



Solidarity Report

“Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.”
~Harry Truman

Teacher Appreciation Week!



VUE Member Appreciation!

This week, we will celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week. We love our teachers, and we love our support staff.

This has been one of the most challenging years in the history of our union. However, we have overcome each and every challenge with grace and dignity. We continue to recruit new members into our VUE family and we grow stronger every day.

Together we have worked to make sense of the decisions that continue to make our work more challenging. Decisions that are based upon political agendas and numbers on a spreadsheet. Decisions that are made without the input and voice of the experts who know what works best in VCS. Decisions that result in expanding class sizes and an increasing need to support students' mental health.

However, through it all, you and your colleagues continue show up for the students. You build safe spaces for learning. You adapt, advocate, inspire, and lead. YOU make the difference in the lives of our students!

We want to take this moment to say THANK YOU. Thank you for your unwavering focus and commitment to our students and our communities. We truly appreciate you!

To show our appreciation and to recognize the hard work of each member of our union family, we will have daily prize drawings this week.

Beginning on Monday, we will draw four (4) names from our list of members (teachers and support staff). Each winner will receive a \$25 gift card. We will do this each day and post the names of the winners on our Facebook page.

We know that our members give their all to help the children of Volusia County excel educationally and as individuals. Thank you for your belief in every student's potential. You are more than educational professionals, you are the heart and soul of our union. It is with sincere gratitude that we show our appreciation to you not only this week, but every day of the year.

Thank you for all that you do to make a positive difference in the lives of our students and in our union. Solidarity!



VCS Health Insurance

Late Friday evening an email was sent to all staff informing employees about a potential change in the group medical benefits. Admittedly, the timing of this email was not good. However, the email provides an explanation of the actions taken by the Insurance Committee to find solutions to the ongoing issues with our health insurance.

The goal of the Committee was to find a company who could offer the highest quality of care, but at a lower cost than the proposed 20% renewal rate offered by FHCP.

Earlier this year an Invitation To Bid (ITN) was released for the group medical contract. FHCP and Curative submitted proposals for this contract. A thorough procurement process was used that included creating a subcommittee from members of the Insurance Committee.



VCS Health Insurance, cont.

VUE held three seats on the subcommittee. Support staff and instructional staff were represented. The procurement process included an intense review and ranking of the proposals and supporting documentation, in person presentations from both companies, and at least two rounds of negotiations with FHCP and Curative.

In the end, the decision was made based upon the affordability of the proposals. The inability of FHCP to control the rising cost of their medical premiums was a critical factor in this decision. We can no longer allow our members to continue to fall behind. While having insurance is one thing, the ability to use it is another.

We know that change is never easy. However, continuing to do the same thing and expecting a different result is futile. If the members of the board approve the proposal to move to Curative on May 13th, your union will be there to educate and support you through this transition.

Health care choices are deeply personal decisions that reflect an individual's values, needs, and unique circumstances. We respect your concerns about this potential change and we are here to answer your questions. Please contact us at 386-238-1605.




FEA Delegate Assembly

The Florida Education Association will hold the 2025 FEA Delegate Assembly on October 10th – 11th at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando.

The Delegate Assembly is an opportunity to gain valuable insights and ideas that can be used to make improvements within VCS and VUE.

If you are interested in attending the FEA DA as a delegate for VUE, please contact Beth at beth.friedl@floridaea.org to obtain a petition.



**2025
Conference Delegate Nomination
and Election Notice**

Nominations are being accepted for the following Conventions.

**FEA Delegate Assembly
October 10 – 11, 2025
Orlando, Florida**

The 2025 FEA Delegate Assembly will be held on October 10th - 11th at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando.

VUE will only cover costs for rooms based upon double occupancy. All other costs of travel 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

Nomination forms **must** be completed and returned to the VUE office no later than 4:00 p.m. Monday, May 12, 2025. (No faxes or emails will be accepted).

Elections (if necessary) will be held on Friday, May 16, 2025.

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

Important Reminders

It is important to review the expectations of our work. The final weeks of the academic year are always challenging. However, we cannot let our guard down or shift from our stance as professionals. Listed below are a few important reminders and updates that should help you make it to the end of the year. If you have any questions about this information or anything else, please do not hesitate to reach out to the VUE office.

- **Use of personal cell phones:** We do not recommend that you use your personal cell phone for the purpose of work. Should an allegation be made against you, it could result in the seizure of your phone for review by law enforcement. However, we know that most employees use their phones. Please make sure that you are not creating the perception that you are on your phone instead of attending to the needs of your students. Additionally, phones should not be used to take pictures of students in crisis or to record anyone (adults or children). This could be considered a FERPA violation or a violation of an adults civil rights.
- **Testing Protocols:** As we move into the final round of PM Assessments, please remember to review the expectations for Test Administrators. Especially what you are allow to say to students if they experience difficulty navigating the computer-based test. We know that we are prohibited from “helping” a student with the test; we also know words matter. An allegation of violating testing protocols is very serious. Err on the side of caution. Call your Testing Coordinator if a problem occurs during a test session.
- **District Fingerprinting: SB 676 (2023)** set forth the requirement to rescreen (fingerprint) employees working in public schools and other educational institutions. The bill states that employees who were last screened on or before June 30, 2021 must be rescreened by June 30, 2025. The HR department has created a schedule to complete this process. The updated fingerprints will be held in a Clearinghouse to reduce duplicate screenings for certain employees. This Clearinghouse allows multiple agencies to use the same database to complete background checks. There are seven state agencies currently participating in the Clearinghouse.



Happy Cinco de Mayo!




VUE Summer Professional Learning

Do you need to take an ESOL course? Are you interested in getting a head start on planning for the 2025-2026 academic year?

If so, please consider registering for one of the VUE PD courses below. VUE PD is offered at no cost for VUE members. Potential members can attend pending availability but must pay for the course.

DON'T DELAY, REGISTER TODAY! SEATS WILL FILL UP QUICKLY!



ESOL Culture

Presented by Volusia United Educators

Facilitated by
Dr. Teresa McMillan Ward


June 2nd - 5th, 2025 @ 8:30am - 4:30pm

Course# 12552 Session# 113715 Format: F2F

Note: This course is one of the five courses needed to meet the Category 1 ESOL requirement and to obtain the ESOL Endorsement. Teachers will build cultural competence to enhance classroom interactions, instructional effectiveness and create a foundation for optimal learning.

60 In-Service Points
A Combination of Contact and Independent Hours

Please register through Volusia County Schools MyPGS. If there are any questions, contact Dr. Lekita Howard at lekita.howard@floridaea.org or call the VUE Office at 386-238-1605 for registration. Non-VUE/VESA members will be required to pay a registration fee.



Managing Behaviors in the School Community



Presented by Volusia United Educators
Facilitator: Amy Hawkins

June 2nd—5th @ 8:30am until 11:30am
Course# 71630 Session# 113755 Format: F2F

Spend the summer planning a new approach to managing student behaviors in the school community. Build a foundation of knowledge for problem solving and cultivating an effective instructional environment for optimal learning.

60 In-Service Points
A Combination of Contact and Independent Hours

Please register through Volusia County Schools MyPGS. If there are any questions, contact Dr. Lekita Howard at lekita.howard@floridaea.org or call the VUE Office at 386-238-1605 for registration. Non-VUE/VESA members will be required to pay a registration fee.



VUE 10-Minute Meetings

The VUE staff continues to visit schools throughout the district. Here are a few photos from our most recent visits.

Please make sure to attend the next 10-minute meeting at your school. We are looking forward to seeing YOU!



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!

