

Celebrating Success Across the Region



We are: Aiming High

■ Page 3: Valley Elementary School enrichments help students aim high and thrive.



We are: Growing

■ Page 4: Valley Middle School students are getting their hands dirty at Gaining Ground Farm in Concord, MA.



We are: Physical

■ Page 5: Site 3 introduces new after-school programming, including activities aimed at getting School and Life Skills Training students moving.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
KARI MORRIN, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; JOIA MERCURIO, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; SEAN GLAVIN, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

It's hard to believe that the holidays are almost upon us. Valley has had a great start to the school year. Our educational offerings continue to be celebrated throughout the region for being of the highest quality and the most reasonably priced. Our enriched programmatic offerings include:

- Enhanced sensory regulation equipment at the elementary school
- Our new greenhouse located at the elementary school will serve as an outdoor classroom engaging our students in STEM activities with the newly developed science standards
- A robust experiential physical education program
- Community based learning opportunities
- Dual enrollment program with Middlesex Community College
- An afterschool recreational program
- State of the art technology to en-

gage students in the curriculum

- Numerous vocational partnerships with local businesses, corporations and the New England Laborers Training Academy (NELTA)

Open House at Valley's Elementary, Middle, Transitional High School, and the Adult Programs was very well attended. We thank everyone for coming and visiting our schools and getting to know our dedicated staff.

Valley was asked to participate in two workshops at the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS)/Massachusetts Association of School Committee (MASC) Conference at the Cape. Our workshops included Planning for Success: DESE Multiyear Improvement/Annual Action Plan and the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC) Social/Emotional Learning: Educational Collaborative Initiatives.

Celebrating Success

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This fall Valley's robust Leadership Mentorship program continues to develop leadership capacity at Valley. We have invited experienced leaders from around the state to discuss the challenges and rewards in their leadership roles. We held our first meeting on September 21st, with Ms. Christine McGrath, M.A.S.S. Director of Operations (retired Superintendent Tewksbury Public Schools), as our guest speaker. The session was very well attended with representation from over half of our member school districts. Ms. McGrath is a pioneer in the State, as she was one of the first women Superintendents who paved the way for many women. Those of us in the field respect her contribution.

On October 14th Valley held the second Leadership Mentorship Coffee Hour. Our second presenter was Dr. Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Commissioner generously shared his leadership path with us and some of his hard earned lessons. Commissioner Chester's visit to Valley lasted for over three hours, and he was most impressed

with the programming.

On October 26th Valley held the third Leadership Mentorship Program Coffee Hour. Dr. Mary A. Czajkowski, Ed.D., Superintendent of Lexington Public Schools, inspired us all with her leadership journey.

On November 9th Massachusetts State Auditor Suzanne Bump shared with us the challenges and responsibilities of her position as the State Auditor. State Auditor Bump told us about numerous accounts of her admirable stewardship. Valley



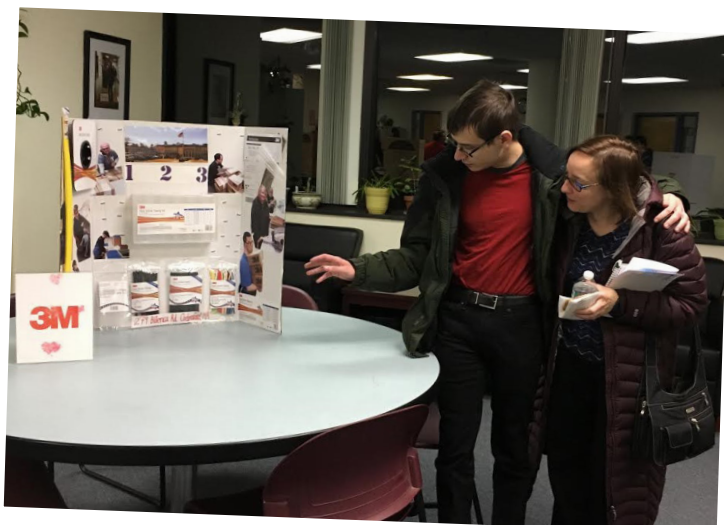
DR. MITCHELL CHESTER, COMMISSIONER OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, AND HIS CHIEF OF STAFF HELENE BETTENCOURT ON A VISIT TO VALLEY COLLABORATIVE. COMMISSIONER CHESTER WAS MOST IMPRESSED BY VALLEY'S PROGRAMMING.

Collaborative is honored that state leaders are so willing to support the leader mentorship Coffee Hour program.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any concerns, questions or to share some good news. My door is always open. ■

Chris

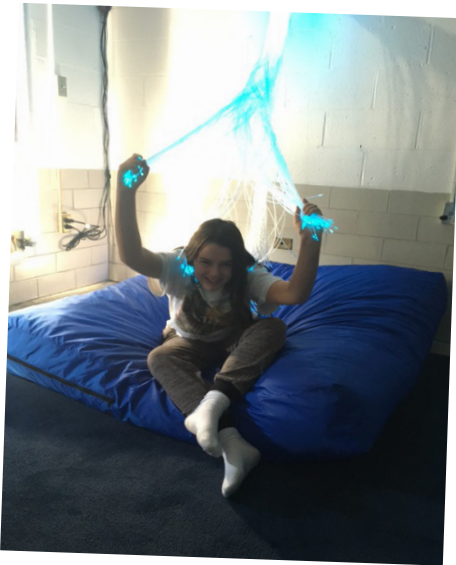
Chris A. Scott, Ph.D.
Executive Director



VALLEY COLLABORATIVE'S ADULT SERVICES PROGRAM HOSTED ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE THIS YEAR. PICTURED IS DAVID SILVA EXPLAINING WHAT HE DOES DURING HIS WORKDAY AT 3M TO HIS MOTHER MARY.

Elementary School Update

This summer we updated many spaces in and outside of our building with sensory regulation equipment, gross motor activities and hands-on curriculum materials. Students can now begin to extend and generalize already established "Zones of Regulation" curriculum to real life choices in



TESSA OUELLETTE IN THE CHILLVILLE ROOM.

the building. The new student spaces include an indoor gross motor playground and a calming sensory spa. Our greenhouse is "in" as well. This greenhouse will serve as an outdoor classroom engaging our students in STEM activities with the newly developed science standards. Additionally we are looking to create local relationships with farms for small animal care programs. We will be touring the new building spaces in the Fall open house. In addition to these physical improvements, we have invested in new enrichment curriculum for our students. Our social workers will be collaborating with our physical education teacher and nurse to improve our health program.

We have invested in some new curriculum to help students navigate difficult social and safety situations they may encounter.



JONATHAN COLPOYS IN THE ACTION ROOM.

We look forward to our continued growth and the positive effects these improvements will have on our students. ■



Max and Sam McNulty wrote a letter to their favorite author, Judy Schachner about how much they love her books. They composed the letter using their head switches and voice output devices. They even sent a picture to the author to show her just how much they love Skippyjon Jones!

Growing Food, Growing Community

A recent Thursday found eight sets of hands sifting through soil, rock, and roots in search of their treasure, brown potatoes. These hands belong to Valley Middle Schoolers and the setting is Gaining Ground Farm in Concord, MA. The work is not glamorous, but the students are not deterred. They know these potatoes will be sent to local food pantries where it will feed some of the roughly 700,000 U.S. adults and children struggling to put food on their tables. This sentiment is not lost on these volunteers, as one Middle School student explains, "People help us, so why shouldn't we help other people who are hungry."

Gaining Ground Farm is a non-profit hunger relief farm that has been growing organic produce for 20 years through the support of volunteers. Valley Middle School has been involved with the Farm for nearly half that time in an attempt to address the roughly 11% of U.S. families who struggle from hunger.

This collaboration allows students to engage in meaningful work, develop an understanding of where food comes from and how it grows, and an opportunity to give back to the community.

Whether they are planting beans in the rich soil, building the trellises for the tomatoes to thrive on, or harvesting potatoes for a warm autumn meal, students know their efforts will positively impact their communities. A sense of pride surrounds this knowledge. Middle School History Teacher, John Shea, explains, "When students return from a day at Gaining Ground, they want to share what they did. They enter the building after working outdoors all morning feeling a sense of pride and accomplishment. It's a game changer for many, including the staff." It's clear that Gaining Ground and Valley Collaborative are a perfect match and the only question left is, "When does Spring planting begin?" ■



MIDDLE SCHOOLERS HARVEST PRODUCE AT THE GAINING GROUND FARM IN CONCORD, MA.

An Exciting Year for the Transitional High School

Valley's Transitional Vocational High School is in the midst of an exciting year with several new components already in the works. Academically, an Independent Living class has been introduced for seniors transitioning into post-secondary life. In this class, topics include resume-writing, interview skills, public transportation, budgeting, and technology applications to aid students as they transition into young adults. MCAS prep courses have been added for upper-classmen that have not yet passed the assessments. Our vocational staff continues to secure meaningful partnerships with local employers so that our deserving students can experience internships in career fields of interest. We

are especially excited to continue our partnership with the New England Laborers' Union Training Academy for the third consecutive year. Students participated in a week-long Massachusetts Construction Career Program.

Incentive field trips are in full swing. Many students have already experienced the Basketball Hall of Fame, Patriots Hall of Fame, and the Topsfield Fair. Upcoming trips include horseback riding, New England Aquarium, Museum of Fine Arts, and Dickens' A Christmas Carol at the Northshore Music Theatre.

Our therapeutic model continues to evolve and improve. One of our classrooms has been transformed into the "Reset Room." Here, stu-

dents can remain on site but take a few minutes to process, destress and/or refocus in hopes of quickly returning to class. Our Extended Support Center now consists of ESC-1 and ESC-2. These different rooms allow for appropriate consequences depending on the severity of a behavior. We are already seeing a significant decrease in suspensions with this new structure in place.

Our school is involved in two unique initiatives to enhance civic awareness this fall. For the month of October, we have spearheaded a Breast Cancer Fundraiser with all auto detail customers getting their cars detailed for a 20 dollar fee. All proceeds will be donated to breast cancer research.

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Independence Project Celebrates Success, One Year Anniversary

The goal of the Independence Project is to assist those attending Valley Collaborative who are in need of support through short term poverty alleviation. The hope is that this support will enable individuals to better engage in educational training and skill development. This support is intended to help individuals with disabilities become self-sufficient, productive members of their communities. The first recipients of the Independence Project were the Vaheys. Last year we received a tremendous response for the Independence Project from Valley employees who generously donated hundreds of dollars.

Valley also reached out to one of our corporate partners, Lantheus Medical Imaging, who has been a strong supporter of Valley Collaborative for many years. Lantheus,

represented by Peter Coe, Supervisor Facility GMP services, made a sizable donation to the Independence Project. These donations helped the Vaheys get on their feet.

Nearly a year has passed since our first successful Independence Project.

The Vaheys are doing great! Leo is currently in Valley's Today and Tomorrow program and his mother continues to work at Stop N Shop. Leo is thrilled to be back at Valley. His employment at Valley gives him a sense of pride and independence. He loves being with his friends and



co-workers, while he continues to build his vocational skills. The Independence Project allowed the Vaheys to have a fresh start and to take control of their lives. Thank you to everyone in the Valley Collaborative community who helped support the Independence Project! ■

Valley Collaborative's Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

On November 17th Valley held its Annual Thanksgiving Dinner. 410 Turkey Dinners were given out to staff, students and the public. Thank you to Joe Reilly for making this possible.

LEFT TO RIGHT: JOHN JASILEWICZ, ADULT SERVICES PROGRAM; JOSEPH REILLY, COMMUNITY CATERING MANAGER; WHITMAN MAMAYEK, SCHOOL AND VOCATIONAL STUDENT, TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, SITE 3.



LEFT TO RIGHT: KARI MORRIN, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; JOIA MERCURIO, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; JULIE FIELDING, PRINCIPAL, SITE 2, VALLEY TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



Valley's Leadership Mentorship Program Presents Coffee Hour Lecture Series



DR. MARY A. CZAJKOWSKI, ED.D. SUPERINTENDENT LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT KAREN BLACKBURN, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; JOIA MERCURIO, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; HEATHER VALCANAS, ADULT SERVICES MANAGER, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; DR. MARY A. CZAJKOWSKI, ED. D., SUPERINTENDENT LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; DR. MICHAEL FLANAGAN, SUPERINTENDENT, TYNGSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; – 2ND ROW DENISE COOK, HUMAN RESOURCES AND BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; GAIL DEGREORY, ASSISTANT BUSINESS MANAGER, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; NICOLE NOSKA, PRINCIPAL, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL; SEAN GLAVIN, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; CHRIS COWAN, PRINCIPAL, SITE 1 VALLEY TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL; MATTHEW GENTILE, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR, VALLEY TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL; – 3RD ROW BRIAN MIHALEK, PROGRAM LEAD, VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL; KARI MORRIN, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; PAUL DONOVAN, NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE



MS. CHRISTINE MCGRATH, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPER- INTENDENTS, RETIRED SUPERINTENDENT TEWKSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1ST ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: KARI MORRIN, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES; JUDY NORTON, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, BILLERICA PUBLIC SCHOOLS; DR. LINDA HIRSCH, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS; JOIA MERCURIO, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; MS. CHRISTINE MCGRATH, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS, RETIRED SUPERINTENDENT TEWKSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS;

2ND ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: DR. MICHAEL FLANAGAN, SUPERINTENDENT, TYNGSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; SEAN GLAVIN, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES; RICK PELLETIER, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, TEWKSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BRAD BROOKS, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



MASSACHUSETTS STATE AUDITOR SUZANNE BUMP
AND DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE



COMMISSIONER MITCHELL D. CHESTER
SHAKING HANDS WITH JUDY NORTON, DIRECTOR OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION BILLERICA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Expanding Skills Through Site 3's Class Business

The High School is off to another great start with a lot of fun and exciting activities already underway. The ISN classroom has continued to build upon their vocational skills by expanding their class business. They have started creating towels to be sold year-round, sugar scrubs and cookies-in a jar for the holiday season. All of these goods are created by using assistive technology. All proceeds from the class business will help support the after-school recreation program.

The School and Life Skills-ISN (formally known as SCOAP Foundations) students have started a new job site, at the Walgreens in Lexington. They have been working hard at learning the new skills and schedules and are excited to be trying something new.

Site 3's after-school recreation program started October 3rd and has many exciting activities planned. The format of Monday programming has changed in which we have created a monthly course that focuses on building specific skills. In the November class the students will learn the art of photography. They will work with both SLR and Point and Click cameras to help develop their artistic eye and learn when and how to use different settings on the camera. They will also then go out in the community and test their knowledge in the real



SCHOOL AND LIFE SKILLS TRAINING STUDENTS STUDENT KEVIN DEIBERT WITH PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER ALLISON GRADY.

world.

We are eager to see what the rest of the year brings for site 3. ■

Encouraging Students To Do More Than They Thought Possible

The High School has always believed in pushing students just a bit farther than they ever thought possible. As the 2016 year begins, we will not only begin to push our students farther, but push our site goals to the limit!

The Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD) Outdoor Education program has already begun the first 10 miles of the Midstate Trail which begins on the border of Massachusetts and New Hampshire in the town of Ashburnham, and concludes just before the border of Rhode Island in Douglas, MA. This 95 mile hike will be completed from start to finish, in pieces, throughout the 2016-2017 school year. While students completed one highlight of the famous trail on Day 1 (climbing Mt. Watatic), sometime in the middle of the school year, students will be traversing Mt. Wachusett.

The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) program is continuing to use PBIS to reward preferred, positive behaviors. The program utilizes the Experiential Physical Education teachers to expand upon their field trips and promote positive risk taking. Students are very excited that overnight field trips will be implemented into their programming this school year.

We have opened an additional EBD program. This program incorporates the high quality academics, social emotional supports and transitional planning that our original EBD classes have, with the focus being the traditional high school experience on a smaller scale.

As always, thanks go out to the amazing staff members that have continued to help our students find success across all programs, encouraging and nurturing our students to grow day by day, month by month, and year by year! ■

Transitional High School

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Students have the opportunity to forego three paid work days for community service days in the spirit of the cause. If they do this, they will be celebrated for their sacrifice by being a part of our Chinese food celebration. They will also be given Valley "Pink Ribbon" t shirts.

Our second initiative is "Valley Votes." Students who are 18 years of age and older had the opportunity to register to vote with staff assistance. We informed students of their designated precinct so they could vote and experience this important civic duty as U.S. citizens on November 8th. ■

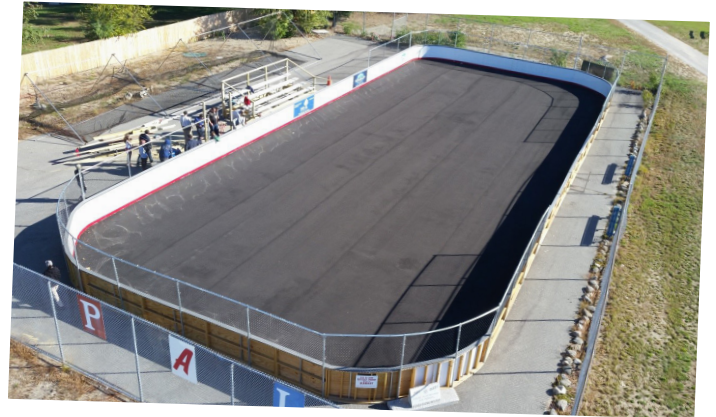
Building Opportunity for Valley Vocational Students

Vocational Coach Dale Sarno, was presented with a unique and exciting opportunity for the students and staff in the Site 1 woodshop. Early last summer Dale was approached by the Billerica Recreation department who was looking for help rebuilding their street hockey rink located at the Marshall Middle School. Dale, along with Vocational Coach Ron Stapleton who also works in the woodshop on Site 1, thought it would be a great opportunity for the students to construct the rink.

This opportunity would present some challenges for Ron, Dale, and the students. However, gaining the experience of working on such a large scale project while at the same

time giving back to the community was something they simply could not pass up.

With the assistance of Ron and Dale, the students began building the boards in the woodshop at Valley. Once the boards were done the real fun began. They transported the boards and began constructing the rink. The students and staff did an excellent job working through some of the hotter days of the summer and slowly but surely the rink began to take shape.



The students gained a great deal of experience working on this project and their hard work has certainly paid off as the children and families of Billerica have already begun using this fantastic rink built by the students and staff of the Valley Collaborative Woodshop. ■



OPENING DAY ALL STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LEFT TO RIGHT: KARI MORRIN, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES; HEATHER VALCANAS, ADULT SERVICES MANAGER; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; JOIA MERCURIO, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DR. MARY A. CZAJKOWSKI, Ed.D., SUPERINTENDENT LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Northeast Regional Collaborative Cookout



LEFT TO RIGHT: KIM OLIVEIRA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CREST COLLABORATIVE; FRAN ROSENBERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTHSORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM; KARI MORRIN, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; JILL GRAHAM, PROGRAM PRINCIPAL, EPIC AND LIFEWAYS, CREST COLLABORATIVE; IN ATTENDANCE BUT NOT SHOWN DR. CATHY LAWSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SEEM COLLABORATIVE



LEFT TO RIGHT: KIM OLIVEIRA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CREST COLLABORATIVE; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; RILEY O'KEEFE, VOCATIONAL LEAD, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; JOE VENSUS, SCHOOL RESOURCE LEAD, SITE 1



LEFT TO RIGHT: KARI MORRIN, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; JILL GRAHAM, PROGRAM PRINCIPAL, EPIC AND LIFEWAYS, CREST COLLABORATIVE; BILL BRYANT, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, CREST COLLABORATIVE; JOIA MERCURIO, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE



LEFT TO RIGHT: HEATHER VALCANAS, ADULT SERVICES MANAGER, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; KRISTINE BONSAK, PRINCIPAL, SITE 3, VALLEY TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL; JULIE FIELDING, PRINCIPAL, SITE 2, VALLEY TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL; CHRIS COWAN, PRINCIPAL, SITE 1, VALLEY TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL; SEAN GLAVIN, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

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Valley Collaborative Board

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