



The Truth Will Set You Free

We are providing this update to share the truth, the whole truth, about the statements that were made by the district related to instructional bargaining and their decision to call it quits and declare impasse. They seem to be working overtime to provide justifications why instructional personnel should gleefully accept a salary proposal that is less than what has been provided to other employees in the district. Not to mention that there is still the mystery of salary enhancements and increases for the upper echelon working in VCS. Will they also receive 2%? Only time will tell!

While everyone is entitled to their own opinion, they are not entitled to their own facts. We are addressing each statement below and have included the **facts in red**. You can then judge for yourself if you believe that the boss has your best interest in mind or if they are just trying to put lipstick on a pig.



- Compensation totaling a 2.15% salary increase, which is just above the amount approved for non-bargaining employees at the Sept. 9 board meeting: **Not all instructional personnel will receive 2.15%. Non-bargaining personnel all received a 2% salary increase and our friends in the Transportation Department received adjustments to their salary schedule in order to decompress their salaries.**



- The Teacher Salary Increase Allocation (TSIA) of a 0.54% increase to the FEFP base funding, which is equivalent to a 0.65% salary increase for instructional staff. **But not for all staff. Teachers with less than two years of experience receive nothing. The TSIA amounts are calculated using a formula and are fixed amounts depending upon contract status and the overall summative evaluation results, which may result in an increase less than the .65% for some staff.**

Example Calculated Amounts	
Base-No Rating or NI	\$ -
GF	\$ 514.03
E	\$ 321.27
HE	\$ 642.54



- A 1.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase for all members of the bargaining unit to bring the total increase to 2.15% after TSIA. **Due to the TSIA restrictions, there are approximately 500 instructional staff who will not receive the 2.15%.**



- A one-time, non-recurring 1% salary bonus. This payment was offered but it will do nothing to help increase your earnings for years to come. It will not count toward your pension, and it will be taxed at a higher rate since it is a bonus. It's like finding a dollar in the dryer. It might make you happy in the moment, but the thrill is over soon.



- Two days of paid bereavement leave. Your union has been fighting for this for more than eight years. It's about time we received what other districts and employers provide without hesitation to their employees.



- The district also discussed the \$17.6 million in salary enhancements (advanced degree, retention, etc.) being redistributed to the entire bargaining unit. The district is fixated on this talking point. They expect you to believe that the redistribution of previously allocated money is somehow going to make you feel like you are earning more money. They are attempting to hustle us. If we were to agree to this, it would undo the hard work done by the VUE bargaining team to address the salary compression created by the TSIA legislation. The money mentioned here is not new money, it is robbing Peter to pay Paul, a shell game of finances to make it seem like you're getting a raise when you aren't.



- The total compensation package is equivalent to a 3.15% raise for instructional staff and including bereavement the total package is equivalent to a 3.44% increase. This is non-recurring money and is not 3.44% for everyone. Teachers with less than two years of experience will only receive 1.5% reoccurring. Additionally, we hope that no one needs to use the bereavement leave benefit, but to promote it as if everyone will utilize the two days is misleading. Additionally, we believe that that district will ultimately provide bereavement for non-bargaining personnel too, which they should. However, if all things are equal, then the total compensation package for non-bargaining will also increase.



- The district is ready, willing and able to convene should VUE wish to re-engage in bargaining sessions. At the conclusion of Wednesday's bargaining session, we attempted to schedule another meeting, however the district declined, and as a result declared impasse the following morning. If they wanted to continue to work toward an agreement, why are they declaring impasse?



- The district's bargaining team is committed to finding a solution that is equitable for our employees while also considering what is best for students and what is financially feasible given declining enrollment in Volusia County and across the state of Florida. We do believe that the members of the district bargaining team care about the students, however, the decisions made at the table do not come from the VCS bargaining team members. They are coming from the members of the school board and the superintendent. The members of the board seemed to believe that it was financially feasible to provide an 8.7% salary increase (and additional perks) to the superintendent last year while the rest of us received

somewhere around 3%. We are left to wonder what she will receive now that you and your colleagues have earned the district the “A” rating.



- Despite this and the loss of \$20 million in funding over the last two years, the district is still committed to increasing compensation for our instructional staff. This loss of funding and students has also resulted in fewer teachers, larger class sizes, and less programs. We cannot be competitive with surrounding school districts if we keep slashing from the bottom. We will not be able to retain our personnel if we continue to disrespect and devalue their contributions to the success of our students and the district.



- Furthermore, it is inaccurate that the district only offered a 1.5% increase in compensation. As stated above, the total package is a 3.15% monetary increase with an overall increase of 3.44%. As stated above, this is .65% in pass through money (TSIA) that will not be received by nearly 500 teachers in VCS because the law makes them ineligible. Additionally, a 1% bonus that is non-recurring, non-pensionable, and taxed at a higher rate does not create a total package of 3.44%.



- VCS hopes to work together to make the best decisions possible for the educators who play a crucial role in our district. If this were true, we would not be at impasse and we would have received a salary proposal that was at least the same as the non-bargaining personnel. Again, WHAT IS THE VALUE OF BEING AN “A” DISTRICT?
- *What are some of the other districts that have settled their instructional contracts? Do they not realize that these people are our people?!*
- Osceola – 2.7% salary increase, paid Juneteenth holiday for 11 & 12-month employees, remote workdays, additional funding for insurance
 - Performance Pay (0.7%: HE: \$500, E:\$350, GF:\$450)
 - Recurring Retention Supplement (2.0%): Based on currently employed instructional employee’s 2024-2025 minimum base salary on the existing salary schedule.
- Seminole – provides compensation to all instructional staff with advanced degrees regardless of certification area. Provides Comp time to instructional staff
 - Performance Pay (HE:2.33%, E:1.36%, GF: 1.82%)
 - Title I Supplement of \$100 for each teacher at a Title I eligible school for 2025-2026.
- Brevard – Multi -year contract plus a referendum of 9%, provides Comp time to instructional staff, provides paid paternal leave
 - 2% raise for each of the next three years
- Orange -
 - 4.01% increase to the salary line

- Provides paid maternity leave
- Provides advanced degree payment to all instructional staff with advanced degrees regardless of certification area

These counties offer other benefits and privileges such as paid maternity, virtual workdays, and competitive salaries. For VCS to compare their offer with other Central Florida districts, who continue to compensate their employees at a significantly higher rate is disingenuous at best.

What Do We Do Now?

When the boss fails to tell the truth, it is a deliberate betrayal that shatters trust and reveals complete disregard for the workers. Manipulating the truth is just another way to exploit workers.

We must now think about our next steps. It is time to let the members of the board, the superintendent, and district leaders know that they have gone too far. We are asking that everyone to do something, no matter how small the action might seem, it will result in a brighter and better day for all bargaining unit members.

Please consider the following actions:

- Attend a VUE site meeting
- Create an automatic reply on your email stating your availability during your contract hours
- Send an email or call school board members (from your personal email account)
- Post on your social media accounts, following the VUE FB and Instagram pages
- Writing or making a video testimonial (we will publish on our social media pages)
- Take your WHOLE 30 MINUTE UNINTERRUPTED LUNCH
- Attending and/or speaking at a school board meeting (October 14th is the next meeting)
- Ask a colleague to join VUE
- Leave at the end of your contractual day and don't take work home with you!

We can do this, and we will persevere. We must be persistent, stay optimistic and encourage each other. We will not let our current circumstances determine our destiny. We are mighty, we are powerful, and we are #VUESTRONG! #RespectEmpowerSupport!

In Solidarity,
Elizabeth Albert