



2004 VERNONIA JAMBOREE SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT



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Board agrees that trees on playground are a liability and should be removed

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ture. "The liability far exceeds the esthetics" of these trees and they should be removed, according to Funderburg, and the board agreed. Jones said he hoped the board would consider setting aside any revenue from the removal of trees to purchase landscaping or for natural resource programs for students.

Following the hearing, the board convened their regular meeting and voted to accept the findings, which will allow the district to serve as its own contractor. The primary advantage is savings in cost and a shortened timeline compared to the usual bid process. The county will determine the elevation of the building in relation to the flood plain, and other permit issues. The board also approved the recommendation of Willamette ESD to contract services with Terra Architecture PC.

Report on AYP

Funderburg reviewed several pages of information on the results of schools progress under the No Child Left Behind Act, the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) rating and state assessment results. A table of statewide results for all schools in Columbia County shows that in Vernonia, Clatskanie and Scappoose all elementary schools met AYP standards, as did Scappoose Middle School. None of the high schools in the county met the standard.

The results across the state were equally disheartening, with more than 70 percent of high schools failing to meet AYP. However, Funderburg said, the picture for small schools is brighter. While only two percent of 4A schools met AYP, 18 percent of 3A schools, and 27 percent of 1A and 2A high schools were successful in meeting AYP goals. Small schools are clearly doing a better job, Funderburg said, and there is no reason that Vernonia cannot be in this group.

Further details of AYP in Vernonia show an across-the-board failure to meet the needs of special education students. Funderburg said the district has made structural changes in

special education and will be changing directions. Additionally, a new director, from Northwest Regional ESD, has been hired to work with both Vernonia and Scappoose.

State test results

State testing results were also briefly discussed. Funderburg praised the work of Judy Gingerich, whose third grade class exceeded the statewide average in both reading/literature and mathematics.

There was very little change in the percentage of third graders meeting the state standard in reading and literature (R&L) between 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, but the percentage of students successfully meeting the standard in mathematics declined by seven percent. Declines in success at the fifth and eighth grade were even more dramatic: five percent fewer in R&L and seven percent less in math at the third grade; 17 percent fewer in R&L and 12 percent in math at the fifth grade level.

There was improvement at the tenth grade level, however, by eight percent in R&L and six percent in math. Mist is not evaluated because of the small numbers of students at each grade level. In his written report to the board Funderburg said, "Improvement is not happening, pride is missing, and expectations are too low. A fifth grader only has one time to be a fifth grader."

Handbooks

The board approved new handbooks for students and staff and, in a letter at the beginning of the book, Funderburg said that the handbook should serve as a first resource for information. The board uses the vision statement and guiding principles to focus decision-making and "there will be consequences" for anyone who makes a decision to limit access to a free and appropriate education.

"I know that our district can meet every student's needs if we focus on the three "R's": Rigor, Relevance and Relationships," he said. "Instruction must be challenging, it must re-

late to the real world, and there must be a positive relationship between the teacher, student and parent!"

Changed promotion standards

A notable change this year serves as an example of efforts to raise standards. Students must achieve a passing grade in language arts and mathematics, beginning in the sixth grade, in order to advance to the next grade level. Sixth and seventh grade students who fail in these subjects will be required to make up courses through the regular school program or in summer school. Failures in the eighth grade will result in the student remaining in the junior high, unless the student attends and passes the necessary language arts or mathematics course during summer school or in a remediation program approved by a principal.

Miscellaneous

In other business the board:

- Accepted the resignation of Patty Dickens-Turk.

- Hired Andrew Scherrer as middle school counselor, Kim Morrison as art teacher and Charlie Price as Title I reading teacher.

- Extra duty contracts were awarded to Lorrie Webb as high school activities director, Jessica Streeter as yearbook advisor, Aaron Pierce as junior high head volleyball coach, Scherrer as assistant football coach at the junior high and Price as assistant high school volleyball coach.

- Approved School Improvement Plans for both WGS and Vernonia High School.

- Heard that all of the wooden play equipment at WGS was quite rotten and was removed for safety reasons. The small slide from LGS was moved to WGS.

- Decided that Funderburg and board chair Jim Krahn would work together to set goals for the superintendent.

- Accepted a revised organizational chart reflecting the closure of Lincoln and redistribution of administrative tasks.