



# It's Elementary

## VALLEY STREAM UFSD THIRTEEN

SPRING 2017

### *A Message from your Superintendent*



Thank you for your lasting support toward our continuous improvement efforts extending the quality of education for our students, staff and families. We have enjoyed a positive year, and our students, educators and broader school community are enthusiastically engaged in much of the work that we had

hoped to successfully implement. The Board and I have also constructively worked to reflect the district's vision and mission in the strategic efforts that we believe make the Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen a district of excellence. Below, I have highlighted many of our successes that focused on the priorities identified by our community.

- Completion of Phase I projects of our \$32M bond referendum that address the health, safety, and security needs of our district's four buildings.
- All VS 13 schools are in the second year of fully implementing Superkids®, a new English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum used in grades K-2. These additional resources further support aligning our instructional practices with the Common Core Learning Standards (students were visited by Cass, a Superkids character, in the month of January).
- All VS 13 schools have fully implemented Math in Focus K-6, a Common Core-aligned math program that helps our students develop multiple strategies to understand mathematical concepts and problem solving.
- Extension of our Instructional Coaching Program. This job-embedded structure for professional development was introduced at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year.

This year we have been able to grow our human resource allocation, increasing the number of coaches from one to three. In September, we reorganized our human resources and now have a K-6 ELA coach, a K-6 Math coach and an Instructional Technology coach.

- We have rolled out the implementation of the RULER Program. RULER is an evidence-based approach for integrating social and emotional learning into schools. RULER teaches the skills of emotional intelligence — those associated with recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotion. Decades of research show that these skills are essential to effective teaching and learning, sound decision making, physical and mental health, and success in school and beyond.
- Chromebooks have been installed in all classrooms in grades 4-6. Both educators and students have consistently reported that access to this level of technology has provided a boon to their engagement and learning.

The initiatives noted above benefit our students' educational experiences, helping to prepare them for success in their middle school and high school years. As we close in on the final months of this academic year and look ahead toward the future, we will continue to focus our efforts on prioritizing and implementing those curricular and technological programs and services that will help guide our students to becoming responsible citizens and leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Constance D. Evelyn, Superintendent of Schools



# PROGRAMS OF EXCELLENCE DEFINE THE DISTRICT

The 2016-2017 school year is off to an exciting start. We've continued to enhance our curriculum and programs with several notable improvements. The 1:1 Chromebook initiative in grades 4-6 has transformed our classrooms with technology. Math in Focus has been fully implemented in all grades across the district, ensuring that our students are on the road to math success. The Instructional Coaching program has been providing job embedded professional development for our teachers in the areas of mathematics, English Language Arts, and technology. This year, all students in grade four will participate in enrichment through an additional full unit of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) instruction.

## TECHNOLOGY

The 2016-2017 school year began with the incorporation of more than 1,000 Chromebooks in classrooms in grades 4-6. This infusion of devices for each student is transforming teaching and learning in our schools. Teachers and students are utilizing powerful tools to collaborate and move beyond the four walls of their classrooms.

Recently, students in the sixth grade at Willow Road School were able to team up with their peers across the grade level to work on Greek mythology projects. Students used Google docs and Google slides to collaborate virtually with each other—without leaving their own classrooms. At Howell Road School, teachers are using Google docs to plan units and share resources for the inclusive English as a New Language program. In all four buildings, teachers and students have full access to the online textbooks and resources of the K-6 Math in Focus program. This includes online manipulatives that students can use to explore math concepts. Google classroom is a learning management system that allows teachers to use a centralized online repository to hold their lessons, resources, and assignments. Students have access to their class resources at any time and can submit their assignments online for teacher review.



## MATH IN FOCUS



Math in Focus is a Singapore Math curriculum that is fully aligned with the New York State Learning Standards for mathematics. This program has problem solving as the center of math learning, and concepts are taught with a concrete-pictorial-abstract learning progression through real-world, hands-on experiences. Teachers use digital tools and manipulatives to teach foundational math concepts to students.

The district hosted a well-attended parent workshop on the Math in Focus program. A flyer will be sent home with students; we encourage all parents to attend these informative sessions and learn how you can support your child at home with mathematics.

## INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING AND ENRICHMENT

The district is committed to ensuring that teachers have the support they need to implement high-quality instruction for all students. To this end, three faculty members are available to all teachers for a range of support including professional goal setting, planning, co-teaching, and accessing resources. The coaches facilitate individual, grade level and content specific professional development. Professional development topics this year have included Google classroom, Google applications, Math in Focus, Superkids, Math Talk, SMART Notebook, RULER, Understanding by Design, Bar Modeling and more!



(L-R) Math Coach Andrea DiMango and fifth grade teacher Sharon Kapitansky work with two students.



(L-R) Technology Coach Melissa O'Geary and ELA Coach Laurie Salvatore provide teacher professional development.

The district's gifted and talented teacher, Richard Rosenfeld, has been working with classroom teachers in fourth grade to deliver a fun and informative enrichment unit involving concepts in engineering. Students work on math skills, use spreadsheets, and learn about the engineering process in order to create a car that has to perform a series of specific tasks. Students are challenged during the process, as they are constrained by specific parameters for the construction of their car. This project also exposes students to important concepts in science such as gravity and friction. Students at the Dever School and the Willow Road School have completed their enrichment experience, and Mr. Rosenfeld is now working with students at Howell Road and Wheeler Avenue.

## EMOTIONS MATTER.

Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen recognizes that emotions matter and impact students' engagement and ability to learn. This year, the district has embraced RULER, an evidence-based approach to social emotional learning.

The RULER approach has been integrated into our academic curriculum and has provided the entire school community with tools such as the mood meter and charter as ways of addressing social emotional learning. Students are now fluent in talking about their feelings by identifying whether they are in the red, yellow, blue or green zones on the mood meter. Vocabulary has been embedded into discussions so that students learn to use more descriptive words to describe their emotions. Classrooms are also in the process of developing charters, which is a collaborative document that helps establish supportive and productive learning environments.

A parent workshop is planned for later in the school year to support parents and families in embracing the RULER approach. This home-school connection is critical in supporting children's emotional development and school achievement.

### **RULER teaches five skills of emotional intelligence:**

- Recognizing emotions in one's self and others
- Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- Labeling emotions accurately
- Expressing emotions appropriately
- Regulating emotions effectively

## **BOND UPDATE...ON SCHEDULE AND ON BUDGET**

It's full steam ahead on the work planned for repairs and renovations to our Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen school buildings through the \$32 million capital project bond referendum approved by voters on December 8, 2015. PHASE I's roof replacement and chimney reconstruction projects on the district's four schools have been completed, and planning for PHASE II has begun, consisting of the following building enhancements and system replacements that will begin in summer 2017:

### **ARCHITECTURAL**

- Replacement of corridor doors and hardware
- Wheelchair lift at Dever
- Gymnasium painting and floor refinishing - all four buildings
- Relocation of Wheeler playground / playground surfacing

### **ELECTRICAL**

The following work will occur at all four buildings:

- Upgrading of motion detection systems
- Additional CCTV security cameras and monitoring
- Card access systems at four doors
- Replacement of P.A. systems
- Possible installation of magnetic hold-opens at cafeterias, auditoriums and gymnasiums

### **PLUMBING**

- Replacement of existing water heaters - two schools
- Removal of hot water storage tanks - all four buildings
- Replacement of drinking fountains - all four buildings
- Replacement of exterior hose bibs - four at each building
- Installation of eyewash station at Wheeler nurse's office

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Capital improvements beginning over the 2017 Spring break and continuing through the summer include:

- Exterior door replacements at Wheeler and Willow
- Concrete overhang replacements at Willow
- Bathroom renovations at Wheeler

Construction will continue into the summer of 2018. Some of the major projects that will take place will be the kitchen additions at Dever, Howell and Willow as well as the relocation of the Wheeler kitchen to ground level adjacent to the newly renovated wing.

### **NEW YORK STATE SMART SCHOOLS BOND ALLOCATION**

Technology upgrades districtwide are being addressed through the district's NYS Smart Schools Bond allocation. Currently these plans are in review. Once approval is received from the state, the transformation of the district's technology capabilities and systems will begin.

### **ENERGY PERFORMANCE CONTRACT**

The district also approved an Energy Performance Contract. The following work will take place at all four buildings:

- LED lighting upgrades
- Replacement of air handling units, pumps and pump motors
- Installation of pipe installation
- Building Management System upgrades
- Installation of solar panels

### **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.

### **Kindergarten Registration**

Residents of Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen whose children will turn 5 years old by Dec. 1, 2017 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 <http://valleystream13.com/district/student-registration/> or by contacting the district registrar at 516-872-5674.

### **VALLEY STREAM 13 BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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