

COMMUNITY



+Link

A Publication of Mount Vernon Schools

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SUMMER 2015 NEWSLETTER

Featured Alumni »

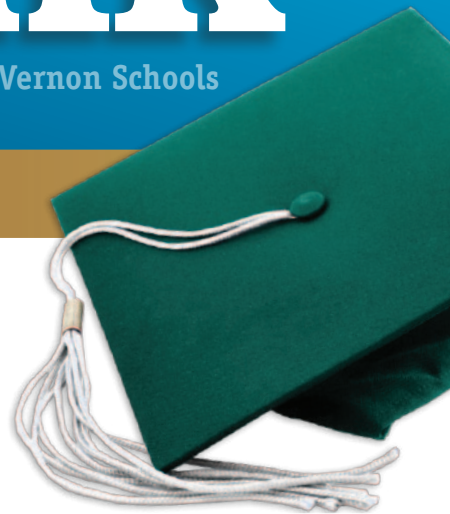
You will find our alumni working in every field imaginable, changing the world around us every day. Take a look at what our alumni are doing today and where they started.

Featured Articles »

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www.mountvernonschools.org

Congratulations to the Class of 2015!



On June 5, 344 seniors marked the end of their K-12 journey at Mount Vernon High School's 112th commencement ceremony. Thanks to the tireless efforts of these students, their families, teachers, counselors, and administrators, this represents the largest graduating class in the history of Mount Vernon High School.

As is typical of our graduating seniors, they represent a diverse array of life experiences. Some come from families that have expected academic success and college attendance from the time they were in kindergarten. Others have had to struggle with a host of personal and social challenges many of us could never imagine. Some arrived in kindergarten reading at a first grade level. Others have had to work diligently to overcome or accommodate for language barriers, a lack of early learning opportunities, and/or various disabilities. They represent a wide range of interests and aptitudes, reflected by their numerous academic, athletic, artistic, and technical awards and accomplishments both in school and beyond. Together, their successes reflect the goal of public education in America - to provide equal opportunity leading to success for all students.

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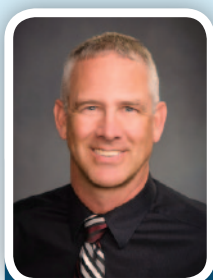




FEATURED ALUMNI

Our alumni are working to change the world around us.

Youngquist's teaching approach, positive attitude wins him national educator award...



Chad Youngquist

High school teacher and swim coach Chad Youngquist seldom backs away from a challenge – whether it's coaching students to excel in competitive swimming, helping generate community support for education, or tapping a national education program that seeks to improve school cultures and boost community pride.

A competitive swimmer at both the high school and college levels, Youngquist graduated from Mount Vernon High School in 1986. His favorite teacher at MVHS was Dave Cornelius, whose philosophy classes inspired him and whose advice led him to choose from a range of vocational options to become a teacher. "Mr. Cornelius' lessons often find their way into my coaching and teaching today," Youngquist says.

Youngquist attended Central Washington University where he earned BS and MS degrees in Exercise Science, and later served as head men's and women's swim coach. In 1998, he accepted a position at Shelton High School where he teaches aquatic physical education, coaches swimming, and has helped spearhead a plan to keep the school's pool open in spite of dwindling public education funding.

Youngquist finds his job satisfying, but discovered real challenges in dealing with students who lived in poverty and had low self-esteem and confidence. That's when he became an advisor for the Jostens Academic Renaissance program, a national initiative which sponsors efforts to improve school culture, recognize achievement and positively impact students' lives. This year Youngquist was selected by Jostens as Renaissance Educator of the Year.

Youngquist and his wife, Tonya, have two sons, Ryan and Tyler. He credits his mother, Skagit County Auditor Jeanne Youngquist, who has long been active in local government and community affairs, with teaching him that "thinking positive, working hard and building relationships will get the job done."

Youngquist's favorite teacher at MVHS was Dave Cornelius, whose philosophy classes inspired him and whose advice led him to choose from a range of vocational options to become a teacher.



\$4.8 Million

in college/university and community
scholarships has been awarded
to 2015 MVSD graduates.

344

graduates is the
largest graduating
class in the history
of Mount Vernon High
School.

2014-2015 IN REVIEW

Mount Vernon School District

We made some important improvements during this past year towards accomplishing each of our strategic goals.

» Early Learning

Ensure that every student completes kindergarten with the skills needed to be successful in their further education.

- Expanded partnerships with and support for 34 community preschool providers:
 - Hosted monthly meetings to discuss teaching and program strategies
 - Co-facilitated a series of workshops on strategies to develop children's early math skills
 - Implemented a process to exchange information on students entering kindergarten
- Piloted an assessment that will provide more information to parents and teachers on kindergarten children's learning throughout the year



» Quality Instruction

Students at all levels will develop an age-appropriate ability to:

- ☐ Formulate, represent, and solve mathematical problems
 - ☐ Build content knowledge; comprehend and critique; value evidence; and use technology strategically and capably in reading, writing, listening, and speaking
- Expanded training and support to help classroom teachers implement research-based teaching strategies
 - Expanded training in effective models for teacher collaboration to improve student learning
 - Continued working with teachers to align their instruction with the new standards
 - Supported teachers in the use of new classroom technology to improve student learning
 - Implemented a district-wide focus on early identification and intervention for students who need additional support
 - Opened a second community-based support center to provide after school homework help for students



Washington Elementary and **Mount Vernon High School** were recognized with Washington Achievement Awards, celebrating their level of progress.

65% of the 2015 Bulldog Class are heading off to 2 and 4 year public and private colleges, universities, and technical institutes.





» Family Partnerships

Engage families to provide encouragement and support to students, ensuring that student needs are met and their educational opportunities are enhanced.

- Implemented strategies to significantly increase parent participation in parent-teacher-student conferences
- Partnered with community organizations to offer ESL classes for parents at Washington, LaVenture, Mount Baker, and Lincoln
- Increased parent involvement in site leadership teams in some schools
- Researched the Parent Academy model for increasing parents' knowledge of how to access the educational system and support their children's learning at home

The impact of these efforts on increasing student achievement will be reported in our fall 2015 edition of Community Link.

» Creative Independence

Encourage and facilitate student independence, self-motivation, perseverance, and creativity, preparing our graduates for continuing education, careers, and fulfilling lives.

- Expanded college-in-the-high school classes through a partnership with Skagit Valley College
- Offered the Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) to all sophomores
- Increased early identification and support for students at risk of failure
- Offered a credit retrieval program for students during the school day
- Implemented the Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) test for students wishing to earn a Seal of Biliteracy on their high school diploma
- Expanded the number of Advanced Placement courses
- Expanded high school elective courses in Social Studies, Science, Band, Information Technology, and Audio/Video Technology
- Expanded instrumental music alternatives at middle school
- Implemented a new service delivery model for highly capable students



Dick Spink, **Mount Vernon High School alumni** and Engineering Design instructor is featured online at National Geographic.



Facility Planning



Researching solutions to our aging and overcrowded facilities

This past school year, we continued work with our architectural consultants and a committee of staff, parents, and other community members to research solutions to our aging and overcrowded facilities. These planning efforts, which have now been underway for the last 2½ years, have been built off of the work done in preparation for the district's April 2007 bond proposal – a proposal which failed to reach the 60% approval level required for school bonds. Over the past 8 years, our student enrollment has grown by approximately 600 students.

The following projects have been identified as priorities:

- Replacement of Madison Elementary
- Addition of an elementary school on E. Division
- Expansion of LaVenture Middle School
- Modernization of Mount Vernon High School's oldest building – Old Main
- Replacement of the Mount Vernon High School Agriculture building with a facility to house science, agriculture, technology, and manufacturing programs

This summer and fall, the school board and district will conduct a number of meetings with community members to gather input on these proposed projects. This will be followed by a community survey in late September. By October, the board hopes to make a decision on a bond to put before the voters next spring.

Growth in Numbers

600+

Approximate student growth since 2007.

830+

Estimated student growth over the next 10 years.



Hearing from our Parents

ThoughtExchange Survey

During March and April, the district piloted a new survey format in partnership with ThoughtExchange. Parents and guardians were asked to share their thoughts on the successes and challenges faced by each of our schools.

After thoughts were collected, participants were asked to prioritize each thought by assigning stars. Similar items were grouped together to form categories, which appear in the final report.



Results for each school can be found at:
<http://bit.ly/1eHEhc5>

Perceptions varied by school. However, taken together, some overall themes were apparent. Participants (totaling 507) appreciated:

1. Schools' levels of safety and supervision
2. The number of elective courses at high school and extra-curricular activities at our middle schools
3. Schools' communication with home
4. Quality of teachers and staff
5. Schools' academics and programming

They were concerned about:

1. A lack of academic rigor or challenge
2. A lack of visual arts programs
3. Too much emphasis on testing
4. The condition of some of our schools, including problems with student drop-off and pick-up
5. The registration process for high school and lack of college planning

Our administrators will be using this information in the coming year to reinforce what is going well and to address concerns.

AVID Program

100% of 60 senior students in the AVID program (Advancement Via Individual Determination) are headed off to pursue postsecondary education, collectively receiving \$1,303,450 in scholarships

With the help of \$4.8 million in college/university and community scholarships, an estimated 65% the Bulldog Class of 2015 will be headed off to 2 and 4 year public and private colleges, universities, and technical institutes across the country and beyond, including:

- Digipen Institute of Technology
- Harvard University
- Pacific Lutheran University
- Pomona College
- Seattle Pacific University
- Skagit Valley College
- University of Oregon
- University of Otago (New Zealand)
- University of Washington
- Washington State University
- Western Washington University

Others will transition directly into jobs. Whatever their course, we wish them all the best for bright and fulfilling futures!



Carl Bruner

Superintendent, Mount Vernon School District

6th Annual Green & White Open

Sponsored by Williams & Nulle, PLLC



**Friday, August 7, 2015
Eaglemont Golf Course**

\$115 Tournament fee includes: 18 holes of golf, cart and pulled pork sandwich buffet, silent auction and raffle.

8am – 9:30am REGISTRATION | 10am Shotgun start, Scramble

Play with a chance to win \$10,000 for a Hole-In-One!

Call Kyle Reep (360) 391-9300 or Larry Otos (360) 424-0418 to sign up.
.....

***Tournament proceeds benefit
Mount Vernon Schools!***

Congratulations 2015 Retirements!

Centennial Elementary

- Jean Pass – *Special Ed Teacher*
- Lucy Wells – *Librarian*

Lincoln Elementary

- Cheryl Jones – *Special Ed Teacher*

Little Mountain Elementary

- Peggy Ratermann – *5th grade Teacher*

Madison Elementary

- Patti Allen – *Paraprofessional*
- Sharon Sackett – *Librarian*
- Michael Shapiro – *3rd grade Teacher*

Washington Elementary

- Cynthia Lint – *4th grade Teacher*
- Mary Taylor – *Librarian*

Transportation

- Glen Mickelson – *Driver*

LaVenture Middle School

- Cheryl Briggs – *Reading Teacher*
- Mary Jean Klopfenstein – *Head Cook*

Mount Baker Middle School

- Linda Uyeno – *Registrar*

Mount Vernon High School

- Cheryl Hughes – *Nurse*
- Cindy Loeff – *Secretary*
- Janet Patrick – *Secretary*
- Robynn Seymour – *Paraprofessional*

Special and Support Services

- Susie Dalponte – *Secretary*
- Joan O'Neill – *Speech and Language Pathologist*

***On June 3, the
School Board
recognized 20
staff members
who have now
retired.***

*Together, these
individuals represent
over 411 years of
dedicated service to
public education. We
wish them well in
their retirement!*



A Day in the Life of a Sixth Grader



<http://bit.ly/1HqYWKB>



Join teachers and students
as they review **life as a
Sixth Grade student at
LaVenture Middle School.**