

COMMUNITY +Link



FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the 2022–2023 School Year

The 2022–2023 school year is well on its way and we are excited to begin this school year with our new normal. It is a tremendous honor to be your superintendent and I value the trust that the school board, families, staff, and the community has in me. We have an amazing district that offers an opportunity for everyone to learn, from our youngest learners and beyond. We offer learning in Transitional Kindergarten, 6 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, Mount Vernon Virtual Learning (MVVL), Mount Vernon High School, NCTA (Northwest Career and Technical Academy), Aspire Academy, Skagit Academy, and Open Doors both at NCTA and Skagit Valley College.

Equally as valuable is the great partnerships we have formed with organizations like the United Way, who's bold goal is that, "by 2025, all Skagit children entering Kindergarten are ready to learn". This, of course, aligns well with our district's vision and mission. We continue to partner with organizations like Mount Vernon Public Schools Foundation, SPARC (Skagit Preschool and Resource Center), Children of the Valley, Boys and Girls Club, and the YMCA just to name a few. These organizations have boldly walked beside us especially through these last two challenging years to provide both educational and social emotional support for our students and families. These partnerships demonstrate the depth and breadth of how our community works together to support student learning and well-being.

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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

- Superintendent's Message
- Ribbon Cutting & Centennial Celebration
- Construction Update
- All for Literacy, Literacy for All

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In this issue, you will learn about the status of our construction projects – made possible by your support of the 2016 Bond. You will also read more about our learning and exploration around the concept of a Student Focused Balanced Calendar (SFBC). You will find information on our reading curriculum and many more exciting programs and services we are providing our students and families. These big picture projects come down to one common goal – “100% of our students will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education, careers, and life.” That includes the kindergarten student learning how to be a part of a classroom, the 3rd grader celebrating their accomplishment of reading at grade level, the 6th grade student finding new opportunities to learn through a wide choice of electives, and the high school student successfully completing their math course or earning their seal of biliteracy. Student success comes from every teacher, staff member, family member, community partner, and every student. As a community, we continue to create the conditions for optimal learning success for each and every student!

Please stay healthy and safe.

Warm regards,



Ismael Vivanco, Ed.D

Superintendent, Mount Vernon School District



Ribbon Cutting and Centennial Celebration

The district, board, and community members gathered at the Mount Vernon High School Old Main building on September 28, 2022 to celebrate its 100th birthday and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. We had an amazing turnout, with alumni representing various generations. It was an honor to host this special celebration and to hear all the memories. A few tears were shed as former employees and graduates walked through the halls of their past while simultaneously expressing joy and hope for our future generations of graduates. Thank you all to those who made this such a successful event!



Mount Vernon Alumni return to teach future bulldog graduates

Flor Zamorano-Beltran

Flor graduated from MVHS in 2016. She went on to receive her bachelor's degree from Western Washington University and a Masters from the University of Washington. Flor recalls her teacher, Mr. Satana, as being the first teacher of color that she had, and the impact that had on her.



Washington Elementary

She is grateful to finally fulfilling her goal of becoming a teacher in her community to serve our students and families.

Kayla Angulo

Kayla graduated in 2017. She received her degree at Saint Martin's University. Kayla recalls her AVID teacher, Mr. McColl, who influenced her career choice.



Mount Vernon High School

Kayla played soccer at the high school for 4 years and is now coaching for the girls soccer team.

Ana Casillas-Sanchez

Ana graduated from MVHS in 2010 (She was the first in her family to graduate high school). She attended Skagit Valley College where she first began working on her nursing degree. However, in May 2015, she began subbing as a paraeducator and very quickly changed her

mind about becoming a nurse. In January 2016, Anna was hired at Madison Elementary School as a full-time paraeducator. "When I worked with students, they would have "ah ha" moments, you could see it in their faces as they were making those important connections to understand. It was in working with students that I realized I wanted to



Centennial Elementary

become a teacher. I wanted my own classroom full of these moments!" Ana graduated from Western Washington University this past June! "It was always my goal to become a skilled teacher in my community, so I only applied for jobs in the Mount Vernon School District."

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Director District No. 2

Marissa Guerrero is a MVHS alumni and Skagit Valley College & WWU. She is an accountant at the Skagit County Treasurer's office.



Director District No. 3

Griffin Uchida received his MA in Higher Education Administration from University of Louisville, BA in English Literature and Secondary Education Teaching Certificate from WWU. He is the Director of Residence Life for the Skagit Valley College Foundation.



All for Literacy, Literacy for All

The 2022-2023 school year began Year 1 of our **Literacy for All, All for Literacy** efforts in elementary schools across the Mount Vernon School District! These efforts began in response to brain-based research about how the brain learns how to read, as well as to the nationwide need to make changes to the ways in which students are taught how to read and write in elementary school.

In June, the Mount Vernon School Board approved **American Reading Company** as the new K-5 elementary literacy curriculum. American Reading Company or ARC, is a knowledge building curriculum whose mission is to ensure that every student is reading and writing on or above grade level. ARC uses a structured approach to teach foundational reading and writing skills, and is designed to build and sustain a child's love of reading within and beyond the classroom.

In addition to the adoption of a new literacy curriculum, all elementary schools across the district use a common daily schedule that was created based on research about the amount of time students need to spend engaged in literacy instruction in order to accelerate their literacy skills. This schedule also provides a teacher facilitated recess time during which your child's teacher will address the daily needs of the class to determine if they would most benefit from outdoor unstructured play, outdoor structured play (ie. class game of tag, etc), indoor free play, or an indoor structured game. Intentional opportunities to teach and re-teach students how to play together emerged as an important take away from the 2021-2022 school year.

With an increase in instructional minutes in the area of literacy, with new curricular resources, and with a district-wide elementary daily schedule, we expect to see an acceleration in students' love of reading and in their reading abilities.

Literacy for All, All for Literacy means that we **all** have a role to play in supporting the literacy development of our students. We recently enlisted the help of all staff members...paraeducators, teachers, principals, board members, bus drivers, and district office staff to spend time reading books to individual or small groups of students, we are so grateful for the ways in which everyone is pitching in. We know that these hours of one-to-one reading WILL make all the difference in the lives of our students. We would love to invite the Mount Vernon community to join us in these efforts. If you'd like to volunteer to read to a student, please be sure to fill out the district's volunteer application, which can be found on our website. You can reach out to your child's school, or a school nearby, to get signed up for this opportunity and help our students gain the skills they need to be successful.

Construction Update

On September 28, the District held a ceremonial ribbon cutting event to celebrate the remodel of Old Main on the MVHS campus. The celebration included student-led tours, Folklorico dancing in the rejuvenated auditorium, MVHS Cheerleaders and the MVHS Band. The ribbon cutting also celebrated the 100th birthday of this beautiful building and many alumni reminisced about their days on campus.

While finishing minor details to conclude construction this month, Old Main has been open for students since the first day of school on September 7th. Other construction-related details are also wrapping up across campus with the installation of new fencing and gates, landscaping improvements and minor upgrades to the Ag building.

The final piece of the 2016 Bond will support adding space at LaVenture Middle School. This addition is scheduled to break ground in April 2023 and be completed in November 2023. It will include a maker space, classroom spaces and special education spaces. The addition will connect to the Southwest corner of the existing building.

Student Focused Balanced Calendar

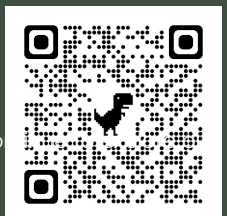
As we continue to move forward in learning about and exploring a Student Focused Balanced Calendar (SFBC), I want to keep you informed and updated. The MVSD Board began discussing and exploring the concept of a modified calendar as it is one of the policy priorities of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The interest also stemmed from the concern in learning loss (summer slide) due to long summer breaks.

The district applied for and received a state grant for the purpose of exploring the concept of a modified calendar. There were no outcome expectations set by the grant.

In 2021-2022 we initiated the Student Focused Balanced Calendar (SFBC) work. This included learning from other districts, state-wide summits, school visits, and book studies.

As we continue to learn, explore, and plan this year, a SFBC Steering Committee composed of MVSD parents, staff, students, community members and labor partners has begun working to share learn and share ideas about what a SFBC might look like. The committee began meeting in October 2022 and will continue through Spring of 2023 to provide direction and guidance on the SFBC to the Superintendent and to serve as a representative of our school district and community.

I encourage you to take a look at our website, where we share resources and information as we co-work around a Student Focused Balanced Calendar.



Featured Alumni

Our Alumni are working to change the world around us

Commissioner Bowers

A lifelong resident of Skagit County, Bonnie Bowers was elected to the Port of Anacortes Board of Commissioners in 2019. Bonnie is one of five Port Commissioners who set policy, establish the Port's long range plans, and acts as steward of public assets. Job creation, economic development, environmental issues, property acquisition, and maintenance of Port assets like buildings and docks, are all areas the Commission considers. For Bowers, it is all about finding a balance between sustainable economic development, while ensuring that the fragile marine environment is preserved for future generations.

Bonnie is a Mount Vernon High School alumni who attended Mount Vernon schools throughout her educational career. As she thought back about her time in our district, she remembers the quality of teachers that she had throughout her years in Mount Vernon. From her kindergarten teacher at Roosevelt School (which is now the District Office) to high school teachers, Bonnie was reminded of their impact on her life "I had fabulous teachers who were creative and encouraged us to be creative."

After graduating from Mount Vernon High School, Bonnie graduated from Washington State University with a BA, and graduated from the FBI National Academy. She used her education and expertise throughout her career in law enforcement. Bonnie spent 33 years working in public safety, culminating with her last nine years as the Anacortes Police Chief.

She retired from police work in 2017, and continues giving back to her community through her work at the Port, and as an active volunteer.

Bonnie volunteers in local schools as a reading tutor. "We have to support local education not only with our tax dollars, we also have to support students with our time, by volunteering and attending events at local schools. Let students know they are important to us, we value their efforts, and are proud of them. We want them to succeed in life, and someday give back to their community. After all, our kids are our hope for the future."



"We have to support local education not only with our tax dollars, we also have to support students with our time..."

Lets stay connected!



Jefferson Elementary
360-428-6128



Centennial Elementary
360-428-6138



Skagit Academy
360-428-6206



Madison Elementary
360-428-6131



Little Mountain Elementary
360-428-6125



NCTA
360-848-0706



Harriet Rowley Elementary
360-428-6199



Mount Baker Middle School
360-428-6127



Mount Vernon High School
360-428-6100



Washington Elementary
360-428-6122



LaVenture Middle School
360-428-6116



Mount Vernon
Virtual Learning

Aspire Academy
360-428-6216

MVVL
360-428-6216

We are Hiring!

Mount Vernon Schools

- **Paraeducator (multiple sites)** Starting @ \$23.33/hour

Substitutes:

- **Bus Drivers** Starting @ \$26.88/hour
- **Teachers** Starting @ \$175.00/Day
- **Secretaries** Starting @ \$22.85/hour
- **Food Service** Starting @ \$21.59/hour
- **Custodians** Starting @ \$26.17/hour

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Contact:
Alexia Bautista
Grace Arnold
Ashleigh Hollmann
Tina Ellison

360-428-6110

WELCOME STUDENT BOARD

During a recent board meeting, we welcomed three new student board representatives to the team. David Pacheco, Mel Fuimaono, and Santiago Calderon III, will serve as liaisons for the board of directors and the MVHS student population. The board and superintendent are excited to have them on the team.



David Pacheco

Mel Fuimaono

Santiago Calderon III

Students receive vital Scholarships

This past August, the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club presented twelve Mount Vernon High School students with a scholarship to go towards their post-secondary education. The Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club has a deep-rooted commitment to serving the Mount Vernon community and the annual scholarships are one of the many ways they give back.

Each year the Kiwanis Club hosts events that help raise funds for these scholarships. One of those events is the annual Salmon BBQ, held in April during tulip season. All proceeds from the Kiwanis Salmon BBQ go directly back to youth and community programs in Skagit Valley. All of the recipients of the scholarship awards had a part in volunteering for this big event.

As part of a yearly tradition, the Mount Vernon Kiwanis Club presented the scholarships to students during a special lunch. Each student had an opportunity to share their hopes and dreams, and thank the Kiwanis Club and the community for the generous scholarships. Out of the twelve students, four were migrant students.

If you would like to learn more about the Kiwanis Scholarship program we encourage you to reach out to one of the counselors at the high school.



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, Jon Ronngren, Director, 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.