



Solidarity Report

“You really can change the world if you care enough.” ~ Marion Wright Edelman

Court Ruling on Payroll Dues Deductions

Last week, U.S. District Judge Mark Walker ruled favorably on an ongoing lawsuit filed by the Florida Education Association related to SB 256 and the payroll deduction portion of the bill.

In this particular federal case, SB 256 sought to override the US Constitution's protection of contracts by forcing PERC (the Public Employees Relations Commission) to call an immediate end to payroll deduction which was protected in existing contracts.

Judge Walker ruled that “the payroll deduction ban as applied to the remaining Union Plaintiffs with CBAs violates the Contracts Clause” and further, that “prohibition on the collection of union dues through payroll deductions, as applied to Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association’s and Hernando United School Workers’ existing collective bargaining agreements, is unconstitutional.”

What does this ruling mean for members of VUE?

FEA legal counsel is currently reviewing this ruling and how it will impact other locals who were not named as plaintiffs in the lawsuit. However, we know that although the transfer to the eDues system has been challenging, we must take time to reflect on all aspects of a potential return to payroll dues deductions.

As with most things, there are pros and cons to consider. We are aware that there are certain groups and individuals who are determined to take away your right to be a member of your union. It may just be a matter of time before we see another round of legislation that attempts to make payroll dues deductions illegal again.

The ACH deduction method removes all participation by VCS, which means that the district does not know who is and is not a member of VUE. For some individuals, they are more comfortable having a degree of separation from the district.

As we learn more about what this ruling means for us as members of VUE, we will be sure to share the information. For now, it is good to know that our voices were heard and that Judge Walker stood up for public sector workers and affirmed that our collective bargaining rights and contracts need to be respected. Solidarity!

Ethics

Every now and then we all need a little refresher on the do’s and don’ts. Listed below is a quick reminder of a few of the items that are taught to new employees during the Ethics portion of the HR orientation. This is not an exhaustive list. If you have questions about any of these items, or anything else, please contact Elizabeth at elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org.

Always remember that as an educational professional, you are held to a higher standard. The things that you do, say, write, and post, will be viewed differently from the general public because we work with children. Please keep this in mind as you read through the list below.

- Avoid direct communication with students - texting or calling a student directly is never a good choice. Contact parents or use a group messaging system if communicating with a team, club, or group.
- Refrain from sharing your personal beliefs/opinions with students - students do not need to know these things. We are to teach the Florida Standards, using the resources provided by VCS. Stay in a professional stance at all times.
- Be aware of your social media presence - never “friend” your students or parents of students. Social media is a slippery slope and if you identify yourself as a VCS employee, your posts will be viewed differently. It is a good idea to use the highest security settings and to “think twice” before posting.
- Never give a student medicine - this includes aspirin, cough drops, or lotion. Send students to the clinic if they are ill.
- Supervision, Supervision, Supervision - always know where your students are. If you can’t see them, it’s a problem. Make sure to be well planned and prepared for transitions and drills.
- Avoid conversations with students on controversial topics. Everything is a HOT TOPIC these days, so please redirect any attempt to discuss these topics back to your content or the appropriate person.



Ethics cont.

As a public school employee you are a Mandatory Reporter. That means, if you suspect that a child is being abused, neglected, or has been abandoned, you MUST contact DCF. You can call 1-800-962-2873 or file an online report at www.myflfamilies.com. Failure to report could result in a Third Degree Felony. It is better to make the call and have nothing come of it, versus not calling and allow a child to remain in danger. When in doubt, MAKE THE CALL!



High Stakes Testing

High stakes testing has been the name of the game in Florida's public schools for many years. However, now that the state has shifted to computer-based testing for even the youngest learners, it has resulted in creating vulnerabilities for teachers and proctors.

Prior to the implementation of Progress Monitoring, most educators only facilitated a big "end-of-the-year" test. Now, the PM cycles occur three times a year. The multiple assessments are to measure the amount of knowledge the student has at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.

While this sounds reasonable, we have legitimate concerns with the logistics of computer based testing for all students. First, we know that there are varying levels of computer literacy among our students. Some students are a whiz and can easily navigate the nuances of computer testing, while others struggle to move through the questions and make sense of the process. We do not believe that it is developmentally appropriate for children in the primary grades to take assessments on the computer as we question if the assessment is truly measuring the knowledge of the student or if it is measuring the student's ability to use the computer.

Secondly, we are extremely concerned about allegations of misconduct toward teachers and proctors. We know that some students will need assistance with the logistics of the testing platform. How are teachers and proctors supposed to "help" students move through the test if they are not allowed to look at the student's screen or prompt them? A quick review of the FLDOE's Testing Security Agreement failed to provide guidance on how to manage this concern.

As we approach the second round of the PM assessments in January, we will be seeking specific language that is allowable and "safe" for teachers and proctors to use if a student experiences a computer issue during testing. The only other recourse would be to contact the school testing coordinator if a students have computer-based testing technical difficulties, which we know is unreasonable due to the volume of students testing at any given time.

We will keep you updated on this issue as it is critically important.

DPP Support!

Evaluations for instructional personnel are comprised of three components; observation, deliberate practice plan (DPP), and student growth measure.

The Instructional Practice Score (IPS) is 65% of the total summative evaluation score. The IPS is the combination of the observation score and the DPP. Instructional personnel are able to earn ratings on the DPP based upon how many learning cycles they complete. One correctly completed learning cycle will result in a proficient rating, and two or more correctly completed learning cycles will result in a distinguished rating.

We encourage members to complete two DPP learning cycles in order to strive for the highest rating possible.

To be considered for a distinguished rating on the DPP, a minimum of one of two learning cycles must be implemented, and all steps of the learning cycles must be completed and entered in MyPGS by December 20, 2024, by 5:00 PM.

If you are looking for a learning opportunity for your next DPP, consider engaging in a VUE professional learning. We are planning our second semester course offerings and wanted to get the word out early. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Howard at lekita.howard@floridaea.org.

The courses we will offer are below. Additional details will be shared soon.

40-Hour Reading/ESE course will begin on January 14, 2025. Seats will go quickly! REGISTER TODAY using MYPGS.

Course # 78544
Section #110934

ESOL - Language & Literature - Registration information coming soon

ESE - All Five (5) Modules - Registration information coming soon



Trivia Night at the Hall!

Come one, come all to the first annual VUE Trivia Night at the Hall!

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the work of your union, please join us for this FUN event.

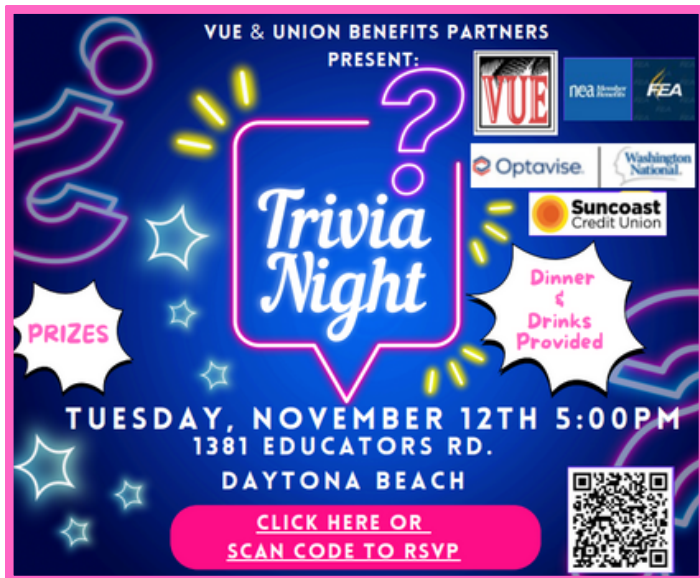
VUE and your benefits partners are hosting this event on Tuesday, November 12th at the office beginning at 5:00 pm.

Food, drinks, and prizes will be provided.

So grab a friend and come on out for a night of fun, friendship, and factoids!

RSVP using the QR code or the link below.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf3DIRK1OTzORB-SG8XMqWZPkHK-m90dQQhVOvNWb2VU6bqhw/viewform>



Growing our Membership

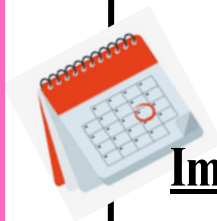
Our focus for the 24-25 year is building power through organizing and recruiting, and thanks to YOU, new members are being recruited every day!

There is no secret or special skill when it comes to recruiting. It is simply about building relationships and having conversations with colleagues about why YOU are a member of your union.

If each site/school were to reach just 50% member density, we would greatly exceed the density requirement.

Talk with a friend who has not yet joined our union and help them understand that we have more power when we stand together than when we are alone. Talk with them about the benefits of belonging to the ONLY UNION within VCS. Our ability to make improvements is directly connected to our membership.

You can direct them to the membership application by clicking [here](#) or by scanning the QR Code below.



Important Dates to Remember

- **VCS Board Meeting** - Tuesday, November 12, 2024- this is the last meeting for the current board.
- **Midterm Grades Due** - Wednesday, November 13, 2024 (*No meetings Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday unless they are an IEP, 504, or MTSS meeting*)
- **Instructional Retention Payments** - November 15th paycheck
- **Dr. Balgobin's Check-In** - November 19, 2024 at Deland High School, 5-6:00 pm
- **Summer School Retro Payments** - November (date TBD)
- **Thanksgiving Break** - Week of November 25, 2024
- **Longevity Payments (support & instructional)** - December
- **DPP #1** - Due December 20th by 5:00 pm.
- **No ER Hurricane Makeup hour** - December 20, 2024
- **Winter Break** - Begins week of December 23, 2024

