

Schools Update ~ Communication

By Dr. Ken Cox

We are now well into the second month of the school year. In this column you have read about our new emphasis on attendance and the importance of making sure your children are at school as much as possible. You have also learned about the work that the elementary school has done and the significant improvements in student achievement that are happening there.

There are a lot of moving parts to run a school district. I personally only supervise seven people. Many of them in turn supervise others in what is traditionally known as the chain of command. I try to keep informed about what is happening in each of our buildings and among our staff and students. As I visit the school to

meet with various staff members I have been impressed with the way things are coming together in the new building. We didn't have the funds to get new furniture when we moved in but we have made the best of what we have. After all it is not furniture that helps students learn nearly as much as it is the people. And we have good people!

All of our staff members care about kids and each does their part to help them learn. I hope that you realize that they have your child's best interest in mind in all they do. I also hope that if at any time you do not feel this to be the case, that you let us know your concerns. We each have a different perspective on any given situation, especially when it comes to our own children. So if you see something that doesn't fit, please

visit with your child's teacher about your concerns. We are open to suggestions and are hoping to improve our communications to parents this year. We really do want to hear from you. If you don't feel that you are being heard by any staff member then please contact one of our building principals, Mr. Miller (VES) or Mr. Underwood (VMS/VHS), and if you still don't feel you are getting anywhere, my door is always open.

Communication is a two-way street and I hope to do a better job of keeping the community informed this year. You can check out what's happening with the Vernonia Education Foundation at vernoniaschools.org and we also have a Facebook page (if I can ever figure out how to use it)!

Vernonia School Board Report

At the October 10, 2013 Vernonia School Board Meeting:

Board Hears PBIS Report-Jan Dyer presented the PBIS Report which deals with Student Behavior. Dyer defined student behavior corrections as "major" which means a referral and "minor" which means a written reminder to the student. Dyer reported statistics from the 2012-13 school year. Dyer's report noted that Wednesdays were the top day for referral writing; that Classroom Disrespect was the number one reason for referrals; and that data shows an increase in problem behavior in February and March. Dyer reported that through this school year so far there have been 15 minor reports from VES and 13 from VMS/VHS and 2 Out of School Suspensions, with 19 minors from VES and 23 from VMS/VHS.

Dyer also introduced a "Positive Office Referral" which recognizes positive student behavior and is new this year. Dyer reported on what they have been doing which included a student survey for 7th through 11th graders which explores school climate from the students perspective; beginning Anti-Bullying training for all staff; and additional upcoming training.

Dyer reported that grant funding was not awarded this year to continue this program.

SHaW Report-Bill Langmaid reported that the Spencer Health and Wellness clinic is working on more outreach this year. He also reported that the clinic program received more funding which would allow for a larger contingency fund. He also said that SHaW staff is happy with the redesign of the clinic layout. Langmaid also reported that DeAnna Pearl has been hired to do

Cover Oregon outreach.

VES Focus School Report-Aaron Miller gave a detailed report on the Focus School Program. Miller reported that in 2012 VES was designated as a Focus School and that the school is entering its second year of a four year commitment. Miller reported that the District received \$34,000 this year to implement the program, which is designed to impact student achievement and attain growth levels mandated by the state. Miller explained that the District is graded on whether each student demonstrates growth each year. Miller reported that the VSD will receive an additional \$40,000 during each of the next two years to implement programing to increase reading and math opportunities. That money can be spent on before or after school reading programs, increased adult support, and increasing technology. Miller reported that it has been decided that one-third of the funding will be spent on technology through the purchase of 35 ipads and apps for student use. Miller also shared the Oregon Department of Education Report Card for the last two years which shows an overall increase in performance by Vernonia students. According to Miller the VSD has made significant progress because of the focus in the classroom on improved instruction, and the focus on analyzing data. Miller also shared a four page list of indicators that the district is using to improve progress.

Board Hears Attendance Report-Aaron Miller gave the attendance report. Miller reported that both VES and VMS/VHS principals have made it a priority to decrease the amount of chronic absenteeism. Miller noted that there are several things they are doing

including a new attendance policy and outreach to parents to explain the new policy. Miller noted that attendance is even more important given the short school year. Miller shared the new report that the District will be using to track attendance data.

Board Hears Class Size Report-VMS/VHS principal Nate Underwood presented a class size report for VMS and VHS. Underwood reported that generally class sizes are pretty good, but that the schedule presents some challenges which causes some imbalanced classes. Underwood also reported that students now have more opportunities to take classes on-line.

Board Discusses Volunteer Criminal History-Superintendent Ken Cox presented the Board with a suggested matrix that would set policy for how the District would qualify school volunteers who had any kind of criminal history. Cox explained that the District needs a better system and tools to regulate who can volunteer. Cox said implementing a new system would require making changes to policy which would refer to the matrix. The Board took no action.

Board Approves Achievement Compact Template-Superintendent Ken Cox presented the VSD's 2013-14 Achievement Compact. The Achievement Compact tracks student achievement and whether students are graduating and are ready for college; if students are making sufficient progress

toward college readiness, whether students are succeeding across all schools; other measures that reflect key district priorities and what is the public investment in the district. The Board voted to accept it subject to revision.

Board Receives Facilities Committee Project List-Superintendent Ken Cox presented the Board with a priority list developed by the Facilities Committee. Current projects on the list for this year included providing electricity, plumbing and heating to the shop and greenhouse, which Cox noted that there is no funding for at this time. The list also included the completion of Spencer Park at the old school site, moving the dirt pile that remains on the new school campus, and building a softball field at the new campus. The list of future projects include: baseball field, football field/track, stadium seating and lighting, shop/art/storage building, and additional parking.

Board Approves Senior Trip-The Board approved a request for the Senior Trip to go to Disneyland on April 25-28, 2014.

Board Receives Updated Lighting Schedule-Superintendent Ken Cox presented the Board with an updated schedule for lighting for the school building. The building has an automated system; Cox has made minor changes to the programing in order to reduce the amount of time that lights are on in the building.



- Kitchen & Bathroom Remodels • Finish Carpentry
- Ceramic Tile Work • Custom Home Construction
- Additions • Commercial Tenant Improvements

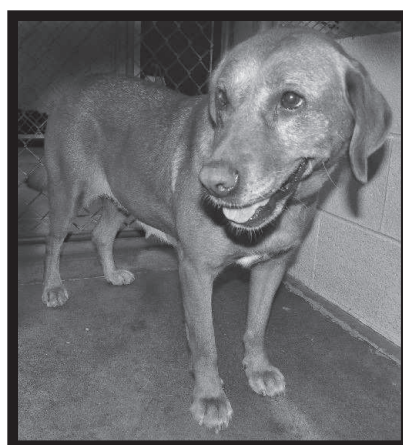
Jim Morrison, Jr.
General Contractor
CCB# 112057

Ph: (503) 429-0154
MorrisonRemodeling@hughes.net
Vernonia, OR 97064

• Licensed • Bonded • Insured

Columbia Humane Society Featured Pet

"Firecracker"



2084 Oregon Street,
St. Helens, OR 97051
Phone: 503-397-4353

Firecracker is a sweet older girl that needs to find a new forever home. She gets along with other dogs and would be a great addition to any family. She does need to go to a home without cats though as she thinks chasing them is great fun! We think she is right around 5 years old and she weighs about 46lbs. She came to the shelter when her family had to surrender her over because they had too many dogs and couldn't provide the proper care for her. Come see this sweet girl today!

E-mail: info@columbi humane.org
Web: www.columbi humane.org