



The Lion's Roar

Vernon Independent School District Newsletter

November 2008

DISTRICT NEWS

Family PLUS Parenting Workshop & Health Presentation

PARENT MEETING

Monday, January 26th

6:00 pm – Vernon High School

Topic: Health & Human Sexuality

ON CAMPUS/STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday, January 27th

all day – Vernon High School Little Theater

Topic: Health & Human Sexuality

For more information please contact:

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Public Education, Time for Change

All parents have a desire for their children to be successful and happy. We hope and dream that they will make the right decisions and that they will grow into responsible citizens with success in their chosen jobs or professions. As a community and school district we share this vision for our children. Most of the focus on education today is on preparing students for success in the workforce. Unfortunately it is a system driven by compliance and testing. We are losing the ability to educate students in an environment that values creativity and innovation. In every classroom throughout the course of the year there are teaching moments that occur. These may or may not be related to the daily lesson or to the curriculum that the state prescribes. The current system of one test or assessment driving the curriculum and instruction has failed to create a system that inspires learning.

Throughout the presidential election the focus by both parties was on change. As we prepare for our state legislature to meet in Austin there has also been discussions on bringing about change to the educational system. As you may recall during the last session the state decided to eliminate the TAKS tests for grades 9-12 and replace them with end of course tests. While this could be a step in the right direction it is too early to tell at this time. The last session also required two interim committees to be established. One was for the purpose of evaluating the accountability system and the other was charged with studying the public school finance system. With less than two months left before the session neither committee has produced a report on their findings or recommendations.

Historically school systems have been driven by beliefs and values. These are usually summarized in their mission statements or goals and are a reflection of the community. Today public education is being driven more by a bureaucratic form of control. Both the state and national governments are driving this control. This bureaucratic system is characterized by rules and sanctions, punitive accountability systems.

The days of a remote control education system should come to an end; we need to develop an accountability system that values each child and their educational progress. Assessments need to be a learning and teaching tool utilized in the classroom to improve a child's understanding not a one shot test that determines a school's effectiveness. Accountability, local control and creativity can coexist. We should not have to sacrifice one for the other.



Vernon ISD Teacher Grants Program

The Vernon ISD Board of Trustees included \$25,000 in the 2008 - 2009 budget to fund projects or learning activities through a teacher grant program. The district received 13 applications from the teachers and was able to fund all of the grants which totaled \$24,788. Grants funded included the following: Contemporary Reading Project written by Susan Thompson; Technology for Tutoring written by Shannon Parum; Podcasting written by Linda Borchardt; Multisensory Remedial Reading Software written by Kathy Craighead; Science Exploration and Imagination Stations written by Angela Morrison and Cheryl Woody; SRA Science laboratory written by Janet Hughes; Shive's Art Connection written by Carla Jones; Weekly Reader written by Marion Newell; Jump Start Program written by Leyda Worden; Wire Welding Techniques written by Kyle Myers; Woodworking Tools written by Jennifer Hunter; Digital Imag-ination written by Susan Kenner; and Composer Connection written by Marianne Quiett.



VISD Board President John Hardin III presents a grant certificate to Janet Hughes



VISD Board Members with grant recipients Linda Borchardt and Shannon Parum



Gold Performance Recognition

In addition to the AEIS Report that rates each district and campus in the state by Acceptable, Recognized or Exemplary, the state also acknowledges districts with the Gold Performance Acknowledgment (GPA) system. This system acknowledges districts and campuses for high performance on indicators other than those used to determine the accountability ratings. **This year Vernon ISD had two campuses receiving Gold Performance recognition. Vernon Middle School received commended performance on reading and attendance. North Texas State Hospital – AFP campus received gold performance for attendance and performance in social studies.**

**VERNON HIGH SCHOOL
ACTIVITIES**

The following Vernon High School Band students auditioned on Saturday for the Region 2 West Zone All-Region Band.

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| Catherine Garmon | Pedro Moreno |
| Mykel Byersmith | Ethan Alexander |

Mykel was named first chair tuba.
Ethan was named third chair tuba.
Pedro was named third chair trombone.

These three band members will attend an all-day clinic and concert on January 31 in Wichita Falls. They will be joined with 107 other band students from the entire Music Region 2.

Congratulations to all who auditioned!

On Saturday, November 8, the following band students auditioned for and made the Region 2 all-region band: Seniors, Pedro Moreno and Brady Craighead (Trombone); and Juniors, Mykel Byersmith and Ethan Alexander (Tuba) Also making a good effort was Catherine Garmon, auditioning for percussion. Both Mykel Byersmith and Ethan Alexander will advance to the Area Auditions on January 10 in Argyle. At this audition, Byersmith and Alexander will audition for the ATSSB All-State Band.

The region-wide auditions were held in Bridgeport and were open to all A, AA, and AAA schools in Music Region 2, including Vernon, Quanah, City View, Hirschi, Graham, Holliday, Argyle, Castleberry, Krum, Sanger, Olney, Bowie, Petrolia, Throckmorton, Burkburnett, Decatur, Bridgeport, Iowa Park, Paradise, Archer City, Notre Dame, and more. Congratulations to all of these students on such a fine accomplishment!

The Vernon High School Student Council is selling t-shirts. The white, long-sleeved shirts are \$18.00 each. We have sizes XS to XXL. You can get your t-shirt from any Student Council member or call the school at 553-3377, ext. 266.

The Student Council will begin “Change to Make a Change” in November. Members will collect change in their classes at VHS. The money will be used to purchase items to fill gift baskets to be given at Christmastime to children in the community.

PALS (Peer Assistance Leadership) group and VHS Student Council sponsored Red Ribbon Week (October 27-31). Each day of the week represented a different theme and message to help raise awareness about alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention. Prizes were given to students and teachers who represented the days’ theme most appropriately. Pictured below are winning students and teachers:



More Red Ribbon Week winners:



VHS students participated in a mock presidential election on October 28. Photos of that election can be seen online at www.vhs-tep.com/photos.html. The pictures may be purchased for 50¢ each by contacting Mrs. Kenner in the AG 1 building or calling 553-3377, ext. 266. Proceeds will go to the Student Council and the “Change to Make a Change” project.

The VHS PALS and the Texas Blood Institute sponsored a Blood Drive on Tuesday, November 18th from 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. in the little gym at high school. Participants received a FREE t-shirt, cholesterol check, and health check.

VERNON MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

News from our Vernon Middle School Library: Our newly implemented **Follett Destiny Textbook Manager**, the browser-based technology that allows our VISD schools control of textbook inventory, is a huge success at Vernon Middle School! Students are able to check out appropriate textbooks for a semester according to one’s individually assigned ID number. Books are scanned as they are returned at the end of classes, or when a student transfers to another school. The system allows schools greater control over their textbook inventory, and realizes substantial savings in a textbook budget. Our **Follett Destiny Library Manager** has been in use at Vernon Middle School since February, 2008, and is integrated along with textbook data for more efficient reports, management, and purchasing. The **Destiny Library Manager** continues to help students in Vernon Middle School develop important research skills, as one uses the new automation system to search for books and materials in our VMS Library collection.

Book Memorials for our VISD Libraries purchased thus far for the 2008-2009 school year include:

Hot Biscuits: Eighteen Stories by Women and Men of the Ranching West, edited by Max Evans, on behalf of Vernon Independent School District Administrative Staff, in memory of George London.

Freshwater Fishing, by Ellen Hopkins, and *Saltwater Fishing*, by Laura Salas, on behalf of Vernon Independent School District Administrative Staff, in memory of Rogers Morgan.

Texas Night Before Christmas, by James Rice, on behalf of Vernon Independent School District Administrative Staff, in memory of Russell Rutledge, grandson of Johnnie Rutledge.

Christmas in Texas, by Elizabeth Silverthorne, on behalf of Vernon Independent School District Administrative Staff, in memory of Alton McCurley, brother of Nicole Rodriguez.

'Twas the Night Before Christmas, by Clement C. Moore, on behalf of Vernon Independent School District Administrative Staff, in memory of Anna Auch, mother of Norman Auch.

English-French/French-English Dictionary of Colloquial Phrases and Expressions, Hippocrene Books, on behalf of Vernon Independent School District Administrative Staff, in memory of Fred A. Brock, father of Susan Coker, and father-in-law of Geary Coker.

World War II, by Neil Tonge, and *The Holocaust*, by R. G. Grant, on behalf of Marguerite Couch, in memory of Robert (Bob) Couch.

SHIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOOD DRIVE

Congrats to all those who participated in Shive's annual can food drive last month! Shive collected 439 pounds of food! It is so wonderful to see how compassionate our students are!

McCORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

McCord Students Celebrate National Young Readers Day. Schools across the country celebrate reading by participating in National Young Readers Day on the second Tuesday of November each year. Set aside as a special day to recognize the joys and benefits of reading, teachers recruited local "celebrities" to read aloud a favorite children's book to their classrooms. Local reading role model "celebrities" included local school board members, sports figures, parents, and other guests from the public. Students also enjoyed a visit from special guest Dr. Martha Burger, a professor at Midwestern State University. Dr. Burger read Where is the Big Bad Wolf and Barnyard Dance to Pre-Kindergarten through First Grade students in the school cafeteria. McCord Elementary School encourages our youth to learn to read, and open the door to knowledge, information, success, and happiness. Anyone interested in becoming a "celebrity reader" for next years event is encouraged to call the office at 553-4381. A great big "Thanks" to all who made National Young Readers Day a day to remember at McCord.

First Grade Music Program Focused on "Fall"
First Grade students at McCord have been busy learning new songs for their music program. Students were divided into groups and presented many fun and entertaining songs pertaining to the season. First graders sang about football, school, Christopher Columbus, Thanksgiving and many more!



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