

# Schools Update: Bond Projects Getting Started

By Aaron Miller

The Vernonia School District continues to make progress in its efforts to implement capital improvement projects to be completed with the passing of last May's Bond.

In addition to bringing Heery International onboard as the overall Project Manager, the School Board recently approved the recommendation to hire Oh Planning and Design, Architecture as the architect for the major construction projects within the scope of the Bond work.

Now that the Project Manager and Architect are both onboard the District will work with them to develop firm timelines for each project on the list.

They will also put together a much clearer estimate of what each project will cost given the scope of work, as well as the changing market conditions due to the booming construction industry.

Throughout this process we will work to include the public in our discussions, asking for input and feedback on projects to be implemented, as well as providing timely updates on the progress of those projects that have already been started.

While this process is necessary as the preparatory work to complete these projects effectively, on budget and on time, there are some Bond projects that the District will undertake on its own.

Currently we are working with

the Project Manager to address the roofing and gutter needs at Mist Grade School. This project will not be one that the architects are involved in, and will likely go out to bid very soon to take advantage of construction schedules and to avoid projected pricing increases.

In addition to the building work at Mist Grade School, new playground equipment will be selected by the staff, students and parents at Mist with installation projected over the 2018 summer. A similar selection process for playground equipment at the Vernonia Schools building will be put in place by our Sprouts parent group, with installation of this equipment also projected for the summer of 2018.

Some items that have already

been ordered are the new trophy cases that will allow the District to display its many awards that have been in storage since the flood. These cases will be placed in the blue hallway, and will pave the way for our historical class pictures to once again be hung and displayed in the halls.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Bond, or any other School District happenings, please call at (503) 429-5891.

Also, the next Superintendent/Community Chat is scheduled for Wednesday, January 24 from noon to 1:00 pm at Subway. Stop by to talk with me, and share any questions or concerns you have for the Vernonia School District.

## School Board Report

At the November 9, 2017 School Board Meeting:

**Bond Expenditure Process** – District Superintendent Aaron Miller requested that the Board raise the limit for expenditures that need to be approved by the Board. Current policy requires Board approval for any expenditure over \$10,000. In order to move projects approved under the May 2017 General Obligation Bond in a timely manner, Miller requested the limit be raised to \$150,000. Miller said this amount was consistent with other Districts he had spoken with that were working on Bond capital improvement projects. Miller said the Board would be informed monthly on planning, implementing, and paying for capital improvements, and only Bond approved projects would be subject to the increased limit on spending. The Board approved an increase to \$100,000 and will require that the Board be notified with an informational email prior to the expenditure.

Miller later informed the audience that the District has hired Oh Architecture for bond related projects and said the firm was the first choice of each member of the selection committee and has experience with small school district projects. (See full story on this page.)

**Board Approves Supervisory Agreement** – The Board approved the 2017-18 Confidential/Supervisory Contract for the following positions: Business Manager, Administrative Assistant, Fiscal Assistant, Special Education Compliance Officer, Maintenance Supervi-

sor, and Food Service Director. The only significant change in the contract was to provide a 3% step raise, which is consistent with other employee salary schedules this year.

**Enrollment Report** – The Board received an enrollment report which showed an increase of three students from October 1 to November 1. Total enrollment is 537, with 18 students at the Mist School, 220 in the Elementary School in grades K-5, 112 students in the Middle School in grades 6-8, and 187 students in the High School in grades 9-12 including 13 exchange students.

**Transportation Report** – Shelley Hennessy from Curl's School Bus Service provided the annual transportation report. Hennessy told the Board there are five large bus routes, five small bus routes and two van routes; there is also a run to Mist School and vans go to Beaverton, special needs homes, and to Head Start for Early Intervention students. There are 10 assigned drivers and two substitutes. Hennessy reported there have been 0 accidents, one breakdown, and two late buses during the past year.

**Teacher Professional Development** – High School instructor Juliette Safier provided the Board with an update on ongoing professional development for teachers. She said teachers have worked successfully on Evidence-Based Behavioral Support with Ben Smith on two occasions and provided the dates for four more work sessions

for teachers throughout the rest of the school year. Safier told the Board that she likes the flexibility the schedule provides which allows staff to address specific needs as they arise and noted potential topics: Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Trauma Informed Care, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. She said teachers would be discussing Suicide Awareness in December and January. Safier told the Board that she would like to see more time for Professional Development built into the schedule in the future.

**Superintendent Report** – Superintendent Aaron Miller updated the Board on

his ongoing Community Chats, the fix for a home adjacent to the school campus that was having water run off issues perpetrated by the campus construction, and attempts to reschedule the "Paper Tiger" film showing and discussion.

Miller told the Board hours have been added to staff time in the cafeteria and maintenance staff time at the Mist School, freeing up time for the Maintenance Supervisor and other maintenance staff.

Miller updated the Board on the potential start-up of a virtual academy system that would allow home school

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## Vernonia Students of the Month

### October 2017

#### Elementary School



Back Row, left to right: Koa Leiningner (Grade 3), Marissa Naeve (4), Joshua Meglen-Robledo (2), Lucian Cutright (4), Rebecca Nelson (5). Front Row, left to right: Alexander Sever (K), Sapphire Herndon (3), Myles Milstien (K), Hayden Kofstad (1)

#### Alicia Wack Grade 6

Alicia is known for being diligent, doing her work, and putting forth 100% effort. She is also known for her great sense of humor and attitude. Alicia ran cross country this year and plans to run track in the spring. She also hopes to participate in choir. At home she does chores and helps take care of the animals on their family farm. She hopes to do 4-H this year and also likes to hike.



#### Brook Naron Grade 12

Brook is the Public Relations representative for the Student Body, is part of the leadership class, and recently attended the state leadership conference for students. She helps plan school activities like Homecoming and Prom. She is starting to tutor young students and outside of school she helps teach art classes to young students. She works at the Black Iron Grill, enjoys riding horses, and spending time with her dog Jasper. Next year she hopes to attend Pacific University and study to become a veterinarian.



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