



The Lion's Roar

Vernon Independent School District Newsletter

January 2008

DISTRICT NEWS

Quality Counts Report

According to the 12th annual edition of Education Week Quality Counts report, Texas was ranked 13th in the nation in K-12 achievement with a score of 72.6. One indicator showed that Texas had the second highest gains in eighth grade math scores in the past year. Massachusetts was ranked first in K-12 achievement with a score of 85.2. The report also ranked Texas 12th in the nation in how well the K-12 education system prepares students for employment. The report also showed that Texas currently ranks 40th in the area of school finance spending \$7,687 per student.

While the report showed other areas of strength the report also showed areas where Texas must improve. We must continue to improve our math scores and even though the report focused on reading and math, we know that science is an area that we need to improve in. Another big challenge for Texas is to improve our graduation rate and to ensure English fluency for all of our students. Vernon ISD is a mirror of the state reports. We have seen success in several areas over the past few years, but we know we have to continue to improve in several areas.

Saluting the VISD Board of Education

I would like to take some time to give credit to our Board of Education for their conscientious public service. January is Board Recognition Month, therefore, it is appropriate to express our great appreciation for the job that these seven community members do for VISD. On Wednesday, January 16th, the Board met for its regular meeting; however, we had several of the campuses make presentations to honor the service of John Hardin III, Kevin Young, Bob Cochran, Clint Brints, Dan Buesing, Jeff Hass, and Tandy Whitehead.

These members have volunteered their time for one of the most important jobs in the country and face many challenges in the performance of their duty. Public

education is the backbone of American society, and local school boards are deeply rooted in U.S. tradition.

Local trustees sometimes tackle an often thankless job devoid of any glory. It is appropriate that we take the time to thank them for their untiring efforts. Too often we forget about the personal sacrifices that these members make routinely giving up their personal time to ensure that communities maintain local control over our public schools.

Too often the efforts of school board members go unrecognized and unrewarded. Even though January is School Board Recognition Month, anytime is an appropriate time to thank these members for their service and show our appreciation for their efforts in working together to ensure a better future for our children.



VISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Front row:

Dan Buesing, Member
John Hardin III, President
Jeff Hass, Member

Back row:

Bob Cochran, Secretary
Tandy Whitehead, Member
Clint Brints, Member
Kevin Young, Vice President

News from McCord Elementary School

Pre-Kindergarten Activities

By Pam K. Bell

Pre-Kindergarten has started the New Year off with a bang. We have learned about winter and Community Helpers. Our letters and sounds for this month are Ll, Mm, Nn, Oo, and Pp. Activities that we have or will be enjoying are making Larry Lion Pizza, Nachos with Nemo Movie Hour, cooking and eating Octopus Stew, and making our own take home books about jobs people in our community do for us.

The Pre-Kindergarten is also excited to begin our new Language Development Program using iPod Shuffles this semester. Children will be learning to use Shuffles in class and listening to songs and concept developing activities. We will be having a parent orientation, to be announced at a later date, where we will explain the uses for the Shuffles to the parents. Parents that attend the meeting and sign a contract of agreement will enable their child to participate in the Take Home a Shuffle Program. These children will be allowed to checkout and use their iPod Shuffle at home for the week then return it each Thursday to be reprogrammed and recharge for the next week. We know that there will be a lot of questions and things to work out at first, but are very excited about all the possibilities for this program.

First Grade Activities

By RaeAnn Stevens

There were a lot of exciting things happening in first grade over the course of the third six weeks. Many hours were spent perfecting our Christmas Program. The students did a wonderful job and impressed everyone that was in attendance. They also shared their beautiful voices with the staff and patrons at both the Herring Bank and the Waggoner Bank, as well as serenading the residents of Altera. We have also recently completed our middle of the year TPRI testing. Our first graders are growing more and more with every passing day and are starting to blossom into second graders!

News from Central Elementary School

Holiday Blessings

By Su McMahan

Usually, the second graders at Central Elementary have a gift exchange at their class Christmas party, but this year was different. Instead of bringing a

present for a classmate, each second grade student brought a few dollars to give toward the purchase of gifts for the residents at both the Vernon Care Center and Covenant Care Center. The second grade was able to raise over \$400.00 to purchase socks, lotion, blanket throws, and sugar-free candy. Then, each second grade class traveled to the care centers to sing Christmas carols and distribute the gifts. It was a wonderful time for everyone! Each heart was warmed with the beautiful blessing of giving to others...the true meaning of the Christmas spirit.



2nd Grade students at Central Elementary among the many gifts they purchased for the Care center residents.

Second Grade G. T. Activities

By Sueann Haseloff



**Top Row: Brendan Folk, Ethan Curtis
Bottom Row: Emily Flores, Megan Overby, Mila Milner, Tori Rejino**

The Second Grade G.T. students at Central Elementary recently finished working on researching countries and how each country celebrates Christmas. Each child created a scrapbook from their assigned country. The group of fifteen students then shared their information about other cultural traditions.

Tips for Parents

By Janice Manlove, Principal
Central Elementary

1. Talk with your child about daily events and take time to listen to what your child tells you.
2. Read aloud to her child every day and encourage your child to read to you. The more children read, both in school and outside, the more they will improve their reading ability.
3. Take your child to new and different places. Talk about what you have seen.
4. Supervise television viewing. Choose good programs and set limits.
5. Establish a regular time and place for doing homework, encourage your child's efforts, and offer praise when assignments are completed.
6. Instill self-confidence by encouraging your child to believe in his or her self-worth and abilities.
7. Encourage good health practices by making sure that your child has three nutritious meals a day, gets plenty of exercise and sleep, and has regular medical and dental check-ups.
8. Make sure that your child attends school regularly, show an interest in what is being learned at school, and let him or her know that education is important.
9. Teach your child to be a hard worker and to accept personal responsibility.
10. Be a role model for your child. Children imitate what they see their parents doing. If you read, your child will want to read.

News from Shive Elementary School

Excellence at Shive

By Lisa Sanmann

Well, half the year down and the Read Right program at Shive is proving to have another excellent year. As the year began, we started with approximately 75 students. Currently, we have graduated 8 students and have many more close to graduation.

Each graduate is honored with an Excellent Reading Certificate at Shive's weekly assembly as well as putting their handprint on the Read Right graduation wall.

It is truly amazing to see how so many of these students have not only learned how to be excellent readers, but also to have confidence in their reading.

VERNON MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

All-District Honor Band

By Dianne Koch

Ten Vernon Middle School Cat Band students competed in the Texas Music Educators Association All-District Honor Band auditions held at Hirschi High School on Saturday, December 1. Earning positions in the band were: Adriana Escobedo, 16th chair clarinet, Concert Band; Ariel Seward, 12th chair clarinet, Concert Band; Andrew Gammon, 2nd chair bass clarinet, Concert Band; Greg Wilson, 7th chair trumpet, Symphonic Band; Shelby Womack, 3rd chair, Concert Band; and Reynaldo Trejo, 4th chair tuba, Concert Band. Also competing for VMS were: Tori Hines, Rose Moore, and Sierra Shores, flute and Isaac Gallegos, trumpet. The six students making the All-District Honor Band will rehearse with and perform in concert with the All-District Band at Wichita Falls High School on Saturday, February 2, 2008.

From the Vernon Middle School Library

By Mary Castleberry, Librarian

Students in Mrs. Westover's and Mrs. Lamp's Science classes have made use of online and print resources in our Vernon Middle School Library and CATT Lab to create "Biome" brochures. Each brochure presents information about a major ecological community, and includes complete bibliographies that offer reference resources utilized in the assignment. Some of the students have proudly displayed the "Biome Brochures" in our VMS Library.

An Outstanding Book Review by sixth grade student Anthony Pennartz, was recently shown over the school-wide media system maintained in our VMS Library. Anthony is a student of Denise Pippin, and his book selection, *The Texas Cowboy, the Story of Thomas Bugbee*, by Rita Kerr, was presented in DVD format. Along with the retelling of the story, Anthony included fantastic sound effects, pictures of frontier and pioneer life in Texas, familiar faces that represent characters in the story, and scrolling credits to all who helped create the book review. What a great way to promote reading!

Students of Mrs. Kenner completed their "Grow!" commercials, presentations and skits that inform the VMS learning community about Vernon Middle School's 2008 yearbook sale. The "Grow!" DVD is shown via the media system following our Channel One program each day in the library.

Junior Library Guild, a source of exceptional books to build our VMS library collection, features four of the latest copyrighted books by reliable authors each month. Be sure to visit the Vernon Middle School Library and see what is new!

Vernon High School News

A Wal-Mart Christmas

By Sarah Lehman

The Life Skills class took a field trip to Wal-Mart to do some of their Christmas shopping. The students liked having a part in choosing holiday crafts and fun gifts for themselves. They also enjoyed escaping the hustle and bustle of the everyday school routine.

Spring UIL Academic Contests

By Brenda Beebe

Vernon High School will be participating in the spring UIL academic contests in various different towns this year. Vernon will be hosting the district CX debate contest, February 7 at the Calvary Baptist Church. Iowa Park will be hosting the academic contest March 25th and 26th, and Graham will be hosting the One Act Play contest March 28th.

Schools participating in the district contests will be Vernon, Iowa Park, Graham, Burkburnett and Wichita Falls Hirschi

One Act Play Festival

By Brenda Beebe

VHS theatre department will be hosting their annual one act play festival March 17-18 in the high school music building and VHS cafeteria. Guest clinicians will be Kelly Russell from Texas A & M Corpus Christie, and Dr. Scott Allen from Spring ISD. Schools participating in the festival include: Vernon, Iowa Park, Electra, Friona, Munday, Holliday, and Lindsey. Shows begin at 8:00 a.m. each day, and are open to the public to come and watch.

From the VHS Library

By Donna Prince, Librarian

The VHS Library is in the process of changing automation systems. The collection is migrating from Athena to Destiny for library management software.

Library aides are keeping busy with labeling, making deliveries, carrying out weeded items from the library, and many other odd jobs. They also handle many circulation tasks like checking in,

checking out, and renewing books and equipment. This year's senior students serving as library aides for one period each day are: Annaliese Jolly, Nayeli Salvador, Alberto Camacho, Juana Saldana, Mallory Dennis, Tyler Methvin, Matt Walser, Darien Williams, Aaron Weitner, Lindsey Hall, Jordan Walker, Karina Esparza, Emily Wright, and Kaylee Rogers.

A few of the many recent additions to the VHS Library collection are:

Notorious Lives - 3 volume set of biographies featuring 600 "Bad Apples." The bad guys are **very** interesting! Recent publication (2007), so it includes many people (still living) that we have read about their notoriety as it was happening.

The Riverside Dictionary of Biography A comprehensive reference covering 10,000 of the world's most important people, from ancient times to the present day.

Hamlet The first edition of the play based entirely on the Second Quarto of 1604, providing a text as close as possible to the play Shakespeare wrote.

Shakespeare A Literary Reference to His Life and Work, Volume II by Charles Boyce.

Personality Disorders by Linda N. Bayer provides information about the history, causes and effects, and treatment and therapies for a variety of personality disorders.

Mentor: The Kid & the CEO by Tom Pace. The kid is in trouble, the CEO mentors him, and he goes from irresponsible and immature to successful and significant. Based on actual events, this is a "simple story of overcoming challenges and achieving significance."

Ultimate Collection: World War II Set of 5 DVDs produced by A&E Entertainment for The History Channel.

Knights of the Hill Country by Tim Tharp

Firestorm by David Klass

Monkey Town: The Summer of the Scopes Trial by Ronald Kidd

Dragon's Keep by Janet Lee Carey

Ethan, Suspended by Pamela Ehrenberg

Some new Junior Library Guild selections:

Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

A Swift Pure Cry by Siobhan Dowd

Knife Edge by Malorie Blackman

Useful Fools by C. A. Schmidt
The Rules for Hearts by Sara Ryan

Reminder:

The VHS Library is open to all VISD students for Homework Help sessions Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

More District News

Spring 2008 State Testing

By Marilyn Leasure, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Spring 2008 state testing begins with field testing this month. VISD has been selected to participate in field tests at various grades. The following table gives information on which students will test.

Campus	Shive	Vernon High School		North Texas State Hospital	
Grade Level	4	9	11	9	10
Subject	Writing	Reading	English language arts	Reading	English language arts

Students will test on the dates scheduled by the campus. No results will be returned to the district, but Texas will use the results for future testing decisions.

Due to the presidential primary election day falling on Tuesday, March 4, the state tests scheduled for this date have been moved so that no state testing will take place on that day. Some campuses in Texas districts are election sites and the people coming to cast ballots may cause distractions or pose security problems on a state test day. The new schedule is as follows:

Subject	Reading	English Language Arts	Writing
Date	March 5	March 5	March 5
Grade Levels	3, 5, 8, 9	10, 11	4, 7

Subject	Social Studies	English Language Arts	Math	Science
Date	March 3	March 5	March 6	March 7
Grade Level	EXIT Retest	EXIT Retest	EXIT Retest	EXIT Retest