

COMMUNITY



+Link

A Publication of Mount Vernon Schools

SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER

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This year has brought us many opportunities to address the various challenges that students face. From hiring additional staff in the mental health area, to increasing the avenues in which students receive their education, the Mount Vernon School District has worked tirelessly to focus on the needs of all students.

As you read through this newsletter, you will see that great things are happening in our district. We are excited to have additional mental health professionals join our team, assisting students, as well as working with families who need mental health resources. You will read about our renewed focus on student safety, and about teachers participating in cultural responsiveness opportunities. You will read about diversity in the classroom, and how students will get the chance to learn from teachers who share their cultural background during summer school. This value-added opportunity is due to our partnership and participation in a Binational Teacher Exchange Program. We continue to explore, offer, and/or implement programs to meet the needs of our students.

While on the subject, we are still currently in the early stages of exploring the concept of a Student Focused Balanced Calendar (SFBC). Although we are in the beginning phase of the process, we wanted to share with you the rationale behind our exploration into this topic. In short, there is a need to improve equitable outcomes for all students, and to reduce the summer learning loss. Exploring the SFBC concept will take some time and we want to dedicate plenty of time during each phase of this process. We plan to learn more about the research, hear from districts who have successfully modified their calendars, receive input from our stakeholders, review data, and to plan for what might work for the Mount Vernon School District. We are currently in the Discussion and Exploration phase, and anticipate this phase will take us through this year and the 2022-2023 school year. With that in mind, you will begin to hear more and more about the Student Focused Balanced Calendar. Keep an eye out for upcoming communications about this important topic and opportunities for your involvement and input.

With less than two months before the end of the 2021-2022 school year, we want to take this time to encourage our school community to finish strong. We are on the home stretch of what has been another challenging year, yet every day seems to be bringing us to some level of normalcy. We will continue to educate and support our students and work diligently towards our district's vision: To graduate inspired and critical things who embrace diversity and are committed to the betterment of their own lives and the lives of others.

Respectfully,

Ismael Vivanco, Ed. D
 Superintendent
 Mount Vernon School District



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 Successful Learners Strengthening Our Community



Student Safety

As our day to day activities become more routine, we wanted to take this opportunity to renew our focus on student safety. MVSD administrator, Eric Monson, has begun this process with the district's Emergency Management team. The Mount Vernon School District will work closely with the emergency liaison from the Northwest Educational Service District (NWESD) to make sure all plans meet or exceed the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) standards. Our first goal is to ensure that all schools within the district are up-to-date and prepared for emergencies. The District Emergency Management team will work directly with each building to update their action plan. We see this is a great opportunity to improve our communication and create a stronger relationship with those involved in aiding the district during emergency situations. This includes local agencies such as Mount Vernon Police and fire departments. Safety is a high priority for the district, and our goal is to continue improving our system, as a team. If you have any questions, you can reach Eric Monson at 360-428-6141 ext. 14131.

Diversity in the Classroom

The Mount Vernon School District will have an opportunity to host four exchange teachers this summer. "Districts can apply for the opportunity to bring in teachers from different regions in Mexico and we were fortunate enough to be one of two districts in the state of Washington to be selected as one of those districts" said David Rodriguez, Director of Equity and Inclusion.

These four exchange teachers have a wide variety of experiences and talents that will be shared with our students. They all have unique skill sets that can be utilized in the classroom, which include specialties in History, Cultural Arts, and Ethnic studies, just to name a few. All of the exchange teachers are bilingual and will be placed in a classroom with one of our talented teachers.

"We are excited to give our students an opportunity to see and be taught by teachers who come from similar backgrounds and cultures," said Rodriguez. Students will have an opportunity to experience the diverse offerings these teachers bring during this year's summer school program.

Mental Health

Students all over the country are struggling with mental health issues on a daily basis. The district is currently using the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model which helps us increase our strategies and our skills in early detection of identifying students in need. This model gives our staff the tools they need to support our students, as well as providing services to students who need additional assistance. Part of this program involves teachers working on social/emotional learning lessons with students. Students take part in weekly lessons with their teacher, where they are given an opportunity to talk about, and practice social/emotional skills. When students are involved in learning about social/emotional skills, they enjoy school more, and have better relationships with their peers, and their academics improve as well. The district has also hired additional mental health professionals, including school counselors and social workers, who are able to address a wide variety of student needs in our schools. The school counselors are able to work with students at school, while the social workers can assist whole families by connecting them with resources and connections outside of the school, and within the community. If you are interested in learning more about programs that will help your child's social/emotional needs, please contact your school counselor at your building, or talk to your building principal, as they can connect you with our mental health professionals.

Cultural Opportunities for Teachers

The district has teamed up with the University of Oaxaca to bring Spanish dialect courses to teachers. Teachers had an opportunity to enroll in either Spanish or Mixtec language courses, and both courses are currently at full capacity. We have 40 teachers enrolled in the Native Spanish/Mixtec course and 30 teachers enrolled in the Spanish immersion course. These evening courses align with the district's Equity Action plan and give our teachers an opportunity to gain cultural experiences. Director of Equity & Inclusion, David Rodriguez, said these courses have been very popular, and they will be offering them again in the future, to teachers who did not get an opportunity to participate.

Mount Vernon School District Opportunities



Summer School Opportunities

Mount Vernon Schools

2022 Summer Schools

JUNE-AUGUST
(dates vary by school and program)

ACADEMIC **ARTS** **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING** **CREDIT RETRIEVAL**

Elementary School (PreK-5th grade)
We will provide supplementary and support services to program students as well as offering Interest Based Programs (IBP) with the goal of engaging students in areas of interest.

Middle Schools (6th-8th grade)
Students will receive literacy, reading, science, technology and math. Other opportunities such as character building, arts, and sports will be part of the many programs offered to students of middle school age.

High Schools (9th-12th grade)
Students will have an opportunity for credit retrieval through Zoom and in-person courses.

ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS
Summer school 2022 will focus on fun and engaging resources to help our students in PK-12 prepare them for the 2022-2023 school year.

for more information
CONTACT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



 **Summer Literacy (BookMobile) throughout the summer!**

Choice Schools

We are continually looking for ways to help students succeed. Students who are interested in receiving their education, high school diploma, and or GED, are able to pick from a wide-variety of options that the Mount Vernon School District offers. The district is proud to offer Mount Vernon Virtual Learning (MVVL), Aspire Academy, Skagit Academy, and NCTA Open Doors. We have a pathway for all students! If you'd like more information about any of the programs below, please visit our website at www.mountvernonschools.org.

Mount Vernon School District Choice Schools

MVVL
Mount Vernon Virtual Learning
K-12 grade
360-428-6236

Aspire
9-12 grade
360-428-6216

Skagit Academy
K-12 grade
360-428-6206

NCTA Open Doors
16-21 year old's
360-848-0706



Community Bulldog Award

The Mount Vernon Public Schools Foundation was the recipient of this month's Community Bulldog award. This award is given to those in the community who demonstrate support and commitment to our district. The Mount Vernon Public Schools Foundation supports our schools in many ways. They are dedicated to improving the quality of education in the Mount Vernon School District by raising funds for projects that encourage & enhance academics, athletics, the arts, technology, and all other programs that enrich the learning experience.

Since 2008, they have supported students and staff with over \$100,000. This includes providing educational enhancements that would otherwise not be available. A few examples of how students have benefited are: band trips, AVID field trips, science excursions, Camp Orkila, and Migrant Leadership Conferences. We know that students in the district benefit from this very valuable resource. Thank you Mount Vernon Public Schools Foundation for committing to our students, promoting student achievement, and for your generosity.



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. In this month's Community Link, we feature Brooke Holmes, who grew up and graduated from Mount Vernon High School. We took some time to ask Brooke questions about what she does for a living, and how she got there.

Tell me a little about yourself? Where did you go to college?

I grew up in the Skagit Valley and went to Columbia University for college.

What drew you to your profession?

I'm currently a professor in the Department of Classics at Princeton University. When I went to college, I thought that I would work for the State Department. I'd done cross-examination debate in high school and learned about current affairs. It was right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, so I wanted to study Russian. But I'd also always loved literature. Columbia has a required Core Curriculum, and taking a class called "Literature Humanities" rekindled my interest in literature, so I decided to major in comparative literature. I was taking Russian, and I needed another language quickly, so that was how I ended up in intensive ancient Greek. I didn't set out to become a scholar of ancient Greece and Rome. But I think I was drawn to the ancient Greco-Roman world because you can move across different disciplines and ask big questions. My research and teaching cross literature, the history of philosophy, science, and medicine, and the study of gender and sexuality. Recently I've worked more in the contemporary art world and thought about the history of studying "classical" antiquity, its promise and its problems. I love my work because the more I learn, the more questions I have. And I love teaching and mentoring: I'm always learning from my students.

Did you have a favorite teacher, or someone who inspired you when you were in school?

I was deeply inspired by so many incredible teachers at MVHS who fostered my intellectual curiosity and encouraged me to forge my own path, especially Ms. Johnson, Mr. Cornelius, Mr. Boyer, and Mr. Clark. After two years of the pandemic and now that I have kids of my own, I'm even more grateful to all teachers, especially those in public education, for their incredibly valuable work.



Do you ever visit the Skagit Valley, and if so what is your favorite part of the valley?

Yes, I've tried to come back a couple times of year to visit family. And now that I have traveled quite a bit, I can appreciate more than I could growing up how beautiful the valley is. I especially love being out on the flats in late afternoon. The light is often so incredible.

Brooke graduated from MVHS in 1994. She trained in the United States and Europe as a comparative and a classicist. She holds a B.A. in Comparative Literature from Columbia University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Princeton University. She also holds a D.E.A. in Études grecques from the Sorbonne (Paris-IV). She has taught at Princeton since 2007.

Kindergarten Registration

Requirements ✓
Proof of age documents include a birth certificate; a religious, hospital, or physician's certificate showing date of birth; a passport; an adoption record; previously verified school records; an affidavit from a parent; an entry in a family bible; or any other documents permitted by law.

Apply Online:
www.mountvernonschools.org/kindergartenregistration



Registration forms are also available at all elementary schools upon request, beginning in Mid-April

District office:
124 E. Lawrence St.
Mt. Vernon WA 98273

www.mountvernonschools.org

Mount Vernon Schools
Successful Learners Strengthening Our Community

Join us to meet the principal and school staff. This is a great opportunity to tour the school with your child.

May 16, 2022	May 17, 2022
Jefferson Elementary 1801 E. Blackburn Rd. - 4-6 PM • (360) 428-6128	Centennial Elementary 3100 Martin Rd. - 4-6 PM • (360) 428-6138
Washington Elementary 1020 McLean Rd. - 4-7 PM • (360) 428-6122	Harriet Rowley 400 53rd St. - 5-7 PM • (360) 428-6199
Skagit Academy 2001 Cleveland Ave. - 4-6 PM • (360) 428-6131	Little Mountain Elementary 1514 S. LaVenture Rd. - 4-6 PM • (360) 428-6125



www.mountvernonschools.org

