



# Solidarity Report

**"We must stand together in solidarity against the targeting, demonization, and vilification of any group of people."**

**~ Linda Sarsour**

## ESE Workgroup Update

The ESE Workgroup is tasked with reviewing the process for PST (now MTSS), IEPs and 504, including the workload of District Placement Specialists (now SSS), School Psychologists, and school-based staff. Recommendations of the committee shall be forwarded to the Superintendent and the Union President within thirty (30) days of the completion of the work. The committee is currently working on the following issues:

- **Counseling As a Related Service (CARS)** - the most pressing issue is that the CARS Checklist is not being utilized, and certain providers are not being invited to meetings or included when making decisions on whether adding CARS is appropriate. This includes adding CARS as a service for non-verbal students. **The district has committed to ensuring that all MTSS Chairs and SSS will be reminded to invite all stakeholders to IEP meetings. The decision to provide services is made by the committee and if non-verbal students are scheduled to receive CARS it was done with consensus from the committee, however, if there are individual concerns the district leaders have agreed to review specific situations.**
- **Student behaviors impeding the ability to provide academic instruction and support** - academic learning time is frequently lost due to dysregulated students. The reasons for inappropriate behavior are varied, but student behavior is intensifying and students who have significant behavior concerns and who come with crisis plans and BIPs, trigger each other or feed off/learn to copy other's misbehavior. Students are non-complaint and physically aggressive. Teachers and staff are bit, struck, kicked, spat on and more each day. Behavior is often a chain reaction that can spiral out of control quickly. Greater support and consequences are needed to decrease inappropriate behavior and increase student learning time. **A discussion among the committee members resulted in the decision to create a survey to solicit student behavior data from across the district. A sub committee made up of VUE and VCS representatives is currently working to create the survey. The target date to release the survey to personnel is mid-February.**
- **Overwhelming workload** - Workload remains a significant concern for ESE teachers. Many report feeling overwhelmed by the demands of the role and worry about making mistakes or not being able to fully keep up with the expectations required across all areas of ESE. This level of stress directly impacts both recruitment and retention, as potential candidates hesitate to enter the field and current teachers consider leaving.

District leaders requested specific examples of situations leading to feelings of being overwhelmed and committed to reviewing and responding to the concerns. Members of the committee provided the following examples (this is not an exhaustive list, but a starting point):

- issues with providing direct support to students on caseloads.
- overwhelming paperwork - there is not enough time in the contractual day to complete the required paperwork.
- assignments for co-teachers that are not aligned with the areas of certification for the co-teacher. This creates a deficit for the co-teacher and requires them to operate as if they are "out-of-field".
- inconsistencies in how ESE responsibilities are carried out across the district.
- **The ratio of students with disabilities to general education students in the general education classrooms**- district staff asked for specific examples in order to look at each situation on a case-by-case basis. If you are teaching a class with a disproportionate amount of ESE students on your roster, please contact us so we can have this reviewed.
- **Medicaid Billing for SLPs** - The Relay system utilized for Medicaid billing is problematic; no goals are in the system and the list of eligible students is incomplete. **This is a known problem, and the district is working to fix it, however the timeline for Medicaid billing is 365 days, which provides a window to make the needed corrections and then bill Medicaid.**
- **Alternative methods to look at Gifted placement** - can an alternative screening criteria, in addition to or in lieu of the NNAT be used to determine Gifted eligibility? All data should be used to determine if the gifted program is the best option for the student (regardless of a test score). **A Gifted criteria checklist has been discussed. Various assessments and data is reviewed prior to sending the referral for Gifted. The district is attempting to identify students who would not typically be considered for placement in the Gifted program.**

The items shared above are a sample of items discussed during the ESE Workgroup meetings. If you have a specific concern that you would like shared, please contact your steward or Elizabeth. Your union is your voice and we need to hear from you.



## CALL TO ACTION: Trades & Service Professionals Contract Action Committee

Now that the Trades and Service Professionals (TSP) unit is officially formed, the real work begins. We must build our first contract from the ground up.

We are starting from a blank piece of paper. That means **EVERYTHING** we bargain will be shaped by the people who step up now. Pay, working conditions, protections, and privileges will not be freely given to us. We must prepare to fight for every word in this contract.

This is serious, hands-on work, **and individuals must be active VUE members to serve on the committee.**

The Contract Action Committee (CAC) will play a critical role in this process. This team will:

- Research contract language from other local union contracts within FEA
- Help gather input from worksites
- Analyze issues
- Define bargaining priorities
- Communicate with colleagues
- Mobilize members to engage in bargaining

Strong contracts are won with strong participation. If you want a real voice at the table, now is the time to step up!

Winning doesn't happen by sitting on the sidelines, **YOUR** voice needs to be included in this work!

If you believe Trades & Service Professionals deserve a fair voice, professional pay for professional work, and real respect on the job, we need you at the table. This is a chance to help build the future for our TSPs.

To register to participate on the committee, please complete this brief survey, <https://forms.gle/Yi86ivizk1heaMvS7>

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### MemberAssist- How Can We Help YOU?

Don't forget that as a member of VUE, you have access to many no cost benefits that potential members cannot access. One great benefit is MemberAssist.

This free, personal assistant/life concierge service for members of VUE is designed to help with everyday tasks like booking appointments, finding contractors, arranging elder/child/pet care, planning travel, and managing benefits. MemberAssist provides real people (not bots) to handle research and scheduling via app, text, or email to save VUE members time and reduce stress.

Members report having used MemberAssist to find a dog sitter, a cleaning person and to create an itinerary for an upcoming trip.

Sign up at [www.memberassist.net](http://www.memberassist.net) and see how your life can become less complicated! VUE is offering this service **FREE for a one year trial period**. Take advantage of this amazing union only benefit!

## What is My VUE Doing for Me?

Your union has been extremely busy advocating for your rights and ensuring that your contract is being followed. Here is an overview of some of the items we are currently working on for you:

- **Professional Standards Representation**- would you believe that in the first semester (18 weeks) there are a total of 7 members (we know there were potential members as well, but since we do not represent non members we don't track those numbers) who were recommended for termination? In two of the situations we were able to stop the termination, and for the other members legal representation has been provided. We are working in a time when grace is no longer being provided. It is critical to remember to never put your hands on a student and that if you have a question about testing, fundraising/collecting money, or anything else, that you ask your steward or member rep. Don't just assume or guess. Also, remember that as a member of VUE you have the Right to Representation if you are called to meet with your administrator or supervisor. This is a federal law and you need to invoke this right if you are asked to attend a meeting. Once you make a statement it is very difficult to reel it back. We are here to support you!
- **Longevity Payments** - longevity payments for **all eligible instructional, support, and trades & service professionals** will be paid on a separate pay run on January 21<sup>st</sup>. We have confirmed this with the district.
- **Demand to Impact Bargain**- on Friday, we sent a Demand to Bargain letter to the Superintendent to bargain over the reimbursement for the 24-25 FEFP payment that was underpaid by DOE. The amount of the underpayment was \$869,790. We believe this money, had it been received on time, would have been available for the purpose of salary negotiations, and now that it has been received, we believe that it should be given to YOU. We will keep you updated on this item.
- **FOCUS Grievance** - we are in the process of grieving the contract violations related to the provision of leave for support and instructional personnel. We have agreed to a remedy as a result of the Level 1 meeting and are waiting on the district to complete the agreed upon solutions. The district has until Jan. 31 to ensure that the system is providing leave according to the contract. Also, the district will now begin reviewing the leave balances of any employee who is set to have their pay docked to ensure that the calculations are correct. Also, if a dockage is found to be in error, the district will now make the correction on the next pay run or in a separate run between the established pay dates, whichever comes first. If you believe that your leave has been docked in error, PLEASE contact your member representative immediately.
- **Job Description Committee**- support staff and VCS agreed to reconvene this committee during bargaining. We have asked the chief negotiator for VCS to provide meeting dates several times, yet there have been no dates provided. We have escalated this request to the Superintendent. If we do not have a date to meet by Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, we will file a grievance.



## What is My VUE Doing for Me? cont.

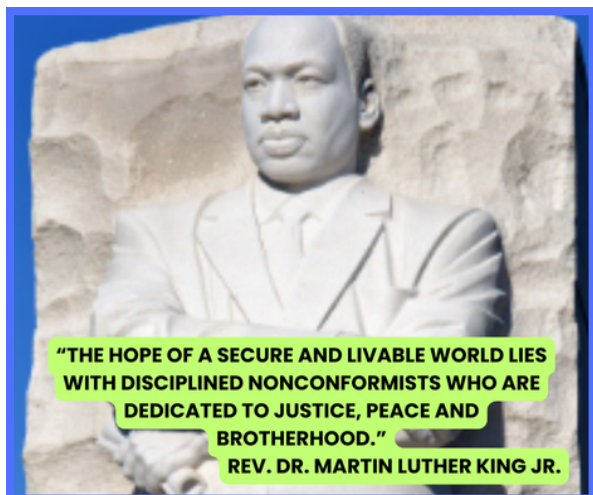
- **Bargaining Dates for TSPs**- again, we have reached out to the Chief Negotiator for VCS and requested dates for the preliminary bargaining meetings to set expectations to bargain a new contract for TSPs. We have asked several times and no dates have been provided. We have also escalated this item to the Superintendent. If we do not receive any communication from the VCS Chief Negotiator by Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, we will send a formal Demand to Bargain letter to him.
- **Labor Management** - labor management is a contractually agreed upon meeting to encourage collaboration and shared problem solving between VUE and VCS. The district has recently made a personnel change in this area. We have not met for labor management since November. We have asked the new labor management contact for meeting dates several times, yet there have been no dates provided. We have escalated this request to the Superintendent. If a meeting is not set by Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, we will file a grievance.
- **Comp Time Committee** - during instructional contract negotiations, a pilot program to determine if comp time should be allowed in lieu of payment for clubs at the secondary level occurred. While VCS did not want to commit formally, they did agree to form a committee to work toward an implementation for the 26-27 school year. We are seeking to convene this committee.

Your union continues to work tirelessly to fight for the improvements you and your colleagues need in order to live a better life, both at work and at home. We can only win the the fights ahead by growing our strength. Take a moment this week to talk with a colleague about joining their union. Share with them why you are a member and ask them to help build the power it takes to secure real change for every employee working in VCS. The membership link and QR code to join VUE are below!

Membership link: [www.ourvue.net/membership](http://www.ourvue.net/membership)



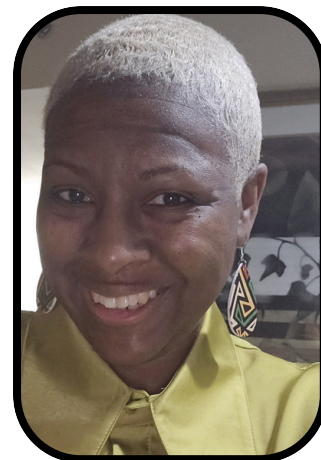
Membership QR Code:



The VUE office will be closed, Monday, January 19, 2026 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

## Meet Lakisha Ayers-White - VUE Organizer!

I am a dedicated labor advocate and seasoned educational professional. I bring firsthand knowledge of the challenges and strengths of support staff. My deep union roots began in New York(Long Island) where I was a School Bus Driver for 5 years and a UNION member.



I bring 12 years of service at Flagler County Schools as a school bus driver and CDL trainer, where I proudly served as Vice President of FESPA for four terms and played an active role on the Bargaining Team, Insurance Team, Accident Review Committee, and Calendar Committee. I continue my commitment to worker advocacy as a member of the FEA Executive Cabinet, holding the Support Staff Chair position.

My passion for union work is driven by a lifelong belief in collective power, dignity, and protecting the voices of working people like you, this is why I took on the role as VUE Member Organizer.

## Target Tallahassee - Your Voice Matters!

The 2026 Florida Legislative Session will begin this Tuesday. There are several bills that we are watching (see the SR from 1/5/26 for details) and several that are still in the pipeline.

It is important to stay informed. Please take advantage of the following ways to stay up to date on the latest news from Tallahassee.

- **FEA Power Hour:** <https://floridaea.zoom.us/meeting/register/6Ujrw7ITeY2S4WRS-DcA#/registration>
- **Frontline Report:** <https://feaweb.org/action-center/2026-legislative-session/frontline-signup-and-archive/>

If you are interested in traveling to Tallahassee to advocate for our public schools and our union, please contact Elizabeth at [elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org](mailto:elizabeth.albert@floridaea.org).

