

Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk is a monthly column of information about Vernonia schools. It is written by various staff members.

By Mike Funderburg, Superintendent
Vernonia Administrative School District 47J

The Vernonia School District is joining the other 198 Oregon school districts in celebrating January as "School Board Recognition Month." During the past year and a half, I have had the pleasure of working for and with the following individuals while they were on the board: Carla Strand, Jim Krahn, Randy Hansen, Darrell Hamblet, Cari Levenseller, Tim Titus, Leslie O'Leary, Ed Buckner, Gienah Cheney, and Phil Doyle.

These men and women volunteer countless hours of unpaid time not only providing the best possible education for all our students, but also serving as the corporate board of directors for one of our community's largest employers. As your elected officials, they represent you in their continuing commitment to the community and decision-making for our public schools. Too often the efforts of the school board members go unrecognized, unappreciated, and unrewarded. Sometimes, they are unfairly criticized for doing the best job they can do to make our schools safe for the students.

The key work of our school board is to support student achievement by:

- Creating the vision and guiding principles for what we want our school district to become and how we will focus on student achievement;
- Establishing standards for what we want our students to learn and be able to do;
- Ensuring assessment occurs to determine if we are reaching those standards;
- Being accountable for the outcomes of decisions and actions;
- Adopting an operating budget that reflects how the district's human and financial resources should be used;

Managing stress in the family is possible

What is stress? It's your body's reaction to a challenge or threat. Stress can make your heart beat faster and your muscles tense.

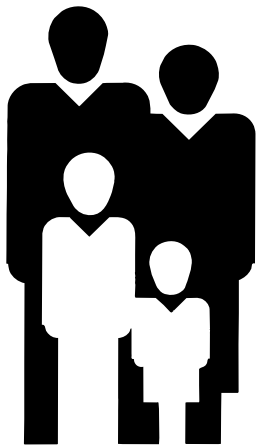
Stress can be helpful, it gives you the energy to meet life's challenges – from job interviews to personal tragedy. But stress can be harmful, too. Your body isn't meant to run in high gear all the time. Too much stress can wear you down, physically and emotionally.

Why learn about stress? Because parenting can be a stressful job. Stress is built in to family life. The demands of career, children and personal needs are often at odds. Change – which all families experience – is a big source of stress.

Learning to handle stress is vital. It's important to your family's health and happiness. Fortunately, there's a lot you can do to keep stress under control.

Some causes of stress in the family are common to many households:

- Poor understanding of children. Many parents see children as small adults, and expect them to act that way. When children don't, parents may feel frustrated and angry.
- Lack of support. Parenting takes time and energy. Parents may have trouble meeting children's needs and their own.



➤ Creating a safe and orderly climate where students can learn and teachers can teach;

➤ Forming collaborative relationships and sub-committees to solve problems and support successes; and

➤ Focusing on continuous improvement by questioning, examining, revising, refining, and revisiting issues and policies.

Even though we are making a special effort during January to show appreciation for school board members, we recognize that they, and all the volunteers in our district, contribute year-round to our students, staff, and schools. Frankly, with all the budget cuts and loss of revenue from the state, we could not accomplish our goals without the many volunteer hours donated by the community and school board members. It is a shame when some individuals or the media attempt to create controversy and sensationalism when they do not agree with a decision or have all the information. Part of what makes America great has been our sense of volunteerism and "Good Samaritan" attitude. The recent winter storm is an excellent example of how people stopped to help others. I truly hope people continue to volunteer without fear of undue criticism. You can choose to be part of the solution or part of the problem. We are thankful for our board members and most of the community members that choose to be part of the solution. Thank you.

Our board works together extremely well and operates through sub-committee and/or board consensus. Very few decisions are made in a vacuum. They are dedicated individuals who are committed to improving student achievement and to fighting for the best for all our students.

Without support from family, friends and the community, many parents become worn out.

• The myth of the "Perfect Family". Some parents judge their family against an imaginary "perfect family." The pressure to live up to this ideal leads to stress.

• Low self-esteem. Many parents are unsure of their parenting skills. They have trouble taking the ups and downs of family life in stride. Each frustration is seen as a personal failure.

• Other sources of family stress. Everyday problems – involving work, illness or money – can also build up and affect the family.

It's possible to learn how to manage the stresses of parenting. For more information, contact Columbia Community Mental Health at 503-429-1053.

Not too late for PCC classes

It's not too late to register for winter term at Portland Community College.

The college has extended registration hours after four consecutive days of closure last week due to a storm that dumped heavy snow and ice in the district. PCC is extending the period of open registration for its students through Friday, Jan. 16. The college is also extending business office hours, as well as bookstore, college facilities and operations to enable students to conduct business with PCC.

Students may register in person at any campus, by phone, 503-977-4933, or TTY at 503-977-4939, or on the Web (www.pcc.edu) for classes as long as space is available and there are no other restrictions on entry to the class.

Dance Jan. 24 at Grange Hall



Join the fun at a Saturday night dance at the Vernonia Grange Hall, January 24.

If you're learning how to dance or just want to brush up, lessons in ballroom-type dancing will start at 7:00 p.m., with the dance following the lessons. The cost will be \$2.00 per person for the evening.

There will be also be a "Sweethearts Ball" at the Grange on February 14.

The Grange hall is located at the corner of North Street and Washington Avenue.

FREE Credit Score Enhancement Seminars

Mon. January 26

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Vernonia Scout Cabin
Hawkins park (Park Drive)

*Your credit score affects you in many areas:
Insurance Premiums, Employment,
Loan Requests and much more!*

Get answers to:

- What is a credit score?
- How do I read a credit report?
- What affects the score?
- What hurts my score?
- What can I do to improve my score?

The seminar is FREE. However, seating is limited. Choose the date of your choice and reserve your place today!



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