



The new temporary modular buildings are being put in place behind Washington Grade School as weather allows. This picture was taken on January 15 after snow fell overnight.

Come to 47J Town Hall tonight

The Vernonia School Board meeting of January 10 started with an announcement that there will be another board meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 17, probably at the Vernonia Community Church, that will be more of a Town Hall type meeting for the community to talk about the future of the schools.

School principals told the board that school attendance this week had been 75 percent for the high school, 81 percent for the middle school and 80 percent for grade school students.

Washington Grade School (WGS) has been reviewed by a structural engineering firm, Nishkian Dean. Nishkian Dean stated in the report that they reviewed Washington Grade School in 2002 and found numerous structural deficiencies and prepared a rather lengthy list of recommendations for maintenance, repairs and reinforcement of the structure. The report goes on to say that, to date, none of the recommendations have been accomplished. The Nishkian Dean report also said that continued use of WGS represents a hazard during periods of major wind storms or earthquake events.

WGS Air quality tests all came back acceptable. The carpets on the first floor have been cleaned with enzymes, as flood mud got tracked into the building during the town hall meetings.

A final inspection of WGS is expected to occur on January 17 by Vernonia's building department and it is anticipated that the grade school can then be made ready for students to return by January 22, though

the basement will not be in use.

The modular units are projected to be ready for occupancy by January 28 or 29. Superintendent Ken Cox proposed that January 28 be a teacher work day and said he would have school psychologists do training with all staff that day on how to cope with tragedies.

Cox put forth a plan to move staff development from Friday afternoons to Wednesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. After discussion with board, and input from audience, Cox decided not to make any change right now.

The board gave unanimous approval (with board member Ernie Smith absent) to begin negotiating with Curl's School Bus Service for a contract to start with the 2008-09 school year. Curl's bid was about \$70,000 higher than another

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Chalk Talk

Chalk Talk topics are presented by Vernonia School District. This column was written by Superintendent Kenneth Cox, PhD.

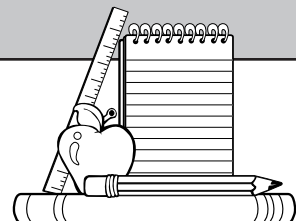
Do you have any questions about what is happening with our schools? Are you concerned about the future of our schools? Would you like to have an opportunity to help guide the future of our schools? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, then we need your help.

First, I would like to remind you that there is an opening on our school board. The Board is accepting applications at the district office through the end of January. If you want first hand access to all the information I have, become a board member. The Board normally meets once a month, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. In addition, there are a number of conference and training opportunities that board members can take advantage of. In many ways it can be a thankless job, but there is satisfaction in being part of something and influencing the future direction of the District.

Because January is School Board Recognition Month, I would like to express my appreciation to each of our existing board members for their many hours of service to our children. Our board members are a sounding board to the community for me as a superintendent. They are available for your questions and your in-

put and I am sure that they would appreciate hearing positive comments as well as complaints. I would like to point out here, that it is okay to talk about a concern you have with a board member, however they cannot directly address that concern, and you most likely will be directed to the appropriate staff member (teacher, principal, superintendent) who can address a remedy. And I will once again say, please feel free to contact me via email, phone, or stop by if you have concerns. I will take the time to listen to you and do what I can to address your needs.

Second, we have a special board meeting this evening, January 17 at 6:00 p.m., at the Vernonia Community Church to gather your input into the future of our schools. We will be presenting information as to what we have done so far, discussing the status of school repairs, answering your questions about what we are doing and why. In addition, we will be seeking your input and ideas into what you would like to see in our schools in the future. The meeting will last from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Please come and share your ideas with us.



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