

# MINUTES

## BOARD OF EDUCATION VALLEY STREAM SCHOOL DISTRICT 24

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BUSINESS MEETING  
April 23, 2025

WILLIAM L. BUCK SCHOOL  
7:15 PM

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**Members Present:** President Hernandez, Trustee Clark, Trustee Maier, Trustee Nunez, and Trustee Wilson

**Others Present:** Superintendent Karakas, Dr. Lisa Conte, Dr. Jack Mitchell, and School District Attorney

**Absent With Prior Notice:** Vice-President Herrera and Trustee Wheeler

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### I. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM & CALL TO ORDER – PRESIDENT HERNANDEZ

Having a quorum, the Business Meeting was called to order at 7:15pm by President Hernandez at the William L. Buck School. Motion to enter Executive Session at 7:15 pm was made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Clark to discuss Personnel and Contractual Obligations. Motion carried.

Motion to exit Executive Session at 7:55 pm by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Nunez. Motion carried.

The Business Meeting was reconvened at 8:08 pm, at the William L. Buck School by President Hernandez.

### II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** March 19, 2025 and April 9, 2025. Motion to approve the Minutes made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Wilson. Motion carried.
- IV. **WELCOME TO VISITORS:** At this time the Board of Education welcomes questions or comments relative to the items on tonight's agenda.
- V. **CORRESPONDENCE REPORT– MS. JENNIE PADILLA, DISTRICT CLERK**

Good evening.

We have received two FOIL requests since our last Business Meeting. Both request came via email on April 11, 2025. The first came from Ms. Diana Tischler of NYSUT (New York State Unified Teachers). The second one came from John V. Ciulla of Lifshitz Law, PLLC. Thank you and that concludes the Correspondence Report.

VI. **SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – DR. UNAL KARAKAS**

Good evening everyone.

We are nearing the close of the month of April, with only two more months of school after this. This is the homestretch with a very busy schedule ahead.

Our district continues to be focused on innovation, and this is in alignment with Vision 2030.

We are focusing on our extracurricular offerings that align with 21st Century skills. News literacy and journalism are two of those areas. This month, the RWC Newspaper club, led by Ms. Deborah Adler and Ms. Paige Brickman, invited me for an interview. The students asked me a series of questions ranging from who inspired me to be a Superintendent to what I love most about my job. They then published the newspaper to their school community.

Thank you to Ms. Adler and Ms. Brickman for instilling a love of journalism in our students and teaching them about interviewing skills. Ms. Adler and Ms. Brickman informed me that they are planning a day for students to meet

actual journalists from our local area, which is a wonderful way to learn more about the career.

On April 1st, Valley Stream School District #24 6th-grade Challenge students participated in The Olympics of the Visual Arts. Our district's Challenge teacher, Risa Miller, and Art teachers Jessica Rosenthal, Nicole Barci, and Leighanne Jaronczyk traveled with our Challenge students to Saratoga Springs to present their projects.

Our students competed against middle school students from 32 school districts across all regions of New York State. Judging was conducted by professionals, including artists, architects, graphic designers, fashion designers, illustrators, and more.

We are proud to announce that our Challenge students excelled in each of the categories in which they competed, demonstrating their exceptional skills and creativity.

Alesandra P., Vanessa H., and Viktoria S. from the Robert W. Carbonaro School earned 3<sup>rd</sup> place for their fashion design project, Bound in Beauty.

Justin B., Matteo B., Maurice D., and Santiago Z. from the Robert W. Carbonaro School won 1st place for their painting project, Palette of Passions: A Journey Through Pride and Shame.

William L. Buck students Jake M, Elias R., and Eric L. achieved 3rd place for their illustration project titled The Transformation: Playful to Perilous.

Brandon G. and Jaiden S. from the William L. Buck School secured 2nd place for their photography project, Collapsing Depth.

Brooklyn Avenue students Xavier J. and Thomas A. competed in the Graphic Design category with their project, The Flavor of Harmony. They developed a promotional package for a new beverage, utilizing the digital painting and illustration design tool Procreate to design a logo.

We are proud of all our students for representing Valley Stream 24 in our state in such an incredible way.

Here are some additional pictures.

A big thank you again to our Challenge and art teachers, and our students for their incredible work! You make all of us very proud.

Principal DeBlasio, Principal Comis, and I had an inspiring learning experience at this year's League of Innovative Schools Convening in Pittsburgh. We visited several school districts in that area who are working on innovative practices and gathered ideas to further integrate creative, student-centered learning aligned with our Vision 2030.

We also had an opportunity to speak with over 150 school district leaders nationally and attend many sessions on ways to continue to innovate our work.

Here are a few pictures from our experience showcasing an innovative studio, students using innovative technology, and a greenhouse!

With our Vision 2030 pilot projects nearing completion, we want to share a quick update on one of the projects that has a partnership with Northwell Health.

Sixth-grade Challenge students at Carbonaro School, after collaborating with other students in the school, are engaging in a powerful act of innovation and service by designing and building a prosthetic arm to donate to Northwell Health's occupational and physical therapy providers. As part of this project, students recently participated in a virtual meeting with physical therapist Taylor Jensen and occupational therapist Rob Carafo to gather insight into the design of prosthetic devices and how they support individuals with physical disabilities.

Students will be using robotic LEGO materials to construct their prototypes and create custom coding sequences to bring their device to life.

This is very exciting work happening here at VS24!

As Earth Day was April 22nd, WLB's PTA brought an inflatable planetarium for students to learn about our earth and to explore space. We

thank our PTAs for always going above and beyond for supporting engaging learning experiences for our students.

Recently, RWC held its multicultural assembly. There was great attendance from families and students. The event featured dances and music from across different cultures, with South High School students presenting to our community. Several of our students also performed. We thank the Central High School District and all our students for a job well done!

RWC Held its Spring Concert right after our last board meeting, thanks to Ms. Wilkey leading our chorus. Students sang songs with the theme being Wicked and Wizard of Oz. We thank our students for their incredible performance, our families for always supporting our arts programs, and Ms. Wilkey for her outstanding job preparing our students for this important day.

As we have shared, we are very proud to have received a \$500,000 grant by Assemblywoman Solages this year. All 6 out of the 6 water bottle filtration systems are installed and are operational, providing our students and staff with access to clean water.

Robert Carbonaro School is also receiving a brand new sensory playground to support all students, and we are still on track for installation to potentially take place at the end of April or early May depending on the weather. Rather than discard of the swing set currently at Carbonaro, the swings there are being added to William L. Buck's existing set as space did permit that to take place.

On behalf of our Board of Education and entire District, we once again thank Assemblywoman Solages for the grant.

These are upcoming important dates and events.

April 24- Tomorrow, our sixth Grade Hockey Tournament will take place at South High School at 4:00 pm. We look forward to this! Following the Hockey Tournament, I will be hosting Coffee Hour at BAS for a special budget preview with Dr. Mitchell joining us for the Coffee Hour.

April 24+25- Grades 4-6 will take their Computer Based ELA State Assessment. We know our students are very well prepared thanks to our staff, and we wish them much success.

April 29+30- Grade 3 will be taking their NY State ELA Exam and that will be paper-based.

May 1- Is our grade 5 science exam.

On May 5 and 6, grades 4-6 will take their NY State Math assessment. That is Computerbased.

May 7+8 is the grade 3 Paper-based math assessment.

Next year, all of our students in grades 3-6 will be taking assessments on the computer as per NYS guidelines.

May 7- Our BOE will be meeting for its work session.

May 8- Dr. Mitchell will be presenting to the PTAs for our full budget presentation. This will be at WLB's gym at 7:00 pm.

May 9- WLB's Chorus Concert will take place at 2:00 pm.

May 12-14- Our Sixth Grade Students will be going to Ashokan again this year. Our BOE and district really believe in this trip for our graduating seniors, and it is why this trip is partially funded through our district's budget thanks to our BOE. We thank our principals for always organizing the details of this important trip and sharing information with our families.

May 14- Our BOE will meet for its Business Meeting at 7:30 pm.

May 15- Our district's spring band concert will take place at WLB at 7:00 pm in the gymnasium.

May 20- Exhibit Night. This is also our budget vote and BOE Special Meeting. We look forward to seeing many of our families at Exhibit Night. Please come out and see the wonderful projects that evening.

May 22- Coffee Hour with the Supt. at RWC at 10:00 am.

Also, on May 22nd in the evening will be our district's spring orchestra concert at WLB's gymnasium.

May 26- Memorial Day (No School)

May 27- Don't miss our fifth grade soccer tournament, this year taking place at South High School at 4:00 pm!

It is going to be a very busy next few weeks. We look forward to all the events that are upcoming.

We have an exciting 9 weeks of school left as we continue to make the connection and innovate our future.

That concludes my Superintendent's report this month.

## **VII. OTHER REPORTS:**

### **A. VALLEY STREAM CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

There are three delegates from Valley Stream UFSD Twenty-Four on the Central High School Board of Education: President Hernandez, Vice President Herrera, and Trustee Maier.

#### **Residency Hotlines:**

Valley Stream School District 516-872-5677

Village of Valley Stream 516-592-5140

Town of Hempstead 516-584-5000

Trustee Maier:

I have nothing to report at this time. Our next Committee Meeting is May 6, 2025 and our next Business Meeting is May 13, 2025.

### **B. LEGISLATION REPORT - TRUSTEE NUÑEZ**

I have nothing to report at this time. Thank you.

**VIII. LIST OF ITEMS FOR ACTION:**

**A. PERSONNEL – VICE PRESIDENT HERRERA**

*Trustee Clark 1<sup>st</sup>, to move A1, as listed Trustee Wilson 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-0 motion carried.*

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints John Boniello Jr., effective July 1, 2025, as Director of Pupil Services holding a Professional Certificate as a School District Leader, for a 4-year probationary period, unless terminated prior thereto, and subject to the requirements of the Education Law, and the Rules of the Board of Regents. Their probation expiration will be June 30, 2029. Compensation will be \$176,000 and thereafter be consistent with the provisions outlined in the negotiated agreement with the Directors' Unit of Valley Stream Union Free School District Twenty-Four.

*Trustee Clark 1<sup>st</sup>, to move items A2-A15, Trustee Wilson 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-0 motion carried.*

2. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves the permanent appointment of Khasharr Mitchell, as a Cleaner, effective April 25, 2025.
3. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approves to appoint Alida Pesola, holding a Certificate in Childhood Education (Grades 1-6), as Leave Replacement for Naomi Rashad, to be effective April 1, 2025. The duration of this appointment is through April 7, 2025. Compensation will be at Step 1 MA, consistent with the provisions outlined in the Valley Stream Teachers Association (VSTA) Contract.
4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Carolina Mendoza Molina, as a School Monitor Part-Time, effective April 24, 2025, pending fingerprint and civil service clearance, replacing Kristen Nugent. Compensation for this appointment will be Step 1 in accordance with the agreement between the District and the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU).



5. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Amandeep Dhaliwal, as a School Monitor Part-Time, effective April 24, 2025, pending fingerprint and civil service clearance, replacing Sultana Baloch. Compensation for this appointment will be Step 1 in accordance with the agreement between the District and the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU).
6. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Chowdhury Sumayea E. Mahjabin, as a School Monitor Part-Time, effective April 24, 2025, pending successful completion of the onboarding process, fingerprint and civil service clearance, replacing Ana Salazar. Compensation for this appointment will be Step 1 in accordance with the agreement between the District and the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU).
7. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Fatiha Fathy, as a Full-Time Aide, effective April 24, 2025, pending civil service clearance, replacing Marijo Sensale. Compensation for this appointment will be Step 1 in accordance with the agreement between the District and the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU).
8. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Maryum Masood, as a Full-Time Aide, effective April 28, 2025, pending civil service clearance. Compensation for this appointment will be Step 4 in accordance with the agreement between the District and the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU).
9. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves an extension of a leave of absence for medical purposes (pending documentation and review) for James Fischman, Elementary Classroom Teacher, until on or around May 15, 2025.
10. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Ilonka Gonzalez De Nunez, Part-Time School Monitor, effective close of business April 4, 2025.

11. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Ana Salazar, Part-Time School Monitor, effective close of business April 4, 2025.
12. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Maryum Masood, Part-Time School Monitor, effective April 27, 2025.
13. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Ronni Schweitzer, Temporary Substitute, effective close of business March 31, 2025.
14. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Lisa Davis, Secretary to the Superintendent, effective close of business May 2, 2025.
15. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby approves the written request of the employee named in the attached Confidential Schedule “A,” dated March 26, 2025, for an extension of the employee’s probationary period for an additional calendar year. The employee’s new tenure date shall be September 1, 2026.

**B. EDUCATION – TRUSTEE MAIER**

*Trustee Maier 1<sup>st</sup>, to move B1-B2, as listed Trustee Wilson 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-0 motion carried.*

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accepts the confidential recommendations of the Committee on Pre-School Special Education previously approved by the Committee on Pre-School Special Education 03/14/2025 and 03/10/2025 for the 2024/2025 School Year and 03/18/2025, 03/18/2025, 03/20/2025, 03/20/2025, 03/10/2025, 03/28/2025, 03/28/2025, 03/14/2025 and 02/24/2025 for the 2025/2026 School Year,

pertaining to students being considered for pre-school special education services as set forth in a schedule provided to the Board of Education and the Board of Education hereby approves and ratifies said recommendations of the Committee on Pre-School Special Education.

2. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accepts the confidential recommendations of the Committee on Special Education previously approved by the Committee on Special Education on 03/25/2025, 03/13/2025, 03/27/2025, 03/11/2025, 03/20/2025, 03/17/2025, 03/11/2025, 03/24/2024, 03/13/2025, 03/10/2025, 03/04/2025, 02/25/2025, 03/07/2025 and 02/25/2025 for the 2024/2025 School Year and 03/03/2025, 04/02/2025, 02/24/2025, 03/24/2025, 03/24/2025, 03/17/2025, 03/17/2025, 03/06/2025, 04/02/2025, 03/11/2025, 03/12/2025, 04/03/2025, 03/19/2025, 03/04/2025, 03/04/2025, 03/13/2025, 03/04/2025, 03/26/2025, 03/26/2025, 03/11/2025, 03/25/2025, 03/25/2025, 03/20/2025 and 03/20/2025 for the 2025/2026 School Year, pertaining to students being considered for special education services as set forth in a schedule provided to the Board of Education and the Board of Education hereby approves and ratifies said recommendations of the Committee on Special Education.

#### **C. FINANCE – TRUSTEE WILSON**

*Trustee Wilson 1<sup>st</sup>, to move C1, as listed Trustee Maier 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-0 motion carried.*

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board hereby accepts the Treasurer's Report, Collateral Report, Appropriation Status Report, Revenue Status Report, Trial Balance for February 2025 and the Claims Auditor's Report for March 2025.

#### **D. POLICY - TRUSTEE WHEELER**

I have nothing to report at this time. Thank you.

#### **IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS, IF ANY: N/A**

#### **X. NEW BUSINESS:**

*Trustee Maier 1<sup>st</sup>, to move X1-X8, as listed Trustee Wilson 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-0 motion carried.*

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby approves the Agreement between the District and Freeport UFSD for student health and welfare services for the 2024-2025 school year and further authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement.
2. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby approves the Agreement between the District and Uniondale UFSD for student health and welfare services for the 2024-2025 school year and further authorizes the Board President and the Superintendent of Schools to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement.
3. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby approves the Agreement between the District and Hempstead UFSD for student health and welfare services for the 2024-2025 school year and further authorizes the Board President and the Superintendent of Schools to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement.
4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby approves the Agreement between the District and Malverne UFSD for student health and welfare services for the 2024-2025 school year and further authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement.
5. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education hereby approves the Agreement between the District and Textbook Central for centralized textbook distribution services and textbook information and management services for the 2025-2026 school year at the rate set forth in the Agreement and further authorizes the Board President to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement.
6. **WHEREAS**, the Board of Education of Valley Stream 24 (“Board”) has reviewed the benefits of allowing piggybacking onto its contract for

transportation with We Transport and has concluded that doing so has the ability to provide value and cost savings to the District.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, pursuant to Education Law 305, the Board of Education hereby approves a contract with the Valley Stream Central High School District to utilize the Valley Stream UFSD 24's transportation contract with WE Transport to provide transportation services to HAMZA Academy, 202 Stuart Ave, Valley Stream, NY 11580, provided there is room on the school bus for any additional students and hereby authorizes to Board President to execute same.

7. **WHEREAS**, the Board of Education of Valley Stream 24 ("Board") has reviewed the benefits of allowing piggybacking onto its contract for transportation with We Transport and has concluded that doing so has the ability to provide value and cost savings to the District.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, pursuant to Education Law 305, the Board of Education hereby approves a contract with the Valley Stream Central High School District to utilize the Valley Stream UFSD 24's transportation contract with WE Transport to provide transportation services to HAFTR (Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway), 389 Central Ave, Lawrence, NY 11559, provided there is room on the school bus for any additional students and hereby authorizes to Board President to execute same.

8. **BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby authorizes the following Budget Transfers for the 2024-2025 School Year.

	<b>BUDGET TRANSFER FOR BOARD APPROVAL</b>		
	<b>DATE: April 23, 2025</b>		
<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>
A9060.8	Hosp & Medical Insurance	\$33,700.00	
A2815.4	Health Services Expenses		\$33,700.00
	<b>Health &amp; Welfare Services - Rockville Centre &amp; Malverne</b>		
A9060.8	Hosp & Medical Insurance	\$6,725.00	
A2815.4	Health Services Expenses		\$6,725.00
	<b>Hempstead UFSD Health &amp; Welfare 2023-24 / 2024-25</b>		
A2610.455	Audio Visual Supplies	\$1,000.00	
A2610.45	Library Supplies	\$154.00	
A2610.46	Library Computer Software		\$1,154.00
	<b>Software Aid for Holy Name of Mary</b>		
A2110.480-2	WLB Textbooks	\$1,225.00	
A2110.48	Textbooks		\$1,225.00
	<b>Textbook Aid for Holy Name of Mary</b>		
A9060.8	Hosp & Medical Insurance	\$20,000.00	
A1420.400-2	Negotiations Attorney	\$20,000.00	
A1420.4	Attorney Fees		\$40,000.00
	<b>Guercio &amp; Guercio</b>		
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 82,804.00</b>	<b>\$ 82,804.00</b>

**XI. DISCUSSION**

**XII. AUDIENCE TO VISITORS**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to re-enter Executive Session at 8:22 pm by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Wilson. Motion carried.

Motion to exit Executive Session by Trustee Maier at 8:58 pm and seconded by Trustee Wilson. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn the Business Meeting at 8:59 pm by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Clark. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jennie L. Padilla*

Jennie L. Padilla  
District Clerk