

School Board Report

At the February 13, 2020 School Board Meeting:

Board Approves School Bus Service Contract – The Board approved the extension of the contract with Curl School Bus Service to provide student transport for the District. The new contract extends the current contract until June 2024.

Board Approves Budget Committee Calendar – Business Manager Marie Knight presented the Board with the 2020-21 Budget Calendar, which was approved. Budget Committee meetings will be held April 30 and May 14, with the budget scheduled to be approved at the June 11 School Board meeting. There are currently several open spots on the Budget Committee – contact the District Office if interested in serving.

Northwest Regional ESD Annual Report – Superintendent Aaron Miller presented the Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRES D) Annual Report, which explains the services the NWRES D provides to the VSD, which include: early intervention; special education and special student services; instructional and educational option services; technology, business, and administrative services. The Board voted to approve the 2020-21 NWRES D Local Service Plan, which allocates \$207,595 in service credits which the District can use to access services during the next school year.

Surplus Equipment – The Board approved the following items as surplus equipment: two CookTek MC 1800 Countertop Commercial Burners, a

Hoyer Lift.

School Board Recognized – Superintendent Aaron Miller recognized the School Board and thanked them for their continued work on behalf of the District and the community.

Superintendent Report – Superintendent Aaron Miller told the Board the installation of LED lights in District buildings has produced a decrease in electricity usage. While the Mist School building has not seen a decrease due to the doubling of the number of students attending class there, the Vernonia building has seen decreased usage of between 10% and 20% during several months.

Miller told the Board that Friday, March 13 will be a Snow Make Up Day, making up for a missed day on January 14.

Miller reported that enrollment is holding steady at 570.

Bond Update – Superintendent Aaron Miller reported that students are attending classes in the new Metal Shop building. He reported new security cameras are being installed. Miller said five construction companies took part in a walk through for bids for the new art classroom; bids were due February 17.

Student Success Act, Student Investment Account Update – Superintendent Aaron Miller told the Board the Community Engagement Committee will be working with staff from the NWRES D to review input and draft the application to access Student Success Act funds through the Student Investment Account.

Principal Reports – Elementary Prin-

icipal Michelle Eagleson reported attendance for the month of January for VES was 94%. On January 31 the VES K-2 students attended the play “Dragons Love Tacos” at the Newmark Theater and had a great time!

Eagleson reported that VES instructors are working on reading interventions to determine student progress; analyzed winter benchmark data, set student growth goals in reading and math and agreed to utilize specific instructional and behavioral strategies for consistency; worked with a professional development coach on CORE reading and small group instruction; worked with a Rural Network Coach to strengthen reading instruction.

High School/Middle School Principal Nate Underwood told the Board that 90% of 9th grade students are on track to graduate and said success can be attributed to a new Academic Success class, graduation coaches, phone calls to home to discuss issues, and other staff efforts.

Social-Emotional Learning Program – Superintendent Aaron Miller introduced Jamie Hamsa who is working in the Vernonia, Clatskanie, and Rainier Districts. Hamsa explained her role in the Vernonia District two days a week and talked about her background in mental and behavior health.

Opportunity Room II Report – Justin Ward is in a new role supervising the Opportunity Room for middle and high school students. Ward explained the process for students who are struggling in the classroom, noting that the

room is used not just for students with behavior issues, but also for students to get extra help when needed. Ward tracks students’ attendance, looks for behavior patterns, works with students on making good decisions – both in the classroom and outside of it, and contacts parents when needed. Ward said the strategies seem to be having a positive impact.

School Resource Officer Report – Officer Abbie Hanson updated the Board on her activities, including attending school functions and events, her work to promote attendance and address truancy, her follow-ups on DHS reports the school receives, her work investigating criminal reports, several requests for ride-alongs from students, and her work on mental health issues and run-aways. She also announced that a SKID event (Stop Kids Impaired Driving) will be held April 14.

Front Door Lock System – Superintendent Aaron Miller asked for input on the idea of having a front door security lock system installed. The Board had an in-depth discussion about the merits or drawbacks to the idea, and made no decision.

Student Reports – Kale Sullivan and Lyness Ota, representing the Leadership Class, thanked the Board for their service to the District and their support for students, and updated them on the recent activities around the middle and high schools.

The Next School Board Meeting – March 12 at 6:00 pm in the School Library.

Vernonia School Board Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 12 at 6:00 pm in the Schools Library.

Western States Widely Support Refugee Resettlement

The president’s executive order meant to limit resettlement, but the West is opting for more

By Jessica Kutz
High Country News

Last September, President Donald Trump undercut the country’s refugee resettlement program in two ways: He announced that the 2020 resettlement numbers would be capped to 18,000 refugees, a huge cut from 110,000 in fiscal year 2017. More surprising, though, was his executive order requiring states and localities to agree to refugee resettlement in their municipalities. The move was unprecedented, and many advocates saw it as proof of an increasingly nativist administration.

Local governments had 90 days — or until January 21 — to agree to resettlement in writing. In a hasty response, many governors and local officials rushed to write approvals in their jurisdictions through a flurry of county declarations. Texas was the only state to formally decline refugee resettlement; several others simply did not issue letters of consent. By mid-January, a federal judge ruled the order had been unlawful to begin with. But as of this writing, the ordeal would not be over yet: On

February 11 the government appealed the judge’s ruling in federal court. Meanwhile, counties in non-Western states like Maine and Minnesota continued to make symbolic “no” votes, stirring anxiety among refugee populations.

Yet in the Western United States, the executive order led to an almost unanimous consensus that refugee resettlement was, in fact, welcome. Governors — Republicans and Democrats alike — came out in enthusiastic bipartisan support. Wyoming was the exception: the state is the only in the country that does not participate in resettlement. (In 2013 former Governor Matt Mead, a Republican, received local backlash after he attempted to start a program in the state, effectively halting the effort.)

Trump’s executive order seemed to backfire across much of the West. Given the opportunity, most officials said the program wasn’t a burden, but rather, a boon — a sign of the resilience of both the cities and rural towns that shape the region.

Refugee resettlement has a long history in the United States. The first legislation was passed in 1948, after more than 250,000 people came to the U.S. in the aftermath of World War II.

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Vernonia Students of the Month

January 2020

Elementary School



Jordynn Ellis (5th), Hunter Shirley (1st), Sarah Pelster (2nd), Naomi Pike (5th), Bella Granucci (3rd), Naomi Pelster (4th), Lucas McWhirter (1st), Maddie Vance (K), Rowan Wegener (K)

Middle School

These students were selected for showing EMPATHY this month.
Celia DeField - 6th grade
Jesse White - 8th grade
Zayden Rose - 7th grade



Whitley Tolonen Grade 12

Whitley is involved in AVID, National Honor Society, and keeps stats for the school basketball and baseball programs. Her favorite subject is English and she says she is unsure about her plans after graduation.

Sponsored by Senator Betsy Johnson