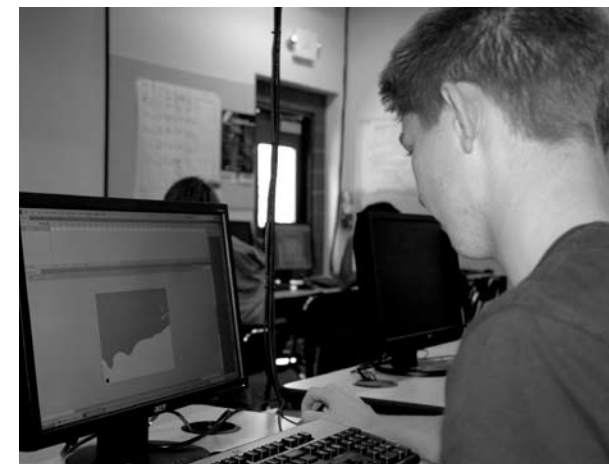


# TECHNOLOGY LEVY

## Technology enhances student learning across the curriculum



Thanks to a two-year, voter-approved technology levy, last year brought a flurry of activity focused on putting current technology in the hands of teachers and students to enhance teaching and learning. Specifically, we:

- ✦ Developed a detailed plan for use of 2008 technology levy funds to upgrade the district's network and provide computers for students and high tech teaching stations for teachers.
- ✦ Installed energy efficient, five-station mini-labs in each third and sixth grade classroom and in each science and social studies middle school classroom.
- ✦ Installed document cameras and projectors in all third and sixth grade and middle school science and social studies classrooms without that equipment. High school classrooms without the equipment will receive them later this month.
- ✦ Began upgrading out-of-date teacher computers.
- ✦ Installed a 30-station multimedia lab at Mount Vernon High School.
- ✦ Hired a local technology firm to update the district's Web site.
- ✦ Hired several technology assistants to ensure classroom equipment is kept operational.

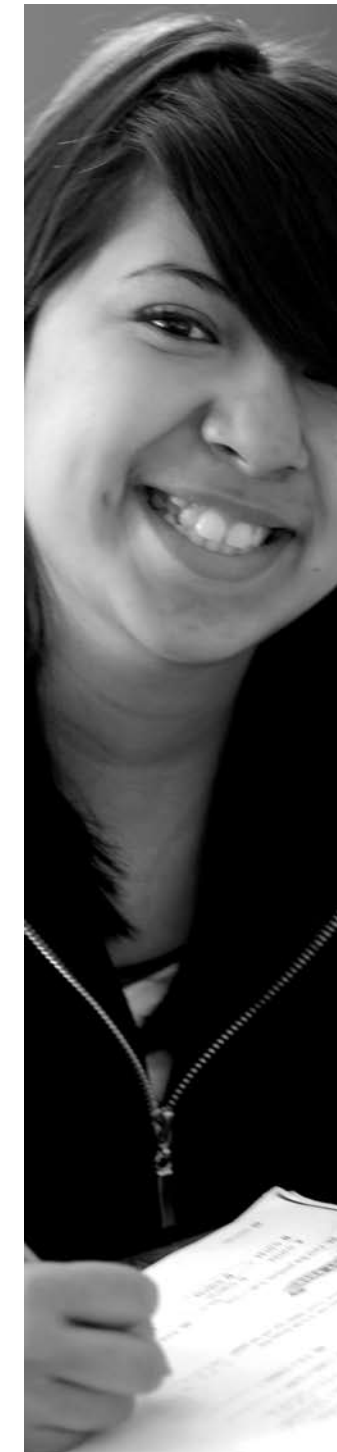
This year, we will implement the second half of our levy plan:

- ✦ Providing training and support to teachers on ways to use the new technology to improve student learning.
- ✦ Installing energy efficient, five-station mini-labs in each fourth and fifth grade classroom and in each language arts and mathematics middle school classroom.
- ✦ Installing document cameras and projectors in all fourth and fifth grade and middle school language arts and mathematics classrooms without that equipment. We will also provide document cameras and projectors to kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms and any other classrooms without that equipment.
- ✦ Continuing to upgrade out-of-date teacher computers.
- ✦ Implementing the new district Web site.

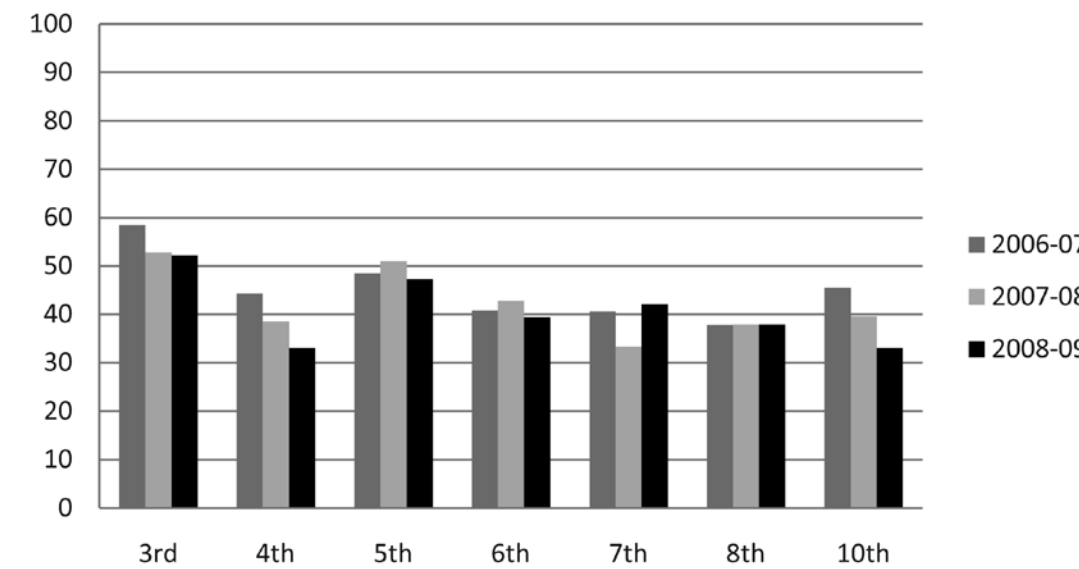
As exciting as new classroom technology can be, it is first and foremost a tool to enhance student learning. It is only useful when it is adequately supported and when teachers are appropriately trained to use it effectively in their teaching. Our plan addresses both the need for technology support and professional development of teachers. As a result, we are confident that new equipment and software provided through the levy will become powerful teaching and learning tools for teachers and students.

**LAST SPRING, ALL MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL DISTRICT** students in grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and 10 were administered the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The overall WASL results for Mount Vernon Schools continue to frustrate teachers, administrators, parents and students. Intensive efforts to improve student achievement are not reflected in the overall results. The WASL represents only a snapshot of what students know and are able to do and yet it is an important one. We are in the process of examining the results to determine what adjustments in curriculum and instruction need to be made to help our students demonstrate higher success on the state assessments.

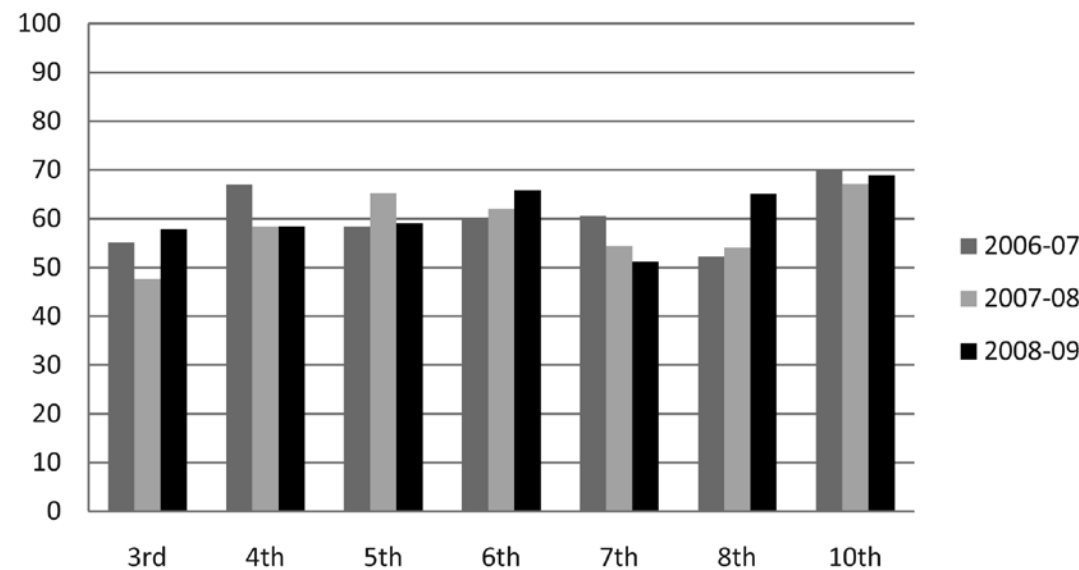
As the State moves to the Measurements of Student Progress for K-8 and the High School Proficiency Exam for reading and writing, we will continue to monitor student progress and set high goals for their achievement. For school level results, please consult the Washington State Report Card at <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us>



### WASL RESULTS: PERCENTAGE MEETING STANDARD – MATHEMATICS



### WASL RESULTS: PERCENTAGE MEETING STANDARD – READING



Fall 2009



## inside this issue

### Featured Alumni 2

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

### Budget Update 4

Find out how the district is managing its shrinking state dollars while faced with a growing student enrollment.

### Technology Levy Update 5

Thanks to Technology Levy funds, students have new opportunities to create and collaborate.



# COMMUNITY + Link

A PUBLICATION OF MOUNT VERNON SCHOOLS

## Strategic 'Road Map' guides efforts for year

By Dr. Carl Bruner

Welcome to the 2009-10 school year! This edition of *Community Link* is intended to share information about our accomplishments in 2008-09 and outline what we have in store for the current year. The information below is organized by the four areas of our strategic *Road Map*, designed to improve our educational organization for the benefit of all students.

### Focus Area #1: Teaching, Learning, Curriculum and Assessment

#### WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2008-09

##### Mathematics

- Developed a math vision and direction for the district
- Implemented a new K-5 math curriculum
- Adopted new curriculum materials for grades 6-8

##### Reading

- Identified gaps in current curriculum materials
- Developed a plan to review reading materials for grades K-8 next school year

##### Teaching

- Developed a district vision of quality instruction
- Trained teacher teams district-wide in the use of four research-based teaching strategies

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN 2009-10

##### Mathematics

- Implement new curriculum materials for grades 6-8
- Implement classroom-based assessments for monitoring progress

##### Reading

- Review K-8 reading materials

See *Road Map*, Page 3

## Staying young at heart



If your children are long past the school-age years, or you don't have any children in your life right now, there are still plenty of reasons to get involved in your community and become active in our Mount Vernon Schools.

You and the District will mutually benefit from a relationship. Here are some ways that you can become involved:

- Volunteer as a classroom assistant, reading tutor, library assistant, etc.
- Employ a high school student through a mentoring program or business class at MVHS.
- Serve on the school board or attend meetings to find out what it is doing.
- Become an active and knowledgeable voter on school bond and levy issues.
- Attend school events (music concerts, theater performances, sporting events, etc.).
- Volunteer your knowledge as a guest speaker in a class.
- Help raise funds.
- Offer your resources for school field trips.

There are many creative, fun and fulfilling ways you can get involved with our schools and children in your community. Children are our future and we are a reflection of theirs. We have much to learn and gain from each other, so reach out and do something!

For more information about the District's VISITS (Volunteers In Schools Inspire Today's Students) program, please call 428-6110 or contact the volunteer coordinator at the school of your choice.

## FEATURED ALUMNI

Catching up with MVHS graduates

**A**S A TEEN AT MOUNT VERNON HIGH SCHOOL, Linda Frizzell delighted in participating in student activities—building Homecoming floats, working on the yearbook staff, cheerleading, and serving as class officer. Now, as Executive Director of the Skagit Valley Hospital Foundation, she applies her initiative and energy to benefit our community, helping to raise nearly \$10 million for the hospital over the last 15 years.

A 1982 graduate of Mount Vernon High School, Frizzell says, "I loved school from my days at Jefferson Elementary to LaVenture Middle School to Mount Vernon High School. I was very social—probably too much so—but most of all, I enjoyed time spent with my classmates."

A high school English class with instructor Jim Beasley made a lasting impression on Frizzell. "He was a real character and a truly engaging teacher. He used to have us diagram sentences and along the way, I developed a love for writing."

After graduating from Mount Vernon, Frizzell attended Washington State University where she received her bachelor of arts in communications. After graduating college and prior to her current position, she worked as Director of the Mount Vernon Senior Center for Skagit County Senior Services.

Frizzell's talents are a natural fit in her work for the Skagit Valley Hospital Foundation. "This job enabled me to work in my own community and utilize my degree in communications. I also loved and continue to enjoy the event planning aspect of fundraising. Each year we put on the Festival of Trees and the ParTee Golf Classic to benefit the Foundation."

The Skagit Valley Hospital Foundation recently completed a \$4 million capital campaign to assist in building the Regional Cancer Care Center, a project Frizzell describes as her most ambitious and satisfying to date. Current fundraisers will help to remodel the Behavioral Care Center in the hospital and build a larger clinic on Camano Island.

After 18 years, Frizzell says that it is still a joy to come to work at Skagit Valley Hospital. "It is a compassionate, professional atmosphere and I have incredible co-workers. I feel very privileged to work with people who are making gifts of support and appreciation to Skagit Valley Hospital."

Frizzell advises students to stay involved in the community, just like in school. "We live in an incredible community and there are so many quality people to meet. Together we can make good things happen!"



LINDA FRIZZELL

# ROAD MAP: Creating a Plan for District Improvement

Road Map, Continued from Page 1

- Adopt new curriculum materials and plan for purchase, training, and implementation
- Implement the state Model of Reading Instruction

### Teaching

- Work with teacher teams district-wide to use four existing and three new research-based teaching strategies in the classroom

### Focus Area #2: Technology and Facilities

#### WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2008-09

##### Technology

- See article on Page Five

##### Facilities

- Became involved in the State of Washington's Performance Contracting Program to achieve energy efficient lighting and heating upgrades
- Collaborated with the YMCA and Skagit Valley Hospital to determine the feasibility of building a shared health and fitness facility on the Mount Vernon High School campus
- Successfully applied for a long-term, zero interest loan totaling \$3.9 million through the federal Qualified Zone Academy Bond program to assist with renovation of the MVHS gymnasium and field house complex

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN 2009-10

##### Technology

- See article on Page Five

##### Facilities

- Continue working with the YMCA and Skagit Valley Hospital to explore costs related to a shared health and fitness

facility

- Complete lighting and heating upgrades to ensure greater energy efficiency
- Continue efforts to address preventative maintenance and repair needs at our existing facilities
- Reactivate Facilities Advisory Committee to begin planning for strategies to address long-term solutions for facility needs

### Focus Area #3: Parents and Community

#### WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2008-09

- Extended outreach to the Latino community through (1) bi-weekly programs on KSVR, (2) several informational shows produced for and aired on public access television Channel 26, and (3) employment of a bilingual Parent and Community Liaison
- Expanded partnerships with the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, WorkSource Skagit, and Skagit County Youth and Family Services to support students at risk of school failure
- Broadened the scope of our communications through involvement in the Mount Vernon "Get a Great Life" campaign
- Completed ten focus group receptions with key communicators to gain insight into community perceptions of the district's strengths and challenges

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN 2009-10

- Use bilingual Parent and Community Liaisons to continue outreach to Latino community and establish outreach to Russian/Ukrainian communities
- Expand partnership support of students at risk of school failure to include students

transitioning from elementary to middle school

### Focus Area #4: Leadership and Governance

#### WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED IN 2008-09

- Revised Board policy on budget development
- Formed a Budget Advisory Committee comprised of staff, parents, other community members, and School Board representatives to review district funding and expenditures and give input into priorities for the 2009-10 budget
- Finalized a district policy on Student Progress and Promotion

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN 2009-10

- Implement the second year of the district's Budget Advisory Committee, ensuring stakeholder input into the 2010-11 budget development process
- Implement the new policy and procedures on Student Progress and Promotion
- Pursue training for the School Board, focused on Board strategies for increasing student achievement, through the Washington State School Directors Association.

Educating all students to high standards has never been more important, challenging, and rewarding than it is today. It requires a district-wide focus, time, adequate resources, and parent and community encouragement and support for our staff and students. I am grateful to be part of the Mount Vernon School District's team of talented and highly committed educators and look forward to another busy and productive year!

## Practicing good stewardship with shrinking dollars

**M**ount Vernon has not been immune to the funding crisis impacting school districts across the country. This year, we will receive an estimated \$2.2 million less in state funding as compared to 2008-09. Thankfully, increased student enrollment, federal stimulus dollars, grant funds, and previous cost control measures offset a large part of the funding reduction. However, it was impossible to achieve a balanced budget without cutting some programs and services and raising fees for others.

The good news is we were able to avoid cutting any classroom teaching positions, counselors, nurses, or instructional assistants, and to increase funding in specific areas to address needed priorities. Class sizes and support for students at the school level will not be impacted. For the first time in a number of years, we are projected to end the school year with a 5% cash reserve, meeting the School Board's goal.

Some of the major areas that will be reorganized or reduced and those that will see fee adjustments include:

**Administration**—Administrative time at the district office and transportation department will be reduced. District office budgets will be cut.

**Athletics**—The district and our School Board believe in the important role quality athletic programs play in many students' education. At the same time, we must recover a portion of the cost of these programs if we want to avoid reducing options. This year, participants must purchase an ASB card (\$35) and pay a sports participation fee (\$60 for the first sport and an additional \$30 for the second sport, subject to reduction with proof of free/reduced lunch status).

**Elementary Math for High Achieving Students (HiCap Math)**—This coming year, we will create flexible groups for math like we have for reading. Students will be placed in a math class based on their performance. Teachers of the HiCap group will use the accelerated portions of the *Investigations* curriculum, ensuring students are studying the same concepts, but at greater levels of depth/complexity. Students will be tested periodically to ensure they are in the best placement. We believe this will prove a more cost efficient and effective way to challenge students without creating gaps in their knowledge and skills. The program will be supported at each school by a math coach, funded by the district's Summit Improvement grant.

**Mountain School**—In developing the budget for the 2007-08 school year, the

live within one mile of the school they attend. These students generate no state transportation funding. While we cannot have students crossing busy roads unsupervised, we must make our transportation routes more efficient. Beginning this year, we will be looking at ways to shift stops and combine routes. This process will likely take two years to complete.

Funding was allocated to address several priorities, including:

- Elementary and middle school class size
- Tutors for the AVID program
- Improvements to school breakfast and lunch programs
- K-8 reading curriculum materials
- A full-time high school drug/alcohol intervention specialist

While we feel very fortunate to have avoided additional budget cuts, we know



"The good news is we were able to avoid cutting any classroom teaching positions, counselors, nurses, or instructional assistants, and to increase funding in specific areas to address needed priorities."

that next year will bring additional budget challenges. We will continue to meet with our Budget Advisory Committee throughout the year to ensure input into the 2009-10 budget process.



**Dr. Carl Bruner** has served as MVSD superintendent since July 2004. For questions or comments, please contact the superintendent's office at (360) 428-6181.