



# Solidarity Report

**“You don’t make progress by standing on the sidelines whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.”**  
 ~ Shirley Chisholm

## District Update

The Labor/Management meeting between VUE and VCS was held last week. Additionally, meetings have taken place with district leaders that have resulted in the following items of importance.

- **Secondary Testing Windows** - we have confirmed with Dr. Baker-Drayton that the assessment testing windows that are listed in the curriculum maps are set by the district, but site-based administration make the decision on when assessments are to be given during the window. If you are being told that everyone in your department/grade level must test on the same day, that may not be 100% accurate. Please contact us if you are having problems with testing dates.
- **Wednesday, February 19th - ERPL CANCELLED**
- **Computer Basted Testing (CBT)** - we shared concerns about the increase in allegations of violations of testing protocols during the administration of the PM assessments. CBT creates issues for students that are not related to content, but with the fluency of navigating the platform. We are asking for additional training/guidance from the REA Department to help teachers know “what is allowed to be said/done” to assist students to move through the assessment.
- **Over testing in VCS** - we asked for clarification on the directive given to the REA Department by the Superintendent during the January 28th board meeting. The Superintendent asked for an update on changes made this year and those that will be made for the next school year. Ms. Workman, Executive HR Director, will provide an update.
- **VUE/VCS ESE Workgroup** - we reminded VCS staff that Article 19 section F of the Instructional CBA calls for an advisory ESE workgroup made up of teachers (appointed by VUE) and administrators (appointed by VCS) to review MTSS, IEPs, 504s and the workload for DPS, School Psychologists, and site-based staff. We have asked to reconvene this committee. **\*\*\*If you are interested in being appointed to this committee, please contact Elizabeth at [elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org](mailto:elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org).\*\*\***
- **Fundraising/ Handling Money** - due to increased allegations of mishandling of money and failure to follow VCS policies on fundraising, we have asked for additional training for teachers and staff who handle money. Allegations of inappropriate conduct in this area can lead to severe penalties.

The Office of Professional Standards is creating a guidance document to address these concerns. Ms. Workman will also determine if training can be provided.

If you have any questions about these items, please contact your member representative or call the office at 386-238-1605.



## Legislative Update

As I often say, timing is everything. Last week’s Committee Week resulted in an interesting conversation about state testing. It seems that just as we are sounding the alarm about over testing in VCS, members of the Senate PreK-12 Education Committee are having a similar conversation in Tallahassee.

The same bill that transitioned standardized testing in Florida from the FSA to FAST also required a study to be done to determine what improvements, if any, could be made to reduce the amount of testing.

The study has been completed and the FLDOE offered their [overview of the study](#) to the [Senate PreK-12 Education Committee](#) meeting earlier this week.

One of the things that stood out was a finding on [slide 24](#) indicating that FAST testing cannot be reduced any further and that FAST testing has already reduced the length of assessments compared to FSA.

There was bipartisan pushback from the members of the committee who asked tough questions of the DOE staff about the amount of time that is wasted with students being tested.

Special appreciation to Sen. Berman (D-Boynton Beach) for asking to see a copy of the study so she can review it for herself instead of simply relying in FLDOE’s interpretation of the study results. FEA has also requested a copy of the study; it will be shared when they receive it.



## Protecting Our Kids: Mobilizing for a Day of Action

Join us on Wednesday, Feb. 19, to prepare for the **March 4 Protect Our Kids Day of Action**. The plan to cut federal funding would devastate millions of students—especially those in underserved communities. If enacted, these cuts would:

- Strip 26 million vulnerable kids of critical educational services.
- Deny 7.5 million students with disabilities the special education support they need.
- Cut career and technical education for 12 million students, threatening their job opportunities.

This webinar will equip you with the tools and resources to take action in your community. Learn how to:

- Mobilize locally to defend public schools and the vital services they provide to kids and families.
- Urge federal representatives: oppose education funding cuts.
- Push state leaders: Say NO to cuts in federal aid for schools.

[Register here](#) to get the latest campaign updates, hear from education leaders and activists, and learn how you can make an impact.

Together, we can protect our kids and their future!

Speakers: Randi Weingarten, President AFT and Jessica Tang, President- AFT Massachusetts

## VCS Retirement Workshop

The Employee Benefits Department cordially invite all employees who are planning to retire within the next five years or wish to enter DROP within the next year to attend the 2025 VCS Annual In-Person Retirement Workshop on Friday, March 14, 2025 (Teacher Duty Day) from 12:00pm-3:30pm at The Deltona Center.

Principals have been advised to provide Temporary Duty to ensure that eligible employees can attend

To register, please [CLICK HERE](#) Registration will close at 5:00pm on Monday, March 10, 2025 or will close earlier if we have reached maximum capacity of 400. Unfortunately, no guests are allowed.



## 2025 Empty Bowls Charity Event

If you are interested in attending an event that will put a smile on your face, a song in your heart, and tasty food in your tummy, then you need to join Halifax Urban Ministries for their 17th Annual Empty Bowls charity event on February 22, 2025, at Hope Place! Tickets available now online:

<https://www.ticketleap.events/events/halifax-urban-ministries>

Enjoy delicious hot soups from local restaurants, take a tour of Hope Place and select a ceramic bowl from our [County of Volusia art students](#) to take home as a reminder of hunger in the world. These bowls are one-of-a-kind and they will be an acknowledgement of your contribution to make our world a better place.

Please call 386-317-5888 with questions. Thank you for helping HUM continue their mission of serving those in-need!



## VUE Office Specialist Survey

If you are an Office Specialist and you are responsible for opening an office or building door due to the implementation of HB 1473, we need you to complete the survey below.

<https://forms.office.com/r/pTxvpWvLaR>

We are working to collect data on the number of times OS personnel must stop doing their work to open the door. The unfunded mandate that was forced upon local school districts must be amended.

We believe school districts must be provided funding to make the necessary upgrades to buildings/locks or the law needs to be reworked. We will be traveling to Tallahassee in March to meet with lawmakers and this data will be an important part of our advocacy.

If you have not yet completed the survey please do so now. Also, please share the survey link with your potential member colleagues. Thank you!



# VUE Black History Month Contest

# Labor History

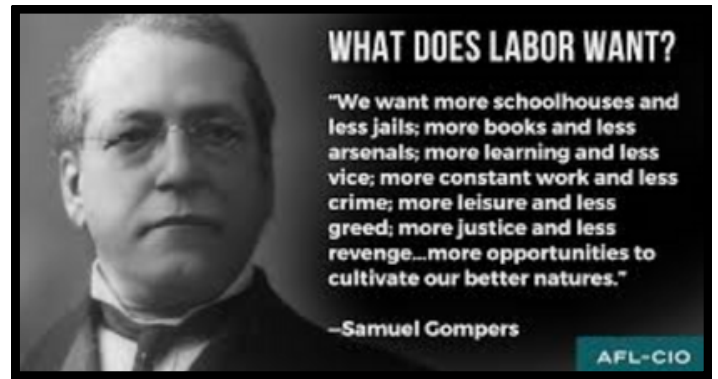
VUE's Black History Month Contest is designed to encourage students to research the various and profound ways that labor of all kinds – free and unfree, skilled, and unskilled, involuntary and voluntary – impact the lives of all people.

The contest is open to all Volusia County students. Students are eligible to win a \$50 gift card. Two (2) winners will be awarded at each level. The categories are Essay and Visual Arts. Each submission shall include the following criteria:

- All work must be an original essay (typed) or original art work by the student
- Typed entries are limited to 500 words
- All submissions must be received by Friday February 28, 2025
- Theme: "African Americans and Labor"
- Winners will be announced March 3, 2025
- Please include grade, school and teachers name

Submit entries to: **Lekita Howard at VUE**

1381 Educators Road, Daytona Beach, FL 32124 or [lekita.howard@floridaea.org](mailto:lekita.howard@floridaea.org)



Samuel Gompers is a key figure in the history of the labor movement in America. Samuel Gompers founded the American Federation of Labor and served as the organization's president from 1886 to 1894, and from 1895 until his death in 1924.

It is interesting to note that the ideals that were important to Gompers and the House of Labor in the late 1800's are still important to us today.

Let's remember that the fights that are worth fighting are the ones that align with our core values and beliefs and those that lift up others and contribute to the greater good. SOLIDARITY!

## NEA Representative Assembly Nomination & Election Notice

The VUE Elections Committee is announcing the opening of nominations for Delegates to the 2025 NEA Representative Assembly. The NEA RA will be held in Portland, Oregon this year beginning on July 2 and ending on July 6, 2025.

VUE will not be covering any costs. All travel, hotel, and food must be paid by the delegate. For more information or to request a nomination form, please contact Beth at [beth.friedl@floridaea.org](mailto:beth.friedl@floridaea.org).



### 2025 Conference Delegate Nomination and Election Notice

Nominations are being accepted for the following Conventions.  
*The VUE President & Executive Vice Presidents are automatic delegates to the NEA RA*

#### NEA Representative Assembly

July 2 – July 6, 2025

Portland, Oregon

*VUE will not be covering any costs this year. All costs of travel, hotel, and food must be paid by the delegate.*

Nomination forms may be obtained at the VUE office 386-238-1605 or by e-mailing, [beth.friedl@floridaea.org](mailto:beth.friedl@floridaea.org)

Nomination forms **must** be completed and returned to the VUE office no later than 4:00 p.m. Monday, March 24, 2025. *(no faxes or emails will be accepted).*

Elections (if necessary) will be held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Please call the VUE office (386-238-1605) if you have any questions

