VSMG
BETTER ADVICE. BETTER BENEFITS

Management Board
Tom Boone, Chairman/CEO
Mike Barragan, Vice-Chairman
Jim DiCello, Secretary
Bill Maas, Treasurer
Jill Barragan, Member
Heather Mock, Member
Dale Ponder, Member
Marcie Rodriguez, Member

VALLEY SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 25, 2026

1. Tom Boone, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:33 a.m.

2. **Board Members Present:**
   Tom Boone, Chairman/CEO
   Mike Barragan, Vice-Chairman
   Jim DiCello, Secretary
   Bill Maas, Treasurer
   Jill Barragan, Member
   Heather Mock, Member
   Dale Ponder, Member

   Board Members Absent:
   Marcie Rodriguez, Member

   Staff Present:
   Jodi Jerich, General Counsel
   Ken Hicks, Executive Director Member Services
   Laura Felten, Chief Financial Officer
   Lisa Dessenberger, Executive Assistant
   Raquel Flores, Administrative Assistant
   Leigh Steele, Director Marketing and Communications

   Guests Present:
   Gretchen Jacobs, Lobbyist, Arizona Governmental Affairs

3. Board Member Recognition – Tom Boone.

   Tom Boone recognized Dale Ponder for his appointment by the Crane Elementary School District's Governing Board as the District's Superintendent, beginning July 1, 2026. Mike Barragan praised Dale's leadership and congratulated him, expounding on his accomplishments. Jill Barragan echoed Mr. Barragan's statements and noted that there has been feedback from the District that they have great confidence in him. Dale Ponder thanked the Board for the recognition.

Due to a legislative meeting at the Arizona State Legislature on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, regarding the SB1497 striker bill, Tom Boone opened the floor for public comments. Mike Barragan commented on the bill, and Gretchen Jacobs added some details. Several attendees shared their experiences and commented on the bill. Some questions and discussion followed the public comments.

4. Approval of the VSMG Board meeting minutes held on December 17, 2025.

MOTION: Jim DiCello SECOND: Heather Mock VOTE: 6-0-0-2

Tom Boone – yes	Mike Barragan – yes	Jill Barragan – absent
Jim DiCello – yes	Bill Maas - yes	Heather Mock – yes
Dale Ponder – yes	Marcie Rodriguez–absent	

5. Approval of the Valley Schools Insurance Group ("VSIG"), Valley Schools Workers' Group ("VSWCG"), Valley Schools Employee Benefits Group ("VSEBG"), and Valley Schools Management Group ("VSMG") financial statements for the month of November 2025, December 2025, and January 2026 – Laura Felten.

Laura reminded the Board about the VSMG Financial Seminar scheduled for March 26, 2026, and gave a brief update on the agenda items, who was invited, the RSVP responses, and mentioned that there is currently a waiting list for those wanting to attend.

VSIG— Laura Felten reviewed the VSIG financial statements. She stated that there has been a positive change in market value and that interest earnings are strong. Bill Maas asked about the excess insurance and the claims process. Tom Boone responded.

VSWCG – Laura Felten reviewed the VSWCG financial statements. She discussed reinsurance costs and shared some details. She concluded that the VSWCG continues to perform well.

VSEBG— Laura Felten reviewed the VSEBG financial statements, noting that claims are running high across the board. Jim DiCello added that historically, a jump in claims will occur during holiday breaks. She stated that revenues received on a quarterly basis will be reflected in the February 2026 financial statements. She discussed a school district risk assessment released by the Auditor General and shared some information. Bill Maas asked what percentage of Members prepay contributions, and Ms. Felten responded. A discussion took place.

VSMG— Laura Felten reviewed the VSMG financial statements. She pointed out some specific line items and took some time discussing those totals. She noted that overall, the budget is performing well.

MOTION: Jim DiCello	SECOND: Bill Maas	VOTE: 7-0-0-1
Tom Boone – yes	Mike Barragan – yes	Jill Barragan – yes
Jim DiCello – yes	Bill Maas - yes	Heather Mock – yes
Dale Ponder – yes	Marcie Rodriguez–absent	

6. Executive Director Member Services update – Ken Hicks.

   Ken Hicks provided a handout to the Board and reviewed overall medical, dental, and vision pool data. He discussed average renewals and shared information from conversations he has had with individual member districts regarding their renewals. Bill Maas asked about medical trends and specialty services, and Ken Hicks responded. Laura Felten and Mike Barragan contributed additional details to the discussion.

7. Chairman/CEO summary report and update – Tom Boone.

   Tom Boone informed the Board of the next meeting date and noted several conferences and events on the calendar.

8. Board Member comments.

   Mike Barragan informed the Board that the Brian Mee scholarship is now live on the AASBO website, noting that VSMG is one of the sponsors. He also provided an update on the ASBO International conference he and Bill Maas attended in New Orleans and the AASPA event, and again congratulated Dale Ponder. Jim DiCeillo thanked staff for their work. Heather Mock acknowledged the Wellness Team and their efforts for the DVUSD 5K and Health Fair event. Dale Ponder commended the VSEBG team for the time and effort they dedicate to servicing YABC, adding that the team does a great job educating and engaging with the Board. He again thanked the VSMG Board for the recognition.

9. The meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jim DiCello

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Jim DiCello, Secretary

JD/lad