

Schools Update: Teacher Mentor Program

By Aaron Miller

The first two years of teaching can be quite an experience: addressing State learning standards, developing lesson plans, effectively managing a classroom of 25+ students, developing assessments, correcting papers, evaluating student work, communicating with parents.... the list goes on and on. Teaching is a hard job, and once you step into "your" classroom, it can be quite overwhelming to be on your own.

Fortunately for new Vernonia School District (VSD) teachers there is the St. Beaver Mentor Program. This program developed by the Beaverton School District (BSD) provides support, training and mentoring services to new teachers in the St. Helens (SHSD) and Vernonia School Districts, hence the name "St. Beaver."

Mentor teachers from the BSD must apply and be selected to work as mentors with beginning teachers in

the VSD and SHSD. Once teachers are matched with an appropriate mentor (they are matched by the grade level or subject area that is taught), they go through training together that includes classroom-based mentoring, New Teacher Summits, and Learning Labs to ensure that each teacher receives at least 90 hours of high quality mentoring and a minimum of 9 formal observations by their mentor teacher.

This work fosters self-reflection to accelerate growth toward professional teaching standards, and supports knowledge of curriculum and grade level standards to strengthen the ability of new teachers to plan and differentiate highly effective instructional programs.

Currently there are five teachers from the VSD taking advantage of this program.

Second year Vernonia High School band teacher Matt Urban has found the experience "invaluable."

"I have now begun to design

new lessons that have an activity at the beginning and end designed to help students get more invested in the lesson," says Urban, "and we are working on ways to impart information that I had only previously been imparting by lecture." This methodology is helping keep students more engaged in their lessons.

Laura Blacker, a second year Vernonia Elementary School teacher, has had similar positive outcomes from her work with her mentor teacher.

"This is a fantastic resource for a small district like ours," says Blacker, "because it allows collaboration and sharing of great ideas for support of our students' growth and learning. Most of these teachers are also using the

EngageNY math curriculum so we can support one another with this shift in instruction."

In addition to the information, Blacker is also very pleased with the support she receives directly from her mentor teacher. "My mentor, Jenny, is wonderful. She has observed a math lesson in my classroom and gave me really nice feedback that has helped me improve my instruction across all subjects. She is a really great problem solver and has connected me with wonderful resources."

Beginning VSD teachers and their students are truly benefiting from this partnership. If you have questions regarding the St. Beaver Mentor program, please contact Superintendent Miller.

School Board Report

At the November 12, 2015 Vernonia School Board Meeting:

Board Appoints Wagner to Fill Vacancy – After entertaining applications from Bob Perry and Susan Wagner, the Board appointed Wagner to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Jim Krahn last month. Several Board members noted that both Perry and Wagner were excellent candidates, which was reflected in the silent vote the Board held to make their appointment; Wagner received three votes and Perry received two. The Board voted unanimously when the motion was made to appoint Wagner later in the meeting.

District Report Cards – The District has received Oregon Report Cards for their schools. The Report Cards provide a profile for each school; rates Progress of students over time in English Language Arts, Math and Science; the Outcomes students are achieving in regards to college and career readiness, graduation, and continuing education; and the Outcomes for students in key groups that include economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and talented and gifted students. This year's Report Card did not provide an Overall School Rating; the U.S. Department of Education allowed Oregon to temporarily suspend rating this year as the state

transitions to new assessment standards.

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Miller provided the Board with a report on what happened concerning communication during a Police Incident on Riverside Drive on October 13. Miller told the Board he did not receive any communication from law enforcement to alert him of the incident. He said he called police at 7:10 am and was told children who were walking to school were being routed away from the incident. Miller says he made the decision that the area directly around the school was not in danger, decided not to cancel school and sent out a full coverage call to parents at 7:19 and again at 7:28. The School was put on "Lock In" which means no student may leave once they are in the building and no one else is allowed in. He says he was informed by both county and local law enforcement once the incident was concluded. Miller told the Board the school held a previously scheduled Lock-Down/Evacuation Drill on October 14, which included local police and fire personnel. Student, staff and administration practiced lock-down and evacuation procedures.

Miller told the Board that, based on the Board's request, their meeting in April will be held at the Mist School.

Miller told the Board he is

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Vernonia Students of the Month

October 2015



Delaney Draeger Grade 4

Delaney is an excellent and mature student who consistently does her best. She says her favorite subject is math. She just finished her soccer season where she played goal keeper. At home she keeps a fish tank and is trying to convince her father to let her get a salt water tank because salt water fish are a lot cooler than fresh water fish. She also likes to climb trees.

Cody Hathcoat Grade 6

Cody is a very polite and responsible student who takes pride in his work. His teachers say he is a joy to have in class. Cody says his favorite subject is math. In his spare time he likes to play video games. He also has a two year old pet hedgehog named "Sonic."



William Scheuerman Grade 10

William's favorite subject is engineering with Mr. Shockey. He plays trumpet in the school band. As a Boy Scout he is very close to earning his Eagle Scout, having completed a project to refurbish parts of the play structure at Anderson Park. In his free time he builds with legos, is interested in model railroading, and enjoys researching WWII history.

Sponsored by Vernonia's Voice

The Vernonia Volunteer Ambulance Association

will be holding an informal Q&A meeting at the VRFPD conference room on Tuesday, December 1 at 6pm. Come learn about full scholarships and other great incentives to being a volunteer!

Snacks and cocoa provided!



Scouting For Food

The Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts of Troop 860 will be participating in the Cascade Pacific Council's "Scouting for Food" campaign again this year on December 5th beginning at 9am to benefit Vernonia Cares



Scouts will be leaving plastic bags at people homes on the morning of Wednesday, November 25th. Please leave bags with canned goods on your porches. There will also be a drop off site at the Vernonia Dental Office for anyone who would like to donate after the 5th. Office hours are Monday – Thursday 8am-5pm.