

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District

Budget Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2026

Members in Attendance

Gerald Finn of Millville
James Mitchell of Sutton
Tyler Bartlett of Upton
Joseph Broderick of Blackstone

Anthony E. Steele II, Superintendent-Director
Matthew Connors, Assistant Superintendent
Nicole Ferguson, Business Manager
Christopher Pilla, District Treasurer
Jacquenette Raad, Assistant Business Manager
Jaime Patriarca, Assistant Business Manager

Members Absent

Joseph Hall of Bellingham

Guests in Attendance

Michele Denise, Principal
Edward Evans, Academic Curriculum Coordinator
Yvette Martin, Director of Student Services
Kerri Baltramaitis, Vocational Coordinator
Bryant Laflamme, Vocational Coordinator

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m. by Mr. Mitchell in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Approval of minutes from prior meeting

Mr. Mitchell asked members to review the minutes from the January 15, 2026 Budget Subcommittee meeting.

Motion: On a motion moved by Mr. Pilla seconded by Mr. Bartlett; it was voted and approved with one abstention from Mr. Broderick, as he was not in attendance at said meeting.

Agenda items

Ms. Ferguson opened the meeting with a review of the District Wide/Principal/Coordinator/Student Services budget (2000 series), which had an overall increase of \$23,964 or 10.71% from the prior year budget. The main drivers of the increase related to the following items:

- \$28.2K DW Prof Dev. Tuition: Mainly due to increase in tuition reimbursement per ongoing contract negotiations, and to a lesser extent, an increase in vocational professional development
- \$ 3.2K DW Prof Dev. Other: Anticipated costs for NEASC 5-year site visit, due in FY27
- \$ 1.5K Coordinator Dues/Subscriptions: Addition of MA Partnerships for Youth, previously grant funded
- (\$ 1.3K) Coordinator Conferences/Prof. Dev.: Moved to Administration function for Assistant Superintendent
- (\$ 7.6K) Student Svc Contract Services: Decreased for WMRC radio public service announcements (to be funded by BVTi), and viewbook photography due every two years (next needed in FY28)

Next, Mr. Evans presented a review of the Academic department budget (2000 series), which reflected an overall decrease of (\$268) or (0.17%) from the prior year budget. The notable changes were as follows:

- \$10.6K Science Other Instructional: Renovation of classroom (drop down electrical, chairs, sinks, storage, etc)
- \$ 2.0K Humanities Instr. Equip <\$5K/unit: Addition of two "creation stations" for art teacher demonstrations
- \$ 1.5K Humanities S&M: Increased \$1K for art supplies and \$0.5K for music supplies
- \$ 1.4K Humanities Equip. Maintenance: Increased instrument repair for inventory from donations and grants
- \$ 1.4K Science S&M: Increased based on actual trends observed
- \$ 1.0K Phys. Ed S&M: Increased for chairs, kettle balls, nets and speedminton rackets
- (\$ 1.4K) Humanities Oth Instr. Material: Removal of music stands purchased in prior year
- (\$ 2.6K) Phys. Ed Instr. Equip <\$5K/unit: Removal of scoreboard and backboard padding purchased in prior year
- (\$ 4.6K) Foreign Lang. Textbooks: Books purchased in FY26 were more expensive than those needed for FY27
- (\$ 9.6K) Science Textbooks: Removal of environmental science books purchased in prior year.

A lengthy discussion ensued as the Subcommittee discussed the plan to renovate another science classroom, leaving one more to be done in another year or two. The conversation considered several factors; resources required, other projects underway, impact on instructional services, and alternative funding sources. Ms. Denise advised the Subcommittee that the renovation is necessary to remain compliant with ADA guidelines and maintain an accessible learning environment.

Mr. Evans then presented a handout indicating a textbook replacement plan, in an attempt to level out the major spikes in year-to-year budget requests in a methodical manner.

Next for review was the Guidance and Special Education budget (2000 series), presented by Ms. Martin, which had an overall increase of \$13,161 or 6.56% from the prior year budget. It was noted that the new lottery admissions process makes anticipating the needs of incoming freshmen more difficult than prior years. The notable changes over the prior year budget were as follows:

- \$ 3.6K Guidance Contract Services: Increased translation, legal fees and hearing-impaired interpreter services
- \$ 2.8K SPED IEP Contract Services: Increased need for services required by IEPs
- \$ 2.3K SPED & Psych Contract Services: Increased cost of psychological evaluations and testing
- \$ 2.0K Guidance Conferences/Prof Dev: Addition of in-house mental health training for topics specific to BVT
- \$ 1.0K Guidance Psychological Services: Increased cost of psychological assessments
- \$ 1.0K SPED Director Contract Services: Increased cost of annual program evaluations in addition to DESE integrated monitoring review audit due in FY27
- \$ 0.7K SPED S&M-Non Instruction: Increased in-house printing and various office supplies, based on trend
- \$ 0.2K SPED Textbooks: Increased for modified text resources to accommodate SPED students as needed
- (\$ 0.5K) Guidance Travel: Decreased based on actual trends observed

Next, Ms. Baltramaitis and Mr. Laflamme presented the Vocational department budget (2000 series). Overall, the budget request reflected an increase of \$172,090 or 31.52% from the prior year budget. The significant changes were as follows:

- \$83.6K Supplies & Materials: Mainly due to inflationary costs and the removal of prior year budget constraints
- \$42.1K Instructional Equipment <\$5K: Addition of new industry standard equipment across various shops
- \$22.6K Textbooks: Rotation of new textbook purchases based on predetermined schedule
- \$12.8K Vocational Shop Repairs: Increase driven by repair costs on aging equipment in multiple shops
- \$10.2K Vocational Contracted Svcs: NATEF 5-year program review for Auto Collision and Auto Technology
- \$ 2.8K Vocational Field Trips: Increase due to removal of prior year budget constraints
- (\$ 2.0K) Maintenance of Shop Equipment: Decreased for spray booth service needed every three years (Auto Collision) and extended warranty no longer needed for laser (Paint and Design), offset by an increase for general machine maintenance (Construction Technology)

The Subcommittee discussed anticipated inflationary costs of supplies and materials, resulting in 12-19% increases across several industries. Mr. Finn requested from Mr. Laflamme a few examples of items that had higher than usual inflation since the prior fiscal year, to be provided at a subsequent Budget Subcommittee meeting. The discussion turned to exploring alternative funding sources, especially for any one-time costs.

Ms. Baltramaitis turned the Subcommittee's attention to a supplemental handout, which itemized equipment needs in more detail, citing anticipated funding sources for each item. It was noted that the equipment listing is closely monitored by the Advisory Committee, and other funding sources beyond the operating budget are underway. The Subcommittee also discussed developing a rotating replacement schedule for aging classroom furniture to even out the budgetary impact from year to year.

Mr. Laflamme then directed the Subcommittee's attention to the supplemental handout that showed vocational enrollment trends by shop. He further articulated that enrollments in both Auto Collision and Design and Media Production are trending upward, while Advanced Manufacturing, Information Technology, and Electronics are trending downward from the prior year.

Next, Ms. Ferguson presented the Budget Summary for items reviewed to date, which reflected a preliminary increase of 7.26% from FY2026. She reminded the Subcommittee that the remaining budget presentations consist of Technology and Capital.

In closing, Mr. Steele presented the Subcommittee with several articles and emails of interest. He also advised the Subcommittee that the Governor's numbers had been released on January 28, 2026, and the District was working those into the FY2027 revenue projections.

The next scheduled meeting is set for Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Special Note: Consistent with the District's standard budget building process, the Budget Subcommittee will continue to receive and review all departmental budget requests. Once fully collected, the Subcommittee will explore and investigate all options (including grants and donations) to secure requests prior to including them in the FY2027 final proposed budget, with local municipal assessment consideration.

Areas for follow-up:

- Mr. Laflamme will provide a few examples of items that had higher than usual inflation since the prior fiscal year
- Ms. Baltramaitis will provide a rotation schedule for aging chair replacements in various shops

Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn made by Mr. Broderick at 6:07 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Finn; motion voted and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jaime Patriarca, Recording Secretary