



APRIL 2022

MT. VERNON

Mainstream

MV COMMUNITY CARES



Superintendent's Note

As we move into the fourth quarter of the school year, our hopes are high that we are through the worst of the pandemic. Smiling faces abound as our absence rate is low, our substitute fill rate is high, and we are revving our engines for a smooth ride into

summer. Another part of our efforts this last quarter is to ensure that our success continues for many years to come.

As we have shared, the elected board of Mt. Vernon Schools has chosen to put a referendum on the May 3 ballot in order to ensure we maintain revenues in our Operations Fund after the loss of the Increment dollars and increasing tax cap losses. Additionally, our operating referendum will allow us to increase pay for our teachers and classified staff who take care of our students on a daily basis. Bringing those wonderful Mt. Vernon employees closer to market wages is a big part of ensuring a bright future for our school district.

I've been sharing our story with parents and community members through weekly Virtual Traveling Talks and one of the common questions include "Why did we land on a \$0.17 rate?". That rate is quite low in comparison to other school referenda in central Indiana, and that is because we are only asking for what we need. Additionally, a referendum spreads the cost to all taxpayers, including those

"OUR OPERATING REFERENDUM WILL ALLOW US TO INCREASE PAY FOR OUR TEACHERS AND CLASSIFIED STAFF WHO TAKE CARE OF OUR STUDENTS ON A DAILY BASIS."

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Students Walk on Water Project!

SEE INSIDE ►

Referendum Facts – SAVINGS MADE, THE ASK & USE OF FUNDS



As part of the upcoming May 3 Primary ballot, registered voters who live within the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation will have the opportunity to **vote on the operating referendum question placed on the ballot by the MVCSC Board of Trustees after considerable public input.**

Here are key referendum facts:

- Voters will decide on a proposed operating referendum of **17 cents per \$100 of net assessed value on homes or businesses.**
- If approved, the referendum would generate **\$3,201,692 annually to retain and attract outstanding teachers and staff, to support MVCSC general operations, help pay for utilities, transportation and support staff.**

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MT. VERNON
COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

"Engage, Educate & Empower Today's Students"

Facebook.com/MtVernonSchoolDistrict | Twitter.com/MVCSC_District
www.mvcsc.k12.in.us | 1806 W. State Rd 234, Fortville, IN 46040

Become a MV Ambassador during the 2022-2023 School Year!

"WE ARE GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR RESOURCES AND OUR TEAM WORKS HARD TO SAVE MONEY EVERY CHANCE WE GET."



SUPERINTENDENT Continued from page 1

warehouses in TIFs who have captured taxes for redevelopment. Since 2012, \$288,000,000 of non-residential assessed valuation has been captured in a TIF. Should the referendum pass, those businesses in a TIF will be paying a school tax, likely for the first time.

An additional question we receive relates to transfer students. Transfer students, while consistently declining, have no negative impact on our Operations Fund. Since the state implemented a plan to allow schools to send and receive students from other enrollment areas, the money received for tuition follows the child. Mt. Vernon ranks third in net transfer students behind both Southern Hancock and Eastern Hancock. For Mt. Vernon, about 11% of students living in our district transfer out of our district while 15% transfer in and that is going down consistently each year.

Finally, we answer the question related to revenue and expenses in our Operations Fund. Our school district ranks in the middle of the two most comparable districts (Southern Hancock and Greenfield-Central) regarding both revenue and expenses. We are good stewards of our resources and our team works hard to save money every chance we get.

If you have any questions about our referendum, or you want to receive more information, please sign up for a virtual or in-person traveling talk. You can do so at our district website.

Jack

Dr. Jack Parker, Superintendent

MV REFERENDUM FACTS
www.mvcsc.k12.in.us/referendum

Interested in knowing detailed information about Mt. Vernon operations? Consider joining the 2022-2023 MV Ambassadors cohort! These MV Ambassadors attend eight morning meetings during the week and experience behind-the-scenes tours and detailed operational information to share with the community. Learn program information at www.mvcsc.k12.in.us/ambassadors. The 2022-2023 MV Ambassadors application will be live on that webpage in late April!

This year's MV Ambassadors saw student musical performances, experienced a tour of an elementary, middle and the high school, as well as our bus barn. They learned about the operations of many departments at MV and how they each impact student learning. Consider becoming a MV Ambassador in the community!



Mt. Vernon Ambassadors

www.mvcsc.k12.in.us/ambassadors

CONNECTING SCHOOL & COMMUNITY –



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

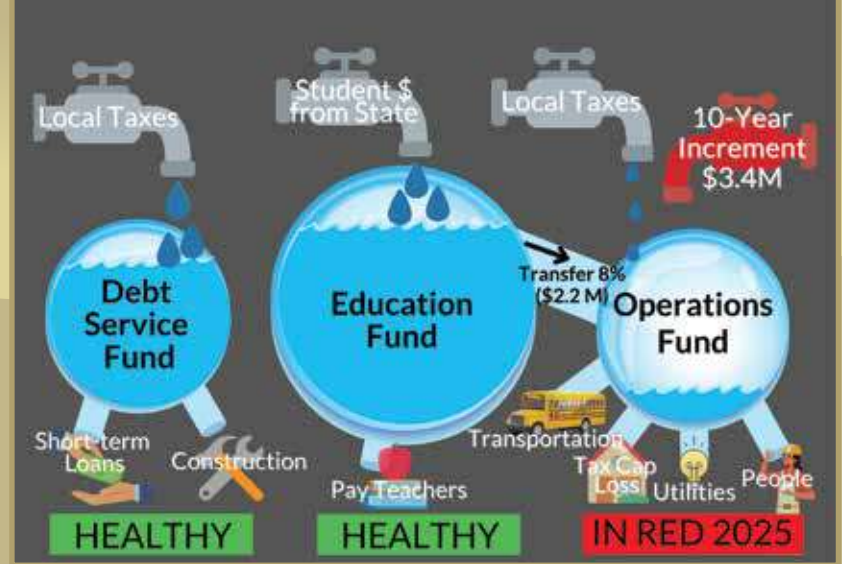
REFERENDUM FACTS with Q&A

"Engage, Educate & Empower Today's Students"

REFERENDUM FACTS

Continued from page 1

- Several factors led to the Board's decision to place a referendum on the ballot:
 - Increment Loss:** Our Increment dollars (\$3.3 million annually for 10 years) that support approximately one-third of our Operations Fund revenue will end in December 2022. This will create a deficit that will impact the district's ability to support our 4,500 students.
 - Fire Territory Financial Loss:** While we support having adequate fire response teams, the fire territory development reduced our Operations Fund revenue by just over \$1 million, annually.
 - Tax Cap Loss:** MVCSC experiences a high tax cap loss, spanning from \$3.5 million in 2021 and an expected \$3.8 million in 2022.
 - Savings made by MVCSC.** Because the school corporation has been aware of the factors listed above and their effect on revenue, MVCSC has reduced expenditures and initiated many savings totaling more than \$2 million each year. These are real savings to you and other taxpayers in our school community.
 - The Ask:** While the \$0.17 ask is an investment of \$14.02 per month to the average household in our district valued at \$201,000, the referendum will also tax businesses located in TIF districts that are currently not paying taxes.



Funds Will Be Used for:

- The referendum funds will help **retain teachers and classified staff**.
- This will better enable us to **maintain our low class sizes and continue our "A" rating** from the Indiana Department of Education for our schools.
- These referendum funds would additionally **provide at least one School Resource Officer in all schools and two at the high school – to ensure the safety of our 4,500 students**.
- The referendum funds would replace the increment dollars and fire territory revenue loss, making our Operations Fund solvent. We have **made enough savings to not need to recapture the full Operations Fund revenue loss of over \$9 million**.

We encourage you to visit mvcsc.k12.in.us/referendum for an interactive chart to determine the amount of your investment to support our schools.

Our Mt. Vernon Schools **join over a hundred other Indiana school districts in seeking the support of residents via the public referendum process.**

Dr. Parker invites the community to join him for an open-forum discussion in this spring's remaining **Traveling Talks** meetings. The Traveling Talks, which Dr. Parker has been conducting for the past several months, are a mutually beneficial opportunity for the community to connect with the school district, and for school leadership to get to know more about you and other residents of the community. Dr. Parker will share facts about the May 3 referendum and will provide an overall update on the status of our school district. We welcome you to engage directly with Dr. Parker to share your opinions, hopes, questions, and/or concerns about Mt. Vernon schools.

VIRTUAL Traveling Talks

Register to attend at mvcsc.k12.in.us, and the Zoom link will be emailed.

TUESDAY, APRIL 5: 6 – 7 P.M.

TUESDAY, APRIL 12: NOON – 1 P.M.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20: NOON – 1 P.M.

TUESDAY, APRIL 26: 6 – 7 P.M.

IN-PERSON Traveling Talks

No registration necessary. Just show up, look for the table signs and grab your own meal!

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13: 6 P.M.

(The Grill in McCordsville)

FRIDAY, APRIL 9: NOON

(Sero's in Cumberland)

Cost-Cutting Corner

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation is always seeking opportunities to stretch tax dollars and identify both short- and long-term savings. Here are a few examples from the past year:



- The **installation of LED lighting district-wide**. An investment of \$841,335 will yield total maintenance and utility expense savings of \$1 million over 11 years.
- Middle school **renovations to art, music and cafe** were budgeted at a minimum of \$3.7 million in construction costs. The final cost remained at \$3.7 million, but eventually included all alternate bids (**upgrades**) at **no additional cost**.
- District-wide HVAC and mechanical/electrical/plumbing upgrades. For an investment of \$8.4 million, the total maintenance and **utility expense savings over six years is \$10.2 million**.
- **The Stewardship Project costs (mainly updating roofs & HVAC systems) came in under original budget projections, which allowed an investment of \$500,000 in technology infrastructure upgrades** to the middle school without increasing total project costs.
- The anticipated increase in property values for the budget year 2022 will allow the district to pay back the 2022 bus financing and a \$2.7 million dollar General Obligation Bond in one year, **(for continued Stewardship Project improvements), thus saving an additional year of financing and interest costs – all without an increase to the debt service tax rate**.
- The cost for **installing ionization air purifiers for all classrooms throughout the district** came in under budget with a saving of \$20,000 and is financed through the federal ESSER III grant – designed to assist schools with pandemic-related expenses.
- The East Central Indiana Natural Gas Consortium (ECINGC), of which Mt. Vernon is a member, last fall agreed unanimously to purchase natural gas at current market rates, stockpiling supplies for winter 2021-2022. **With gas rates increasing rapidly, this early purchasing resulted in substantial savings.**
- The district is also **evaluating its purchasing and procurement processes in order to gain savings** in the future.



Become a Middle School Mentor!

Looking for a great way to give back to the community in the form of helping students? The Mt. Vernon Education Foundation is seeking adult mentors to work with Mt. Vernon Middle School Students. These “Make A Difference in A Student’s Life!” mentors will help students learn about careers, develop big dreams for the future and understand the importance of doing well in school.

The time commitment is one hour per week. All meetings will be daytime sessions at Mt. Vernon Middle School. All volunteers will be trained and given guidelines and support. Background checks and interviews will be required.

You can help by volunteering your time as a mentor or by providing funding that helps recruit, train, screen, and manage volunteers. To apply, visit mtvernonfoundation.org under the “News” tab.

Questions may be directed to the Mt. Vernon Education Foundation’s Executive Director Renee Oldham by emailing Renee@MtVernonFoundation.org or by e-mailing MarauderMentors@gmail.com.

Walk on Water is a Floating Showcase of Student Learning

Mt. Vernon Middle School (MVMS) eighth graders recently participated in the annual Walk on Water science experiment. Multiple teams competed in the project, which challenged students to use their critical thinking skills. Each team built a float that would allow one member of their team to "walk" across the length of the pool. The floats were not tested until the day of the challenge. If the float sank before it crossed the pool, the team was out of the competition.

The project is designed to test students' knowledge of problem solving, the scientific method, planning a long-term project, teamwork and writing a formal lab report. Students are encouraged to think outside of the box. Some of the scientific concepts the students have to consider are: propulsion, density, energy, energy transfer, Newton's Laws, and stability.

Mrs. Stacy Griner, Eighth Grade Science Teacher and also "Walk on Water" creator stated, "The project gives an exciting way for the students to engage in their learning. They have to work as a team, use critical thinking skills and scientific knowledge to choose their device and physically build it. The kids love it and really get into the project and the secrecy of their construction."



Many teams were in the spirit of the event and dressed up in their float's theme. Superheroes, tutu's, butterflies and lifeguards were all popular themes this year.

The project allows for an atmosphere of excitement and friendly competition, as well as entertainment. This unique curriculum-based event is one of the capstone activities at Mt. Vernon Middle School. It was a fun day of learning for all involved!



"Because of You" Campaign Thanks Amazing MVCSC Employees



Our dedicated Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation employees contribute so much to our students' well being and to a strong community that it seems impossible to adequately thank them all.

But now, a "Because of You ..." postcard campaign is giving community members an opportunity to try. Anyone wanting to express appreciation to a Mt. Vernon employee may share a kind message with a bus driver, teacher, cafeteria worker, instructional assistant, custodian, or any staff member. The Mt. Vernon employee being recognized receives a "Because of You..." postcard with a personalized message from the sender. The campaign has been a wonderful success, with nearly 175 staff or community members so far sending "Because of You ..." messages to staff in every department. Want to join in expressing your appreciation for someone? It's easy; just go to mvcsc.k12.in.us, look under "News Articles" and click on the "Because of You" to fill out your message.

Student Highlights



Mt. Vernon students do amazing things every day with their talent, hard work and achievements. A few of our recent highlights at MVHS include:

- Band of Marauders member, Jebediah Lottes (Jeb), has been selected for the 2022 Indiana All-State High School Band sponsored by the Indiana Bandmasters Association (IBA).
- Senior Carson Johnson and freshman Devin Kendrex earned spots in the IHSAA state wrestling finals in February and
- seven boys swimmers also competed at state.
- Junior Sierra Pienkowski advanced to the state finals in girls wrestling in January.
- Girls Soccer program received the Team Pinnacle Award for the 2020 season (issued by the United Soccer Coaches Association a year after each season to assess information on teams from across the country). Mt. Vernon girls team was one of only two in Indiana and 48 in the United States to earn the honor for the 2020 season.
- FCCLA earned a gold chapter award at the state conference, with many individual projects also receiving top awards.

15th ANNIVERSARY
MT. VERNON EDUCATION FOUNDATION

THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE
home

BLACK
& GOLD
GALA

Reserve Your Tickets

Join other Mt. Vernon supporters for the 2022 Black & Gold Gala on April 23, 2022, from 6 p.m. to 12 a.m., at the JW Marriott Indianapolis, located at 10 S. West Street in Indianapolis. This is a chance to support students by participating in the Mt. Vernon Education Foundation's (MVEF) annual signature fundraising event. Highlights include honoring Mt. Vernon's Teachers/Staff of the Year and Distinguished Alumni Awards.

"Engage, Educate & Empower Today's Students"

Our MV Football Champions Recognized!



4A Football Champions were recognized in Washington D.C with a congressional record from Representative Pence, and were also recognized in the statehouse by Representative Jeter and Senator Crider.



for the April 23 Black & Gold Gala

Cost is \$100 a person.
Tickets may be reserved at [MtVernonFoundation.org](https://www.MtVernonFoundation.org).

The MVEF, led by its Board of Directors, with the help of many generous volunteers, works to facilitate through business and education partnerships, the fostering of programs, alliances, and resources to impact student learning and assist educators within the public school system. The foundation supports these areas through programs, partnerships, and advocacy initiatives.

Since its founding in 2007, MVEF has awarded more than \$900,000 in teacher grants and has proven itself adaptable in meeting current student needs.

FEATURED MT. VERNON SCHOOL: Mt. Vernon Middle School Snapshot

- ★ Indiana Department of Education Four Star School – 9 times total
- ★ STEM Certified by the Indiana Department of Education – 2018
- ★ Gold Star Rated Counseling Program by the Indiana Department of Education
- ★ Part of an “A” rated district
- ★ Named a Unified Champions in the Middle School by the Special Olympics & Indiana High School Athletic Association
- ★ Attendance Rate: 2019-2020 – 95.61%
- ★ Exceeded statewide assessment average from 2021 iLearn Test in English for grades 6-8 and in Math for grades 6-7, and Science for grade 6.
- ★ \$10 million renovation featuring a new fieldhouse, collaborative classrooms, and additional classrooms – 2018
- ★ Renovation project for the band room, choir room, art room, and expanded cafeteria – 2021
- ★ Student Council named “Honor Council” for 14 years
- ★ All students have their own touchscreen Chromebook
- ★ Academic competitions available including all core subjects
- ★ 20 clubs, including a new Drama Club (2021) or extracurricular opportunities, in addition to 19 athletic teams
- ★ Enriching “Walk on Water” 8th grade cross-curricular project
- ★ Winner of the Bayer STEM Grant which funded a second robotics class
- ★ Video surveillance and high-tech safety features
- ★ English Language Learners (ELL) assistance program
- ★ Almost 9,000 books in the media center, meeting the needs and interests of all students
- ★ Speech/language, special education, high ability, and social worker programs
- ★ Highly Effective School Accreditation 2021-2022
- ★ Multi-year National Assessment of Educational Progress school participation
- ★ Marauder Mentor program
- ★ Exceeded the national average growth in winter NWEA in all grade levels in math, language arts, and reading

(PER THE LATEST STATISTICS FROM THE INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION)

BROOKE THARPE, PRINCIPAL

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www.mvcsc.k12.in.us



Kindergarten

REGISTRATION

Online registration is now open for incoming Kindergarten students to attend Mt. Vernon during the 2022-2023 school year.

Mark your calendars for an IN-PERSON Kindergarten Registration!

Tuesday, April 5 OR Thursday, April 7

from 3:00-6:00 p.m. at any elementary school: Fortville Elementary, McCordsville Elementary and Mt. Comfort Elementary.

It is imperative to have all Kindergarten students register so schools can prepare enough teachers to keep class sizes low. MVCSC will have FULL day kindergarten only. **Students need to be 5 on or before August 1 to attend kindergarten in 2022-2023.**

Visit mvcsc.k12.in.us for instructions on the three simple steps to register your Class of '35 kindergarten student to attend Mt. Vernon in 2022-2023! Please visit the website for details for online registration and what information to bring to the kindergarten registration event.



◀ **See Inside!!**
MV Community Cares