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VALLEY CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT



VIKING VOYAGE

NOVEMBER
2023

Office of the Superintendent

Evette Avila

(845) 457-2400 Ext. 18510

evette.avila@vcsdny.org

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SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER



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We know that the horrific events continue to take place in Israel and Gaza. These events may deeply impact some members of our school community, either directly through family connections or indirectly through exposure to the inhumane atrocities broadcast through news and social media. We recognize times of crisis evoke feelings of fear, anxiety and worry, making this an emotional time for many.

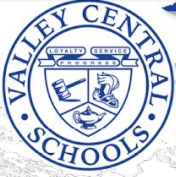
We encourage anyone who needs additional support to reach out to one of our school assistance counselors, psychologists or guidance counselors in our buildings. We encourage you to monitor your child's consumption of social media, especially content related to the conflict. There are violent and disturbing images circulating and videos that might not be appropriate for young people.

We are here to provide a safe, supportive and caring environment for all members of our school community, especially during difficult times such as these.

It's important that we look out for one another and take care of each other. Each member of the Valley Central community is important and valued and helps to make our district the cornerstone of the wonderful community in which we live, learn and educate. Please know that when times are turbulent, we are here to support you.

VALLEY CENTRAL'S MISSION

The mission of the Valley Central School community is to develop responsible and productive members of society in a safe and innovative environment, where students are motivated to think critically, communicate effectively, and achieve excellence in active partnership with the community and a knowledgeable and dedicated staff.



ATTENDANCE

Ensuring that students feel engaged in school is an area of focus for this school year. Across the district we are working on engagement strategies to instill a sense of belonging that prompts excitement about coming to school.

According to the New York State Department of Education, when a student misses 10 percent or more days of school due to absence for any reason, whether the absence is excused, unexcused or because of a suspension, the student is chronically absent. Once a student is considered chronically absent, that status remains for the entire school year.

Students who miss extended periods of school are academically at-risk. Research indicates chronic absence negatively affects a student's academic performance. Students who struggle with attending school have difficulty learning and, if persistent through high school, may impact the student graduating on time.

It is important that we work together to support every student developing excellent attendance habits and coming to school every day. Please contact your school to share any barriers to your student attending school regularly and how we can best support you and your student.

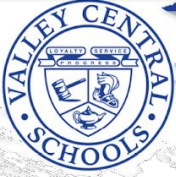


COMMUNICATION

Communication is a key component of creating a strong community. Community feedback is vital to understanding the needs of the community and lifting stakeholders' voices. We have developed a survey to get stakeholder feedback regarding the best ways to communicate, what information to communicate and when to communicate. Additionally, there is an opportunity to participate in a focus group to share your thoughts. Please take a few minutes to respond to the survey below. Your feedback is greatly appreciated. Click here to take the [SURVEY](#).

POST SESSION

Central Office Administration and the Valley Central Teacher Association (VTCA) met for several months to discuss the options for post session. We have collaboratively agreed to have the official post session time remain on Tuesdays from 2:00 PM-2:40 PM for High School, 2:50 PM-3:30 PM for the middle school and at the elementary level, teachers support students during the school day. Teachers may also voluntarily support students at additional times during the day and/or other days before or after school during the week.



SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

One of the most important ways in which we can help our students perform better in their classrooms is to provide the nutrition necessary for the healthy growth of their minds and bodies.

The nutrition standards for meals and snacks served in our schools are based on the food policies set forth by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The newest standards support the service of a greater variety of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, lean meats/meat alternative, and low-fat and fat-free dairy while minimizing added sugar and saturated fat. Students can pick from five components offered for lunch each day which include: meat/meat alternative, grain, vegetable, fruit and dairy. Out of the five components, students only have to take three and one has to be either a fruit or vegetable. Each component also has a required measurement. You can find more nutritional information on the food services page on our website located [here](#).

We have introduced some new menu items, which include: chicken and waffles, french toast sticks, hot ham, egg and cheese on a croissant, baked penne pasta with ricotta and mozzarella cheese and chicken bowl (chicken, mashed potatoes, corn and gravy). Offerings at the HighSchool/Middle School include a pasta bar (plain, oil and garlic, marinara sauce, chicken, beef), egg salad, tuna salad and hard boiled eggs.



FREE MEALS

The USDA published a final rule in the Federal Register on September 26, 2023, to expand access to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) by lowering the minimum identified student percentage (ISP)1 participation threshold from 40 percent to 25 percent. The rule gives more high-need schools the option to elect CEP and offer all students healthy school meals at no cost when it is financially viable for them to do so.

The combination of the federal change and the Community Eligibility Provision State Subsidy has provided our district with the opportunity to apply for free meals for breakfast and lunch for all of our students. We submitted the application and were awarded the reimbursement rates for every meal.

Beginning on December 1, 2023, students enrolled at Valley Central CSD are now eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at no charge to your household each day of the 2023-24 school year.



SUPERINTENDENT'S SPOTLIGHTS

Kelly Brahm has been the voice of Berea Elementary. Everyday she does fun and informative morning announcements that involve both students and staff. She is a member of multiple committees, at both District and school levels.

Ella Deckaj is a VCMS student. Each and every morning when Ella walks into school, she greets the SROs, Security Guards, Hall Monitors and Teachers with a smile and a positive attitude. Her energy and kindness is felt by all she encounters. Thank you, Ella!

Kristy Parton is a VCMS Attendance Paraprofessional, Kristy Parton. Kristy is always going above and beyond in supporting students, staff and families. Keep up the great work, Kristy!!

Marianne Jachimiak is a MES Music and Chorus Teacher. She is always enthusiastic and holds her students to a high standard. Mrs. Jachimiak helps prepare our students for many special events like our Holiday Sing Along, PTA Tree Lighting, Founders Recognitions, DARE Graduation and the 5th Grade Moving Up Ceremony. She also assists with any musical set up throughout the year. Mrs. Jachimiak is the definition of "All In".

Tyler is an exemplary 12th grade student at the High School. He has been a part of the HS Yale RULER team and plays for our Varsity Boys Basketball team. Tyler is an exceptional student and role model.

John Bonagura, is a substitute teacher at East Coldenham Elementary. Mr. Bonagura taught at and retired from East Coldenham. It is a rare occasion to find a day where "Mr. B" isn't subbing at EC. If you were to ask him why he continues to work everyday, he'd tell you it's "for the kids." Mr. B is the embodiment of "All in" and we are lucky to continue to call him our colleague.

Camaron Croce is an Occupational Therapist at Walden Elementary. She goes above and beyond to help students be successful in their school day. She is always happy to assist staff in helping classroom crisis management and support.

Arlyn Nunez, High School Attendance Teacher, has been making a positive impact working with families. She has spent time assisting families and forging connections that matter.

Delaney White, a 12th grader at ALC, graduating with a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation. Delaney works part time outside of school, is a Rho Kappa member, a member of the English Honors Society, Gradus Honoris. Parallel to that she is an exceptional friend and peer.

Isaiah Wilson, a HS Coach and Security Guard goes above and beyond to assist staff and students everyday.

SENIOR CLASS TRIP

Last year there were challenges regarding the Senior Trip. In order to address these challenges, the high school provided a survey on Google Classroom to the eleventh grade students in June 2023. The survey contained choices for multi-day trips to Disney World and a day trip to a location to be determined. Only a third of the students completed the survey and provided feedback indicating that they wanted other choices. As a result, additional surveys were provided in order to include more student voice. I wanted to ensure students had voice and choice for a memorable experience in their senior year. Mrs. Mojica and I met with the senior student council to discuss the senior trip selection process. There was an attempt to propose a trip to another location but the dates were not available. On October 23rd, the Board approved our Senior Trip to Disney in the beginning of April 2024. Moving forward, a Junior Class assembly will be held no later than February to explain the importance of their feedback in deciding their senior class trip. A survey will be conducted and the survey will include more choices, be given more time to plan, and additional parental/guardian collaboration will take place.



VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

944 State Route 17K • Montgomery, New York 12549-2240

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, November 9:

Vietnam Memorial
Rededication Ceremony

Friday, November 10:

Veterans Day Observed ~
No School

Monday, November 13:

Winter JV/Varsity Sports
Season Begins
BOE Meeting

Wednesday, November 15:

VCHS Children's Theatre
Performance

Thursday, November 16:

VCMS Musical Revue

Friday, November 17:

VCHS English Honor
Society Induction
VCMS 7th/8th Grade Blue
and White Dance

Monday, November 20:

Winter Modified Sports
Season Begins
Evening Parent-Teacher
Conferences

Tuesday, November 21:

Daytime Parent-Teacher
Conferences

Wednesday, November 22-

Friday November 24:
Thanksgiving Recess ~ No
School

Wednesday, November 29:

VCMS Student Recognition
Night

Thursday, November 30:

VCHS Student Recognition
Night

CELEBRATIONS

During our Hispanic Heritage Celebration, students were able to have a variety experiences across the district learn about Hispanic cultures. Students conducted research, listened to announcements/stories, and engaged in art and physical education activities to deepen their understanding and share their culture. In future heritage celebrations, we would like parents to also have the opportunity to share their culture with students. Please complete the survey below to let us know how you would like to be involved. Click here to take the [SURVEY](#).



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