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VALLEY CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT



VIKING VOYAGE

JUNE
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Office of the Superintendent

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SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER



VC PROUD • VIKING STRONG

I would like to take a moment to thank our community for supporting our 2024-25 budget. This budget will allow us to maintain all programs for students and will ensure the stability and long-term health of our schools. We appreciate the dedication and continued support of the Valley Central School District.

With the end of the year soon approaching, it is important to recognize all we have accomplished. District administrators, faculty and staff have focused on a sense of belonging, strengthening community and building consistency across the district. In the last few weeks, we have had the opportunity to celebrate our talented students at concerts, award ceremonies, art shows, inductions, and sporting events. We are proud of all the hard work our students and staff have done to support progress, growth and improvement. I am confident we will continue to do our best and finish strong.

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.



VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Strategic Planning Update

Dear Valley Central Community,

As the end of the school year is approaching, I wanted to provide an update regarding our district's strategic planning process.

Strategic planning is an intentional process that aligns the values, mission, and goals of our district. It provides a framework that prioritizes what is most important to our community and creates a roadmap for our future. A strategic plan contains clear expectations, coherent strategies to achieve our goals and measures to identify impact and success. We are using a collaborative process to gather valuable feedback from our community and develop our strategic plan.

Valley Central will benefit from a well communicated and executed strategic plan that keeps everyone informed of our goals, and how our actions contribute to our achievements. This enables parents, staff, students, and community members to work towards a common vision.

In February, we partnered with consultants from Education Elements, a company known for having a deep contextual knowledge of strategic planning, a passion for responsive leadership, and experience partnering with districts across the nation and in the Hudson Valley in this work.

During March and April, we focused on collecting feedback from our many stakeholders through focus groups and surveys. A survey for the entire district was distributed and open from March 19 through April 4. Overall, 1,544 students, parents/guardians, community members, teachers, staff members, administrators, and board members completed the survey.

As a result of the survey, ten focus groups were conducted in which Valley Central community members participated. In choosing these groups, our goal was to select participants' that would provide unique perspectives and that represented different backgrounds, walks of life, experiences and mindsets. We believe that when many perspectives are consulted and included then a plan is developed with and for the community. Feedback shared during focus groups was presented anonymously and analyzed to aid in the design of responsive solutions.

Through the survey process, we also developed our steering committee. The District administration carefully reviewed all participants' responses and took participants years of experience and positions held into consideration. This committee provides guidance, recommendations, and leadership to ensure that our district's strategic plan aligns with our goals and objectives. This committee consists of members of district staff, faculty, administrators, family members, students, and members of the Board of Education. The steering committee had virtual meetings on April 11, 2024 and May 16, 2024 and in-person meetings were held on April 24, 2024 and May 20, 2024.

In May, the steering committee started the design phase of our strategic plan and have begun to identify draft initiatives aligned to the focus areas. A second survey will be distributed by email this week. On June 17, the steering committee will incorporate the feedback received from this survey into the plan. We will have our district strategic plan completed for the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

We value your feedback and appreciate your time. We know this process will bring us closer to our goal of being one team, one district. Thank you for your commitment to our District.

Sincerely,

Evette Avila
Superintendent of Schools



SUPERINTENDENT'S SPOTLIGHTS

Nancy Fitzsimmons, the District's Social Emotional Support Specialist, works tirelessly throughout each building within our district to support student learning. Students, staff, administrators, and parents have found her to be a tremendous resource.

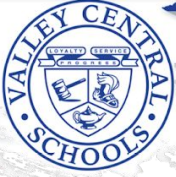
Terri Weiss, an English Teacher and Consultant at Valley Central Middle School, dedicates endless hours both in the classroom and beyond as a Team Leader, Musical Production Director, and National Junior Honor Society advisor. She models what great teachers do through her continuous lifelong learning, especially the work for the Hudson Valley Writing Project at SUNY New Paltz.

Diane Savage, a Paraprofessional at the Alternative Learning Center, has been working tirelessly on collecting plastic this year to earn a Trex Bench for the ALC. The company offers organizations a bench for collecting 1,000 pounds of plastic in a year. So far, Mrs. Savage has collected 400 pounds of plastic. Last year, Mrs. Dobson collected 1000 pounds of plastic, earning ALC its first bench. Mrs. Savage has taken this task over. We thank Mrs. Savage for always going above and beyond for our students.

Kelly Brahm is a dynamic Art Teacher at Berea Elementary School. She organizes the morning announcements and has a different theme every day, along with some friendly competition among classes. She has organized and hosted "fun days" for Berea for the past two years. These events have brought the school together for fun, entertainment and community.

Maureen Wassermann and Dawn Stokes work in the Walden Elementary health office. Each day, they show care and compassion for our students. They are kind, patient and understanding, doing their best to help students feel better so they can achieve their best in school. Walden is fortunate to have such caring individuals supporting the health and well-being of our students.

Jamie Leroy, a Special Education Paraprofessional, is an asset to the Valley Central Middle School team. She is hardworking, professional and always courteous. Beyond the classroom, Mrs. Leroy supports the paraprofessionals, teachers and students in her role as the Para Coordinator. She ensures that students' needs are met – and she does this with great pride. Ms. Leroy often volunteers for extra assignments to support students in extracurricular events.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Juan Ortiz, an 8th grade student at VCMS, has dealt with a great deal of adversity this school year. Even when faced with these challenges, Juan continues to excel and gives his all. He was a recent recipient of our Spring Student Recognition Award for his outstanding attitude. Juan is a great example of resilience and perseverance in our students today! We are so proud of him!

Victoria Carpino, an 8th grade student at VCMS, enrolled mid year. As you can imagine, transferring in the middle of a school year can be challenging, however Victoria entered with a positive and enthusiastic attitude that has served her well. She immediately became a part of our VC Family and has been active in the music department.

Isabella Phillips, a 7th grade student at VCMS, is having an outstanding school year bringing a positive attitude and a mature insight to the classroom each and every day. Isabella is one of our friendliest students here at VCMS and always willing to help others. Another great example for others!

Grayson Gamma, a 3rd grade student at Berea Elementary School, loves sports and baseball in particular. Some time ago, he approached his principal via a note asking for a meeting. The meeting was granted and that is when Grayson pitched the idea of having a third grade baseball game to help bring everyone together. Grayson was given the green light to proceed and over a couple of months, organized a third grade baseball game. His PE teacher (also a baseball coach for VC) helped with organization and equipment. Grayson created sign up sheets for his classmates. The game was scheduled for May 20 on Berea's blacktop. Grayson is a future leader as he took an idea and turned it into reality for the benefit of others. Well done!

Staff at the ALC would like to thank Kesi Arzu and April Conklin, students at the ALC, for their hard work in school and acceptance into the CTEC program for the 24-25 school year. April is hoping to pursue her interest in the Automotive Technology program and Kesi is looking to pursue her interests in the Digital Design and Advertising program.





STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Andrew Burns, a 4th grade student at Walden Elementary, is an excellent overall student. For the past several months, he volunteered each day to support our WES Drama program. Andrew was a big help getting our students and sets prepared for 101 Dalmatians at our school.

Angelina Santos, a 4th grade student at Walden Elementary, is a kind and caring student. She is very friendly and involved in many extracurricular activities. Angelina enjoys ice hockey, which she has been playing for 5 years now.

Freddie Giametta, a 1st grade student at Montgomery Elementary, has embraced every genre that was taught during Writers Workshop this year. He has enthusiastically followed directions to successfully complete several narratives, informational books, and "How Tos" with attention to organization, conventions, details, and illustrations.

Harper Hinspeter, a 4th grade student at Montgomery Elementary, is an excellent role model both in and out of the classroom. Not only does Harper put her best foot forward in her classwork, but she collects dried-out pens and markers from all of the fourth-grade students to recycle in hopes of making our environment a better place.

James Wirth, a 4th grade student at East Coldenham, decided to take part in a St. Baldrick's head shaving event last month. St. Baldrick's is a charity committed to supporting research to find cures for as well as to help support survivors of childhood cancer. In his philanthropic activities, James raised over \$1,600 in sponsorships. We are very proud of James and his excellent work. We are sure he will continue to exemplify ways to be a pillar of the community as he grows older and hope he takes as much pride in his efforts as we do in him.

Emily Thorn, a 5th grade student at East Coldenham, sold 167 boxes of cookies for her Girls Scout troop. This impressive number of cookies only gets sold with hard work and dedication; two things that Emily personifies in her everyday work in school. Great job Emily! Keep up the good work and keep those cookies coming!

Kaitlyn Sepulveda, a senior at VCHS, was named an Outstanding Student Delegate on behalf of the Angelo Del Toro Puerto Rican/ Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute (PR/HYLI). She has been invited to attend a trip to Washington D.C. this June to tour our nation's capital, visit historic landmarks, and engage first-hand with elected representatives. Kaitlyn graduates in June and will attend Virginia Tech in the fall to major in biology.

Tyshan Mitchell II, a senior at VHCS, will be attending the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School after graduation. Tyshan received several accolades including the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in JROTC (Platoon Leader), President of the National Honor Society (Gradus Honoris), President of the National Social Studies Honor Society (Rho Kappa), Member of the National English Honor Society, and Boys State Delegate to name a few. We are excited to see the great things Tyshan will accomplish after graduation!

