

# MINUTES

## BOARD OF EDUCATION VALLEY STREAM SCHOOL DISTRICT 24

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BUSINESS MEETING  
February 28, 2024

WILLIAM L. BUCK SCHOOL  
6:45 PM

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**Members Present:** President LaRocco, Vice-President Hernandez, Trustee Herrera, 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:** Trustee Wheeler

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

Having a quorum, the Business Meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm by President LaRocco at the William L. Buck School. Motion to enter Executive Session at 6:45 pm was made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Wilson to discuss Personnel and Contractual Obligations. Motion unanimously carried.

Motion to exit Executive Session at 7:25 pm by Trustee Maier and seconded by Vice-President Hernandez. Motion Unanimously carried.

The Business Meeting was reconvened at 7:30 pm, at the William L. Buck School by President LaRocco.

### **II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** January 24, 2024, and February 7, 2024. Motion to approve the minutes made by Vice-President Hernandez and seconded by Trustee Wilson.

**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 – MR. UNAL KARAKAS**

I want to start this month's update by first remembering Karen Brass, a speech teacher at Carbonaro School, who we recently lost. Please join me in a moment of silence to reflect on her impact and legacy at Valley Stream 24. Thank you!

I didn't get to share this at our last board meeting as the information came out right after it, but I did share it with our families in a letter that was sent out on Friday, January 26th as well as during the January video update. In great news, our 2023-24 school year accountability status is in good standing. All districts and schools that are in good standing receive a designation of Local Support and Improvement. I am proud that all three of our schools are designated as such, which means we are a district in good standing for this school year. This is wonderful news and we should all be so proud of our district.

At VS24, we firmly believe that student leadership is critical as we shape our students to be the leaders of tomorrow. I had shared with families that I've met with our Student Councils on Vision 2030, which is a future-focused vision that we are creating to ensure our students are prepared for the demands of the 21st Century. I also discussed our school lunch options. Recently though, I met again with RWC students who interviewed me to learn what it's like to be a leader of a district as they aspire to be student leaders and future leaders of our community and country. Meeting with the students and speaking about leadership brings me great joy as they prepare to be future leaders in our world.

Speaking of the power of student voice and leadership, I am proud to let our families know that that thanks to the feedback of our Student Council representatives, after reviewing our school lunch menus, we are beginning to tailor the menus to include more items that they enjoy seeing, as well as a brand new vegetarian meal option! This new menu begins March 1st. Fridays are Pizza Fridays, which our students expressed that they love pizza. Our staff is committed

to continuing to refine our menus with student voice. Thank you to our teachers leading Student Council, our Food Service workers, Nancy Jakobsen, who is an Account Clerk that works with our food service workers, for all helping with this initiative.

We had the honor of celebrating literacy during World Aloud Day this month. Guest mystery readers were invited inside our classrooms to read to our students. I had the pleasure of reading to Ms. Fitz Gerald's third-grade class, choosing the book "Ada Twist, Scientist." The students exhibited remarkable curiosity and shared insightful perspectives on fostering their own critical thinking skills. Thank you to all the mystery readers who came to our classrooms to read and build that love of literacy.

This month, we also celebrated Valentine's Day in our district by honoring our Veterans. We had Veteran George Catalanotto join us. We also had several legislators come and visit our district to collect cards our students made for veterans. It is always important to honor those who have served our country and we thank all of our schools for always thinking of our veterans.

PS I Love You Day is a day in which fostering a supportive environment and a community where everyone feels welcomed, loved, and included. Classrooms across our district honored this day by wearing purple and engaging in self-love and self-appreciation assemblies and activities. I thank every staff member for helping to build the self-esteem of our students and for always making our students feel included and valued.

Ray McNulty, from the Successful Practices Network, has been collaborating with our district to advance our Vision 2030 initiative. As you are aware, Vision 2030 represents our forward-looking vision that we are actively shaping. This week, we engaged in a half-day session with Ray during which the administrative team began crafting a preliminary vision statement together. This statement will undergo further refinement as we engage more stakeholders in the process throughout the next school year. Additionally, we will be introducing cornerstones to the vision, outlining the strategies for its implementation. This vision is a collective one, and the involvement of all stakeholders will be important. This is very exciting work that will greatly benefit our teachers, staff, and ultimately our schools and students!

Tomorrow, I will be having Coffee Hour with the Superintendent at WLB School at 6:30 pm. The month of March also has many important events, but these are just a few of them that I wanted to remind our families about. In the month of March,

we celebrate Women's History Month and the contributions women have made in our global society. Read Across America Day is March 2nd, and schools will celebrate this the week of March 4th since March 2nd is a Saturday. Report cards get distributed this month on March 13th. This year, for the first time, our district will also have two mid-year Parent Teacher Conferences on March 13th and March 20th. As our families were informed earlier in the school year, these days will be half-days. Dismissal will be at 11:30 am on the half-days. The month of March also starts Ramadan fasting for those in the religion of Islam. This starts around March 11th. I remember growing up fasting in fifth grade, and it's 30 days of fasting from sunrise to sunset where you cannot eat or drink. So, some of our older students may also be fasting during this month, and we will be mindful of that. There is also a District Hockey Game for sixth grade on March 21st at South High School's Gym. We look forward to a great match!

Now I am excited to introduce Principal Gaddy, our Principal at William L. Buck School, who will share with us a Black History Month Presentation with poetry and dancing!

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

William L. Buck Student Presentation

Wow, what an incredible presentation! I thank all of our students and staff for such a strong showcasing of Black History Month. And that concludes the Superintendent's report.

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## **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: Vice President Hernandez, Trustee Maier and Trustee Herrera.

### **Residency Hotlines:**

Valley Stream School District 516-872-5677  
Village of Valley Stream 516-592-5140  
Town of Hempstead 516-584-5000

Trustee Herrera:

Valley Stream North, South and Central high schools earned top scores in the Advanced Placement School Honor Roll for 2023. This recognition honors high schools in which graduating cohorts have high levels of AP exam participation and proficiency. With North, south and Central earning the Silver recognition on the AP Honor Roll denoting a more than 50% participation rate in AP exams among the schools respective cohorts alongside the Access Award recognition. College preparation and expanding access to AP curriculum is a major focus for the central high school district. The recognition is a wonderful acknowledgment and something for our graduating students and families to look forward to.

The Central High school is once again offering free PSAT and SAT exams to students in the 10th and 11th grade alongside a variety of free and discounted tutoring services in partnership with The Princeton Review. If you are interested in participating in any of these offered programs please make your way to the Valley Stream Central High School District page for further information.

Robotics kicked off this month with their first club meeting. Students have the opportunity to learn and flex their engineering and programming skills. It's wonderful to see that our students from District 24 are able to carry over their interest and passions to the high school. We look forward to participating in various regional and national competitions.

Thank you Madam President that concludes my report

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

On February 2, 2024 Valley Stream District 24 attended and participated in the virtual capital conference day, where we received a breakdown of the Governor's budget and its effect on local school districts. It was a great opportunity to collaborate with local school districts on ideas to maintain and enhance funding for our district.

On Saturday, March 9, 2024, our local legislators will be present at the Valley Stream Legislative breakfast. We encourage our community to attend. This is a great opportunity to meet and interact with our local legislators and have your voice be heard.

The Legislative breakfast is on Saturday, March 9, 2024 at 9 AM at Memorial Junior High School. Breakfast is prepared and served by our students in the culinary program in the Valley Stream Central High School.

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

### **A. PERSONNEL – VICE PRESIDENT HERNANDEZ**

**Vice President Hernandez 1<sup>st</sup> , to move A1-A8, Trustee Maier 2<sup>nd</sup> 6,0,0**

**1. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves a leave of absence for medical reasons for Samantha Joltin, RWC Special Education Teacher, on or around March 5, 2024, until on or around April 16, 2024.

**2. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Mary Cubas, District Duplicating Aide Part-Time, effective February 28, 2024.

**3. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education appoints Mary Cubas as a Full Time Teacher Aide, effective February 29, 2024. Compensation for this appointment will be at Step 3 in accordance with the agreement between the Board of Education 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 Memoona Manzoor as the District Duplicating Aide Part-Time, effective February 29, 2024. Compensation for this appointment will be at Step 4 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 approves the appointment of Karolyn Currie, as a Provisional Full Time Account Clerk, subject to the rules of the Nassau County Civil Service Commission with regard to provisional appointments. This appointment will be effective February 29, 2024. Compensation for this appointment will be at Step 1 in accordance with the agreement between the Valley Stream School District 24 and the Valley Stream Association of Educational Office Personnel of

the Valley Stream Teachers Association, Local 163. The appointment is for a nine-month probationary period, said probation set to expire on November 28, 2024.

**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 2023-2024 School Year:

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Alyssa Lupo (effective February 29, 2024)

Monique Lipari-Cavaleri (effective February 29, 2024)

Lisa Kraker (effective February 29, 2024)

**7. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints the following additional teachers to teach the Learning Lab Program for ELA and/or MATH for the 2023-2024 school year. Compensation is in accordance with the appropriate hourly rate of pay as per the current Valley Stream Teachers' Association contract:

**Robert W. Carbonaro**

Kathleen Murray (Substitute)

Matthew Roth (Substitute)

**8. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Dr. Angela Austin as the 504 Compliance Officer and Administrator of the District's Committees for Pre-School and Special Education (CPSE & CSE) for the 2023-2024 school year as per the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

**B. EDUCATION – TRUSTEE WILSON**

**Trustee Wilson 1<sup>st</sup> , to move B1-B2, Vice-President Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup> 6,0,0**

**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 01/09/2024, 01/18/2024, 01/11/2024, 01/09/2024, 01/11/2024, 01/23/2024, 01/18/2024 and 01/22/2024, 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 01/16/2024, 02/02/2024, 01/11/2024, 01/16/2024, 12/07/2023, 01/18/2024, 01/11/2024, 12/01/2023, 01/09/2024, 11/28/2023, 01/11/2024, 01/17/2024, 01/17/2024, 01/19/2024, 01/25/2024, 12/21/2023, 01/31/2024, 12/07/2023, 02/02/2024, 12/01/2023, 12/19/2023, 01/18/2024, 12/15/2023, 01/19/2024, 01/16/2024 and 12/19/2023, 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 MAIER**

**Trustee Maier 1<sup>st</sup>, to move C1, Trustee Wilson 2<sup>nd</sup> 6,0,0**

**1. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board hereby accepts the Treasurer’s Report, Collateral Report, Claims Auditor’s Report, Appropriation Status Report, Revenue Status Report, Trial Balance for December 2023.

**D. POLICY - TRUSTEE WHEELER**

I have nothing to report at this time.

**IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS, IF ANY:**

**X. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Trustee Herrera 1<sup>st</sup>, to move X1-X7, Vice-President Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup> 6,0,0**



1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopts the School Calendar for the 2024-2025 school year.

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 Our Kids Place Country Day, Inc. for the provision of Universal Pre-Kindergarten Services for the 2024-2025 school year, subject to and conditioned upon the District's receipt of the State's allocation, and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said contract between the District and Our Kids Place Country Day, Inc. on behalf of the Board of Education.

3. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education hereby approves the agreement with Nassau BOCES for the purpose of the participation in the Nassau BOCES Regional Summer School Program from July 2, 2024 to July 29, 2024.

4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education enters into an agreement with a parent to transport one student to the Children's Readiness Center for a special education program from March 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024 at a reimbursement rate of \$0.67 per mile, and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said agreement.

5. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby approves the Agreement between the District and Rockville Centre UFSD for student health and welfare services for the 2023-2024 school year, and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement.

6. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby ratifies the Memorandum of Agreement with the Valley Stream Teachers' Association, Local 1633 dated February 8, 2024, for the period July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026.



Motion to re-enter Executive Session at 7:52 pm made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Wilson to discuss certain Personnel and Contractual Obligations. Motion unanimously carried.

Motion to exit the Executive Session at 8:41 pm made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Vice-President Hernandez. Motion unanimously carried.

Motion to adjourn the Business meeting at 8:42 pm by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Nunez. Motion unanimously carried

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jennie L. Padilla*

Jennie L. Padilla  
District Clerk