

MINUTES

BOARD OF EDUCATION VALLEY STREAM SCHOOL DISTRICT 24

BUSINESS MEETING
January 28, 2026

WILLIAM L. BUCK SCHOOL
6:45 PM

Members Present: President Herrera, Vice President Wilson, Trustee Clark, Trustee Hernandez, Trustee Maier, and Trustee Matthew

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

Absent With Prior Notice: Vice President Wilson and Trustee Maier

I. Call to Order

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

Motion to exit Executive Session at 7:30 pm by Trustee Hernandez and seconded by Trustee Clark. Motion carried.

The Business Meeting was reconvened at 7:35 pm, at the William L. Buck School by President Herrera. Motion carried.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** December 17, 2025, January 10, 2026, and January 14, 2026. Motion to approve the Minutes was made by Trustee Hernandez and seconded Trustee Matthew. 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.

The weather has been cold and snowy, but it is so nice to see everyone in our audience tonight in our warm space.

I always start with our district motto, which is make the connection-innovating our future.

Our Scripps School Spelling Bees were held this month, with classroom competitions in grades 4–6 conducted in writing first. Each school proudly hosted its own school spelling bee, celebrating student achievement and academic excellence. Congratulations to all participants and school winners, who will advance to the qualifying round of the regional spelling bee.

A special thank you to our reading, math, and ENL teachers, as well as Dr. Keogh, our building principals, Mr. Onorato, and the technology team, for their outstanding support in making all of the spelling bees a success.

Paralympian Rohan Murphy visited all Valley Stream 24 schools this month, sharing his powerful story of perseverance, goal setting, and dedication. Our sixth-grade students were truly inspired by his message. Thank you to Ms. Serro, Mr. Boniello, and all staff for organizing this meaningful experience, and to the Board of Education for your continued investment in impactful opportunities for our students.

I had the pleasure of attending the Carbonaro School PTA Student Bake-Off this month. The RWC PTA also invited Legislator Nunez, who shared her inspiring journey from Carbonaro PTA member and Board trustee to the role she now plays as legislator.

During the bake-off, students created impressive desserts, and I joined Principal Iacono and Ms. Otton in selecting winners. We could not identify one winner, so we came up with three winning titles for the three desserts we sampled: The Triple Crown Award, Layers of Joy Award, and People's Choice Pastry Award.

Thank you to our PTAs for consistently creating such engaging, creative, and community building experiences for our students, staff, and families.

I had the opportunity to meet with our Student Council members at William L. Buck School to discuss the role of AI in learning and was truly impressed by their thoughtful understanding of both its strengths and limitations. Students emphasized the importance of fact-checking and responsible use, recommending that AI be integrated carefully and meaningfully, particularly in grades 4–6.

They shared how AI can support studying, research, and creative thinking, while strongly agreeing that it should never replace their own work. Their perspective aligns with our district's core beliefs around ethical, purposeful, and student-centered AI use.

I am meeting with RWC and BAS's student councils in February and am excited to get their input as well.

Our recent Board of Education Walkthrough was a powerful example of collaboration, community partnership, and shared vision in action. Alongside our Board, district leadership team, families, PTA members, and four local legislators, we proudly showcased how our district priorities and Vision 2030 are coming to life across all three schools.

Participants experienced firsthand our thoughtfully redesigned learning spaces, new sensory playground, water filtration systems, and collaborative classroom environments, while also gaining insight into critical building needs, including ADA compliance and renovation priorities at Brooklyn Avenue School.

This initiative aligns directly with our Board goal of strengthening community engagement and transparency. Our legislators were highly engaged, offering valuable feedback and deepening their understanding of

both our progress and future needs, reinforcing the importance of advocacy and partnership.

A special thank you to Mr. Brocher, Director of Facilities, for leading and coordinating all aspects of our facilities planning, improvements, and long-term vision, as well as to Dr. Mitchell, our Assistant Superintendent for Business, and our building principals and administrative team for their leadership and collaboration.

We extend sincere appreciation to Assemblywoman Solages, Senator Canzoneri Fitzpatrick, Assemblywoman Griffin, and Legislator Nunez, along with our PTAs and community members, for their continued partnership and support.

We are incredibly proud of our music department and students for representing Valley Stream 24 at the All-County Music Festival. Four students were selected this year, with all of them showcasing exceptional talent and dedication. Congratulations to our students, and sincere thanks to Mr. Garzetta and Mr. Shmorhun for their outstanding preparation and support.

William L. Buck School's STEAM Around the World event engaged K-2 students and families in hands-on exploration of global cultures and landmarks, including the Amazon Rainforest, Great Wall of China, Egyptian Pyramids, and more. It was a great day of learning about cultures while integrating STEAM activities. A job well done by the WLB team!

Here are upcoming important dates and events to take note of.

January 29- Sixth Grade Parent Zoom Meeting on Ashokan Trip (7:00 pm)

February 4- Parent Academy on Technology (6:30-8:00 pm)

February 5- RWC Superintendent's Coffee Hour at 6:00 pm

February 11- BOE Work Session at 6:45 pm

February 16-20- Winter Recess (No School)

February 25- BOE Business Meeting at 7:30 pm

February 28- Legislative Breakfast at Memorial (9:00 am)

March 11+ March 18- Half-Days for Parent-Teacher Conferences (Dismissal at 11:30 am)

What an outstanding job by our students and our music department. Let's give them one more round of applause. There are refreshments in the back so please stick around and enjoy it at the end of this meeting. On that upbeat note, that concludes my Superintendent's report tonight.

- **Student Award**

In exciting news, we are honored tonight to highlight one of our third grade students, in support by our art teacher Ms. Jarzonczyk, created art work and sent it to be considered for the New York State School Board Association's holiday card in 2026. In exciting news, the student was selected and only one gets selected each year. On behalf of the Board of Education and our district, we are so proud of our student representing Valley Stream 24 in this way.

- **Recognition of Life Saving Action**

Tonight, we also have the privilege of honoring two individuals who truly exemplify bravery, composure, and dedication to our students.

Valley Stream 24 is a district where every staff member and community member genuinely cares about children and is deeply committed to their wellbeing. Earlier this month, a scary incident occurred at William L. Buck School when one of our students began choking on a snack inside a classroom. At the same time, parents, students, and I were concluding our school spelling bee and taking photos.

In moments like these, calm, decisive action is essential. Classroom teacher Ms. O'Shea immediately recognized the emergency and sought assistance. Ms. Brenneis quickly responded to support. Principal DeBlasio left the Spelling Bee and arrived promptly, kept everyone calm, and ensured swift coordination. We are incredibly grateful to each of them and to the entire staff for their professionalism and care.

Two staff members acted with exceptional courage and urgency by

performing the Heimlich maneuver, successfully dislodging the snack and ensuring the students' safety. We are honored to recognize them this evening.

Tonight, we proudly honor Mr. Jonathan Mendez and Mr. Charles Brocher for their heroic actions. On behalf of the Board of Education and the entire Valley Stream 24 community, I invite them forward to receive certificates acknowledging their bravery and commitment to our students. Please join me in giving them a well deserved round of applause.

- **BAS Showcase**

We are also pleased to share a special showcase this month from Brooklyn Avenue School, integrating our redesigned learning spaces to highlight creative thinking.

At this time, I am happy to welcome Dr. Comis for this Brooklyn Avenue showcase.

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

B. LEGISLATION REPORT - TRUSTEE MAIER

The Legislative Breakfast will be held at Memorial Junior High School on February 28, 2026 at 9 am.

VIII. LIST OF ITEMS FOR ACTION:

A. PERSONNEL – VICE PRESIDENT WILSON

Trustee Hernandez 1st, to move items A1-A6, as listed Trustee Clark 2nd 4-0 motion carried.

- 1. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves the following Salary Changes, effective February 1, 2026:

Nicole Barci	Step 8.5	MA+30
Paige Brickman	Step 2	MA+30
Marissa Campo	Step 12	MA+15
Joanna Milanese	Step 4	MA+15
Traci Ritterband	Step 6	MA+60
Julia Sollin	Step 7	MA+30
Katarina Sloboda	Step 6	MA+30
Jessica Wolfsdorf	Step 8	MA+45

- 2. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Nisha Samuel, Permanent Substitute Teacher, effective January 6, 2026.
- 3. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves a leave of absence for medical purposes for Estelle Dempsey, School Nurse, effective on or around January 15, 2026, until on or around February 26, 2026.
- 4. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the resignation of Marie McGee, PT School Monitor, effective January 23, 2026.
- 5. BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints Valerie Anderson, as a School Monitor Part-Time, effective January 29, 2026, pending civil service clearance. 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:
Swera Zeeshan-Majid

B. EDUCATION – TRUSTEE MAIER

Trustee Hernandez 1st, to move items B1-B2, as listed Trustee Clark 2nd 4-0 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: 12/10/2025, 12/15/2025, 12/18/2025, 12/18/2025, 12/18/2025, 12/19/ 2025, 12/22/2025, 12/22/2025

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: 12/01/2025, 12/03/2025, 12/09/2025, 12/10/2025, 12/10/2025, 12/12/2025, 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/22/2025, 01/08/2026

C. FINANCE – TRUSTEE MATTHEW

Trustee Matthew 1st, to move item C1, as listed Trustee Hernandez 2nd 4-0 motion carried.

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

D. POLICY - TRUSTEE CLARK

I have nothing to report at this time.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS, IF ANY:

X. NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Hernandez 1st, to move items XI-X7, as listed Trustee Clark 2nd 4-0 motion carried.

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the recommendation from the Nassau County Cooperative of Superintendents for Buildings & Grounds, for the Blinds, Shades, Motorized Drapes Restoration of Stage Curtains Bid 2025-2026, exercising the second one-year period renewal option of three additional one-year periods in said bid to Master Carrier Window/Acme Window Treatments.
2. **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 2025-2026 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 authorizes the District to enter into an agreement with Herricks Union Free School District for special education services for a resident student 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 RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby authorizes the District to amend the agreement with Blue Sea Educational Consulting, Inc. 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.
5. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education adopts the School Calendar for the 2026-27 school year.
6. **WHEREAS**, equipment has been determined to be broken, surplus and/or obsolete, and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the School District to dispose of such broken, surplus and/or obsolete equipment, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that such broken, surplus and/or obsolete equipment will be disposed of in a manner that services the best interest of the Valley Stream Union Free School District Twenty-Four, and

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

District Barcode:
02412
201700008

Device:
i3 Touch TV
iMac Desktop

Building:
Tech Office
Tech Office

7. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby authorizes the following Budget Transfers for the 2025–2026 School Year.

BUDGET TRANSFER FOR BOARD APPROVAL			
DATE: January 28, 2026			
CODE	DESCRIPTION	FROM	TO
A2070.444	Staff Development	\$2,000.00	
A2250.140	CSE Chairperson Per Diem	\$2,000.00	
A2250.4	Special Ed Expenses		\$4,000.00
	Student Presentations/Interpreter/Mileage Reimbursement		
	TOTALS	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00

XI. **DISCUSSION**

XII. **AUDIENCE TO VISITORS**

XIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to re-enter Executive Session at 8:00 pm was made by Trustee Hernandez and seconded by Trustee Clark to discuss Personnel and Contractual Obligations. Motion carried.

Motion to exit Executive Session at 8:35 pm by Trustee Hernandez and seconded by Trustee Clark. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn the Business Meeting by Trustee Hernandez at 8:36 pm and seconded by Trustee Clark. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennie L. Padilla

Jennie L. Padilla

District Clerk