



BLACKSTONE VALLEY PREP

Preparing every scholar for success in college and the world beyond.

Chief Executive Officer Report

Jeremy Chiappetta

September 20, 2021

Key Highlights:

- BVP opened its doors to full in-person instruction in grades 1-12 on Monday, August 30. We held orientation sessions for Kindergarten scholars on Tuesday and Wednesday of that week and had all scholars K-12 on Thursday September 2.
- While returns from a Family Wellness Check-in Survey are still early (about 750 responses), as of early morning on September 19, **93% of families Agreed or Strongly Agreed with this statement:** *Based on how the 2021-2022 school year is going for my family so far, I would highly recommend BVP to friends and family.* (No families Strongly Disagreed, and <1% Disagreed.)
- BVP 5K:
 - After a one-year hiatus, we're excited to host our 5K Run/Walk & Kids' Fun Run on Sunday, September 26, at Slater Park in Pawtucket. This event is an opportunity for scholars, families, staff, and members of the community to come together to enjoy a fun-filled morning celebrating health and wellness, and serves as the main fundraiser for our athletics program. Learn more and register:
<https://blackstonevalleyprep.org/athletics/5k/>

COVID

- Approximately 315 of 340 staff members are fully vaccinated, and another five are in-process. To date, approximately 85% of staff of color and 95% of white staff are fully vaccinated.
- At the high school, about 75% of our scholars are reported as being vaccinated.
- Since mid-August, we have had at least 25 scholar cases (1 breakthrough case) and 12 staff cases (8 breakthrough cases) of COVID. This has led to nearly 400 quarantines and/or scholars/staff impacted by classroom closures of at least one day, and often more than a week. Following RIDOH guidelines, we are regularly sending home scholars and staff with one symptom, regardless of vaccination status, and requiring a negative PCR to school.
- We have published this document to families (website, ParentSquare) to share how we will support scholars who are absent from in-person school due to COVID.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/13QZomU2gXO4QWSKfVgAvTsMGabwF>

[hLyLLGxWZcR4TRc/edit](#) Unlike last year, we are not set to run a full distance learning program with live synchronous instruction, so we are limiting our offerings to what is noted above, as is consistent with RIDE's directive to have all scholars in-person. We are in active conversations with RIDE regarding attendance for those who are not in-person.

Talent

- BVP currently employs its largest staff yet, with approximately 340 full-time equivalents across the organization. This is our largest staff in our thirteen years of existence, largely due to growth and short-term positions funded through federal stimulus funding. With over 90 staff members who identify as part of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community, this is also our most diverse staff ever.
- Staffing has been incredibly competitive this year, more than any other year, largely due to:
 - An increase in resources across school systems from federal funding creating more positions in the marketplace
 - A decrease in new people entering the profession (likely fewer completing school)
 - Departures from the profession connected to stresses of COVID.
- BVP has just over a dozen openings in key areas, including opportunities for both fully certified educators (STEM, special education, and elementary) as well as support positions (behavior and academic support aides). *Even with all competitiveness in the marketplace, we've been able to successfully onboard and welcome 65 new employees to the BVP team!"*

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- BVP has Diversity Chairs in each school, and their first collaborative planning meeting took place this past week. We are proud to join so many others around the country to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and we recently shared this note with our entire staff to that effect.
 - **<FYI> Hispanic Heritage Month Resources.** [This resource](#) from Learning for Justice (previously Teaching Tolerance) is a great primer on Hispanic Heritage Month. I encourage everyone to read this to better inform themselves on the history of and challenges with celebrating Hispanic heritage. Looking for more resources? Connect with your Diversity Chair (ES1 = Canning, ES2 = Ortega, ES3 = Jensen, UES = McMillan, JHS = Garcia & Palombo, HS = Scherben) or Head of School.

Key Data

- **Current enrollment** is 2,189 which is within the range of where we anticipate being for the year and slightly below our target of 2,200 for the school year.

- **Attendance:**

Elementary School 1	88.44 %	95.52 %	34.96 %
Elementary School 2	91.00 %	97.70 %	31.93 %
Elementary School 3	90.51 %	96.94 %	34.32 %
High School	91.94 %	86.77 %	24.82 %
Junior High School	93.88 %	96.27 %	17.54 %
Upper Elementary	92.75 %	96.59 %	24.74 %
District Total	91.38 %	94.78 %	28.11 %

- **Attendance is very challenging.** Based on following the RIDOH guidance, we are isolating and quarantining many scholars and classrooms, and we are sending dozens of symptomatic students home daily, requiring a PCR test to return to school. With PCR tests taking 24-72 hours to return, a child who leaves school on a Monday morning with a symptom is often out most if not all of the week.
- **Unless RIDOH changes rules, or RIDE changes accountability rules, BVP will score at the bottom level on the attendance section of the charter renewal and accountability frameworks for the 2021-2022 school year.**
- Academic baseline data is being collected. At the K-8 level, we are administering the STAR assessment and we are seeing this year’s baseline to be slightly lower than in years past (though generally above the baseline from a year ago). High School baseline data will be captured using mock SAT exams during the current week.
- RICAS (State Assessment for English and Math for grades 3-8) data has not been published, though raw scores (not scaled scores) have been released. We are able to use this data to see how we performed on specific items and standards; we are able to also see, by scholar, the percentage correct, though that does not tell us the percentage proficient. Based on the data we do have, and consistent with what we are hearing from others across the state, we predict that our performance will be down significantly from pre-pandemic testing years.

Development

- BVP is actively pursuing several grants to support DEI efforts and to support our capital investments, especially at the high school.

Media and Advocacy

- WPRI featured BVP CEO Jeremy Chiappetta and our bussing partner Durham School Services highlighting the urgent need for bus drivers.

- <https://www.wpri.com/target-12/nearly-10-of-providence-teachers-have-left-in-2021-amid-staff-shortages-across-ri/>
- Several very positive mentions of BVP athletics in the local news (Providence Journal, Valley Breeze, and Pawtucket Times), especially with regard to our high school football and soccer programs.
 - <https://www.valleybreeze.com/2021-09-08/cumberland-lincoln-area/high-school-football-season-begins-friday#.YUSyOrhKg2w>
 - https://www.pawtuckettimes.com/sports/2021-blackstone-valley-football-preview-central-falls-thrilled-to-be-joining-forces-with-blackstone-valley/article_d0560bb6-123a-11ec-a42e-df59d948b76a.html

Facility Updates

- We are proceeding with a major high school expansion project. We anticipate closing on the abutting property this month, we have secured emergency funding of \$500,000 from the state to support that effort, and that will be reimbursed in July of 2022. We have submitted a Stage I application to RIDE for facility funding to support the addition required at the high school level due to increased enrollment per our projected growth and have retained an owner's project manager, an educational facilities planner as well as an architectural firm to support in the ongoing work to develop a Stage II application that will be due in February. The Stage II application will primarily be focused on the high school addition, but will also include the purchase of our Junior High School and potentially our Upper Elementary School as well as other smaller projects throughout the network. Based on the timeline of the needed space at the high school, architects and engineers will be developing plans for both the permanent addition and a one year temporary solution concurrent with the development of the Stage II application with the hope of being a shovel ready project at the time of RIDE approval in May of 2022.
- BVP has engaged Peregrine Facilities Management to support the management of vendors for school maintenance projects (e.g. A/C servicing, cleaning crew management). While the service is new, we are already uncovering new opportunities to better support our scholars and staff by improving our facilities in small but meaningful ways.