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BVT PARENT NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2026

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Fiscally Fit

We all strive to lead healthy, secure, and well-managed financial lives, characterized by consistent saving, smart budgeting, low debt, and thoughtful long-term planning. As a parent, modeling responsible behaviors, such as financial wellness, will prepare your teen to make informed, wise financial choices. Similar to physical fitness, our annual budget process requires regular "exercise" in managing revenues and expenses to ensure that we can maintain current needs, handle emergencies, and pursue future goals—all key components of being **FISCALLY FIT**.

Anthony E. Steele II — Superintendent-Director



Fiscal responsibility is a continuous process that demands discipline. At BVT, we align resources with instructional needs to provide high-quality career and technical education.

In its simplest form, fiscal responsibility at BVT is about maximizing taxpayer money wisely, without overspending. With that said, school budgets are tight. Funding has become an especially acute challenge for municipalities across Massachusetts, caught between inflation-driven cost increases and binding constraints on their ability to raise new revenue.

In late 2025, the Massachusetts Municipal Association and Tufts University released a pivotal report, *A Perfect Storm: Cities and Towns Face Historic Fiscal Pressures*, highlighting that nearly three-quarters of Massachusetts municipalities are at 95% to 99% of their levy limit, with rising costs outpacing revenue. This crisis, driven by stagnant state aid and Proposition 2½ constraints, threatens essential services.

Any analysis of growing fiscal pressures focuses on many of the essential public services our municipalities provide, including clean water, safe streets, high-quality schools, and dependable emergency services. As BVT's budget season advances and we present our budget to our thirteen member towns for final vote and approval, it is important to highlight all of the cost-saving measures and fiscal restraints made annually to be a responsible partner.

The Cost of a Vocational Technical Education
When it comes to appreciating the value of a vocational education, you get it. But do you know how much it costs to send your teen to BVT? From the high-tech shop equipment to the smartboard and laptops, your teen applies theory learned in mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies to solve workplace/life problems encountered in their career vocational technical shops. It all comes with a cost.

Apples to Apples
As you examine your investment in BVT, it's important to understand that we must meet the state's vocational guidelines and rigorous academic standards. Although the state estimates that a vocational education should cost one-and-a-half to twice that of a traditional education, BVT has put forth budgets featuring a per-pupil cost far below that estimate. Our current per-pupil cost is approximately 1.25% the average per-pupil cost of our sending schools. That metric is a great indicator that we are maintaining high-quality education with financial efficiency.

In fact, with the inclusion of nearly $10 million state Chapter 70 aid and our aggressive pursuit of grants and donations, the per-pupil assessment to our towns often mirrors that of their local system. We're proud that BVT, in an apples-to-apples comparison, consistently ranks in the bottom third of Massachusetts vocational schools when comparing per-pupil expenditure to our 25 sister schools. We consider that a testimony to your return on investment.

Apples to Oranges
Annually, we request a one-time, all-inclusive consolidated assessment from each of our member towns. Any valid attempt to compare or contrast BVT versus local per-pupil costs must first add the multiple cost center subsidies found within the municipal and not the school side of the ledger.

In our apples-to-oranges comparison, such expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Central office
- Capital improvements
- Health Insurance for active employees and retirees
- Casualty, life, and property insurance
- Federal and state revenue shortfalls
- Legal expenses
- Pension obligations
- School resource officer
- Trash, recycling, and snow removal
- Treasurer, audit, and other business expenses
- Unemployment and workers' compensation

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We are not critical of the typical town-to-school financial relationship; in fact, we're quite envious of it. As a fiscally autonomous regional school, we not only have all of our expenses rolled into one annual per-pupil assessment, but also have one bite at the apple each year.

Apples: Throughout the Commonwealth, municipal planners are bracing for potential meteoric rises in health insurance costs for public employees as trend would suggest. Schools typically represent a town's largest sector of employees; however, the associated costs for health insurance falls under the umbrella of town, not school, expenses.

Oranges: At regional schools like BVT, we face the same exposure to unpredictable cost escalators like employee health insurance. Due to the potential impact, we meet regularly with our insurance brokers and conduct deep-dives into the factors driving our premiums and strategies to minimize increases. We were fortunate this year that our efforts yielded an enviable 3.95% increase when 15-20% increases are the norm. Regardless, that cost center is factored into our per-pupil cost, and ultimately becomes a major component of our annual budget. Thankfully, we have not experienced a mid-cycle increase in health insurance premiums, but that too is possible. In that case, we have to bridge that difference—there is no going back to the member towns for unforeseen expenses. We live within our budget for better or worse.

At BVT, we are mindful of spending, explore cost-saving measures whenever feasible, and strategically plan for the future. In preparing our proposed FY27 preliminary budget, we are working to keep BVT's high-quality vocational education as affordable as possible. Our Budget Subcommittee and Business Office personnel diligently work year-round to ensure funds and resources are allocated appropriately to support your teen and their education.

Before the widespread use of digital resources, we had CliffsNotes. These distinctive yellow-and-black pamphlets broke down complex material and concepts. In that same spirit, I share this condensed overview to keep you informed of what's happening financially at the school, in our communities, and with our annual budget.

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A Win-Win Partnership

With the growing need for skilled professionals in the technology industry—and the hiring challenges many companies face—building mutually beneficial partnerships has never been more important. When schools and employers work together, they foster innovation, strengthen communication, and create meaningful connections that prepare our students for successful careers, a win-win!

We are proud to partner with Worldband, a computer consulting firm that has long supported our students through guest speakers, mentorship, Cooperative Education (Co-Op) placements, and even employment opportunities.

"Through our partnership with BVT, we support the future of our industry and our clients with the in-depth knowledge and IT expertise of our highly skilled team," explained Lawney Tinio, IT Specialist and owner of Worldband. "We set students up for success and show them through first-hand experiences how rewarding their IT careers can be."

Located in Bellingham, Worldband has offered accessible Co-Op opportunities for more than a decade. They have supported nearly a dozen student placements and currently employ six full-time staff members who are graduates of our Information Technology program, several of whom serve on our advisory committee, such as Bryan Bradley *(Class of 2011)*, who has been instrumental in reviewing program curriculum, making equipment recommendations, and providing insight on industry trends.

Another alumni, Zabel DerKosrofian *(Class of 2025)*, applied what she learned at BVT through her Co-Op at Worldband. She reflects on her experience as a Tier I Technician: "Every other week of my senior year, instead of going to school for my shop, I got to work for an IT company and learn more about IT in a professional and real-life environment. This experience at Worldband was something I had been working toward since I first walked into my shop as a freshman. I not only learn valuable skills beyond my school's curriculum, but I incorporated my soft skills into a real-world environment, while also earning money, and who wouldn't like the sound of that?"

Dr. Matthew Connors, Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum Director, noted, "The partnership with Worldband has created many learning opportunities for our tech-savvy students to delve deeper into their careers. While there are many paths to success, we're proud to see our students further their career technical education alongside industry experts and gain experience through Co-Op that will help launch their careers."

Friend of Vocational Technical Education
Each year, we present the Friend of Vocational Technical Education Award to individuals who have made significant contributions to our vocational programs. This honor recognizes those whose involvement, support, and commitment have helped our students thrive—particularly in the trades. This year's award recipient is Mr. Tinio.

We are grateful for our long-standing partnership with Worldband and for their dedication to supporting students in their career pursuits. Having Worldband by our side offers our students invaluable opportunities as they prepare to enter the workforce. We appreciate Mr. Tinio, Mr. Bradley, and the entire Worldband team—their commitment to vocational education continues to make a lasting impact on our community.



Celebrating Our Skilled Students

Medals, trophies, and awards are more than symbols—they recognize dedication, commemorate achievement, and celebrate the hard work of our students.

This spring, our students will demonstrate their technical and workplace skills as they participate in SkillsUSA local, state, and national competitions. At BVT, the SkillsUSA year begins with the Fall State Leadership Conference (FSLC), which helps our chapter advisors, Becky Corda, Mikayla Corda, and Maria Bennes, build a strong and engaged SkillsUSA chapter. Unlike traditional trophies—and similar to the Olympics—SkillsUSA awards gold, silver, and bronze medals to honor outstanding achievement in its annual competitions.

Fall State Leadership Conference
We're proud of our twelve sophomores who recently attended the FSLC in Marlborough. They enjoyed connecting with their peers from across the state, engaging in collaborative projects, and participating in training designed around the SkillsUSA Framework of personal, workplace, and technical skills. They also had an opportunity to earn the SkillsUSA Massachusetts Leader Award. Congratulations to the following students, who took home theses accolades and awards:

- Nina Bandstra: Silver, Workplace Skills
- Samantha Bresnahan: Bronze, Workplace Skills & Leader Award
- Julliana Cael: MVP Award, Technical Skills & Leader Award
- Jessica Calles: Leader Award
- Madison Denise: Leader Award
- Garrett LeBoeuf: Gold and Bronze, Community Service
- Reece Mathieu: Silver, Community Service

The Road to the SkillsUSA Championships
The SkillsUSA Championships are the national culmination of a year-long journey that begins in local chapters across the country. Local district gold and silver winners advance to the state level, and state gold medalists earn the opportunity to compete at nationals in June.

Along with medals, students may receive scholarships, tools of the trade, or even job offers right from the competition floor. Most importantly, they gain confidence that comes from knowing they are among the best in their field. Each medal tells a story of perseverance and excellence. Beyond celebrating hands-on achievement, SkillsUSA highlights the value of career and technical education and inspires students to aim high. To learn more, visit: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/skillsusa**.



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**.

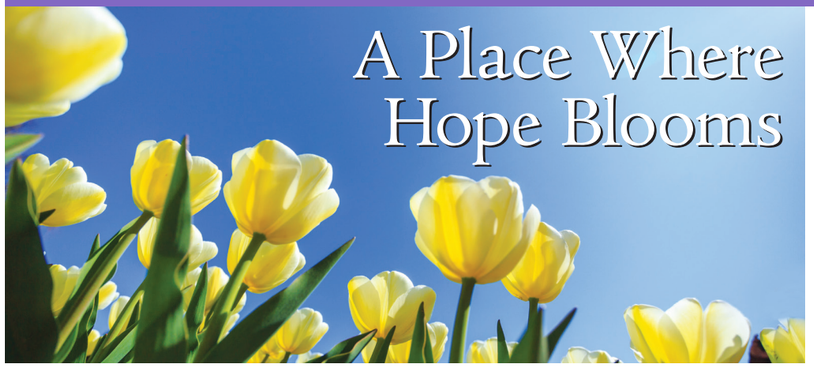
Feb 16 – 20	Winter Break – NO SCHOOL
Mar 4	Teacher In-Service – 7:45 to 10:30 a.m. Student Late Start – 10:30 a.m.
	Multicultural Festival – 11:00 a.m.
Mar 6	Second Trimester Ends
Mar 11	SkillsUSA District Competition
Mar 16	First Day of Spring Sports Tryouts
Mar 19	Early Release – 11:00 a.m. Superintendent's Gourmet Dinner
Mar 20	Teacher In-Service – 7:45 to 10:30 a.m. Student Late Start – 10:30 a.m.
Apr 3	Early Release – 11:00 a.m. Senior Portfolios Due
Apr 10	Drama Club Dinner Theater
Apr 11	Incoming Freshmen Placement Testing & Parent Orientation – 7:30 a.m.
Apr 12	NHS/NTHS Color Run – 10:00 a.m.
Apr 20 – 24	Spring Break – NO SCHOOL
Apr 30	Early Release – 11:00 a.m.
May 1	SkillsUSA State Competition at BVT – NO SCHOOL
May 4 – 8	Seniors: Last Week of Academic & Final Exams
May 7	Senior Class Day & WooSox Game
May 9	Junior & Senior Prom
May 11 – 15	Seniors: Last Week of Shop & Final Exams
May 14	Seniors: Last Day of Co-Op Third Trimester Ends for Seniors
May 18 – 20	Senior Class Trip: New York City
May 18 – 21	Senior Attendance Make-Up
May 21	Senior Checkout Day
	Senior Memorial Scholarship Night *(by invitation only)* – 6:00 p.m.
May 22	Senior Breakfast & Graduation Rehearsal
May 25	Memorial Day – NO SCHOOL
May 26	Class of 2026 Graduation Ceremony
May 29	Junior Portfolios Due
Jun 2	Spring Concert – 7:30 p.m.
Jun 4	BVT's Got Talent – 7:00 p.m.
Jun 5	Third Trimester Ends for Juniors, Sophomores & Freshmen
Jun 8&9	27th Annual Golf Tournament
Jun 15	Last Day of School / Early Release – 11:00 a.m.

Note: These events and dates are subject to change.

the Compass

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS • SPRING 2026

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 curiousity for learning as they reach their full potential and become career, college, and life ready.
Together, we can help you chart their course.



A Place Where Hope Blooms

An incredible transformation is taking place at the front entrance of our school. After taking root, several inches below the ground during a blustery winter, fifty yellow tulip bulbs are now poised to bloom together in our newly planted Hope Garden. This inspiring display is the result of months of thoughtful planning and collaboration among our school counselors, students, and facilities team. As winter gives way to spring, our school community waits—somewhat patiently—to see the fruits of their labor. Gardening, after all, requires hope and trust in the future.

On a cool October day, a small group gathered with a shared purpose: to focus on mental health while planting tulip bulbs as part of a new school counseling initiative. In partnership with the Yellow Tulip Project, our counseling department is working to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding youth mental health through the creation of this Hope Garden. Stigma remains one of the greatest barriers preventing individuals from seeking help, yet support and hope are available.

Yellow tulips symbolize hope. Through the Hope Garden, we are bringing our community together and addressing the importance of mental health through conversations. The Yellow Tulip Project was created by a young adult who had experienced the loss of two friends to suicide and was struggling with her own mental health. The project has since grown into a nationwide movement promoting awareness, connection, and healing.

A Hope Garden is more than just colorful landscaping—it serves as a daily reminder that hope can be cultivated even in the toughest times. Through our partnership with the Yellow Tulip Project, we are committed to ending mental health stigma and encouraging open conversations at school and at home about mental well-being.

As a family, take a moment to notice the Hope Garden when you visit the school or talk about it at home. Consider asking:

- What does hope mean to you?
- What are some things that help you feel hopeful or supported during challenging times?
- Who are the trusted adults or friends you can talk to when you need help?

These simple conversations help normalize talking about feelings and remind your teen that they are not alone.

Small Conversations Matter

Mental Health = Physical Health: Just like we treat physical illness, mental health deserves the same care, attention, and understanding.

Normalize The Conversations: Talking about mental health regularly, at home and at school, helps reduce stigma and makes it easier for kids to ask for help when they need it.

Check-ins: Having short, everyday chats with your teen helps build trust and makes harder discussions feel less intimidating over time. Mental wellness conversations are ongoing. Give it a try. You may find that these chats can make a big difference.

Use Natural Entry Points: Finding natural ways to start conversations about mental health—like watching a movie together where the characters are struggling—can be a gentle way to reduce the stigma and focus on your teen's well-being.

Reframe The Questions: Rather than asking, "What's wrong?" Try open-ended questions like:

- "How are you feeling today?"
- "What's been going well lately?"
- "What's been hard this week?"

Nature Is Healing: Being in nature can help open up conversations that would otherwise be challenging to approach. Going for a walk can reduce stress and make it easier for teens to open up and share.

It's Okay Not To Be Okay: Struggling with mental health is common, and it's nothing to be embarrassed about, especially for teens navigating growth, friendships, and school pressures.

Peer Support: Often, teens lean on friends first for support, which can be really helpful. However, it's important to let your teen know that if they are struggling with something and feel overwhelmed, they may need to reach out to a trusted adult.

Identify Their Trusted Person: If your teen doesn't want to talk to you (Sigh!) or their friends, encourage them to name another trusted adult or school support person they can reach out to.

As a parent, you don't have to carry heavy concerns alone. If a conversation with your teen feels uncomfortable, seek professional help: reach out to your teen's school counselor, their pcp, an outside counselor, or emergency services.

When we come together—put our hands in the soil, share experiences, and talk openly—hope truly does bloom. We can support mental health awareness in many ways. To learn more about the Yellow Tulip Project, access mental health resources, or explore how to plant your own Hope Garden, visit **www.theyellowtulipproject.org**.



Measure Twice, Cut Once

In carpentry, you measure twice and cut once because precision matters. The same principle applies to building your teen's next year's schedule. Careful planning now ensures a strong, well-constructed foundation for their success.

Students began the process in January by reviewing course recommendations and having thoughtful discussions with our staff and with you at home before submitting their plans to our Scheduling Office.

In May, after some preliminary planning, we'll share course verification sheets. Think of this as the "measure twice" moment. It's time for you and your teen to confirm every detail and make any final adjustments to the blueprints before we start framing BVT's master schedule. This step is critical to ensure we have the correct number of sections, given staffing constraints, for a solid, precise, and custom-built, made-to-last course schedule.

If your teen needs to make an adjustment, don't wait. The deadline for schedule changes is **Friday, July 17th**. While there will be an Add/Drop period in September, we're working together to build their final course schedule. The longer your teen waits, the greater the risk of gaps in their schedule, extra work to contend with, and the possibility that we may not have the right courses they need. Remember, it's far better to measure carefully now, so we can build it right the first time!

See You Later, Seniors

It's hard to believe, but the final trimester of high school is just around the corner for our seniors. This milestone marks an exciting, yet sometimes overwhelming chapter in their lives. Earning a high school diploma and vocational certificate is a tremendous achievement that reflects years of dedication and hard work. It brings feelings of pride, joy, and often a sense of relief.

At the same time, leaving behind familiar routines, teachers, and friends can feel daunting. Many students worry about losing connections, second-guess their chosen path, and wonder how they'll manage the independence and responsibilities that come with adulthood. Seeing classmates get into their dream schools or share future plans can add to the pressure for those still figuring it out.

We encourage you to remind your teen that just because they're "leaving the beaver lodge," it doesn't mean they're leaving the BVT family. As alumni, they play an essential role in our community, and we want them to stay connected. Graduates who join our alumni registry receive the Connect (our alumni newsletter), job postings, class reunion announcements, and invitations to special events. Alumni can also give back in meaningful ways:

- Volunteering at career-related events like our annual Industry Insights Seminar
- Providing Co-Op opportunities
- Serving on our advisory board
- Sharing success stories that help shape and improve our programming
- Some alumni even come home to join our staff, teaching and mentoring the next generation

Wherever life takes the Class of 2026, they'll always be Beavers. Graduation isn't goodbye. It's a celebration of all we've accomplished together and the start of a new chapter in a lifelong partnership. We'll always be here cheering them on, with doors wide open, eagerly waiting for them to reach out.

CALENDAR 2025 – 2026

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

Feb 26	Seniors: Scholarship Support Day
Mar 12	Juniors: College Fair
Mar 16	Freshmen: Depression Screening Opt-Out Deadline
Mar 16&17	Freshmen: Signs of Suicide Curriculum
Mar 18	Freshmen: Depression Screening
Apr 8	Seniors: Seeking Supports After High School Lesson & Graduation Surveys
Apr 9	Career Fair
May 4	Course Verification Sheets Available
May 5	Sophomores: Building Wellness Lesson
July 17	Drop AP Courses Deadline Request Schedule Changes Deadline
Aug 31	Add/Drop Period Begins

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Assessments

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

College Entrance Exams

- Apr 7–10 — Sophomores: PSAT–10
- Mar 14, May 2 & Jun 6 — Seniors: SAT Exam
- Apr 11, Jun 13 & Jul 11 — Seniors: ACT Exam

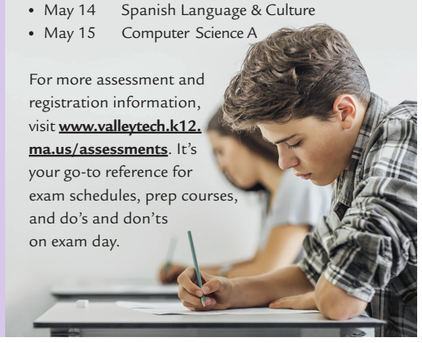
MCAS Exams

- Mar 24 & 25 — Sophomores: ELA
- May 19 & 20 — Sophomores: Math
- Jun 2 & 3 — Sophomores: Science
- Jun 2 & 3 — Freshmen: Honors Science

Advanced Placement Exams

- May 4 — Biology
- May 5 — Chemistry
- May 6 — English Literature & Composition/ Physics 1 (Algebra-Based)
- May 8 — U.S. History
- May 11 — Calculus AB
- May 12 — Psychology
- May 13 — English Language & Composition
- May 14 — Spanish Language & Culture
- May 15 — Computer Science A

For more assessment and registration information, visit **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments**. It's your go-to reference for exam schedules, prep courses, and do's and don'ts on exam day.





New Members

Celebrating Our Honor Societies Inductees

Induction into the James S. Mullaney Chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) and the Paul Sullivan Chapter of the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) is a commendable recognition of a student's hard work, dedication, and academic excellence. It represents one of the highest achievements a student can attain. Our NHS chapter honors students who've met rigorous academic standards and demonstrated specific qualities regarding scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Our NTHS celebrates those who demonstrate excellence in their chosen trade, technical courses, as well as character, skills, and work ethic.

"It is always a pleasure to celebrate our modern-day career technical students. They can readily demonstrate high-level technical training and simultaneously validate high achievement in academics that serve as a foundation for their technical aptitude," said Superintendent-Director Anthony E. Steele II. "It is with immense pride that I congratulate our new inductees, who exemplify the values of our school and these organizations."

Help us congratulate our 57 inductees, who were honored during a recent induction ceremony and learn more about NHS and NTHS, by visiting **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/nhsnths**.



Make Every Day Earth Day!

Don't toss away your household bags and wraps. Our Students for Environmental Action (SEA) Club needs them for our school-wide recycling challenge. By making thoughtful, consistent earth-friendly choices — like reducing waste, reusing materials, recycling responsibly, conserving water and energy, and selecting sustainable products — we can collectively make every day Earth Day.

The #TrexRecyclingChallenge is an annual competition where our students strive to collect more than 1,000 pounds of stretchy plastic film. Join the cause by recycling the following items:

- Produce bags
- Store bags
- Ice bags
- Wood pellet bags
- Ziploc/Reclosable bags
- Cereal box liners
- Case overwrap
- Bread bags
- Newspaper sleeves
- Dry cleaning bags
- Bubble wrap
- Plastic e-commerce mailers

Get social with us by sharing your recycling efforts using the hashtags ***#TrexRecycling Challenge*** and ***#Recycle2Win***. Thank you for thinking beyond the bag!

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As your Superintendent-Director, the springtime focus is on presenting (and sometimes defending) next year's budget, which involves working with our school committee, local towns, state agencies, and legislators to fund and manage our regional vocational education programs. The budget process involves planning for operational costs, capital improvements, staffing needs, and protection from unforeseen circumstances.

Each spring, our budget seeks approval from our 13 sending towns at annual town meetings. It relies on the support of informed citizens like you. We encourage you, and all community members to actively participate in the budget process by staying informed, attending meetings, and letting your voice be heard. We appreciate your support of our ongoing pursuit to provide high-quality career and technical education, and for embracing what it takes to be FISCALLY FIT.

Many Thanks!

We extend our sincere appreciation to our sponsors, whose generous donations support our student transportation vans. Each contribution helps maintain a van for one year. In return, the vehicle proudly displays the financial institution's logo as it transports students to and from job sites throughout our 13-town district and neighboring communities.

MCU Millbury Federal Credit Union

Savers Bank

UNIBANK

bankHometown

MNB Millbury National Bank

countrybank

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 conversation. 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** and Instagram: **@bvt_highschool**.