

# Valley Stream #30

public schools

[www.valleystream30.com](http://www.valleystream30.com)

## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR *Superintendent of Schools*

Dear Valley Stream 30 Community,

As you know, one of the overriding goals of the District's five-year Strategic Plan is to prepare students to be 21st century learners, thinkers, and "doers." In order to successfully accomplish this goal, 21st century schools are mindful of providing learning opportunities that foster students' higher-level thinking, in addition to activities that support students' knowledge and comprehension.

Our new English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum maps that are being developed in grades 3-6 place an increased focus on critical thinking skills. The new fifth- and sixth-grade science units (one of which is highlighted to the right) are inquiry-based learning experiences where students experiment, observe, and analyze in order to build a deep understanding of science concepts. In the arts curriculum maps under development, students actively engage in learning activities that have them responding critically to works of art, building on their background knowledge of the discipline. In character education programs, such as PBIS, Peer Mediation, and Responsive Classroom, children are asked to consider outcomes, analyze implications of actions, and examine situations from varying viewpoints.

As the development of a well-rounded student requires a strong home-school partnership, there are many ways you can help your child at home build 21st century skills. For example, when reading at home, move beyond simply asking your child about the literal happenings in a story. Instead of asking, "Where did Goldilocks go?" encourage your child to think inferentially about what's been read. Was Goldilocks just being mischievous when she entered the bears' house or did she think she had a good reason to enter the house uninvited? Questions requiring evaluation, opinion and judgment on the reader's part also encourage the development of strong critical thinking skills. Try asking, "What should happen to people who touch other people's property without permission?" Just as our teachers are, I am sure you will be impressed at our students' ability to think critically and problem solve creatively.

Twenty-first century living requires us all to constantly make informed judgments, come up with creative solutions, and express well thought out opinions. The more opportunities we provide our children to practice these all-important skills at school and home, the better they will become at meeting the challenges of this demanding, yet exciting, century.

I wish you all a healthy and successful school year.

Sincerely,  
Elaine Kanas  
Superintendent of Schools



## Enhanced Science Curriculum Engages Students

Last year, as part of the District's strategic planning process, Valley Stream 30 parents and community members expressed a desire to make enhancements to the schools' science curriculum in order to make it more rigorous, hands-on, and up-to-date. As a result, a plan was developed to incorporate several new units in grades five and six for this school year. The selections were made using a framework that included New York State content and process standards, as well as 21st century learning skills.

This year, Valley Stream 30 fifth and sixth graders will learn about science in new inquiry-based units, which were selected by a District committee last year. The new, inquiry-based units in fifth grade are ecosystems, sustainability, and a science project unit. In sixth grade, the units include a plant unit, a science fair unit, and a chemistry unit. Teachers received the units this fall and had the opportunity to learn about implementing them from the District's science chair, Ronnie Horowitz, and science teacher, Ralph Laudano. While the units are centered on learning about science concepts, they are also rich in materials to support student growth in math and literacy skills.

One unit currently in progress is the fifth-grade ecosystems study. This lesson involves students observing and understanding the interactions and cycles that occur in nature. Students will create a terrarium and an aquarium with plants and animals. During their study, they will have the opportunity to observe and explore the interactions between these ecosystems. Throughout the unit, students maintain science notebooks where they record and maintain their observations and understandings. Towards the end of the unit, students will have the opportunity to introduce certain variables to control groups set up for experimentation. This will give them the opportunity to observe and understand how human actions can impact an ecosystem.

Throughout the course of the school year, the District will be looking to identify inquiry-based units that are aligned with the schools' science framework and add them to the current science curriculum in grades three and four. The strategic planning goal is to have new inquiry-based units in each grade by the end of the 2013 school year. The District is happy to report that it is well on its way to accomplishing that important community objective.

## CIAC *Establishes Goals for the Year*

Each year, the District's Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Council (CIAC) creates a set of goals to be accomplished in the area of curriculum and instruction and student life. One of the important goals for this year includes re-alignment of the District's English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics curriculum. These changes, where applicable, will help to better align the District's curriculum to the new New York State assessment cut scores and benchmarks. Below are some of the steps the District has taken to date in order to meet this goal successfully.

At the start of the school year, a detailed review by District and building administration and teachers took place regarding last year's test performance in relation to the new state expectations. Action plans were put into place accordingly. Summer and ongoing curriculum work focused on some revision of the curriculum maps for ELA and math to place an increased focus on student critical

thinking and lessons that help to support these items. Additional formative assessments have been developed to provide regular information about individual student progress and to help ensure students are keeping pace with the new learning requirements. Ongoing data analysis meetings take place at the District, building, and classroom levels, as well as regular meetings to assess individual student progress. Two new writing units are being introduced into all grade levels this year. Additionally, the Foundations program, which focuses on phonics, handwriting, and spelling skills, will be expanded to include the third grade. Previously this program had been successfully implanted in grades K-2. These enhancements, along with the introduction of a new afterschool Academic Intervention Services Academy, will help to further support and ensure students' continued success.

A complete list of the goals created for this year can be found on the District website at [www.valleystream30.com](http://www.valleystream30.com).

## Board Welcomes New Trustee

During their annual reorganization meeting, the District's Board of Education swore in newly elected trustee, James Lavery. Mr. Lavery's appointment to the Board followed the retirement of longtime Board member, Maria Fletcher, who dedicated 10 years of service to the School Board.

Mr. Lavery has previously served as a co-president on the Forest Road PTA and, at the time he was elected to the Board of Education, served as co-president of the Valley Stream Council of PTAs. He is a landscape contractor and a freelance illustrator and has lived in Valley Stream 30 School District for 15 years.

Additionally, during the annual meeting, Elise Antonelli was elected to serve as President of the Board while Carolyn Pean was sworn in as Vice President.

## Working to Reduce Operating Costs

For the past several years, as part of the District's ongoing commitment to reduce operating costs and ensure taxpayer dollars are utilized in the most efficient way possible, Valley Stream 30 has engaged in many initiatives to reduce costs. The District's involvement with cooperative groups, consortiums, Nassau BOCES, and the NYS Office of Government Services provides ways for Valley Stream 30 to purchase supplies, materials, equipment, and services for all areas of the instructional program and the facility in a more cost-effective manner. In addition, by participating in cooperatives for insurance and workers compensation, the District has been able to limit the increases on premiums. As the budget planning process for the 2011-2012 school year is quickly approaching, the District will continue to look at ways to limit expenditures.

## Whiteboards Installed in District Classrooms

Continuing with the District's Instruction Technology Initiative, which began in 2008, interactive whiteboards have been installed in a growing number of classrooms. At the close of the 2009-2010 school year, the District had completed over 40 installations, which correlates to more than half the classrooms districtwide having access to this technological resource. This year, the District is continuing this initiative and plans to have many more classrooms equipped with whiteboards and engage teachers in a corresponding intensive 12-hour, hands-on training course.

The most impressive result of this initiative has been the dynamic change in the instructional practice of the teaching staff. The interactive whiteboard has not only motivated students but has allowed the teachers to develop lessons that add a new level of interactivity. Teachers have been inspired to bring digital content into the classroom, develop student-led activities, track student performance, and monitor progress.

The installation of an interactive whiteboard in a classroom is the beginning of the instructional journey for the teachers at Valley Stream 30. With ongoing professional development, additional digital resources such as teacher laptops, document cameras, laptops for students, and multimedia resources, the integration of the District's technology plan has proven to be an exciting and successful initiative.

# New Administrators Around the District

The District was very pleased to appoint Lisa Rutkoske as its new Assistant Superintendent for Business.

Ms. Rutkoske comes to the District with a wealth of corporate business experience, having worked as the Global Chief Financial Officer of a subsidiary of Omnicom Group, Inc. for the past five years and in the financial field since 1993. She completed her business and finance internship this summer in the Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Columbia University, a Masters of Science in Accounting from New York University, and her School District Business Leadership Certification from Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus.

As Ms. Rutkoske is finishing responsibilities at her current job, she will be joining the District in late November. The District will continue to benefit from the knowledge of Sydney Freifelder, an experienced, retired Assistant Superintendent for Business who has been serving as the District's Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business since this summer. Ms. Freifelder will provide transition

support to Ms. Rutkoske.

Following the announced retirement of the District's Director of Special Education, Harriet Rabinowitz, this past June, the District appointed Paul Stellino to serve as the Interim Director for the 2010-2011 school year. Later this school year, the District will conduct a search for a permanent Director of Special Education, who will assume the post by approximately July 1, 2011.

Mr. Stellino comes to the District with an extensive amount of experience in special education and administration. He worked as the coordinator of student services in the Sagem Central School District for 16 years, as well as the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education in the Islip Union Free School District and the principal of a school in Rockland County BOCES. Additionally, he is a member of several professional and community organizations, including serving as president of his home District's Board of Education and as a member of the Long Island Association of Special Education Administrators.

## Clear Stream Avenue's New Leadership Team

Students and faculty members from Clear Stream Avenue Elementary School are benefiting from a new leadership team as the District

welcomes John Singleton as the building's new Principal and Sean Yannie Chon as the school's new Assistant Principal.

Mr. Singleton joins the District from the Lynbrook Public Schools, where he worked as the District Coordinator of English Language Arts and Social Studies for the K-12 school district since March of 2004. Throughout his tenure in education, he has held several administrative positions, as well as worked with students directly as a teacher of social studies. He received his bachelor's degree from Georgetown University, a master's degree in secondary education and youth services from Queens College in Flushing, and a master's degree in administration and supervision from the College of New Rochelle.

Ms. Chon began her career in education as a kindergarten teacher, but most recently worked as a literacy staff developer at P.S. 24, Andrew Jackson School in Queens since 2001. In her most recent position, she worked to improve the school's instructional practices and focused on individual instruction. Her strong knowledge of literacy and the New York State learning standards for education are sure to be a great asset to not only the school but also the District. Ms. Chon received her bachelor of science degree in elementary and special education from St. John's University, a master of arts degree in TESOL from Adelphi University, and her certificate of supervision and administration from C.W. Post.



*Teachers and administrators new to District 30 participated in a new teacher orientation program prior to the start of school. They learned about District policies and participated in a Responsive Classroom Training program.*

## Welcoming New Teachers to District 30

At the start of the school year, the District not only appointed several new administrators but also welcomed 12 new faculty members to Valley Stream 30. Congratulations to the following new staff members:

Sharon Benyaminy – Forest Road Speech Teacher  
 Roshni Daswani – Shaw Avenue Classroom Teacher  
 Allison Hammond – Clear Stream Avenue Classroom Teacher  
 Jennifer Kozub – Shaw Avenue Leave Replacement Teacher  
 Tara Lang – Shaw Avenue AIS Math Leave Replacement  
 Jamie Lowry – Forest Road Special Education Teacher  
 Mary Mahoney – Shaw Avenue Leave Replacement Teacher  
 Samantha Marturano – Forest Road Teacher Aide  
 Tami McElwee – District Literacy Staff Developer  
 Kathleen Merkle – Shaw Avenue Reading Teacher  
 Aram Suhail – Shaw Avenue Teacher Aide  
 Denise Winter – Clear Stream Avenue Social Worker Leave Replacement

As part of their orientation to the Valley Stream 30 schools, new staff and building administrators participated in a workshop on the Responsive Classroom Approach, provided by a trainer from the Northeast Foundation for Children, an organization dedicated to the inter-relationship between children's cognitive and social-emotional growth. The Responsive Classroom Approach is a way of teaching that fosters safe, challenging and joyful elementary schools. The approach consists of practical strategies for bringing together social and academic learning throughout the school day. The Responsive Classroom takes a proactive approach to bullying prevention by helping students build a strong sense of community and respect for each other. Valley Stream 30 teachers learned about strategies such as morning meetings and greetings, as well as icebreakers and other practical strategies for joining social and academic learning.



Valley Stream UFSD #30  
Valley Stream, New York 11580-3032

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### 2010-2011 Board of Education

- Elise Antonelli, **President**
- Carolyn Pean, **Vice President**
- Kenneth Cummings, **Trustee**
- James Lavery, **Trustee**
- Cristobal Stewart, **Trustee**

Dr. Elaine Kanas, **Superintendent of Schools**

### *Dates to Remember:*

**December 13**  
**Board of Education Work**  
**Session Mtg. @ Shaw Avenue**  
**School Library 8:00 p.m.**

**December 15**  
**Early Student Dismissal**  
**11:15 a.m.**

**December 15**  
**Clear Stream Ave./Forest**  
**Road/Shaw Avenue**  
**Parent/Teacher Conferences**  
**12:30-4:15 p.m. and**  
**7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**December 20**  
**Board of Education Mtg.**  
**@ Shaw Avenue School**  
**Library 8:00 p.m.**

**December 24-31**  
**Holiday Recess - Schools**  
**Closed**

**January 3**  
**Schools Reopen**

## Valley Stream 30 Cares

Throughout the school year, Valley Stream 30 students are involved in many community outreach programs to help others. This fall, as an extension of their local efforts, District students are reaching out “globally” and hoping to have a positive effect on the world around them.

Both Shaw Avenue Elementary School and Forest Road Elementary School, in conjunction with the PTAs, are coordinating a Pennies for Pakistan fundraiser to help victims of the flood. Clear Stream Avenue students are also reaching out to faraway lands and sharing their Halloween candy with troops overseas in Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. It is the schools’ hope that their efforts will further demonstrate that Valley Stream 30 is not only “where the love of learning begins,” but also a community of caring learners.

## School Closings or Delayed Openings

Weather and other emergencies may warrant school closings or delayed openings. A delayed opening means students are expected to be at school at 10 a.m. Closings will be posted on the District website, [www.valleystream30.com](http://www.valleystream30.com), and our automated calling system, ConnectEd, will also notify you by telephone. News 12 on TV Channel 12 will carry school closing information. Such school closings or delays will also be announced on the following local radio stations:

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>WCBS (AM) 88</b>   | <b>WGSM (AM) 740</b>  |
| <b>WINS (AM) 1010</b> | <b>WALK (AM) 1370</b> |
| <b>WGBB (AM) 1240</b> | <b>WHLI (AM) 1100</b> |
| <b>WALK (FM) 97.5</b> |                       |