

School Board Report

At the June 13, 2019 School Board Meeting:

At Home School Program to Begin in Fall – Superintendent Aaron Miller told the Board he has had a great response to the new At Home School Program. Miller said the District needed at least 15 students to register for the program for it to be financially successful – to date at least 45 students have expressed interest, and the majority of those students (at least 30) are new students to the District. Instructor for the program, Debbie Taylor, has been holding regular meetings with parents as the District develops the program and curriculum. “I’m very excited about what Ms. Taylor is working on and how she is connecting with parents,” said Miller. Miller expressed hope to grow the program even more once it is established.

Board Hears Update on Bond/Classroom Addition – Superintendent Aaron Miller updated the Board on the revised plan for the construction of a classroom addition that was to be funded with bond revenue approved by voters in 2017. Original plans called for a two-story, four-classroom addition, but rising costs have required the District to adjust that plan. Miller informed the Board that he will hold a Bond Update review for the general community on July 11 at 5:15 pm in the Schools Library prior to the next regular School Board meeting. (See full story on front page.)

Board Approves 2019-20 Budget – After holding a public hearing at which there was no comment from the audience, the Board approved Resolution 1819-09, adopting the 2019-2020 budget. The budget totals \$13.67 million.

Board Approves Teachers Contract – The Board approved a new Collective Bargaining Agreement contract with the Vernonia Education Association for teachers. The new contract includes cost of living increases of 3% in the first year and 4% in the second year of the contract across all categories and steps, and also includes increases in the extra duties salary schedule that includes coaches, activities directors, class advisors, music supervisors, and mentor positions. “Since I have been Superintendent we have not had any money, and our teachers have been extremely cooperative and understanding of that situation to help us get to a place where we are financially stable,” said Superintendent Miller in

explaining the changes in the contract to the Board and audience. “I can’t thank you all enough for helping us make that happen. This does not in any way make our teachers’s salaries whole – I would not even say that it makes us competitive. But we are making progress, and we need to continue to do that to honor them and everyone else here for the hard work that they do for our kids.”

“I’ve been through several of these in different roles,” added Board member Steve Whiteman, who was part of the negotiating committee. “I didn’t see a lot of ‘us versus them’ in this – I saw all Vernonia. I’ve been in these where somebody has to win, and I didn’t see that here.”

Board Approves Election Results – The Board voted to accept the May 21, 2019 election abstract with the results for Board positions. The Board accepted the election of current members Greg Kintz for Position 2 and Steve Whiteman for Position 3. They also accepted the results of write-in votes that saw current member Brittanie Roberts receive the most votes for both Position 6 and Position 7, which had no candidates filed. Roberts will have to accept one position and then the Board can appoint someone to fill whichever seat Roberts does not accept.

Miller’s Decision Upheld – After recessing and entering into Executive Session under ORS192.660 (2)(b) to hear a complaint against Superintendent Aaron Miller from a parent after Miller denied a request to allow a student to transfer to another school district, the Board voted 3-1 to uphold Miller’s decision. Because there were only four Board members present for the meeting and the vote was not unanimous, there was no majority, and the Superintendent’s decision stands.

Board Approves Resignations, Retirements, and New Hires – The Board accepted the retirements of Val DeWitt, Nga Frederiksen, and Linda Hobart, and accepted the resignations of Katherine Brown, Paula Dorry, Cassandra Hylton, Doran Lower, and Deb Stahlnecker. The Board accepted the hiring of new instructors, including: Rachel Brown – MS Social Studies, Kirk Ebberts – MS/

HS welding (part-time), Claire Youngberg – VES kindergarten, Jordan Fink – VES 1st grade, Kiara Single – VES 1st grade, Dancia Sammons – VES 4th or 5th grade, Lisa Spiesschaert – MS Special Education.

Project Based Learning Class Awards Grants – Anika Suppes and Lanaya Clapshaw from Vernonia High School’s Project Based Learning class presented \$5,000 in grants to local organizations.

The grant funding comes through the Oregon Community Foundation as part of their Community 101 program.



Anika Suppes and Lanaya Clapshaw presenting a check from the Project Based Learning Community 101 class to Stacey Adams of the Vernonia Education Foundation.

The Project Based Learning classes are taught by Jim Krahn and offers students the opportunity to learn by investigating real world issues and finding solutions through the development of group projects.

This year’s grant award recipients were:

- Vernonia Education Foundation,

\$2,050 – for the Sports Initiative to fund the clay target team, statistics recording, and decorations for the girl’s locker room.

- Vernonia Cares Food Bank, \$1,500 – for emergency groceries for low income families in need.
- Vernonia High School Art Department, \$600 – for the purchase of screen printing equipment.
- Friends of Vernonia Public Library, \$450 – to add chairs to the reading area to make it more inviting.
- Vernonia Elementary School, \$400 – to Ms. Blacker’s class for a field trip that would not normally be available to those students.

Project Based Learning Survey Results Presented

– Jim Krahn, instructor for the Project Based Learning Class, presented the results of a student survey that his class created in the fall. The survey was completed by 175 students in grades 8-12 and focused on questions about college; drug, alcohol, and e-cigarette use; bullying; self esteem and body image; and school atmosphere. Krahn pointed out some concerning responses,

especially in the self esteem section of the survey, where 46.3% of students responded that they had had suicidal thoughts, and 16% of students said they had attempted suicide.

Principal Reports – Elementary Vice Principal Michelle Eagleson told the Board that VES students and families

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Vernonia Students of the Month

May 2019



Elementary School

Front Row: Kacelyn Brennan (1st), Aubrie Morrison (2nd), Kyleigh Rau (1st), Briannie Narvaez-Jimenez (K), Emma La Belle (K)
Back Row: Sylar Navarro (5th), Molly Stahlnecker (4th), Naomi Pelster (3rd), Brooklyn Clark (4th)

Zayden Rose

Grade 6

Zayden is known as a very kind, caring, and compassionate person, who goes out of her way to help others with a smile on her face. She is hard working in school, stays on task, and has a positive attitude. Her teachers say she isn’t afraid to ask questions or for help when she needs it. Zayden says her favorite subject in school is art. She likes to do art at home and also likes to work with plants.



Lanaya Clapshaw

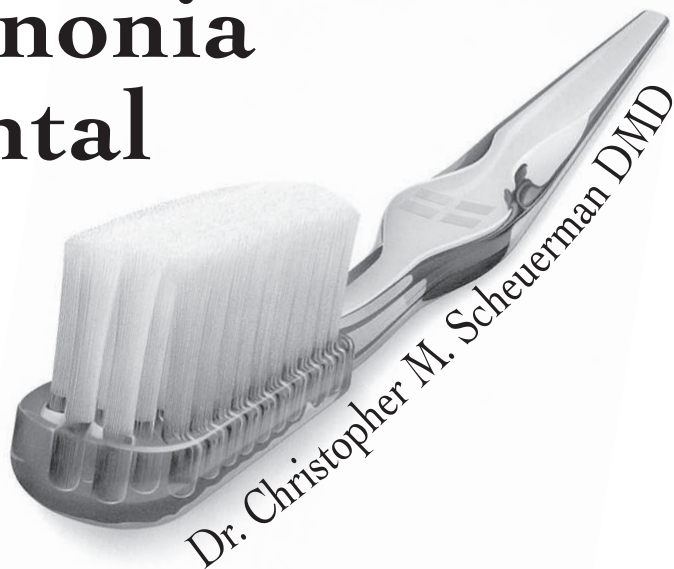
Grade 9



Lanaya was the freshman class president and was just re-elected for next year. She says her favorite class this past year was global studies with Mr. Lower. She was part of the Project Based Learning class. She was the kicker on the football team, and also part of the new trap shooting team. She is planning to start earning dual credits by attending PCC classes next year, and plans to work toward a career as an anesthesiologist in the military. In her spare time she is working at Black Iron Grill, and she likes to do crafts and make handmade cards.

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