

the Link

BVT PARENT NEWSLETTER • FALL 2025

the
Compass
insert

Check out what's inside this issue...

- 2 Let's Get a Physical
- 3 Funding Their Future is GRRREAT!
School Calendar 2025-2026
Bus Schedule
- 4 A Lucky Find
'Tis the Season...
Link up...

Are Your Ducks in a Row?
Schedule Changes
Ready for College?
School Counseling Calendar 2025-2026
Assessments

Embrace Change

There is a shift in the air, a sense of excitement and anticipation that accompanies the start of school. Much like embarking on an incredible adventure, this year promises to be filled with opportunities as we blaze new trails with a change in leadership and bring renewed energy to our school's culture — one filled with promise, partnership, and possibilities. After a summer of preparation, we are eager to open our schoolhouse and greet our students and staff. I am honored and excited to serve as your new superintendent-director, encouraging innovation as we all learn to **EMBRACE CHANGE**.

Anthony E. Steele II — Superintendent-Director



My leadership experiences and growth were not accidental, but rather a philosophy in action that has allowed us to develop talent, focus on our future goals, and ensure smooth transitions.

Our strategic and mindful succession plans allow us to maintain and develop a deep bench of talent that ensures the upward trajectory of our school for generations to come. We are well prepared to build on our impressive legacy and are excited to introduce some of the key players in transforming the school into the successful model it is today.

We've Got Talent

It is an exciting time for our school as we navigate a period of leadership change, with familiar faces stepping into new roles and new talent bringing fresh energy to our shared mission. While transitions often come with uncertainty, our veteran administrators bring a wealth of knowledge and talent to their respective roles.

Dr. Matthew Connors – Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum Director

Dr. Connors will play a key role in overseeing curriculum development, instructional practices, and related areas. Working collaboratively, he will ensure high-quality educational programs across all academic and career and technical areas, monitor curriculum implementation, and support staff development.

Mrs. Michele S. Denise – Principal

Mrs. Denise proudly became the first female principal in BVT's history. In this role, she remains committed to fostering a school culture rooted in high expectations, mutual respect, and collegiality, while continuing her legacy of service and leadership.

Mrs. Kerri Baltramaitis & Mr. Bryant Laflamme – Vocational Directors

Mrs. Baltramaitis and Mr. Laflamme work in collaboration with our vocational instructors and play an integral role in meeting modern industry's rigorous and relevant standards with the rich offerings of our career vocational-technical shops. Under Mrs. Baltramaitis' guidance, our Cooperative Education (Co-Op) program is impressively growing and continues to inspire our students to delve deeper into their career paths.

Mrs. Catherine Proctor & Mr. David Champagne – Assistant Principals

As the newest members of the administrative team, Mrs. Proctor and Mr. Champagne each bring leadership experience, which will be instrumental in developing and maintaining a school culture that ensures a safe and positive environment for all our students.

Our Future Goals

United by a bold vision, the future is exciting for many reasons, and we have several immediate goals for the district:

- **Expand Access to Career Technical Education (CTE)**
Establish the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute, which will expand our adult Moonlight Program to implement 200-hour, credential-based programs in Advanced Manufacturing, Electrical, HVAC, Welding, and Plumbing. This grant-funded program will allow us to deliver high-quality CTE to adults interested in upskilling and retraining, provide skilled labor to the local workforce, and generate non-taxpayer revenue to help fund the school.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Across the Curriculum**
Continue to refine our AI governance policies as we embrace this technology in our teaching and learning. We are training our academic teachers and vocational instructors to use AI in their classrooms and shops, and likewise, we are training our students on the responsible use of AI. It is vital that we stay current with emerging AI tools and practices and that our graduates are prepared to utilize AI in the modern workplace.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

• **Maximize the Benefits of the “Skills-Based-Hiring” Movement**
Through our Co-Op program, we will continue to increase the number of students placed in Co-Op employment positions. Over 180 students participate in Co-Op each year, providing a seamless pathway to employment after graduation. Our students learn sophisticated career planning through their Career Enrichment courses, and we are giving extra attention to analyzing emerging opportunities as the Skills-Based-Hiring movement grows nationwide. We will also continue to work with employers to create attractive opportunities for seniors going directly to work after graduation.

• **Expand the Role of The Valley Tech Education Foundation**
With sensitivity that there are fewer tax and state dollars available each year, it is imperative to generate alternative revenue streams to maintain the quality of education at BVT. We wish to increase the Education Foundation’s efforts to seek charitable donations through businesses, foundations, and the private sector, and expand fundraising activities and events. The goal is to strengthen the quality of education and student opportunities at BVT while decreasing the reliance on member town assessments.

Meeting these goals will help us create a vibrant, inclusive, and dynamic school culture, one where everyone feels connected, supported, and proud to be part of our community.

Stay Connected
To make sense of all these changes and in true BVT spirit, we’ll plunge in, find a sense of rhythm, and move forward as a united team. An open dialogue between educators, families, and students is the foundation of a strong school community.

Look for opportunities to meet our leadership team, academic teachers, vocational instructors, and support staff this fall at a variety of school events. Whether you’re attending athletic events, curriculum nights, or our homecoming weekend, these moments offer valuable chances to connect with each other.

Beyond in-person events, you’ll continue to hear from us through our multiple communication channels, such as our robust website, social media platforms, and this newsletter. This allows us to remain visible, accessible, and engaged with you, the valued members of our school community.

Continued on page 4



Let’s Get a Physical

Get Your Teen Back-to-School Ready

As the back-to-school season approaches, most parents focus on school supplies, new clothes, and organizing schedules. A visit to your teen’s primary care physician is not always at the top of every parent’s checklist. While it may seem like just another thing to do, these routine physical exams keep your teen safe, healthy, and ready to succeed at BVT and beyond.

During the exam, a healthcare provider evaluates your teen’s overall health, which includes:

- Review of medical history,
- Check height, weight, heart rate, and lungs,
- Ensures vaccinations are up to date,
- Assesses physical fitness,
- Identifies any health concerns,
- Discusses mental and emotional well-being.

In our quest to be fit for life, annual physicals help detect potential health problems early on, and benefits include:

Preventative Care: Adolescents are still growing, and a yearly exam allows doctors to monitor development and identify any new or ongoing health issues—like heart problems, scoliosis, or other health issues that might not be obvious—before they interfere with school or extracurricular activities.

Updated Medical Records: Our school nurses need access to students’ current health information. Knowing your teen’s allergies, medications, or chronic conditions allows them to respond quickly and appropriately during an emergency.

Supporting Mental Health: Many providers screen for anxiety, depression, and stress that often surface or intensify during the school year. An exam gives your teen a safe space to discuss their feelings.

Safety in Physical Activities: Whether your teen is joining a sports team, participating in PE class, or our alternative health program Nutrition & Fitness for Life, it’s vital to ensure they’re physically prepared for exercise and sports. A physical can uncover conditions like asthma, joint problems, or heart irregularities that might require special attention.

Eligibility to Play Sports
Given that all students must pass a physical exam to participate in high school athletics, we spoke with our Athletic Trainer, Molly Awiszus, about the importance of getting a physical exam before the start of the sports season.

“In addition to helping us determine a student’s eligibility to play sports, the exam provides us with health information and establishes baseline data for tracking health progression throughout the year,” said Ms. Awiszus.

She explained that the baseline vitals aid her in preventing injuries by helping her understand restrictions such as asthma, ensure safe participation in sports, and help manage and treat injuries and medical conditions. It’s also used in emergency situations to develop individualized treatment plans and return-to-play protocols.

Student-Focused Health Care
Your teen’s health and wellness journey is supported by our School Based Health Center (SBHC) staff, who encourage them to see their primary care physician for an annual physical. However, if that is not possible, the SBHC has summer hours for physicals on **Friday, August 8th**. Sign up today at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/summerphysicalform.



Learn How a Grant Enhances Skills & Builds Curious Minds

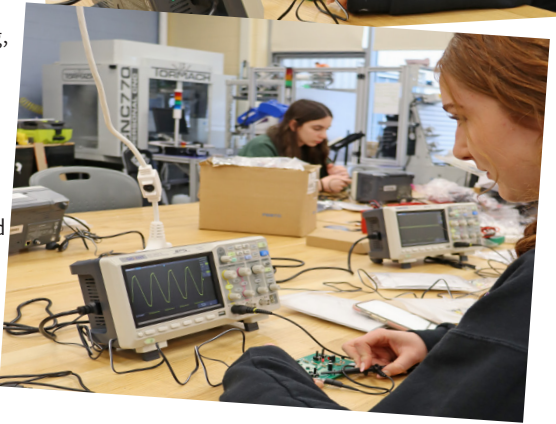
Thanks to a \$3,390 STEM grant from the Toshiba America Foundation, we bought ten oscilloscopes and a training board for our Engineering & Robotics program. The equipment is necessary to enhance students’ understanding of circuit board functions and teach them how to adjust waveforms to produce desired outcomes.

Sophomores in Mr. Oliveira’s digital electronics course were excited to use the grant-acquired diagnostic equipment, also called an “oscope,” in a fun and engaging assignment of bringing a little personality to a stuffed animal. Using the instructor training board, Mr. Oliveira demonstrated how to use the oscscope to draw a graph of an electrical signal and create a circuit board to illuminate the plush tiger’s eyes.

“Learning how to use the equipment properly was important to me,” said Charlotte Lewis of Uxbridge. “I enjoyed creating a circuit board and adjusting waveforms to produce a pulsing light in the eyes of the critter. I’m confident that the skills learned through this project will continue to help me in my future career.”

Mr. Oliveira explained, “Understanding how to use an oscscope is crucial for troubleshooting, designing, and maintaining electronic circuits. Our students need these skills to prepare for and pass certification exams. With an increasing need for skilled technicians, preparing our students with in-demand, critical-thinking skills will not only help them meet employer needs and expectations, but increase their employability.”

When modern tools and equipment are paired with our inquiry-based curriculum, projects like this come to life for our students. It’s exciting to see them grasp the subject matter and watch their eyes light up!



CALENDAR
2025 – 2026

To help keep you up-to-date on important school information and events, visit our Important Dates page at: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/importantdates.

Aug 13	Freshmen Cookout – 5:00 p.m.
Aug 14	Freshmen Orientation Day 1
Aug 15	Freshmen Orientation Day 2 Football Tryouts Begin
Aug 18	1st Day of Classes for All Students Fall Sports Tryouts Begin
Aug 20 & 21	School Pictures
Aug 29	Early Release – 11:00 a.m.
Sept 1	Labor Day – NO SCHOOL
Sept 10	Academic Curriculum Night for Grades 10 & 12 – 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Sept 17	Academic Curriculum Night for Grades 9 & 11 – 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Sept 22 – 26	Spirit Week
Sept 27	Homecoming Festival
Oct 1	Teacher In-Service – 7:45 a.m. Student Late Start – 10:30 a.m.
Oct 13	Columbus Day – NO SCHOOL
Nov 1	Senior Yearbook Biography, Portraits, & Baby Pictures Submission Deadline
Nov 11	Veterans Day – NO SCHOOL
Nov 12	Annual Admissions Open House – 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Nov 14	First Trimester Ends
Nov 19	Vocational Curriculum Night for Grade 9 – 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Nov 26	Early Release – 11:00 a.m.
Nov 27 & 28	Thanksgiving Break – NO SCHOOL

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Bus Schedule

With the start of school just around the corner, safely transporting your teen to and from school is a top priority. Together with our transportation provider, we’ll be following strict transportation regulations to ensure the safety of all students and drivers. For the most up-to-date bus schedule, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/busroutes throughout the fall.



the Compass

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS • FALL 2025

Welcome to *the Compass*, our school counseling noteworthy news source. Our team of compassionate counselors are here to guide and support you and your teenager on their educational journey. We're dedicated to fostering the academic, career, and social-emotional wellbeing of your teen to promote individual talents, and a curiosity for learning as they reach their full potential and become career, college, and life ready. Together, we can help you chart their course.



Are Your Ducks in a Row?

As your teen heads back to school and your family settles into a new routine, everyday life can get busy. Consequently, it is easy for teens to feel overwhelmed by their schedules, assignments, and deadlines, especially if they lack adequate time management and organizational skills. You may notice that when your teen gets stressed, it's often a result of issues that stem from a lack of organization, and they may need support to develop these skills.

As a parent, you know your teen and their learning style best. You know, when they apply themselves or choose to let things slide. You've seen your teen excel in certain areas and fall short in others. And when they do, your instinct is to help. However, when teens struggle academically, there is a delicate balance between providing necessary guidance and fostering autonomy by allowing them to help themselves advocate, self-manage, and seek out the needed support to successfully handle their work independently.

As educators, we recognize that teens with strong organizational skills are more likely to stay on top of their work, leading to improved grades and reduced stress and anxiety related to school. We recommend that students struggling to keep track of assignments, deadlines, and commitments utilize the Learning Lab for organizational support.

Welcome to Our Learning Lab
Modeled after collegiate learning centers, our Learning Lab is a space within the Digital Learning Commons (DLC) where our students, teachers, and staff can collaborate, meet, and study with shared technology and resources. It is open Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., when school is in session, and on selected Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Your teen is welcome to visit the Learning Lab in the morning and take a moment to get organized before school. They can check Canvas and PowerSchool, review assigned work and ensure it is complete and correctly submitted, study for tests or quizzes, check school e-mail, work independently or with a staff member, and prepare for a successful day. They can also return for additional support during regular school hours with a pass and permission from a teacher or counselor.

In the afternoon, your teen can use their time in the Learning Lab to organize backpacks, binders, folders, and other materials. They can check that their student planner is filled out and makes sense, ensuring they have what they need to complete their homework or start it in a quiet space supported by a teaching assistant. After-school homework help is also available most afternoons with one of our National Honor Society students in Math/Science or English/History. The tutor calendar for the month is posted at the Learning Lab entrance.

- The Learning Lab offers all students:
- a quiet, cozy, space to study or complete assignments independently
 - organizational assistance with goal setting, task prioritization, and time management
 - access to printers, laminators, school supplies, and additional learning materials
 - small group and make-up testing
 - structured support with classwork and/or homework
 - help with developing study skills, routines, and strategies as part of their daily routine
 - the opportunity to practice self-advocacy
 - a connection to the school network, Wi-Fi, and additional support from our Technology Department, where laptops and chargers can be borrowed in a pinch

Schedule a Visit
However, if your teen needs one-on-one support, they can alert a Learning Lab staff member by scheduling a support session with our online form (www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scheduleasupport-session) or they are welcome to stop by the DLC. If transportation home is an issue, there is a 3:15 late bus on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

We encourage you to talk with your teen about the goal of their session. Help them narrow down what they should focus on. They may want to make a note in their planner or create a checklist of what they want to accomplish, especially if they have multiple objectives. They should plan to have the materials they need with them to complete their work. Clarify when and how you expect your teen to utilize the Learning Lab and the consequences at home for not meeting the expectation.

For more information about our Learning Lab and the incredible resources housed within the DLC, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/technology. Together, we will help your teen self-manage, find a strategy that works best for them, and leave feeling productive, knowing they've got their ducks in a row.



Schedule Changes

Back-to-school jitters are normal and expected, especially regarding your teen's new fall course schedules. If you or your teen is unsure about one of their classes, take some time to talk to them about why. Whatever the reason, it may be wise to get the teacher's perspective and/or give it a cycle or two and then reassess. After some investigating, you'll often realize it's not time to raise the white flag. However, if it ultimately seems that a transfer would be best for your teen, our add/drop period runs from **September 2nd – 12th**.

the confusion of students transferring between classes while being mindful of potential make-up work accumulation. Our end date also ensures that transfers occur prior to when the state requires all courses to be recorded on transcripts, which is preferable when considering college admissions.

Please note that students are not permitted to change courses due to teacher preference. To ensure equity, students are transferred to the course section with the most available seats. To learn more about our add/drop policy, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/adddropolicy.

This timeline provides students with an initial window for testing their schedules. It also limits

Ready for College?

Applying to college can be exciting and overwhelming for you and your teen. There are many pieces to figure out before this new chapter of their life begins. We want to help you and your teen have positive and productive conversations about college. It's much easier to provide emotional, practical, moral, and logistical support when you understand the process yourself!

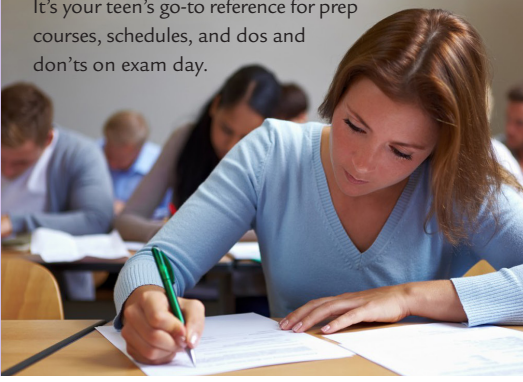
Junior Parents: Join the counselors at a free virtual College Exploration & Junior Process Workshop on **Thursday, November 6th**, where we will cover:

- Creating a college list
- SAT/ACT Exam considerations, prep, and registration
- Senior course selection
- Determining application type and who to ask for recommendations
- Writing a college essay
- Preparing for college sports

Senior Parents: Join the counselors for a MEFA College Financing Seminar at BVT on **Tuesday, October 21st**, that will cover:

- Applying for financial aid and how financial aid decisions are made
- Financial aid award letters
- How your family can pay their share of college costs
- What free resources are available

In September, keep an eye on your e-mail; we'll be sending you information about completing and submitting college applications, SAT/ACT scores, financial aid forms, transcripts, request procedures, and scholarship opportunities. To learn more about college planning and how it aligns with your career goals, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careerplanning.



CALENDAR 2025 – 2026

Parents, keep your teenager up-to-date on all our school counseling events, deadlines, and workshops.

Aug 18 – 22	Sophomores: Meet Your Counselor
Aug 21	Freshmen: Meet Your Counselor
Sept 2	Academic Course Add/Drop Begins
Sept 9	Seniors: College Application Process Workshop
Sept 12	Academic Course Add/Drop Deadline
Sept 23	Seniors: Financial Aid Lesson
Oct 1	FAFSA Opens for College-Bound Seniors
Oct 1	Thanksgiving & Holiday Drives Begins
Oct 16	Juniors: Depression Review Lesson
Oct 21	Seniors: MEFA College Financing Seminar
Oct 28	Juniors: Depression Screening
Nov 4	Juniors: College Application Process Lesson
Nov 6	Junior Parents: College Exploration & Application Process Workshop
Nov 20 & 21	Thanksgiving Drive Pick-up

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Assessments

MCAS, AP, SAT, PSAT, oh my! Keeping track of all the exams and requirements can be challenging. No worries. Here is a sneak peek at the fall schedule:

• Aug 18	Juniors: PSAT Open Registration
• Aug 23	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Sept 6	Seniors: ACT Exam
• Sept 13	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Sept 19	Juniors: PSAT Registration Deadline
• Oct 4	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Oct 14 – 17	Juniors: PSAT Exam
• Oct 18	Seniors: ACT Exam
• Nov 8	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Dec 6	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Dec 13	Seniors: ACT Exam

Visit: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments for more assessments and registration information. It's your teen's go-to reference for prep courses, schedules, and dos and don'ts on exam day.

A Lucky Find



A Treasured Landmark Rescued & Restored

When Charles Thompson, who serves on the board of trustees for the Whitinsville public library, came across the weathered and worn Whitinsville Social Library sign in the town barn, he felt compelled to rescue it and restore it to its original glory.

Restoring and repurposing can breathe new life into an old item and have a significant impact on reducing waste on this planet. This lucky find was the ideal restoration project for students in our Painting & Design Technology program and a welcomed opportunity to apply their training and skills.

Under the guidance of their instructor, students refurbished the sign. It had sustained a fall when the poles that supported it had rotted away. The students ordered and painted new poles and caps. Using Adobe Illustrator they designed custom brackets to hold the sign firmly in place and primed and painted them with period-correct paints and techniques. All of the hand-carved lettering and stripes are applied 24K gold leaf.

Curious to see our students work on display? Take a drive by the Whitinsville Social Library, check out a good book, and admire the fine handiwork of the newly refurbished sign.



Continued from page 2

As we look ahead to another exciting year, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to you for your continued support, trust, and partnership. You play a vital role in shaping the success of our students and strengthening our school community. We are grateful for the confidence you place in us and all of our programs.

I'm filled with genuine excitement about our future and all that we will accomplish together. As we embark on this journey and embrace change, we will build on our strong foundation and reach new heights as a school community.

Welcome back! Let's make this an adventurous and memorable year.



'Tis the Season...

...to connect, give thanks, and spread hope and good cheer. Our Student Council is helping to bring the holiday spirit to our community by hosting our annual Thanksgiving and Holiday Drives. During the holiday season, these programs are a great way to show our appreciation and support for one another as members of the BVT family.

If you're a family in need or you'd like to donate to these programs, we would be extremely grateful for you to make one of our traditions, one of yours.

To participate, please contact us by **Monday, November 3rd**. For more information, visit our website at: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/givingback.



Blackstone Valley Regional

Vocational Technical High School

65 Pleasant Street, Upton, MA 01568

508-529-7758

www.valleytech.k12.ma.us

Link Up...



As a Massachusetts Green School, BVT fosters open conservation. In that spirit, parents are reminded that all resources — school year calendar, lunch menus, daily announcements, bus routes, and mandatory forms — are available at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us. Be sure to take advantage of PowerSchool, the software that allows you access to your child's assignments and schedule. If you're unable to access our website, contact the main office at 508-529-7758.

In addition to this newsletter and our robust website content, our social media sites will give you an opportunity to connect and engage with us. Join in on the conversation by following us on X: [@BVTHighSchool](https://twitter.com/BVTHighSchool) and Instagram: [@bvt_highschool](https://www.instagram.com/bvt_highschool).

