



The Lion's Roar

Vernon Independent School District Newsletter

February 2009

DISTRICT NEWS

Family Learning Event

The Family Learning Event is scheduled for Thursday, March 12th at the Wilbarger Auditorium Forum Room and foyer area beginning at 5:30 p.m. continuing until 7:30 p.m. Parents and guardians are invited to bring the children to participate in learning stations provided by Vernon ISD teachers and staff. Experience the newest technology used in school and have fun with science, math, language arts, social studies and electives. Several community agencies will have information available that night. Spring is a very busy time for families in Vernon, but we hope that you will take some time to share the evening with us! If you have attended past events, you know what a fun time we have. If you have not attended, please take this opportunity to learn with your student and have a fun time doing it. A light snack will be provided and some of the stations will have prizes. We hope to see you at the Forum Room on Thursday, March 12, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

School Board Recognition

January was school board recognition month.

The Vernon community is currently represented by the following VISD Trustees: John Hardin III, President; Kevin Young, Vice-President; Bob Cochran, Secretary; Dan Buesing; Jeff Hass; Judy Pattison; and Kay Wall.

Board members today face the daunting task of maintaining local control of the local educational process in a time when schools are increasing receiving national and state mandates. The board does an excellent job of keeping focused on the needs of the district's students and being wise stewards of the funds provided by local taxpayers.

The only compensation that the members receive is the thanks that we give them and the satisfaction that

they are doing their part to help prepare our students for success. If you see these members out in the community please remember to thank them for their service.

VERNON ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Pictured front row, left to right: Kay Wall, John Hardin III, Judy Pattison; Pictured back row, left to right: Jeff Hass, Kevin Young, Bob Cochran; Not pictured: Dan Buesing

Creating a New Vision for Public Education in Texas

For almost two years a group of Texas superintendents met to discuss the current state of public education and to examine what the future of Texas education should be. The result of this work is a report titled *Creating a New Vision for Public Education*. This report is not specific programs but a set of ideas that should be the center of discussions as we look at future reforms.

Why a New Direction and Why Now

Every parent has a dream that their children will be happy and successful. Our communities and the schools that serve them should equally share in that dream and have a plan for making that dream a reality. Preparing students for success in the

workforce is secondary to preparing children for success in life. The core business of schools is to provide engaging, appropriate experiences for students so that they learn and are able to apply their knowledge in ways that will enrich their lives and ensure their well-being. Unfortunately, the present bureaucratic structure has taken away that focus and replaced it with a system based on compliance, coercion, and fear. If proper focus is to be restored, the system must be transformed into one based on trust, shared values, creativity, innovation, and respect.

The report identifies the following principles that need to be included in future reforms

Article I: The New Digital Learning Environment

Digitization and miniaturization of information processing power are expanding exponentially and are changing the world, our lives, and our communities at an overwhelming speed. To be viable, schools must adapt to this new environment. We must embrace and seize technology's potential to capture the hearts and minds of this, the first digital generation, so that the work designed for them is more engaging and respects their superior talents with digital devices and connections.

Article II: The New Learning Standards

The new digital environment demands new learning standards for students so that they will have the values and the capabilities to live, learn, and earn in a free society surrounded by a world that is truly global, connected, and increasingly competitive in scope and character.

Article III: Assessments for Learning

Appropriate and varied types of assessments are essential for informing students about their level of success in ways that affirm and stimulate their efforts and for informing their teachers so that more customized learning experiences may be provided in a timely way. Well-conceived and well-designed assessments should also be used to reveal to parents, the school, the district, and society at large the extent to which the desired learning is occurring and what schools are doing to continuously improve.

Article IV: Accountability for Learning

Comprehensive accountability systems are essential to achieving minimal personal and organizational performance only. They are necessary for weeding out the incompetent and reconstituting unproductive schools, but such systems serve to create compliance and mediocrity at best. Excellence and sustained exceptional performance come from a commitment to shared values and a clear vision that encourages collaboration and teamwork. Creating organizations that foster commitment requires superior moral leadership and a responsible use of authority.

Article V: Organizational Transformation

The digital revolution and its accompanying social transformations and expectations dictate a transformation of schools from their current bureaucratic form and structure that reflects the nineteenth and early twentieth century factory after which they were modeled, to schools that function as learning organizations. We believe that a learning organization can create the conditions and capacities most conducive for leaders, teachers, and students to perform at high levels and meet the expectations of new learning standards.

Article VI: A More Balanced and Reinvigorated State/Local Partnership

A more balanced, reinvigorated state/local partnership can generate the public involvement and community support needed to meet the demands of new learning standards essential to the success of the 21st century learner. The present state-dominated partnership is inherently incapable of creating the type of schools that can provide the learning experiences most needed by students in our schools today. New levels of trust and reciprocal arrangements, including a return of significant authority and responsibility to local communities, are the only hope.



Vernon Middle School News

District Band Tryouts & Selection

Vernon Middle School had 23 7th and 8th graders tryout for the All-District Junior High Band held at Hirschi High School in Wichita Falls on December 6th. About 600 students tried out for a position in the band around the district. Those trying out for the band were flutes, Alexis Love, Moises Garcia, Norma Mejia, Angela Urista, Dana Bonfy, Sheila Piper, Jessica Chavez, Stephanie Garcia, Hannah Walker, Jazmine Quintero; clarinets, Macaila Morris Adriana Escobedo, Mikayla Beebe; bass clarinet, Andrew Gammon; alto saxophones, Ty Dudley, Alejandro Corona, Joey Hasseltine, Jacob Garcia; trumpets, Josh Grajiola, Colin Davis; tuba, Reynaldo Trejo; percussion, Morgan Garrard, Robbie Hinojosa. Those making the band were Dana Bonfy, Makayla Beebe, Macaila Morris, Andrew Gammon, Reynaldo Trejo, and Robbie Hinojosa. They participated in a clinic and concert at Wichita Falls High School on January 31, 2009.



Vernon Middle School Library News

Whether books are chosen as print resources for research projects, or for sheer enjoyment of reading, the following books in our Vernon Middle School Library are presently on our “**Top Ten**” list. Books are listed in order of popularity, and summaries are by Follett Destiny.

1. **The Chronicles of Narnia**, by C. S. Lewis.
Presents all seven of C.S. Lewis's "The Chronicles of Narnia" books, which are set in a fantastic world filled with mythical creatures and humans who take part in an epic battle between good and evil.

2. **Behind the attic wall**, by Sylvia Cassedy.
In the bleak, forbidding house of her great-aunts, neglected twelve-year-old orphan Maggie hears ghostly voices and finds magic that awakens in her the capacity to love and be loved.

3. **The Clique : a novel**, by Lisi Harrison.
Wealthy Massie is determined to exclude middle class Claire, the daughter of her father's old friend, from her seventh-grade clique at a very exclusive private school in Westchester, New York, but after Massie steals her only friend, Claire strikes back.

4. **Inkspell**, by Cornelia Funk.
When Dustfinger finds a crooked storyteller who can read him back to Inkscape, he leaves his apprentice Farid behind; but Farid seeks out Meggie and the two follow him back into the enchanted book.

5. **The story of Thomas Alva Edison**.
Illustrated with photos, and maps. A biography in the series, Landmark Books.

6. **The Tales of Beedle the Bard**, by J.K. Rowling.
Contains five illustrated moral tales for children from the world of Harry Potter, reportedly discovered and translated by young witch Hermione Granger, with an introduction and commentary from Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

7. **Aria, Voyage 1**, by Kay Bertrand.
In this graphic novel, Akari Mizunashi becomes accustomed to her new home in Neo-Venezia, a futuristic imitation of Venice, as she pursues a new trade and lifestyle.

8. **Caesar**, by William Shakespeare.
This is Shakespeare's play about Mark Antony, and his success at turning Roman citizens against Caesar, which plunges the nation into revolution.

9. **Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact Index**.
Several of these encyclopedias are checked out from our VMS library as print resources for assigned research projects. Includes alphabetically arranged articles in each of the volumes, and are supplemented by brief factual entries on additional topics in that volume's index.

10. **Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen**, by Dyan Sheldon.

In her first year at a suburban New Jersey high school, Mary Elizabeth Cep, who now calls herself "Lola," sets her sights on the lead in the annual

drama production, and finds herself in conflict with the most popular girl in school.

National Junior Honor Society

The National Junior Honor Society traveled to Vernon High School where members shadowed the senior members of National Honor Society. The 8th graders followed seniors to class and participated in their class activities. The seniors also gave the 8th graders a tour of Vernon High School.

NJHS members also traveled to Main Street Courtyard & Café where they practiced their skills of proper dining etiquette. Members were given lessons on etiquette and then showed off their skill at the restaurant.



NJHS members touring Vernon High School



NJHS members practicing etiquette skills



NEWS FROM VERNON HIGH SCHOOL.....

Science Club

The **Science Club will have its first meeting** on Thursday, February 12th at 7:00 p.m. in room 38 at Vernon High School. Membership applications are still being accepted; dues are \$15.00 and include the cost of a Science Club t-shirt. The program for the first meeting is Demonstration Dazzle. We will begin a t-shirt design competition this week as well. The next **Robotics meeting** will be on Thursday, February 19th at 7:00 p.m. On February 26th, the Science Club will be hosting an **Edible Car Competition** for all members.

Student Council

The “**Change to Make a Change**” project the VHS Student Council held in December was a great success. VHS students contributed enough change to purchase gifts for seven children in Vernon. Shout out to all those great givers!

Student Council has been busy working tournament concession stands, and managing nominations and elections for All-School and Class Favorites and the Valentine King and Queen. The VHS Valentine Dance will be held Friday, February 13 from 8:00 to 12:00 at the VHS Cafeteria.

VHS Student Council members are looking forward to the **State High School Student Council Convention** to be held in Arlington in March.

The Student Council is still **selling VHS “Proud to be a Lion” t-shirts**. If you are interested in buying one, you can contact Susan Kenner at 553-3377, ext. 266.

High School Library News

Many great things are going on in the VHS Library. Research is going on for many different classes, with the English teachers utilizing the *Turnitin.com* program to check research papers for original work. Room 23 is being used as a computer lab for 1st-4th periods as well as the library, which is utilized all periods.

We are into our first full year using the automated *Destiny* Library management program, and are also using the *Destiny* Textbook management program. Textbooks are checked out not only from the teacher in the classroom, but also through the library using this automated computer program.

Many new books have been added to the library collection this year so far. We have several copies of the very popular *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyers, some new graphic novels (which are also very popular), new Stephen King and Nicholas Sparks novels, the *Bluebloods* series by Melissa de la Cruz, as well as new novels in the romance, spiritual, adventure, mystery, horror, humor, and biography genres. Along with these many additions, several of the older, unused, or damaged books have been weeded out of the collection. Many new teacher-requested videos have also been added to the DVD collection.

Channel One News is up and running every school day at 9:05. The recent Presidential swearing-in and speech was presented in a special recording at 1:30 p.m. on January 20, so most VHS students had an opportunity to watch this historic event either at 11:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m., or at both times.

Homework Help is held in the VHS Library Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evening from 6:00 to 8:00 for any student in the district who wants to come in for tutoring on any subject.

District Wrestling Tournament

The Vernon Lions and Lady Lions both won District Titles at the District Wrestling Tournament on Friday, February 6th, in Lubbock. The boys and girls both crowned five champions. Wrestlers qualifying for the Regional Meet in El Paso are Megan Johnson, Rose Moore, Yareli Lora, Alyssa Goodrum, Bryana Nava, Sara Hollis, Shaina Mesa, Marissa Haynes and Jessica Kenner. The boys qualified Andrew Reyna, Daniel Escobar, Justin Thompson, Quinton Scales, Lee Moore, Dakota Holcomb, John Hodges, and Keyair Hall.

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