

# Vernonia School Board Report

**At the August 14, 2014 Vernonia School Board Meeting:**

**Board Hears Questions About K-2 Blended Classes-**Over twenty people were in attendance, most were there to ask questions about the District's plan to group all kindergarten through second grade students together for instruction this coming school year. Superintendent Aaron Miller addressed the audience concerns for over an hour. (See full story on front page.)

**Security Cameras Being Installed-** Superintendent Miller told the Board that installation of a security camera system is being completed with cameras in strategic locations to deter vandalism.

**Miller Gives Construction Updates-** Superintendent Miller told the Board that Spencer Park construction is continuing with all the new dirt in place and that the backstop at the new softball/baseball field is being installed. The project is on schedule to be completely

constructed by the September 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. The SHPO (State Historical Preservation Office) monument that is a requirement of FEMA should also be installed by September 1. Permits for the new shop were approved and construction should begin shortly. The new softball field at the new school is on hold.

**Board Approves Administrative Agreement-** The Board approved a three year Administrative Memorandum of Agreement with administrative employees.

**Board Accepts Morrow Resignation-** Superintendent Miller informed the Board that he has received the resignation of band teacher Andy Morrow. The Board voted to accept the resignation.

**School First Days-** Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup> will be the first day of school for 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders and foreign exchange students as well as for kindergarten assessments. All other students start on Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Schools Update: Blended Classes

By Aaron Miller

Vernonia School District students will see some new and returning faces in the classroom this fall, as summer hiring welcomes three teachers into the district. Laura Blacker, a recent school volunteer and student teacher, will teach fourth grade, filling in for Robyn Richmond who is taking a year's leave of absence. Margie Fry, a fifth year teacher returning to Oregon from North Dakota, will be joining the kindergarten through second grade teaching team and Steve Whiteman will rejoin the high school staff teaching physics and an upper level math course.

The addition of Mr. Whiteman will add a much needed section of math for high school students, while the hiring of Ms. Fry will enable our primary students in grades K-2 to have much smaller class sizes with five teachers rather than four. Class sizes in K-2 classrooms are presently projected at 23 or 24 students, whereas they would have been 29-30 without this new position.

The decision to move to a K-2 blended model was made after much deliberation by the entire teaching team, who has already spent several days of their summer developing plans to address the unique needs of this blend.

While smaller class sizes for these critical primary years were a very strong consideration, they were by no means the sole reason for this decision. Please find bulleted below several other reasons and considerations that went into this choice.

- Other grade configurations (with

either 4 or 5 teachers) left large disparities in class sizes, and/or had unacceptable class sizes.

- These blends allow for more effective differentiation of instruction to meet individual student learning needs.
- VES teachers already utilize an effective K-2 reading program, and will expand the concepts of effective grouping, and meeting individual student needs, to math, science and social studies.
- We have an extremely successful model for effective blended classrooms in our own Mist Grade School's Kindergarten-5th grade program.
- Blending primary grades will allow us to maintain an effective full-day kindergarten program, prior to state funding availability in 2015-16.
- A long-term, consistent grade level configuration will be possible. In the past five years we have had K/1, 1/2, 2/3 and 4/5 blends. By creating K-2 blends we will eliminate this reactionary practice and allow for a consistent primary program, with equitable class sizes.
- All five K-2 teachers will be working closely together to ensure consistency of curriculum and that each student is working at their optimum level of productivity.

A parent information night will be held early in the school year to provide parents with an opportunity to ask further questions. See your students' backpacks during the first week of school for further information. Prior to that, questions can be submitted to Aaron Miller at the VSD Office, 503-429-5891 or via email.

## School Bus Routes Announced for Fall



This is a summary of all main bus routes; these are estimated times. There will be a 5 minute window of time allowed for pickups on routes and all route times are subject to change due to additional stops and unforeseen traffic issues.

**Special needs and in town small buses** will be determined at the start of school pending notification of riders.

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**Small bus routes change all during the school year as they carry all of our smallest riders and they vary daily.**

### Timber Route AM

- 7:09AM Clear Ck Rd.
- 7:11AM near 55670 Timber Rd.
- 7:15AM near 57139 Timber Rd.
- 7:20AM Kirk Rd.
- 7:21AM Airport Rd.
- 7:24AM Hwy 47/Timber Rd.
- 7:26AM Storage Too
- 7:30AM 1<sup>st</sup>/Cougar St.
- 7:32AM Maple St.
- 7:33AM Columbia Ave/Rose Ave.

### Pebble Ck. Route AM

- 6:45AM Arctic Way
- 7:05AM Hwy 47S near tree farm
- 7:09AM Peterson Rd.
- 7:12AM Johnson Rd.
- 7:15AM bottom of McDonald Rd.
- 7:20AM Seidleman Rd.
- 7:25AM near 58021 Pebble Ck Rd.
- 7:30AM Chinese Restaurant
- 7:33AM Elm St.
- 7:34AM Grove St.
- 7:35AM Juniper St.

### Birkenfeld Route (big bus)

- 7:05AM Hwy 202/Hwy 47N (mainline)
- 7:08AM Battle Ck Bridge
- 7:10AM Museum
- 7:14AM Natal Grange
- 7:19AM Peterson Station
- 7:24AM Scap/Vern Hwy junction
- 7:30AM Sleepy Lane
- 7:33AM Stoney Point Rd.
- 7:41AM Heather Lane
- 7:43AM Cherry St.

### Keasey Route

- 7:05AM Fibre mainline
- 7:07AM Boeck Rd.
- 7:15AM Burn Rd.
- 7:20AM Flack Rd.
- 7:24AM Eden Rd.
- 7:26 Stoney Point/Lincoln Rd
- 7:30AM 2<sup>nd</sup>/Nehalem Rd.
- 7:31AM 3<sup>rd</sup>/Nehalem Rd.
- 7:32AM 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>/Nehalem Rd.
- 7:33AM 5<sup>th</sup>/Bridge St.
- 7:34AM 4<sup>th</sup>/Bridge St.

### Scappoose Route

- 7:11AM near 22071 Scap/Vern Hwy
- 7:17AM Peterson
- 7:22AM beginning of Stoney Point Rd.
- 7:26AM Stoney Point/Woods Rd.
- 7:30AM Stoney Point/Mellinger Rd.
- 7:31AM G/State St.
- 7:35AM B/State St.
- 7:37AM North/State St.

### Sm. bus Fishhawk 1<sup>st</sup> Route

- 6:25AM Fishhawk Rd.
- 6:40AM Hwy 202 near Shalmon Libels farm supply
- 6:45AM near Mist School
- 6:50AM Mist junction
- 6:55AM Barkanall to transfer students

### Sm. bus Fishhawk 2<sup>nd</sup> Route

- 7:10AM end of Fishhawk Rd.
- 7:35AM near Shalmon Libels farm supply
- 7:45AM Burris Rd.
- 7:55AM near Big Eddy Park
- 8:00AM Crawford Rd.

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