



# Solidarity Report

**“Labor cannot stand still, it must not retreat. It must go on, or go under” ~ Harry Bridges**

## First Week Feedback - Input from Members

The first week of the school year is in the books. We made it through the week, but there are some issues and concerns that we've heard from our members. We will share a few of them below, and we ask that if you have concerns, you share them with your steward or member representative. We are here to help solve problems and make improvements, but if we do not hear from you, we cannot help.

**Supplements-** (Instructional) supplements as defined in Article 28 of the instructional contract are, *“paid for the performance of duties beyond the regular working day and normal job responsibilities and are not approved solely on the basis of position classification or previous supplement payment.”* There are three classifications for supplements (A, B, C) and prior to performing supplemental duties, a Supplement Performance Order (SPO) must be completed by the recipient. We are hearing that some schools have decided not to pay for supplements, and instead delegate the work of the supplement to members of a grade level or department. **THIS IS NOT ALLOWED.** If you are asked to do the work, you must be paid. If this has occurred at your school or worksite, please let us know. We don't work for free and supplemental duties have been a longstanding fixture in our contract.

**Supplements-** (Support) supplements are not included in the contract for support professionals, however, many schools provide supplements to support staff to ensure that supervisory and other needs are met. When support staff take on these additional duties, they must be paid their hourly rate of pay, according to the Federal Department of Labor. This year we are hearing that VCS is no longer allowing supplements for support staff. We believe that our support staff are a critical part of our district and should be eligible for supplements if they are available. The continued pinching of pennies is creating negative impacts to those who do the work of educating and supporting the children of VCS. Shameful.

**Class Sizes-** as the result of the reduction in allocations for two years in a row, many members are reporting class sizes that are unmanageable. During the board workshop last week, this was briefly discussed. The HR Director stated that they are monitoring the situation and on August 25<sup>th</sup>, all students who did not enter VCS, will be withdrawn and the classroom numbers will be reviewed. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, adjustments will be made to allocations based upon enrollment.

If you have concerns or questions about your working conditions, please make sure you connect with your steward or your member representative. Knowing your contractual rights is important!

## Bargaining Survey & Committee Update

If you have not already done so, **PLEASE TAKE THE BARGAINING SURVEY NOW!** If we don't hear from you, your VUE Bargaining Committees cannot work to develop proposals that reflect your priorities.

The **BARGAINING SURVEY** can be accessed by clicking this link, <https://forms.gle/weRfaE2AdMhm4PaEA>.

The first bargaining committee meeting was held last week and the room was packed. Instructional and support members from across the district worked to review the current survey data to identify the articles that will be opened when we bargain. This year is what we call a “Reopener” year. That means we will only discuss salary and two language items. This is why the data is so important. We must focus on what our members want since we will not bargain the whole contract until next year.

The current data shows that salaries are the biggest concern for both support and instructional members. As we continue to receive completed surveys, we will adjust if needed.

The committees are currently reviewing contracts from other Central Florida districts and will bring proposed language improvements to our second meeting on Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>. As we prepare for negotiations, it is important for you to stay informed. Please make sure that you attend your 10-minute meeting if scheduled, and that you continue reading the Solidarity Report.



## Critical Ethics Reminders

As employees in a public school district, we are bound to uphold the ethical standards found in the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida. This is also known as the code of ethics. You can review the complete document by clicking [HERE](#).

We have received several questions and noticed a few things while visiting schools during the first week. We want to provide a few reminders to keep you safe from an allegation of inappropriate behavior. These are just reminders, and not an exhaustive list. If you have questions, please contact your steward or member representative.

- **We are held to a higher standard** - the things we do, say, and post on social media are viewed differently because we work in a public school system. Please remember that you must always maintain a professional demeanor because we work with the most important citizens in our communities - our children.
- **We are Mandatory Reporters** - if you suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or abandoned, you are mandated to report it to DCF. You can do this by calling (800) 962-2873 or report online at [www.myflfamilies.com](http://www.myflfamilies.com). Failure to report could result in a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree felony.
- **We must supervise our students** - whether you are teaching Pre-K or seniors, you must supervise your students. The most frequent allegation of misconduct is failure to supervise. Know where your students are at all times and make sure that you are well planned when it comes to monitoring your students.
- **Student Fights** - you are not required to physically intervene when students are fighting. The requirement is that you “do something.” This could include, using your Centigix badge, calling for help, shouting for students to stop, or any other means to stop the fight. We recommend that you do not attempt to physically stop the fight. Unfortunately, a few members have been injured when attempting to break up a fight.
- **Sarcasm or Embarrassment** - sarcasm has no place in our public schools. Statements made during casual moments can be misinterpreted by our students and this can lead to allegations of inappropriate behavior and a visit from Professional Standards. Please remember to maintain your professionalism at all times.
- **Communication with Students** - never call, text, or communicate via electronic methods directly with a student. If you must contact a student, contact their parent. If you sponsor a club or sport, use the district approved communication apps and contact the entire group or team.
- **Transporting Students** - do not transport students in your personal vehicle. This is a liability and there is no reason to do this. If there is an emergency call 911.

Again, this is not an exhaustive list. If you have questions, please don't wait, contact your steward or the VUE office.

## Labor Management: Follow up

Last week, your VUE staff met with the HR Director and the ESE Director to discuss issues and concerns. The information below is a summary of that meeting.

- What changes to the expectations with ED Modified have been made for 25-26? **Elective and special area teachers will use it for tracking accommodations. Training was received during preplanning. Teachers are no longer required to mark if a student is absent in Ed. Mod. Optional training next week to build templates (No specific information on the training was provided). Videos can be shared with teachers who need support.**
- Access to buildings for ESE Support Facilitators and other personnel. **This could be a facilities issue, but need to know the names of schools/sites.**
- Expectations for the new Behavior Support Teachers **Mrs. Copeland will email the expectations (not yet received)**
- Expectations for site-based ESE Case Managers - **Mrs. Copeland will email the expectations (not yet received)**
- Class sizes (gen ed and ESE) **See first week feedback above**
- FOCUS - entering leave. **Ms. Workmand sent an email in July with training links to canvas. Instructional staff will use SEMS to request a sub, and instead of payroll entering leave into FOCUS, teachers will enter their own leave. This is due to an audit finding, and Ms. Workman stated, “We are not changing this, because it is an audit requirement.” Are there consequences if errors are made? Ms. Workmand stated that mistakes can be corrected by the individual or payroll clerk. Paid personal leave must be approved by admin. However the payroll clerk must still review all of the leave to ensure accuracy. The contract for instructional states that sick leave is entered as soon as practicable, what is the timeline for entering leave? Do SEMS first. Don't do anything if you don't feel good. Focus must be completed within the pay period. When we asked about potential disciplinary issues if leave is entered incorrectly, we did not receive a clear answer. Outlook calendar notations are **NOT required** when using leave.**
- FOCUS - entering leave for support personnel. Support staff do not have devices assigned and have never been required to enter leave into any system. **Ms. Workman will/can push out additional options for training for support staff. Outlook calendar notations are **NOT required** when using leave.**
- Support with the new Cell Phone Policy - **Per Mr. Micallef- it's essential to have clear guidelines that are consistently communicated to both teachers and students. Teachers are supported with a structured approach that includes clear consequences for violations and a system for reporting incidents posted in this policy. Regular reminders and training sessions can also be helpful to ensure everyone is on the same page. We are not sure who is responsible for providing the support, and we will seek clarification on this statement.**
- Training and support for paraprofessionals - **Per Mrs. Copeland - paras received a 2 hour training via a canvas course. This included expectations, IEP implementation and goals, and Ed Modified training.**



## Labor Management: Follow up, cont.

- Incorrect Advanced Degree payments: Certain individuals who work a 12 or 11-month contractual year have reported errors with their advanced degree amounts- **years of service have not been updated yet in FOCUS. Once they are updated, retro will be provided. The district is aware that this is impacting some 11 & 12-month employees.**
- Transitions plans for Starke and Orange City Elementary - **Ms. Workman will reach out to Ms. Corr to obtain the plan to move teachers and staff into the new schools once the Certificate of Occupancy is received. The moves are anticipated to occur in October.**

Labor Management occurs twice a month. This is our opportunity to speak with district leaders about issues and concerns. If you are experiencing an issue, have a concern, or question, please contact us. Your contract affords you rights, privileges, and protections. We must make sure that all parties are held accountable to the language of the CBA.

---

## Call to Action: Labor Day - The Day to Celebrate Those Who Work For a Living!

This Labor Day, let's remind the world who really makes our schools, our communities, and our country run: workers, not billionaires.

Every lesson taught, every bus driven, every meal served, every student supported—it's all powered by us, the people who show up every day for our kids and our future.

While billionaires hoard wealth and influence, public school employees are left fighting for fair pay, safe workplaces, and respect.

By joining this call to action, you're standing shoulder to shoulder with workers everywhere to say loud and clear: it's workers over billionaires, and it's time our voices are heard!



## VUE Professional Learning

We are excited to announce the fall professional learning provided at no cost to all members of our union. The document below provides an overview of the courses.

Specific enrollment information for MyPGS will be provided in next week's Solidarity Report.

## Professional Learning Calendar



### Fall 2025

40 Hour Reading- Mondays- August 25th to November 10th

ESOL Curriculum-Tuesday-August 26th to November 3rd

New Teacher Tool Kit Series:

Managing School Behaviors-Monday- September 15th

Foundations-Monday-October 13th

ESE IEP/504- Monday-November 3rd

ESE Module #1-Tuesday- September 16th

ESE Module #2-Tuesday-September 23rd

ESE Module #3-Tuesday-September 30th

ESE Module #4-Tuesday-October 7th

ESE Module #5-Tuesday-October 14th

VSET: The Secret to Winning-Monday-November 10th



---

# PROUD to be UNION

