

Vernonia School Board Report

At the October 9, 2014 Vernonia School Board Meeting:

Next Board Meeting- The next School Board meeting will be Wednesday November 12 at 6:00 PM, which is a change from the usual Thursday night meeting.

Board Welcomes Guest- the Vernonia School Board meeting was attended by NW Regional ESD Superintendent James Sager.

Student Reports- The Board heard Student Reports from senior Zi_xian Chen and sixth grader Jared Armes. Zi-xian reported on current high school activities and Jared gave report on Outdoor School.

Building Reports- Elementary School Principal Aaron Miller told the Board that students had taken part in the Salmon Watch program, a field trip to Dr. Thomas' property along Rock Creek on Keasey Road. The trip was a joint program with students from the Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School in Salem. Vernonia Students from the Forestry program helped with the program. Students learned about riparian zones, water quality issues, salmon life cycles and plant and tree identification. They also had a chance to see salmon spawning in Rock Creek.

Mr. Miller reported that he will visit Corbett Elementary School on October 28 with ODE Instructional Coach Patti Wiemer. Corbett is a high performing school and Miller will look at their blended classroom program and how they provide intervention services for students in need of extra reading and math help.

Middle/High School Principal Nate Underwood provided the Board with a written report. Mr. Underwood reported that thirteen students went on a Manufacturing Career Day trip; that a lockdown drill was held on October 9;

that the district has four Pacific University graduate students who are assisting Mr Weisel with counseling duties; and that a 'New Technology' assembly will be held October 29 with a parent presentation in the evening. Underwood also reported that Homecoming Week is October 13-18.

Class Size Reports- Mr. Miller reported there are 235 students enrolled in the Elementary School; last year the school had 215 students at the end of the year. There are five classes of K-2 with 26 or 27 student in each class, 29 students in a 3rd grade class, 35 students in a 4th grade class and two classes of 5th grade with 19 students in one and 20 students in the other. There are 19 students at Mist Grade School in grades K-4.

Mr. Underwood provided the Board with a Class Size Report. In the middle school there are a total of 140 students; grade 6 has 41 students, grade 7 has 58 students and grade 8 has 41 students. At the high school there are 212 students; grade 9 has 50 students, grade 10 has 46 students, grade 11 has 48 students and grade 12 has 47 students. There are 9 foreign exchange students.

Underwood also provided a breakdown of each class size that individual teachers have. There were concerns raised about the size of several of the classes including the middle school PE class with 55 students and several other classes with counts in the mid to high thirties. Superintendent Aaron Miller told the Board that he is working with Mr. Underwood to find creative ways to alleviate the overcrowding in classrooms and would report with more details at the next meeting.

Board Approves Surplus Items- Superintendent Miller told the Board that the District received a donation of chairs from Portland Community College which are being used in the library. The thirty-five plastic chairs that were pre-

viously used are no longer needed and were declared surplus.

Board Approves Achievement Compact- The Board approved the 2014-15 Achievement Compact which documents district goals for addressing and improving graduation rates, and reading and math proficiency rates. Miller told the Board the goals include increases of 5% in almost all categories to demonstrate a level of growth.

Board Approves New Hire- The Board approved the hire of Charlotte Gilbert as the new Behavior Specialist. Gilbert did her student teaching at Washington Grade School and has been subbing as a special education teacher in the area. Mr. Miller told the Board this position has been a need in the district for several years and that Gilbert will help with special education needs for students along with assisting Mrs. Wilcoxon with behavior issues. Miller said he hoped this would allow him and Mr. Underwood to spend more time in classrooms observing teachers and students.

Superintendent's Report- Superintendent Miller reported that the transportation contract with Curl's Bus Service has been signed.

Miller told the Board that three part-time Instructional Assistants will be moving to full time. Miller reported that the City of Vernonia has agreed to waive \$130,000 in SDC funds the District owed the City and Miller thanked the City for their consideration. Miller

also thanked State Representative Brad Witt and State Senator Betsy Johnson for their help in getting the Oregon Emergency Management Board to approve \$212,500 in funding.

Miller told the Board that on October 3rd sixty members of the Council of Educational Facility Planners International toured the school facility with Boora Architects.

Miller reported that Spencer Park is complete and that letters have been sent requesting the release of the final funds being held in escrow for the project. Miller told the Board that the City and District are in agreement that the project has been completed to everyone's satisfaction and are trying to locate documentation of agreements between the two parties that identifies who is responsible of any remaining work. Miller also told the Board that the historical monument has been completed at Spencer Park and that the District has fulfilled their obligation to FEMA.

Miller reported that construction of the new shop facility is moving forward and should be complete by the end of fall.

Miller told the Board that the Vernonia Education Foundation (VEF) has approved \$36,000 to build the softball field and that the District is seeking bids for the work. Miller said time is running out to start the project this fall. He told the Board that board member Ernie Smith has found a good deal on fencing for the field and the cost is part of the funds from VEF.

Vernonia Students of the Month

September 2014



Maddie Christie Grade 3

Maddie is known as a sweet, kind, compassionate and helpful student who always has a smile on her face no matter how rough things get. Maddie says her favorite subject in school is math. She says she wants to play volleyball. Maddie says she helps take care of the family's adopted dog Abigail, an Aussie. She says she also likes to do art and help other students with their homework.

Jared Armes Grade 6

Jared is new to Vernonia Schools. His teachers say he always gives 100% and that he has a lot of integrity, self confidence, and cares about other people. "He's a great addition to our school," says one VMS teacher. Jared is playing football this fall and plans to participate in wrestling and baseball. He is in the Engineering Club and says his favorite subject is PE. He is a Boy Scout and says he likes to do legos. He would like to learn to play guitar.



Makayla McCord Grade 12

Makayla is part of the Forestry program at VHS as well as part of the Equestrian team. She was selected for the Columbia County Flag Team this past year and says she plans to try out for the Columbia County Rodeo Court this upcoming year. She also does equestrian events as part of 4-H. Makayla says she plans to take a year off from school next year to work and then look into either trade school or vet school.



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