Spring 2023

It's Elementary

VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN

Assessment as a Tool for Student Growth and Success in Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen

Assessment refers to the variety of methods and tools educators use to evaluate, measure and document students' academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition and educational needs. Assessments are designed to pinpoint specific elements of learning—such as the level of existing knowledge a student has about a certain topic—and uncover areas in need of improvement.

In Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen, monitoring student growth using assessments is a key tool we apply in providing the highest quality instruction. When teachers administer an assessment, they are observing a child to gather information about what the student knows and what they are capable of doing. Information generated by assessments, when used strategically, enhances teaching and creates a more vibrant, engaging learning environment for students.

Individual student information, as well as specific class and cohort data coming from assessments, supports our educators' ability to individualize learning activities for students across differing areas of curriculum and social-emotional development. Assessment data helps identify student weaknesses and strengths, providing a roadmap for the individualization of academic support for each student. Assessment results are also used to bolster parents' and guardians' awareness of their child's educational growth and give families insight into how teachers are using this information to help children achieve maximum growth. Armed with this information, parents and guardians can better understand their children as learners and will have tools they can use to help advance their children's academic journeys through Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen and beyond.

More Students to Benefit From the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen Prekindergarten Program

At Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen, we value a safe, positive environment that encourages consistent growth. Our prekindergarten program is truly emblematic of this philosophy.

Our prekindergarten program is thriving and growing. During the 2021-2022 school year, the district offered four classes comprising a total of 76 students. This year, we have seven classes comprising 121 students. Our prekindergarten educators provide experiences that deliver academic lessons and cognitive development practices to cultivate a positive foundation for our budding scholars' educational journeys. Through a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that promotes inquiry, exploration and discovery as the foundation of all learning, students feel supported during their earliest days in the district.

With an innate understanding of how young children's abilities progress, our educators tap into our creative curriculum in ways that individualize instruction. Daily lessons focus on language and literacy skills as well as essential mathematical skills such as problem-solving, reasoning, communicating, and making connections. Instruction is built upon child development techniques—play, art and music—combined with math and literacy lessons.

Benefits of a strong prekindergarten program

- Provides a safe environment where children can develop language, cognitive and motor skills
- Nurtures creativity
- Develops individuality and independence among our youngest scholars

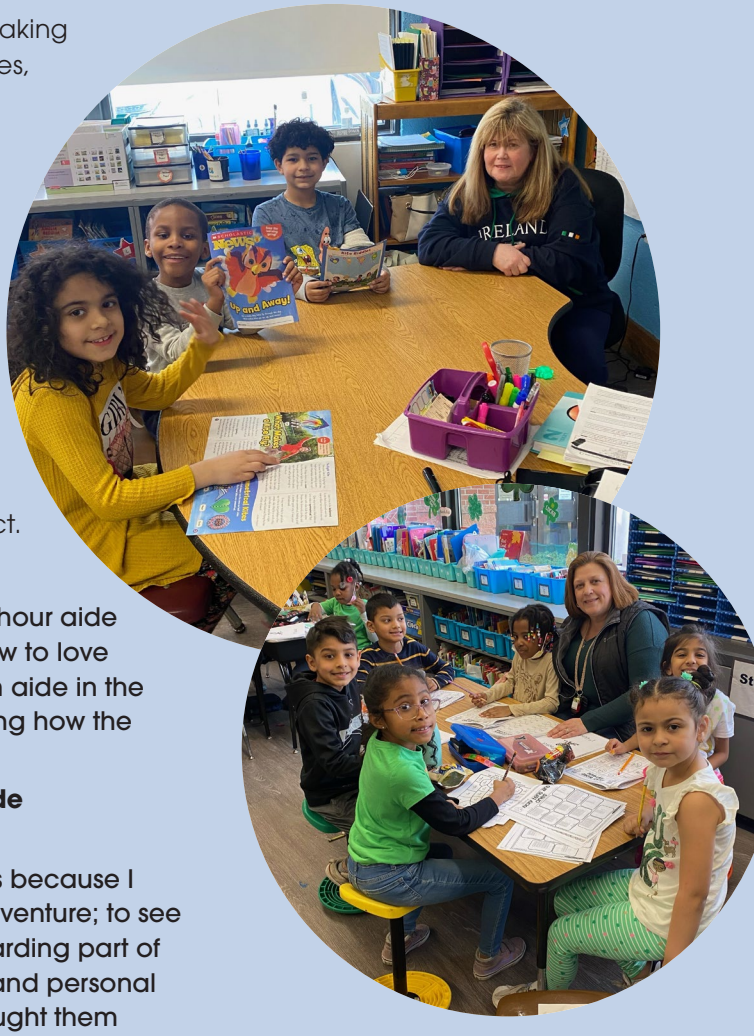
The benefits are countless, as articulated by these parents whose children are enrolled in the district's prekindergarten program:

> Since our son has started the prekindergarten program at Howell Road Elementary School, he has been able to articulate his thoughts and ideas, concentrate independently on his tasks and projects, and has begun to sound out words and count to 100.
>
> **— Mr. and Ms. Ferrente, parents of a Howell Road Elementary School student**

> Since my son started the Valley Stream Thirteen's prekindergarten program, he's become very independent and has a more structured day. I am very pleased with the curriculum.
>
> **— Ms. Ramnarain, parent of a James A. Dever Elementary School student**

Aides Provide Vital Support to the Learning Environment in Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen

Aides in Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen are essential partners in making our schools run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Classroom aides, noon-hour aides, noon-hour supervisors, media aides, building aides and 1:1 aides—all these individuals are vital in ensuring the effectiveness of learning in our schools. Students connect with our school support staff throughout the school day—they are vital in creating a safe and supportive learning environment in the classroom, at recess, and within our facilities. They act as informal mentors or coaches and work with our mental health professionals to address students' social and emotional needs. Aides continuously strive to provide students with positive interactions to encourage them to learn and grow. Our aides are quiet guardians of our students' well-being, and are deserving of our gratitude and acknowledgement for the important role they play in our district.



> "I started working in the district 21 years ago as a noon-hour aide to earn a couple of extra dollars. As time went on, I grew to love the children more and more and became a classroom aide in the small special classes. My favorite part of the job is seeing how the children grow from September to June!
>
> **— Carol Lucente, Willow Road Elementary School aide**

> "The reason why I chose to become a classroom aide is because I truly enjoy working with children. Each day is a new adventure; to see the world through their eyes is awesome. The most rewarding part of my job is to witness each individual child's academic and personal growth throughout the year. Each day I hope I have taught them something because I certainly learn so much from them.
>
> **— Dawn Moreno, Willow Road Elementary School aide**

Classroom aides: assist teachers in the classroom

Noon-hour aides: help monitor students eating in the cafeteria, facilitate clean-up, provide support for social skills and guide conflict resolution

Noon-hour supervisors: organize lunch and recess, guide the other aides, interact with children to resolve conflicts, and communicate with teachers, parents, and building principals

Media aides: ensure technology in our classrooms is properly operating and support the innovation labs

Building aides: help in the Main Office and the nurse's office with monitoring attendance and communication with parents

1:1 aides: assist students one-on-one and in small groups

Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen
585 North Corona Avenue
Valley Stream, New York 11580-2099
516-568-6100 • www.valleystream13.com

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Valley Stream, NY
Permit No. 309

Board of Education
Jennifer Oliveri, President
Gerardo Cavaliere, Vice President
Anthony Bonelli, Trustee
Vincent Caposio, Trustee
Frank Chiachiere, Ph.D., Trustee
Patricia Farrell, Trustee
Milagros Vicente, Trustee

Dr. Judith A. LaRocca, Superintendent of Schools
Gerard Antoine, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Human Resources
Fabayo McIntosh, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Tuning in: Music in Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen

For more than 30 years, March has been officially designated by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) for the observance of Music In Our Schools Month® (MIOSM®), the time of year when music education becomes the focus of schools across the nation. What better month to highlight the robust music program here at Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen! Our music program affords students with opportunities to participate in music through creating, performing, responding, and connecting. Between prekindergarten and sixth grade, all students are involved in the General Music curriculum, which provides students with fundamental skills that are essential as they advance into performance-based ensembles. The third-grade recorder program, ukulele program, as well as methods and practices through Orff-Schulwerk, Kodaly and Suzuki training, provide a precursor to what our students experience when they join the instrumental program.

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, students have the option to join the Chorus, Band, and String/Full Orchestra, as well as other select performance-based groups, such as Jazz Band, Glee Club, and Chamber Orchestra. Each year, many of our students participate in various competitions. This year, two schools will attend the Music in the Parks Competition in Pennsylvania, while another is attending NYSSMA Majors. Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen students have received the highest possible scores and ratings throughout the many years these competitions have taken place.

Earlier this year, our district had 45 fifth and sixth grade students selected to participate in the All-County Division I West and Division II festivals. Twenty fourth grade students were selected for the All-County P.E.A.K. festival (Parents, Educators, and Kids) and five fifth and sixth grade students were selected for the LISFA Festival (Long Island String Festival Association). Almost two hundred students across the district are participants for the NYSSMA piano, vocal, and instrumental recitals, where they will perform solo repertoire to be evaluated by a state adjudicator.

What sets the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen music program apart from other elementary music programs is that students receive two lessons per week in their first year of training. This provides the foundation and framework for the level of musical aptitude our students can achieve. Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen schools also have a Marching Band that participates in the annual Memorial Day parade. Our music students are heavily involved in many community-based activities, including performances, tree lighting ceremonies during the holiday season, recitals, talent shows, select performing groups such as the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra and much more. There is no shortage of talent and enthusiasm in the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen music program. Come join our student musicians by attending their spring concerts for the Advanced and Junior Performing Groups listed on the district calendar in the months of April and May.

Festival participation for the 2022-2023 school year:
All-County Division I West, All-County Division II, All-County P.E.A.K., LISFA, NYSSMA Piano and NYSSMA Vocal/Instrumental

Competitions: NYSSMA Majors, Music in the Parks, Long Island Music Festival