

Valley Collaborative
Board of Directors Meeting
11 Executive Park Drive, North Billerica, Massachusetts
Thursday, October 24, 2024 ▪ 10:00 a.m.

Action Required

- I. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Board of Directors Meeting, General Session Minutes: September 12, 2024
- II. Financial Update
 - a. FY'25 Update
 - Balance Sheet as of 9.30.2024
 - Budget to Actual as of 9.30.2024
 - Profit and Loss by Program as of 9.30.2024
 - FY25 Budget Amendment
 - FY25 Projections
 - b. Treasurer's Report(s)
 - c. PARS Statement(s)
 - August 2024
 - d. Enrollment Update
 - FY24 Student Enrollment by Program 9.30.2023
 - FY25 Student Enrollment by Program 9.30.2024
 - FY25 Student Enrollment by Program 10.17.2024
- III. Post-Retirement Health Care Plan - Program Documents and Policies

No Action Required

- IV. Making a Difference Awards
- V. Communications
 - State Agencies:
 - a. DESE Financial Review Letter
 - b. DPPC Review Closure Letter
 - c. DDS CORI Review Letter
 - d. DESE MCR/CPR Update
 - e. Lowell Public Schools Problem Resolution Systems Office State Withdrawal Letter
 - f. Methuen Public Schools Problem Resolution Systems Office State Complaint Decision
 - Valley Program Updates:
 - a. Elementary School September Monthly Newsletter
 - b. Alternative Programming at the Transitional High School Update
 - c. Middle School and Transitional Programming Update at the Transitional High School
 - d. Adult Services Update
 - e. Safety Committee Update

Valley Collaborative
Board of Directors Meeting
11 Executive Park Drive, North Billerica, Massachusetts
Thursday, October 24, 2024 ■ 10:00 a.m.

Community and Staff:

- a. Valley Collaborative Fall 2024 Fall Newsletter
- b. Professional Learning Early Release Day – September 25, 2024
- c. A+ All Staff Email

VI. Executive Session:

To consider the exchange and/or value of real property: 0 Suburban Park, Billerica, MA

**Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
General Session Meeting Minutes
September 12, 2024
10:09 a.m. –10:57 a.m.
11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, Massachusetts**

Board Members Present: Dr. Jay Lang, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Mr. Brad Morgan, Dr. Christopher Chew, Dr. Geoff Bruno

Board Members Absent: Dr. Denise Pigeon, Mr. Steven Stone

Collaborative Representatives Present: Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director; Ms. Heidi Kriger, Treasurer; James A. George, Business Manager/Accountant.

Also Present: Thomas Lent, Barrow Weatherhead Lent LLP

Call to Order: Dr. Jay Lang, Chairman, convened the Collaborative Board Meeting at 10:00 a.m and requested that the record indicate that the Board Meeting was being held remotely. Dr. Lang conducted roll call attendance of all Board Members participating remotely.

Dr. Jay Lang welcomed Dr. Geoff Bruno to the Valley Collaborative Board of Directors.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Jay Lang requested the Board to review the meeting minutes made available for review and asked for a motion relating to the minutes.

On a motion made by Mr. Brad Morgan and seconded by Dr. Michael Flanagan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: To approve the General Session Meeting Minutes for the Board of Directors dated June 6, 2024.

The roll call vote was 5-0-2. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Mr. Brad Morgan. Abstained: Dr. Geoff Bruno and Dr. Christopher Chew.

Financial Update

Executive Director's Report

Dr. Scott welcomed the Board to the 2024-2025 School Year and provided a summary of the School Year opening.

Dr. Scott directed the Board to the financial update memo contained within the Board meeting materials, which was prepared with the assistance of Mr. James George, the Collaborative's Business Manager/Accountant. Dr. Scott generally reviewed the 4th Quarter Financials, the Capital Fund status, and the commencement of the Fiscal Year audit. Dr. Scott reviewed the revenues, expenses, assets, budget status and enrollment. Dr. Scott reviewed the OPEB Trust funding status, and compared to the Collaborative's funding status as to other collaboratives. She reviewed additional expenses incurred this past year. She further provided year-end projection figures for revenue and expenses within the year end summary, which remain subject to the audit. She also reviewed the projected cumulative surplus fund calculation, which also remain subject to the audit. Dr. Scott and Mr. James George reviewed the cumulative surplus calculations as of June 30, 2024, a chart summary of which was contained within the Board materials. The Board discussed.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Heidi Kriger, the Collaborative Treasurer, provided the Board with her report which covered the months May, June and July 2024. Ms. Kriger provided a verbal summary of her report, including available balances, transfers, withdrawals, interest income and ending balances. A written summary report was contained within the Board materials. Ms. Kriger reviewed the current funding levels of the surplus fund amounts the OPEB Trust. There was no further discussion.

[Dr. Kerry Clery and Dr. Christopher Chew left the meeting].

On a motion made by Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan and seconded by Dr. Michael Flanagan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors accepts the report of the Collaborative Treasurer, as presented at this meeting, and requests that a copy of the report be maintained at the Collaborative

The roll call vote was 5-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan, Dr. Geoff Bruno. Absent for vote: Dr. Christopher Chew, Dr. Kerry Clery.

[Dr. Christopher Chew returned to the meeting]

Valley Collaborative Central Office Updates

Dr. Scott reviewed the current four (4) audits that are currently in process or which occurred within the past three months: DDS/CORI; DESE Collaborative Financial Review; DESE Coordinated Program Review – Mid-Cycle Review; and Fiscal Year 2024 Independent Financial Audit Review. A status summary report for each was provided through her memo which was contained within the Board meeting materials.

Lease Extension with Middlesex County Retirement System: 25 Linnell Circle, Billerica, MA

Dr. Scott directed the Board to her memo within the Board materials that outlined the proposal for a five-year extension of the lease at 25 Linnell Circle with the Middlesex County Retirement System. Dr. Scott reviewed the planned use of the space for Fiscal Years 2026 through 2030.

On a motion made by Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan and seconded by Mr. Brad Morgan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors authorizes the Executive Director to negotiate, on behalf of the Board of Directors, a lease extension agreement with the Middlesex County Retirement System, for 25 Linnell Circle, Billerica, MA.

The roll call vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Dr. Christopher Chew.

Fleet Vehicle Replacement Strategy Update and Funding for Fiscal Year 2025

Dr. Scott reviewed with the Board the fleet vehicle replacement strategy update memo contained within the Board materials. Dr. Scott summarized the status of the fleet and strategy with respect to purchase or leasing options, and the financial amendment to the budget. There was no further discussion.

On a motion made by Mr. Brad Morgan and seconded by Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors approves the amended Fiscal Year 2025 Budget for the acquisition and replacement of vehicles, as presented and recommended by the Executive Director and certified by the Treasurer.

The roll call vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Dr. Christopher Chew.

Approval of Today and Tomorrow Program Handbook & Policies and Procedures Manual

Dr. Scott referenced the Today and Tomorrow program handbook and policies and procedures manual contained within the Board materials indicating that there were no substantive changes for the 2024-2025 School Year. There was no further discussion.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan and seconded by Mr. Brad Morgan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors approves the revised Today and Tomorrow Program Handbook & Policies and Procedure Manual in the substantive form presented at this meeting.

The roll call vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Dr. Christopher Chew.

Approval of HR Payroll Policies and Procedures Manual

Dr. Scott referenced the human resources payroll and procedures manual contained within the Board materials reviewing the substantive changes for the 2024-2025 School Year. Generally, it provided a Disabled Persons Protection Commission procedures for compliance with M.G.L. c. 19C, § 15 (“Nicky’s Law”). There was no further discussion.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan and seconded by Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors approves the revised Human Resource Payroll Policies and Procedure Manual in the substantive form presented at this meeting.

The roll call vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Dr. Christopher Chew.

Valley Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Business – Fiscal Year 2024

Dr. Scott reviewed the Fiscal Year Fourth Quarter Reports on Collaborative Business, a copy of which is to be provided by the Board Members to their respective school committees for compliance purposes. The Board discussed.

Valley Program Updates

Dr. Scott provided the Board with an update regarding their respective schools and/or programs, including a summary from the Safety Committee. Dr. Scott provided a summary to the facilities improvements. There was no further discussion.

Financial Update – Valley by the Numbers

Dr. Chris Scott provided the Board with her annual Valley by the Numbers presentation and analytical review of the past School and Fiscal Year.

Making a Difference Awards

Dr. Scott will review further during the October 2024 meeting but acknowledged the IT department for their work towards improvements at the Collaborative locations and schools.

Communications

Dr. Scott directed the Board to the communications contained within the Board materials. There was no further discussion.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan and seconded by Mr. Brad Morgan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: To adjourn the Board meeting.

The roll call vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Mr. Brad Morgan, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Dr. Christopher Chew.

Dr. Jay Lang adjourned the Collaborative Board Meeting at 10:57 a.m.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED, DISTRIBUTED AND REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING:

- School Year 2024-2025 Electronic Board Binder Board Meeting, September 12, 2024

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Jay Lang, Chairman

Dated: _____



Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica MA 01821 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Mr. James George, Accountant/Business Manager
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Financial Update - FY'24 & FY'25

Valley Collaborative's FY'25 first quarter shows expenses and revenues are up significantly from the original projected budget. Payroll has increased by \$1.8M and associated benefit costs are up \$500,000. Valley's FTEs have increased from 272 in the first quarter of FY'24 to 290 in FY'25. These expense increases to the budget are healthy signs that we have been able to hire all the necessary staff, including one-on-one paraprofessionals required, to increase enrollment on both the DESE and DDS programs. We are also expecting revenues to be \$2.6M above the original FY'25 projection. Student enrollment is up 8 students over last year at this time (55% member districts; 45% non-member districts) and the DDS program continues to have strong enrollment trends with 7 participants on the wait-list. We are expecting these positive enrollment trends to continue throughout the year.

Given these financial trends and projections, I am requesting the Board amend the FY'25 budget. We are conservatively projecting that revenues will increase by 5.92% and expenses will increase by 10.71%. The amended revenue total would be \$27,430,000 and the total expenses would be \$26,537,718, creating a balanced budget. See attached FY'25 Budget Amendment document for details.

The Board has previously voted to return \$1,695,822 of surplus in FY'25. Given that the 25% Surplus calculation is premised upon Valley's expense budget, the Cumulative Surplus Percentage before the final audit is currently 24.33%. As such, no additional vote is required at this time. After the final audit is complete in November, an additional vote may be required.

Required Action:

- Vote to amend the FY'25 Budget

Attachments:

- Balance Sheet - September 30, 2024
- Budget to Actual - September 30, 2024
- Profit & Loss by Program – September 30, 2024
- FY25 Budget Amendment
- FY25 Projections
- FY24 Student Enrollment by Program – September 30, 2023
- FY25 Student Enrollment by Program – September 30, 2024
- FY25 Student Enrollment by Program – October 17, 2024
- Treasurers' Report
- PARS August 2024

Valley Collaborative
Interim Statement of Net Assets
For the Period Ended
September 30, 2024

UNAUDITED	
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 5,360,274
Restricted Investments - OPEB	7,855,739
Accounts Receivable, Net	4,269,746
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	-
Cash Held for Member Districts	929,022
Total Current Assets	<u>18,414,781</u>
Non-Current Assets	
Land & Building	4,345,014
Furniture, Equipment, and Leasehold Improvements,	
Net of Depreciation	2,092,431
Construction in Progress	-
Total Non-Current Assets	<u>6,437,445</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>\$ 24,852,226</u></u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	\$ 1,789,863
Other Liabilities	2,516,129
Member District Accounts (Settlement)	929,022
Total Current Liabilities	<u>5,235,014</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>5,235,014</u>
Net Assets	
Operating - Unrestricted	5,433,962
Restricted - Student Activities	34,561
Reserved - OPEB Trust	5,366,543
Reserved - Capital	1,500,000
Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt	7,282,146
Total Net Assets	<u>19,617,212</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u><u>\$ 24,852,226</u></u>
	-

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted.
No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative
Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets
For the Period Ending September 30, 2024
50 of 210 (23.8%) School Days

UNAUDITED		
	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL
REVENUES		
Services	\$ 19,200,000	\$ 4,769,350
State Contracts	4,900,000	1,091,721
Other	700,000	130,821
Interest	30,000	10,314
Total Revenues	24,830,000	6,002,206 24.17%
EXPENSES		
Salaries	17,173,652	4,629,572
Employee Benefits	2,931,619	852,719
Operating Expenses	2,788,200	738,828
Leases & Rentals	593,247	243,137
Depreciation	751,000	187,750
Total Expenses	24,237,718	6,652,006 27.4%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	\$ 592,282	\$ (649,800)
Non Operating Activities		
Return to Member Districts	-	
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(575,000)	(844,701)
Change in Net Assets	\$ 17,282	\$ (1,494,501)

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

September 30, 2024
50 of 210 Days

	100	200	400	712	660	450	665	500	101	102	
	Central	HS Site 3	HS Site 2	Middle	Elementary	Therapy	Home	DDS	Education	MRC	
	Admin			School			Services		& Training	Supportive	
										Work	Total
REVENUES											
Services	\$ -	\$ 1,709,940	\$ 618,327	\$ 755,729	\$ 1,685,354	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,769,350
State Contracts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,040,599	51,122	-	1,091,721
Other	3,426	2,433	600	-	1,351	-	-	123,011	-	-	130,821
Interest	10,314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,314
Total Revenues	13,740	1,712,373	618,927	755,729	1,686,705	-	-	1,163,610	51,122	-	6,002,206
EXPENSES											
Salaries	246,056	1,152,581	563,938	603,376	1,244,242	43,562	-	703,107	50,538	22,172	4,629,572
Employee Benefits	310,140	117,595	51,800	64,484	131,787	83,775	-	93,138	-	-	852,719
Operating Expenses	306,743	143,221	56,510	54,962	118,688	11	-	50,844	4,194	3,655	738,828
Leases & Rentals	-	13,991	13,991	27,981	127,975	-	-	59,199	-	-	243,137
Depreciation	187,750	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	187,750
Total Expenses	1,050,689	1,427,388	686,239	750,803	1,622,692	127,348	-	906,288	54,732	25,827	6,652,006
Net Income Before Admin Allocation	(1,036,949)	284,985	(67,312)	4,926	64,013	(127,348)	-	257,322	(3,610)	(25,827)	(649,800)
Admin Allocation	(1,036,949)	274,969	132,196	144,633	312,592	24,532	-	135,943	8,210	3,874	0
Operating Net Income	\$ -	\$ 10,016	\$ (199,508)	\$ (139,707)	\$ (248,579)	\$ (151,880)	\$ -	\$ 121,379	\$ (11,820)	\$ (29,701)	\$ (649,800)



VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

FY2025 BUDGET SUMMARY Proposed Budget Amendment

	FY2022		FY2023		FY2024	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025			
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Amended Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Amended Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Approved</u>	<u>Amended</u>	<u>vs. 2024 Actual</u>	<u>% change</u>
REVENUES										
Services	17,268,440	16,133,113	17,200,000	17,323,864	19,600,000	20,646,468	19,200,000	21,800,000	\$ 1,153,532	
State contracts	2,521,300	2,702,043	3,920,000	3,918,012	4,500,000	4,590,023	4,900,000	4,900,000	309,977	
Other	300,800	414,507	650,000	633,398	700,000	663,525	700,000	700,000	36,475	
Interest	29,000	1,950	30,000	36,296	5,000	59,537	30,000	30,000	(29,537)	
Total Revenues	\$ 20,119,540	\$ 19,251,613	\$ 21,800,000	21,911,570	\$ 24,805,000	\$ 25,959,553	\$ 24,830,000	\$ 27,430,000	\$ 1,470,447	5.92%
EXPENSES										
Salaries	13,181,932	11,559,371	14,604,102	14,520,241	16,431,226	16,717,809	17,173,652	18,973,652	2,255,843	
Operating Expenses	5,971,980	5,489,251	6,762,927	6,714,551	6,644,655	7,223,818	7,064,066	7,564,066	340,248	
Total Expenses	\$ 19,153,912	\$ 17,048,622	\$ 21,367,029	21,234,792	\$ 23,075,881	\$ 23,941,627	\$ 24,237,718	\$ 26,537,718	\$ 2,596,091	10.71%
Revenues over/(under) Expenses	965,628	2,202,991	432,971	676,778	1,729,119	2,017,926	592,282	892,282	(1,425,644)	
NON-OPERATING										
Capital	725,000	241,871	715,000	-	1,015,000	-	575,000	875,000	875,000	
Board Capital Reserve			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
BUDGETED SURPLUS/(SHORTFALL)	\$ 240,628	\$ 1,961,120	\$ (282,029)	\$ 676,778	\$ 714,119	\$ 2,017,926	\$ 17,282	\$ 17,282	-	

**VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
AUGUST 31, 2024**

	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ENTERPRISE BANK ACCOUNTS							
Operating a/c 493426	\$ 5,307,951.43	\$ 990,823.05		\$ (652,944.84)		\$ (1,700,000.00)	\$ 3,945,829.64
Payroll a/c 795823	\$ 1,168,371.84		\$ (2,420,968.63)			\$ 1,700,000.00	\$ 447,403.21
Joe's Bistro a/c 531401	\$ 5,458.70	\$ 726.03					\$ 6,184.73
ICS MMDA a/c 856490	\$ 4,757.10				\$ 2.01		\$ 4,759.11
Capital Reserve a/c 4063467	\$ 1,500,000.00						\$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project a/c 821315	\$ 114.36	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 114.36
TOTAL ENTERPRISE BANK ACCOUNTS	\$ 7,986,653.43	\$ 991,549.08	\$ (2,420,968.63)	\$ (652,944.84)	\$ 2.01	\$ -	\$ 5,904,291.05
MMDT a/c 0044263747							
	\$ 1,107,641.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,163.23	\$ -	\$ 1,112,804.73
Total Unrestricted Cash							
	\$ 9,094,294.93	\$ 991,549.08	\$ (2,420,968.63)	\$ (652,944.84)	\$ 5,165.24	\$ -	\$ 7,017,095.78
PARS OPEB Trust							
	\$ 7,551,442.01	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (2,036.22)	\$ 157,161.95	\$ -	\$ 7,706,567.74
TOTAL CASH							
	\$ 16,645,736.94	\$ 991,549.08	\$ (2,420,968.63)	\$ (654,981.06)	\$ 162,327.19	\$ -	\$ 14,723,663.52

**VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
SEPTEMBER 30, 2024**

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ENTERPRISE BANK ACCOUNTS								
Operating	a/c 493426	\$ 3,945,829.64	\$ 1,327,351.65		\$ (568,456.50)		\$ (1,444,000.00)	\$ 3,260,724.79
Payroll	a/c 795823	\$ 447,403.21		\$ (1,512,239.56)			\$ 1,450,000.00	\$ 385,163.65
Joe's Bistro	a/c 531401	\$ 6,184.73	\$ 1,726.03				\$ (6,000.00)	\$ 1,910.76
ICS MIMDA	a/c 856490	\$ 4,759.11				\$ 1.94		\$ 4,761.05
Capital Reserve	a/c 4063467	\$ 1,500,000.00						\$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	a/c 821315	\$ 114.36	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 114.36
TOTAL ENTERPRISE BANK ACCOUNTS		\$ 5,904,291.05	\$ 1,329,077.68	\$ (1,512,239.56)	\$ (568,456.50)	\$ 1.94	\$ -	\$ 5,152,674.61
MMDT								
	a/c 0044263747	\$ 1,112,804.73	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,873.53	\$ -	\$ 1,117,678.26
Total Unrestricted Cash								
		\$ 7,017,095.78	\$ 1,329,077.68	\$ (1,512,239.56)	\$ (568,456.50)	\$ 4,875.47	\$ -	\$ 6,270,352.87
PARS OPEB Trust								
		\$ 7,706,567.74	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (2,074.15)	\$ 151,245.09	\$ -	\$ 7,855,738.68
TOTAL CASH								
		\$ 14,723,663.52	\$ 1,329,077.68	\$ (1,512,239.56)	\$ (570,530.65)	\$ 156,120.56	\$ -	\$ 14,126,091.55



VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
PARS OPEB Trust Program

Account Report for the Period
8/1/2024 to 8/31/2024

Heidi Kriger
Treasurer
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821

Account Summary

Source	Beginning Balance as of 8/1/2024	Contributions	Earnings	Expenses	Distributions	Transfers	Ending Balance as of 8/31/2024
OPEB	\$7,551,442.01	\$0.00	\$157,161.95	\$2,036.22	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,706,567.74
Totals	\$7,551,442.01	\$0.00	\$157,161.95	\$2,036.22	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,706,567.74

Investment Selection

Source

OPEB Target Index Balanced Strategy

Investment Objective

Source

OPEB Dual goals are to provide a moderate amount of current income with moderate capital growth.

Investment Return

Source	1-Month	3-Months	1-Year	Annualized Return			Plan's Inception Date
				3-Years	5-Years	10-Years	
OPEB	2.08%	5.91%	16.91%	2.58%	7.58%	-	6/24/2015

Information as provided by US Bank, Trustee for PARS; Not FDIC Insured; No Bank Guarantee; May Lose Value

Past performance does not guarantee future results. Performance returns may not reflect the deduction of applicable fees, which could reduce returns. Information is deemed reliable but may be subject to change.

Investment Return: Annualized rate of return is the return on an investment over a period other than one year multiplied or divided to give a comparable one-year return.

Account balances are inclusive of Trust Administration, Trustee and Investment Management fees

FY24 September Active Students by Progra

As of 2023-10-16 13:50:52 Eastern Standard Time/EST • Generated by George Pylotis

Filtered By

Show: All districts

Current Program Start Date less or equal 9/30/2023

Current Program End Date greater or equal 9/1/2023

District: District Name not equal to A Member

District: District Name not equal to A MA NonMember

District: District Name not equal to A NH NonMember

Data Status not equal to Terminated Before Program Start

Data Status not equal to Incorrect Student Entry

Collaborative School: School Name ↑	Program ↑	Record Count
Valley Elementary School	ES EBS	5
	ES EBS ISN	43
	ES EBS ISN EE	1
	ES PSB	3
	ES PSB ISN	24
	ES PSB ISN EE	1
Subtotal		77
Valley High School	HS Alternative	31
	HS Alternative ISN	1
	HS Alternative EE	2
	HS Alternative Vocational	13
	HS Alternative Vocational EE	1
	HS School Life Skills Training	24
	HS School Life Skills Training ISN	18
	HS School Vocational Training	30
	HS School to Work	14
Subtotal		134
Valley Middle School	MS EBS	7
	MS EBS ISN	10
	MS EBS EE	1
	MS PSB	10
	MS PSB ISN	7
	MS School Life Skills Training ISN	6
Subtotal		41
Total		252

FY25 Active Students September

As of 2024-10-17 09:22:24 Eastern Standard Time/EST • Generated by George Pylotis • Sorted by Fiscal Year Date of Termination (Ascending)

Collaborative School: School Name ↑	Program ↑	Current Grade ↑	Record Count
Valley Collaborative Elementary School	ES EBS	4	1
		5	2
		6	1
	Subtotal		4
	ES EBS ISN	1	6
		2	3
		3	13
		4	10
		5	9
		6	3
	Subtotal		44
	ES PSB	4	1
		5	1
		6	1
	Subtotal		3
	ES PSB ISN	K	1
		1	2
		2	10
		3	7
		4	4
		5	6
		6	1
	Subtotal		31
Subtotal			82
Valley Collaborative High School	HS Alternative	9	14
		10	8
		11	6
		12	8
	Subtotal		36
	HS Alternative ISN	10	1
	Subtotal		1
	HS Alternative EE	10	1
	Subtotal		1
	HS Alternative Vocational	11	7
		12	7
	Subtotal		14
	HS Alternative Vocational EE	12	1
	Subtotal		1
	HS School Life Skills Training	9	1
		10	2
		11	1
		12	2
		SP	21
		PG	1
	Subtotal		28
	HS School Life Skills Training ISN	10	2
		11	3
		12	2
		SP	6
	Subtotal		13
	HS School Vocational Training	9	5
		10	5
		11	3
		12	8
		SP	5
	Subtotal		26
	HS School Vocational Training EE	9	1
	Subtotal		1
	HS School to Work	12	4
		SP	12
	Subtotal		16
Subtotal			137
Valley Collaborative Middle School	MS EBS	7	4
		8	3

	Subtotal		7
	MS EBS ISN	6	1
		7	3
		8	3
	Subtotal		7
	MS EBS EE	8	2
	Subtotal		2
	MS PSB	7	4
		8	4
	Subtotal		8
	MS PSB ISN	7	5
	Subtotal		5
	MS PSB EE	8	1
	Subtotal		1
	MS School Life Skills Training ISN	6	1
		7	6
		8	3
	Subtotal		10
Subtotal			40
Total			259

FY25 Active Students October

As of 2024-10-17 09:25:46 Eastern Standard Time/EST • Generated by George Pylotis • Sorted by Fiscal Year Date of Termination (Ascending)

Collaborative School: School Name ↑	Program ↑	Current Grade ↑	Record Count
Valley Collaborative Elementary School	ES EBS	4	1
		5	2
		6	1
	Subtotal		4
	ES EBS ISN	1	6
		2	3
		3	13
		4	11
		5	9
		6	3
	Subtotal		45
	ES PSB	4	1
		5	1
		6	1
	Subtotal		3
	ES PSB ISN	K	1
		1	2
		2	10
		3	7
		4	4
		5	6
		6	1
	Subtotal		31
Subtotal		83	
Valley Collaborative High School	HS Alternative	9	14
		10	8
		11	7
		12	8
	Subtotal		37
	HS Alternative ISN	10	1
	Subtotal		1
	HS Alternative EE	10	1
	Subtotal		1
	HS Alternative Vocational	11	6
		12	7
	Subtotal		13
	HS Alternative Vocational EE	12	1
	Subtotal		1
	HS School Life Skills Training	9	1
		10	2
		11	1
		12	2
		SP	20
		PG	1
	Subtotal		27
	HS School Life Skills Training ISN	10	2
		11	2
		12	2
		SP	6
	Subtotal		12
	HS School Vocational Training	9	5
		10	5
		11	3
		12	8
		SP	5
	Subtotal		26
	HS School Vocational Training EE	9	1
	Subtotal		1
	HS School to Work	12	

		SP	12
	Subtotal		16
Subtotal			135
Valley Collaborative Middle School	MS EBS	7	4
		8	3
	Subtotal		7
	MS EBS ISN	6	1
		7	3
		8	3
	Subtotal		7
	MS EBS EE	8	2
	Subtotal		2
	MS PSB	7	4
		8	4
	Subtotal		8
	MS PSB ISN	7	5
	Subtotal		5
	MS PSB EE	8	1
	Subtotal		1
	MS School Life Skills Training ISN	6	1
		7	6
		8	3
	Subtotal		10
Subtotal			40
Total			258



Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Thomas E. Lent, Barrow Weatherhead Lent LLP
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Adopt and Clarify Definition of Eligible Employees for the Plan

The Valley Collaborative Board of Directors adopted the Public Agencies Post-Retirement Health Care Plan Trust, including the Public Agencies Post-Retirement Health Care Plan, effective June 18, 2015. The Master Plan Document, together with the variable provisions within the Adoption Agreement, as amended, outline the provisions of the Plan, including eligibility, member agency contribution, reimbursement/distribution of benefits, funding and investment direction. Article III of the Master Plan Document provides, in relevant part, that each employee of Valley Collaborative who is or becomes eligible for post-retirement health care and welfare benefits as specified in the Collaborative's applicable policies is defined as an "Eligible Employee". In a recent review of the Plan documents and communications with Kathryn Cannie, Senior Manager, Public Agency Retirement Services ("PARS"), it is recommended that the Collaborative clarify the definition of "Eligible Employee" and specifically adopt a definition that provides that an "Eligible Employee" is an individual employed with Valley Collaborative on or after July 1, 2015, who is fifty-five (55) years of age or older and who has provided a minimum of ten (10) years of service to Valley Collaborative.

Required Action:

- Vote to adopt or amend applicable policies to clarify the definition of "Eligible Employee" under the Plan, and pursuant to the Master Plan Document, together with provisions of the Adoption Agreement, as amended, to be an individual employed with Valley Collaborative on or after July 1, 2015, who is fifty-five (55) years of age or older, and who has provided a minimum of ten (10) years of service to Valley Collaborative.

Attachments:

- None



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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Student, DDS/MRC Adult Program Participant and Staff Making a Difference Award Presentation

We would like to recognize Valley's student and staff members of the month from the Elementary, Middle, and High School as well as a DDS/MRC Adult Program Participant and staff member from the Adult Services Program for all their hard work and dedication to the Collaborative. Additionally, we would like to recognize district-wide staff, Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources, and Kathleen Diaz, HR Generalist, for an exemplary DPPC audit and CORI audit this quarter.

Valley Elementary School

Student of the Month: Patrick Carrier

Staff of the Month: Noah Colon

Valley Middle School

Student of the Month: Ivy Lefebvre

Staff of the Month: Rajeswari Ravichandran

Valley Transitional High School – Alternative Programming

Student of the Month: Robert Pirnie

Staff of the Month: Brittany Maiuri

Valley Transitional High School – Transitional Programming

Student of the Month: Brandon Taipe

Staff of the Month: Madison Watford

Valley Adult Services

DDS/MRC Adult Program Participant: Jennifer Glidden

Staff of the Month: Rebecca Thibedore

Valley Collaborative – District Wide

Staff of the Month: Kari Morrin & Kathleen Diaz

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None



Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: DESE Collaborative Financial Review Update

Valley Collaborative received the draft results from the DESE Collaborative Financial Review performed by MARCUM Accounting for DESE back in May 2024. Please find review, attached. I am pleased to report that Valley received an 'exemplary' score with no findings. MARCUM presented at MOEC's general membership meeting on October 7, 2024 and Valley was the case study/exemplar.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education continues to work through some technical matters regarding how certain DESE guidance and regulations are being interpreted by both Collaboratives across the Commonwealth and DESE with regards to the 25% Surplus Calculation. Valley has been instructed not to change how it has calculated the 25% surplus. Valley is proud to be a thought partner and the pilot site for this new financial review process that all Collaboratives will undergo every six years.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None



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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) Abuser Registry Compliance Review Update

In 2020, Massachusetts enacted “Nicky’s Law” (M.G.L. c. 19C § 15), requiring the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) to “establish and maintain a registry of care providers against whom the [DPPC] has made a substantiated finding of registrable abuse.” The DPPC Abuser Registry was effective July 31, 2021, and is intended to protect individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (pursuant to a contract or agreement with the Department of Developmental Services (“DDS”)/funding administered by DDS) by barring care providers who have a substantiated finding of registrable abuse from working with other persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities. DDS and agencies defined as Employers (Valley Collaborative) by this law must first check the registry before employing a candidate.

To ensure compliance with Nicky’s Law, the DPPC is authorized to conduct periodic compliance reviews of DDS and agencies defined as Employers (Valley Collaborative). Valley has just completed its first compliance review on September 6, 2024. This review included DDS staff hired after July 1, 2023, along with their signed DPPC Consent Form and Valley’s internal policies and procedures to adhere to M.G.L. c. 19C § 15. We are pleased to report that Valley received an ‘exemplary’ score.

Required Action:

- Vote Human Resources & Payroll Policies and Procedures Manual

Attachments:

- Human Resources & Payroll Policies and Procedures Manual



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Disabled Persons Protection Commission

300 Granite Street • Suite 404 • Braintree • Massachusetts • 02184

MAURA T. HEALEY
GOVERNOR
KIMBERLEY L. DRISCOLL
LT. GOVERNOR
JAMES T. BRETT
CHAIRPERSON
KACY C. MAITLAND
COMMISSIONER
MARY BETH McMAHON
COMMISSIONER

NANCY A. ALTERIO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Phone: (617) 727-6465
FAX (617) 727-6469
Hotline: (800) 426-9009

By Electronic Mail

Kari Morrin
Valley Collaborative
11 Executive Park Drive
North Billerica, MA 01821

Re: DPPC Abuser Registry – Compliance Review Status

Dear Kari Morrin:

On September 17, 2024, pursuant to 118 CMR 15.05 (1), the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (“DPPC”) completed a review of your organization’s compliance with Nicky’s Law, M.G.L. c. 19C, § 15. Based on the review, the DPPC did not identify any significant concerns with regard to your organization’s compliance with the requirements of the DPPC Abuser Registry. The DPPC has no corrective actions to recommend, and encourages your continued diligent adherence to the requirements of Nicky’s Law.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact the DPPC Abuser Registry at DPPCregistry@mass.gov or (857) 403-0295.

Thank you very much for your cooperation during the review.

Sincerely,

Maya Bornstein
Assistant General Counsel



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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: DDS CORI Audit Results

On September 24, 2024, DDS performed a first-time CORI audit to ensure Valley Collaborative is in compliance with all procedures and protocols. The reviewer, Mitchell Greenblatt, provided excellent feedback to us on the organization of our systems and procedural steps. Valley received an 'exemplary' evaluation. Special thanks to Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources and Kathleen Diaz, HR Generalist, for ensuring the integrity of Valley's data and systems are continuously maintained.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health & Human Services
Department of Developmental Services
Division of Investigations – Central Office
1000 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02118

Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley L. Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen E. Walsh
Secretary

Sarah W. Peterson
Acting Commissioner

Bernard J. Murphy
Director of Investigation
Area Code (617) 624-7789

MEMORANDUM

To: Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources
Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Valley Collaborative

From: Mitchell Greenblatt
DDS CORI Administrator

Date: September 27, 2024

Re: CORI Audit of September 24, 2024

On September 24, 2024, a CORI audit was conducted at your agency. At the time CORI's of 40 employees were reviewed. As this was your initial DDS CORI audit, the CORI's reviewed were for all employees that provide services / supports to or have the potential to provide services / supports to DDS individuals. The result of this audit was that there were **no problems found** with the CORI's that were reviewed.

If you have any questions regarding this audit, please feel free to contact me at 857-225-7135 or e-mail me at Mitchell.Greenblatt@Mass.Gov.

ecc: Regional QE Director



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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Coordinated Program Review Update

Valley is undergoing its DESE Coordinated Program Review – Mid-Cycle Review. We successfully submitted our self-assessment materials on September 20, 2024. We look forward to welcoming DESE on-site to perform the onsite portion of this review the week of November 4th, 2024. Special thanks to Joia Mercurio, Deputy Director, for her leadership on this project and the Principals, Nicole Noska, Nick LeClair, and Heather Murphy, for their cooperation and assistance. We will update the Board at the November Board of Director's Meeting.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None



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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Lowell Public Schools Problem Resolution Systems Office State Withdrawal Letter

Lowell Public Schools received a complaint from the DESE Problem Resolution Systems (PRS) Office regarding a student who at one time attended Valley Collaborative. After the PRS Officer called me to discuss the case, they dismissed it. Please see attached letter.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- DESE Problem Resolution Systems Office State Withdrawal Letter



September 20, 2024

Gerri Yok
27 Perron Way
Lowell, MA 01854

Re: Intake PRS 12083
Student Reference: Vuthy Serey Yok
No Further Action Letter: Withdrawal

Dear Ms. Yok,

On September 13, 2024, you filed a complaint with the Problem Resolution System Office (PRS) of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) related to Vuthy Serey Yok (Student). You contacted the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) on September 19, 2024 indicating that you are withdrawing the complaint that you filed with the Department on behalf of the above referenced student on September 13, 2024.

As of the date of this letter, this complaint is closed, and the Department will not take further action on this complaint.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Feinberg".

Donna Feinberg, PRS Specialist
Problem Resolution System Office

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Paolillo".

Dean Paolillo, PRS Supervisor
Problem Resolution System Office

Cc: Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director, Valley Collaborative
Nicole Noska, Principal, Valley Transitional High School
Liam Skinner, Superintendent of Schools, Lowell Public Schools
Dr. Jennifer Dolloff, Director of Special Education, Lowell Public Schools



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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Methuen Public Schools Problem Resolution Systems Office State Complaint Decision

Methuen Public Schools received a complaint from the DESE Problem Resolution Systems (PRS) Office regarding a student who at one time attended Valley Collaborative. After the PRS Officer called me multiple times to discuss Methuen's case, Methuen's letter of finding stated that Valley Collaborative needed to provide professional training for its administrators and principals regarding regulations under 603 CMR 53.00, specifically the requirements for the contents of the notice under 603 MCR 53.06 and the written determination from the principal's hearing under 603 CMR 53.08. This updated training occurred on October 1, 2024 by Special Education Attorney Cat Lyons.

Although there was a minor technical misstep on Valley's part, Valley's feedback to the DESE PRS Office was that no complaint was filed against Valley so we did not have the opportunity to research the matter in order to respond. Special Education Attorney Cat Lyons responded to the Department regarding the procedural unfairness inherent against Valley Collaborative in this Methuen case. Dean Paolillo, PRS Supervisor from the PRS Resolutions Office, agreed that they did not follow their own guidelines and violated their protocols and procedures. In the spirit of continuous improvement, next time they will follow their own guidelines.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None



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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 24th, 2024
Re: Monthly Update – Heather Mackay, Principal of Valley Elementary School

The elementary school's theme for the start of this year is **"Bright Smiles, Fresh Starts"**. Welcome to a new school year, full of opportunities to explore passions, develop new skills, and make lasting memories with friends and staff. Each person in our school plays an important role in our school community. Let's work together to make this year the best one yet!

New Curriculum: This year we are rolling out our new ELA curriculum: EL Education. EL Education focuses on building meaningful learning and background knowledge through using content-rich, authentic texts and read-alouds on real-world topics in social studies, STEM, and literature. Through their learning modules, students deep dive into topics that naturally enhance their vocabulary and comprehension skills and simultaneously their social emotional learning through building habits of character that help them contribute to a better world.

New Adventures: This September, the Elementary School held our first ever overnight camping trip. A small group of students and Valley staff visited the East Boston Camp on the Stony Brook Conservation Land in Westford. Students went swimming, fishing, hiking, biking, and explored the outdoors. Students cooked hotdogs and roasted marshmallows over a campfire. For most students, it was their first camping adventure! Great memories were made by all and we hope that this will be the first of many successful trips. Teacher, Matt McCarthy (who spearheaded and organized the trip) says, "I wanted to give the kids an experience they might not normally have. Getting outside can be therapeutic for anyone, and I wanted to share that experience with the students." Student quotes after the camping trip included:

- "I had fun fishing. We should do it again!" - Abram Brittsan; 6th - Pelham, NH
- "I had fun hiking, talking with my friends, sleeping and eating noodles." - Patrick Carrier; 6th (Andover, MA)
- "Fishing, swimming, finding wood, the campfire, everything!" - Keeshawn Weinert; 4th (North Middlesex)
- "I liked sleeping over, waking up at 6:00 and fishing right away!" - William De Souza Diaz; 4th (Salem, MA)

In addition to the camping trip, classes have attended field trips to The Acton Discovery Center and We Rock the Spectrum, and have gone horseback riding and hiking. We are looking forward to many more field trips and enriching experiences throughout the year.

Open House: On September 25th, over twenty families and their students visited our school for our annual Open House. The night started with a meet and greet in the cafeteria with therapists and specialists before families made their way down to classrooms for presentations and tours from teachers.

Fresh Cuts: Barber, Phill McNulty (www.phillmcnulty.com), came to our school in anticipation of picture day. Twenty-eight students signed up for a fresh haircut. School Nurse, Kathryn Richard, organized the event and says, "It's honestly amazing, everyone loves it. It is meaningful to see the students' smiles when they see their new haircuts. Many of our students have sensory needs that make visiting a barber a challenge for families. This opportunity is greatly appreciated by families and students."

Dentist:

SMILE Mobile Dentist serviced students in teeth cleaning at the Valley Elementary School. With the support of the BCBAs, paras and teachers, fourteen students successfully participated.

Our current enrollment at the Elementary School is 81 students with referrals from Westford, Methuen, Lincoln, Londonderry and Weston.

Thank you for the continued support.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None



Valley Collaborative Elementary School Newsletter

October 2024



Last Month in Review

In September, we started the new school year, greeted new students, welcomed returning students, and families visited the school for an open house. Students went camping, hiking, and horseback riding. Classes went on field trips to the Acton Discovery Center and We Rock the Spectrum, and Reptile Shows of New England visited for an interactive assembly.



October Events

October 1st: School Picture Day

School pictures will be taken on October 1st. Information and packets were sent home. Please contact the school if you require more information.

October 2nd: Dentist Visit

SMILE mobile dentist will be visiting on October 2nd. Information and registration was sent home. Please contact the school nurse if you require more information.

October 16th, 17th, & 22nd: Pumpkin Picking Field Trips

Classes will be returning to Parlee Farms, in Tyngsboro, to pick pumpkins, take a hayride, visit farm animals, and enjoy apple cider & donuts. Classes will attend one of three trips.

October 31st: Halloween Event

On Halloween we will have our annual dance and Trunk-or-Treat event! Parents should be on the lookout the next week or so for a sign-up sheet & details on how to participate. Students may wear costumes that day without masks, weapons, or blood. If the student does not have a costume and would like to wear one, the school has some costumes that the student can borrow for the event.

Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

Please consider joining our Parent Advisory Group

All parents and families are welcome to come on board to collaborate, plan, and help support our school community. This is a fun way to give back, have your voices heard, share creativity with a team, and support families, students, staff, and the entire school community.

If you are interested, or would like further information, please email: Bryan Thomas
bthomas@valleycollaborative.org

October Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1 <i>School Pictures</i>	2 <i>Dentist Visit</i>	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14 <i>Columbus Day No School</i>	15	16 <i>Pumpkin Picking Trip</i>	17 <i>Pumpkin Picking Trip</i>	18
21	22 <i>Pumpkin Picking Trip</i>	23 <i>Early Release for Students</i>	24	25
28	29	30	31 <i>Halloween Trunk-or-Treat</i>	



Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Monthly Update - Nick LeClair, Principal Valley Transitional High School Alternative Program

The 2024 - 2025 school year has started off successfully for the Alternative Program. Valley's Psi Cohort, welcomed a new math teacher and two new special education assistants to our team. We also transitioned 13 students from our middle school programs, helping to ensure a smooth integration into high school.

The Alternative High School has introduced an exciting Engineering/STEM class that emphasizes hands-on learning. Students recently explored Bernoulli's Principle by flying paper airplanes and participated in balloon races, as well as building cardboard bridges. Students are eager for more hands-on opportunities with tools and advanced materials as the semester progresses.

Additionally, students have greatly benefited from reconnecting with the community through recent field trips. Excursions included visits to Salisbury State Park, Crane Estate for kayaking, Franklin Park Zoo, Purgatory Chasm, Honey Pot Hill, Seacoast Science Center, and Mount Watatic. These community experiences focused on academic skills as well as community building. Students are encouraged to reflect these healthy activities in their own communities.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None



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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 24th, 2024
Re: Monthly Update – Nicole Noska, Principal of Valley Middle School

In the Middle School's Alternative programming, students have settled nicely into the new school year. They have been participating in PBIS and enjoying trading in their Dojo points each week for items in the school store. Students have shown positive engagement in their academic classes. In ELA, they are reading the book *The Curious Vanishing of Beatrice Willoughby* and crafting essays. In Math, the students are learning about proportional relationships and ratios. In addition to the core academic subjects, students have also enjoyed the variety of elective and club options including Cooking, Dungeons and Dragons, Multi-Media, Music, and Coffee Cart, which is a new business endeavor for all of our young entrepreneurs. Electives offer the students a chance to connect with peers who share similar interests and are truly a building block to the school community and culture of the Middle School.

In the Middle School's Transitional programming, students had a fantastic time visiting Salem, MA and learning about the history of the Salem Witch Trials. In cooking class, students learned how to make some new dishes that they hadn't yet tried including, an enchilada casserole, chicken in a sun-dried tomato cream sauce, and a crustless apple pie. Students are enjoying reading the book *Wonder*, as a class, and are working on crafting letters. One of the most favorite activities in the Middle School continues to be community lunch where students are given the opportunity to budget for and purchase lunch in the community where they are able to practice their social skills and community navigation and safety.

Thank you for the continued support.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None



Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: October 24th, 2024
Re: Monthly Update – Nicole Noska, Principal of Transitional Programs, Valley Transitional High School

The Transitional High School kicked off the school year with the '24-25 Student Council election. Eleven students ran for the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Student Representative. The Student Council is planning a number of community service and charitable events this year including a non-perishable food drive, a coat drive, and an Earth Day outdoor clean up event. The council will also sponsor a school spirit week and a "No Name-Calling Week" in conjunction with the GSA Club.

The vocational opportunities continue to grow with the addition of 8 new worksites, which provide a range of opportunities including retail, food service, assembly, cleaning, animal care, and maintenance. Breakaway Ice Center, one of our worksites and community partners, recently sponsored a women's hockey game at Merrimack College and invited 30 students from the Transitional High School to attend. The students had an amazing time!

In the School and Vocational Training (SVT) class, academics are in full swing. Students started reading the classic book *To Kill a Mockingbird* and working on writing persuasive essays. Students were excited to return to school and learn the results of the most recent MCAS test this past spring with four students closing out their testing with passing scores. In addition to academics, students have also been working on their community living skills and enjoying the beautiful Fall weather during class outings to the Topsfield Fair, Mt. Wachusett, Franklin Park Zoo, and Honey Pot Orchard.

Thank you for the continued support.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None



Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: September 25, 2024
Re: Monthly Update - Matthew Gentile, Director of DDS Services

While many programs slow down in the summer months, Valley Collaborative's Adult Services Program continued pushing forward with a number of new opportunities for the individuals served, as well as an end point for a couple of our long-standing Adult Services community members.

Donald Bugden retired this summer after more than 30 years with the Adult Program. Donald was a popular member of the community, endearing himself to all the different staff and individuals who passed through our doors. Through all of Donald's experiences with Valley, he acted as a stabilizing face of Valley through programmatic and administrative changes. Donald's positive attitude never wavered in his time at Valley, and his presence throughout our surrounding communities, and out at different volunteer and work sites, helped to continuously show Valley in a positive light and embodied what Valley has to offer as a program, while more importantly highlighting what he personally had to offer as an employee and a person.

Julia McNally was part of the Valley community for just over 25 years before retiring from the program earlier this summer. Julia's infectious attitude and passion for opportunities to connect with her community through employment and volunteering will be missed as she had been a long-standing ambassador for the Adult Program as a whole.

Valley also lost a long-standing staff member to retirement as Sean Curran moved onto his next stage in life at the end of the summer. Sean was with Valley for over 30 years and impacted countless lives while connecting individuals with opportunities for competitive, individualized employment. Sean will leave his lasting impression on the program as many of the connections Valley maintains in the community were established through Sean's hard work and personability. Sean has long followed the Valley mission of empowering individuals to highlight and access opportunities that help to grow and create their own individualized path. While Sean's experience and personality will be missed, Valley is thrilled that he has decided to stay on in a consultant role, as we could think of no greater wealth of knowledge to help push us into the future.

Throughout all of these transitions, Valley programming continued evolving, as we began to put a greater emphasis on opportunities to help the individuals explore their own interests, while also exposing them to new, undiscovered possibilities. The Adult Program used the summer months as a chance to institute some newer skill building and interest exploration into the areas of travel training, community mapping, the power of writing out experiences and feelings, cooking, art, community service, accessing community resources, and a number of everyday living skills.

As Fall approaches, Valley will continue to highlight new opportunities for the individuals to learn and grow while maintaining the long-standing employment and volunteer opportunities that define the mission of Valley and program as a whole.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None



Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director
Renato Silva, School Safety and Facilities Manager
Date: October 24, 2024
Re: Valley Collaborative School Safety Update

Valley prides itself on offering excellent programing and striving to find new ways to strengthen and enhance the Collaborative – all while being ever-vigilant of the safety and well-being of all who pass through its doors.

Valley's School Safety Committee has initiated several directives aimed at bolstering the safety of our students, staff, and individuals, collaborative-wide.

We have instituted a program whereby all classroom and office door locks will utilize a “one-key” system where all internal locks will be accessible by the same key. These keys will be assigned and electronically logged to each staff member with Facilities and top-administration holding master keys which would work on exterior and highly sensitive interior doors as well.

At 40 Linnell Circle, we are installing speed bumps in targeted areas of the parking lot to greatly reduce the speed with which vehicles enter and exit thereby creating a safer and calmer atmosphere for all pedestrians.

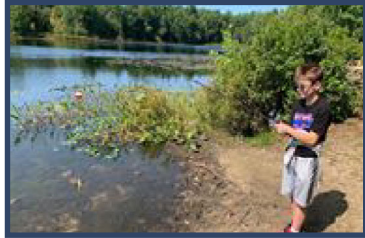
Most recently, three exterior doors which had been showing advanced signs of age and wear, have been replaced with heavy-duty commercial-grade aluminum doors. These entrances have also been fitted with state-of-the-art electronic remote access badge readers to be utilized by authorized staff.

Required Action:

None

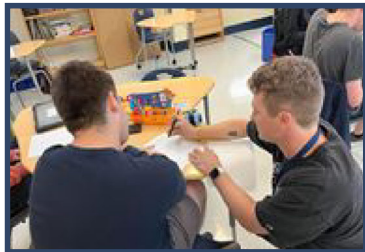
Attachments:

None



We are: Adventuring

■ Page 2: Students at the Elementary School recently went on their first-ever over-night camping trip.



We are: Achieving

■ Page 4: Students in the Transitional Middle and High School Programs are excited about learning this year.



We are: Moving On

■ Page 7: Adult Services recently said farewell to several long-standing community members who are retiring.

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Volume 13, Issue 1 News for the extended Valley Collaborative community Fall 2024

A Smooth Start to the School Year



RENOWNED SCIENTIST AND AUTISM ADVOCATE TEMPLE GRANDIN WAS THE FEATURED GUEST AT THIS YEAR'S ORIENTATION DAY, WHERE SHE SPOKE ON THE POWER OF "VISUAL THINKING." STAFF MEMBERS, WHO RECEIVED COPIES OF DR. GRANDIN'S BOOKS, SAID THAT SHE WAS ONE OF THE MOST INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS VALLEY HAS EVER WELCOMED.

Dear members of the Valley Collaborative Community:

Valley has had a smooth opening to the new school year. On Orientation Day, staff had the opportunity to hear Dr. Temple Grandin speak about Autism in education and the power of "visual thinking." Dr. Grandin was one of the most inspirational keynote speakers we have had the privilege of working with on opening day. Valley provided one of Dr. Grandin's bestselling books to every staff member. If you are looking for some great fall reading, we encourage you to read Dr. Grandin's books, *Autism in Education: The Way I see It* and *Visual Thinking*.

We were also pleased to welcome back Dr. Anthony Bent, Leadership Consultant, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

(MASS) as our guest speaker on Orientation Day. Dr. Bent has led Valley Collaborative's leadership development program for the past decade.

As you read the school updates in this newsletter, you will see that our students have many amazing opportunities to participate in community outings that afford them activities that help to develop their social/emotional, behavioral, and regulatory skills and instill a sense of belonging at Valley. The Elementary school just hosted their annual open house, which was well-attended by many families. Our Middle and High School are scheduled to hold their annual open house October 17, 2024.

*continued on page 7

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Elementary School: Bright Smiles, Fresh Starts

The Elementary School's theme for the start of this year is "Bright Smiles, Fresh Starts."

This year is full of opportunities for students to explore their passions, develop new skills, and make lasting memories with their friends and teachers.

New Curriculum

This year, the Elementary School is rolling out a new ELA curriculum called EL Education. As teacher Meghan Waters explains, "EL Education focuses on building meaningful learning and background knowledge through using content-rich, authentic texts and read-alouds on real-world topics in social studies, STEM, and literature. Through their learning modules, students deep dive into topics that naturally enhance their vocabulary and comprehension skills and simultaneously their social emotional learning through building habits of character that help them contribute to a better world."

New Adventures

This September, the Elementary School held our first ever overnight camping trip. A small group of students and Valley staff visited the East Boston Camp on the Stony Brook Conservation Land in Westford. Students went swimming, fishing, hiking, biking, and explored the outdoors. Students cooked hotdogs and roasted marshmallows over a campfire. For most students it was their first camping adventure! Great memories were made by all and we hope that this will be the first of many successful trips. Teacher, Matt McCarthy (who spearheaded and organized the trip) says: "I wanted to give the kids an experience they might not normally have. Getting outside can be therapeutic for anyone, and I wanted to share that experience with the students."



FROM LEFT: 6TH GRADER PATRICK CARRIER, 4TH GRADER LANDON MAILLOUX, AND 6TH GRADER ABRAM BRITTSAN ENJOYING MORNING HOT CHOCOLATE BY THE CAMPFIRE.

Here's what some of our students had to say about the adventure:

"I had fun fishing. We should do it again!" Abram Brittsan, 6th grader

"I had fun hiking, talking with my friends, sleeping and eating noodles." Patrick Carrier, 6th grader.

"Fishing, swimming, finding wood, the campfire, everything!" Keeshawn Weinert, 4th grader.

"I liked sleeping over, waking up at 6:00 and fishing right away!" William De Souza Diaz, 4th grader.

In addition to the camping trip, classes have attended field trips to The Acton Discovery Center, We Rock the Spectrum, and have gone horseback riding and hiking. We are looking forward to many more field trips and enriching experiences throughout the year.

Open House

On September 25th, over twenty families and their students visited our school for our annual Open House. The night started with a meet and greet in the cafeteria with therapists and specialists before families made their way down to classrooms for presentations and tours from teachers.

Fresh Cuts

Barber Phill McNulty came to our school in anticipation of picture day and found 28 students ready and waiting for fresh haircuts. School Nurse Kathryn Richard organized the event and says: "It's honestly amazing, everyone loves it. It is meaningful to see the students' smiles when they see their new haircuts. Many of our students have sensory needs that make visiting a barber a challenge for families. This opportunity is greatly appreciated by families and students." ■



4TH GRADER NELSON LOZADA WITH VISITING BARBER PHILL MCNULTY

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Valley Transitional High School: Alternative Program – New Year, New Faces

The High School Alternative Program is kicking off the new year by welcoming a number of new faces. Joining the ranks are a new STEM and engineering teacher, a history teacher, a new algebra and biology teacher and a special education assistant who is reentering the teaching profession after a break.

Hands on learning

Ralph Arabian is a long-time teacher of STEM subjects but new to Valley this year. His classes combine principles of engineering and physics with hands-on projects. In recent weeks, Ralph's students have been learning about the forces of lift, thrust, drag and gravity, then applying their new knowledge to concrete exercises, including creating balloon rockets and constructing communication towers out of paper. Ralph will also be helping students work on more ambitious design projects in Valley's woodworking space. That combination of concept and real-world application draws from Ralph's own background as a structural engineer. Before he went into teaching nearly two decades ago, Ralph managed sections of the Big Dig, something that inspired him to change careers. "I'd hire kids out of high school and college and they really didn't have the STEM background they needed, so I decided to do something about it."

A new role at Valley

Colleen McAnespie is no stranger to Valley. She worked in the Adult Services program as a case manager for two and a half years. When Colleen shared her desire to become a teacher with program director Matt Gentile, he helped her make it happen. These days Colleen is teaching history to Valley high schoolers, guiding them through



FROM LEFT, NEW STAFF MEMBERS AT VALLEY ALTERNATIVE MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL: CRISTINA LEBBA, TIM McDONALD, COLLEEN MCANESPIE AND RALPH ARABIAN.

lessons on the Klondike gold rush or the Euphrates River. She says that while she never imagined that she'd end up being a history teacher, her new classroom at Valley seems like exactly the right place for her. "The kids are amazing and I feel a really strong connection with them," says Colleen.

Climbing great heights

Tim McDonald has been in education for 20 years, teaching math and working as an administrator, most recently at a middle school. So when he joined Valley as a new ninth and tenth grade teacher, he hit the ground running—or rather, hiking. In addition to teaching algebra and biology, Tim has quickly become an active part of the outdoor education program here, joining students and staff for hiking trips, trail walks, beach outings and apple picking. "We hiked Wachusett one week, followed by a trip to Purgatory Chasm," says Tim, noting that the opportunity to see students outside of the classroom

has been really rewarding. Tim also applauds the cohesive culture among staff and administrators at Valley. "We're all here working together to support the social and emotional needs of these kids and that's just a great feeling."

Back from a break

Cristina Lebba recently began working at Valley as a special education assistant. While her role supporting Valley's special education staff is new, Cristina says that it also feels deeply familiar. "I started my career working with individuals at Methuen High School and absolutely fell in love with it." As she embarks on a new education adventure, Cristina says she couldn't be happier with her new position. "This is absolutely the right place for me." ■

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Excited to Learn at Valley Middle School

In the Transitional Middle School, ‘welcome back’ has an extra special meaning for teacher Shana Dunlevy. Shana, who is celebrating her 10th year of teaching, began her career at Valley as a paraprofessional while she attended school to earn her master’s degree and teacher licensure. When asked to reflect on the key to her longevity, she points to the synergism of the Transitional Middle School Program. “We have a supportive administrative team who sees the potential for growth and encourages staff development. Then it’s the collaboration between my team: therapies, special education assistants, transitional aides, they are always open to problem solving, even the most difficult of situations,” says Shana. Then, of course, there are her amazing students. “After all, middle school is 2-3 years, that’s a significant amount of time together and we really become a family.”

During a recent history class, Shana reviewed a lesson on early civilizations and the role of hunters and gatherers, a topic that captivated student Keegan Graham’s attention. History is one of his favorite subjects, especially when given the opportunity to discuss nomadic empires. Keegan, an eighth grade student, is looking forward to finishing out his middle school career with a year full of his favorite things including swimming, reading the book *Wonder*, making a class song in music, field trips, hiking, and earning PBIS dojo points to buy sports cards in the school store.

Next door in Victoria Clauson’s classroom, students are putting the final touches on a unique ELA assignment: writing letters to their future selves. Presented with a writing prompt and graphic organizer, students wrote letters reflecting on their favorite subjects and setting goals for



TEACHER HANNAH MORIARTY DURING AN ELA LESSON WITH STUDENTS HAILEY HAMILTON, DINITRI SCOTT AND ELIJAH TONG-ROUSSEAU

the future. Eighth grade student Rose Morin is looking forward to expanding her reading comprehension skills and learning new recipes in cooking class this year. She would also like to see the class learn and incorporate Spanish vocabulary words. Having met her previous goal of identifying coins, Rose would like to focus this year on learning how to set her alarm clock in order to wake up for school on time—an important life skill that will benefit her as she transitions into high school and adulthood.

In the Alternative Middle School, ELA teacher Hannah Moriarty, who is also celebrating her tenth year at Valley, is thrilled to have found a genre that the students enjoy. “This year the students are really into mysteries. We’re currently reading *The Curious Vanishing of Beatrice Willoughby* as a group,” explains Hannah. “When you find the right genre or series that gives the students that all important ‘buy-in,’ the possibilities are endless. It’s gratifying to watch the students grow each year as readers and writers.”

Just down the hall, math teacher Kristen Saunders-Brown is in her first year teaching at Valley. Ms. Saunders-Brown began the year with a holistic approach toward teaching math. The first initiative was to fa-

miliarize the students with academic language and build the foundational skills that they will need beyond mathematics. “Now when students see an objective such as ‘determine the proportional relationships between two quantities using ratio tables’ they’re not overwhelmed with the complex language. They are not only able to understand the language being used but they can apply their knowledge to solve the problem,” explains Kristen. Her goal for the year is to “push the students beyond the boundary of what they think they can do. They are capable of more than they think.”

Kristen encourages students to utilize a multi-modal, layered approach to committing things to memory. To aid in this process, students have created individualized resource binders, which will assist them with self-advocacy and improve their executive functioning. Among the students in her class is eighth grade student Aydin Kelley. When asked how his school year is going so far he noted, “I never enjoyed school. I didn’t usually make it through the day and I’d ask to go home. That hasn’t happened since I started in September.” ■

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Valley Transitional High School: Transitional Programs – Planning for the Future

This year, students in the Transitional High School Programs are excited about working in the community, graduating, reading and school council. School and Life Skills student Anna Burnett is looking forward to attending field trips this year where she can continue to build her community living skills to support her long-term goal of attending college. Upon graduation, Cassidy Dufault would like to utilize her vocational training and experiences at Valley to transition to a job at an animal shelter.

In the School and Vocational Training (SVT) classrooms, many students were thrilled to check the MCAS off of their “to-do” lists when results came in at the beginning of the school year. Scott Delano is feeling “secure and hopeful for my future” after learning the exciting news that he had met a passing score on the test he took last spring. “I have Valley staff to thank for my success!” he exclaimed.

Lori Escolas, who has been a teacher for nearly twenty-five years, five of which have been at Valley, credits the students with their successes. “My students work very hard in school and learn test taking strategies and MCAS academic content. I am very proud of them and delighted that each student will be able to graduate with a diploma.” Gavin Wargo and Taejon Vilela-Martinez are also celebrating MCAS victories. “At first, I genuinely didn’t think I would pass but once my teacher told me that I passed I was really happy. I feel like

5

I overcame a huge milestone in my life and I don’t have to worry about that part any-



TEACHER LORI ESCOLAS CREDITS THE HARD WORK OF HER STUDENTS IN REACHING THEIR GOAL OF PASSING THE MCAS TEST.

more,” said Gavin. Taejon added, “I feel great! I am really happy that I passed the Bio as that was really a struggle. Jake (HS literacy coach) really helped me and I am really happy he did.” Jillian Gould is “feeling proud” to have achieved her goal and is excited “to tell others about it.”

For the high school freshmen, the work is just beginning. In the School and Vocational Training program, students are studying the literary classic *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. This coming-of-age novel is told from the perspective of a young girl and helps the students understand the themes and concepts of this complex story from the 1930s. The plot revolves around an attorney defending a black man who was wrongfully accused of assaulting a white woman. The book emphasizes the importance of understanding and compassion, values we stress in class here at Valley Collaborative. Explains Lori: “Teaching is not just about imparting knowledge, but inspiring change. That’s the mantra I try to live by.”

The ‘24-25 Transitional High School Student Council held elections in early October. Eleven stu-

dents campaigned for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Each candidate brings a unique perspective and exciting ideas. High School senior and presidential hopeful Corey Erickson described his motivation for running for student government. “I see the school and I see a lot of great people. I want to build a strong, diverse committee that is reflective of our student body.” Student Nicholas Porcaro, also a senior, envisions “a school with less problems and a positive future ahead.” His campaign flyers note the need for a “talented, creative president” with a focus on positive school change and fun. Caiden Berthet, a sophomore running for Vice President, highlighted his kindness, sense of humor, and responsibility as the personal traits that would make him an outstanding VP. Having been a Student Representative last year, Caiden enjoyed attending meetings and participating in charitable initiatives throughout the year. The Student Council will kick off its first event later this month with a Holiday Canned Goods Drive to benefit the Merrimack Valley Food Bank. ” ■

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Adult Services: A Season of Change

Valley Collaborative's Adult Services Program continued pushing forward this summer with a number of new opportunities for the individuals served, as well as an end point for a couple of our long-standing Adult Services community members.

Donald Bugden retired this summer after more than 30 years with the Adult Program. Donald was a popular member of the community, endearing himself to all the different staff and individuals who passed through our doors. Through all of Donald's experiences with Valley, he acted as a stabilizing face of Valley through programmatic and administrative changes. Donald's positive attitude never wavered in his time at Valley, and his presence throughout our surrounding communities, and out at different volunteer and work sites, helped to continuously show Valley in a positive light and embodied what Valley has to offer as a program, while more importantly highlighting what he personally had to offer as an employee and a person.

Julia McNally was part of the Valley community for just over 25 years before retiring from the program earlier this summer. Julia's infectious attitude and passion for opportunities to connect with her community through employment and volunteering will be missed as she had been a long-standing ambassador for the Adult Program as a whole.

Valley also lost a long-standing staff member to retirement as Sean Curran moved onto his next stage in life at the end of the summer. Sean was with Valley for over 30 years and impacted countless lives while connecting individuals with opportunities for competitive, individualized employment. Sean will leave his lasting impression on the program as many of the connections Valley



FROM LEFT: SEAN CURRAN (RETIRED) WITH MARK FITTS AND MEG CROUCHER.



DONALD BUGDEN (RETIRED) WITH JULIA MCNALLY (RETIRED)

maintains in the community were established through Sean's hard work and personability. Sean has long followed the Valley mission of empowering individuals to highlight and access opportunities that help to grow and create their own individualized path. While Sean's experience and personality will be missed, Valley is thrilled that he has decided to stay on in a consultant role, as we could think of no greater wealth of knowledge to help push us into the future. ■

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Provider Staff Recognition Night



FROM LEFT: KELLY LAWLESS (DDS REGIONAL DIRECTOR), ELIZABETH MORSE (FORMER DEPUTY DDS COMMISSIONER), DR. CHRIS SCOTT, MATT GENTILE, KATLYN WINCH, HOLLY TIERNEY, JANE RYDER (FORMER DDS COMMISSIONER).

This year DDS reinstituted its Provider Staff Recognition Evening. At this event, DDS will be recognizing provider staff who have gone above and beyond to positively impact the lives of the individuals they work with. Valley nominated three staff who supported an individual, who is part of the Adult Services Program, during a difficult time when his mother passed away, leaving him living alone in their apartment with limited supports.

These three staff, Holly Tierney, Katlyn Winch, and Angela Fisette, all stepped outside of their roles with Valley and supported the individual to help pick up the pieces and get his life back in order. From supporting him through the grieving process, to helping him to clean his apartment after program hours, to taking him to get a haircut on the weekend, these staff stepped up and supported the individual in his greatest time of need; simply out of the kindness of their own hearts.

No one asked them to do what they did, but they immediately went into action when they saw that an individual we serve was at a difficult point in life with limited supports to help him navigate the unknown. These three women personify what it means to work at Valley and to fully embrace the mission of supporting the individuals we serve.

Valley congratulates Holly Tierney, Katlyn Winch and Angela Fisette for having their outstanding service recognized by DDS. We're all proud of you! ■

A Smooth Start to the School Year

**continued from cover*

In our Central Office, our small but mighty team has been busy with audits, five in total, over the last few months. Good thing that our team excels under pressure and tight timelines. 😊

Valley Collaborative received the draft results from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Collaborative Financial Review performed by MARCUM Accounting for DESE (May 2024). Because of our model systems and procedures that have been developed and implemented over the past decade, we were selected to be one of the pilots for this draft financial review protocol. I am pleased to report that Valley received an 'exemplary' score with no findings. MARCUM presented at Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaborative's (MOEC) general membership meeting in October 7, 2024 and Valley was the case study/exemplar.

Valley is undergoing its DESE Coordinated Program Review – Mid-Cycle Review. We successfully submitted our self-assessment materials on September 20, 2024. We look forward to welcoming DESE on-site to perform the fieldwork portion of this review the week of November 4th, 2024. Special thanks to Joia Mercurio, Deputy Director, for her leadership on this project and the Principals, Nicole Noska, Nick LeClair, and Heather Murphy, for their cooperation and assistance. We will update the Board at the November Board of Director's Meeting.

**continued on back page*

Valley Collaborative Leadership Team



Chris A. Scott, PhD

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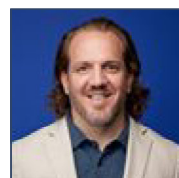
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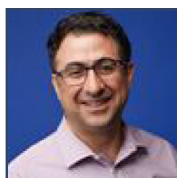
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Valley Collaborative Board

Chair: Dr. Jay Lang

Superintendent, Chelmsford Public Schools

Dr. Kerry Clery

Superintendent, Billerica Public Schools

Mr. Steven Stone

Superintendent, Dracut Public Schools

Dr. Geoff Bruno

Superintendent, Groton-Dunstable Regional School District

Dr. Denise Pigeon

Superintendent, Nashoba Valley Technical School District

Mr. Brad Morgan

Superintendent, North Middlesex Regional School District

Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan

Superintendent, Tewksbury Public Schools

Dr. Michael Flanagan

Superintendent, Tyngsborough Public Schools

Dr. Christopher Chew

Superintendent, Westford Public Schools

A Smooth Start to the School Year

*continued from previous page

To ensure compliance with Nicky's Law, the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) is authorized to conduct periodic reviews of Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and agencies defined as Employers (Valley Collaborative). Valley has just completed its first compliance review on September 6, 2024. This review included DDS staff hired after July 1, 2023, along with their signed DPPC Consent Form and Valley's internal policies and procedures to adhere to M.G.L. c. 19C § 15. We are pleased

to report that Valley received an 'exemplary' score.

On September 24, 2024, DDS performed a first-time CORI audit to ensure Valley Collaborative is in compliance with all procedures and protocols. The reviewer, Mitchell Greenblatt, provided excellent feedback to us on the organization of our systems and procedural steps. Valley received an 'exemplary' evaluation. Special thanks to Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources and Kathleen Diaz, HR Generalist, for ensuring the integrity of Valley's data and systems are

continuously maintained.

Currently, Valley is undergoing our annual DESE Independent Financial Audit, completed by Dan Schaffner and Jeff Banville from Fritz DeGuglielmo, LLC. Both auditors were on site at Central Office for a few days over the summer to collect many artifacts required for this review. This annual audit is going very well and we are hoping to be able to share the final results of this audit in November.

Please reach out if you have any questions or if I can assist in any way. My door is always open.

Chris A. Scott,
Executive Director

From: Linda Balfour <lbalfour@valleycollaborative.org>

Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 8:14 AM

To: Valley Elementary School Teachers <VCES_Teachers@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Special Education Assistants <Special_Education_Assistants@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Trans High School - Alternative Teachers <AltHS_Teachers@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Trans High School - Alternative Therapist <AltHS_Therapy@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Middle School - Teachers <MS_Teachers@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Middle School - Therapist <MS_Therapy@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Trans High School - Transitional Therapists <TransHS_Therapy@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Trans High School - Transitional Teachers <TransHS_Teachers@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Trans High School - Alternative Therapist <AltHS_Therapy@valleycollaborative.org>

Cc: Valley Technology Department <it@ValleyCollaborative.org>; Valley Principals <Principals@valleycollaborative.org>; Valley Assistant Principals <Assistant_Principals@valleycollaborative.org>; Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>; Kari Morrin <kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org>; Joia Mercurio <jmercurio@valleycollaborative.org>

Subject: Good Morning and PL Day Information



Hello, Valley Learners!

I hope the beginning of the school year has been a wonderful experience for you.

It is such an exciting time to meet new students and colleagues and catch up with returning students and fellow educators. As we know, it is also a time for setting new goals and establishing the foundation for new learning for students and adults alike. I know that you all learn something new both professionally and personally every day but now is the time for us to begin our “official” Professional Learning at Valley and have our very first *Wicked Smaaht*

Wednesday of the 2024 - 2025 school year!

As always, our PL Day will have something for everyone. To keep everyone in the loop, following is a synopsis of the afternoon activities on Wednesday, September 25th.

SEAs

- Our *new SEAs and those SEAs who joined Valley after October 2023* will view the recorded session of the first SEA PL from last October, *Special Education Classroom Basics, and Supporting Nursing Needs for Students in Special Education Out-of-District Settings*. The session will be facilitated by Bryan Thomas at the elementary school and Brian Mihalek at the MS/HS. Your principals will let you know where that will take place.
- *Returning SEAs* who attended the October PL session last year will engage in some new, self directed online learning via their new Vector accounts. Everyone should have received the information from Mazyar Moshtaghi regarding how to log in and access the assigned courses. A member of the tech team will be present at each school to provide any assistance you may need. Your principals will let you know where that will take place.

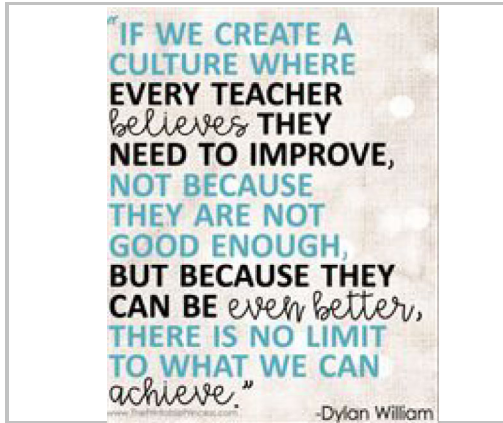
Teachers/Therapists/Specialists

- Teachers/Therapists/Specialists will be the fortunate recipients of some professional learning from in-house experts.
 - Meghan Waters will present to the elementary group on the following topic: *Understanding New Curriculum Data and Applying to Teacher Instruction*
 - Nick LeClair's presentation for his teachers will be *Implementing SMART Goals for Student Success: Collaborative Strategies for Academic Teams*
 - Nicole Noska will share information on the following topic: *Understanding and Implementing the New IEP Format*

Your principals will let you know where these sessions will take place.

As you can see, the sessions promise to be very informative and engaging - a great way to kick-off our Valley PL days! This year we will continue to build on the solid foundation of professional learning that has been built over the past several years.

Our thought for the day is about what you have created here....



... and that includes every person at Valley, no matter what your job description is. I hope you have a wonderful day of learning - this morning with your students and this afternoon with your colleagues as you continue to build that culture of continuous learning for everyone.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

Happy Learning!
Linda

Linda A. Balfour
Academy Facilitator
Office of Professional Learning
Valley Collaborative

From: [Chris Scott](#)
To: [All Valley Collaborative Staff](#)
Subject: A+
Date: Friday, October 18, 2024 10:13:00 AM

Dear Staff,

The Open Houses at the Elementary, Middle and High schools this fall were amazing. Valley is a very special place because of your commitment and care and dedication to our mission. You were all enthusiastic and hopeful for a meaningful year that holds great promise for our students.

As you are aware, parents and school districts constantly tour our programs to determine if Valley is the right setting for their child/student – first impressions matter and we can all be very proud. All of the schools received an A+ tour-ability score, as classrooms were impeccably clean and in good order. Please let me know if you ever need anything to better support our students so they thrive at Valley and to ensure they experience a sense of belonging.

My door is always open,

Chris

*Chris A. Scott, Ph.D.
Executive Director*



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