 238-1605.

FEA Retirees Innovation Grant



COMING SOON!!

Florida Education Association-Retired
\$150 INNOVATIVE GRANTS

Are you an VUE 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 Steward or contact the VUE Office for a quick and simple application!



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!

