

## School board hears update on proposed public charter school

Karen Heikes, of Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRESA), gave the Vernonia School Board an update, at their June 12 meeting, on the development of charter schools in Columbia County. Heikes is working with Superintendent Mike Funderburg and Vernonia City Administrator

Mike Sykes to develop a charter school proposal that will be presented to the board in August. Locally, the focus is on a charter school that would expand alternative school and professional technical education. Approval of the proposal in August will allow the district to apply for a \$150,000 imple-

mentation grant in October. According to Heikes, receipt of the grant would keep the project moving toward a goal of opening the school in September of 2004. Heikes told the board that the grant money could be used for many things, though not for salaries, rental or purchase of space. According to

Funderburg, the district is in a unique situation because, working in conjunction with the city, development of the city's learning center and the district's charter school will meet the needs of both, in one facility.

The district is beginning a new program to build a more positive student climate at the high school, Funderburg told the board, by contracting with Performance Dynamics, a professional leadership and mentoring company, to facilitate student and teacher training. The program will help participants gain the skills needed to set achievable goals, facilitate meetings, communicate and/or function more effectively with others. Teachers have nominated more than 100 students to participate in Leadership Academy, which is limited to 60 student participants. As of June 16, only 30 students had completed the short application. Students are encouraged to complete applications and return them to the school district office as soon as possible. District staff will be introduced to the program's concepts during August in-service.

Funderburg reported on his investigation regarding the title to property in the Birkenfeld area, supposedly belonging to the district. Funderburg said the district has a lease on the property, dated in 1898, but that Longview Fibre has an unrecorded deed from 1951. It is completely surrounded by Longview Fibre-owned property and, according to school board member Randy Hansen, who is a Longview Fibre employee, has been planted. The board agreed with Funderburg's recommendation that the district accept Longview Fibre's offer of \$1500 to establish clear title to the land.

Next year's high school seniors will still be required to submit senior projects, with some modifications for increased flexibility. Funderburg told the board that a new policy is being developed that may allow a senior project to be changed into a career project, not linked to senior English.

The resignations of several employees were accepted, including Elementary Principal Kirk Sherrill, music teacher Bob

Isted, Jan Bernardi and Barbara Rainbolt.

The board discussed Isted's resignation, which it accepted with reluctance. Patron Jim King told the board that his children had benefited greatly from Isted's teaching in band and chorus, and as coach of the high school's winning Quiz Bowl team.

Sherrill has accepted a position as principal at the Charles F. Tigard Elementary School, a K-5 school with a student body of about 600. He received board recognition for five years of service to the district. Sherrill said that the last five years had been the "best of his life" and that he loved coming to work every day.

Bernardi and Rainbolt resigned at this time because of the PERS situation.

The board adopted a policy to handle the retirement of staff members, as well as regulations pertaining to employees who retire, begin receiving PERS benefits and seek continued employment with the district. An employee who retires during a school year may continue in their current position, subject to criteria set out in the regulations. In an effort to recognize the value of experience, licensed employees will receive the equivalent of the total compensation package of a first year teacher. Classified employees will be compensated at the step and level at which they retired.

The board approved the district's recommendation for textbook adoption. All textbooks on the adoption list have been reviewed extensively over the last year, according to Robyn Cochran. The total cost for new math texts, kindergarten through grade 12, will be \$39,396.

At the close of the meeting, outgoing board member Carla Strand was recognized for ten years of service. Strand thanked her family for their support throughout those years. She said that, when she began, she had no idea of the time commitment necessary, the amount of work involved, or that the public would not always accept board decisions. She also said that the public, staff and administration have a great board to work with in the future.

# Better Rate. Better Bank. Better Hurry.

## 5.99% APR\*

U.S. Bank Home Equity Loan  
Fixed Rate for 20 Years!

### A rate this low won't last long!

There's never been a better time to open a U.S. Bank Home Equity Loan. And right now, you can also get an incredible rate of just 5.99% APR. That's not an introductory rate—it's a fixed rate for 20 years!

Use your U.S. Bank Home Equity Loan for debt consolidation, remodeling, that dream vacation...whatever! Plus, the



interest you pay may even be tax deductible. And remember, U.S. Bank has financial solutions for absolutely everyone, even if you have less than perfect credit. The U.S. Bank Home Equity Loan. Better rate...better bank...better hurry!

For more information or to apply, stop by any U.S. Bank branch, call 1-888-444-BANK (ext. 4100) or visit [usbank.com](http://usbank.com).



Pam Walther  
Manager  
Banks Branch

**Great time to  
refinance with  
no closing costs!**

**usbank.**  
Five Star Service Guaranteed

[usbank.com](http://usbank.com)

\*5.99% fixed APR available for terms up to 20 years on home equity loans with a U.S. Bank checking account with ACH and loan-to-value (LTV) of 80% or less. Higher rates apply for higher LTVs. Minimum loan amount or increase of \$10,000 required. Consult your tax advisor regarding deductibility of interest. Installment loan payment example: On a \$10,000, 20 year loan at 5.99% APR, monthly payments would be \$71.59. Rates subject to change. Offer is subject to normal credit qualifications. Some additional restrictions may apply. Not available with other discounts. Home equity loans are offered through U.S. Bank National Association ND. Member FDIC.