



# Solidarity Report

“If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn’t thinking”

~ General George S. Patton

## Health Insurance Update

We know that pay and benefits are the most important issues for the teachers and staff in Volusia County Schools. The rising cost of health insurance and the decline in the quality of care has been an ongoing topic of discussion for the members of the Insurance Committee along with leaders within FEA.

Two productive meetings have recently occurred between VUE and VCS to work toward making improvements with the health insurance benefit. We are glad that the Superintendent has listened to our concerns, and for her willingness to work collaboratively in order to get this right for the employees of VCS. Dr. Balgobin understands the importance of providing high quality health care at an affordable cost to working families.

We know that the focus must shift away from managing our health concerns and illnesses, to proactively working toward preventative care that stops and illness or disease from occurring altogether. We must be intentional about WELLNESS vs. controlling an illness. The conversations have also focused on improving the quality and access to care while lowering the cost for employees and families.

As additional information becomes available, we will be sure to keep you informed. We can no longer continue to do what we have always done and expect a better outcome. Now is the time to be an innovative leader within the Central Florida region to change the face of health care for those working in our public schools.



## Support Staff Job Descriptions

The work of the committee to review and propose changes to support staff job descriptions continues. The committee met recently to finalize the work needed to complete a proposal to submit to the Superintendent. The proposal will include realigning job roles/responsibilities for office specialists and paraprofessionals. Our paras are taking on small group instruction and other duties that are typically assigned to instructional personnel, and most of our office specialists are responsible for the work that would have previously been done by two people.

The goal of the committee is to realign the work and redefine job roles. When the proposal is complete, we will share the findings. This is priority work for VUE as our support staff

are the backbone of our schools and district. Solidairty!



## Target Tallahassee



The 2025 Legislative session will begin on March 4, 2025 and end on May 2, 2025. Committee weeks have already begun and we need tenacious advocates to lobby our legislators in Tallahassee!

The Target Tallahassee program is funded solely through the NEA grant. Therefore, funding for travel, meals, and lodging will go on a first come, first served basis. Lodging will be covered for double occupancy only. It is always better to advocate with a friend!

There have already been several education bills filed. Including the following:

- HB 136 - Public School Personnel Salary Schedules
- HB 75/SB 100 - Display of Flags by Governmental Entities
- SB 296 - Middle and High School Start Times
- HB 127/SB 102- Exceptional Student Education

If you are interested in advocating for public schools in Tallahassee, please contact Elizabeth at [elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org](mailto:elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org). SOLIDARITY!



## Calendar Reminders



- February 5, 2025** - No Early Release due to FTE
- February 6, 2025** - Testing training for MS during PLC - PERT Assessment
- Week of February 10th** - No Meeting Week- Midterm grades due Wednesday 2/12 (PLCs can occur on Thurs. or Fri. only)
- February 17, 2025** - President’s Day, no school
- February 19, 2025** - **ERPL CANCELLED**



## 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>



## AFT Professional Learning

Join the AFT Professional Learning team this February for an engaging series of virtual workshops designed exclusively for AFT members. These dynamic sessions aim to energize you for the winter season and equip you with practical, ready-to-use strategies for your classroom. With a wide array of topics — ranging from differentiated instruction and integrating technology to engaging civics lessons — there's something valuable for everyone. Don't miss this opportunity to refresh your skills and enhance your teaching toolkit. Workshop topics include:

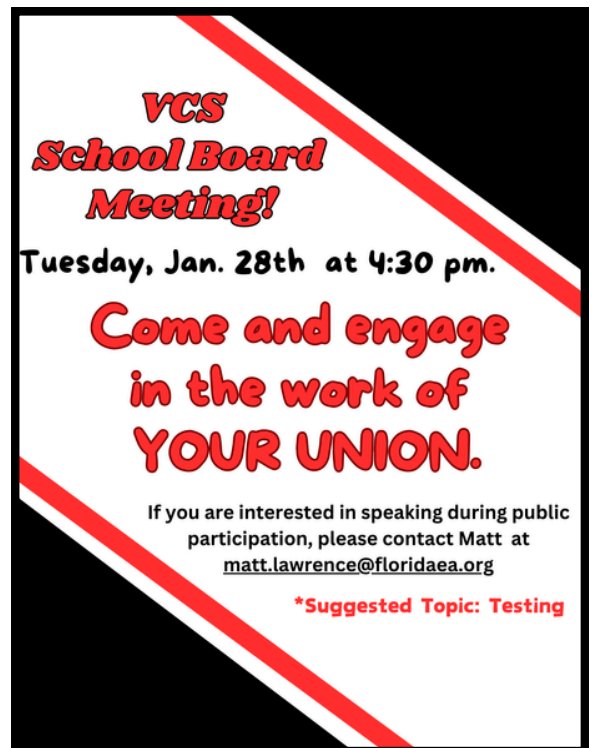
- Differentiating Instruction
- Students with Challenges
- Students, Advanced Technology and Learning
- Trauma-Informed Strategies to Help Students Heal

For a full list of workshop offerings, click [here](#).

Workshops begin Feb. 3, and space is limited. [Register now](#) to secure your spots!



## VCS Board Meeting This Week!




# 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](mailto: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 18<sup>th</sup>, 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**

# Union Benefits

Your union partners with a variety of businesses to provide you with top notch, high quality, affordable benefits that meet the ever changing needs of you and your family.

We are proud to announce that our partner Washington National has started visiting schools across VCS.

Washington National provides supplemental health and life insurance benefits to members of VUE. Please be on the lookout for the representatives from Washington National when they visit your school. Your peace of mind is their priority. The Washington National line of products and services are designed to meet your unique needs and help you achieve your financial goals.



## W2s

It is that time of year again when we must begin the process of completing our taxes. The wonderful folks in the VCS Payroll Department are diligently working on completing the W2s for all employees.

If you have elected to receive your W2 electronically, you should be able to access it from eportal sometime this week. If you receive your W2 statement as a hard copy, it will be mailed to you this week.

If you have questions, please contact the VCS Payroll Department. Thank you.

