

VAPO, The Parent Organization of Valley Academy

February Meeting Minutes – Governing Council

2/10/2026 | Time: 8:15 AM | Meeting called to order by: A. Sessler (President)

Location: VAPO Room

Meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m.

In Attendance

A. Sessler (President)

V. Brooks (Principal)

E. Billings (Secretary)

C. Ushakov (Coyote Pride) – via Zoom

K. Morawa (Treasurer)

V. Eckles (Staff Appreciation)

M. Basak (Library) – via Zoom

M. O'Day (8th Grade Promotion)

Guests

None

Administrator's Report

V. Brooks – Valley Academy purchased an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) with fundraiser money, and a second AED is being donated to the school. V. Brooks requested that the fundraiser money from the Fun Run be utilized to purchase new sports jerseys. V. Brooks asked M. O'Day about any plans for the 8th grade gift. M. O'Day responded that 8th grade gift options would be considered if any money is left from 8th grade fundraising.

V. Brooks – Before the spring festival there will be a “Kindergarten Round-up” to include a welcome and invite to explore the campus for potential Kindergarten families. There will be no formal tour of the campus this year. Families attending will be divided into 4 groups where they will visit one of the kindergarten classrooms and be given some curriculum details. After, they will be given a ticket to attend the spring festival.

V. Brooks – On Valentine's party day, parking will be stacked on the field and in the parking lot to free up more parking for parents. A. Sessler mentioned that there are some vendors that she works with who have office spaces in the adjacent building and they may be willing to allow parking for Valley Academy families when needed. Parking may also be available in adjacent business lot during off hours (weekends).

V. Brooks – Reiterated that badges must be worn by everybody, including VAPO council members who are held to higher standards.

New Business

A. Sessler – Review/approval of January Meeting Minutes – V. Eckles motioned the vote, M. O'Day seconded. All in favor, no opposition. Next month the council will discuss who will be willing to step up and serve as President and who will be returning.

Treasurer

K. Morawa – Checks were written and deposits were made. The Fun Run earnings, after fees, were \$20,110. There are \$5,595 in corporate matches possible.

Secretary

E. Billings – The February/March Newsletter needed to be finalized for review and approval at time of this meeting. Top volunteers are included for the month of January. Gift cards for top volunteers would be distributed soon.

Library

M. Basak – Accepted agreement for the upcoming spring Scholastic Book Fair. Book fair setup will be on Thursday, April 2, 2026, as there is no school on Friday. A Signup Genius will go out in mid-March.

Coyote Pride

C. Ushakov – The next Spirit Day Ice Cream is on 3/6/2026. When asked whether T-shirt orders could be opened at random times throughout year, her response was that the vendor is not able to accommodate this.

Staff Appreciation

V. Eckles – The Staff Breakfast is on 2/11/2026. As of the day before, no one had signed up for main courses. V. Eckles will order food using the budget. Volunteers had signed up for other items. A. Hedgepeth is volunteering to help at the breakfast. V. Eckles requested to move the May lunch from Tuesday, May 5, 2026, to Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

V. Eckles – Discussed ideas for staff gifts. She was looking at a heart cutting board she saw on Temu but was concerned with quality. She will be looking at other ideas that fit the budget. The theme for the staff lunch will be Celebrity Red Carpet. There are 85 staff, though 100 items will be ordered.

Office Fundraising (OPEN)

This committee is an open council position.

A. Sessler – Final information from the Fun Run will be provided on Thursday, 2/12/2026, currently showing that \$30,810 was raised, minus fees. There is \$20,110 that the school will receive. The possibility of donating directly was discussed, but it was noted that the fees were worth it for the management services that are provided. M. O'Day asked if another organization might be considered in the future for fundraising to avoid the repetition that the same organization provides year to year.

Event Fundraising

A. Sessler – The Spring Festival will be on 3/7/2026. There have been enough donations to provide six raffle baskets. V. Eckles plans to provide some donations from her employer (JW Marriot). A flyer has been submitted for review and approval, and an email should be sent out later in the week. A. Sessler is waiting on the volunteer Signup Genius as she is still coordinating NJHS and High School volunteers. Employees of the event company are being paid to run bounce houses and rides. Food trucks at the Spring Festival include BBQ, Indian, Mexican, and Popsicle (with dairy free and vegan options). The BBQ and Mexican trucks also include dessert including peach cobbler and churros. There will be a DJ, photo booth, and a petting zoo. There will be a gift certificate awarded to an adult and a student winner of yard games.

Athletics (OPEN)

This committee is an open council position.

V. Brooks – There will be no soccer team this year but planning for next year.

8th Grade Promotion

M. O'Day – 8th grade will not be providing cotton candy for fundraising at the Spring Festival. Kettle corn may be considered.

M. O'Day – A. Bratlien will be providing photography for free.

M. O'Day – 60 shirt forms were printed, 50 to be distributed to students, and 10 available for teachers. If there is a student who chooses not to purchase a T-Shirt, they can still be in the picture, just not front and center.

M. O'Day – Revised what is happening for 8th grade fundraising and events. This includes a Great Skate night for all of Valley Academy on a Friday night (4/17/2026). The 8th graders seemed happy with the event on Friday. There will be an option for 8th graders to raise \$100 each as part of a skate-a-thon and to get free entry. Great Skate can provide a dinosaur to come to the school as advertising for the event. There is an option for them to skate around the school. V. Brooks still needs to approve this fundraising event, and she noted that skating on school property can be a liability.

M. O'Day – For the 8th grade dinner, 2 meal options will be catered, similar to last year, with pasta and chicken options. NO vegan will be provided. If needed, this will be provided separately. M. O'Day asked about the cost of renting a bus. The \$400 budget should be close, but it depends on the size of the bus. V. Brooks will confirm.

Office Assistance

A. Bratlien – Not present at meeting. Nothing to report.

Special Events

T. Heglie – Not present at meeting. Nothing to report. The next Caught Being Good is on 2/12/2026.

Office Communication

A. Sessler – Valentine's Day Parties are coming up on 2/13/2026.

M. Basak – Asked about school policies regarding US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), due to parent concerns of ICE showing up at school. V. Brooks will call CEO of Reid Traditional Schools and follow up regarding concerns.

Next Meeting

3/10/2026 | Time 8:15 a.m. | Location VAPO Room

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Erica Billings

Secretary

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