

# COMMUNITY



# +Link

A Publication of Mount Vernon Schools

IN THIS ISSUE

SUMMER 2019 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

- Graduation Recap
- A Healthy Step Towards Graduation
- Bond Construction Progress Updates
- School Board Approves Map Option B-3 for 2019-2020 School Year

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## Congratulations, Class of 2019!

### Mount Vernon High School graduates the largest class to date!

Faculty, staff, friends, and family filled the Mount Vernon High School Gymnasium the evening of June 7 to celebrate commencement for the Class of 2019. This class, numbering over 400, is like classes before them, talented and unique in so many ways. Their individual and collective stories are inspirational and a testament to the human spirit's ability to overcome some daunting challenges with the support of loved ones and the community. Matthew Jurenka and Rochelle Thai were celebrated as Valedictorian and Salutatorian respectively. Over their high school careers, others have earned recognition for their accomplishments in the fine and performing arts, athletics, speech and debate, entrepreneurship, and a host of other endeavors. They are headed in a number of directions, including two and four year colleges and universities, technical schools, the military, the workforce, and workforce apprenticeships.

Graduation is the culminating event for our District. On behalf of the School Board and the District, thank you to our community for partnering with us to support our graduates' achievements. We look forward to seeing the results of their impacts on our world in the years to come!



Carl Bruner, Superintendent  
Mount Vernon School District

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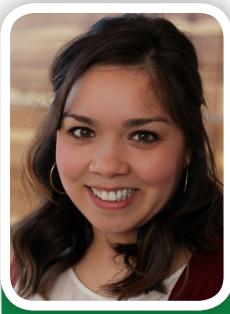
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# FEATURED ALUMNI

Our alumni are working to change the world around us.

## MVHS alumna Daisy Padilla bringing teachers back to the community



Daisy Padilla

Daisy Padilla has found that her career in education is rewarding in ways she didn't expect. Graduating from Mount Vernon High School in 2006, she credits her AVID teachers, Chris Oliver and Angelica Garcia, for her interest in education. As a first-generation student, higher education seemed unlikely, but with encouragement and support from people like her AVID instructors who told her to dream big and set goals, she has achieved some major accomplishments.

After receiving her Associate of Arts at Skagit Valley College, Padilla continued on to Western Washington University where she attained a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish with a minor in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Shortly after, she completed a Masters in Adult Higher

Education, also at WWU. Her next academic goal is to identify a doctoral program.

Padilla quickly learned that the education field was her choice after realizing that student perspectives, choices, and approaches are influenced in our schools through teachers, curriculum, and social opportunities. She wanted to be an agent of change in her community, specifically for the Latinx and other historically marginalized peoples.

Today, Padilla is the Navigator of the Maestros Para el Pueblo program at Skagit Valley College. In this role, Padilla helps Latinx students identify pathways for teacher certification in hopes that they return and become educators in their communities. The Maestros program provides culturally relevant programming through advising, contextualized curriculum, leadership development, and community and school engagement. As a Navigator, Padilla is able to reach students and help them accomplish their goals. Supporting students academically, emotionally, and socially is the foundation and root of her work.

Daisy's parents migrated to the United States from Michoacán to pursue the American Dream. She is proud of her roots, background, language, community, and family. She now shares those ideals with students and teaches them how to commit to themselves. Padilla believes, "We should always have a purpose for our next decision and choice." She continually encourages her students to use their voice about positive things that are happening, as well as social issues that create barriers for some in our communities. "When we are committed to ourselves, we love, respect, and take care of our body, mind and soul."

“The most satisfying part of my job is working with students and assisting them in navigating the higher education system.”

– Daisy Padilla



Madison Elementary becomes the first school in Washington State to hold a Spanish Spelling Bee and send a student to the National Contest.

MVHS Seniors Matthew Jurenka and Lauren Cline were selected as National Merit Scholars.

Washington Elementary's Mr. Dabbs' 5th grade class raises \$307 and donated it along with hundreds of pounds of food to a local food bank.

# Graduation Day Festivities

The morning of June 7 over 300 of our graduates donned their caps and gowns and boarded buses headed for their former elementary or middle schools. Once there, they were greeted by excited student “go lines” cheering them on. Graduates were then transported downtown for our second annual Graduation Parade. Led by the Mount Vernon Police Department and MVHS Cheerleaders and Pep Band, they made their way from the Riverwalk Plaza, down 1st Street to City Hall. Co-Sponsored by the City of Mount Vernon, the Mount Vernon Downtown Association, and the Mount Vernon School District, this event is meant to demonstrate community-wide support for our graduates and their accomplishments. Thanks to all who attended!

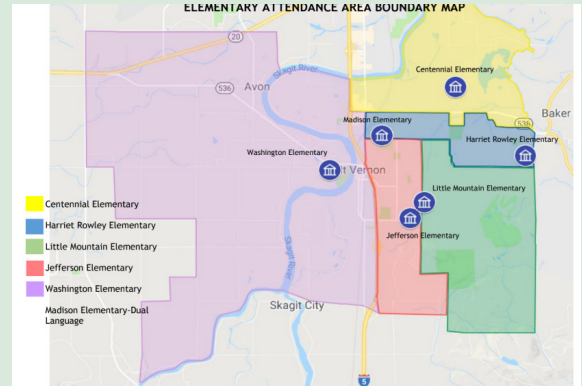


# Farewell, Lincoln

Alumni from the 1950s to 2018, along with current students, families, and former teachers packed the halls to reconnect and reminisce about their time at Lincoln, which has served our community as a school for 80 years. It was a fitting send off for the iconic neighborhood school.



# School Board Approves New Boundaries



Over the past 18 months, the Attendance Boundary Committee sponsored ten presentations to families where they shared options and listened to input. On March 26, the last round of meetings was completed. Based on input gathered through this process, the school board approved Map Option B-3 at their April 17 meeting, as the new elementary/middle school attendance area boundaries beginning September 2019.

Throughout the process, the boundary committee had three goals for the new boundary option: safety, equity, and efficiency. With safety in mind, the new attendance areas take students’ walking, biking, and bus stops into consideration while ensuring best use of district resources by providing efficient school and transportation options. In addition, the new attendance areas will create student populations in each school that are similar in size (balanced enrollment) and student makeup (demographics).

### Next Steps:

Notifications were mailed to elementary and middle school families in early May regarding school assignments for the 2019-20 school year.

Open House/Welcome Parties for families were held at elementary Schools in May.

Bus routes/stops will be determined; notification to families will be mailed in August .

Decisions regarding elementary school in-district waivers will be made in August (following School Board policy guidelines).



# Budget Update: 2019-2020

This year, we were hoping the Legislature would modify their 2018 response to the McCleary Supreme Court ruling in a way that would decrease the funding inequities between property rich, property poor, and neighboring school districts. Specifically, we were hopeful that we would receive additional funding to help us close our budget gap for 2019-20, estimated at \$3.7 million. In response to budget challenges, our School Board passed a resolution to Reduce Educational Programs. You can learn about the specifics of this reduction plan at <https://bit.ly/2HttFyE>.

The Legislature did provide a small increase in funding for special education programs. However, the largest change came in the form of an increase in the local levy lid. For our District, the allowable rate was increased from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

In January 2019, the rate for our Educational Programs and Operations Levy decreased from \$3.93 per \$1,000 of assessed value to the new state cap of \$1.50 per \$1,000. Left unchanged, this would have resulted in a reduction of over \$10 million in local levy funds for our district over the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. Unfunded increases to the new state health insurance system, estimated at \$1.2 million for Mount Vernon, made matters worse. Increases in state funding were not enough to cover the loss of revenue, when combined with our increased operating costs, especially for districts like ours with low property values.

The increase in the levy lid will allow us to collect the total amount approved by voters last February, amounting to an estimated rate of \$1.74 per \$1,000. We would need to receive voter approval to collect the full \$2.50 per \$1,000.

In the coming weeks, the School Board will examine our options through the lens of what is best for our students and our community. The District will be considering what cuts may be restored, given that we are now able to collect the entire amount approved by voters last February.



# Bond Construction Progress Updates



On time and on budget – two phrases we always hope to be able to use in describing our construction projects, and both apply to the Madison Elementary project. While it will likely be a rush to the finish line, we fully expect the new Madison to be open for business on September 4 – the first day of the 2019-20 school year for students in grades 1 – 12. “The Madison community is excited to return to ‘New Madison!’”

says Principal Juan Gaona. “We look forward to creating a new space where language, culture, and learning continue to thrive.”

While Madison will be moving from their temporary home at Harriet Rowley Elementary to their new school on Fir Street, Lincoln Elementary will be moving into Rowley, joined by a number of other teachers and support staff from across the District. These moves are complex, labor intensive, and require hard work, patience, and flexibility on the part of all involved. Needless to say, it is a busy summer!

With both elementary projects at or near completion, our efforts are turning to the third phase of the 2016 construction bond – Mount Vernon High School. The first two projects on the high school campus will include:

- Improvements to the Fine Arts building, which will house administration and counseling and include several classrooms.
- Construction of a new Agriculture/Career and Technical Education shop on the northwest end of campus.

These facilities will house classrooms from Old Main during its renovation. Timeline estimates for these projects are listed below.

## Project: **Tenant Improvements for Fine Arts**

Projected Start: End of August 2019

Projected Completion: January 2020

## Project: **Old Main Renovation**

Project Start: February 2020

Projected Completion: August 2021

## Project: **New Ag Shop**

Project Start: September 2019

Projected Completion: January 2020



Built in 1952, the Ag Building will be replaced beginning this fall

Rather than use Lincoln School to accommodate displaced students, the high school and capital projects teams have worked together to ensure that there will be adequate temporary classroom space on campus during construction. While this will create inconveniences in the short term, we will gain many efficiencies by keeping students and staff on campus.

Early on in our planning process, we had considered using Lincoln to house both the District Office currently located on E. Lawrence St. and the Special Programs and Services Office, located on S. 2nd St. However, doing so would trigger a change of use for Lincoln, requiring the district upgrade the building in accordance with ADA standards. Considering the costs of these upgrades, we are reevaluating uses for the Lincoln facility.

# Shanander to Take the Helm at Harriet Rowley Elementary School



Following interviews, forums, and site visits, longtime Lincoln Elementary School teacher leader, Patricia Shanander, was recommended to and approved by the School Board for the position of Harriet Rowley Elementary School Principal.

Ms. Shanander has served in a variety of capacities at Lincoln over the past 21 years, including 2nd grade teacher, Reading Facilitator, Instructional Support Specialist, and part-time Assistant Principal. She brings a wealth of instructional and leadership experience to her new position.

“This is such an exciting time!” she says. This summer, Ms. Shanander is facilitating Lincoln’s move to Rowley once the Madison staff relocate to their newly rebuilt school. To accommodate Rowley’s larger enrollment, a number of additional teachers from across the district will join the Lincoln staff. The staff has eagerly signed up for one of eight different teams to begin planning for family engagement, leadership opportunities for students, and procedures for daily operations.

This transition has been a very large and coordinated effort requiring all hands on deck. “The building is beautiful and the Madison staff have gone above and beyond in sharing what they have learned about daily life at Rowley” says Shanander. “I am extremely excited about the opportunity that is before us and I can hardly wait to welcome our new students and families!”

## 2019-2020 Administrative Support

As part of our budget reduction plan, we are making some changes to administrative support for elementary schools.

-Julie Sager, Assistant Principal at Centennial, is moving to MVHS to assume the AP position occupied this year on an interim basis by Evelyn Morse.

-Ashleigh Moe, currently serving as Interim Assistant Principal at Little Mountain, will split her time as the AP between Jefferson and Little Mountain next year.

-Madison Assistant Principal, Melissa Van Straten, is taking a .5 leave and will remain at Madison half-time.

-Human Resources Director, Kris Wollan, will support Rowley Elementary half-time.

-District office administration will share responsibility for supporting Centennial part time.

Thanks to these administrators and to our elementary principals for their flexibility.

## Congratulations 2019 Retirees!



On June 5, the District and School Board honored our 24 retirees. Together they represent 600 years of dedicated service to students and families; we are grateful for the impact each one has had on our schools. This year’s retirees, by school and department, include:

### Centennial Elementary School

- Kathy Phay, Paraeducator
- Gail Williams, Paraeducator
- Susan Hahn, Centennial Reading Specialist

### Lincoln Elementary School

- Cheri Fredlund, 1st Grade Teacher
- Henk Kruithof, Principal

### Little Mountain Elementary School

- Krista Paulson, Principal

### Washington Elementary School

- Pat Chaires, Washington Food Service
- Melody Henderson, Secretary/Paraeducator
- Sandy Holmstrom, Paraeducator
- Carali Moe, Paraeducator
- Jan Rolf, Reading Specialist

### Madison School

- Susan Jobe, Paraeducator
- Bob Hoare, Physical Education Teacher

### LaVenture Middle School

- Marcia Cobb, Paraeducator
- Carol Highet, Paraeducator
- Stuart Harpel, Math Teacher

### Mount Vernon High School

- Susan Grzadzielewski, Paraeducator
- Mike Criner, Tech Ed Teacher
- Craig Harpel, Science Teacher

### Special Programs & Services

- Tatiana Gabriel, Teaching Coach
- Laurel Parker, Payroll Specialist District Office
- Doug Walker, Northwest Career & Technical Academy Assistant Director

### Transportation

- Jim Hinckle, Transportation Supervisor
- Cindy Callahan, Transportation Driver

We’ll miss them, but wish them all the best for an enjoyable and fulfilling retirement.



# A HEALTHY STEP TOWARDS 100% GRADUATION

This year, our School District made some bold steps to help ensure our students are active and healthy. For the first time, we prioritized a new health education curriculum taught by health specialists at our elementary schools. We also updated our health curriculum at the secondary level.

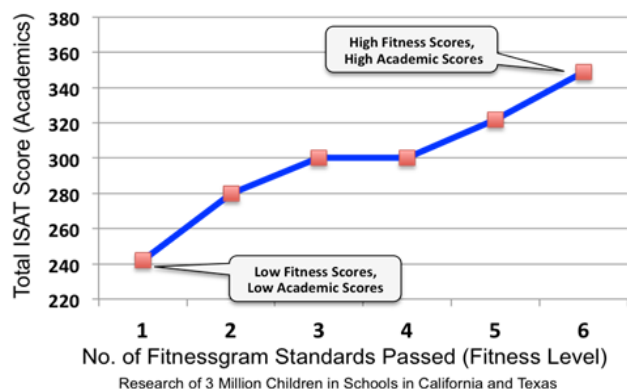
We are excited about the new health learning opportunities for elementary students. All students in grades K-5 now have a regular opportunity to explore health topics presented in a sequential and developmentally appropriate manner. The information is medically accurate and aligned with the National Health Education Standards.



I applaud Mount Vernon School District's commitment to providing high quality health education to every elementary school student through their cohort of health education specialists. This is a unique program that creates dedicated instructional time to focus on health topics including nutrition, social-emotional learning, and our vaping epidemic, while allowing educators to mentor each other through their Professional Learning Community (PLC) on best practices and student assessment. MVSD's focus on the importance of health education represents the critical whole-child focus that is an underlying value at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction."

— Dr. Ken Turner, Program Supervisor for Health and Physical Education, OSPI

## Strong Correlation Between Higher Fitness Scores and Higher Academic Scores



We know that communities who encourage and support healthy and safe behaviors increase the likelihood of individuals making mindful choices. With our new curriculum we are able to help increase students' capacity to think critically, set goals, and make healthy and safe decisions.

## Free Summer Meals, Books, and Popsicles!



The Mount Vernon School District announces the sponsorship of the Simplified Summer Feeding Program for Children. Meals will be made available at no charge to children 18 years of age and younger. After lunch, visit one of our bookmobile sites for a free book and popsicle for your summer reading.

Bookmobile link:  Summer Meals Link: 

The Mount Vernon School District does not discriminate in employment, programs, or activities on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability or use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the District's Title IX/Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, Bill Nutting, Assistant Superintendent, 124 E. Lawrence Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 (360)428-6110; Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Clint Carlton, Director of Special and Support Services, 920 S. Second Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, (360)428-6141.

Mount Vernon Public Schools Foundation

# Annual Green & White Open

Friday, Aug. 9, 2019  
Eaglemont Golf Course

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

