

# School Enrollment and Funding

in anticipation of this issue.” But the budget has already been figured and is already tight, so they can’t just continue to add more teachers if enrollment increases.

Which leads us to another gap in the system for Vernonia; the fact is that the district has instituted full day kindergarten, yet the state only factors kindergarten students as .5 of a student, which produces another gap in the Vernonia district budget. It is anticipated that the state will fund kindergarten students full time in the next budget, but that is not yet a done deal. If it does happen, Vernonia, with fifty-two currently registered kindergarten students, could receive significantly more full student funding for an additional twenty-six students. Keep in mind, the funding all comes from the same pool of state money, so by adding full time kindergarten funding and not increasing the overall pool, the state may just reduce the amount they give districts for each student. If full day kindergarten funding doesn’t happen at the state level Vernonia may continue to have this gap in their funding.

Another large hole in the system is the way the state funds districts for special education students. Each student identified as needing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) receives an additional factor of 1.0, meaning the district receives twice as much funding for each of those students. “Those students may need services from being pulled out for an extra class, to needing a one-on-one assistant, to having a student that requires transportation to another program outside our district because we are unable to meet their needs here,” says Miller.

The extra resources from the state help offset those extra costs for the district. Unfortunately the state caps that extra factor at 11% of the student population. In 2014-15 the Vernonia district estimated they would have ninety-seven students identified as IEP, yet they only receive funding for 60.5 students because of the 11% cap. The state does have a small fund which provides additional funding for districts over the 11% cap, but for Vernonia it only provides an additional 10.9 factor, meaning the district only receives extra funding to meet the needs for 71.4 IEP students. And, the reality is that, at the start of the school year, Vernonia actually had 117 students, or 17.5% of their student population, identified as IEP. “We have forty plus students that we don’t receive extra money for, yet we have to meet their needs with services,” says Miller. “The bottom line is the state does not fully fund us for our special education students. And that comes out of the bottom line of the rest of the budget.” Miller went on to say that he believes this is a problem for districts throughout the state, not just Vernonia. “We are not the only ones,” says Miller. “I would guess there are very few districts in the state that have 11% of their population who are in special education.”

## What does the future look like?

Vernonia is currently dealing with gaps in funding for several of their programs, along with issues that

*continued from page 3*

involve the everyday operation of their facility.

Overall, Miller is looking on the bright side. He says he views the increase in students as good for the district and, as Miller likes to point out, also good for the Vernonia community overall.

“The kids that come into our school enhance our bottom line, which helps us start to make progress towards getting healthy after the downturn we’ve experienced,” says Miller. “But it’s also significant to note that those families who move in are paying rent, they’re buying groceries, they’re paying water and electric bills—all those things really make it an exponential growth for the community

as a whole. When we’re healthier the community is healthier, and when the community is healthy, we’re healthy.”

But that additional funding may not lead directly to new teachers or new programs says Miller. Because of prior state funding cuts, flood impacts and budgetary issues the district has previously made cuts across the board. “We need more teachers,” says Miller. “We need to add days back into our schedule. With our increased special education population, we have increased costs. We have the need to increase

custodial services. We need additional instructional assistants. We are meeting the needs of our kids. But that extra money is not going to go very far among all those priorities.”

There is one other factor that could potentially impact the district budget that Miller failed to mention, maybe because it’s such a large elephant in the room that it’s almost impossible to miss. The district has almost \$5 million in debt from the construction of the new school campus. They continue to work diligently to fundraise and try to retire that debt, but if that fundraising money ever dries up, the district general fund could be affected.

Miller pointed out that student enrichment remains the priority for the District. “What shouldn’t get lost in the discussion about finances is the fact that our focus is actually on the well being of our students, their growth and achievement, and not on just getting more dollars from more students,” says Miller.

Miller is hopeful that the upswing in enrollment this year is a trend and not an anomaly. “Hopefully funding continues to increase and we continue to see our enrollment grow,” says Miller. “Then we can add a few more things to our priority list. Even with more funding, it’s not going to be a one year fix. It’s going to take a number of years for us to recover. We’ve been in this downturn for too many years; it’s going to take a while to make that up.”

## PTA PRESS EXTRA!! EXTRA!! READ ALL ABOUT IT

This years Open House BBQ went off without a glitch. Thank you all for coming.

Now is perfect time to get involved with your PTA. Sign up forms are in the school on the PTA bulletin board. We currently have two open positions available, Secretary and CO-chair for Fundraising.

For more information please come and join us at a meeting or find us

on facebook. Our next meeting will be Thursday November 5th at 7:00 PM, at the school. We would love to see new faces. We usually meet on the third Thursday of the month. Our upcoming meeting dates are as follows:  
November 5  
No meeting in December  
January 15th  
February 19th  
March 19th  
April 16th  
May 14th

## Leadership • Results Our voice in Salem

- Advocating for Small Business
- Strengthening Rural Oregon
- Making State Government Accountable
- Helping Real People Solve Day-to-Day Problems
- Putting Oregonians Back to Work
- Prioritizing Critical Services

## Re-Elect Betsy Johnson State Senator

www.betsyjohnson.com

Paid for by the Committee to Re-elect Betsy Johnson



Mastercraft  
TIRES

GET UP TO A

\$70

Visa® Prepaid Card by mail when you buy a new set of four qualifying Mastercraft tires.



Courser HXT ..... \$70  
Courser AXT ..... \$70  
Courser HSXTOUR ..... \$50  
Avenger Touring LSR ..... \$50

Promotion valid from October 1 through November 15, 2014\*

Courser HXT™

Courser AXT™

Courser HSXTOUR™

Avenger Touring LSR™



## Vernonia True Value

503-429-6364 • 834 Bridge Street • 9 AM - 6 PM •  
www.MastercraftTireRebate.com



\*GO TO WWW.MASTERCRAFTTIREREBATES.COM FOR REQUIRED DOWNLOADABLE OFFICIAL MAILIN FORM AND FOR OFFICIAL TERMS & CONDITIONS. FORM AND TERMS & CONDITIONS ALSO AVAILABLE AT POINT OF PURCHASE. PAYMENT OF REWARD WILL BE MADE THROUGH A MASTERCRAFT TIRES VISA PREPAID CARD. ACCEPTED EVERYWHERE VISA DEBIT CARDS ARE ACCEPTED. CARDS ARE ISSUED BY CITIBANK, N.A. PURSUANT TO A LICENSE FROM VISA U.S.A. INC. AND MANAGED BY CITI PREPAID SERVICES. VISA PREPAID CARDS CANNOT BE REDEEMED FOR CASH AND CANNOT BE USED FOR CASH WITHDRAWALS. IN EFFECT FOR TIRES PURCHASED FROM OCTOBER 1, 2014 TO NOVEMBER 15, 2014. OFFER BASED ON AVAILABILITY OF ELIGIBLE NEW TIRES AT TIME OF PURCHASE. ELIGIBLE TIRES ARE THE MASTERCRAFT COURSER HXT, MASTERCRAFT COURSER AXT, MASTERCRAFT COURSER HSX TOUR, AND MASTERCRAFT AVENGER TOURING LSR TIRES. REWARD AMOUNT DEPENDS ON QUALIFYING TIRES.

For more information, go to [www.MastercraftTireRebates.com](http://www.MastercraftTireRebates.com)