



Solidarity Report

“Always believe that something wonderful is about to happen.” ~ Dr. Sukhraj Dhillon

Welcome Back!

On behalf of the VUE leadership and staff, welcome to the 2025-26 school year!

It seems that school just ended, and yet, we are getting ready to welcome back more than 50,000 students into our schools and classrooms for another great year of learning.

Your VUE staff spent the summer months improving our skills at the negotiations table, and we are starting this year off with the end in mind, winning big by engaging each and every member of our union in the work of bargaining!

As teachers, paraprofessionals, and office specialists, we have immense responsibility as we hold the future of our communities, state, and this nation in our hands.

We know our teachers, office specialists, and paraprofessionals are the best in Florida, and we are excited to start another year as the collective voice for change in VCS!

So let's lean in, lift each other up, and start strong. We've got a year of challenges, opportunities, and wins ahead of us, and we are going to navigate it all in the most powerful way. Here's to being brave, bold, and to building our power in 2025-26!

In Solidarity,

Elizabeth Albert
President,
Volusia United Educators

The Truth about Bargaining



Last week, the Commissioner of Education sent a memo to every school superintendent across the state blaming unions for any delay in providing salary increases to teachers. The superintendent forwarded the memo to the instructional staff of VCS. The next day, the VCS Communications Director felt compelled to send another email to instructional staff inferring that VUE was delaying the process of bargaining.

While the district is entitled to their opinion, there are a few problems with their narrative. First, the Annual Financial Report (AFR) is not complete. The AFR provides the much needed financial data that we use to develop our salary proposals. If we head to the table without the data, we are essentially flying blind. Why would we engage in this important process without the facts? We believe that you deserve professional and competitive pay for the work you do, we will not just guesstimate when it comes to negotiating for your salary increases.

Next, the district bargaining team is made up of district and site-based administrators, all of whom are twelve (12) month employees. Our bargaining team is made up of your colleagues, who are mostly ten (10) month employees. We are not going to ask our team to give up their much needed summer break to engage in negotiations, especially since we've already mentioned that we are waiting on the AFR.



The Truth about Bargaining cont.

Your VUE bargaining team is committed to big, open, and transparent negotiations. We are planning and preparing to meet at the end of August and have asked to hold negotiation sessions in the evening when you can be present to engage in the process.

To learn more about the changes in how we bargain, we encourage you to register for our **Bargaining Revealed** webinar below.

Bargaining Revealed

Join us for Bargaining Revealed – Thursday, August 7, 5:00–6:30 PM.

Learn how bargaining works and help shape our priorities for the upcoming negotiations.

We'll share how member input from our survey will guide our proposals.

This is your union—member-driven and focused on what matters most to you.

Get involved! Bargaining Revealed is also your chance to join a Bargaining Committee or even the Bargaining Team.

Please register TODAY to join us for this informative and impactful meeting. Click [here](#) to register or scan the QR code below. Solidarity!



VCS Non-Disclosure Agreements

The Superintendent of VCS is now requiring certain district level managers/ administrators to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) as a term of their employment.

The NDA binds the individual to the terms of the agreement for the duration of their employment and for a period of three (3) years following a separation from VCS.

While we do not typically concern ourselves with the innerworkings of the district level administrative leaders, this NDA raises serious concerns about the intent of the NDA.

Confidentiality has its place in protecting student data and sensitive information, but it appears that the terms of this agreement extend beyond reasonable boundaries. For example, section 1.C of the agreement states, *“Information regarding the District’s financial operations, including budgets, funding sources, and allocation of resources.”* We are genuinely concerned with this language as we are preparing to enter contract negotiations and the Florida Statutes guarantee us the right to bargain in good faith.

Our members, and the public deserve financial transparency. As a public school system, VCS is funded by public tax dollars; anything less than full financial transparency feeds a culture of suspicion and breaks trust.

Trust is earned through openness, not silence. Each employee working for VCS should have confidence and trust in their employer, yet this NDA creates barriers and continues to build obstacles that impede our district to be all that it can be. Instead of trying to silence district administrators, VCS should be sending those leaders out to collaborate with us to make changes to improve the working and learning conditions for our students, staff, and teachers.



Insurance - Open Enrollment

As we continue to navigate the process of transitioning to Curative, the rollout continues to cause concerns. Many members have shared frustrations about poor communication, unclear plan details, and mixed messages about coverage.

This lack of clarity has made it difficult for employees to make informed decisions about their healthcare. We want to acknowledge these concerns and reaffirm our commitment to advocating for transparency, accuracy, and support during this transition.

Your union has actively sought to partner with the district during this time, yet VCS has denied us the ability to provide assistance with information sharing and support.

However, we are actively pushing the district to improve communication channels and to ensure that knowledgeable representatives are available to address questions. If you've encountered issues or misinformation, please reach out to us at (386) 238-1605 so we can document the problems and find solutions on your behalf.

The district is hosting a virtual discussion on August 8th at 4:30 pm. To register please scan the QR code below. Additionally, there are still a few dates remaining for the Benefits Fair.

Date	Location	Time
8/5/2025	Deltona High	12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
8/7/2025	Tomoka Elementary	12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
8/13/2025	Spruce Creek High	12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
8/14/2025	Christian Family Worship Center (DeLeon Springs)	12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
8/15/2025	DeLand Admin Complex (DAC)	3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.



Registration QR code
for the virtual
discussion with
Curative

Preplanning Info

As we return to our schools and worksites, it is important to review a few contractual items of importance. Please see below.

Support Staff:

Article 13 - Working Conditions

- Employees shall not be required to report to work prior to the established start time nor be compelled to work beyond their scheduled work day UNLESS they are compensated for the time.
- When employees are required to work overtime in addition to their regular work hours totaling more than forty (40) hours per week, they shall be paid one and one-half (1 1/2) of the normal rate of pay. In lieu of overtime, the employee may choose, but cannot be required to receive comp. time.
- At the beginning of each school year, all paraprofessionals and office specialists shall be given a link to or a physical copy of the job descriptions for her/his assignment and be given an opportunity to ask questions.

Instructional Staff:

Article 9 - Working Hours and Conditions

- Contractual hours are as follows:
 - Elementary - 7:30 am - 3:00 pm
 - Middle - 8:50 am - 4:20 pm
 - High- 8:05 am - 3:35 pm
- During Preplanning at least one half (1/2) of the work time shall be reserved for use by the teacher for activities and job responsibilities as deemed necessary by the individual. Teachers are to receive a one (1) hour uninterrupted duty free lunch during preplanning.
- During Preplanning no more than 13 hours can be used by administration or the district for meetings, trainings, PLC, or other tasks. This includes Meet the Teacher at the Elementary level.
- Instructional personnel shall not earn comp time. Any mandatory work that is performed outside of the contractual day must be paid at the individual's hourly rate of pay.



Preplanning Info, cont.

- Teachers may be required to attend faculty meetings, grade level meetings, school/department meetings for up to one (1) hour outside of the regular workday. No teacher shall be required to attend more than two (2) of the meetings above per month.
- A schedule for early release days shall be provided prior to the start of each school year.
- Principals shall inform the faculty of the six (6) ERPL meetings during preplanning.

These updates are not inclusive of all rights, privileges and protections afforded in the contracts. Be on the lookout for Tuesday's Contract Tidbits coming soon!

The More You Know: 7 Tips To Keep You Safe!

Whether you are a new teacher or a seasoned veteran, listed below are seven (7) tips that you need to know to keep yourself safe while working in Volusia County Schools (VCS).

1. Social Media/Cell Phones- Be very careful what you post on social media. Never “friend” your students or their parents. Use the highest security settings on your accounts and do not identify yourself as a public-school educator. Do not give your cell phone number to your students. If you need to communicate with your students, use the VCS system. If you need to contact a parent, call from a VCS phone during your contractual hours. Using your personal cell phone should be the last option!

2. Talking about controversial issues – Do not discuss “Hot Topics”, politics, or social issues with your students. Follow your curriculum map and teach the content provided by the Florida Department of Education and VCS.

3. Showing videos – Only show video clips that are VCS approved or vetted resources. Always preview the clip prior to showing it to students.

4. Humor- While everyone enjoys a good joke, please use discretion. Be mindful of any possible misinterpretation or misunderstanding of your comments. There is no place for sarcasm in our schools or classrooms, ever. We must ensure that we are providing a safe environment for all students.

5. Being alone with students- Avoid placing yourself in a situation where you are alone with a student. Always be visible or in a common area if you are working one-to-one with a student. If there is an allegation of misconduct you do not want it to be your word against the student.

6. Touching students- Any time you touch a student you place yourself at risk. Use common sense and to the greatest extent possible, avoid physical contact. Do not grab or hold a student. If you are NCI certified and need to restrain a student, be sure to complete the appropriate paperwork to document the restraint.

7. Handling money- Do not handle money unless you have been trained by VCS to do so. Allegations involving the mishandling of money could result in the loss of your certificate or termination. If you are collecting money for a field trip or fundraiser make sure to know the policies and expectations for turning in money. All fundraisers **MUST BE APPROVED** by administration.

If you have any questions about any of these items, please contact VUE today at (386) 238-1605. We are here to help.

To learn more about membership scan the QR code below or visit the VUE website at www.ourvue.net.

Solidarity!

