

School Board Report

At the January 14, 2016 School Board Meeting:

Board Approves Names for New Sports Fields – The Board voted to approve names for the new softball and baseball fields at the school campus. The softball field will be named Alumni Field and the baseball field will be named Holce Field. (See full story on this page.)

Council Discusses Weapons Policies – The Board discussed current District policies concerning weapons on campus and at school sanctioned events. The discussion was prompted by an incident at a football game this past fall. The Board took no action. (See full story on front page.)

Financial Audit Receives OK

– The annual independent financial audit found the Vernonia School District in compliance. Larry Grant from Gove, Mueller & Swank presented the financial statement to the Board and reported that there were no significant findings in the audit

New Custodians Hired

– Following the retirement of both Julie Ramsey and Carol Senn from the custodial staff on January 4, 2016, Superintendent Aaron Miller told the Board that two permanent replacements have been hired, Randy Phipps and Debbie Johnston.

District in Compliance with OARs – Superintendent Aaron Miller reported that the District has received a completely compliant Division 22 report. The Division 22 report is used to determine a District's compliance with Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) for public elementary and secondary schools.

Board Approves Local Service Plan – The Board approved the Local Service Plan from the North West Regional Education Service District (NWRES). The NWRES combines resources from the state and provides services to regional school districts that the districts might not be able to afford on their own. The NWRES includes 18 school districts, including Astoria, Clatskanie, Forest Grove, Jewell, Knappa, Sherwood, St. Helens, Tigard-Tualatin, Tillamook, and Vernonia. NWRES head Rob Saxton says he is currently working to bring the Beaverton and Hillsboro School Districts back into the NWRES. The 2016-17 budget is projected to be \$15.3 million with the service credit allocation projected at \$11.5 million. Service credit allocations are divided among districts based on enrollment. Vernonia's service credit allocation is projected to be \$187,889.

Superintendent Evaluation Process to Begin – Board Chair Brett Costley notified the Board that it is time for the annual evaluation of Superintendent Aaron Miller. Costley asked Miller and the Board to fill out an evaluation form, which he would compile and present for discussion at a later meeting. He also notified the Board that Miller has asked for his contract to be opened for negotiation. Costley received consensus to have a negotiation committee, made up of himself and board members Ernie Smith and

Greg Kintz, meet with Miller and bring any suggested changes back to the Board. Costley said any negotiation suggestions were welcome from the rest of the Board.

Enrollment Climbing – Superintendent Aaron Miller reported that after reaching a low of 530 students in December, enrollment has been slowly increasing and has now reached 547.

Student Reports – 1st and 2nd grade students, Olivia Bunkey, Sylar Navarro, and Connor Johnston from Mrs. Schlegel's class made a presentation on what they learned about Computer Sciences in a recent section that taught computer code writing.



Superintendent Report – Superintendent Aaron Miller shared correspondence from the Oregon Crusaders, a marching band organization that has used the Vernonia Schools facility for weekend practices and workshop events three times in the past and have another event scheduled. The group pays \$750 to use the facility for two days. The group thanked the District for being

flexible and for the use of their facilities.

Miller shared a letter with the Board that is being sent home to all parents offering the opportunity for students to opt out of the Smarter Balanced testing. The opt out form is available at the Vernonia Schools office or online at www.vernonia.k12.or.us.

Miller reported that a grant proposal involving several school districts to create a Columbia County Career and Technical Education (CTE) Hub for careers in nursing and other medical careers was not funded.

Miller told the Board his plans to begin a Strategic Planning process is being delayed for a month due to receiving support from the NWRES to work with a private consultant to lead it.

Miller told the Board the District is applying, in partnership with the Upper Nehalem Watershed Council, for a grant for \$35,000 from BLM to support operations at the greenhouse, including paying for student summer interns.

Miller reported that the District received Medicaid Administrative Claims of over \$29,000 this year, an increase of \$20,000. Miller said staff are being especially diligent in documenting time spent on any work that can be related to Medicaid after learning of other schools that were receiving large reimbursements.

Board Approves Names for New Sports Fields

The Vernonia School Board voted at their January 14, 2016 meeting to approve names for the new softball and baseball fields at the school campus.

Based on a recommendation from Superintendent Aaron Miller and a naming committee, the softball field will be named Alumni Field and the baseball field will be named Holce Field.

The softball field is currently under construction and is expected to be completed and ready for use this spring. Construction on the baseball field is expected to begin this spring.

The softball field was completely paid for with donations of approximately \$80,000 that came from

alumni through the Vernonia Education Foundation's (VEF) Sports Initiative. Miller thanked the VEF, and especially Jim and Kathy Eckland, for their work spearheading the campaign.

The District recently received a donation of \$120,000 from alumni and long-time district supporters Evelyn and Randy Holce to install the new baseball field.

The naming committee was comprised of community member Mike Fetch, School Board member Ernie Smith; district administrators Gordon Jarman and Aaron Miller, teacher Randy Shockey, classified staff member Kathy Fetch and student Cassidy Whitton.

Schools Update: Snow Make Up Days

By Aaron Miller

After our most recent flooding event, and a bout of snow followed by more cold and icy road conditions students in Vernonia have already missed three days of school due to inclement weather. Following such a hot, dry summer Mother Nature is certainly working hard to get us back to average with such a wet, cold start to our winter.

When our school calendar was developed last spring three Fridays were designated as days off of school, with the intent that they would be used as weather make-up days if needed. Well, they are needed.

Students will now be attending school this Spring on the following Fridays to make up for the instructional time lost during these weather events:

- Friday, February 26
- Friday, March 4
- Friday, April 29

While only three "snow make-up days" were placed in the calendar, further inclement weather will likely result in extending the school year into the summer to make up for any more lost class time. If further school days are lost to weather the Vernonia School District (VSD) Board will make the final determination as to when that time will be recouped.

As the VSD calendar was developed to meet standards for instructional hours, extending make-up days into the summer would be likely to maintain state compliance.

Vernonia Students of the Month

December 2015



Addie Coburn Grade 2

Addie is known as a good all around student who is polite, looks out for others, and does especially good school work in reading and math. Addie says her favorite subject is reading and that she likes to read in her spare time. She also helps take care of the family dog, Sadie.

Sophia Wolf Grade 8



Sophia is known as a hard worker who tries her best, turns in high quality work, and is willing to go the extra mile. "She has this great desire to actually learn and put forth the effort," says one of her teachers. Sophia says her favorite subjects are language arts and social studies. She plays volleyball and is part of a tournament basketball team, and says she enjoys hanging out with friends

Kaitlyn Eyrrick Grade 11



Kaitlyn is a very good and active student. She plays first clarinet in the school band and was just selected for both the Honor and the All State Band. She is part of the FRC Robotics program and also works on the school yearbook. She has already started her senior project, making digital copies of the old class photographs from VHS. She is also helping the Vernonia Pioneer Museum revise their Historical Walking Tour and is a volunteer at the Vernonia Library. In her spare time Kaitlyn raises award winning show rabbits for 4-H.

Sponsored by State Representative Brad Witt