

MINUTES

BOARD OF EDUCATION VALLEY STREAM SCHOOL DISTRICT 24

BUSINESS MEETING
October 22, 2025

WILLIAM L. BUCK SCHOOL
6:45 PM

Members Present: Trustee Clark, Trustee Hernandez, Trustee Maier, Trustee Matthew, and Trustee Nunez

Others Present: Superintendent Karakas, Dr. Christopher Keogh, Dr. Jack Mitchell, and School District Attorney

Absent With Prior Notice: President Herrera, and Vice President Wilson

I. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM & CALL TO ORDER – PRESIDENT HERRERA

Having a quorum, the Business Meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm by District Counsel Katherine Maier at the William L Buck School. Motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:10 pm was made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Clark to discuss Personnel and Contractual Obligations. Motion carried.

Motion to appoint Trustee Armando Hernandez to lead the meeting as Board President Pro Tempore was made by Trustee John Maier and seconded by Trustee Cynthia Nuñez. Motion carried.

Motion to exit Executive Session at 7:33 pm by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Nunez. Motion carried.

The Business Meeting was reconvened at 7:35 pm, at the William L. Buck School by Trustee Armando Hernandez, serving as President Pro Tempore.

II. **SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** August 27, 2025, September 17, 2025, and October 8, 2025. Motion to approve the Minutes was made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Clark. 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**

I have nothing to report at this time.

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

Good evening, everyone. Today marks the start of our eighth week of school—hard to believe, but that means we're already about 20% of the way through the school year.

Throughout this year, our district is focused on making connections with our community and continuously innovating our practices to reflect 21st Century learning.

With innovation in mind, I had the privilege of attending the GlobalMindED Conference at the United Nations this week, made possible through their partnership with Digital Promise and the League of Innovative Schools. The conference focused on innovation, artificial intelligence, and how we can best prepare students for careers in today's evolving workforce. We discussed the importance of embracing AI while also always monitoring ethical implications so that its use is strategic and intentional.

One of the highlights for me was hearing from former New York Knick Jerome Williams, who led a session on how sports, art, and music inspire leadership. As a Knicks fan, it was great to see him in person.

I also connected with global leaders—from entrepreneurs to university leaders—who are advancing the use of AI and technology in education. It was an inspiring event, and I'm excited to bring these ideas back to our Vision 2030 work and our Board's mission to keep innovating for our students' future.

I continue to be impressed by the great work happening in our departmentalized grade 6 classrooms. Today, you'll hear directly from our students about how departmentalization supports their engagement and learning. I won't give too much away, but during my visits, I've seen firsthand how our teachers are creating dynamic, engaging lessons that truly bring content-area learning to life. I also always appreciate the insights that students bring, which again, we will hear from them directly in a little while.

This month, Ray McNulty led training sessions with our staff to extend our third year of Vision 2030. Our focus this year is on expanding pilot projects, strengthening departmentalization, supporting our administrative team, and increasing student engagement. The sessions were productive and inspiring, and we have a number of exciting plans and projects underway. More information will be shared throughout the year.

William L. Buck School held an exciting pep rally that brought students together through fun activities to kick off the new school year. The energy was incredible, and as a visitor, I have to say—I left feeling just as energized. A big thank you to Principal DeBlasio and the staff for creating such a positive and spirited start to the year.

In exciting news, at our last Work Session, our auditors reported to our Board of Education that our annual audit had no findings—confirming that the district remains in strong financial standing. We extend our appreciation to our business office staff for their hard work and diligence in making this possible.

From September 15 to October 15, our schools celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month through a variety of projects and activities. One highlight was a wax museum where students dressed as famous figures they researched and presented their findings to others. I was so impressed by the depth of knowledge our students shared, and I thank our staff and Spanish teachers for thoughtfully integrating this work into our Spanish curriculum.

Having been a building principal myself, I know firsthand the amount of planning, visibility, multitasking, and constant support the role requires. October is Principals Appreciation Month, and we are fortunate to have three outstanding building leaders who lead with intention, focus, collaboration, and unity every single day. They are truly my right hand in ensuring our schools run smoothly, and I'm grateful to have them on our team. On behalf of our Board of Education and our entire district, we wish Principal Comis, Principal Iacono, and Principal DeBlasio a very happy Principals Appreciation Month!

Just a quick reminder that as of October 1, all district and school communication has officially transitioned to ParentSquare. Some teachers continue to use ClassDojo for classroom reward systems, but all building and district messages are now sent through ParentSquare. Most of our families are already connected, but if anyone still needs assistance, please reach out to your building principal. They'll connect you with our wonderful Tech Team, led by Mr. Onorato, who will be happy to help.

We have some upcoming important dates and events to take note of.

October 23-25- Our Board of Education will engage in professional learning alongside other Boards throughout NY State at the NYSSBA Convention in NYC.

November 4- Superintendent's Conference Day (Parent-Teacher Conferences)

November 5- BOE Work Session at 6:45 pm

November 11- Veterans Day (No School)

November 18- Parent-Teacher Conferences Evening Session at 7:00 pm

November 19- BOE Business Meeting at 7:30 pm

November 20- Coffee Hour with the Superintendent at 10:00 am (Zoom)

November 26- Early Dismissal Drill at 2:30 pm

November 27+28- Thanksgiving Recess (No School)

That concludes my Superintendent's report tonight.

- Board Appreciation

I'm very excited to share that this month we celebrate Board of Education Appreciation Month. From President Herrera, Vice President Wilson, Trustee Maier, Trustee Hernandez, Trustee Nunez, Trustee Clark, and Trustee Matthew—our Board of Education dedicates countless hours to ensuring our district continues to move forward with purpose and vision. Their commitment, insight, and care for our students, staff, and community are felt in every decision they make. I can sincerely say that I am a stronger Superintendent and leader because of the seven individuals who sit on this Board. Everything you see being accomplished in our schools is a reflection of their guidance, trust, and partnership.

Today, we have certificates to honor each of them on behalf of the New York State School Boards Association. We also have a special student video and presentation that highlight the incredible leadership our students demonstrate every day—leadership that is made possible through the direction and support of this Board.

- Innovation in Motion: Grade 6 Student Leaders Shape Departmentalized Learning

What amazing presentations by our students engaged in departmentalization in grade 6. We are so proud of you and the leadership you exemplify.

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 Herrera, Vice President Wilson, 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

Vice President Wilson:

Good evening. The next Board Meeting for the High School District will be on November, 4 2025. Thank you.

B. LEGISLATION REPORT - TRUSTEE NUÑEZ

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

VIII. LIST OF ITEMS FOR ACTION:

A. PERSONNEL – VICE PRESIDENT WILSON

Trustee Maier 1st, to move items A1-A6, Trustee Clark 2nd 5-0 motion carried.

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Nisha Samuel, as a Permanent Substitute Teacher, effective October 23, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year.

2. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Khushdeep Kaur, effective October 24, 2025, as a Probationary Teaching Assistant holding a certificate in Teaching Assistant, Level 1, for a 4-year probationary period. This probationary period expires on October 23, 2029. Compensation for this appointment will be at Step 1 in accordance with the agreement between the Board of Education of the Valley Stream Central High School District and the Valley Stream Teachers' Association Teaching Assistants' Unit.

3. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Cindy Salazar, as a School Monitor Part-Time, effective October 23, 2025, pending Civil Service clearance and successful completion of the onboarding process. Compensation for this appointment will be Step 1 in accordance with the

agreement between the District and the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU).

4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Tuha Akther, as a School Monitor Part-Time, effective October 23, 2025, pending Civil Service clearance and successful completion of the onboarding process. 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 Alisha Beera, as a School Monitor Part-Time, effective October 23, 2025, pending Civil Service clearance and successful completion of the onboarding process. 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 approves the following additions to the per diem substitute list for the 2025-2026 School Year:

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS:

Anthony Andux
Christopher Camacho
Kayla Camacho

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER AIDES:

Lisa Nieves (Pending Civil Service Clearance)

Trustee Maier 1st, to move items A7-A13, Trustee Clark 2nd 5-0 motion carried.

7. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves a leave of absence for medical purposes for Julia Sollin, Library Media Specialist, effective on or around December 2, 2025, until on or around February 2, 2026.

8. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves a leave of absence for medical purposes for Jennifer Albahae, Special Education Teacher, effective on or around October 17, 2025, until on or around December 1, 2025.

9. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves a leave of absence for maternity leave for Joanna Gallo, Elementary Classroom Teacher, effective on or around November 26, 2025, until on or around February 23, 2026.

10. **BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Education hereby amends the probationary period of Marleen Cazales St. Jean, to end on August 28, 2028 based upon the teacher's demonstration that they received tenure in another school district within the state and received an annual professional performance review rating in their final year of service in such other district as required under Education Law 3012(1)(a).

11. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves the permanent appointment of David Nolan, as a Cleaner, effective October 13, 2025.

12. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Denise Garcia, School Monitor Part-Time, effective October 14, 2025.

13. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education appoints the following teacher liaisons for clubs/departments for the 2025-2026 school year at the appropriate Club Extra Pay Amount per the VSTA contract as follows:

Teacher Liaisons

ENL	Kathleen Murray
Nurse	Estelle Dempsey
Science (WLB)	Christine Brenneis
Science (RWC)	Shannon Quinn
Science (BAS)	Kathleen Carter

William L. Buck School - Clubs

Student Council Marissa Campo and Christine Iadevaio

Robotics	Samantha Ponzo Byrams
Art Club	Leighanne Jaronczyk
School News	Naomi Rashad and Grace Riordan

Brooklyn Avenue School - Clubs

Student Council	Samantha Ponzo Byrams and Jo-Anne Casucci
Robotics	Cheryl Calamiong
Art Club	Nicole Barci
Sports Club	Ashely Goldman

Robert W. Carbonaro School - Clubs

Student Council	Cathy Haufler and Pamela Fowler
Robotics	Amanda Plutner
Book Club	Chelsea Cittadino
School News	Deborah Adler and Paige Brickman

District

Drama (B-Club)	Breana Martinez
Senior Orchestra Club (B-Club)	Gary Garzetta
Senior Band Club (B-Club)	Nicholas Shmorhun
District Instrumental Music (C-Club)	Nicholas Shmorhun

B. EDUCATION – TRUSTEE NUÑEZ

Trustee Maier 1st, to move items B1 & B2, Trustee Clark 2nd 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 on the dates listed below, 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.

Dates: 09/09/2025, 09/12/2025, 09/17/2025, 10/07/2025

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 the dates listed below, 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.

Dates: 09/11/2025, 09/26/2025

C. FINANCE – TRUSTEE MATTHEW

Trustee Matthew 1st, to move item C1, Trustee Maier 2nd 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 August 2025 and the Claims Auditor's Report for September 2025.

D. POLICY - TRUSTEE CLARK

Trustee Clark 1st, to move item D1, Trustee Maier 2nd 5-0 motion carried.

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education reviews and adopts the following revised policies:
 - Policy 3290 Investments
 - Policy 3301 Purchasing
 - Policy 5113 Student Attendance

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS, IF ANY: N/A

IX. NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Maier 1st, to move items X1-X6, Trustee Clark 2nd 5-0 motion carried.

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education hereby approves the Agreement between the District and Rohan Murphy (Consultant/Speaker) for the 2025-2026 school year, and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement on behalf of the Board of Education.

2. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby authorizes the District to enter into an agreement with Dr. Caryl Oris for Special Education services for the 2025 – 2026 school year and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education 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 authorizes the District to enter into an agreement with Manhattan Psychology Group for Special Education services for the 2025 – 2026 school year and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement

4. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Superintendent of Schools, or his designee is hereby authorized to proceed with the disposal of the following items:

- William L. Buck Item: Newline TV: TT6618RS ID# 002389
- Brooklyn Avenue Item: Old Lab Cabby Cart ID# 002305

5. **BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Education revises the Board of Education Mission, Vision, and Belief Statements for the 2025-2026 school year as follows:

Mission: The mission of Valley Stream School District 24 is to provide every child with an equitable, rigorous, and innovative education through a robust curriculum that supports academic excellence, critical thinking, and creativity. Drawing strength from our diverse community, we foster a learning environment where students are empowered with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to succeed in school and in life, and to meet the challenges of the 21st century with confidence and purpose.

Vision: To accomplish this goal, the Board of Education is committed to employ, train and support a staff that acts to achieve mastery and excellence in education. Our nurturing educational environment and the programs contained within, will allow students to achieve mastery in academics, develop resilience and independence, and engage as thoughtful, responsible members of society.

Belief: Student progress requires the district to be creative and maximize educational opportunities. Hence, we support excellence and innovative learning experiences in partnership with family and community.

6. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby awards the Transportation Contracts beginning on October 6, 2025, through June 30, 2026, and authorizes the Board of Education President and Superintendent of Schools to execute the contracts, as set forth in the Schedule below:

**VS24 COST SCHEDULE for SCHOOL
YEAR 2025-2026 NEW BID CONTRACTS**

BID	BUS	#						
DAT	COMPA	SCHOO	STUDE	COST/VAN/	COST/MATRO	MONT	YEAR	
E	NY	L	NTS	MONTH	N/MONTH	HL Y	LY	
New	Sunbrigh	Rhame						
Bid	t	Element						
9/17/2	Transpor	ary				\$11,400	\$102,60	
025	tation	School	1	\$7,800.00	\$3,600.00	.00	0.00	

New	Develop					
Bid	mental					
9/17/2	Disabilit					
025	ies				\$11,800	\$106,20
Stork	Institute 1	\$8,400.00	\$3,400.00		.00	0.00
Bussing					\$23,200	\$208,80
			TOTAL		.00	0.00

X. **DISCUSSION**

XI. **AUDIENCE TO VISITORS**

XII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the Business Meeting at 8:00 was made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Clark. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennie L. Padilla
Jennie L. Padilla
District Clerk