



Solidarity Report

“The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace, and brotherhood”
~ Dr. Martin Luther King

Important Reminders about Leave

Each week we receive calls and emails that reinforce the need for a few gentle reminders. There are a few basic contract and policy expectations about sick and personal leave that need to be reviewed. The items below are not an exhaustive list. If you have questions about leave or a practice at your school/worksite, the contract language for leave can be found [here](#).

Earned Leave - As part of the benefits of working in VCS, leave is provided to teachers who work more than half-time and to all full-time support staff. Sick leave is earned at the rate of one day per month and is credited at the end of the month. Leave cannot be taken in advance of it being earned and credited. Instructional personnel earn ten (10) leave days per year (4 days are credited on the first day of employment each year) and support staff earn days aligned with their contractual work year. Six (6) days of sick leave may be used as paid personal leave.

Sick Leave - If you are an instructional employee, you are required to provide notification of your absence by using the Substitute Employee Management System (SEMS) as soon as practicable. Typically, notifications are put into SEMS prior to the beginning of the workday. If you are support staff, we recommend notifying your principal/supervisor as soon as practicable. There is currently not an electronic notification system available for reporting absences for support staff.

Pay Period Leave Increments- If you need to use your leave for an appointment or obligation that does not require you to be gone for a full day, you are able to access your leave incrementally. The first occurrence must be at least one hour, but any additional time taken within the same pay period can be taken in 15 minute installments.

Expectations when out on leave - when you are out sick or on leave, there is no expectation that you are to work. You are not obligated to check email, answer phone calls, respond to text messages, or participate in Teams meetings. Sick and personal leave are provided to you for their respective purposes and should be honored as such. When you use your sick/personal leave, your leave balance is reduced. If you choose to work while out on leave, we cannot guarantee that you will be compensated for the work you do.

Personal Leave - Personal leave may be taken as “no reason given.” Personal leave must be requested at least three (3) days in advance of the beginning date of leave. There are only 3 reasons why personal leave can be denied:

- when 10% or more of the bargaining unit staff has requested off
- Blackout weeks (Testing)
- To work for another employer

Personal leave may be used in an emergency situation without the advanced notification to administration/management, however we recommend notification as soon as possible in order to avoid a no call/ no show situation. If you are considering taking personal leave, we recommend that you email your principal/supervisor from your VCS email to provide the notification. The VCS email system will provide evidence of the date and time the request was made.

Annual Leave (12 month support employees) - Support staff employees who work 250 days or more earn annual leave. Annual leave is credited as follows:

- Employees who have worked less than five (5) continuous years with VCS in a 250-day position earn eight (8) hours per month of annual leave.
- Employees with five (5) - nine (9) years of continuous years of service in a 250-day position earn ten (10) hours per month of annual leave.
- Employees with ten (10) or more years of continuous service in a 250-day position earn twelve (12) hours per month of annual leave.

Leave of Absence- Leave of absence (LOA) without pay is available subject to approval by the school board. This leave can be authorized for a variety of reasons including personal reasons. LOAs are granted for no less than six (6) weeks and up to one (1) school year. LOAs may be extended for the subsequent school year. A LOA may not be granted for employment elsewhere. When an individual takes an unpaid LOA, the sole responsibility of insurance rests upon the individual.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) - The district is bound to comply with the provisions of the federal Family Medical Leave Act. The provisions of this policy are found in the Appendix section of each of the Collective Bargaining Agreements.



VUE Support Staff Appreciation Party!

Your union knows that our support professionals are the backbone of our district. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of our unsung heroes and we want to show our paras and office specialists a little love and appreciation.

We are hosting an appreciation party for support staff on Friday, February 7th at the VUE office from 4:30 - 7:00 pm. We will have food, drinks, raffles, door prizes and a rooting tooting trivia contest. Come and join us for a fun filled evening.

This event is also an opportunity to share the benefits of belonging to the only union within VCS. We encourage you to bring a friend who has not yet joined and help them to learn why *"IT'S BETTER IN A UNION!"*

Please RSVP by clicking this link, <https://forms.office.com/r/FeVU6VmV6W>



Upcoming VUE Elections

The VUE Constitution and Bylaws requires all elections to be overseen by the Elections Committee. The committee shall set dates for the elections, including the nomination process and a run-off if necessary. All dates will conform to the Constitution and By-Laws of VUE. This includes elections for Convention/Assembly Delegates to state and national affiliates and elections for site-based stewards.

This year we will elect delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly, the FEA Delegate Assembly, and worksite stewards. To qualify as a candidate, members must be in good standing.

The dates for nominations will be shared soon. If you are interested in running for any of these leadership positions, please contact Elizabeth at elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org.



The Truth About Testing!

Are you frustrated with the stress and strain that district assessments put upon you and your students?

Are you concerned about the unnecessary over testing that impedes your ability to teach and your students' ability to learn?

Are you fed up with the narrative about "needing the data" to ensure that our students are progressing?

If you've answered yes to any of the questions above, or if you are just tired of having less time to teach because so much of your time is spent testing, then we need to hear from you!

We are organizing individuals who have had enough with the negative impacts of over testing in VCS. We know that the move to ongoing progress monitoring by the state was done to reduce the negative impacts of testing on our students and schools, yet in VCS we have seen the opposite.

If you are interested in taking action to work to reduce the amount of testing imposed upon students in VCS, please contact Matt at matt.lawrence@floridaea.org. We will contact you to discuss the options available to you and how you can work to advocate for a better approach to collecting data and assessing the academic progress of your students.



VUE Professional Learning

Your union continues to provide you with top notch professional learning that is designed to meet your needs. VUE PL is facilitated by members for members. The following face-to-face ESE courses are currently being offered.

Make sure that you register today using MyPGS. There are only a limited number of seats and they are filling up quickly!

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Lekita Howard at lekita.howard@floridaea.org.



ESE Building Relationships with Adults Professional Learning
Presented by Volusia United Educators
Facilitator: Paulette McKibbins-Shed & Jeffrey Turner



Course# 72061 Session# 112608 Format: Face2Face

Tuesday February 18th, 2025 5:00pm – 8:00pm

In this class participants will learn:

- resources available to build positive relationships with adults
- strategies effective in creating a hospitable/comfortable classroom environment
- importance of classroom layout and how it impacts SWD
- Importance of classroom structure and consistent rule enforcement
- how to effectively give procedural clarity to meet the needs of all students
- different models of ESE services
- to implement strategies to develop on-going dialogue
- who in the school community can provide ESE services

In-Service Points: 4



ESE IEP/IDEA Professional Learning
Presented by Volusia United Educators
1381 Educators Rd. Daytona Beach, FL 32124
Facilitators: Paulette McKibbins-Shed & Jeff Turner

Tuesday February 11, 2025 * 5:00 – 8:00pm



Course# 72058 Session# 112607 Format: Face2Face

This course will be an overview of federal, state and district requirements as participants will understand the federal law governing educational requirements for students with disabilities such as:

- Understand the parameters of IDEA educational requirements for students with disabilities
- Understand the purpose and criteria for quality inclusion practices in public schools
- Recognize the consequences of non-compliance
- Foster the teachers consistent use of the IEP and involvement with the IEP Team
- Broaden the teacher's knowledge and skills in making accommodations and meeting the needs of ESE students.

In-Service Points: 4

10-Minute Meetings

One of the benefits of belonging to your union is access to relevant and timely information. Our stewards hold monthly “10-Minute Meetings” that are designed to give you the facts and information you need, while honoring your busy schedule.

If you have not yet participated in a 10-Minute Meeting, make sure to do so. It is the best way to stay informed and engaged in the work of your union! Solidarity.



Team SDE took their 10-MM on the road to a local coffee shop! Definitely too cool for school! 😊

Discovery Elementary turned out for our quick 10-minute meeting last week with Dr. Matt Lawrence. The members at DES are ready to do the work of their union!



A HUGE Thank you to DES school counselor, Ms. Durrance for her hard work and outreach to community partners. Ms. Durrance is managing her own food pantry to help the students and families of DES. Keep up the great work, Ms. Durrance!

