Fall 2024

It's Elementary

VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN

Welcome to the 2024-2025 School Year!

James A. Dever Elementary School

Wheeler Avenue Elementary School

Howell Road Elementary School

Willow Road Elementary School

What's New?

The Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen is proud to announce its new theme and goals for the 2024-2025 school year.

For 2024-2025, we are committed to Growing Together as a school community. We want all students to feel **connected** to themselves and peers, **engaged** in their learning, and **ready** to take on new challenges. To this end we have established overarching goals to focus on. Our main goal is to ensure that our instructional programs help students achieve their potential, are aligned to New York State Standards, and connect to student interests so that our students are ready for their secondary experience.

Goal 1: Student Engagement

Provide programs and learning experiences for students to maximize and actualize their potential. Curriculum is aligned to New York State standards, and assessments guide the development of responsive instruction. Learning experiences are designed to capture high levels of engagement, connect to student interests, and build readiness for secondary pathways. Students develop academic skills and habits to aid them in continuous learning as well as emotional awareness to guide their social experiences.

Goal 2: Future Readiness

Provide staff with professional development that enables them to offer innovative classroom learning experiences where students think and design critically and creatively. Staff will implement their professional learning to design enriching experiences for students. Students will develop problem-solving skills and learn to become global citizens.

Goal 3: Community

Maintain proactive communication with the community to share information regarding district initiatives, school events, and achievements through print and electronic means. Celebrate and build cultural competence through collaboration with stakeholders. Engage school community members in school culture and connectedness.

Goal 4: Safe Schools

Prioritize the improvement of the safety and security of our schools through implementation of projects funded by the voter-approved $700,000 capital reserve expenditure.

Goal 5: Budget

Assess the district's financial health through the budget process to include enrollment considerations, class size, replenishment of reserves, and possible impacts of changes to the New York State Foundation Aid formula, to maintain high-quality programming that the Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen community expects.

Goal 6: Facilities

Prepare short- and long-range facilities improvement plans based on recommendations of the district architect, administration, and the Board of Education. Include community input, considerations of the broader economic health of the district and community, and cost-benefit analysis.

Welcoming Our New Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

The district is excited to introduce Dr. Lorraine Radice as our new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. With extensive experience working in education, Dr. Radice brings a wealth of knowledge to her new role at the Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen.

With a focus on enhancing educational programs, Dr. Radice's educational journey is marked by a diverse background. She began her career as an educator as a grade 6 teacher, literacy specialist, and English as a new Language teacher. Her work in specialized programs has supported literacy and language acquisition for students across all grade levels.

Previously, Dr. Radice served as the PreK-12 Director of Literacy and Director of Elementary Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at Long Beach Public Schools. Her leadership resulted in significant advancements in curriculum development and professional learning. She created and implemented literacy and content-area curricula, monitored student engagement, and fostered a vibrant culture of learning within schools.

Dr. Radice is also an esteemed educator at Hofstra University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in childhood education and literacy studies. She is an award-winning author, and contributed her research and insights to many publications that focus on education. Her commitment to literacy training extends beyond the schools — she participates in local, state, and national professional learning communities, where she shares her research and fieldwork. With her innovative approach and dedication to enhancing literacy and curriculum, Dr. Radice makes an exceptional addition to our team and will undoubtedly have a positive impact on our district.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to join the Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen. It's been a pleasure to connect with students, families, teachers, administrators, and community members over the past few months. I look forward to working with the team to provide engaging opportunities for students and to support all members of our school community."
— Dr. Lorraine Radice

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Supporting Play and Stimulating Minds

New Facilities Improvements at Howell Road and Wheeler Avenue

The New York State Education Department emphasizes the importance of play; it's a key part of a child's development and learning in early childhood. With this in mind, improvements have been made to the playgrounds at Howell Road and Wheeler Avenue elementary schools. The new additions include swings at Howell Road, which were installed above new safety surfacing.

At Wheeler Avenue, a giant Adirondack chair has been added to the playground, creating a conversation piece that students can use to sit on and chat, and which doubles as a piece of climbing equipment. Designed by American Recreational Products, the chair is customized to represent the school, featuring Wheeler Avenue's colors and engravings of the school name and logo.

Play panels were also installed at Wheeler Avenue, and they were ready for student use in the second week of school. The play panels are educational pieces featuring three panels with different activities, like telling time and reading the alphabet in braille. These new playground features are sure to keep students engaged and stimulate their minds during playtime.

Research shows that playtime contributes to a child's cognitive development, honing skills like critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication. Play allows children to explore their sense of creativity, discover new things, and have fun. It helps them learn how to work through social and emotional situations and form friendships. The district is committed to supporting play for our youngest learners, helping them grow up healthy. Through play, children explore the world around them and gain insights into everyday life.