



# The Solidarity Report

Your weekly VUE Update

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“The labor movement is the principle force that transforms misery and despair into hope and progress.”



~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Spotlight: Ms. Payten Ford!



- \* 2<sup>nd</sup> year working as a teacher for Volusia County Schools!
- \* Currently teaching music at Manatee Cove Elementary
- \* Rookie Teacher of the Year Nominee 2023-24
- \* K-2 Music Club Sponsor – MCE
- \* Volusia All-County Elementary Music Ensemble coordinator
- \* Favorite Quote: “Where words fail, music speaks.” ~ Hans Christian Anderson

Ms. Payten Ford is an early career educator who is making a positive impact on those around her. In just one academic year, Payten has realized the power, influence, and importance of being a teacher. She shared, “*I found myself especially inspired after my first year of teaching when I had my first interaction working with Multi ESE classes.*” Payten explained, “*There have been many moments when I have nonverbal students making music and interacting with other students in a way that I have never seen them before. It brings me joy to know that making music can have such a positive impact on my students.*” Payten’s enthusiasm for music education has led her to explore ways to integrate other content/curriculum, such as literacy, into her lessons. Her goal is to show her students how the concepts taught in their core classes can be applied through music in the real world. Thank you, Ms. Payten Ford, for your creativity, caring, and compassion for your curriculum and your students. We are excited to watch you continue to make a positive difference within VCS and VUE! Solidarity.

## District Update

**Meeting Reminder:** Contractually, principals are allowed to use one planning period each week for the purpose of PLC, with the exception of the block out weeks. As a reminder, principals are also able to call a PLC on the Thursday after interim grades are due. However, principals are still limited to only 2 before/after school meetings (faculty meetings/team meetings) per month. For months with less than 14 days, only one meeting is allowed.

**Digital ESE Paperwork:** The ESE department has created digital versions of the support facilitation logs and the IEP Acknowledgement form with the intent to develop consistency, efficiency, and to create accuracy in the recording of the supports provided to our students with disabilities. As with any new process, there have been a few bumps. We are working directly with Ms. Wiles and her team to find solutions and corrections to the specific issues that have been shared. In the first week of school, more than 1,300 individual logs were entered into the system, and there were only a handful of identified issues. Support is being offered to ESE personnel through Student Data Dashboard “deep dive” trainings. These trainings are geared toward meeting the needs of our teachers and ESE personnel. Three (3) regular in-service points are being offered and 1 of the points is a bankable ESE point. Currently, the trainings are being held at Mainland High, but additional opportunities will be offered on the west side of the county in the coming weeks. Please check MyPGS for the training dates and locations. If you are experiencing issues with the digital ESE forms, please reach out to our office. The direct feedback we have received from our members has been extremely helpful and has led to the positive changes that have been made.

**Upcoming Dates to Remember:** 1) This week testing (PM1/ Fall EOC, & Retake) training may occur during PLCs. 2) ERPL #1 (District- based, Performance Matters) is scheduled for Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. 3) Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup> is a teacher/student holiday in observance of Labor Day!

## Instructional Contract Settlement/Next Steps

On Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, VUE and VCS reached a settlement for the 2023-24 instructional contract. We have tentatively agreed to the following:

**Article 4:** a modification to the dues deduction language pending the final ruling from the courts. Currently there are at least two lawsuits that have filed as a result of SB 256.

**Article 34:** Provisions to ensure that if changes are made within VCS that impact hours, wages, or the terms and conditions of employment, VUE and VCS shall enter into a Memorandum of Understanding.

**Article 28:** Supplements included in Article 28 will increase by 2%, and clarifications to the 5 year rule were made.

**Article 26:** The compensation agreement is as follows:

- TSIA Distribution
  - Base = \$567.00
  - Effective = \$1,039.00
  - Grandfathered (Tenured) = \$1,323.00
  - Highly Effective = \$ 1,512.00

- The Retention Supplement has been expanded to include teachers who have 7-9 years of VCS experience and the values at each interval have been increased.

Years	Amount (for each year of VCS Service)
7-14	\$60
15-19	\$80
20-24	\$100
25+	\$160

- The payment for voluntary in-service outside of the normal workday has been increased to \$25 per hour.

All other previously negotiated components of Article 26 (Advanced Degree Supplement for Grandfathered teachers and the Longevity Supplement) will remain in place.

The tentative ratification date is scheduled for Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>. VUE will conduct a paper ratification vote following the same process used last year. Stewards and member representatives will facilitate the vote at school sites, work locations, and the VUE office. If ratified, the contract will go to the board for approval on September 12, 2023. Once approved by the board, the payment schedule will be shared.

We will continue to send additional information this week. Please be on the lookout for the Calculate My Increase document and other important information.

Also, this agreement would not have been possible without the work of our union, the members of the bargaining team, and the input of our members. PLEASE share this positive outcome with your colleagues who have not yet joined or completed their eDues. Now more than ever, we need to recognize and share the power of having a voice, an advocate, and OUR UNION! SOLIDARITY!

Bargaining for support professionals will reconvene on Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. We are hopeful that we will reach an agreement for our support members very soon.

## eDues Reminder



Time is running out to ensure that your membership in our union remains in place. If you are a 12 or 11-month contract employee and you have not enrolled in eDues or opted into the check pay process, your membership has terminated. All other instructional and support members have until August 31<sup>st</sup> to confirm that your membership will not be interrupted.

However, don't fret, we are here to help. You can use the QR codes in the flyer to join for the first time or finish your enrollment. If you are interested in the check pay option, please contact Beth at (386) 238-1605 or [beth.friedl@floridaea.org](mailto:beth.friedl@floridaea.org).

Additionally, please ask a colleague to join today. We are pushing toward our goal of 60% membership in both bargaining units.

We are getting closer each day, but we are not there yet. We need to get this done, and if we all work together, we will succeed.

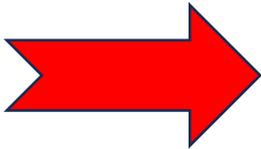
Please reach out if you need to confirm your membership or if you have any questions.  
SOLIDARITY!

## **Certification Reminder**

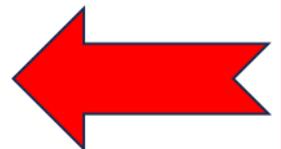
As a reminder, instructional personnel who need to recertify in 2024 should determine NOW if all of the requirements are in place. We are here to support you and want to make sure that you have plenty of time to complete any outstanding professional learning opportunities if necessary.

For a complete listing of the requirements for renewal, please click here,  
<https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/renewal-requirements/reinstatement.stml>.

Please remember that as a member of VUE, you have access to free professional learning in ESE, ESOL, and certain requirements for the Reading Endorsement. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Lekita Howard at [Lekita.howard@floridaea.org](mailto:Lekita.howard@floridaea.org).



## **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?&zsid=10](http://www.ourvue.net/contract-salaryscheduled/index?&zsid=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](mailto: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](http://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.

## VUE's Membership Committee



Do you enjoy networking? Do you enjoy talking to your colleagues about the things you love about teaching or working in our district? Do you enjoy being a part of our union and sharing the positive impacts that VUE has on the lives of our members?

If you've answered yes to any of these questions, then we have an opportunity for YOU!

The VUE Membership Committee is looking for a few guys and gals to help recruit new members. The members of the committee work to make connections and establish communication with our new employees to inform them of the benefits of membership in our union. If you are interested in joining the VUE Membership Committee, please contact Sheila Butchart at [sbutcha1@gmail.com](mailto:sbutcha1@gmail.com).

## 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!



Are you looking for a way to fund an exciting and innovative lesson or project? If so, FEA Retirees can help!

Each year our fantastic retirees union provides financial assistance to educators across the state. They understand first-hand that power of creativity and exploration.

Don't delay, apply today!

For more information or an application, Please contact CJ Allen at **CJ Allen, President VUE Retired**, 386.212.4245 or [cj-english@msn.com](mailto:cj-english@msn.com)

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!

