



Solidarity Report

“Public schools are also a choice.”

~Senator Corey Simon

The More You Know - Legislative Update!

This week marks the halfway point in this year’s legislative session. While the climate has not been as toxic as it has in years past, and while there are some very good bills being proposed for public schools, we must also keep a watchful eye on a few potentially harmful pieces of legislation moving through the committees. A recap of some of the bills and legislation we are following is below:

Initial Budget Proposals: Both chambers released their [initial education budget proposals](#) this week. While there are some significant differences between the Senate and House proposals what they have in common is more important.

These budget proposals keep Florida’s per-student funding in the bottom ten in the nation and will do nothing to move Florida’s teachers up from #50 in the nation in average pay. Add to that a [proposal to cut revenue by \\$5 billion](#) in the midst of Florida’s massive teacher shortage, fueled by low pay, and we must not stay silent.

Another similarity between the two budgets is they have the state decreasing their share of education funding putting more of a burden onto counties. In the proposed budgets released this week the percentage of state funding is 54% in both chambers.

All Floridians deserve better than these budget proposals. It won’t be long until a final budget is adopted. So, we must [act now and contact legislators](#) to demand they do better by Florida’s families!

Anti-union legislation: One of the good things that has occurred this session is that **SB 1328**, sponsored by Randy Fine, candidate for Congressional District 6, that was designed to further the attacks on certain public sector unions has not been heard in committee. Therefore it should be considered dead. However, we are continuing to watch **HB 1387/SB 1766** which make changes to how PERC will handle the certification and recertifications of certain public sector unions. It seems that each time we figure out how to navigate the “rules of the game” lawmakers change them. This continued moving of the goalpost is very frustrating. However, we will continue to do what we need to in order to keep our union!

HB 140/SB 123 - Charter School Takeover of Local School Districts- The charter school industry has been taking more money and power away from local school districts every year. These bills are not identical, but allow for the following:

- the conversion of public schools into charter schools without the input of educators or school district officials
- forces local school districts to sell public property if there is declining enrollment in an area as defined by the state.
- prohibits school districts from obtaining new property unless they complete a complex annual plan approved by the state.
- these charter school conversions could strip teachers unions of their union representation and their collective bargaining rights.

These bills are EXTREMELY dangerous to everyone working in our public schools across the state. We are urging members reach out to their elected officials to tell them to **OPPOSE HB 140 and SB 123**. **SB 140** will be heard in the Senate Community Affairs Committee at 4:00 p.m. on Monday. [Click here](#) to write the members of the committee and ask them to oppose this bill. **SB 1126/HB 945- COLA Reinstatement for the FRS-** The 2% cost of living increase reinstated into the Florida Retirement System restores the annual adjustment for eligible retirees. This helps offset inflation and helps our retirees live a better life. So far these bill have been referred to committee, but have not yet been heard. **SB 918/HB 1225 - Eliminating Child Labor Protections-** Labor shortages and other factors have resulted in certain employers looking for “cheap labor.” Minors typically work in low paying entry level positions. Now even the protections afforded to minors in the workforce are on the chopping block. These bills will allow employers to schedule minors (16-17 year olds) for longer hours on school nights, and for more hours during the week. The bill will also allow children to be fired if they or their parents don’t want them to work late on school nights. This is an attempt by the tourism and service industry to fix the shortage of workers at the expense of our children. **SB 676/HB 541- Weaking Minimum Wage Rights -** The drive for cheap labor continues. These bills attempt to change the very good state law that was passed several years ago to reach a minimum wage of \$15 per hour by 2026. These law would allow students/workers in apprenticeships, internships or similar work-based learning opportunities to “opt out” of their right to earn the state minimum wage. The attempt to increase these opt out scenarios is on the rise, which would allow employers to convince young, inexperienced workers/students to work for as little as \$6.15 per hour.



Taking Action

If you are like me, you may be frustrated with the continued attacks on our union, our public schools, and working families by those elected to work *for the people* of our great state. The bills and legislation mentioned above are just a sampling of what some members of the Florida Legislature have lined up for the citizens of Florida.

It is time to take action. Hoping that things will get better does nothing to stop what has already been put in motion. However, what we know is that when we stand together and raise our voices, we often disrupt the plans of those who plot against us. Working families, educational professionals, students, and unionists deserve better.

If you are interested in raising your voice please consider engaging in the following advocacy opportunities:

FEA Power Hour - Each week, the FEA Communications Department hosts the Power Hour. This hour is dedicated to real time advocacy. Power Hour participants meet via Zoom and work together to advocate for pro-public school initiatives. You can join the Power Hour by registering [here](#)
FEA Frontline - register for FEA's weekly newsletter that provides detailed information on important bills and actions occurring at the Capitol. To start receiving the Frontline, please click [here](#)
Action Alerts - sign up for email alerts to stay connected in real time. To sign up, click [here](#).



Instructional Bargaining Unit PERC Election

Sometimes gifts come in the strangest packages. As you know, we are currently in the process of collecting Showing of Interest (SOI) cards for instructional and support staff. Well.....

Late last week, we were informed that the Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) has finally ordered the election to determine if instructional personnel will continue to be represented by VUE. The documents to request the election were submitted last October and we are just now moving forward. The election will occur between April 17 - May 15, 2025. Ballots will be mailed to the homes of instructional personnel and should be completed and returned immediately. Since we are currently engaged in the collection of the SOI cards, we believe that instructional staff will be more likely to vote YES to keep our union.

The outcome of this election will determine if the Volusia United Educators will remain the Bargaining Agent for instructional personnel in the district. Essentially, it will also determine if we continue to have our contract.

Our ability to advocate for the changes we need, protections in the workplace, rights, and benefits, are dependent upon having a voice, and your voice is provided through YOUR union!

When we unite and leverage our collective power, we are able to accomplish more than any individual standing alone.

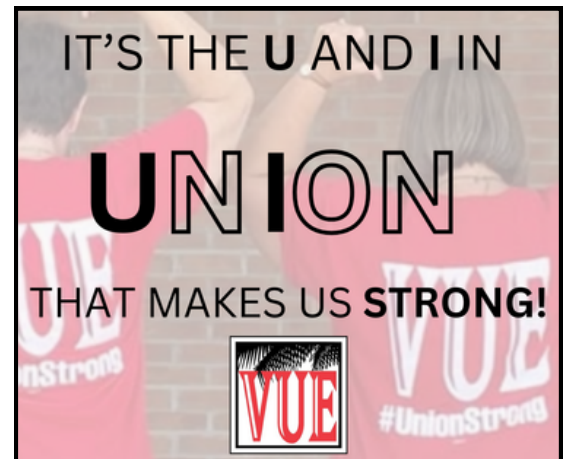
Will you stand with your colleagues and vote YES to save your contract?

Will you return your ballot?

Ballots will begin arriving in mailboxes on or about April 22nd and must be received in Tallahassee no later than May 15th.

We will continue to communicate with you and send reminders to keep you informed. If you have moved since mid October we may need to order a new ballot with your new address. As the election gets closer, we will reach out to identified individuals.

We are very excited to have this election, and we hope you are too. This election will help set the stage for our next round of contract negotiations. Solidarity!



UPCOMING IMPORTANT EVENTS!

Monday-3/31

- VSET Meetings Begin
- **TRANSFER FAIR**
Registration Open
- VUE Support Staff Job Description Committee Meeting
- ESE Workgroup Meeting

Tuesday-4/1

- Special Election - Florida's 6th Congressional District
- Non-Reappointment Meetings Begin
- **TRANSFER FAIR**
Registration Open
- FEA POWER Hour

Wednesday-4/2

- Non-Reappointment Meetings continue
- VCS Insurance Committee Meeting
- **TRANSFER FAIR**
Registration Open

Thursday-4/3

- Displacement Meetings Begin
- **TRANSFER FAIR**
Registration Open

Friday-4/4

- Displacement Meetings continue
- **TRANSFER FAIR**
Registration Open
- VUE School Lunch - Sunrise Elementary

Notes:

- If you are displaced or non-reappointed and you need assistance, please call the VUE office at 386-238-1605
- **Transfer Fair**
Registration closes 4/7



Roster Verification

By Florida Statute, Section 1012.34(1)(a), teachers must be given the option to verify their class rosters and ensure the correct students are linked to them for the value-added model (VAM) component of their evaluation.

This verification is essentially a check of the students who should be included on your rosters as of the date-certain below. This year, the Roster Verification Process is required for the following grades and subjects and optional for all other teachers:

- English Grades 3-10
- Math Grades 3-8
- Science Grades 5 or 8
- Civics
- Algebra 1
- Geometry
- US History Grades 9-12
- Biology

We are recommending that ALL INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL verify their rosters. The student growth measure and value-added model component of your evaluation could impact your salary!

The FLDOE has created a the Roster Verification Tool (RVT) to assist with this process. An email was sent to all instructional staff on March 24th with the details on how to complete this process. the RVT can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

The deadline to complete this process is Friday, April 4, 2025. If you do not teach a student who is listed on your roster, we recommend removing the student. Conversely, if you teach a student who is not listed on your roster, we recommend adding that student.

If you have additional questions or need assistance, please contact the office at 386-238-1605.

Suncoast Credit Union

that Suncoast is hosting an exclusive webinar for FEA members on Saturday, April 5. This session is designed to boost your financial wellness and answer your pressing questions about credit reports, including:

- What lenders look for when approving credit
- Factors that impact your ability to qualify for credit
- How credit is scored
- The impact money management has on your future credit standing

Saturday, April 5
10:00 am - 11:00 am

If you're interested, reserve your spot today:
<https://direc.to/mGBH>

Instructional Transfer Fair

The VCS Instructional Transfer Fair will be held virtually April 9th – 15th. Eligible teachers may register from March 26th to April 7th. The registration link will be shared when registration opens after Spring Break.

Transfer Fair Eligibility:

- Current Volusia County School teachers in permanent positions.
 - Teachers hired on a temporary basis (after Jan. 7, 2025) are not eligible to participate, but can register for the job fair when that opens.
 - Teachers that are non-reappointed are not eligible to participate. but can register for the job fair when that opens.
- "Out of Field" teachers may apply for transfers within their certification area.
- Teachers on a leave of absence may apply to participate.

Please Note: Transfer Fair registration offers an opportunity to upload a brief, pre-recorded, 30-60 second introductory video.

For questions, please contact the Recruitment & Retention Office vcscareers@volusia.k12.fl.us.

