

Schools Update

By Aaron Miller

Here are some of the happenings in the Vernonia School District (VSD):

Bond Information Update

The VSD is continuing its work to provide savings to local tax payers through an Advanced Refund on the General Obligation Bonds that have financed a portion of the new school building.

An Advanced Refund is somewhat similar to refinancing a house. Because interest rates are currently lower than those in place when the Bond was approved by voters in 2010, the Bond can be refinanced, or "refunded in advance" to take advantage of today's lower rates.

If realized, the savings are passed on to taxpayers with a lower tax rate. Actual savings are not determined until the actual day the Advanced Refund of the Bond is sold. It is possible that rates will not be favorable at the time of the sale, in which case the Advanced Refund will be canceled and the savings will not be realized.

The VSD will hold an informational meeting

on Thursday, June 2 at 6:00 pm in the Vernonia Schools Library regarding the Advanced Refund, as well as a potential new Bond to raise funds to eliminate the school's long term debt.

The format of the meeting will begin with information from the District regarding potential bond options, and why a bond is being considered at this time.

The second portion of the meeting will provide patrons an opportunity to ask questions of, or provide direct input and opinions to, the District.

Strategic Planning Update

Preliminary data from the District's Strategic Planning process has been compiled, and is now being reviewed by the School Board and Teachers. The information that was provided by parents, community members, school staff and the School Board will be used to develop 3-4 overriding goals for the District to accomplish in the next 3-5 years.

Following this internal review a draft plan will be developed and shared with parents, staff and the community for further input, prior to the plan being officially adopted by the Board.

Developing strong curriculum, effective instructional practices and good working relationships between parents and the school are some of the overriding themes coming out of this initial review.

Lock Out Follow Up

On Friday, May 6 the Vernonia School District held school in "Lock Out" due to a potential threat of harm, as depicted in a picture that was turned in to school staff. In addition local police were on campus throughout the school day.

The threat of harm did not occur, the situation has been addressed both internally and with law enforcement, and there appears to be no further threat at this time. All aspects of this incident have been addressed as per district policy and state law.

During a Lock Out students and staff follow their regular school day routines, but ALL exit doors are locked, with no students, staff, parents or other patrons leaving or entering the building.

If you have any questions about the information in this article, or other questions regarding the Vernonia School District, please contact Superintendent Aaron Miller at 503-429-5891.

School Board Report

At the School Board Meeting on May 12, 2016:

Budget Committee Meeting – Upon convening the meeting, the School Board immediately recessed to a Budget Committee Meeting. The Budget Committee discussed changes in the 2016-17 budget but declined to recommend an approved budget to the School Board and scheduled another meeting for Thursday, May 19. (See full story on page 3)

Board Hears Proposal to Sponsor Oregon Virtual Education – The Board heard a presentation by Paul Peterson from the Northwest Regional Education Service District about a proposal to become the statewide sponsor for Oregon Virtual Education Charter School, a state online learning program. The Board scheduled a Public Hearing for Thursday, May 19 to consider the proposal. (See full story starting on page 3)

Board Rejects Appeal for Inclusion in Graduation - The Board recessed into Executive Session to hear an appeal by Hyrum Schirmeister of decisions made by school administrators. According to the complaint form filed by Schirmeister, both High School Principal Nate Underwood and Superintendent Aaron Miller had denied a request to allow Megan Schirmeister, Hyrum's daughter, to participate in the Vernonia High School Class of 2016 graduation ceremony, based on District Policy IKFB. The Schirmeister family was appealing that decision to the School Board.

In separate emails the Schirmeister family told *Vernonia's Voice* that Megan withdrew from Vernonia High School (VHS) starting in her junior year to stay at home and take care of Hyrum who has health issues; Megan has not returned to VHS. Megan will be receiving a diploma from Oregon Virtual Academy but has continued to participate in VHS

student body activities; she was part of the Cheer Squad and has supported the community and wanted to walk in the graduation ceremony with the kids she has grown up with.

After considering the appeal and upon returning to Open Session, a motion was made to uphold the administration's decision to deny the request to allow Meagan to participate in graduation. The vote was tied 3-3, with Board members Susan Wagner, Greg Kintz, and Brett Costley voting to uphold the administration decision and Cari Levenseller, Brittanie Roberts, and Katie Cook voting against the motion; Board

member Ernie Smith abstained from voting. With the tie, the decision by the administration stands.

Board Approves Loan Forbearance Agreements - The Board approved two Forbearance Agreements that would delay for two years the payments on two "Cool School Loans." Loan #L00864 was entered into on June 15, 2012 and is for \$2 million. Loan #L00881 was entered into on June 21, 2013 and is for \$1,237,342. By delaying the payments the District will not have to make annual payments of over \$190,000 for the next

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Vernonia Pet Fair

To benefit the Vernonia pet food bank
Bailey's Pantry

Saturday May 21

10am - 3pm

Location at Creatures

Raffle with proceeds going to Baileys Pantry
Pet Item Resale Booth

Doggie Wash by HAPPY Tails Pet Grooming
Pet Photography by Displaced Pets Rescue
Rescues from Displaced Pets Rescue
Cat Coalition Spay/Neuter Info
Columbia Humane Society
ID Tags and more from Creatures
Reiki Pet Massage by Jeffrey Dolan
Sno Cones by the VHS Leadership Class
Food from Nehalem River BBQ
Princess Makayla McCord with the CC Rodeo Court
and MUCH MUCH MORE!

For more information contact Holly at 503-970-0554

Vernonia Students of the Month

April 2016



Hayden Rau Grade 2

Hayden is known as a bright and exceptional student who takes a leadership role in the classroom and is willing to help other students and her teachers. Hayden says she enjoys writing in school. She plays softball and does junior cheer-leading.



Dakota Willard Grade 8

Dakota is a hardworking student who goes the extra mile. Her teachers describe her as humorous, pleasant, kind and respectful. Dakota says art is her favorite subject. She plays clarinet in the band, runs track, is part of the leadership class for middle school, and hopes to do cheerleading next year.

She helps with Vacation Bible School in the summer. In her free time she says she likes to read.



Mike Timm Grade 11

Mike has given up his break each day to work in the student store this school year and his supervisor says he has shown tremendous growth. He is extremely reliable and a hard worker. Mike says his favorite subject is art and he especially enjoys sculpture. In his spare time Mike says he enjoys playing video games.

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