



APRIL 2021

MT. VERNON

# Mainstream

OPERATIONS & FINANCES



## Superintendent's Note

As we complete our third quarter and move to the final stretch of the year, we have a lot to be thankful for. The difficulties we faced during this global pandemic have been numerous. While not ideal, our staff met these challenges with compassion, determination

and creativity. Many of the things we were forced to do have seen benefits that will survive COVID-19, and we will certainly be stronger because of our efforts.

For the first time, we are beginning to see a possible return to normalcy. With the direction the pandemic is going and with the increase in immunity, we may have a more "regular" 2021-22 school year. Our plans for next year include a wealth of knowledge gained this school year. We know that our stringent health and safety procedures have seen very little to no transfer of the virus in our schools. The comfort in knowing that we have the ability to combat this virus and do our part in keeping our students and staff safe has given us our best chance to catch our students back up when the new school year begins.

To that end, we are planning and preparing to increase our almost 83% of 4,300 students learning in-person to nearly 100% for next school year. We expect that there may be a

*Continued on page 2*

**"... WE ARE PLANNING AND PREPARING TO INCREASE OUR ALMOST 83% OF STUDENTS LEARNING IN-PERSON TO NEARLY 100% FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR."**

## SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCES

SEE INSIDE ►



## Cost-Cutting Corner

Here are a few ways the district has saved you and other taxpayers money in an effort to continue to be good stewards of our financial resources:

The district saved \$560,000 in the December 2020 debt payments by refinancing two bond series in the spring. These savings will be used to support operational expenses over the next two years.

The district chose to switch the Employee Clinic to IU Health, which saved approximately \$35K annually.

The district chose to narrow its health network at the beginning of 2021. This decision was made to reduce overall healthcare costs. The district anticipates a significant savings in the cost of prescription claims by nearly \$1M.

All of these initiatives have one thing in mind: to provide the best educational opportunities for our students and to use our taxpayer dollars in the most effective manner.



**MT. VERNON**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

**"Engage, Educate & Empower Today's Students"**

Facebook.com/MtVernonSchoolDistrict | Twitter.com/MVCSC\_District  
www.mvsc.k12.in.us | 1806 W. State Rd 234, Fortville, IN 46040

**"OUR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY LAUNCHED A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE OUR TEACHERS' CAPACITY TO INSTRUCT IN BLENDED AND VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS, BASED ON STUDENTS' NEEDS."**

*SUPERINTENDENT Continued from page 1*

few students who need to learn virtually, and some students have shown great success in learning from home.

Our Curriculum and Instruction department has already launched a comprehensive plan to significantly increase our teachers' capacity to instruct in blended and virtual environments, based on students' needs. It is through efforts like these that we can continue to meet each student where they are and help each learn at high levels for many years to come.

*Jack*

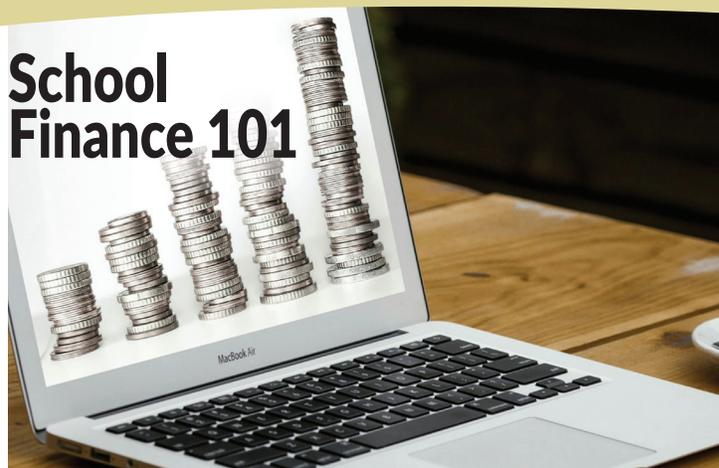
Dr. Jack Parker, Superintendent

## Future Growth Plan Update

The MVCSC Board of Trustees voted 5-0 to build a new elementary school at their January meeting. The motion also included the plan to borrow another elementary architectural plan that will result in saving the district approximately \$500,000. Next, leadership will provide the MVCSC Board of Trustees several options on locations, building plans, finances, maximizing the use of current buildings and much more.

"Future Growth Plan" information can be found on [www.mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvcsc.k12.in.us) under the "Community" tab.

## School Finance 101



The school corporation manages five separate funds that are approved by the state government.

The **Education Fund**, used primarily for teacher salaries and supplies, is funded by the state based on annual enrollment and a per dollar amount for each student. The current Indiana legislative session will be approving a two-year budget which will determine the amount of dollars per student we receive for the Education Fund.

The revenues from the **Operations Fund**, **Debt Service Fund**, and **Pension Debt Fund** come mostly from local property taxes. The property tax based funds were approved during the fall of 2020 budget season. The corporation anticipates receiving approximately \$17.5 million in local property taxes to support student transportation, pay for utilities, maintenance supplies, and pay back the municipal bonds which were sold to provide revenue for various projects. Our 2020 total costs in those funds equaled \$24.5 million. Due to property tax caps loss, MVCSC will not receive \$2.7 million in tax revenue during 2021.

The **Rainy Day Fund** is our savings account that is supported by refunds, rebates, credit card rewards, and has deliberate transfers of savings into the other funds.

The corporation also manages several other funds that are based on state and federal grants.

While there is some movement of dollars between the funds, primarily 8% of the Education Fund is transferred to support the Operations Fund. These funds still operate separately and distinctly from one another. There are also specific restrictions between the funds, such as the Debt Service revenue cannot be used to pay for teacher salaries.

**Please note that the state of Indiana does not fund capital projects for the construction and/or renovation of schools.**



## Mt. Vernon Middle School Renovation

**The Mt. Vernon Middle School (MVMS) is beginning the eagerly awaited \$5.1 million renovation. The project includes expanding and renovating the band, choir, and art room, as well as enlarging the cafeteria.**

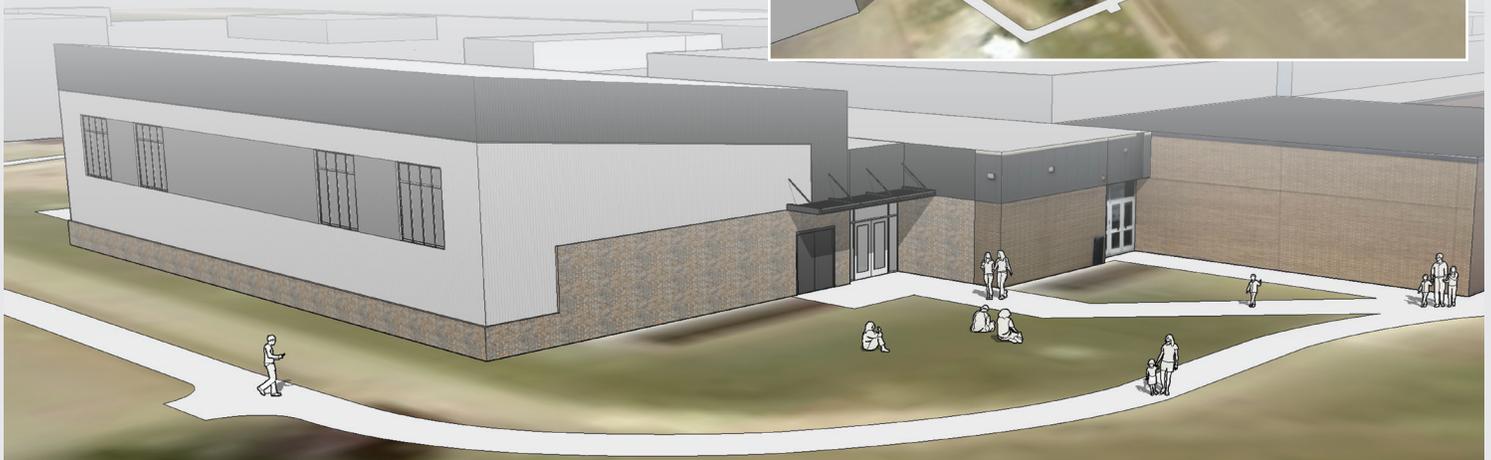
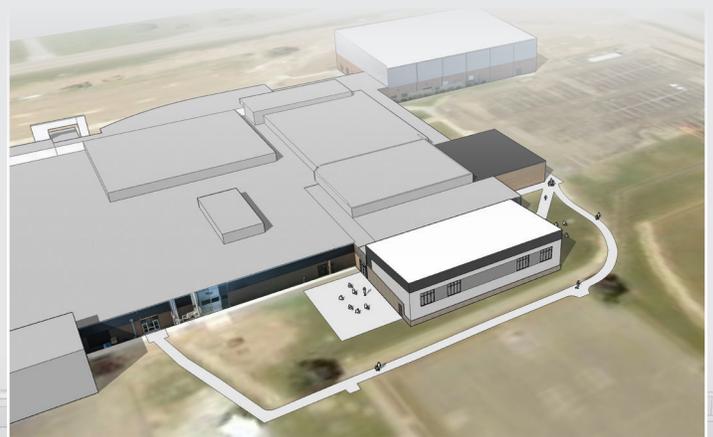
MVCSC's Director of Operations, Mr. Derek Shelton, shares that as long as construction moves according to plans, the project should be finished close to Thanksgiving. Mr. Shelton said that he is excited to see the benefits that the MVMS students will experience with the expansion and renovation of the band, choir, and art rooms. He stated, "This renovation will help our students and enable them to learn at the highest level that they can, while providing the necessary capacity to serve over 900 students."

Mr. Stephen Day, MVMS Band Director shared, "I have had the privilege of being the band director at MVMS since 2003. The MVMS band room does not measure up to what was available at the former Mt. Vernon Intermediate School (for 5th and 6th grade band), or at MVHS. The size of the MVMS band room has been quite limiting. For several years, I couldn't even fit a grade level band in the band room. It is my sincere hope that this new band room becomes an invitation for growth within the MV band program. I am optimistic that many, many students will benefit from this addition to Mt. Vernon Middle School."

The bids for the construction were very competitive; MVCSC will be financing this project through the sale of bonds in 2021. The additional project costs and debt payments were structured so that the debt tax rate would not be impacted.

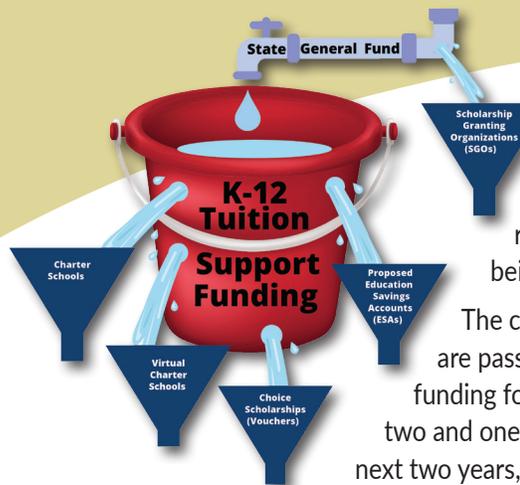


*MVMS band moved into the Marauder Hall for the 2020-2021 school year to accommodate social distancing.*



# MVCSC Board of Trustees Signs Resolution

## Opposing HB 1005 that Reduces Public Education Funds



The MVCSC Board of Trustees signed a resolution that opposes the passage and signing of House Bill (HB) 1005, Senate Bill (SB) 412, and SB 413, or any other bill expanding vouchers and/or creating Education Savings Accounts (ESAs). Specifically, the Indiana General Assembly is reviewing HB 1005 that establishes Education Savings Accounts and removes over \$220M in public education funds, therefore, reducing funds that could be used for teachers' salaries. These school choice proposals being considered will have an immediate and profound negative impact on public schools.

The cost of ESAs is exclusively taken from Indiana's school tuition support fund. If these bills are passed, public schools will receive less than one-third of Governor Holcomb's increase in funding for public schools for 2022, and \$0 in 2023 if his recommended tuition support increases two and one percent for those fiscal years, respectively. HB 1005 will cost more than \$200M over the next two years, consuming most of the \$227M increase in education funding proposed by the Governor. If passed, this legislation will have an immediate and negative impact on our ability to retain and recruit outstanding teachers/staff and to offer programs that benefit our 4,300 students.

## Out-of-District/Transfer Windows

Students who live out-of-district and wish to transfer into Mt. Vernon Schools for the 2021-2022 school year must complete an online application during either of the designated windows in the spring. Also, all students who are currently attending a Mt. Vernon school and do not live within the school district boundaries are required to submit an application during either of these selected windows to attend during the 2021-2022 school year. As Superintendent Dr. Parker and members of our locally-elected School Board have previously shared, once you are a Mt. Vernon student/family, those students who submit an application

will remain part of the Mt. Vernon family, unless there are major discipline or attendance issues. **Parents/guardians of out-of-district/transfer students should mark their calendar to apply for the 2021-2022 school year through the live application link on [www.mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvcsc.k12.in.us) during either of these two weeks:**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 16 at 5 P.M.  
through MONDAY, APRIL 26 at 8 A.M.**

**FRIDAY, MAY 7 at 5 P.M.  
through MONDAY, MAY 17 at 8 A.M.**



## MVEF Black & Gold Gala Masquerade

**SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2021 | JW MARRIOTT INDIANAPOLIS**  
[mtvernonfoundation.home.qtego.net](http://mtvernonfoundation.home.qtego.net)

The Mt. Vernon Education Foundation is proud to host the in person Black and Gold Gala Masquerade. Come be a part of this signature fundraising event that joins the Mt. Vernon community in supporting excellence in public education for every student, every day through grants, programs, and initiatives that directly benefit the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation.

Celebrate the community's spirit of generosity to ensure the continuation of a top-notch "A" school district. The Gala's success plays an important role in meeting the MVEF mission of developing lifelong learners, along with providing relevant real-world experiences for our students. All proceeds help enrich the educational experiences, programs and initiatives of our students and teachers in the Mt. Vernon Community School District. MVEF has granted nearly \$700K since its inception in 2008.

For more information or to purchase tickets visit [mtvernonfoundation.home.qtego.net](http://mtvernonfoundation.home.qtego.net)



**"Engage, Educate & Empower Today's Students"**

# Operations Fund – 2024 Imbalance

In 2012, MVCSC was approved by state law for a unique, but temporary, debt restructuring plan. The plan allowed the district to move \$3.3 million dollars (called the “Increment”) from its Debt Service Fund to what is now known as the Operations Fund. Normally, these types of transfers are not allowed. However, this transfer was permitted for a 10-year period.

Beginning in 2023, this source of operations revenue will cease and no further transfers can be made. However, the \$3.3 million can still be collected in the Debt Service Fund for construction needs due to enrollment growth. This is a positive to Debt Service in that the \$3.3 million is already a part of the current rate, therefore, continuing to collect this will not raise the debt tax rate. In addition, the district is losing over \$1 million in our Operations Fund each year due to the Vernon Township Fire Territory. **There is currently no legislative or practical means for recapturing this revenue to the Operations Fund through normal budgeting procedures. The impact of this lost \$4.3 million to the Operations Fund is projected to cause a budget deficit as early as 2024.**

The corporation has begun taking steps to address this loss but the impact will be significant. To avoid the Operations Fund from becoming perpetually negative, the district will continue to operate in a responsible and frugal manner while continuing to explore new revenue sources. Simply making additional cuts will not counter-balance the revenue loss. A significant amount of expenses in our Operations Fund provides transportation to our 4,300 students, covers utilities and maintenance supplies for six facilities, and helps to staff our maintenance and custodial crews district-wide.

## Congratulations to Mrs. Brooke Tharp, MVMS Principal

MVCSC has named Mrs. Brooke Tharp as the new Mt. Vernon Middle School Principal, effective June 9, 2021. Tharp has served as the assistant principal of Mt. Vernon High School since 2016 and brings over 20 years classroom teaching experience to this leadership position.

During her time as the MVHS assistant principal, Tharp was heavily involved in the crisis prevention and safety team as well as their Professional Learning Communities. Her interpersonal relationship skills and experience in curriculum development, instructional practice and assessment were an integral component leading to her selection as principal of Mt. Vernon Middle School.



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

- Part of an “A” rated district
- Has been an Indiana Department of Education Four Star School – 9 times total
- STEM Certified by the Indiana Department of Education – 2018 - Present
- Gold Star Rated Counseling Program by the Indiana Department of Education
- Named a Unified Champions in the Middle School by the Special Olympics & Indiana High School Athletic Association
- Attendance Rate: 2019-2020 – 96.4%
- Exceeded Statewide Assessment Average from 2019 iLearn Test in English for Grades 6-8 and in Math for Grades 7-8
- Recent Renovation Project for the Band Room, Choir Room, Art Room, and Expanded Cafeteria to be Completed in 2021
- Student Council Named an “Honor Council” for 12 Straight Years
- 990 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

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

**MIKE RATERS, INTERIM PRINCIPAL**  
**1862 W. STATE ROAD 234, FORTVILLE, IN 46040**  
**(317) 485-3160**

[twitter.com/MtVernon\\_MS](https://twitter.com/MtVernon_MS)

[facebook.com/MtVernonMiddleSchool](https://facebook.com/MtVernonMiddleSchool)

[instagram.com/Mt.Vernon\\_MS](https://instagram.com/Mt.Vernon_MS)

# New MVCSC School Board Members



Chad Gray (left) and Phil Edwards (above)

graduates, and two are currently enrolled in the district. Gray attended the University of Indianapolis and graduated with a B.S. in math and math education. He also received his M.Ed. In Education Administration from the University of Cincinnati. Regarding his tenure on the MVCSC Board of Trustees, he shared, "I would like to help Mt. Vernon continue to progress in a fiscally responsible way as the community grows. I would also like to see us continue to have highly effective curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities."

MVCSC looks forward to continuing to grow as a district under the leadership of the MVCSC Board of Trustees. Congratulations and welcome Phil Edwards and Chad Gray!

The Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation (MVCSC) Board of Trustees welcomed Phil Edwards and Chad Gray as new members during the reorganization meeting on Monday, January 11. Edwards and Gray won the school board race in November, along with incumbent Tony May.

In the reorganization meeting, the MVCSC Board of Trustees determined Kellie Freeman will remain President, the First Vice President is Tony May, Secretary is Shannon Walls, the Second Vice President is Chad Gray, and the Assistant Secretary is Phil Edwards.

Phil Edwards is the Lead Pastor at Fortville Church of the Nazarene. In 1980, he graduated with a B.A. degree in Religion from Mid-America Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas. He has lived in Fortville with his family since 2003. During his tenure on the MVCSC Board of Trustees, Phil Edwards states that he plans to lend a listening ear and be a source of encouragement to all of the Mt. Vernon families. "I look forward to helping give support, guidance, and leadership to the direction our school system is going in meeting the needs of our students, teachers, and administration."

Chad Gray has lived in Cumberland since 2005. He has four children, two of whom are MVHS



## VIRTUAL Traveling Talks with Superintendent Dr. Jack Parker

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Superintendent Dr. Jack Parker has scheduled Virtual "Traveling Talks" to keep the community connected with the school. These Virtual "Traveling Talks" are an opportunity for community members to communicate directly with Dr. Parker and share their hopes, questions, and/or concerns about Mt. Vernon schools. Join in and get to know Dr. Parker!

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28 - NOON-1 P.M.**

**TUESDAY, MAY 18 - NOON-1 P.M.**

Sign up to attend a Virtual "Traveling Talks" by visiting [www.mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvcsc.k12.in.us) and hear the latest update on the schools and future growth of MVCSC. Attendees will receive an email with the Zoom link the day before the meeting.

**“I ENJOYED BEING AROUND YOUNG PEOPLE, WATCHING THEM LEARN AND MYSELF LEARNING AND RELEARNING ALONGSIDE THEM. I ALSO GAINED AN ADMIRATION FOR THE TEACHERS AND STAFF THAT I’M SURE I DID NOT HAVE WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL. I OBSERVED HOW THEY PLACED THE EDUCATION OF THE STUDENTS IN THEIR CARE AS A TOP PRIORITY AND THAT I COULD BE PART OF THAT EXPERIENCE.”**

—MYRON MAY, REGULAR MV SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

## Substitutes and Staff Recruiting Success

Throughout the pandemic, MVCSC has maintained focus on the importance of student learning. In order to achieve this, substitute teachers have played a crucial role in keeping our schools operating every day. Due to a substitute recruiting marketing initiative, 19 new substitutes, exclusively serving Mt. Vernon, have been hired by Kelly Services. This brought the first semester’s substitute fill rate of 50% up to 72% in 2021.

Working with Kelly Services, Mt. Vernon simplified the typical substitute recruitment process and added some advantageous incentives. A pay structure increase as well as additional monetary bonuses were implemented to increase substitute interest. Any substitute who completes a week long assignment (or longer) in one building will earn an additional \$10 more/day. Once their assignment has been completed and verified, Kelly Services will also award a \$75 bonus.

During the months of February and May (the two highest months of teacher absenteeism), MVCSC offers \$100 per day for all substitute teaching positions. MVCSC also developed an internal “fast track” system where school principals can provide a recommendation to speed up the onboarding process.

One of Mt. Vernon’s regular substitutes, Myron May, shared, “I first began by accepting openings at many different schools and grade levels. I soon found that I enjoyed being around young people, watching them learn and myself learning and relearning alongside them. I also gained an admiration for the teachers and staff that I’m sure I did not have when I was in school. I observed how they placed the education of the students in their care as a top priority and that I could be part of that experience.”

May also shared, “Even though I have subbed at many schools, the Mt. Vernon schools became my district of choice. During



the past school year, I have worked exclusively at MVCSC. I enjoy all aspects of Mt. Vernon schools. The teachers and staff are very helpful and always let me know how much they appreciate my assistance. However, the major reason I like Mt. Vernon is because of the students. I have watched many of them transition from elementary to middle to high school. I relish in the fact that I have been a part in their growth and accomplishments.”

Chris Smedley, Assistant Superintendent, says, “Based on the feedback we have received from several of our current subs, we believe that if we can attract more new substitutes into our buildings, they will realize what a great place Mt. Vernon

schools are to serve and want to continue to be a part of our Mt. Vernon team.”

**“WE BELIEVE THAT IF WE CAN ATTRACT MORE NEW SUBSTITUTES INTO OUR BUILDINGS, THEY WILL REALIZE WHAT A GREAT PLACE MT. VERNON SCHOOLS ARE TO SERVE AND WANT TO CONTINUE TO BE A PART OF OUR MT. VERNON TEAM.”**

—CHRIS SMEDLEY, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Through the Kelly Rewards program, subs also have the opportunity to earn points for every day worked and redeem them for extra money. Substitutes through Kelly Services can also enjoy the Kelly Perk Spot discounts on cell phone services, travel, shopping and more through this program. For those who qualify, health insurance and 401K benefits from Kelly Services are available.

In addition to recruiting substitutes, MVCSC has also been recruiting bus drivers, custodians and instructional assistants. MVCSC released four employee recruitment videos, highlighting testimonials, benefits, pay, and other important information. These videos can be seen on the [www.mvcsc.k12.in.us/](http://www.mvcsc.k12.in.us/) employment webpage, along with details for each position. To become a substitute, begin by scheduling a time to talk with Kelly Services at [rebrand.ly/substitute](http://rebrand.ly/substitute).



**MT. VERNON**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

1806 W. State Rd 234, Fortville, IN 46040

Facebook.com/MtVernonSchoolDistrict

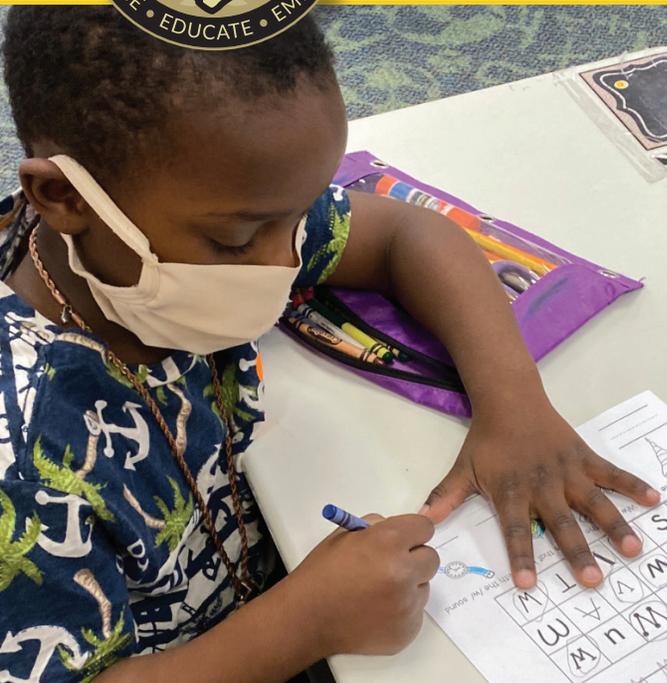
Twitter.com/MVCSC\_District

www.mvcsc.k12.in.us



**MT. VERNON**

# Kindergarten Registration



Kindergarten Registration is coming up soon! After completing online registration through the Kindergarten Registration links at [mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://mvcsc.k12.in.us), plan to attend an in person Kindergarten Registration (available at all three Mt. Vernon elementary schools) on either of the following dates:

**Tuesday, April 6 OR Thursday, April 8, 2021**

**3:00 - 6:30 p.m. at Fortville, McCordsville, or Mt. Comfort Elementary Schools**

Students should attend during their assigned window with **one** parent/guardian.

**Last Names: A-I ~ 3:00-4:00 | J-R ~ 4:15-5:15 | S-Z ~ 5:30-6:30**

Each incoming kindergarten student will be allowed one adult to attend with them and no siblings (due to pandemic restrictions). Parents/guardians should visit the article on [www.mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvcsc.k12.in.us) for details on the necessary paperwork to bring to kindergarten registration.

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. On or before August 1, 2021 students must be 5 years old to attend kindergarten. Visit "Kindergarten Registration" on [mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://mvcsc.k12.in.us) for more information.

◀ **See Inside!!  
District Finances**