

**Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
November 20, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee was held in the school cafeteria. The following members, staff and others were present:

Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone  
Mark J. Potter of Douglas  
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton  
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon  
Jan P. Hanratty of Millbury  
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair  
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge  
James M. Mitchell of Sutton  
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton  
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge

**Members Absent:**

Joseph M. Hall of Bellingham, Chair  
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale  
Paul J. Braza of Milford

Anthony E. Steele II, Superintendent-Director  
Dr. Matthew J. Connors, Assistant Superintendent  
Michele S. Denise, Principal  
Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager  
Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer  
Edward Evans III, Academic Curriculum Coordinator  
Kerri Baltramaitis, Vocational Director  
Bryant Laflamme, Vocational Director  
Miranda Dolegiewicz, Administrative Assistant  
Lawney Tinio, Owner of Worldband  
Maddison Dos Santos, Student Council Representative  
Isla Koopman, Student Council Representative  
Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

**Item 1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by the Vice Chair, Mr. Finn. Mr. Steele announced that Mr. Hall, Mr. Intinarelli, and Mr. Braza had provided advance notice that they would be unable to attend.

**Item 2. Secretary's Report – A. Yitts**

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was unanimously voted to waive the reading of the minutes of the October 16, 2025, regular School Committee meeting and to approve the minutes as written.

**Item 3. Treasurer's Report – C. Pilla**

3.1. The Treasurer's Report dated September 30, 2025, was presented. The report reflected an ending balance of \$1,861,653.05 in Total Funds, including \$1,094,889.19 in Project Funds and \$766,763.86 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was unanimously voted to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented.

**Item 4. Student Council Representatives - Maddison Dos Santos & Isla Koopman**

The Student Council Representatives provided an update on recent and upcoming activities. They reported that members attended the Central District of the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils (CDMASC) Fall Conference on November 12, where they networked with approximately 430 students from 29 schools and participated in leadership-themed workshops. They further reported that STUCO members volunteered as ambassadors at the annual admissions open house and the vocational curriculum night. The Representatives also announced that December activities include the annual Holiday Drive and that members will

participate in a shopping-and-wrapping event on December 12. More than thirty families of BVT students in need have enrolled in the Holiday Drive to receive support. Mr. Steele thanked the students for their efforts to look out for those in need throughout the holiday season.

Item 5. Business Manager – N. Ferguson

5.1. FY25 Audit Update:

The Business Manager, Mrs. Ferguson, presented an update on the FY25 district financial audit, which began on July 1, 2025, and is being conducted by Hague, Sahady & Co., the district's audit firm since FY16. Mrs. Ferguson reported that the audit was progressing more slowly than in previous years due to changes in the audit team and the depth of the review. She noted that the district is awaiting the Department of Revenue's certification of the Excess & Deficiency (E&D) filing. Once the E&D is certified, the financial statements will be presented to the Committee.

5.2. Donation Approval(s):

a. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of a 2015 Nissan Rogue from A. Lapomardo for instructional and training purposes in the Automotive Technology program.

b. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of two Midea Window Air Conditioner Units from M. Pellegrino for instructional and training purposes in the HVAC/R program.

c. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of one Yamaha 1.5 Octave Professional Chimes from C. Cox & D. Carlo for instructional and training purposes in the Humanities program.

5.3. MSBA Roof Project (Funding):

a. Mrs. Ferguson presented the proposed vote language. On a motion by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was unanimously voted to approve, the following motion: The School Committee of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, having convened in an open meeting on November 20, 2025, and in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, appropriates the amount of Five Million Seven Hundred Twenty Eight Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Seven Dollars (\$5,728,357) for the purpose of paying costs of reconstructing the roof of the District's High School, located at 65 Pleasant Street, Upton, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the "Project"), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended at the direction of the School Committee. To meet this appropriation the District is authorized to borrow said amount, under and pursuant to Chapter 71, Section 16(d), of the General Laws and the District Agreement, as amended, or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The District acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need as determined

by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District; provided further that any grant that the District may receive from the MSBA shall not exceed the lesser of (1) Fifty Five percent (55%) of eligible, approved Project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA, and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA.

This vote supersedes the vote of this Committee adopted on February 15, 2024, which is no further force or effect.

That within seven (7) days following the date of this vote, the District Secretary is directed to give written notice of the amount of the debt authorized by this vote and of the general purposes for which it was authorized, to the Boards of Selectmen or Select Boards of each of the District's member towns, as required by the District Agreement and by G.L. c. 71, §16(d).

#### Item 6. Budget Subcommittee Report – Chair (TBA)

##### 6.1. Preliminary Discussion of First Session (11/20/25):

Mr. Steele reported that the Budget Subcommittee met at 5:00 p.m. on November 20, 2025, in the Superintendent's Conference Room. The agenda included the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the FY2027 Budget Subcommittee, confirmation of meeting dates, and an initial review of the Debt function (8000). Mr. Cray, though absent, was nominated for Chair. Mr. Bartlett was nominated and accepted the nomination for Vice Chair. Jaime Patriarca served as Recording Secretary. The next scheduled meeting of the Budget Subcommittee is planned for December 11, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Yitts asked Mr. Steele to provide an overview of the economic landscape. Mr. Steele explained that many municipalities are struggling due to tax revenue not keeping pace with inflationary costs, resulting in override situations becoming increasingly more common. He noted that, within the School Committee's catchment, members can anticipate pleas from their towns to develop a BVT budget that is financially responsible. He emphasized that the goal at BVT is to propose a reasonable budget that balances fiscal responsibility while maintaining quality education. We are working on cost saving measures while we await forecasts on the revenue side of the budget.

#### Item 7. Policy Subcommittee – A. Steele

##### 7.1. IKFE - Competency Determination Policy:

Mr. Steele introduced the item and recapped that on November 5, 2024, Massachusetts voters overwhelmingly approved a measure to reduce the high-stakes nature of MCAS testing as a graduation requirement. He noted one of the state's requirements for graduation is a determination of competency in subjects previously assessed by the MCAS. To meet the Competency Determination (CD) requirement, Massachusetts high school students must demonstrate mastery of English language arts, math, and science through coursework and district-approved assessments, rather than relying solely on the MCAS tests. Mr. Evans

presented the Committee with the proposed Competency Determination Policy for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District. On a motion by Mr. Bartlett, seconded by Mr. Broderick, the Committee unanimously voted to accept and approve the proposed Competency Determination Policy as presented. Mr. Steele alerted the Committee that DESE will be releasing a draft document on December 1, 2025, that is likely to change the policy yet again. We hope that this policy is settled by the end of FY26 with DESE's final draft policy.

#### Item 8. Academic Curriculum Coordinator – E. Evans

##### 8.1. 2025 MCAS Results & Accountability Data:

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released the 2025 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results. Mr. Evans presented the Committee with the MCAS report, noting that the data reflects the scores of current juniors (Class of 2027), who took the MCAS as sophomores. The results showed improved achievement and growth:

- **English Language Arts:** 65% of students were in the Exceeding or Meeting Expectations category.
- **Mathematics:** 55% of students were in the Exceeding or Meeting Expectations category.
- **Science (Biology and Physics combined):** 56% of students were in the Exceeding or Meeting Expectations category.

Mr. Steele thanked Mr. Evans, staff, and students for their efforts in preparing for and administering the MCAS. He noted that the results reflect the dedication of students and staff and highlight the school's culture of excellence. He emphasized that while MCAS had previously served as a predictable measure and a reliable benchmark demonstration and something that this Committee always looks forward to hearing about each year. The District will continue to take steps to ensure its students meet or exceed expectations as they are redefined by the State.

#### Item 9. Assistant Superintendent's Report – Dr. M. Connors

9.1. General Advisory Dinner Update (10/29/25): Dr. Connors reported that the fall advisory meeting was very successful, with over 260 industry representatives from more than 140 local companies in attendance. Individual program meetings were held both prior to and following the dinner event. The evening began with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by SkillsUSA representatives who were engaged in fundraising efforts for upcoming competitions. Dr. Connors acknowledged the Culinary Arts students and staff for providing an Italian-themed buffet, noting their outstanding efforts in supporting the event.

9.2. The 2025 NHS/NTHS Induction Ceremony Report (11/6/25): Dr. Connors shared that the National Honor Society (NHS) and National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) held their annual induction ceremony two weeks ago. A total of 57 students were inducted: 5 into NTHS, 22 into NHS, and 30 into both NHS and NTHS. He congratulated all students for their achievements and noted that, collectively, they contributed over 500 hours of community service to qualify for induction.

9.3. John & Abigail Adams Scholarship (11/19/25): Dr. Connors reported that the John &

Abigail Adams Scholarship requires students to achieve an “Advanced” score on at least one MCAS exam, a “Proficient” score on the remaining exams, and rank in the top 25% of their cohort. Recipients earn the equivalent of eight semesters of tuition at any public college or university in Massachusetts. This year 73 BVT students earned the scholarship.

9.4. Dr. Connors provided a CTI update. The Healey-Driscoll Administration awarded BVT with a \$1,040,000 Career Technical Initiative (CTI) implementation grant. The funding allows BVT to deliver high-quality career technical education to adults interested in upskilling and retraining, provides skilled labor to the local workforce, and generates non-local taxpayer revenue to help fund the school. BVT launched this initiative with the newly established Blackstone Valley Technical Institute (BVTi). The institute offers credential-based programs in Advanced Manufacturing, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, and Welding. Recent public relations, marketing, and advertising campaigns via print (Telegram & Gazette), radio (WBZ-AM/Boston), and television (WBZ-TV/CBS News Boston) have resulted in media coverage and an increase in registrations.

9.5. The "BVT Friend of Vocational Technical Education Award" is presented by the school to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the school's vocational and technical programs. The award is based on an individual's contributions, involvement, and demonstrated growth at BVT, often recognizing those who support student success, particularly in vocational-technical fields. The 2025-26 Friend of Vocational Technical Education Award Recipient is Mr. Lawney Tinio, an IT specialist and owner of Worldband, a computer consulting firm in Bellingham, Massachusetts. Mr. Tinio is a regular supporter of BVT, and a long-term Co-Op employer.

#### Item 10. Vocational Program Presentation

Mr. Steele invited the Committee to walk with him to the Automotive Collision Repair & Refinishing shop for a vocational program presentation. Instructors Benjamin Bertrand and Peter Reynolds provided an overview of the program, noting it equips detail-oriented students with the technical knowledge, skills, character, and work ethic necessary to pursue a rewarding career in this fast-paced, high-tech industry. Committee members toured the shop, observed student projects, and had the opportunity to ask questions. At the conclusion of the vocational program presentation the Committee returned to the school cafeteria for the remainder of the meeting.

#### Item 11. Principal's Report – M. Denise

11.1. Admissions Update: Principal Denise provided an update on the current admissions cycle. She reported that the application portal opened on November 1, 2025, with a new admissions process. As a result, the school began accepting applications one month later than in prior years. As of the date of the report, the school has received just under 300 applications. Principal Denise noted that it is difficult to determine whether this number is on pace with previous years due to the adjusted timeline. She further reported that the school has conducted four information sessions, with attendance ranging from 80 to 125 participants per session. Additionally, the school website now reflects the new admissions policy and the lottery procedures.

a. The Annual Admissions Open House was held on November 12, 2025. Attendance was strong; visitors filled the BVT parking lot, with overflow parking at Nipmuc. The event drew over 1,200 attendees. Principal Denise noted that many alumni returned to campus, either to tour the school with their children or to speak in various vocational shops.

11.2. School Cancellation Procedure: Principal Denise provided an overview of the district's school cancellation procedures. She explained that, if school must be cancelled due to inclement weather, the decision is made collaboratively by the Principal, the Facilities Director, and local officials, who provide real-time updates from their respective communities. Because bus routes begin early, communication with the bus company is prioritized to ensure timely decision-making. Once a determination is made, ideally before 6:00 a.m., the school will issue a notification through the One Call system and will update the school website with the day's status. She reminded the committee that the district has designated remote-learning snow days, which will be utilized first whenever appropriate before shifting to a traditional cancellation.

11.3. Bristol County Agricultural High School Visit (11/10/25): Principal Denise reported that the school hosted a two-part visit from Bristol County Agricultural High School. On Monday, November 10, five members of their math team spent the whole day on campus. During their visit, they met with several students, learned about the school's math curriculum, met with teachers, observed classes, and held discussions with the administration. The visit was so productive and well-received that Bristol County Agricultural sent two staff members today, who also spent the day at the school. Principal Denise noted that the district continues to receive similar requests for collaboration. She concluded by stating that the school always welcomes sister schools who wish to collaborate and learn from one another.

11.4. The Senior Class Banquet was held on the evening of November 17 at Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton, Massachusetts. A total of 235 seniors attended the event. The evening included dinner, dancing, and a celebratory program and was described as an enjoyable, memorable night. Principal Denise noted that she was very impressed with the strong level of student participation.

11.5. Fall Sports Awards Ceremony Update (11/18/25):  
The Fall Sports Awards Ceremony was held on the evening of November 18, 2025, in the Competition Center. The ceremony recognized the following fall sports teams: Boys and Girls Soccer, Boys and Girls Cross Country, Field Hockey, Girls Volleyball, Golf, and Cheer. The Football awards, which are typically presented in the winter after the season concludes, were also included in the program. The football team is scheduled to play tomorrow night in Stoughton at 6:00 p.m. Principal Denise reported that four students signed their letters of intent during the ceremony. She highlighted Miss Olivia Hall, noting that although Mr. Hall was not present, the school recognized Olivia's commitment to Barry University for softball. It was a wonderful evening with numerous accomplishments to celebrate. Principal Denise added that the fall sports teams always help set the tone for the year, and this year they did an excellent job establishing a strong standard.

11.6. Vocational Curriculum Night-Freshmen (11/19/25): The vocational curriculum night for Grade 9 students was held on November 19, 2025.

11.7. Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trip Approval(s):

a. On a motion by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was voted to approve the proposed SkillsUSA field trip request as presented to allow students to attend the SkillsUSA Fall Leadership Conference in Marlboro, MA from November 23, 2025 to November 24, 2025.

b. On a motion by Mr. Ebbeling, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was voted to approve the proposed Model UN overnight field trip request as presented to allow students to attend the annual Model United Nations Conference in Boston, MA, from February 6, 2026, to February 8, 2026.

c. On a motion by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was voted to approve the proposed Student Council out-of-state overnight field trip request as presented to allow students to attend the LEAD Conference (NASC) in Washington D.C. from February 27, 2026, to March 1, 2026.

d. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was voted to approve the proposed robotics team out-of-state overnight field trip request as presented to allow students to attend the robotics competition in Falmouth, Maine from March 6, 2026, to March 8, 2026.

e. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was voted to approve the proposed robotics team out-of-state overnight field trip request as presented to allow students to attend the robotics competition in Kingston, Rhode Island, from March 19, 2026, to March 21, 2026. Mr. Koopman shared that Mr. Norton puts a lot into competitions; it would be great to see what the students built. Mr. Koopman asked if consideration would be given to inviting Mr. Norton, the team, and/or the competition robot to a future meeting.

#### Item 12. Superintendent-Director's Report – A. Steele

##### 12.1. Updates/Events:

a. Superintendent Steele and Dr. Connors attended the Blackstone Valley Superintendents' Consortium (BVSC) on October 17, 2025, where apportionment was a topic of discussion, as the BVSC communities feed into our district.

b. Superintendent Steele and Dr. Connors met with the Douglas Select Board Chair Leslie (Les) M. Stevens and Douglas Town Administrator Matthew J. Wojcik on October 21, 2025. Apportionment was discussed, focusing on the October 1 enrollment numbers, which have not yet been certified. The presentation was well received.

c. Superintendent Steele, accompanied by members of the leadership team, represented BVT at the MAVA General Membership Annual Fall Meeting held on October 23, 2025. A key topic of discussion was the potential expansion grant. After research and deliberation with BVT staff, it was determined that pursuing the grant would not be cost-effective or feasible for BVT. Mr. Steele reported that BVT has consistently taken steps to optimize all available space. However, the current grant funding does not align with BVT's current facility/available space, making it difficult to meet the grant criteria. He expressed pride in the growth of CTE programs across the state and acknowledged that while sending communities aim to minimize costs, the timing is not favorable for adding additional seats at BVT, as the school is operating at or above its maximum capacity. He also noted that while some sister schools in Massachusetts are positioned to expand, such an expansion is not currently a viable option for BVT.

d. Superintendent Steele and Mr. Potter of Douglas attended the Douglas Finance Committee Meeting on October 28, 2025. It was a professional exchange.

e. BVT administrators and staff welcomed a CTE team of twenty-five staff members from all disciplines from Brockton High School for a site visit on November 4, 2025.

f. Superintendent Steele and Mr. Mitchell of Sutton attended the Sutton Select Board Meeting on November 4, 2025, by request. It was a productive visit and a professional exchange.

g. The BVEF Leadership Academy, held on November 10, 2025, continues to support the Arts in the Valley initiative. Superintendent Steele serves on the BVEF board, fostering a strong, mutually beneficial relationship with the community.

h. Superintendent Steele joined by members of the leadership team participated in the annual MASC/COSCAP Conference held in Hyannis, Massachusetts from November 12, 2025, to November 14, 2025. It was an enjoyable experience, and it was eye opening in some regards. Overall, the workshops and presentations were of high quality as expected.

i. Superintendent Steele, Dr. Connors, and Mr. Finn met with members of the Millville Select Board and Finance Committee on November 17, 2025. Mr. Finn expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with the Committee and commended the thorough presentation on the planning process for the admissions lottery, describing it as outstanding. Superintendent Steele indicated a desire to provide the same presentation to all sending towns if they so desire. Themes highlighted across the presentation included thoughtful apportionment, fairness, and the importance of being good partners with the communities.

j. Chapter 70 Listening Session (11/18/25): The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced a series of public listening sessions on October 9, 2025, to gather feedback on the Chapter 70 school finance formula, Massachusetts' primary funding program for distributing education aid to cities and towns. These sessions are part of the Chapter 70 Local Contribution Study included in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget and are conducted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS). Superintendent Steele, joined by members of the leadership team, participated in the Chapter 70 Listening Session on November 18, 2025. Both Superintendent Steele and Mrs. Ferguson have been actively attending these sessions to engage with state officials and contribute to discussions regarding local school funding.

12.2. An FY26 grant status report was shared with the Committee, which included recent donations. The Harvey Foundation, a dedicated supporter of the CTI program, contributed \$25,000 to be used toward CTI programs for adult learners. Superintendent Steele expressed appreciation for the foundation's support and the opportunity to meet with their representatives.

12.3. The 2025 Annual Report is now publicly available. It can be accessed online at [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/annualreport](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/annualreport) or by contacting the Superintendent-Director's Office.

12.4. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, the Committee voted to approve the proposed Courtyard Paving Project as presented and to award the construction

contract for the Asphalt Pavement Restoration to Harshaw Paving & Reclamation as the most responsible and eligible bidder, with a total bid of \$58,000.

12.5. SNAP Benefit Assistance: During the government shutdown, many families in our community who rely on SNAP benefits were uncertain about receiving assistance on or after November 1, 2025. The school community responded proactively: staff and parents organized fundraising and donations, and student services coordinated support using a gift card system to provide food assistance to those in need. Generosity from parents, staff, and students in this effort exemplified the BVT family coming together to support one another.

#### Item 13. New Business

Superintendent Steele shared a copy of *The Link* (BVT Parent Newsletter) – Winter 2025 with the Committee. In addition, a clip of the CBS News segment highlighting Blackstone Valley Tech's adult education programs was played for the Committee.

#### Item 14. Items for the Good of the Committee:

The monthly compilation of news clippings and correspondence packet was provided at the meeting for members' individual review.

#### Item 15. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting - J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on December 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

#### Item 16. Meeting Closure:

16.1. The Vice Chair, Mr. Finn, declared the meeting closed at 8:09 p.m.

16.2. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

#### Listing of Materials Used in the Meeting:

Item 2.1. Regular Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2025

Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated September 30, 2025

Item 5.2.a. Donation: 2015 Nissan Rogue, A. Lapomardo

Item 5.2.b. Donation: Air Conditioner Units, M. Pellegrino

Item 5.2.c. Donation: Yamaha 1.5 Octave Professional Chimes, C. Cox & D. Carlo

Item 5.3.a. Suggested Motion: Vote Language (MSBA Accelerated Repair Program)

Item 7.1. IKFE - Competency Determination Policy

Item 8.1. 2025 MCAS Results & Accountability Data

Item 11.7.a. Field Trip: SkillsUSA, Leadership Conf., 11/23/25-11/24/25, Marlboro, MA

Item 11.7.b. Field Trip: Model UN, Annual Conf., 2/6/26-2/8/26, Boston, MA

Item 11.7.c. Field Trip: Student Council, LEAD Conf., 2/27/26-3/1/26, Washington D.C.

Item 11.7.d. Field Trip: Robotics, Maine District Competition, 3/6/26-3/8/26, Falmouth, ME

Item 11.7.e. Field Trip: Robotics, URI District Competition, 3/19/26-3/21/26, Kingston, RI.

Item 12.2. FY26 Grants Status Report Update (Harvey Foundation)

Item 12.3. 2025 Annual Report

Item 12.4. Suggested Motion: Courtyard Paving Project

Item 14. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony M. Yitts  
Secretary

(JOSEPH M. HALL)  
(in place of)