

# School Board Report

## At the April 13, 2017 Vernonia School Board meeting:

**School Board Meets in Mist** – The Vernonia School Board held their April meeting at the Mist School in an effort to include more community members from the School District. The meeting was preceded by a community forum, hosted by the Vernonia School Bond Committee, to answer questions about the upcoming School Bond on the May 16 election ballot.

**Board Accepts Two Resignations** – The Board accepted the resignations of teachers Judy Gingerich and Kelley Murphy-Shaw. Gingerich has been a teacher for 39 years, 26 of those in Vernonia. In her resignation letter Gingerich stated "...the emphasis on data, benchmark outcomes, and curriculum development has caused fatigue," and noted that "Often, the time spent in an excessive number of meetings and Professional Development has had no positive impact on my teaching abilities..." Murphy-Shaw noted in her resignation letter that, "Every year teachers are asked to do more and more with less," and "...time spent with my family is more important at this point in my life than spending countless hours creating lessons and doing professional development coursework." She added "...the direction of education has turned, and I'm not so sure I agree with the direction it is going." Both resignations take effect June 30, 2017.

**Board Approves 2017-18 Instructional Calendar** – The Board approved the recommended Instructional Calendar for 2017-18 which includes 157 Student Contact Days. The first day of school is September 6 and the last day is June 8. High School Graduation is scheduled for June 2, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion for June 5, 2018.

**Board Appoints Murray to Budget Committee** – The Board appointed Kellie Murray to the Budget Committee.

**Finance Report** – District Finance Officer Marie Knight reported to the Board the Ending Fund Balance has been steadily improving throughout the year, due in part to the State School Fund coming in a little higher than expected and because of a spending freeze instituted by Superintendent Aaron Miller in November.

**Winter Sports Report** – Athletic Director Gordon Jarman told the Board this past winter sports season was "the most successful Winter Sports season, over-

all" since he has been with the District. He said the VHS boys basketball team took 6<sup>th</sup> in the State Tournament and the girls basketball team qualified for the State Tournament after finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in their District. The wrestling team won the District Title and sent six wrestlers to the State Tournament and coach Chris Barnes was named Coach of the Year for the District.

Jarman told the Board in Middle School sports, Justin Ward coached both boys and girls basketball and mentioned outstanding players Levi Richards, Wyatt Jones, and Nick Costley for the boys and Brooklyn Walters and Jayden Hartman for the girls. In wrestling, Jared Gilbert was the new wrestling coach and outstanding wrestlers were Luke Bozied, Pete Crystal and District Champions Brandon Depue, and Wyatt Jones.

**Superintendent Report** – Superintendent Aaron Miller updated the Board on several grants the District has secured, including a county-wide grant through CareOregon for resources for Trauma-Informed Care and Adverse Childhood Experiences; a grant for the Youth Transitions Program which is being reviewed; the two-year Oregon Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (OFAST) which was accepted; and the Kindercamp grant which was accepted and will include fully equipped backpacks for all kindergarten students.

Miller told the Board the District will post announcements for two open elementary teaching positions and the high school science teacher.

Miller told the Board volunteer work on the softball and baseball fields at the school campus continues. He said baseball will not use the field this year, and that volunteers are building dugouts for the softball field.

**Building Reports** – High School/Middle School Principal Nate Underwood introduced instructor Jim Krahn who explained that his Project Based Learning class is hosting Unity Week from April 17-21 that will include guest speaker Phil Boyte on April 19-20, presenting "Breaking Down the Walls." Krahn said Boyte will work to train about 30 students on Wednesday evening to be leaders during his programs with the entire student body on Thursday, empowering students to create a positive and supportive campus by interacting with a cross section of their peers.

Underwood also updated the Board on the Middle School promotion projects, where 8<sup>th</sup> graders presented oral reports on United States Presidents.

Underwood said a small group of students will be traveling to Washington, D.C. as part of the Close-Up trip.

Underwood congratulated VHS senior Kaitlin Eyrrick who was accepted to New York University and was also named First Seat clarinet in the Columbia County Band.

Underwood also briefly discussed a contest the art classes are participating in to decorate a pair of Vans shoes.

Elementary School Principal Aaron Miller updated the Board on work related to the OFAST grant and told the Board the grant proposal for next year was accepted, which will allow teachers to continue this training.

Miller told the Board that staff members attended a Professional Learning Communities training on March 20.

Miller told the Board all K-5 students will go on a half-day field trip to Stub Stewart State Park on April 28,

funded by the State Park Foundation and some students' grandparents. Students will hike, learn about forest stewardship, and work on outdoor art projects.

Miller told the Board the configurations for the Elementary School next year will be Kindergarten - one class, 1<sup>st</sup> grade - one class, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade - one class, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade - two classes, 4<sup>th</sup> grade - one class, 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade blended - one class, 5<sup>th</sup> grade - one class.

Miller told the Board that the Barbee family, who are new to the Mist community will be installing a Little Free Library in front of the Mist School for everyone to take or leave a book.

Mist School teacher Joanie Jones told the Board that her 5<sup>th</sup> grade leadership team have chosen the Mist Mountain Lions as the school mascot.

Jones told the Board about some clean up of old trees from the school property and thanked the Mist-Birkenfeld Fire Volunteer Association and other volunteers who helped with the debris clean up and donated the wood to those in need in the community.

## Bustamante Receives Horatio Alger Scholarship

Vivianna Bustamante, a senior at Vernonia High School, has been named a 2017 National Scholar and was awarded a \$25,000 scholarship from the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans.

Bustamante is just one of 106 National Scholars to receive the Horatio Alger scholarship this year.

Bustamante attended a conference to welcome all National Scholars to the program in Washington, D.C., where she spent five days from March 29 through April 2. The conference included college readiness seminars and other works sessions, social events, a visit to the U.S. Capital and other monuments, an address by Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, and a formal dinner and Induction Ceremony.

Since 1984, Horatio Alger Association Members and Friends have been funding need-based college scholarships to support deserving young people overcome their adversity and pursue their dreams through higher education. So far the Association has awarded more than \$125 million to approximately 20,000 students.

In addition to undergraduate scholarship support, the Association offers a number of services and opportunities to Horatio Alger Scholars:

- Financial Aid and Scholarship Counseling
- College Readiness Tools
- Support and Referral Services
- Mentoring Programs
- Alumni Association
- Graduate School Grants

To be eligible to apply for the Horatio Alger National Scholarship, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be enrolled full time as a high school senior in the United States and progressing toward graduation
- Plan to pursue and complete a bachelor's degree
- Demonstrate financial need
- Be involved in co-curricular and community service activities
- Display integrity and perseverance in overcoming adversity
- Maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0; and
- Be a United States citizen

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