

COMMUNITY



+Link

A Publication of Mount Vernon Schools

IN THIS ISSUE

WINTER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Featured Articles

- Superintendent Message
- Construction Update
- Community Bulldog Award
- Message from your School Board
- Choice School options
- Employment opportunities

Superintendent Message

As we start the 2022 year, I want to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to the Mount Vernon community. The 2021 year has been another one of growth and learning for the district. Despite still being in the midst of the pandemic, we welcomed all of our students back into classrooms at the beginning of the school year. Additionally, we resumed all extracurricular activities, and have attempted to return life to our new normal. The community, parents, staff, and students have stepped up to the 'new' way of living and have continued to persevere with grit and resolve.

It has been almost two years since our way of living was turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have endured many misfortunes and adversity, yet we continue to move forward as we face these challenges together with hope and light at the end of the tunnel.

As we enter the second half of the school year, one of our primary goals is to continue to keep our schools open for in-person instruction. We cannot do this without everyone doing their part. Vaccinations, face coverings, physical distancing, ventilation, frequent hand washing, and testing, continue to be the layered mitigation strategies that give us the best opportunity to keep our students, staff, families, and community safe. I hope you will join us in this ongoing effort.

We also understand that things have been extremely difficult for many of our students, staff, and community. Collectively, we have experienced physical and mental health challenges, emotional stress, grief, loss, and more. That being said, these bonds of despair are broken by the strength of optimism and hope. We are better together and it is important that we continue to lean on each other as a community to support one another.

continued



www.mountvernonschools.org



NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mount Vernon, WA
Permit No. 30

*****EGRWSS*****
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Mount
Vernon
Schools
124 East Lawrence Street
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-2999
www.MountVernonSchools.org



Successful Learners Strengthening Our Community

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from front page

We've seen great strides in our student engagement while adjusting to our 'new' situation. As a district, our mission has always been to expect, encourage, and facilitate the pursuit of excellence and life-long learning for future success and happiness. We will continue to do just that, in order to see our students become the most successful individuals they can be.

"Being positive doesn't mean you ignore the reality of the situation or sugarcoat what's happening. It means you don't let negativity sour things and make them worse." --Jon Gordon

We have ongoing appreciation for those in our community who continue to be on the front lines of the battle to contain the pandemic by being in daily contact with the public. In our District, this includes front office staff, secretaries, paraeducators, food services, transportation, custodial, grounds and maintenance services, technology, security, childcare, teachers, staff specialists, and administration.

We will continue to provide updates through our website and social media sites. Please stay vigilant and cautious to help us reduce the spread of COVID-19. Stay healthy and safe during these ongoing fluctuating and challenging times!

Respectfully,



Ismael Vivanco, Ed. D
Superintendent
Mount Vernon School District



Construction Update

MVHS Old Main

With the prominent Stair Tower blade walls fully constructed, now the preparation has begun to complete the other elements of the stair towers. Foundations were poured for the remaining structural pieces associated with the towers, and once cured, they will receive the structural steel to complete the tower forms.

A less prominent element, but critical is the construction of the roof-top mechanical podium. This work is well underway with new structure being installed near the center of the building, designed to support essential mechanical units.

On the interior of Old Main, the shotcrete structural upgrades are nearing completion, with the final pour planned for the end of the month. Interior steel stud walls are being installed, along with preliminary mechanical, and electrical work. Restoration to some interior finishes, such as terrazzo, is continuing as well.

The overall project is set to be substantially complete around mid-June, reaching final completion before the start of school in September 2022.

MVHS Additional Classrooms

As Old Main moves closer to completion, the additional classrooms on the High School campus will be set to begin construction. This will include six new classrooms and improvements within other buildings on campus as well; primarily the Shop building north of New Main. The preliminary design work is wrapping up, making way for the design team, and General Contractor/Construction Manager (GCCM) to continue design & preconstruction work.

Construction is expected to begin at the start of the summer break, June of 2022

La Venture Middle School

After going through an extensive design-build process, the project team is wrapping up the bid documents, and are set to procure subcontractors at the beginning of 2022. The work will include a new building on the campus that will have six new classrooms, special program spaces, and support spaces. This project also will include improvements within the main LVMS building; primarily in the library, and converted two spaces back to classrooms once the new building is operational.

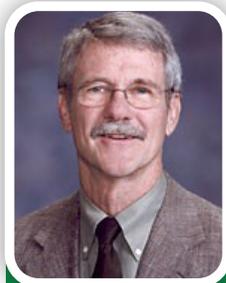
Construction is set to begin in late spring, or early summer contingent on permitting.

SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION MONTH

Proclaimed as School Board Appreciation Month by Governor Inslee, January is a time when we formally thank our five elected Directors.



Larry Otos



Rob Coffey



Wendy Ragusa



Jessica Samora



Laura Cailloux

Message From Your School Board



A B C...T!

We knew the value technology would play in creating a robust 21st century education for our Mount Vernon students. We knew technology would be a strategic investment to assure empowered teaching and learning. What we didn't know was that a pandemic would place the success of our entire educational system in a fully digital world. In 1.5 short years, once seen as a "crisis management tool", technology has become a powerful teaching and learning tool, communication and equity tool, security and utilities tool.



The Mount Vernon School District is resilient. The Mount Vernon School District is grateful.

We, the Board of Directors, are grateful for the confidence and support of YOU, our voters who approved a \$5,173,000 for 2022 to ensure that our staff and students have the very best technology services available for teaching and learning.

1, 2, 3...T!

Enter info from TIMS SLIDES

We know technology in the classroom increases student engagement, helps teachers improve their lesson plans, and facilitates personalized, one-to-one learning. It also helps students build essential 21st-century skills that will prepare them for lifelong success.

2020/21 virtual classrooms took center stage. When students and staff began the 2021/22 school year, technology continued to serve as a critical educational tool supporting in-person learning that our school community thrives on.

Does technology create more inclusive, equitable learning environments, foster collaboration and inquisitiveness and allow staff to capture important performance data? Yes, it does.

Our Mount Vernon educators all experienced a dramatic learning curve to harness the possibilities of technology and they did so with resilience and urgency.

Aside from the impacts in the daily classrooms, technology has broadened its importance to create 21st century classrooms which include state of the art security, communication and utility systems.

Kudos to our District's outstanding Technology team. In a do-or-fail scenario, the team built a Help Desk to assist staff, students and families with tech issues and built mobile teaching centers for the High School's temporary south campus (during Old Main construction) and created wired/wireless networks within our schools and hot spots in our buses. Within a very quick time frame.



SKAGIT ACADEMY-CHOICE SCHOOL



The District has many learning opportunities for students in Mount Vernon. One of those opportunities is the Skagit Academy Choice School. Skagit Academy works with families to select district approved curriculum that both teachers and parents collaboratively teach children. Working together in this form of partnership provides opportunities to socialize, interact, and learn in a group setting. Skagit Academy offers a variety of learning styles for different grade levels. Skagit Academy is open to students in grades K-12. They currently have open spots for students in grades K-8. If you would like more information please contact the Skagit Academy Choice School at 360-428-6206.

For more information:

Skagit Academy
Choice School
2001 Cleveland Ave.
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
360-428-6206

Balanced Calendar Study

The Mount Vernon School District is part of a group of districts in the state who are exploring a Balanced Calendar. What is a balanced calendar? With a balanced calendar, students attend class the same number of days and receive the same instructional hours driven by the same curricula as students at traditional calendar schools. A balanced calendar modifies the traditional 180-day calendar to keep the learning process continuous. Students have periodic, shorter breaks, rather than one long summer break.

A balanced calendar evenly distributes the days students attend school and the days they are on vacation across the 12-month calendar year. All students attend school at the same time and go on vacation at the same time. In a balanced calendar option, during the fall, spring, and summer break periods, schools provide extended learning opportunities for students. Students can relearn material, practice skills, and catch up or experience nonacademic enrichment activities. What does this mean? This means that the district has begun analyzing and reviewing a variation to the traditional school year calendar, where we have a few short breaks throughout the year, and a long summer break. Research shows that students with continued access to education and activities throughout the year are more successful in school. By exploring the Balanced Calendar, we are examining the benefits of how a variation in our calendar structure could benefit our students. The Mount Vernon School District is one of 24 districts in the state of Washington who are partaking in this project. As part of this initiative, we have participated in statewide webinars where we've had an opportunity to hear from professionals in education, as well as other districts who are currently using the Balanced Calendar model. As we work to decide if a Balanced Calendar might be the right move for our district, we will share the steps needed to make this lengthy process a success. The district will first work on Discussion and Exploration. The team will begin to gather information, review data, and to share what we find with our stakeholders. Should we see the Balanced Calendar is a good fit for our district, we then would move on to the Planning phase. During this phase, the district would propose and map out a timeline for the next step, Implementation. The board and superintendent's team would begin to work on making changes to the school calendar. Lastly, the district would Monitor and Reflect on the effectiveness of the new Balanced calendar, making necessary changes or adjustments.

As stated earlier, this process may take some time. This will allow the district to work through each phase, continue to learn more about Balanced Calendars, hear from districts who have successfully modified their calendars, receive input from our stakeholders, review data, and to plan for what will work for the Mount Vernon School District.

Message from the school board, cont.



Again, we can't thank you, Mount Vernon voters, for supporting the District's last tech levy and placing a priority on this important educational tool. We look forward to sharing more exciting developments in future Community Links.

Best regards,

Board of Directors,

Larry Otos-President, Rob Coffey-Vice President, Wendy Ragusa-Legislative Chair, Jessica Samora, and Laura Cailloux

Board of Distinction

The Mount Vernon School District Board of Directors were selected as this year's Board of Distinction award recipients.



PARENT ACADEMY

The district recently completed the 7th annual Parent Academy. This 6-week long program consists of weekly evening classes taught to parents by parents. The program focuses on ensuring that families have the information and skills they need to help their children be successful. Parent teachers include past Parent Academy attendees who are passionate about helping other families get the information needed to help their own children. Gear Up Coordinator Manny Espinoza, Gear Up staff member Paula DesJarlias and building liaison's met weekly with Parent Teachers to review the week's lesson, give tips on presenting, and support teachers as needed. These lessons then became the topic for that week's Parent Academy session. Sessions consisted of dinner with families, topic of discussion, and upcoming dates for that group. In years past, each building has conducted its own Parent Academy. This year, buildings teamed up to create an opportunity to learn together. Washington Elementary and Madison Elementary held meetings together. Centennial and Little Mountain teamed up together, and Harriet Rowley and Jefferson held meetings together. LaVenture Middle school and Mount Baker Middle school worked together to connect families. Gear Up Coordinator Manny Espinoza said that this year's change to schools teaming up, was a big success. By partnering together, Parent Teachers had the support of other Parent Teachers. For those first time Parent Teachers, this was an opportunity to support each other. Buildings offered sessions in various languages (English, Spanish, Mixtec, and Slavic) in order to support our non-English speaking families. We were able to provide this service, thanks to the support of our Parent Teachers. This year the district successfully graduated 100 parents. We concluded the 6-week long program with families by hosting a celebration of completion. This event included dinner, entertainment from our MVSD Mariachi group and Folklorico, special guest speaker, David Rodriguez, Director of Equity and Inclusion, and special guest speaker, Superintendent, Ismael Vivanco. This year's Parent Academy was so successful thanks to our Parent Teachers, building facilitators, Administrators, and the Gear Up Program.



Over 100
parents
participated
in this year's
Parent
Academy

Community Bulldog Award

Guy Clements recently retired from a lengthy career as the MVHS football sports announcer. His once nervous apprehension to get behind the mic changed into an volunteer position that lasted 18 years.

When Guy first agreed to announce, he was already attending football games as a spectator. He was there watching his stepson play. So although this was something that he hadn't done before, he quickly fell right into place as an announcer. Over the years, Guy has had an opportunity see the football program grow.

This month, the Mount Vernon School District honored Guy Clements as our Community Bulldog. An award that is given to those in community who go above and beyond for our students. The district has many volunteers like Guy Clements, and we are honored to have had an opportunity to present him with an award



Lets stay connected!

In an effort to continue keeping our community up-to-date, we're rolling out an easy to use, new feature on our website! On our district website, look to the left of your computer screen, or to the bottom of your phone or tablet for the new Key Communications tray! Simply tap or mouse over the blue tab with the last published date to see the latest update.



JOIN OUR TEAM!

Start your career in education today!

Mount Vernon Schools is seeking applicants for positions throughout the district.

Apply today at

www.mountvernonschools.org

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, Executive Director of Student Support Services, 920 S. Second Street, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, (360)428-6141.