



## **HOT TOPICS**

*March 6, 2025*

On Tuesday, you and your colleagues showed your commitment and dedication to your students and our public schools. VCS turned **#REDforED** and joined with tens of thousands of public-school educators and community members around the country to fight for what we believe in. To quote Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it’s the only thing that ever has.” If we stay focused on fighting for our students and our public schools, we will surely overcome any challenge that comes our way. Please visit the VUE Facebook page (@ Volusia United Educators) to view the many pictures that were shared.

### ***VCS IEPF changes***

VCS contacted us on Tuesday to inform us of their decision that beginning in the 2025-26 school year, the position of IEP Facilitator will be eliminated. Instead, the District Placement Specialist (DPS) positions will convert to Student Staffing Specialists (SSS) and a limited number of additional SSS allocations will be provided to cover the removal of the site-based IEPFs.

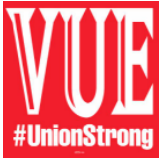
After a lengthy discussion we have determined that SSS personnel will be assigned schools based upon the number of students with IEPs enrolled at each site. SSS will have a caseload that mirrors the current quadrant model. We have been advised by ESE District leadership that the caseloads will be equitable across the district. There will be no reduction/change to the SSS contractual year when converted from DPS positions. IEPFs are not being removed from their current worksite and will have the opportunity to apply for the newly allocated SSS positions. The advertisement for these positions will be internal and not available to the public.

Current IEPFs who do not apply for the SSS positions will continue to be employed at their current school and will be assigned to a position within their area of certification.

Additionally, a new ESE role is being created that focuses only on behavior, not academics. These ESE Behavior Support Teachers will support students with disabilities in the general education setting.

While this news is disturbing and there are many questions as to the need and reason behind this decision, the actions taken by the district do not violate the contract.

Management has the right to create positions and to direct the work of its employees. Since there is no reduction to the contractual work year for the employees currently working as DPS or IEPFs, there is no impact to pay, hours, or the terms or conditions of work, which are mandatory subjects of bargaining.



### *What Can We Do?*

Our contract is the agreement that allows VUE and VCS to determine the rules and terms of our work. As mentioned above, the district is working within the confines of the contract. So, my question for you is, why aren't we doing the same? For too long, we as educators and support professionals have allowed ourselves to believe that we must continue to give in order to meet the ever-increasing demands of our employer. I suggest that we begin to rethink this position. Furthermore, I encourage you to look around your school and worksite at the new young professionals who are entering the workforce.

As I travel from school to school, I have noticed that our young educators and support professionals give 100% all day long, but when the contractual day is over, they leave. They have not succumbed to the mindset that we have to burn the candle at both ends. As you know, when you do this, eventually you run out of candle.

Our workload has become too much to bear. The overwhelming demands do not align with the hours we are paid to work. As we reflect upon what we are being asked to do and compare it with the time we are given to complete our work, I ask you to consider if a change is needed.

Our new young educational professionals are earning record salaries for just entering the workforce, they are dynamic, energetic colleagues who will hopefully decide to spend their entire career with VCS, and we are glad that they are here. However, they have learned very quickly to set boundaries, prioritize tasks, and seek help when needed. These strategies allow them to have confidence that when the workday is done, they have accomplished what they have been provided the time to do and then they go home. I urge you to recognize that this new way of work has value, and it must be considered if we are going to continue to adjust when the district decides to make changes. Being clear about limitations and boundaries will help us to maintain our productivity and our personal wellness. It is something worth considering.

In Solidarity,

Elizabeth