

The Oregonian

Funding for Vernonia schools gets initial OK

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A U.S. House appropriations subcommittee on Tuesday approved \$200,000 that would be used for technology and equipment in flood-ravaged Vernonia schools.

Now the funding request, sponsored by U.S. Rep. David Wu, D-Ore., must get the go-ahead from the House Appropriations Committee, be incorporated in a bill and be approved by the full House and Senate -- a process that could take months, says Julia Krahe, communications director in Wu's Washington, D.C., office.

"Congressman Wu has been trying to find every avenue to help for months and months," Krahe said, adding that Wu's original request was for \$1 million.

Ken Cox, Vernonia School District superintendent, was out of the office Tuesday and unavailable for comment.

All three schools in the Columbia County city were flooded in December. Since then, school leaders have sought ways to raise money for new schools and demolish the old buildings. The efforts have an estimated price tag of \$35 million to \$50 million.

Wu and other federal and state officials have been trying to help Vernonia rebuild.

-- Michelle Trappen