

# COMMUNITY



Mount  
Vernon  
Schools



**Congrats  
Bulldog  
Graduates!**



# + Link

A Publication of Mount Vernon Schools

## IN THIS ISSUE

## SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER



### Featured Alumni

You will find our alumni working in every field imaginable, changing the world around us every day. Take a look at what our alumni are doing today and where they started.

### Featured Articles

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## Congratulations to the Class of 2018!

June 8 was graduation day for the Bulldog Class of 2018! That morning, approximately 200 of our 375 graduating seniors donned their caps and gowns and boarded school buses bound for our elementary and middle schools. Once there, students who lined the hallways greeted them with cheers and “high fives”. They then gathered with 5th and 8th graders to answer questions about high school and share what it takes to make it through to graduation and beyond. Graduate after graduate talked about the importance of students becoming involved in extra and co-curricular clubs and activities, challenging themselves academically, and asking for help when needed.

Later that morning, seniors gathered at the Mount Vernon City Library to begin the first annual Graduation Parade, co-sponsored by the City of Mount Vernon and the Mount Vernon Downtown Association. Led by the Bulldog Cheerleaders and the Marching Band, graduates made their way through downtown Mount Vernon, cheered on by families, business owners, and bystanders.

That evening, graduates celebrated commencement with a packed crowd of staff, family, and friends in the Mount Vernon High School Gymnasium.

Members of our Class of 2018 are headed in a variety of directions with a diverse range of interests and aspirations. Some are directly entering the work force. Others are enlisting in a branch of the military. Some are attending technical colleges, while many have been accepted into one or more two or four-year colleges and universities. For some, high school graduation was never in question. Others are the first in their immediate family to reach this milestone. Some overcame enormous barriers along the way.

Family support is, of course, central to student success. But research has consistently shown that young people who have a supportive relationship with at least one adult outside their family typically do better in life. Thanks to all of those who have contributed to these students’ successes in so many ways. We look forward to hearing about their accomplishments in the years to come!

**Carl Bruner**, Superintendent  
Mount Vernon School District

[www.mountvernonschools.org](http://www.mountvernonschools.org)

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# FEATURED ALUMNI

Our alumni are working to change the world around us.

## MVHS Alum travels the world with his camera and a creative spirit.



Leif Johnson

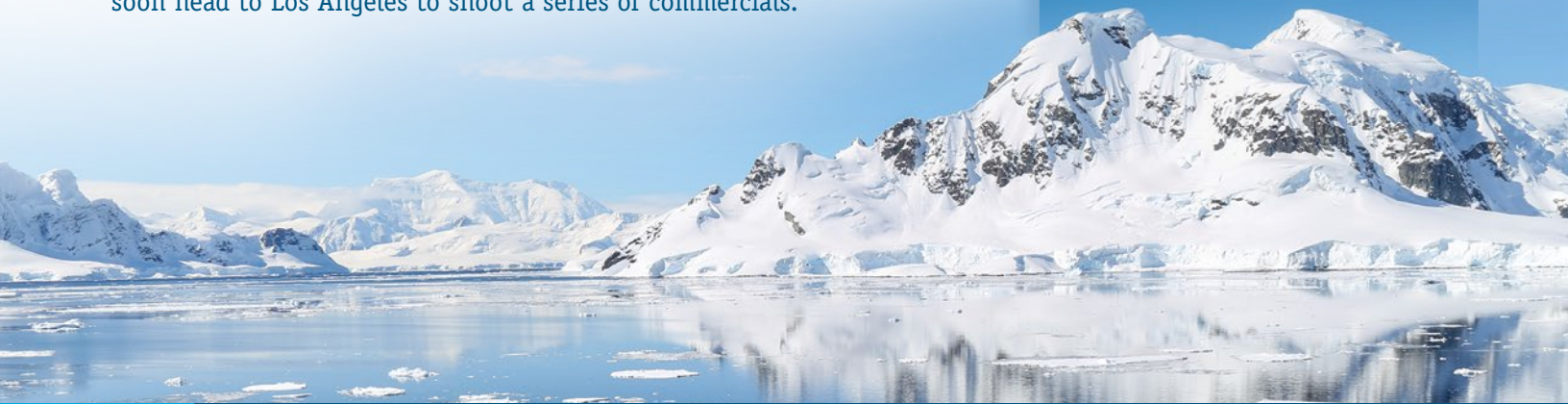
Drawn early to a career in theater, Mount Vernon High School graduate Leif Johnson ultimately chose to work behind a camera instead of on stage. That decision has led him to a wide variety of professional challenges and frequent travel to international locations.

Johnson is a 1994 graduate of MVHS where he says his interest in the Arts was sparked by Mr. Baer in choir, Mr. Zickler in theater, and Mr. Clark in English and debate. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Radio/Television/Film from Northwestern University, where his interest in movie making grew and where he made films as a student, Johnson moved to Los Angeles. There he worked as a production assistant, assistant editor, camera operator and, for the past 13 years, as a director of photography.

Johnson is an independent contractor which allows him to work on a variety of projects all over the world. "I find the freedom to take on a range of projects to be very satisfying," he says. "In any one year, I could find myself working in the Arctic, in a jungle, in a desert or even in the middle of the ocean." He recently wrapped season four of "The Last Alaskans" and will soon head to Los Angeles to shoot a series of commercials.

*"...In any one year, I could find myself working in the Arctic, in a jungle, in a desert or even in the middle of the ocean."*

– Leif Johnson







**The Mount Vernon Book Mobile is back and ready to provide a variety of reading materials for students of all ages!**

It's well known that students who don't read during the summer months often see their reading skills stagnate or decline. As students become older, the effects are even greater. Check out the adjacent Book Mobile schedule for dates, times, and locations.



**Find out more at:**  
[facebook.com/MVschooldistrict](https://facebook.com/MVschooldistrict)



**At After School STEM Camp** all MVSD 5th graders were invited to learn about science, engineering concepts, computer science, and basic electrical engineering.

# SUMMER BOOKMOBILE

## A MOBILE LIBRARY!

**EVERY TUESDAY & FRIDAY, 6/19-8/31**  
**FREE POPSICLES AND BOOKS!**

### TUESDAYS

<b>Edgewater Park</b>	11:00am
<b>Stanford Drive</b>	11:30am
<b>La Casa de San Jose</b>	12:00pm
<b>McIntyre Hall/SVC</b>	12:30pm
<b>Kulshan, Cascade West Apts.</b>	1:00pm
<b>Santa Maria</b>	1:30pm
<b>Hillcrest Park</b>	2:05pm

### FRIDAYS

<b>Edgewater Park</b>	11:00am
<b>Stanford Drive</b>	11:30am
<b>La Casa de San Jose</b>	12:00pm
<b>Kulshan, Cascade West Apts.</b>	12:30pm
<b>Santa Maria</b>	1:00pm
<b>Baker View Park</b>	1:30pm
<b>Kiwanis Spray Park</b>	2:00pm

# Administrative Transitions

Next fall, we will welcome a number of new faces to key administrative positions across the District.

- **Stephanie Jones-Flores** replaces Interim Principal, Marsha Hanson as Principal of Washington Elementary School. Fluent in Spanish and an experienced teacher of English learners, Ms. Jones-Flores comes to us from the Yakima School District, where she worked as the Assistant Principal of Ridgeview Elementary for the past four years.
- **Jennifer Harlan** assumes the role of Principal of Mount Baker Middle School, replacing Interim Principal and longtime Principal of Madison Elementary, Evelyn Morse. Ms. Harlan taught English Language Arts at Stanwood Middle School for 14 years. The past four years she was an Assistant Principal at Sedro-Woolley High School.
- **Dr. Terri Wattawa** has been hired as Interim Principal for Mount Vernon High School, replacing Dr. Rod Merrell, who has been hired by the Marysville School District as Director of Secondary Schools. Dr. Wattawa is an experienced secondary Science teacher and has nine years of experience as a middle and high school administrator in Arizona.
- Little Mountain Assistant Principal, **Susan Husband**, is moving into the position of Interim Principal at Little Mountain. Ms. Husband will temporarily replace Principal Krista Paulson, who is on family medical leave. Ashleigh Moe, 4th grade teacher at Centennial who recently completed her administrative internship, will step in as Interim Assistant Principal at Little Mountain.

*Losing experienced leaders, even if temporarily, can create gaps that are difficult to fill. We feel fortunate to have been able to recruit individuals with great skills and abilities and look forward to supporting their success.*

# Partnering for Career Success

When asked about the characteristics they value most from employees, employers will often refer to things like dependability, attitude, interpersonal skills, initiative, and flexibility.

We know that these “soft skills” are often the key to keeping and excelling in a job or career. Yet they are difficult to teach outside of the workplace. As much as teachers can try to connect dependability, accountability, and attitude as a student to their future success as an employee, it is a tough sell.

Paid summer internships were identified by the District a year ago as a high leverage strategy in our 100% graduation initiative. During the spring, we worked with several community partners to begin to get this initiative off the ground. A special thank you to the City of Mount Vernon who has taken the lead by hiring Mount Vernon High School student interns for summer employment in the Human Resources, Community Development and Parks and Recreation Departments. In addition, the district has hired an intern to assist in administration. We are grateful for Mount Vernon businesses and organizations that have created internship opportunities and are committed to student success.

**Goodbye Madison** event drew hundreds of Madison Elementary alumni, students and staff celebrating 64 years of school history.





# Highly Capable Program for Middle School Students

In the spring of 2017, an advisory committee of staff and administrators was formed to look at program options for students moving into middle school from Jefferson Elementary's self-contained program for highly capable learners, along with eligible students in 7th and 8th grade. Duplicating services in both middle schools for a relatively small number of students was deemed impractical. After a variety of models were considered, the team formulated a recommendation that was shared with parents in February and adjusted based on their input. The program will be located at LaVenture and will include the following elements, assuming there is adequate enrollment:

- An English Language Arts teacher with experience teaching students who are highly capable will be hired to teach qualifying students in grades 6-8.
- An accelerated Science class will be offered to qualifying 6th - 8th grade students.
- Students qualified as highly capable in math will be placed into Accelerated Math classes in both Mount Baker and LaVenture.

The location of the middle school program may change in future years, depending on school enrollment.



# Equity Showcase

Anyone who has raised or spent time around children knows that, though they may be similar, no two respond in the same manner under all circumstances. They require different approaches to tap into their potential. Sometimes these approaches are very different. Sometimes they only need to be slightly modified. Using the same or equal strategies ignores the individual differences that define each child. When we talk about equity, we are talking about approaches that take individual student needs into consideration.

Successful teachers have always known this and have taught accordingly. Yet, with the exception of educating students with special needs, school systems have, over many years, applied similar practices for all, putting some students at a disadvantage.

Over the course of the 2017-18 school year, teams of teachers and administrators from Centennial, Jefferson, Lincoln, Little Mountain, and Mount Vernon High School learned more about the unique needs of students and examined practices that get in the way of their success.

On May 30, these teams came together to share their work with each other and members of the School Board, parents, and other teachers and administrators. Their projects, summarized below, were intended to provide a starting point for our District's efforts to better recognize and meet the unique needs of all students, particularly those who are traditionally under-served by schools.

SCHOOL	PROJECT FOCUS
<b>Centennial</b>	Enrichment opportunities for under-served students
<b>Jefferson</b>	Strengthening relationships with students and families through home visits
<b>Lincoln</b>	Enhancing staff understanding of equity issues and barriers
<b>Little Mountain</b>	Enhancing staff understanding of equity issues and barriers
<b>Mount Vernon High School</b>	Examining whether teacher-student interactions differ for students of color

This August, we will provide a second workshop for new teams of teachers, administrators, and support staff. They will have the opportunity to work with teams from this past school year to provide training and leadership for their schools around how to ensure we are supporting all students effectively.

# Annual Green & White Open

Sponsored by Williams & Nulle, PLLC

Friday, Aug. 10, 2018  
Eaglemont Golf Course

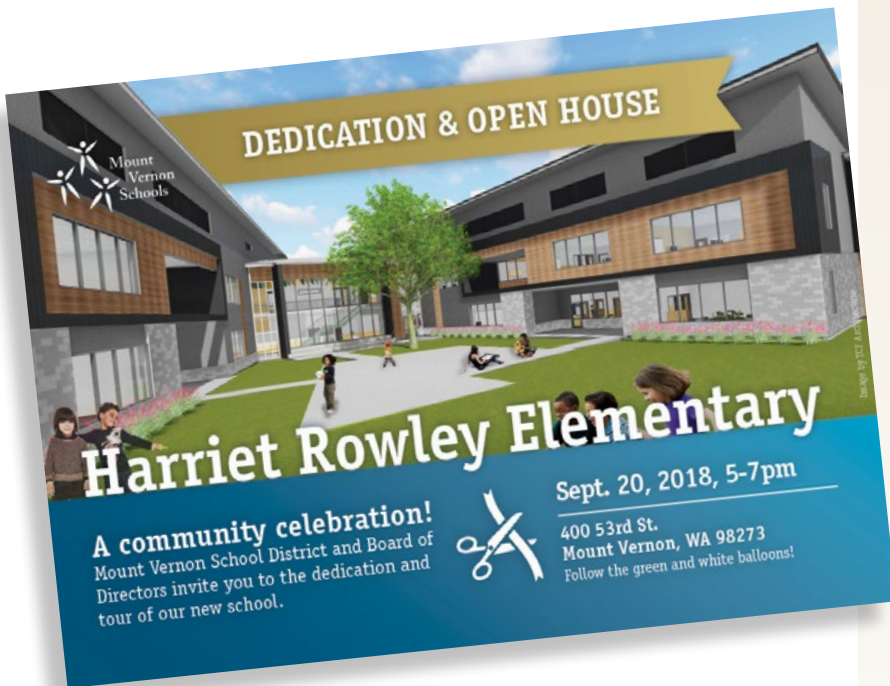
Registration & Details: Larry Otos  
360-424-0418 or lotos@comcast.net



# Bond Project Updates

Contractors are putting the final touches on Harriet Rowley Elementary in preparation for Madison students and staff to relocate to the new school during the 2018-19 school year.

Madison School has been vacated and on July 2nd the Mount Vernon Police Department had a one-day opportunity to use the school for training exercises. The Madison construction site is now secured and abatement and demolition are underway. The new school is designed to serve 560 students and will take approximately one year to complete. Madison students will return to their new school in fall of 2019-20.



Our contractor-architect-district team is maintaining a rapid schedule to guard against increasing construction costs, while ensuring that no corners are cut. A highly collaborative team approach is resulting in cost-effective management and shorter construction times.

The dedication and open house for Harriet Rowley Elementary is scheduled for Thursday, September 20 from 5pm -7pm. Mark your calendar to come and celebrate the first new elementary school in nineteen years!

**76.6% on time graduation rate** for the Mount Vernon High School Class of 2017! Up from 70.5% for the Class of 2016.

## Congratulations 2018 Retirees!



On June 6, the District and School Board honored our 21 retirees. Together they represent 448 years of dedicated service to our students. This year's retirees, by school and department, include:

### Centennial Elementary School

- Diane Bee, 2nd Grade Teacher
- Linda McAdams, Special Education Teacher
- Debra Merrell, Paraeducator

### Jefferson Elementary School

- Chris Ackerman, Special Education Teacher
- Jennifer Johnson, Paraeducator
- Marcia Wilson, Paraeducator

### Lincoln Elementary School

- Linda Stromer, Head Secretary

### Little Mountain Elementary School

- Eva Greenwald, Librarian
- Andrea White, 2nd Grade Teacher

### Madison School

- Gayle Metcalf, 4th Grade Teacher

### LaVenture Middle School

- David Elliott, Librarian/English Language Arts
- Lora Hodgman, Assistant Secretary
- Mike McManus, Counselor
- Ismael Santana, Art Teacher

### Mount Baker Middle School

- Joanne Kennerley, Paraeducator

### Mount Vernon High School

- Laurelynn Brooks, Science Teacher
- Lana Johnson, Math Teacher
- Penny Lane, Paraeducator
- Scott Stromer, Social Studies Teacher

### Special Programs & Services

- Peggy Paxton, Speech Language Pathologist

### Transportation

- Ken Dunning, Bus Driver

*We'll miss them, but wish them all the best as they enter retirement.*