



Solidarity Report

“Silent acquiescence in the face of tyranny is no better than outright agreement. .”

~CJ Redwine

Cuts, Cuts, and More Cuts

When we walk into our schools and worksites, we all want to feel like we are a part of something bigger, a part of an organization with the same values, goals, and mission. Our mission is to create working and learning environments where students, teachers, and staff thrive. Places where we work together to make our communities and our public schools the best in the state.

However, last week, the district delivered the news to more than 200 teachers that they were being displaced or non-reappointed. This comes on the heels of more than 280 displacements and non-reappointments last year. How does VCS plan to compete and set ourselves apart from other Central Florida districts, charter schools, and religious schools if we continue to cut allocations for teachers?

District leaders state that the cuts are needed due to declining student enrollment, but I ask you, are your class sizes supporting this narrative?

If VCS is to be the premier district within Central Florida, it would seem reasonable to prioritize funding classroom positions, thus reducing class size, in order to create an optimal learning environment for students. At a time when the competition is luring parents away from our public schools, our leaders should be taking a hard look at how our schools can be supported and enhanced rather than continuing to strip away allocation for instructional staff.

The district is starting the process of preparing their budget for the next fiscal year. As the experts on the reality of teaching and working within this district, we need you to share your story with members of the board. The board needs to understand how the continued reduction of allocations affects our students and those who remain to teach and work in VCS.

The school board meets this Tuesday. It is an opportunity for you to share your story. Remaining silent will not fix this problem. If you would like more information about attending Tuesday's board meeting, please contact me at elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org.

Legislative Update!

With just 4 weeks left in this year's legislative session, it is time to double down and let our elected officials in Tallahassee know that PUBLIC SCHOOLS must be the PRIORITY!

Everyone who works for a living deserves a sense of job security. Educators need to know that they can advocate for what is best for themselves and their students without fear of their principal simply not renewing their contract. The unfortunate reality is that nearly two-thirds of all teachers in Volusia County are on an annual contract, and the majority of these teachers have less than 5 years experience teaching in VCS. Just last week, 111 annual contract teachers were told that their contract will not be renewed for the 25-26 school year. Would you believe that a few of these teachers have more than a decade teaching in VCS, and they've had good evaluations every year of their career? Something is definitely wrong here!

As we work with our members who were non-reappointed, we must stand up and speak out about the power of multi-year contracts.

Providing job security through multiyear contracts has long been one of FEA's priorities. **SB 166** sponsored by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) allows districts to once again award multiyear contracts, something they have not been legally permitted to do for almost 15 years. **SB 166** unanimously passed the Senate this week. We now must work to ensure it passes in the House as well. To help in those efforts, please sign [this petition](#) demanding the House take up this vital legislation. To add your name to the thousands of educators who want job stability and recognition for their commitment to their students, school district, and community, please click [here](#).

In addition to job security, everyone deserves a living wage. FEA has called on the legislature to increase per student funding by \$1,000. Increased funding alone is not enough.

The people have the power. All we have to do is awaken the power in the people.

— John Lennon —



Legislative Update, cont.

We also need the laws that regulate teacher pay and have led to state-mandated salary compression to be repealed.

HB 439 is a step in the right direction in fixing that issue. The bill requires school districts to address “salary compression for instructional personnel with more than 2 years of experience.

HB 439 passed unanimously in its first committee stop. **HB 439** has a companion bill, **SB 136**.

Finally, you likely have already heard that the House and Senate are looking at drastically cutting the weighted funding for **AP, IB, AICE, Dual Enrollment and Career and Professional Education**. If not, you can [read more about it here](#). If these proposed cuts go through, it will mean a devastating loss of services for students and negative impacts to the district’s budget.

We are asking that you take action (SEE BELOW) to support the bills that will improve academic outcomes for students and improve the lives of educational professionals. We are also asking that you contact your legislators and ask them to oppose cuts that would hurt students and local school districts. If we want our students and communities to thrive, we cannot endure cuts to programs.



Taking Action

With just a few weeks left in this legislative session, it is time to let your voice be heard. Gone are the days of hoping for better outcomes, now is the time to take action.

Just this weekend, thousands of Volusia County residents took to the streets to speak up for what they believe matters. If you believe in public schools, we are asking you to engage in one of the options below. We are the experts on public schools and those who make decisions about public schools need to hear from us!

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

The PERC Instructional Elections will take place from April 17th through May 15th. Ballots will be mailed from PERC to all instructional employees, regardless of membership in VUE.

A YES vote for the PERC renewal election does not mean you are joining your union; instead, it affirms that you want to continue to have a contract and someone fighting for improved working conditions.

The election will determine if VUE will remain as the exclusive bargaining agent for instructional personnel working in VCS.

What is at stake if we lose our union?

- **Loss of our contract.** All of the rights and privileges that have been negotiated through the years will be gone. No contract means that the “rules” that govern our working conditions, hours, and pay will vanish.
- **Loss of our voice.** Decision-makers from the School Board to the worksite leaders will be able to do what they want without input from employees
- **Loss of representation and Just Cause.** Without the ability to file a grievance, true “just cause” will be unenforceable. There will be no accountability for decision-makers.

The list above is just the beginning. If you and your colleagues chose to sit on the sidelines during this election, we could lose it all.

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!



Instructional Transfer Fair

Today is the last day to register for the VCS Instructional Transfer Fair. The Transfer Fair will be held virtually April 9th – 15th.

The link to register is: : <https://tinyurl.com/VCSTF2025>.

Displaced teachers who do not secure a position during the Transfer Fair will be placed in a position by HR according to their certification prior to the opening of the Job Fair. If a position is not currently available within a displaced teacher's area of certification, the contract prohibits hiring any new employees with the same certification until the displaced teacher is placed.

If a displaced teacher is “placed” in a position by HR, the teacher is still able to transfer to a preferred position during the summer. The obligation of the district is to ensure that all displaced teachers have a position.

If you have been displaced, we recommend not waiting on HR to place you. There is power in the ability to choose. Participating in the Transfer Fair, provides options. If you have questions, please reach out to the VUE office.



School Board Meeting

VCS School Board Meeting!

Tuesday, April 8th at 4:30 pm. - recommended arrival time of 5:30pm for public participation

Come and engage in the work of YOUR UNION.

If you are interested in speaking during public participation, please contact Matt at matt.lawrence@floridaea.org

***Suggested Topic: Share YOUR STORY - how the continued cuts to allocations will affect you and your students**

Instructional Job Fair

The Instructional Job Fair is open to all non-reappointed teachers. We are waiting for the HR Department to open registration. The Job Fair is typically conducted using a virtual platform. When we receive the link to register, we will send it to our non-reappointed members.

If you have been non-reappointed, please contact the VUE office as we have a resource guide to share that can help you prepare for interviews and next steps.

NEA Member Benefits



As a member of VUE, you have access to benefits provided by our state and national affiliates. The National Education Association (NEA) offers a robust array of benefits, including reduced rates on mortgage loans and refinancing options.

To take advantage of these MEMBER ONLY benefits, please visit, <https://www.neamb.com/>

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>.

