

# MINUTES

## BOARD OF EDUCATION VALLEY STREAM SCHOOL DISTRICT 24

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BUSINESS MEETING  
May 15, 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, Trustee Wheeler, and Trustee Wilson

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

**Absent With Prior Notice:**

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

Having a quorum, the Business Meeting was called to order at 6:54 pm by President LaRocco at the William L. Buck School. Motion to enter Executive Session at 6:54 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 7:28 pm by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Wilson. Motion Unanimously carried.

The Business Meeting was reconvened at 7:32 pm, at the William L. Buck School by President LaRocco.

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

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** April 16, 2024. Motion to approve the minutes made by Vice President Hernandez and seconded by Trustee Wilson. Motion unanimously carried.

**IV. WELCOME TO VISITORS:** At this time the Board of Education welcomes questions or comments relative to the items on tonight's agenda.

If you were to look up the words ambitious and dedication you would most likely see a picture of our Superintendent.

Last week our Superintendent received his doctorate in Education from Vanderbilt University with a 4.0 GPA.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Karakas on this accomplishment.

**V. CORRESPONDENCE REPORT– MS. JENNIE PADILLA, DISTRICT CLERK**

Good evening.

I received three emailed FOIL requests since last month. Mr. Ryan Brooks from the New York Freedom Foundation emailed one on 4/16/2024. Then on 4/19/2024 a request was received from Ms. Cristina Arroyo. Lastly, on 5/14/2024 Ms. Simona Simone also emailed a FOIL request.

Thank you and that concludes my correspondence report.

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

Good evening everyone. While it may be cool and damp outside this evening, we are in the month of May. A lot of events are taking place in the final weeks of school, and we are excited about all of them.

One of the wonderful events that takes place in Valley Stream 24 is our annual Sixth Grade Trip to honor our graduating students. This week, our students went to Ashokan and had an incredible time. Students were enjoying their Outdoor Education experience at the Ashokan Center in Olive Branch, New York. While learning about interesting science concepts, they created friendship connections with students from Robert Carbonaro and William L. Buck schools, especially as all our students will be moving together to the Central High School District next year.

Students in our school also learned about and celebrated Cinco De Mayo. This is a picture of students in Mrs. Campo & Mrs. Tappeto classes who received a hands-on lesson that they will not forget! While learning about Cinco De Mayo, the teachers also integrated a culinary experience, infused with math! Students learned how to make authentic guacamole while working in cooperative learning groups!

We also had Family Health Night organized by our amazing PTA at BAS this month! Families and students were treated to a healthy dinner and smoothies from a community store and from wellness trainers. Participants engaged in yoga, meditation, and learned about healthy bedtime routines. BAS's very own Ms. Barci conducted a painting breakout room. Families created and took home individualized paintings. It was a great night and a wonderful way to kick off Mother's Day weekend!

At RWC, and throughout our district, students engaged in creating Mother's Day projects to show appreciation for moms and mother figures. In line with our commitment to developing the whole child and supporting the arts, these creative and hands-on projects enable our students to discover and showcase their diverse talents. I hope all the mothers in our district community had a very Happy Mother's Day.

During a recent visit to BAS, several sixth-grade students provided me with feedback on the vegetarian meal option thus far. The students expressed how two of them now eat school lunch because of the option, and they appreciated having two choices daily instead of just one.

We are organizing a taste test for vegetarian dishes for next week. This will allow our Student Councils to provide input on which meal options should be featured more frequently.

The 6th grade Challenge students from Valley Stream School District#24 competed in The Olympics of the Visual Arts. Students conducted in-depth research to develop solutions to problems posed in the areas of illustration, painting, sculpture, drawing, and architecture for this day-long celebration of creativity. An essential component of the student projects is a portfolio documenting their research and analysis. The portfolio showcases the students' active involvement in historical research, critical thinking, decision-making, and innovation. Our students were praised for their original and inventive concepts, as well as their bold approach to challenges. Judges noted the impressive demonstration of brainstorming, along with the students' meticulous and coherent

research.

The students traveled to Saratoga Springs to share their projects and participate in a short-term creative problem-solving competition. The students competed at the middle school level against 7th and 8th graders from school districts representing every geographic region in New York State. The district's Art and Challenge departments have been working collaboratively to prepare the students to compete. Challenge teacher Risa Miller and art teachers Jessica Rosenthal, Nicole Barci, and Leighanne Jaronczyk guided the students during the event's creative problem-solving competition. Nathan Francisque's project, Building the Foundation of the Future placed 2nd in the illustration category. Madelyn Campbell's project placed 3rd in the sculpture category. AMAZING WORK!

This month we also had the honor of celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week. On behalf of the Board of Education and our district, I would like to thank our teachers for their incredible work each and every day. As I shared with them, every time I step into our schools and classrooms, I am deeply moved by the dedication they exhibit in ensuring our students receive nothing short of the best possible education. From the early morning preparations to the late hours spent grading papers and planning lessons, their tireless efforts do not go unnoticed. Thank you to all our teachers for allowing our students to reach their fullest potential.

This month we also had School Nurses Day on May 8th. We have the best nurses here at Valley Stream 24. The beauty of being a school nurse in an elementary school district is that you get to form close relationships with students and their families. Our nurses have done just that. On behalf of our Board of Education and District, I also want to extend our gratitude and appreciation for the hard-working nurses here at VS24.

As I shared last month and during my Coffee Hour, we have exciting initiatives for our proposed budget. With families in attendance tonight, I wanted to reiterate just a few of these initiatives.

With our new forward-focused vision of Vision 2030, we have created a budget that incorporates feedback from our staff, families, and community members. Next school year's budget not only maintains existing programs but enhances and adds on to them while remaining financially responsible.

The first initiative is that we plan to expand our Spanish program to grades 3 and 4. We currently offer it to grades 5 and 6. Research shows that students learn a

language best if they start learning it before the age of 10, and this will allow our students to do just that. We can start general language introduction in grade 3, so that by grade 6, we have even better and more extensive Spanish language acquisition.

We are also excited to announce that our proposed budget has our Challenge Program next year extended to grades 4 and 5, as we currently only have it in grade 6. This will provide added enrichment for all our students. This is the first time we will be offering Challenge in grades 4-6, while concurrently offering Enrichment for All for all students K-6.

With our parents and staff's input, after a survey that I sent out earlier this school year, we are also extending our summer program hours this summer to be 5 hours instead of 3! This will provide added intervention and enrichment for our students in the month of July as our students prepare for their new grade. A letter will be going home to families about this in the next few days.

Our teachers piloted a new science curriculum, and as such, we will be utilizing a brand-new curriculum for grades K-6 through which is called Into Science. Into Science is through HMH, which is the same company that provides our math curriculum, Go Math, as well as our Into Reading curriculum for grades 3-6. Utilizing Into Science will give teachers the same online platform they are used to utilizing, and teachers will be provided with training on the new program.

We also have two propositions that are noteworthy that are included in the budget. The first is something I think our entire community will be happy to see. I have heard this feedback from the first day I began as Superintendent 10 months ago, and that was about air conditioning. We are adding a proposition to utilize funds from our Capital Reserve for window-unit air conditioning for BAS and RWC. For rooms that have windows, aside from our gym and cafeteria, we would place air conditioning to ensure that our students and staff stay cool in our warmer months. This has been a huge ask by our entire community and will truly make an impact on student learning and staff teaching and supporting all of our students.

We are also adding a proposition to utilize our Capital Reserve for magnetic door hold open devices to enhance the safety of our classrooms. In the event of an emergency, it is critical that our doors lock. As such, the magnetic door hold-open devices automatically close and lock all doors should a building ever need to be in lockdown. This means teachers would not need to worry about finding a key, and we would not need to worry if a substitute teacher for the day didn't have access to

a key. It is an incredibly important device that will only enhance safety across our district. With this upgrade also comes a fire alarm upgrade as well.

We also plan to enhance our classrooms and redesign them soon too, in alignment with Vision 2030. Classroom redesigns would allow classroom furniture to be upgraded to be collaborative and innovative, similar to how students would learn to collaborate in the job market out there today.

We also have a proposed new 8:1:3 special education class in our budget, for a Kindergarten class. This will allow, at the very least for this upcoming year, to allow more of our students with disabilities to be in district which is a very important initiative.

The entire budget, including all the new initiatives, will allow us to remain under our tax level limit. The budget vote will take place on Tuesday, May 21st.

Listed on this slide are some important dates and events coming up for the remainder of this school year.

May 21- Exhibit Night

May 21- Budget Vote

May 22- Band and Orchestra Concert at WLB

May 23- Grade 5 Soccer at BAS Field (4:00 pm)

May 23- Coffee with the Superintendent at WLB (6:30 pm)

May 24- WLB Spring Chorus

May 27- Memorial Day (No School)

June 10 through 12- Sixth Grade Graduations

June 14- Half-Day for Students (11:30 am dismissal)

June 17- Eid al-Adha (No School)

June 19- Juneteenth (No School)

June 26- Last Day of School (Dismissal at 9:30 am)

July 2- First Day of Summer School Program

And that concludes the Superintendent's Report.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

Board Achievement Awards

Friends of Bridge Award Winners Recognition

SAAWA Art Award Winners Recognition

Scripps Spelling Bee Winner Recognition

Congratulations to all the Award recipients and to the Trustees on our Board of Education! Students, families, and staff, please stay around for refreshments at the conclusion of this meeting.

## **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:

A team of South High School student-researchers recently earned second place in Northwell Health's Medical Marvels Challenge. South's students went up against more than 150 of their peers who took part from across Long Island and New York City in this prestigious contest. This year's challenge tasked the student-researchers with thinking of innovative solutions to create more inclusive learning environments for students with disabilities, addressing issues related to transportation, accessibility, and curriculum. It's wonderful to see our students progress into their high school careers with advocacy at the forefront of their thought process.

Once again Valley Stream Central High School District is excited to support the transition from elementary school to junior high school. To ease your child's transition, we are offering an optional incoming Summer Bridge Program at our three junior high schools from 8:15 am – 11:00 am. During this two-week period, we will focus on team building, communication skills, project-based learning, and orientation activities. Attending this program will be an opportunity for you to reconnect with old friends and begin new friendships with other students who will be with you in September. There is no cost for this program. But please complete the registration form that you can find on the Valley Stream Central High School District's web page by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Please note there will be a formal orientation program at each school at the end of August as well.

**South Incoming Grade 7:** July 15-18 and July 22-25

**North Incoming Grade 7:** July 29-August 1 and August 5-8

**Memorial Incoming Grade 7:** August 12-25 and August 19-22

Thank you and that concludes my Valley Stream Central High School District Report.

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

With the recent passing of the NYS Budget, Valley Stream 24 has renewed its request with our local legislators for any additional funding to assist with improvements and enhancements to our district. We have been informed that our request has been heard and we are awaiting a response.

Thank you and that concludes my Legislation Report.

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

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

*V.P. Hernandez 1<sup>st</sup>, to move A1-A3, Trustee Maier 2<sup>nd</sup> 7,0,0*

**1. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the irrevocable letter of resignation of Daniel Buckley, Custodian, dated April 18, 2024, with the resignation effective close of business May 7, 2024.

**2. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Alexis Thomas, effective August 30, 2024, as an Elementary Speech Teacher holding a Certificate in Speech and Language Disabilities, for a 4-year probationary period. Their probation expiration will be August 29, 2028\*. Compensation will be at Step 1 MA in accordance with the current negotiated agreement between the Valley Stream Teachers' Association and the Board of Education.

\*To be eligible to receive tenure, the probationer must receive composite or overall APPR ratings of either effective or highly effective in at least three of the four



preceding years, and if the probationer receives an ineffective composite or overall APPR rating in the final year of the probationary period they will not be eligible for tenure at that time.

**3. 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

Reed Toscano (effective May 16, 2024)

Gina Milici (effective May 16, 2024)

Kayleen Montesdeoca (effective May 16, 2024)

**B. EDUCATION – TRUSTEE WILSON**

*Trustee Wilson 1<sup>st</sup>, to move B1-B2, V.P. Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup> 7,0,0*

**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 04/02/2024, 04/05/2024, 03/27/2024, 03/27/2024, 04/15/2024 and 04/04/2024 for the 2023/2024 School Year and 03/15/2024, 03/25/2024, 03/11/2024, 04/02/2024, 04/15/2024, 03/27/2024, 04/11/2024, 03/27/2024, 04/02/2024, 04/08/2024, 04/08/2024, 04/08/2024, 04/11/2024, 04/17/2024, 04/15/2024, 04/15/2024, 04/15/2024, and 04/19/2024 for the 2024/2025 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 03/14/2024, 02/12/2024, 02/15/2024, 03/20/2023 and 03/06/2024 for the 2023/2024 School Year and 04/04/2024, 04/17/2024, 02/08/2024, 04/17/2024, 03/14/2024, 04/08/2024, 04/08/2024, 03/26/2024, 03/11/2024, 03/27/2024, 02/12/2024, 02/12/2024, 02/12/2024, 02/27/2024, 03/06/2024, 03/21/2024, 03/21/2024, 03/12/2024, 03/12/2024, 03/14/2024,

03/13/2024 and 04/02/2024 for the 2024/2025 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 MAIER**

*Trustee Maier 1<sup>st</sup>, to move C1, Trustee Wheeler 2<sup>nd</sup> 7,0,0*

**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 March 2024.

**D. POLICY - TRUSTEE WHEELER**

*Trustee Wheeler 1<sup>st</sup>, to move D1, V.P. Hernandez 2<sup>nd</sup> 7,0,0*

**1. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education reviews and adopts the following revised policies:

- Policy 5119 - Unsafe School Transfer
- Policy 6112 - Emergency Closings
- Policy 6122 - Instructional materials

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

**X. NEW BUSINESS:**

*Trustee Maier 1<sup>st</sup>, to move X1-X10, Trustee Wheeler 2<sup>nd</sup> 7,0,0*

**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 Textbook Central for centralized textbook distribution services and textbook information and management services for the 2024-2025 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.

**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 Zaur Isaakov, PH.D., L-BCBA-D for consultant services for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, 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 Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf for tuition for the 2024-2025 school year, and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education 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 authorizes the District to enter into an agreement with North Merrick Union Free School District for tuition for the 2024-2025 school year, 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 authorizes the District to enter into an agreement with Zycron Industries for Medicaid consultant services 2024-2025 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 approves the Agreement between the District and West Hempstead UFSD for student health and welfare services for the 2023-2024 school year, and further authorizes the Board President and the Superintendent of Schools to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement.

**7. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education awards the transportation consultant contract in cooperation with the Nassau County Southwest Transportation Consortium, to JN Business Services, Pupil Transportation Consultant (Nancy Nunziata) for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 in the amount not to exceed \$2,500.00.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Board President to execute this transportation consultant contract on behalf of the Board of Education.

**8. BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education renews the contract for the provision of school food services to Whitson's Culinary Group at a price per meal of \$2.42 for Breakfast and \$3.70 per meal for Lunch for the 2024-2025 School Year in accordance with the terms and conditions of Bid #FS-23/24-A-01.

**9. BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education hereby denies the Dignity For All Students Act ("DASA") appeal submitted on behalf of the individual listed on Confidential Schedule "A," and authorizes the President of the Board of Education to direct correspondence memorializing such decision to such individual.

**10. BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the following Budget Transfers for the 2023-2024 School Year:



## **XI. DISCUSSION**

## **XII. AUDIENCE TO VISITORS**

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to re-enter Executive Session at 8:01 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 10:31 pm made by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Wilson. Motion unanimously carried.

Motion to adjourn the Business meeting at 10:31 pm by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Wilson. Motion unanimously carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jennie L. Padilla*  
Jennie L. Padilla  
District Clerk