



It's Elementary

VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN

WINTER 2016

The Future Looks Brighter

COMMUNITY APPROVES \$32 MILLION BOND

The future looks even brighter for students and community residents. On Tuesday, Dec. 8, voters overwhelmingly approved the \$32 million capital project bond referendum. The Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools Constance D. Evelyn and the administration wish to thank all community residents for their continued support and vote of confidence.

“As a result of the approved bond, we will be able to address our buildings’ needs in the most cost-efficient way possible and improve the overall quality of education we provide our children,” said Board of Education President Toni Pomerantz. “This is a new beginning for our school district and our community.”

For decades, the district supported regular maintenance of its schools, which are more than 60 years old, with Wheeler Avenue School being more than 90 years old. The approved bond will enable the district to perform major repairs and renovations, too costly to include in the annual budget, that will bring the district up to modern standards. It will significantly enhance the district’s ability to provide a healthy and secure environment, support a more rigorous curriculum and protect the community’s investment in its facilities.

“Our students will be the beneficiaries of an improved learning environment,

which clearly demonstrates that they live in a community that cares about their education and future success,” said Evelyn. “Families moving into our school district will know they are moving into a community committed to providing a quality education for all children.”

Districtwide improvements will be made in the areas of health and safety, bathroom renovations (including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act), security upgrades, kitchen and cafeteria renovations, playground improvements, asphalt and concrete replacement, masonry reconstruction, roof replacements, window glazing replacements, HVAC upgrades, classroom

renovations, fire alarm system replacements and the installation of emergency generators.

The work will be executed in several phases and will be scheduled to avoid disruption to students during the normal school day. The State Education Department must approve all final plans prior to the start of work. Currently, the SED has a 46-week delay in approving plans involving mechanical, electrical and plumbing components. It is estimated that once the work is started, the projects at all buildings will be completed within 48 months. For more details about the scope of work, please visit the district’s website at www.valleystream13.com.

Vinny Pandit Elected to Serve on Board of Education



During a special district election held on Tuesday, Dec. 8, residents voted to elect Vinny Pandit to serve as a Board of Education Trustee. Mr. Pandit will fill the seat and assume the responsibilities of former Board of Education Trustee Denise Diodato, who resigned for the purpose of relocation.

Mr. Pandit, along with his wife of 20 years, Sangeeta, has lived in the district for 15 years. They have three children, two of whom attend North High School and one who attends Howell Road School. Mr. Pandit’s term of office will expire on June 30, 2018.

A Message From Your SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dear Families,

We are grateful for a community that supports our continuous improvement efforts to enhance the quality of education for our students and families. We have enjoyed a productive first half of this year, and our students, educators and broader school community are enthusiastically engaged in many of the initiatives that we'd hoped to successfully implement. The Board and I have also worked diligently to improve the principles that guide our work, including our district beliefs, vision and mission statements that reflect the high expectations we foster toward achieving excellence in Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen. Below, I have highlighted some of our successful steps in meeting the priorities identified by all critical stakeholders.

- **Passage of our Bond Referendum for \$32M to address the health, safety and security needs of our district's**

four buildings.

- **All VS Thirteen Schools have fully implemented Superkids, a new English Language Arts curriculum used in grades K-2. These additional resources further support aligning our instructional practices with the Common Core Learning Standards and promote extended opportunities for digital resources.**
 - **All VS Thirteen Schools have fully implemented Math in Focus K-2, a Common Core aligned math program that helps our students develop multiple strategies to understand mathematical concepts and problem-solve.**
 - **Leadership and Innovation Zones – This job-embedded structure for professional development was introduced at the beginning of the school year. This year's focus is to grow awareness of how teachers can collaborate to identify and develop professional development**
- that is aligned with their professional needs and success targets for our district.**
- **Identified a plan to reorganize the technology department that allows for the hiring of a technology director using the current level(s) of financial resources.**
 - **Engaged staff in an audit to review our instructional delivery models for students receiving Special Education and Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in partnership with Schools of Promise, Syracuse University; next steps include development of a districtwide Inclusive Education Committee.**
 - **Created a new instructional coach position that was filled by one of our master teachers, Laurie Salvatore to support job-embedded professional development for our K-2 educators; the principals of instructional coaching are grounded in research on effective**



professional development.

- **Rolled out Chromebooks in two fourth grade classrooms at Howell and Willow Road Elementary Schools, and two fifth grade classrooms at James A. Dever and Wheeler Avenue Elementary Schools.**

On a personal note, the transition to Valley Stream for me and my family has been a tremendous gift. I feel fortunate to be working with such talented and caring individuals who are dedicated to fully preparing our children for their futures.

Sincerely,
Constance D. Evelyn
Superintendent of Schools

VALLEY STREAM DISTRICT 13 EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC. Donates Electronic Sign

Members of the Valley Stream District 13 Educational Foundation, Board of Education and administration gathered in front of the district's administration office to celebrate the district's new electronic sign with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony. The sign and its installation was a gift to the district from the Educational Foundation at no cost to taxpayers and will be used to provide the community with information about the school district.

Danielle Vitulli, President of the Educational Foundation and First-Grade Teacher at Howell Road School, and Toni Pomerantz, President of the

Board of Education, were joined by Board of Education Trustee William P. Stris, Superintendent Constance D. Evelyn and members of the Educational Foundation at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"I am thrilled that our wish to donate an electronic informational sign to the Board of Education has been realized," said Vitulli. "Now the district's administration office can have its own identity separate from the James A. Dever School."

The donation was made possible through the fundraising efforts of the Educational Foundation, supported by the generosity of the community and the teacher liaisons from

each of the four schools. The teacher liaisons are Eileen Cooke, Howell Road School; Mary Danna, Willow Road School; Megan Ross, James A. Dever School; and Pamela Gollin, Wheeler Avenue School. Fundraising activities included two Family Fun Nights, as well as an annual golf outing and awards dinner.

"We are extremely grateful to the Educational Foundation for all of their efforts on behalf of our children," said Pomerantz. "Their tireless efforts to improve our schools are evident in their donation of this electronic sign."



The Educational Foundation membership drive is currently underway. All parents and community residents are invited to join. Annual membership is \$5 per person, while a lifetime membership is \$100 per person. The Educational Foundation Fourth Annual Golf Outing and Awards Dinner is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, June 28, 2016. For more information about the Educational Foundation, visit the district's website at www.valleystream13.com.

Focus on STEM and Student Success

The district has enhanced its curriculum this school year to include an increased focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) by introducing and expanding several instructional initiatives.

Math in Focus

This program, which has been implemented in kindergarten through second grade, uses the Singapore Math methodology. Through textbooks, workbooks and online resources, instruction is centered on solving problems using multiple models to help students visualize and better understand the mathematical concepts. Visualization strategies, including model drawing, allow students to master more complex math problems. The program also enhances instruction for mental math, number sense and computation.

Superkids Reading Program

Also implemented in kindergarten through second grade, Superkids is a comprehensive approach to English Language Arts that balances the five essential elements of reading: phonemic awareness and phonics, vocabulary, spelling, comprehension and writing. The program, which integrates reading, writing, spelling and grammar, provides rigor while cultivating a love of reading as an essential part of becoming a lifelong learner.

Laurie Salvatore, a gifted teacher with 19 years of classroom experience in the district, will serve as an instructional coach, working primarily with kindergarten through second-grade teachers to promote greater student success within these programs.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Projects

Starting in the spring, students in grades four through six will work with materials from the Museum of Science in Boston to build their

problem-solving, teamwork, communication and creative thinking skills while solving complex engineering design challenges. Fourth-graders will work on a project titled "Go Green: Engineering Recycled Racers" as a way to foster engineering and technological literacy. Fifth-graders will engage in studying and creating a water filtration system using a program titled "Water, Water Everywhere." Grade six students will expand their STEM knowledge as they study the physics of roller coasters and design them this spring.

Expanding Real-World Learning Experiences

The district is expanding its partnerships to include working with the Crossroads Farm in Malverne and the Long Island Children's Museum. These partnerships will offer unique learning opportunities to extend the curriculum beyond the classroom.

Crossroads Farm Partnership

A learning partnership with Crossroads Farm, the last working farm in Nassau County, will include a farm-based curriculum with lessons connected to the history and importance of small farms and local organic foods, plants, bees and soil regeneration.

As part of the curriculum,

class trips, including Family Day, will allow students to experience every aspect of the farm's operation, from the greenhouse to the fields. Fourth grade teachers will be trained to work with students and parents to maximize their learning experience when they visit the farm on two separate occasions. Visits to the

Nassau County Museum of Art will also be part of this expanded learning curriculum.

Long Island Children's Museum (LICM)

The partnership with the Long Island Children's Museum will increase the STEM initiatives in third grade. The school-

museum teaching model will expand the district's science education program beyond the classroom using the resources of the LICM. Instruction will incorporate LICM exhibits to give students a greater understanding of the curriculum being taught in the classroom.

Opportunities for Students to Compete

Lego Robotics Competition

Adelphi University will be hosting the fourth annual Lego Robotics Competition in May 2016. Sixth-grade students have registered to participate in this intellectually stimulating and challenging program. The students will design, construct and program robots using the Lego Robotics kit. The competition requires students to apply foundational math, science and engineering concepts to solve real-world problems and to devise practical solutions in a project-based learning context.

Odyssey of the Mind

Odyssey of the Mind teaches students to learn creative problem-solving methods while having fun in the process. This school year, our fourth, fifth and sixth grade students have been introduced to solving long-term and spontaneous problems using their STEM skills. The district is hopeful that these problem-solving skills will prepare our students to enter the Odyssey of the Mind competition during the 2016-2017 school year.

Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen

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In the Spirit of Giving Back to the Community

In the weeks leading up to the holiday break, students were immersed in activities that focused on giving back to the community. They decorated mitten trees with several hundred mittens that were donated to local churches to give to those less fortunate. Sing-a-longs and traveling concerts to the Franklin Square Senior Center allowed them to share their holiday cheer and brought smiles to all in attendance. Students also used their STEM skills and creativity to make beautifully decorated gingerbread houses for their families.



Wheeler Avenue School



Willow Road School



Howell Road School



James A. Dever School

New Student Registration

New residents to Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen who wish to register school-age children may do so by obtaining a registration packet from their school or by calling the Central Registration Office at 516-872-5674. Upon completion of the packet, an appointment must be made with the residency officer, Neville Roberts, at 516-872-5677, for review before the student will be able to attend school. Students entering the sixth grade must show proof of varicella vaccine or proof of disease signed and stamped by a doctor.

Kindergarten Registration

Residents of Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen whose children will turn 5 years old by Dec. 1, 2016 are encouraged to register now for kindergarten. Early registration allows children to participate in many activities related to getting ready for school. Registration information is available on the district's website at www.valleystream13.com/district/studentregistration or by contacting the district registrar at 516-872-5674.

Transportation Request Deadline – April 1

Pupils attending private and parochial schools out of the district are eligible for transportation if the distance to the school is not more than fifteen (15) miles. New York State law requires transportation requests for the following September be filed on or before April 1 with the local school district. Applications can be obtained by calling the district's business office at 516-568-6110.

Are You Registered to Vote?

This year's school budget vote and Board of Education Trustee election will take place on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at each of the district's elementary schools. To be eligible to vote, a person must be a United States citizen, at least 18 years old, a resident of the school district for at least 30 days and registered. If you are not yet registered to vote, the district encourages you to register. Unregistered residents who meet the above criteria can register on any day school is open between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the district office located at James A. Dever Elementary School.

District Policy on Sex Offenders

Board of Education Policy 5450.1 on sex offenders indicates the following: "This policy shall be disseminated at least once a year to all district residents." To view the policy in its entirety, visit the district's website at www.valleystream13.com.

Tax Code Information – 655

The New York State Tax Code Number for the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen is 655. This code number should be entered in the appropriate box on your state income tax return. It is used in the apportionment of state aid.



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