



Now is the time to speak up if you want School Board members to move forward with placing a referendum on the ballot in November. A referendum would generate approximately \$70 million to support educator and staff salaries each year for the next four years.

At Tuesday's School Board meeting, because of our union's collective effort, we revealed that last month, Mr. Colon agreed to place an item on the April agenda to formally discuss taking this action, however, he failed to do what he said he would do. He shared that during the month between the two meetings; he and Dr. Balgobin decided it was not the right time to ask the voters to support our public schools.

However, we pushed the Board to bring this item into the sunshine; to have an open discussion in public, allowing all board members the opportunity to weigh in on the referendum. That effort resulted in the special meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning. Our advocacy created movement, and now we must keep the momentum going.

During the meeting, Mr. Colón shared several reasons for his opposition:

- Dr. Balgobin did not believe the timing was right
- He stated, "teacher pay in Florida is a state problem,"
- He expressed concern that his community is already experiencing financial strain due to global conflicts
- He cited uncertainty about the Governor DeSantis' proposals regarding property taxes may impact education funding

Dr. Balgobin also indicated that conversations with contacts in Tallahassee led her to believe the timing is not right. It is critical that Board members hear directly from you. VCS employees are experiencing financial strain, and the Board has an opportunity to demonstrate courage and take meaningful action in support of its workforce.

Your voice matters, please email School Board members **from your personal email account**, before Friday morning's workshop.

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Please do not remain silent if you are concerned about your pay and your ability to live a better life. VCS is the largest employer in our community, providing more for the employees will only benefit our communities. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions.

In Solidarity,

Elizabeth