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BVT PARENT NEWSLETTER • WINTER 2025

the
Compass
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Second Shift

After many years in one's career, there is a confidence, and dare I say, a sense of excitement in showing up to work each day knowing you have the skills and training to not only complete the task at hand, but to be passionate about the work you do. If you're lucky enough, that work can make a real difference in the lives of others. In keeping with our mission, I'm proud to be part of the ever-changing landscape of BVT, where together we are building more than skilled workers, we're expanding access to our career-technical education for adult learners—essentially creating our **SECOND SHIFT**.

Anthony E. Steele II — Superintendent-Director

As adults, we want to be mirrors for our kids. Although driven by our responsibilities, we also seek knowledge, take pride in our work, and strive to be happy in our chosen careers.

BVT parents, you are our advocates and ambassadors, and you know the value of a career-technical education. If you are also a BVT alum, you have walked our halls, studied in our classrooms, and experienced firsthand the incredible benefits of a career-technical education. You have likely shared your high school experience with your teen and have encouraged them to look towards their future with a solid trade under their belt.

Most adults, including myself, can say with a bit of humor and maybe some truth, "I still don't know what I want to be when I grow up." So, it seems impossible that an eighth grader interested in attending BVT would possibly know what career path they want to pursue in the future. But I say, why wait until they graduate high school to start exploring a career that might interest them? With our state-of-the-art tools and equipment and highly trained industry-expert instructors, you know BVT will provide them with the training and skills to prepare them for future careers of their choosing.

But what has changed over the years is the breadth of careers that trade schools have to offer. Long gone are the days of offering only hard trades and manual labor careers, such as construction, manufacturing, automotive,

plumbing, and electrical. Many of our career trades, including these hard trades, are now highly technical, require further training, licensure, and degrees. From biotech and engineering to cybersecurity, technology advancements and AI are moving the world and our career offerings forward at a rapid pace.

Throughout my BVT career, I've had the pleasure to speak with parents, who often share with me at our open house, academic or vocational curriculum nights, or simply in passing that they wish they had the opportunity to attend BVT. If you had, what shop would you have liked to explore? Would you have chosen a different career path than the one you're currently in? You now have the opportunity to attend BVT through BVTi.

Welcome to Our Second Shift!

BVTi, the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute, is an exciting new extension of our mission to provide hands-on, career-focused learning opportunities in our day programs (our first shift) into the evening (our second shift). While your teen advances their knowledge in our classrooms and shops during the school day, BVTi brings those same spaces to life in the evening with programs designed specifically for adult learners seeking new skills, industry certifications, or pathways to career advancement.



BVTi is more than an evening school—it's an investment in the entire Blackstone Valley. By offering accessible and affordable vocational training, we help meet workforce demands, provide skilled labor to the local workforce, support economic growth, generate non-taxpayer revenue to help fund the school we love, and strengthen the communities you, your teen, and all our families call home.

I invite you to take advantage of our second shift. If you're interested in upskilling, retraining, credential-based programs, or simply trying something new, our course catalog reflects the needs of today's job market. Whether you are looking to gain expertise in technical trades, update skills with current industry standards, or earn credentials that open new doors, our programs are structured with purpose and relevance. Instruction is guided by experienced professionals, using the same high-quality equipment and facilities that serve your teen in our day programs.

I enjoy rolling up my sleeves, working with tools, and operating heavy equipment, which is why I have a hoisting license. Did you know that Massachusetts requires a Hoisting Engineer License to operate most heavy machinery used for lifting and moving materials, such as cranes, excavators, and forklifts? Hoisting engineers must complete continuing education courses every two years to maintain their license. Scroll through our list of classes A-Z, and you will see

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that BVTi offers a class that will prepare you to take the Massachusetts 2A 1C Hoisting License exams. This course also counts as six hours of continuing education credit towards relicensure.

If you or someone you know is approaching retirement and looking to make informed decisions regarding their Social Security benefits, our “Understanding Your Social Security” class will help you understand how your benefits work with your retirement strategy.

For creative types who want to bring artistic ideas and visions to life, we offer “Calligraphy for Beginners and Intermediates” and various floral design classes. If you’re interested in fitness, you might like our “Barre Basics,” “Yoga for Beginners and Intermediates,” or our “Yoga Teacher Training” class with certified hours.

Have you wanted to learn CPR, First Aid, or how to operate an AED? Our “First Aid/CPR/AED Certification” course is for you. This hands-on training prepares participants to respond to cardiac emergencies.

Benefiting Our Community

Many participating in BVTi are parents like you, neighbors, and local professionals eager to grow in their careers or explore new ones. Your success builds a stronger, more skilled community for all. The launch of BVTi brings additional value to our school community:

- **Enhanced Partnerships:** Stronger connections with employers mean more internship and Co-Op opportunities for our students.
- **Up-to-Date Equipment & Facilities:** Increased use of our shops and labs helps us maintain cutting-edge resources that benefit all learners.
- **Community Engagement:** Parents and community members can now pursue their own educational goals within the very building where our students learn each day.

A Shared Vision for Lifelong Learning

At its core, BVTi represents the belief that learning doesn’t end with graduation. By opening our doors to adult learners, we reinforce the values of curiosity, persistence, and continual growth—values we instill in all our students.

As parents and educators, we must teach our kids to be great strategic thinkers and have a lifelong commitment to continuous learning. The best way to do that is to show them that we, too, are lifelong learners at heart, and some of our most meaningful, passion-driven learning can happen on the SECOND SHIFT.



Connect With Our Thriving Artistic Community

Are you ready for fresh falling snow, twinkly lights, the sweet smell of evergreens, and the hustle and bustle of the holiday season? We’ll help you get in the spirit, mark your calendar, and plan to join us at our **Holiday Art Show on Wednesday, December 17th, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** Our school cafeteria will transform into an enchanting winter wonderland venue featuring seasonal-inspired artwork created by students in our visual arts program and art club.

Come, celebrate our young artists by strolling through the artwork on display. You can also scan the QR codes on each artwork to view an artist’s statement and digital portfolio on Artsonia. It’s a unique opportunity for our students to share their artwork while you learn more about their backgrounds, creative processes, and the art and artists that influence them.

Are You Feeling Creative?

After viewing our students’ artwork, we invite you to wake up your inner child, roll up your sleeves, and join us in painting and decorating polymer clay ornaments. Displayed examples will inspire you to be creative, along with a variety of craft supplies — paints, markers, and embellishments — for you to work with. Make this holiday season extra special by giving your handmade seasonal ornament to someone special. It’s the perfect night out for visitors of all ages and artistic abilities to explore your creativity and connect with our thriving artistic community.

This event is made possible with grant support from the Bellingham Cultural Council, Milford Cultural Council, Uxbridge Cultural Council, and the Mass Cultural Council’s Local Cultural Councils LCC Program.



We are thrilled to share that three of our talented Design & Media Production seniors—Caroline Brown (*Grafton*), Audrey Ellis (*Uxbridge*), and Autumn Lapointe (*Millbury*)—have made a lasting impact through our recent collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office for College, Career, and Technical Education. Over the course of several months, these seniors devoted their time and creativity to researching, designing, and refining a series of logo concepts for DESE. Their hard work and dedication paid off when one of their designs was ultimately selected as the official new logo for My Career and Academic Plan.

In recognition of our students’ collaborative efforts, DESE shared the following praise: “Their professional presentation to the DESE team, their patience with suggestions and edits, and their pride in their work were clearly evident and most engaging! They were true professionals as they took on this project and followed through to this amazing final product.”

We are incredibly proud of Caroline, Audrey, and Autumn for their professionalism, talent, and commitment. Their work leaves a meaningful mark statewide and highlights the real-world relevance and professional skills developed through our Design & Media Production program.



Energy-Efficient Equipment Supports Healthier Meals

At BVT, every new piece of equipment is more than just an upgrade—it’s an opportunity to learn, innovate, and grow. Thanks to a Healthy Meals Incentives grant from Action for Healthy Kids, our Food Services program is now equipped with a state-of-the-art walk-in cooler/freezer that’s tailored to our unique needs. This energy-efficient unit not only boosts safety and efficiency in our kitchen but also allows us to store fresh, local ingredients that support healthier meals for our students.



“With an increase in scratch cooking and the ability to store more fresh ingredients, we’re able to prepare restaurant-quality meals that are both nutritious and delicious,” said Chef Eric Carlson, Director of Food Services. “Offering students a wide variety of healthy options supports both learning and lifelong wellness.” Working alongside our dedicated Food Services team, Chef Carlson and Nutritionist Lisa Ciarametaro ensure that every school lunch includes detailed nutritional information to help students and staff make informed food choices.

The benefits of this grant go beyond the cafeteria. Lincoln Shaw, a junior in our



Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVAC&R) program, helped install the new system alongside instructor Matthew Lajoie. From setting up refrigeration units to installing ductwork and electrical components, Lincoln gained invaluable hands-on experience with commercial-grade equipment.

“HVAC&R technicians are often called on to work with walk-in coolers and freezers in commercial environments,” said Lajoie. “This was a perfect opportunity for a student to apply classroom knowledge in a real-world setting—right here on campus.”

As a Healthy Meals Incentives grantee, we’re proud to partner with the USDA and Action for Healthy Kids to strengthen our school meal program. Thanks to grant funding, in-house expertise, and student involvement, we continue to deliver high-quality, nutritious, and cost-effective meals to our school community—one scratch-cooked dish at a time.

Food Support

We are always here to support our community during times of food insecurity. For families who need assistance or would like to donate, a list of local food pantries and resources are available on our website: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/foodsupport.



**CALENDAR
2025 – 2026**

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

Nov 20th & 21st	Thanksgiving Drive Pick-up
Nov 26th	Early Release – 11:00 a.m.
Nov 27th & 28th	Thanksgiving Break – NO SCHOOL
Dec 1st	First Day of Winter Sports Tryouts
Dec 5th	Sophomore Ring Ceremony – 6:00 p.m. & Sophomore Ring Dance – 7:00 p.m.
Dec 10th	Teacher In-Service – 7:45 a.m. Student Late Start – 10:30 a.m.
Dec 17th	Holiday Art Show – 6:00 p.m.
Dec 18th & 19th	Holiday Drive Pickup
Dec 23rd	Early Release – 11:00 a.m.
Dec 24th–31st	Holiday Break – NO SCHOOL
Jan 1st	New Year’s Day – NO SCHOOL
Jan 2nd	Holiday Break – NO SCHOOL
Jan 7th	Teacher In-Service – 7:45 a.m. Student Late Start – 10:30 a.m.
Jan 15th	Incoming Freshmen Application Deadline
Jan 19th	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – NO SCHOOL
Jan 31st	Yearbook Orders & Senior Recognition Ads Deadline
Feb 4th	Teacher In-Service – 7:45 a.m. Student Late Start – 10:30 a.m.
Feb 16th–20th	Winter Break – NO SCHOOL
Mar 6th	Second Trimester Ends
Mar 11th	SkillsUSA District Competition
Mar 16th	First Day of Spring Sports Tryouts
Mar 19th	Early Release – 11:00 a.m. Superintendent’s Dinner – 5:00 p.m.
Mar 20th	Teacher In-Service – 7:45 a.m. Student Late Start – 10:30 a.m.

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.



the Compass

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS | WINTER 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 and life ready. Together, we can help you chart their course.



Parenting a teenager is a lot like a chess match — requiring strategy, patience, and foresight — where every move matters. Whether it's offering guidance, encouragement, or learning to let go, each decision helps shape your teen's future. With the endgame in mind, we work together to empower your teen to advocate for themselves, make strategic decisions, and position themselves for long-term success. So, when the time comes to let them go, you can remind them — “What happens next is no longer up to ‘us’ — it's your move!”

Until then, you know your teen and their learning style best. You know when they apply themselves or have 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's a balance between telling them what to do and allowing them to decide for themselves when to advocate, seek out additional support, and handle their work independently, and of course, reminding them that their decisions (or moves) have consequences and can lead to a successful outcome or a setback.

As adults, asking for help often feels intuitive. But for teens, especially those still developing confidence, it can feel like a major step. Like many parents, you've probably encouraged your teen to stay after school for Extra Help, only to be met with reluctance, excuses, or indifference. As counselors, we experience the same pushback.

Some students simply won't consider Extra Help until they're in danger of losing something they want, like their eligibility for athletics or Co-Op, in which case they may suddenly be motivated to seek Extra Help.

Self-advocacy isn't easy, but it's an essential life skill. One of the most powerful ways to teach it is to model it. Letting your teen witness you seeking support when you need it helps normalize the behavior and permits them to do the same.

Benefits of Extra Help

Many students who were once reluctant to attend Extra Help have found it surprisingly beneficial and are now more likely to seek it out on their own. Here's what they gain:

Clarify Concepts: Teachers can further explain topics that your teen did not fully grasp during class and allow them to ask specific questions. If their classroom is too crowded or they feel they'd benefit from another teaching style, they can work with a different teacher — one they've had before, a friend's teacher, or someone new.

Catch up & Move Ahead: If your teen is falling behind, Extra Help can provide targeted support to get them back on track. It's also a chance to learn more effective ways to study, complete homework, and approach challenging subjects. Over time, your teen moves from passively reacting to challenges to developing strategies that help master them.

Improve Performance: Consistent use of Extra Help often leads to improved grades and test scores. We encourage your teen to notice when they're struggling, identify when to ask for help, and take initiative. They don't need to stay for the full session — once they've received what they need, they're free to move on to another classroom, practice, or after-school activity.

Accessing Extra Help

Extra Help is available after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 3:00 p.m., regardless of whether it is an academic or a shop week, and students may opt to take the 3:15 p.m. Late Bus back to their town. If those days are not feasible, some teachers may be available by appointment on alternate days.

The Endgame

By actively engaging in Extra Help and learning to advocate for themselves, students develop the skills and confidence they'll need far beyond high school. If we've played the game well, they'll graduate knowing how to navigate life's challenges with wisdom and confidence. In the meantime, we'll continue to work together — but ultimately, we know that their next move is theirs to make. So, when it comes to Extra Help — and much more — we can confidently say: It's Your Move!

Student Reflections...

“The first time I went, Extra Help was a disaster, but that was on me. I showed up, but I wasn't locked in. I went back with an actual game plan, and things went way smoother. Now that I know what I'm doing, I can usually get my questions answered in 5-10 minutes.”

“Coach didn't flip out when I got to practice late because of Extra Help. I was shocked, but all he cared about was that I gave him a heads-up.”

“I had a lot to make up, and my girlfriend's teacher had fewer students, so I went there instead. It felt really awkward at first, but I explained the situation and they were happy to help. I got what I needed — it was all good.”



A Schedule That Fits

If you have ever gone on a woodland hike, you know that selecting the best-fitting pair of hiking shoes makes all the difference between having a comfortable trek and getting a blister. A shoe that doesn't quite fit is the same kind of discomfort your teen risks if they don't plan next year's schedule carefully. The repercussions can carry over into future years, depending on course progression and their post-graduate plans.

During course planning, we often see students struggle to comprehend the overall time required for their coursework, extracurriculars, family, social life, and daily self-care. Our eager beavers want to say “Yes!” to everything, but they already do more in HALF the time than conventional high school students. Having a schedule filled with demanding, higher-level classes isn't always the right path for them.

As a parent, you can help your teen consider:

- Skill level according to teacher recommendations.
- Which classes align best with their post-secondary goals.
- Priorities and time constraints.

By working together, your teen can develop a schedule that not only feels good but meets all of their needs.

Want to learn more? Take a moment to browse our course planning page for more information: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/courseplanning.

Scholarships Await

At this point during the school year, our seniors are actively working on their post-secondary plans. In reviewing your teen's career path, you may be wondering how you might support them in paying for their trade tools, technology, or school tuition. We encourage you and your teen to make the most of available scholarship opportunities by:

- Applying to the eligible statewide, community, and BVT scholarships posted on Canvas.
- Looking for additional scholarships through your town, places of employment, and community organizations that your family is affiliated with.
- Researching whether additional information is needed to be considered for scholarships at prospective colleges.
- Taking advantage of our **Scholarship Support Day** on **Thursday, February 26th**.

Be on the lookout, our seniors will be soon be invited to view a scholarship Canvas page and apply for scholarships. Our school counselors will hold sessions to support them in the application process this coming spring. Get a jump start on the process by helping your teen review our scholarship options at: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scholarships.

CALENDAR 2025 – 2026

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

Dec 12th	Seniors: QCC Decision Day
Jan 13th	Freshmen: Course Selection
Jan 14th	Juniors: Course Selection
Jan 21st	Sophomores: Course Selection
Feb 26th	Seniors: Scholarship Support Day
Mar 12th	Juniors: College Fair
Mar 16th	Freshmen: Depression Screening Opt-Out Deadline
Mar 16th & 17th	Freshmen: Signs of Suicide Curriculum
Mar 18th	Freshmen: Depression Screening

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Stay Informed & Engaged

We're now using ParentSquare, an all-in-one communication platform that connects our staff to you and your teen. It streamlines messaging by allowing us to share announcements, reminders, and updates in one secure place. All our parents were automatically enrolled with the e-mail address listed in PowerSchool. To customize your ParentSquare communications preferences, simply download the app and log in to stay informed and engaged.



Assessments

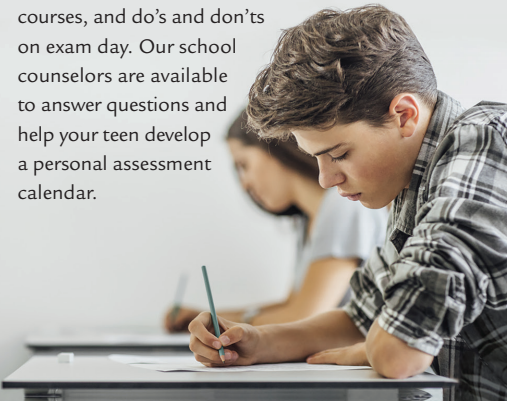
MCAS, AP, SAT, PSAT, oh my! Keeping track of all the assessment exams and requirements can be challenging. Here is a sneak peek at the winter schedule:

Winter College Entrance Exams

- Dec 6th SAT Exam
- Dec 13th ACT Exam
- Feb 14th ACT Exam
- Mar 14th SAT Exam

- Mar 24th & 25th Sophomores: ELA MCAS Exam

Visit: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments for more assessment and registration information. It's your go-to reference for exam schedules, prep courses, and do's and don'ts on exam day. Our school counselors are available to answer questions and help your teen develop a personal assessment calendar.



Our Evening Programs Are Calling You

Welcome to the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute

With a proud tradition of delivering high-quality vocational education every day in our classrooms and vocational shops, we're building on that legacy with the introduction of the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute (BVTi). Located within our campus, BVTi opens its doors in the evenings to adult learners across our community.

Our programs are engaging, practical, and, most importantly, accessible. We're pleased to offer grant funding for qualifying students in Advanced Manufacturing, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, and Welding, and flexible payment plans to ensure cost is never a barrier to reaching educational goals.

EXPLORE the many programs custom-designed to meet your needs and schedule.

EXPERIENCE our state-of-the-art learning labs, where you'll access new concepts and techniques that prepare you for a variety of exciting, high-demand careers. For our hobbyists, you'll connect with like-minded individuals engaged in a shared experience, while learning a new craft.

EXCEL in your career with our 200-hour technical programs, designed to equip you with in-demand skills and industry-recognized credentials that will advance employment opportunities. Those seeking personal enrichment can use their creativity to master new techniques, refine their skills, or complete a project.

Curious to learn more? Visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/bvti, call 508-519-3790, or e-mail us at info@bvtadulthood.org. Let BVTi help you take the next step in your professional or personal journey.

Browse Our Annual Report

We take immense pride in seeing our students and alums take what they have learned and find true passion and purpose in their professional careers. Our annual report shares their success and achievement as evidence of a positive return on your investment.

Therefore, our FY25 annual report titled "It Takes a Spark" goes beyond the facts and figures of our operation to illustrate how the budget is maximized and used to prepare our students to be career- and life-ready, includes an alumni profile, articles on cooperative education, industry insights and opportunities, and much more. Get your copy online at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/annualreport.



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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).



Class Rings

Sophomores, Take Part in a BVT Tradition

The tradition of wearing a class ring dates back to 1835, nearly 190 years ago, when students at the United States Military Academy at West Point began wearing class rings to symbolize unity and commemorate their time at the academy.

At BVT, we've proudly upheld this tradition for over 50 years. Our graduates often share how meaningful their class rings become—distinctive, custom-designed keepsakes that represent academic, vocational, and athletic achievements, as well as fond memories of their high school years.

Traditions like these are an important part of our school culture. That's why we celebrate our sophomores with a Ring Ceremony that honors the entire class while recognizing each student as a unique individual — much like their custom-designed rings. All sophomores and their families are welcome to attend the Ring Ceremony, whether they purchase a ring from Jostens, another company, or not at all.

Save the Date!

The **Sophomore Ring Ceremony & Dance** will take place on **Friday, December 5th**, at 6:00 p.m., followed by the dance at 7:00 p.m. (*semi-formal attire is required*). Dance tickets are currently on sale during sophomore lunches and will also be available at the door.

We hope the Class of 2028 will come together to celebrate this milestone and wear their rings with pride for years to come.