

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
March 12, 2026

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 M. Hall of Bellingham, Chair	Anthony E. Steele II, Superintendent-Director
Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone	Dr. Matthew J. Connors, Assistant Superintendent
Mark J. Potter of Douglas	Michele S. Denise, Principal
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton	Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale	Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon – 6:01 p.m.	Maddison Dos Santos, Student Council Representative
Paul J. Braza of Milford	Isla Koopman, Student Council Representative
Jan P. Hanratty of Millbury	Justin Fransen, Student Recognition
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair	Evan Griffin, Student Recognition
James M. Mitchell of Sutton	Mr. Brad DiDio, Upton Men’s Club Representative
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton	Matt Ronzio, Upton Men’s Club Representative
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge	Miranda Dolegiewicz, Administrative Assistant
	Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

Members Absent:
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. Mr. Steele had been notified in advance that Mr. Koopman would be unable to attend and that Mr. Cray might be delayed. Mr. Cray arrived at 6:01 p.m.

Item 2. Secretary’s Report – A. Yitts

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Braza, the Committee voted to waive the reading of the minutes of the January 15, 2026, regular School Committee meeting and approved the minutes as written.

2.2. On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Finn, the Committee voted to waive the reading of the minutes of the February 24, 2026, special School Committee meeting and approved the minutes as written.

Item 3. Treasurer’s Report – C. Pilla

3.1. The Treasurer’s Report dated December 31, 2025, was presented. The report reflected an ending balance of \$1,930,010.62 in Total Funds (\$966,737.76 Project Funds; \$963,272.86 Local Funds). On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Broderick, the Committee voted to approve the report as presented.

3.2. The Treasurer’s Report dated January 31, 2026, was presented. The report reflected an ending balance of \$3,497,487.05 in Total Funds (\$925,354.14 Project Funds; \$2,572,132.91 Local Funds). On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Broderick, the Committee voted to approve the report as presented.

Item 4. Comments by Student Representatives

4.1. Student Council Report

The Student Council (STUCO) Representatives Maddison Dos Santos and Isla Koopman provided an update on activities. They reported 16 Student Council members attended the annual conference of the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils in Hyannis, where students participated in the Polar Plunge and raised \$2,988 for Special Olympics.

Student Council members received several awards at the conference, including the Unsung Hero Award (Gabe Cassell), the Commonwealth Award (Rory Goyev, Emily Lennig, and Maria Fiero), and the Gold Council of Excellence Award.

The council has also applied for the National Association of Student Councils Gold Council of Excellence Award, with results expected in early April. Members are also considering attending the National Student Council Conference in New Hampshire in June, and plan to attend a Regional Student Council Spirit Conference on April 15.

Principal Denise congratulated the Student Council on receiving the Gold Council of Excellence Award and noted that the council nominated faculty member Danielle Cann for Advisor of the Year. Although she was not selected, the nomination packet prepared by the students was commended. The Chair also thanked the Student Council members for recognizing a member of the faculty.

Item 5. Student Recognition – A. Steele

5.1. Superintendent-Director Steele, joined by Principal Denise, recognized Justin A. Fransen of Upton, Massachusetts, a senior in the Engineering & Robotics program, and Evan S. Griffin of Hopedale, Massachusetts, a senior in the Information Technology program, as recipients of the Certificate of Academic Excellence presented by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. The Committee congratulated the students on their achievement.

Item 6. July 4th Festivities Presentation (06/20/26) – Brad DiDio

Mr. Brad DiDio, representing the Upton Men's Club, requested the use of BVT facilities on Saturday, June 20, 2026, to host the club's annual July 4th festivities. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, the Committee voted to endorse the Upton Men's Club request to hold the family-friendly community event at the school on June 20, 2026.

Item 7. Upton Men's Club Athletic Field Use Request – Matt Ronzio

Mr. Matt Ronzio, representing the Upton Men's Club, requested the use of BVT's athletic field on Saturday, July 11, 2026, for the club's annual twenty-one-plus cornhole tournament. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, the Committee voted to endorse the request to host the event at the school on July 11, 2026.

Item 8. Business Manager – N. Ferguson

8.1. Donations for Approval:

- a. Taco, Inc. – This item was postponed to the next meeting.

b. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, the Committee voted to approve a \$500 donation from Savers Bank to offset maintenance costs for a student transportation vehicle.

c. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Braza, the Committee voted to approve a \$250 donation from Millbury Federal Credit Union to offset maintenance costs for a student transportation vehicle.

d. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Braza, the Committee voted to approve a \$1000 donation from the Associated General Contracts of Massachusetts, to be used in support of the Future Builders Program.

e. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, the Committee voted to approve a \$250 donation from Dean Bank to offset maintenance costs for a student transportation vehicle.

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

9.1. BVTi Update

Assistant Superintendent-Director Dr. Connors provided an update on BVTi. There are 98 total registrations in the current cycle, 66 of which are grant funded. Enrollment was slightly above 100 at the start of the year in January, with typical attrition described as “minimal.” BVTi students are currently completing industry-recognized credentials, OSHA training is underway, and Hot Work training is scheduled for March 26, 2026.

Outreach and recruitment: BVTi has contacted 27 local high schools to expand awareness of career training opportunities. Confirmed presentations include Bellingham, Grafton, Nipmuc, Burncoat, Millbury, Sutton, Shrewsbury, and Medway High Schools.

Business and industry engagement: Outreach to regional employers continues to strengthen partnerships. A BVTi Job Fair is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at BVT.

Grants and program expansion: BVTi will submit a proposal in the Round 11 grant cycle, requesting \$1.38 million to continue current programming and expand offerings in Culinary, Auto Tech, Auto Collision, and Carpentry.

9.2. The Class of 2026 Practical Nursing graduation and pinning ceremony was held in the BVT Competition Center on February 2, 2026. The ceremony was well attended. Upon completion of the program, the 20 graduates are eligible to take the NCLEX-PN exam. Within a few weeks post-graduation, four graduates have successfully passed the exam.

Item 10. Principal's Report – M. Denise

10.1. Principal Denise shared a handout titled Admissions Status Report 2026 and provided an update for the Class of 2030. Thirteen lottery sessions are scheduled from March 23, 2026, through March 26, 2026, to fill the 315 available seats (seat allocation per Town).

Superintendent-Director Steele informed the Committee that a YouTube link will be provided to view a 30-minute video featuring him and Dr. Connors, explaining apportionment, the data, rationale, and process for seat allocation. The video will also be shared with Select Board members, Finance Committee members, and Town Managers via email.

10.2. Principal Denise presented the proposed 2026–2027 school calendar, reflecting the new Memorandum of Agreement with the Teachers' Association. The calendar includes 190 school days, beginning August 20, 2026, and ending June 16, 2027. Key highlights include:

August 19, 2026: New teacher orientation and designated staff setup day.

August 20, 2026: First day for students.

Reduction of two half days to increase instructional time.

Holidays and vacations follow the typical schedule, with vacations noted in red.

Graduation: Scheduled for June 3, 2027, adjusted to accommodate Memorial Day week.

Principal Denise noted there are no additional unique changes to the calendar. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Cray, the Committee voted to approve the proposed 2026–2027 school calendar as presented.

10.3. The Committee received the 2026 Senior Calendar. The anticipated graduation date is May 26, 2026, at the DCU Center, Worcester. Committee members were reminded that dates and times are subject to change.

10.4. Principal Denise reported that the Winter Sports Awards Ceremony was held at BVT on March 10, 2026. The event was well attended and recognized student achievements in athletics.

10.5. Principal Denise reported that the annual College Fair for BVT juniors was held on Thursday, March 12, 2026, in collaboration with Nipmuc Regional High School. The event provided students from both high schools with the opportunity to speak with approximately 70 admissions representatives from colleges, universities, training institutions, and the military.

10.6. Field Trip Approval:

a. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Finn, the Committee voted to give conditional approval for the proposed overnight field trip to the SkillsUSA State Competition in Marlborough, Massachusetts, scheduled for April 30, 2026, to May 2, 2026. Final participation numbers and cost details will be reported to the Committee at a future meeting.

Item 11. Budget Subcommittee Report - J. Mitchell

11.1. First Round Line-Item Series, 7000, 2000

Mr. Mitchell provided a status report on the First Round Line-Item Series, 7000, 2000, and gave a brief update on the recent public hearing. He also expressed appreciation to the Budget Subcommittee for their support during his first year serving as Chair.

Superintendent-Director Steele thanked Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Finn thanked Mr. Bartlett, who served as Vice-Chair of the subcommittee.

11.2. Mr. Mitchell presented a status report on the Budget Public Hearing and thanked all participants involved in the FY27 budget-building process. The FY27 proposed budget was approved by a quorum vote at the public hearing.

11.3. Mr. Hall asked Superintendent-Director Steele to share the results of the School Council Vote with the Committee. Mr. Steele reported that at their February 24, 2026 meeting, the School Council voted unanimously to support the FY27 budget request for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District.

11.4. E&D Authorization – FY27 Budget: On a motion made by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to approve the use of \$250,000 from the District’s Certified Excess & Deficiency Funds (E&D) as a funding source for the FY27 proposed budget. The District's commitment to identification of alternative revenue streams and fiscal austerity contributes to its ability to generate E&D. This valuable resource provides a revenue source that creates a reduction to member town assessments. Analysis of E&D:
\$ 1,384,579 - Certified E&D (1/16/26)

\$ 600,000 - Transfer to Capital Projects (2/24/26 Vote Item 5)
\$ 784,579 - Available Certified E&D (After Vote Item 5)
\$ 250,000 - Requested for FY27 Budget (3/12/26 Vote Item 11.4.)
\$ 534,579 - Remaining Certified E&D After Vote

11.5. Adopt FY27 Budget: On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Cray, following the public hearing held earlier today, the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee voted to accept the FY27 Budget (\$33,031,281) as set forth by the Budget Subcommittee and approved by the School Council on February 24, 2026.

Item 12. Superintendent-Director’s Report – A. Steele

12.1. Superintendent-Director Steele informed the Committee that at the School Council Meeting on February 24, 2026, the School Council recommended that the School Committee not adopt a School Choice policy for the 2026-2027 school year. A discussion on School Choice ensued.

On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, the Committee unanimously voted not to adopt School Choice for the 2026-2027 school year.

12.2. Superintendent-Director Steele provided the following updates:
a. On January 15, 2026, the Town Administrator of Bellingham, Joseph Laydon, and Bellingham CFO Heidi Chuckran visited BVT.

b. On January 21, 2026, Superintendent Steele met with representatives of the Upton Men's Club.

c. On January 28, 2026, Superintendent Steele met with the Town Administrator of Mendon, Jeremy Stull, during a visit to the school.

d. On January 29, 2026, Superintendent Steele, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Matthew Connors, and Vocational Director Kerri Baltramaitis visited Unified's main plant in Sutton, Massachusetts to discuss Co-Op opportunities for students.

e. On February 2, 2026, Mr. Steele and Dr. Connors attended the Bellingham Board of Selectmen meeting for a presentation on Admissions Apportionment.

f. On February 3, 2026, Mr. Steele and Dr. Connors hosted a visit from the Upton Finance Committee.

g. On February 11, 2026, Mr. Steele conducted a phone conference with the Town Administrator of Sutton, Austin Cyganiewicz.

h. On February 17, 2026, Mr. Steele met with the Town Administrator of Northbridge, Adam Gaudette.

i. On March 4, 2026, Mr. Steele and Dr. Connors met with the Town Administrator of Milford, Richard Villani.

12.3. Notification of Retirement:

a. The Committee is in receipt of a retirement letter dated January 29, 2026 from Colleen Langin, Dental Assisting Instructor, which was accepted with an effective date of June 30, 2026.

12.4. Committee received the Parent Newsletter, the Link (Spring 2026).

12.5. The Committee received the Superintendent Goals Update.

12.6. Mr. Steele acknowledged and thanked those involved in the BVTM Memorandum of Agreement FY27-29 noting the agreement's impact on the budget, including a projected \$2 million in savings.

Item 13. New Business

Mr. Finn provided a brief update regarding BMR's efforts to seek a new high school.

Superintendent-Director Steele reported that the MSBA partial roof project and remote snow days will be considered at a future meeting.

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 April 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Item 16. Meeting Closure:

16.1. The Chair, Mr. Hall, declared the meeting closed at 7:09 p.m.

16.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Braza, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Listing of Materials Used in the Meeting:

- Item 2.1. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2026
- Item 2.2. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2026
- Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated December 31, 2025
- Item 3.2. Treasurer's Report dated January 31, 2026
- Item 6.0. Upton Men's Club, Use of School Facilities & Athletics Fields
- Item 7.0. Upton Men's Club, Use of School Facilities & Athletics Fields
- Item 8.1.a. Donation: Taco, Inc.
- Item 8.1.b. Donation: Savers Bank
- Item 8.1.c. Donation: Millbury Federal Credit Union
- Item 8.1.d. Donation: Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts
- Item 8.1.e. Donation: Dean Bank
- Item 10.2. BVT 2026-2027 Proposed Calendar
- Item 10.3. BVT Senior Calendar
- Item 11.3. FY27 Budget Approval School Council
- Item 11.4. Suggested Motion: E&D Authorization FY27 Budget
- Item 11.5. Suggested Motion: Adopt FY27 Budget
- Item 12.1. School Choice Letter
- Item 12.3. Notification of Retirement Letter
- Item 12.5. Superintendent-Director's Goals FY2026 Update
- Item 14.0. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony M. Yitts
Secretary