



Solidarity Report

“If the players don’t trust the coach it’s a problem and vice versa .”

~Bill Parcels

Mo Money, Mo Problems

Last week, VCS announced to the world that they are projecting a \$25 million budget shortfall. This narrative is not new. For as long as many of us can remember, each year when the preliminary budget presentation is made to the board, we hear that the financial sky is falling and we are on the verge of financial ruin. Yet, year after year VCS seems to weather the storm and actually report an increase to the district’s fund balance.

Please don’t take my word for it. Every year, school districts must submit an Annual Financial Report (AFR) to the Florida Department of Education. The AFR shows how the district performed for the fiscal year. The data from the FLDOE shows the following:

2020-21: Unassigned Fund Balance: \$23,573,587.00
 2020-21: **Total Fund Balance: \$66,232,749.00**
 2021-22: Unassigned Fund Balance: \$27,068,105.00
 2021-22: **Total Fund Balance: \$71,419,314.00**
 2022-23: Unassigned Fund Balance: \$50,519,362.00
 2022-23: **Total Fund Balance: \$88,138,125.00**
 2023-24: Unassigned Fund Balance: \$65,525,258.00
 2023-24: **Total Fund Balance: \$117,040,806.00**

As you can see from the data above, the funds continue to grow. If you are interested in reviewing the AFRs submitted by VCS, please click [here](#). The documents are available from 2008 through 2024.

This is what we know, all Florida public school districts must keep a 3% fund balance according to DOE. However, VCS has created a policy that requires a 5% fund balance. As you can see from the figures above, they have more than met their self-imposed 5%.

We also know that funding is determined by the Florida Legislature, and while the elected officials in Tallahassee are not doing their part to provide funding that keeps pace with the Consumer Price Index, the tool used to measure inflation, VCS has shown a historical pattern of increasing the fund balance year after year.

When VCS leaders announce a budget shortfall, and members of the board have conversations about cuts to staff, eliminating programs, and a potential state take over of the district, it creates panic and erodes trust in the employer and the district.

Teachers and staff work hard to ensure that students are learning and that our district runs effectively and efficiently. Statements like the one made last week, do nothing to improve morale and create a positive atmosphere. Conversely, the result is decreased morale and reduced productivity. We believe that VCS has an ethical obligation to be transparent and honest with teachers and staff about the district’s finances.

We understand the negative financial impact of Charter schools, vouchers, and the failure of the Florida Legislature to provide adequate funding, but instead of taking a “gloom and doom” position every year, I wonder what would happen if district leaders took a position of protecting and preserving the learning environment and worked to make reductions in other areas.

We believe that our mission is to provide the highest quality education to all students in order to prepare them to become productive members of our community. We believe that this is only possible through prioritizing the needs of our schools and classrooms. Decisions should be made by asking “how does this affect students?” The answer to that question should result in a prioritizing of investments and resource allocations that directly and positively impact the teaching and learning environment. This approach centers on the needs of students, educators and staff; aiming to create the most effective and supportive conditions for academic success.

As we wait for the continuation of the budget process to unfold, please consider how you can become more educated and involved in this process. The more you know, the more active role you can take in advocating for a better future for your students, your family, and our district.



PERC Instructional Election

The Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) Instructional Election is getting ready to begin.

PERC will mail the ballots to the home address of all instructional employees on Thursday, April 17th. The district provided the list of eligible employees in October of 2024. If you have moved, we will need to request that a ballot be sent to your new address. Please contact Beth at beth.friedl@floridaea.org to update your address.

All members of the instructional bargaining unit, regardless of membership in VUE will be eligible to vote.

The election will determine if VUE will remain as the exclusive bargaining agent for instructional personnel working in VCS, and if the contract that has been negotiated by VUE and VCS will remain in place.

We need a strong turn out for this vote, as it will provide the momentum we need for a strong showing at the bargaining table.

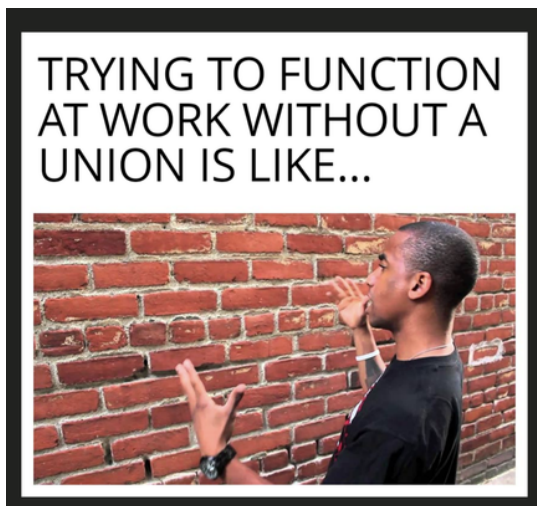
Will you commit to voting YES to keep our union?

Will you commit to returning your ballot immediately?

Will you commit to encouraging your colleagues to do the same?

It's very simple, NO UNION, NO CONTRACT, NO VOICE!

Ask a friend to stand with you to fight to keep our contract. Ask them to join today. Scan the QR Code below and help them become a member of VUE!



VUE Steward Elections

Are you are interested in taking a leadership position within your union and at your school or worksite?

If you answered yes, then you need to run for the position of VUE Steward for the 2025-26 school year.

Any VUE member in good standing for one year prior to the election for office is eligible to run for the position of Steward. Stewards are also able to earn a partial dues rebate based upon the completion of certain criteria.

Candidates are required to complete a Petition for Office.

The VUE Constitution and Bylaws, states that each work location shall elect a Building Steward for instructional staff and for educational support professionals for each 20 bargaining unit members or a major fraction thereof. They may appoint up to two (2) Associate Stewards for each Building Steward

Petitions for Office are due in the VUE office by 4:00 pm on Tuesday, April 29, 2025. Petitions may not be sent via email or fax. To obtain a Petition to run for VUE Steward, please email Beth at beth.friedl@floridaea.org.

Elections will be held Tuesday, May 14, 2024, if necessary. If there is no opposition for a Steward position or if there is an equal amount of positions as candidates for Steward, those candidates shall be elected by acclamation.

If you have questions, please contact your VUE member representative at 386-238-1605.



Instructional Job Fair

Volusia County Schools will host the 2025 Instructional Job Fair virtually on Monday, May 12th. This is a opportunity for you to connect with principals across the school district and discuss potential teaching opportunities that align with your expertise, aspirations, and open positions.

Virtual interview opportunities will be available from 3:00 pm through 6:00 pm. Interested job fair candidates must currently hold or be eligible for Florida Department of Education certification. All certifications are welcome to apply. School principals will be hiring teachers for the 2025-2026 school year.

1. Register to participate in the virtual fair:
<https://tinyurl.com/VIRvcsjfe25>
2. Update your VCS online employment application:
<https://tinyurl.com/VCSApplyNow>

PRIORITY CERTIFICATIONS INCLUDE: Elementary Education, Exceptional Student Education (ESE K-12), English/Reading, School Counseling, School Psychologist, Physical and Life Science, Speech Language Clinician, and Mathematics.

If you have questions, please contact the VUE office at 386-238-1605.



IYKYK: Union Made Easter Products

Easter is quickly approaching and as we prepare to celebrate with our families and friends, it is always good to know how to continue to support our union brothers and sisters as we shop for food and goodies.

To learn more about the Union Made items that can add to your Easter Celebration, please visit, <https://aflcio.org/easter>.



Retiring Soon? Join VUE Retirees!



Retiring soon or know someone who is? Come join us at VUE-Retired. We meet monthly during the school calendar year to share inspirational informational presentations and socialization as we support our fellow educators.

Membership is open to all retired educators/support staff from Florida as well as those from out of state. Explore our website: www.vueretired.org or contact CJ Allen cj-english@msn.com 386.212.4245 txt ok. We look forward to hearing from you!

