

Valley Inquiry Charter School

February Board Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2026 | Zoom Meeting, 6:30 PM

Board Members

Board President & Chair	Cammi Carriere
Vice Chair	Terry Rohse
Treasurer	Stephen Staten
Secretary	BJ Foster
At-Large	Ed Austin
At-Large	Carol Kruse
At-Large	Garrick Williams
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
Non-Voting Member	Lacey McNay

Meeting Agenda Minutes

6:33pm Call to Order

Cammi called the meeting to order. Roll call:

- Virtual: Cammi, Terry, Steve, BJ, Carol, Lacey, Ed
- Absent: Garrick

Approving meeting minutes

- 1/12 Motion by Carol, second by Ed. Vote: 4 yes / 0 no / 3 abstain. Motion passes.
- 1/28 Motion by Ed, second by Carol. Vote: 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain. Motion passes.

6:35pm PYP Report

Ms. Kaur (1st grade): Implemented UFLI assessments, split students into flexible skill-based groups, different games for different groups, Ms. Miller also involved. iReady scores have gone up substantially, especially phonics. Coming up with survey questions and students are asking each other. In social studies focusing

on Black History Month. Change makers, actors, singers, politicians, inventors etc.

Lacey: UFLI is University of Florida Learning Institute, pulls from several strong educational pools to provide additional assessments and tools.

Carol: I love the enthusiasm you bring, thank you.

Melody: Starting meeting with mentors this week to begin planning, should have research starting next week.

6:41pm Principal/Assist. Principal Report

Katherine:

In-Service Day Learning

- K-8 staff came together on 1/30 for PD on restorative justice and how to facilitate and participate in restorative conversations when a problem comes up between two people.
- Staff learned about culturally responsive teaching and read and discussed article by Zaretta Hammond about 5 common myths about culturally responsive pedagogy.
- PTC group sponsored a celebration meal, thank you for that.

Lacey: Trying to do a 1 on 1 with staff, calling it a “mid-year check-in” but purpose is to hear from staff, what's working, what are the barriers, etc. So far the conversations have been very positive in allowing us to identify issues and look for solutions. Thanks to Kathryn, Brynn and Drew for helping take the lead on in-services.

- Monthly Inquiry Clubs: First Friday of the month from 12:30-2pm, longer stretch to allow us to go deeper. Got feedback last year that it felt too rushed.
- 5th grade musical: “Munchkin Mediation – Conflict-Resolution in OZ” on 2/10/26 at 5:30pm at the Loucks Auditorium.
- Kinder lottery applications now open, open house Feb 25 at 5:30-6:30PM. Have around 27 applications, lots of sibling applications, lottery March 12 at 10am.
- Student Council, Year book, GRASSP Soccer, LOSAF/TAG and Choir Monday through Friday are the PYP weekly clubs. On the horizon are a LEGO club with staff/parent volunteer, ASL coming with a parent and teacher, and hoping for a chess club led by a couple of parents.

- Student council is doing another hot chocolate fundraiser on 2/11 during recess/lunch. Melody: Going to purchase outdoor paint to redo the playground map, possibly the hopscotch and maybe adding a chess set. Carol: Are the cookies something you need donated? Melody: Have sufficient supplies but thanks for asking! Carol: Would be happy to make some for the next fundraiser if you want. Steve: I've volunteered at field day each year, and looked at that sad map, and was thinking maybe I could sneak out next summer to redo it, so I love that they are doing this. Let us know if you need time or material donations. Melody: Hoping to do it on the weekend so kids aren't playing on it, will need volunteers.
- Lacey: Kickoff assembly last week for kids heart challenge. Had a beneficiary student share how it helped. Proud of our students for helping with this.
- STEAM night challenge on 2/6. Katherine: Kids created Valentine boxes, created with friends and families. Could take box home or leave it at school for Valentines party. Caring Day on Friday 2/13, do as many kind things as you can for others. Wear red, pink and/or white outfit if you choose to.
- MYP fundraiser: Middle School Students did a fundraiser through Double Good where they sold popcorn. With the help of 98 supporters, our students brought in \$3,377 dollars to go towards fieldtrips! Katherine: getting input from students on possible ideas.
- MYP In-Person Learning at Lake Labish: SKPS recently moved the behavior program that used to be at Lake Labish to a new location. This has left the building open and available for us to use during our construction delay. SKPS is planning to sell the property and building, but our short-term need of the building fit in well with their timelines. We will be following our full in-person schedule at Labish. This will be the same schedule that students will follow when we are at VICS. Starting this Wednesday (Feb 11). Had great questions from parents to work out logistics, and are very excited to be in-person. Katherine and Lacey splitting time between PYP and MYP sites. Cammi: Big shout out to SKPS for helping us utilize this space. Building doing a first read tomorrow night for potential sale. We have a contract with them that might be able to be extended. Lacey: David Hughes has been fantastic, borrowing some of the furniture, got keys and badged very quickly. Teachers were very excited to see this space.

Upcoming Events

- PTC meeting next Tuesday Feb 17 at 6pm
- No school 2/16

Staffing Updates

- Posting a full-time Building Engineer (Maintenance/Custodial) position to our website and Indeed. Used a contract service for the short-term, but there are many things that would be nice to have a full-time staff for.
- Instructional Assistant (general education) will be posted to our website and Indeed.
- Amber Meadows (Recess IA) is supporting in the office for two hours each day.

Plumbing Updates

- Plumber has replaced our kinder bathroom toilet.
- They were working to replace the individual water filters in each classroom, but did not finish due to sediment build-up. Before replacing, they would like us to look into a filtration system for the well.
- Our front office water fountain will need to be replaced after it was attempted to be fixed last year in-house. Since filters were not able to be swapped, we got Culligan water jug dispensers. Water isn't unsafe, but we want to make sure it's the best possible. Encouraging students to bring water bottles from home to start out their day and refill.

Enrollment Update

- PYP: KG 26 / 1st 27 / 2nd 27 / 3rd 28 / 4th 28 / 5th 28 / Total PYP 164
- MYP: 6th 39 / 7th 19 / 8th 7 / Total MYP 65
- K-8: 229 total

Lacey: Working to have some supervision through Cheetah Care to ease late start days for MYP.

MYP IB: Drew Schmitt is in the middle of category 1 training for our IB candidacy, and Brynn Ogilvie just finished hers. Was a treat to see her explaining all the things we're doing and her ideas for making our program as strong as it can be. We were reauthorized in 23-24, are now in year 2, so 28-29 will be next IB eval. Have been looking at getting systems in place with Brynn. She led planning units

of inquiry with Toddle, and she challenged reading buddy classes to work together.

7:14pm

Treasurer Report

Steve:

Please ask questions if this feels unfamiliar, as we have to do bond compliance for the next 30 years.

- Loans are in a good place, show 256 days of cash on hand (60 required).
- We have manual disclosures that went out 12/31/25 that wrap up our financial year, there are also quarterly disclosures. We talked about leaning on financial advisor to help us complete those, were able to retain them for that.
- Quarterly compliance is good.
- Repair & Replacement Fund: Needs setup. Not a financial issue, just an arrangement with U.S. Bank we need to set up.
Carol: What is this?
Steve: Basically ensuring that we're taking care of the facility.
- Submitted No Default Certificate at end of year. Project Fund requisition #8 on 1/8/26 for \$120,658 and on 1/26/26 January SSF Payment Disclosure.
- \$1.4M Cash in bank. \$156,413 Monthly SSF Revenue (Jan 2026), \$0 outstanding payables. The school is financially stable with strong reserves and no outstanding obligations. Various districts are seeing possible fund cuts, but we control our cost structure more directly and they don't impact us quite as hard, but our funding does flow through the district. Legislature allocated \$11.4B to schools for the biennium which is an increase, but costs increasing quickly. By next week should know if we have more impacts from short legislative session.
- Recent expenditures beyond staffing primarily Facilities & Building, and Curriculum & Programs.
Lacey: Opal Creek Deposit is around \$28k but we get that reimbursed, likewise some facilities expenses are reimbursed through our bond.
- Overall stable, investing in the right things, and in a good position. Weathering the financial climate very well.

Cammi: Can we talk about the upcoming audit we have to do?

Lacey: Extension was applied for and received, working with auditors to make sure they have what they need, will be due in March. We weren't able to change who we used for our audit, but historically there have been some frustrations

with delays from our auditors and the department saying we're always doing something late. Have had conversations with Cammi and Steve about possibly looking elsewhere, as the next one will be the one which involves the sale of the building.

7:27pm

Construction Update

Cammi: Crane moved into position, but stopped working. Had a crane tech come out this afternoon. Hoping it will be working tomorrow morning. Were able to get inside of buildings finally. Original bid included funds for interiors of buildings and was allocated at \$10k. Andy Metcalf came back and said some water damage, particularly for #2 (which needs a bathroom). Carpet soaked up moisture and subfloor needs repairs. Every one needs some degree of repairs. Some cabinetry coming apart from wall, some tile work near ceiling needs repairs. In the portables that already had bathrooms, some tiles popping up whether from moisture or moving. Hoping to replace just damaged areas, not complete redo, matching as best as they can. Expecting a change order, still pricing out how much needs to be done. Hopefully not too much more than the \$10k we had allotted, but if more than \$15k will bring to the board.

Bigger issue after plumber took a look, when SKSD removed portables, they cut plumbing and didn't leave connections. Getting numbers for that and there will be a change order for that as well. Original bid had \$5k to use for a well. Plumber is saying sediment issues happen when you turn off power to building and then reconnect it, it causes the well to suck up extra water and stirs up sediment. Spoke with David Hughes, asking why we're only seeing this issue now. Construction crew asked when last time well was serviced. Couldn't find record, only safety testing records. Asked construction crew if putting filter on a well is sufficient, they suggested having a well tech examine it first. Could put a changeable filter on the line into the school. Looking into whether we need a reserve barrel.

Once we get portables in place, stairs and awnings will be put in place, and need to plan spaces between portables. Blake putting together a few scheme ideas, and hoping to get staff and school community input on the look.

BJ: To save costs we could just give the middle schoolers some spray cans and go with a downtown Portland theme.

Carol: What are odds of mold in water-damaged areas? For well, how deep is it, and what is the current water pressure? Cammi: Not sure. Carol: Seems like one well doesn't seem adequate for a school.

Steve: We had a breakdown in 2024, and SKSD replaced parts of pump.

Cammi: Part of the reason we need a well tech is to answer questions like this. The portable with carpet had a smell to it, and saw water damage to subfloor so

those will be replaced. Subfloor in dry areas looked fine when test areas of carpet were pulled up.

Steve: Well report said new pressure tank was installed and had acceptable pressure, but doesn't list exact PSI.

Carol: Just think it wise to take precautions as they may have to dig deeper.

Steve: Strong advocate of putting a carbon filter on just from a safety issue. Might also be reasonable to look into a battery backup system to weather minor outages.

Cammi: Wasn't a carbon filter that was discussed, just a sediment filter.

Steve: Would like something that can take care of chemicals found in soil just in case.

Cammi: Central Geotech requested additional money. Had a site-visit from someone with DEQ who is helping us navigate this. DEQ wants more testing done on the two berms. Quote came in substantially higher than we expected.

7:52pm

Public Comment

Cammi: Received one email asking about delays and what we're doing to hold our construction firm accountable. Another question was about in-person learning. Responded that due to closing delays and PGE delays, that pushed things back substantially. Kind of at the mercy of when subs can get to us since we caused a delay with the closing and soil mitigation. Parent was excited we have temporary in-person space. Currently looking at end of March to be able to occupy 3 of the buildings. Thankful for breathing room that utilizing Lake Labish site offers us.

7:57pm

Items to Discuss/Vote

Central GeoTech change order

Cammi: Want to vote on this tonight.

Steve: Looking over the document, the costs seem very high with many hours for something we went through before with two guys sampling for a few hours.

Cammi: Central GeoTech didn't know which pathway we would go with, whether through self-managed or for our own knowledge. Blake said it potentially wouldn't take that long, as number could come down but this is their expectation.

Steve: Appears like there might be some degree of double-billing, such as creating a work plan when we've been operating under a work plan.

Carol: Could you, as the treasurer, address that with them?

Steve: Could take a stab at it, have done contracting work but not GeoTechnical.

Garrick: Would be nice to see a better scope of work to whether the hours are justifiable.

Steve: Should push for a not-to-exceed cap, could probably get a reduction if we went through it with a comb.

Cammi: Blake seemed to be

BJ: Is this voluntary or mandated?

Lacey: It was voluntary.

BJ: Wasn't this something that SKPS tested the soil and said contamination was below acceptable level, so we're just doing the berming as our own extra safety?

Steve: That was also if it was undisturbed.

Lacey: Investor had some concern.

Garrick: Did we commit to following this?

Steve: Sounds like we have some concerns.

Cammi: DEQ will basically sign off assuming samples come back fine.

BJ: And having a scope of work like Garrick pointed out would be useful.

Garrick: Good to have that info on record.

Steve: There is some scope of services, but not tied to hours specifically. Hours feel high.

Cammi: Want to see if we can get Central GeoTech to join us for an executive session?

Steve: Not necessarily, but more explanation and details as the cost is more than double what we thought.

Carol: If it pushes the timeline back too far, don't want to delay construction.

Cammi: Craig is pretty responsive, can try to schedule something next week.

Board work session/training

Carol: We met January 26, were all there except Terry and Lacey. Dr. Beth Wigham helped identify strengths, weaknesses, and what areas need more focus. We gathered that we could grow in areas 8, 5 and 4 which were "Learning Organization", "Using data for continuous improvement", and "Accountability." Those are some areas of growth we're going to try to work on together. We were average in "effective leadership", "systems thinking", "cultural responsiveness", "cultural inclination", "vision", "budgeting and financial accountability", "community engagement", "board member conduct and ethics", "innovation and creativity." Beth had us introduce ourselves and make a verbal

promise regarding what we were striving to achieve. Felt like a good workshop, and nice to see some counterparts bringing ideas to the table. One area was cohesiveness with old and new members.

Garrick: Was a good session, got everyone involved, nice to think through ideas and feel stronger about a shared momentum for next steps.

Cammi: What do we want to do next? Beth had a 9-month plan with additional components. How do we want to move forward? Feel like we could use some additional training to keep us progressing toward goals for next 5 years. Also good to keep us together as a group through writing policies and making sure our programs are operating at high levels.

Carol: As someone who is newer and feels like an outsider, one thing that stands out is conflict of interest. Some concern about optics of a parent leading the trainings and sessions. No ill will or anything negative to say, enjoyed it and learned some things. How does it look to parents of students if there is a conflict of interest?

BJ: Less concerned with optics of what happens in the session because they are public meetings and there are minutes, so we hold the trainer accountable if anything comes across as having favoritism and such. More concerned with fiscal conservative lens that I view everything from. Want to make sure we are good stewards of public money, not spending on what is easier but spending on what is best and what is needed, and doing the hard work where possible ourselves.

Carol: Yes, how much bang for the buck is important. Some training fees seem high, but not an expert on what it is.

Cammi: OSBA was 3 hour training for 885-\$1k for board essentials. Matthew Lowe could do in-person or virtual for around \$800-\$3,200 depending on the options. Focus on charter law. Another IB trainer gave a 2-day training for \$5k. Need to ask ourselves what we can do for ourselves and what we need help with.

Steve: I'm a strategic planner, this is in alignment with industry standards, but some parts she gave us a break on. If we can pick and choose, the vast majority of expenses were in the board manual development, which we could hold off on and focus on the vision and goals. It is very difficult for a body to do this on their own. Given that I have these skills and it hasn't happened in the past three years indicates that we need an extra push. For policy development, that will be expensive to have a consultant do this, so we might want to try our hand at it first, but strategic development needs more of a walkthrough. Given Beth's experience, she's the best person we're aware of today to do this for us.

Cammi: More so than our current consultant?

Steve: I believe so, our consultant has strong opinions about where the school should go, which I may agree with, but Beth provides a somewhat more removed perspective.

Cammi: Might need to amend budget for board training.

Steve: The board training and vision planning aspects are critical. Policy development is a grind that takes many hours, and it has to be open meeting due to public meetings laws. There are policy books we can borrow from.

Carol: Can OSBA provide some of that?

Cammi: To use their resources, have to become a member and pay membership fee.

Stephen: Pre-written policy book will always need heavy editing to match our community.

Terry: Often the OSBA agenda tends to focus on teachers and teachers only. Workshops can be overly focused, and in the past I found them hard to work with.

Carol: Still want to factor in optics of having a parent leading these workshops. Appreciate Steven's perspective as he does this kind of thing.

Terry: I've done policy planning, and it is a grind.

Ed: Important to consider how we spend our money. Kids are even more important. Have to put it all together.

Garrick: The optics didn't stand out to me, though I can see some hesitancy. The fiscal responsibility, the time, and the alignment with our goals and timelines are considerations, since we don't have unlimited time and money. Vision is hugely important. The board sessions try to get the through process going, brainstorming, compare and contrast, etc. That's different from handing over drawing up something for us, rather than us building something through a guided process.

Carol: Maybe optics isn't the right term, but when someone else is spending our money, we want to make sure we're getting the maximum value. If I were a parent, and saw this dollar amount, I would be concerned and would wonder if there were other options that could be researched to make sure it's not too high.

Cammi: It's hard for us to spend money on ourselves. We usually put it toward the school, the students and the staff. So the look of spending money on the board carries a certain optic. There is work that is way past due that needs done with this board.

Steve: I don't see it as spending money on ourselves, as if we operate without a strategic plan then we're just floating around aimlessly. Having a good plan

allows for continuous improvement and more effectiveness. As far as how much it costs, it's not small, but most of that is document development. The strategic planning aspects are around \$3500. Large firms typically charge \$500+ per hour. Midrange firms are typically \$400-500/hour. Want to make sure there is no conflict of interest, but I think we will struggle to find this experience at this price point.

Lacey: You haven't been spending money on this, in essence it's a delayed payment on work that needs done. I think you'll be a stronger board if you go through this. I was sick as I was listening in, but I recall thinking it was very cool. This cannot come out of the budget approved, as is larger than PD budget, and there is some sticker shock.

Carol: I feel like when shopping for a vehicle, I don't need a brand new one with all the bells and whistles, just a reliable and safe vehicle. With training, I want something that will benefit my position, but having a hard time knowing for sure what those bells and whistles are.

Lacey: The board has had to spend a lot of money on legal fees for different things that have happened, sometimes due to gaps in communication, as well as some reactive spending. This is more preventative, as the school is on the verge of huge things. The head of school, board and parent committee need to be able to work together with a clear vision, not a nebulous one. We are it. We don't have a superintendent who runs board meetings and helps create vision. Having that plan is vital, and we need someone to guide us through that work.

Steve: I have the experience, but not the time. A firm like Deloitte would be your "bells and whistles" option and full project would be anywhere from \$50k to \$150k with multiple consultants. This is the budget option.

Garrick: Is it because this is not something you've ever done, that number looks really big? But when you actually look at it against other things out there, it seems more reasonable. For an individual, spending \$3500 is a really big decision. In this context, it still matters, but even 10-15 years ago many consultants were charging \$500/hr.

Steve: If it goes above \$10k, then we would have to get three quotes.

Carol: What was the total cost quoted?

Steve: Around \$35k for the full package, about \$6400 of which was OSBA fees. She's allowing us to a la carte it and choose the parts we're interested in.

Cammi: Want to be respectful of time, gone way over agenda so far.

BJ: I can support strategic planning work, want us to do the core parts ourselves as much as possible, but can support the \$3500 option for the small package, and then we can look at the other components once we have a solid vision in place.

Steve: Don't want to do budget work with no vision in place.

Steve motions to approve \$3,500 now for vision planning. Garrick seconds motion. Discussion: Steve: As we look to bring in additional services we will get three quotes. Vote: 7 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain. Motion passes.

Cammi: Do we need to table remaining items?

Garrick: Yes, it's getting pretty late.

Terry: Good discussion though.

Cammi: Beth sent out Google form to fill out which will be helpful as we go into next session. Be ready to discuss those we didn't get to, meeting norms, looking at grievance policy and recruitment.

9:09pm

Next meeting info

Cammi: Next meeting March 9, in-person and virtual. We talked about holding in-person meetings quarterly. Should next be that?

Lacey: If we delay until April, we could be in the new buildings.

Garrick: April will be next quarter. Recommend virtual for next one.

9:10pm

Meeting Adjourn

Chat log:

2026-02-09 18:32:39 From Beth Wigham to Everyone:

Hello Everyone, good evening!

2026-02-09 18:46:51 From Jaskiran Kaur and Kerstyn Miller to Everyone:

The inquiry clubs are incredible! It is awesome to see all the students work together!

2026-02-09 18:52:28 From Beka Benham to Everyone:

Carol makes the best cookies!!!

2026-02-09 19:04:11 From Roberto marquez to Everyone:

Is Wednesday a late start for the MYP?

2026-02-09 19:04:40 From Roberto marquez to Everyone:

Can we get a printable schedule for the MYP?

2026-02-09 19:04:51 From Beka Benham to Everyone:

Replying to "Is Wednesday a late start for the MYP?":

Yes! Drop off at 9:45, start at 10:00.

2026-02-09 19:06:06 From Jaskiran Kaur and Kerstyn Miller to Everyone:

Kinder is very grateful!-Ms. Miller

2026-02-09 19:07:24 From Katherine Fuller to Everyone:

Hi Roberto, we will be sending a digital version of the schedule out on Parent Square and student's will receive a printed schedule at school this week too!

2026-02-09 19:38:40 From Jaskiran Kaur and Kerstyn Miller to Lacey McNay (direct message):

Hey, is it alright if we hop off the zoom? We are totally okay staying if u want us too

2026-02-09 19:38:59 From Lacey McNay to Jaskiran Kaur and Kerstyn Miller (direct message):

No you are so good! Thanks for being here!!

2026-02-09 19:39:16 From Jaskiran Kaur and Kerstyn Miller to Lacey McNay (direct message):

Have a good night !

2026-02-09 19:54:46 From Diana Marquez to Everyone:

So I am familiar with wells and my grand parents gets silt in there's every winter when the water table rises over the level of the pump. If the pump can't breathe it will suck mud. We had record flooding with that power outage so wouldn't surprise me if it just sucked silt. A well tech should know if the pump is adequate and if the depth is adequate a generator on the well would help with this issue in the future and just running the taps can help clear lines

Lacey McNay, Beka Benham, Garrick Williams: (heart)

Carol Kruse:☐ ☐