

MINUTES

BOARD OF EDUCATION VALLEY STREAM SCHOOL DISTRICT 24

BUSINESS MEETING
November 19, 2025

WILLIAM L. BUCK SCHOOL
6:45 PM

Members Present: President Herrera, Vice President Wilson, 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: N/A

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 Maier and seconded by Trustee Clark to discuss Personnel and Contractual Obligations. Motion unanimously carried.

Motion to exit Executive Session at 7:12 pm by Trustee Hernandez and seconded by Trustee Maier. Motion unanimously carried.

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

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** October 22, 2025 and November 5, 2025.
Motion to approve the Minutes was made by Trustee Hernandez and seconded by Vice president 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.

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

Good evening.

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

VI. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – DR. UNAL KARAKAS

Good evening. We may be in November and the temperatures may be dropping, but in Valley Stream 24, learning is only heating up.

This year, our district is focused on innovation, inspiration, and academic achievement. Our motto is Make the Connection – Innovating Our Future.

I was excited to hear one of our Student Council members recite our district motto in his speech today, a reminder that our motto is not just something we say but something our students are genuinely experiencing and internalizing.

Our Board of Education continues to work diligently behind the scenes. One of their recent actions was reviewing and revising our District Mission and Vision statements, which were adopted at the last meeting and will guide our upcoming Strategic Planning process. Our mission highlights rigorous and innovative education grounded in a strong, diverse community, and our vision emphasizes academic excellence, resilience, rigor, independence, and thoughtful, responsible citizenship.

Speaking of the strategic planning process, Our district has officially launched the process 2026–2030. We have begun surveying families and staff, and will soon invite students in grades 4–6 to share their voice as well.

In the coming days and weeks, focus group interviews and a strategic planning committee will review and analyze all data to help shape a draft plan. We look forward to sharing updates and the completed plan with our community.

If you have not yet done so, we kindly encourage you to complete the survey sent through ParentSquare by Dr. Keogh.

This month, as part of our continued work to enhance innovation in the district, our administrators and technology team engaged in training for the Abii Robot, an

instructional tutoring tool that supports small group and individualized learning in literacy and math.

We will pilot this work in Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2, and monitor its impact on student learning. Thank you to Mr. Onorato, our technology team, and our administrators for leading and supporting this important work.

Dr. Keogh and I are partnering with Digital Promise and the League of Innovative Schools to explore effective AI integration in elementary settings. This year, we are piloting Magic Student in Grade 6 to provide supportive feedback for students, while also continuing to assist teachers with planning through Magic School.

Thank you to Mr. Onorato for coordinating training in technology for our staff and to our technology team for supporting the rollout as we learn alongside innovative districts across the country.

In Mrs. Carter's sixth-grade departmentalized math classroom, math was truly in motion this month. Students worked collaboratively in small groups to tackle a hands-on challenge—ordering rational numbers on a full-length number line that stretched across classroom tables.

They discussed, debated, and carefully placed fractions, decimals, and negative numbers to find just the right location.

This experience turned mathematical thinking into a shared team effort, combining reasoning, cooperation, critical thinking, and movement to bring an abstract concept to life.

Student Council elections have been underway this week, and we are proud to see student voice, leadership, and civic engagement thriving here in VS24.

I had the honor of attending alongside our Board Trustees, as well as Assemblywoman Solages, Assemblywoman Griffin, and Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick who attended our elections as well.

Our students delivered thoughtful and confident speeches, demonstrating pride, leadership, and strong public speaking skills. Every student who participated represented our district and their school community with excellence, and we are extremely proud of them.

Here are some additional pictures of the elections in our district.
Again, thank you to our local legislators, our Board of Education, our staff, and

our families for being present for these meaningful student council elections.

This evening, it is my honor to recognize and congratulate Trustee Nunez on a remarkable and well-deserved achievement.

Trustee Nunez has been an extraordinary advocate for the children and families of Valley Stream District 24. She brings passion, thoughtful insight, and a commitment to ensuring that every decision made by our Board of Education reflects what is best for students. Her voice is always clear, courageous, and compassionate—rooted in a deep belief in opportunity and equity for every child.

Trustee Nunez serves with distinction on the Policy Committee, the DEI Committee, and the Legislation Committee. These committees shape the direction and core values of our district, and she has approached each one with purpose, diligence, and heart. Her leadership, in collaboration with our Board of Education, has enriched our conversations, strengthened our policies, and helped move our district forward in meaningful ways.

Tonight, we celebrate not only her contributions to District 24, but also her recent election as Legislator—who will now represent District 14 in the Nassau County Legislature. This is an extraordinary achievement. It is a proud moment for District 24 to have one of our trustees earn this honor, and we could not be more thrilled for her.

Trustee Nunez, your commitment to advocacy, to children, and to community is inspiring. We are grateful for all you bring to our district and so proud to congratulate you on this outstanding accomplishment. We look forward to seeing the positive impact your leadership will continue to make for the families and communities you serve.

On behalf of the Board of Education and our District, Congratulations Trustee Nunez!

President Herrera would also like to say a few words.

President Herrera: I will be quick I promise. Trustee Nunez please allow me to echo Dr. Karakas's statements. We just want you to know how proud we are of you sincerely. You have made a tremendous impact on District 24. We are just certain you will continue to be impactful in your new role. We wish you the best of luck. You have our full support.

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

November 20- Coffee Hour with the Superintendent at 10:00 am
(Zoom link to be shared on ParentSquare)
November 24- Turkey Trot at WLB (10:00 am)
November 24- Thanksgiving Parade at RWC (2:15 pm)
November 26- Early Dismissal Drill at 2:30 pm
November 27+28- Thanksgiving Recess (No School)
December 3- BOE Work Session at 6:45 pm
December 4- Coffee Hour with the Superintendent at WLB (6:00 pm)
December 9- RWC Winter Concert (7:00 pm)
December 10- BAS Winter Concert (7:00 pm)
December 17- BOE Business Meeting at 7:30 pm
December 18- WLB Winter Concert (7:00 pm)

The year has been off to a great start. We look forward to continued excellence and innovation in the weeks to come!

- Innovation Report with Library Media Specialists and Student Representatives

Innovation is embedded in our district motto, and tonight we are excited to highlight how this commitment is coming to life in our schools. I would like to welcome Dr. Keogh, Mr. DeBlasio, our Library Media Specialists, and our Student Representatives to share examples of innovative work that is helping our students think critically, solve problems, and engage in meaningful learning.

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

Trustee Maier:

At our last meeting the Life Skills Students gave the Board of Education appreciation surfboard. The students had gone surfboarding for the first time ever. They congratulated us with a surfboard and showed us a video of them doing course accessibility and all the other great stuff that they have done so far. I believe on Friday and Saturday South High School has a play going on if you want to check the website you can find the times. That concludes my report.

B. LEGISLATION REPORT - TRUSTEE NUÑEZ

Thank you, Madam President. Just a reminder to the public that February 28, 2026 at Memorial High School will be the Legislative Breakfast. More details will circulate as we approach that date. We are putting it on the calendar for the public. All are welcome to attend, and it is a great opportunity for you to meet your local representatives. Thank you. That concludes my report.

VIII. LIST OF ITEMS FOR ACTION:

A. PERSONNEL – VICE PRESIDENT WILSON

V.P. Wilson 1^s, to move items A1-A5, as listed Trustee Hernandez 2nd 7-0 motion unanimously carried.

1. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby appoints the following staff to teach the Learning Lab Program for ELA and/or MATH for the 2025-2026 school year. Compensation is in accordance with the appropriate hourly rate of pay as per the current Valley Stream Teachers' Association contract:

BROOKLYN AVENUE SCHOOL:

Hannah Johnston
Brooke Martins
Anastasia Cutolo
Susan Blaes
Kaitlyn Gillespie
Jennifer Joyce
Kara Kinkela
Carol Wright

Jessica Witkiewicz (Substitute)
Vincent Milano (Substitute)

ROBERT W. CARBONARO SCHOOL:

Jennifer Mechetti
Chrissy Sciglibaglio
Paige Brickman
Chelsea Cittadino
Kayla Gonzalves
Matthew Roth
James Fischman
Shannon Weber

WILLIAM L. BUCK SCHOOL:

Adianna Ulino
Donna Ruggiero
Joseph Schumpf
Grace Riordan
Kristen Seiger (Substitute)
Ashley Shapiro (Substitute)

2. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approves to appoint Jessica Witkiewicz, holding Certificates in Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 2) and Childhood Education (Grades 1-6), as a Temporary Substitute which may turn into a Leave Replacement for Joanna Gallo, to be effective on or around November 26, 2025. The duration of this appointment will extend until the return of Joanna Gallo, but no later than June 26, 2026, or earlier at the discretion of the Board of Education. Compensation will be at the daily substitute rate of pay until Mrs. Gallo has exhausted all her allowable time and then will be at Step 1 MA, consistent with the provisions outlined in the Valley Stream Teachers Association (VSTA) Contract.

3. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves an extension of the leave of absence for medical purposes for Jennifer Albahae, Special Education Teacher, through no later than January 5, 2026.

4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approves to appoint Nisha Samuel, holding a Certificate in Students with Disabilities (Grades 1-6), as a Temporary Substitute which may turn into a Leave Replacement for Jennifer Albahae, to be effective

October 17, 2025. The duration of this appointment will extend until the return of Jennifer Albahae, but no later than June 26, 2026, or earlier at the discretion of the Board of Education. Compensation will be at the daily substitute rate of pay until Mrs. Albahae has exhausted all her allowable time and then will be at Step 1 MA consistent with the provisions outlined in the Valley Stream Teachers Association (VSTA) Contract.

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

District

Drama(B-Club) Joanna Walbrecht

B. EDUCATION – TRUSTEE NUÑEZ

Trustee Nunez I^s, to move item B1 & B2, as listed V.P. Wilson 2nd 7-0 motion unanimously carried.

1. **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:

10/16/2025

10/23/2025

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: 10/16/25 10/17/25 10/21/25 10/22/25 10/23/25 10/27/25 10/30/25 11/05/
25 11/13/25 11/13/25

C. FINANCE – TRUSTEE MATTHEW

Trustee Matthew I^s, to move item C1 & C2, as listed Trustee Clark 2nd 7-0 motion unanimously 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 September 2025 and the Claims Auditor's Report for October 2025.
2. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the Budget Calendar for the 2025-2026 School year.

D. POLICY - TRUSTEE CLARK

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

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS, IF ANY:

X. NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Hernandez I^s, to move item X1-X7, as listed V.P. Wilson 2nd 7-0 motion unanimously carried.

1. **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 Services for Americal Sign Language Interpretation 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.
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 Kids First Evaluation & Advocacy Center, Inc., 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 awards the Emergency Transportation Contract beginning on October 23, 2025, through November 22, 2025, to Sunbright Transportation, LLC, and authorizes the Board of Education President and Superintendent of Schools to execute the contract, as set forth in the November 19, 2025, BOE Business Meeting Schedule below:

<u>Bus Company</u>	<u>School</u>	<u># of</u>
<u>Students</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	
Sunbright Transportation LLC.	William L	
Buck 1	\$4,500.00	

4. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby awards the Transportation Contract beginning on November 24, 2025, through June 30, 2026, to Stork Bussing, and authorizes the Board of Education President and Superintendent of Schools to execute the contract, as set forth in the Schedule below:

Anticipated VS24 Cost Schedule for STORK BUSSING SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026 CONTRACT

<u>School</u>	<u>Vehicle Cost Per Month</u>	<u>Matron Cost Per</u>
<u>Month</u>	<u>Monthly Cost</u>	<u>Yearly Cost</u>
William L		
Buck	\$8,400.00	\$3,400.00
	\$82,600.00	\$11,800.00

5. **BE IT RESOLVED**, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education hereby enters into an agreement with a parent to transport one student to the Crescent School, from November 20, 2025 to June 25, 2026 at a reimbursement rate of \$0.70 per mile, and further authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate the said agreement.

VS24 Anticipated Cost Schedule for Parent/Guardian Mileage Reimbursement CONTRACT

Parent/Guardian	School	#of Students	Cost Per
Day	Anticipated Yearly Cost		
Parent	Crescent School	1	\$.70 x 27.20
miles/day	\$19.04 per day x		
		= \$19.04 per day	126
days=	\$2,399.04		

6. **BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Education hereby approves the attendance of the Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education Trustees to attend the NSBA Advocacy Institute in Washington, DC held from February 1, 2026 through February 3, 2026, and hereby authorizes reimbursement for all expenses as authorized by District Policy 3700.

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.

XI. DISCUSSION

- Public Hearing of District Safety Plan

XII. AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the Business Meeting by Trustee Maier at 7:55 pm and seconded by Trustee Clark. Motion unanimously carried.

The Business Meeting reconvened at 7:58 pm for the purpose of public comment on the District Wide Safety Plan by Trustee Maier and seconded by Trustee Clark. Motion unanimously carried. There were no comments from the Public.

Motion to adjourn the Business Meeting by Trustee Maier at 7:58 pm and seconded by Vice President Wilson. Motion unanimously carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennie L. Padilla
Jennie L. Padilla
District Clerk