



MARCH 2022

MT. VERNON

# Mainstream

PROUDLY A-RATED



## Superintendent's Note

Mt. Vernon is a special community made up of people who support one another and treat everyone like family. Our growing community has seen many changes over the years; however, the same high expectations and continued success found in our schools has

shone through. Mt. Vernon is an A-rated school district with excellent opportunities for our students to experience success during their formative years.

As we continue to grow, we will continue to seek your guidance and support as we determine the next and best steps forward for the future. That input, received when hundreds of community members came together to develop our Future Growth Plan, identified how to add our next school. That plan has resulted in fact-based decisions to replace Fortville Elementary School with a new elementary school and to use the existing Fortville Elementary once again as an intermediate school. The inclusive community plan helped guide our decisions to consolidate the fifth and sixth grades into a Mt. Vernon Intermediate School.

Another important element of our planning was fiscal accountability that will enable us to do all of this work without the need to raise the debt service tax rate.

While the last couple of years have been very challenging for all communities, our focus

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*Continued on page 2*

## May 3 Ballot Facts

SEE INSIDE ►



### HANCOCK COUNTY VOCATIONAL INITIATIVE

## MVCSC is Among Hancock County Districts Exploring Vocational Career Center

Many students find both personal rewards and good-paying careers through vocational education, also known as career and technical education courses. Few central Indiana school districts have grown more than Mt. Vernon has by adding additional vocational opportunities to prepare students for success in their future vocations.

*Continued on page 2*



**MT. VERNON**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

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

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**“WE TRULY HAVE A SPECIAL  
COMMUNITY AND WE THANK YOU  
FOR BEING AN IMPORTANT PART. TOGETHER,  
WE WILL ACCOMPLISH PROVIDING A WONDERFUL PLACE  
FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN AND STAFF TO WORK.”**



*SUPERINTENDENT Continued from page 1*

on in-person learning has seen significant growth from students who left learning on the table when they were home as a virtual student last year. Our success has been solely founded on the great work of our Mt. Vernon teachers and staff. They have persevered and put innovative teaching methods into the lives of their students. We are exceptionally proud of their dedication to our schools. Our residents believe that Mt. Vernon Schools are special due to the amazing faculty and staff who work tirelessly to meet the needs of our students. I agree wholeheartedly.

Mt. Vernon has continued to diversify the career-oriented curriculum offered to our students. Just this year, we began a comprehensive welding program that provides multiple certifications designed to prepare our students for the jobs available upon graduation. In addition, our health services program that we implemented last year has led to dozens of additional high school students to be engaged in learning opportunities that will lead to strong employability in our community. We are dedicated to continually increasing opportunities that will prepare them for good-paying jobs upon graduation.

Instilling a love of learning for our students to have a successful future is a priority for Mt. Vernon. We truly have a special community and we thank you for being an important part. Together, we will accomplish providing a wonderful place for students to learn and staff to work.

*Jack*

Dr. Jack Parker, Superintendent

**MV REFERENDUM FACTS**  
[www.mvcsc.k12.in.us/referendum](http://www.mvcsc.k12.in.us/referendum)

*VOCATIONAL INITIATIVE Continued from page 1*

MVCSC Superintendent Jack Parker shares that superintendents of all four Hancock County school districts have created a collaborative vocational task force. Collectively, these business owners, superintendents, and county representatives created a vision and beliefs to establish a career education center in Hancock County. These county stakeholders see many possibilities to provide in-county vocational education that in the past have been available only through career centers in Anderson or New Castle or Indianapolis – a distance that has proved to be a barrier for some students and their families.

Superintendent Dr. Parker led the vocational team, which included Mt. Vernon High School Assistant Principal Stan Wilkison. Through several meetings, the task force developed the vision, “Every Hancock County resident has an opportunity for career success through relevant workforce training.”

The shared vision of the four school districts includes a center that would partner with community colleges and businesses and create an opportunity for students to earn certifications or dual-credits in numerous areas, possibly including heating and air, plumbing, electrical, auto mechanics and the construction trades. All four Hancock County schools recently surveyed all students in grades nine through 11 on their vocational interests. They will use this data to match industry needs with student interest and establish a robust selection of workforce training opportunities.

Progress is being made in Hancock County with the development of a career center. Recently, the county commissioners and county council signed a resolution that details the need for creating an innovation and education center in Hancock County.

In addition, a Hancock County career education center would further build on the substantial gains in offering vocational

# MVHS Teacher Honored with WISH-TV Golden Apple



opportunities that MVCSC has made over the last two years.

Responding to student surveys in 2018 that indicated a strong interest in health science and welding, Mr. Wilkison worked to develop community partnerships that led to expanded opportunities in both areas.

This school year marks the second year for students in the health science program. Last year, all 15 students successfully passed Certified Nursing Assistant state exams. While many of those 15 graduated, five have returned and are taking Health Science II, giving them a pathway to internships with Hancock Regional Hospital and toward becoming a Certified Medical Assistant, which allows them to do a wider range of work – and earn more – in a clinical setting. Meanwhile, 20

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new students are enrolled in the initial Health Science course this year.

Also, Mt. Vernon High School students are making the most of the district's \$500,000 investment in a high-quality welding lab that is preparing students for the many jobs

available. Community partnerships again played an essential role in converting a previously underutilized space into a top-notch lab preparing students for welding careers. None of this would have been possible without numerous donations of money, materials and expertise from the community.

The possibility of a county career center presents the opportunity for MVCSC to follow up the work already done in recent years to boost vocational opportunities. As Mt. Vernon High School Principal Casey Dodd explains, "Our mantra has been that no matter what a student's passion is, we want to have an avenue for that."

Mt. Vernon High School (MVHS) Social Studies Teacher, Sarah Terrell, was recently awarded the Golden Apple Award by WISH-TV. The monthly award is given to one Central Indiana teacher who makes a crucial difference in students' lives. Mrs. Terrell received a trophy and \$500 from their sponsor, Bailey and Wood Mortgage Lender.

Since arriving at MVHS in 2006, Mrs. Terrell has taught various social studies courses and currently teaches Advanced Placement Government and Advanced Placement European History. She also is the team lead for the MVHS Social Studies department.

Her dedication and passion for teaching are evident in how she affects the lives of her colleagues and students. Students and staff alike laud her ability to engage her class in many creative ways, from having students do jumping jacks to wake up or overseeing her ugly sweater project in which students decorate sweaters with objects relating to the French Revolution. Her passion for the subjects that she teaches is apparent in the ways she successfully invests students in social studies and history.

"Her enthusiasm really resonates with students and staff around her and results in everyone around her even becoming better and immersing themselves in the subject," said Troy Guthrie, another social studies teacher at Mt. Vernon High School. "The award is absolutely well deserved. I have taught with her now for seven years and she makes me want to be a better teacher."

Mr. Casey Dodd, MVHS Principal, shared, "All of us here at MVHS are so proud of Mrs. Terrell, and she is so deserving of this recognition. If you've had the chance to see the interview (available on the school district website at [mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://mvcsc.k12.in.us)), you can see just how much of an impact she has on her students and on her fellow teachers. We are so lucky to have her with us here at Mt. Vernon!"

Mt. Vernon is proud to have Mrs. Terrell as a teacher and is thankful for all of the work and effort that she puts into teaching and making the lives of the people around her better. Please congratulate Mrs. Terrell on this well-deserved award!

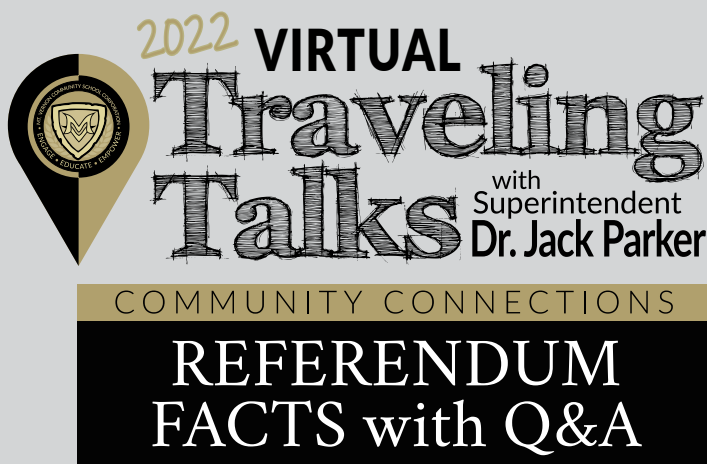


# REFERENDUM FACTS – The What and Why of the May 3 Ballot Question

As part of the 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 for MVCSC operations for eight years.
- Several factors led to the Board's decision to place a referendum on the ballot:
  - a. 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 students.
  - b. 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.
  - c. 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 \$14.02 per month to the average household in our district valued at \$201,825, the referendum will also tax businesses located in TIF districts that are currently not paying taxes.
- Funds Will Be Used for:
  - a. The referendum funds will help provide additional pay to our teachers and classified staff, as we have not fully recovered from when pay was frozen for five years in the mid-2000's. This will enable us to retain the teaching staff to continue our "A" rating for our schools.
  - b. 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.
  - c. 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.
- Visit [mvcsc.k12.in.us/referendum](http://mvcsc.k12.in.us/referendum) for your personal tax calculations.
- Our Mt. Vernon Schools join over a hundred other Indiana school districts in seeking the support of residents via the referendum process.

## CONNECTING SCHOOL & COMMUNITY –



Dr. Parker invites the community to join him for an open-forum discussion in Virtual Traveling Talks meetings. The Virtual Traveling Talks 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 upcoming 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. Please sign up to attend a zoom meeting at [mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://mvcsc.k12.in.us); additional dates may be added.

# AP/ACP/Dual Credits = Tuition Saved for Students and Parents!

Parents know all too well the cost of higher education and appreciate assistance in reducing those expenses for their students where possible.

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation stands at the forefront in offering this kind of assistance, through a variety of programs.

For one, Mt. Vernon High School offers a robust menu of 12 Advanced Placement, or AP, courses, including English Language and Composition, history, psychology, statistics and Spanish. These classes offer college-level rigor and prepare students for the transition to college-level work. Just as importantly, every student who completes an AP course is required to take the AP exam for that class. Exams are graded on a scale of 1 to 5; students who score a 3 or higher earn college credit for the course. Which means that's one course that students will not need to take and pay for when they move on to a college or university. For students who take multiple AP courses throughout high school, the savings effect is multiplied.

Mt. Vernon High School sets itself apart by requiring every student who enrolls in an AP course to take the AP exam. Many – probably most – high schools make the end-of-year AP exam optional.

“Here, every student is required to take AP exams,” Mt. Vernon High School Principal Casey Dodd explained. “If you’re going to be in a dual-credit course, we want you to go through the full experience and have the opportunity to earn those college credits.”

Thanks to those efforts, Mt. Vernon High School routinely tops

statewide and global average AP test scores, even with the exam requirement in place.

That, Dodd says, is a credit to all involved. “We have such great students. Dedicated. Goal-oriented,” he said. “And we have



amazing staff members. Our counseling staff keep students on track. Teachers are so dedicated to helping our students achieve. We have staff members taking on the responsibility of additional education and certification that they need to teach the dual-credit courses.”

In addition, Mt. Vernon High School offers an additional opportunity for students to earn college credit by way of the Advance College Project (ACP), in cooperation with Indiana University. ACP courses are college-credit courses that help better prepare students for their next steps, particularly in science fields. ACP courses offer yet another cost-saving for students and parents, with tuition of only \$25 per credit hour – representing what IU terms “incredible savings compared to standard on-campus rates.” Among Mt. Vernon’s offerings are ACP classes in calculus, chemistry, biology and U.S. History.

“This is just one more way that we are serving students a little better, to prepare them for college classes,” Dodd said.

Mt. Vernon High School offers a large variety of dual-credit opportunities in other fields, partnering, for example, with Ivy Tech on engineering and family and consumer science programs. Finally, as detailed in the vocational article in this issue, MVCSC has substantially expanded its health science and welding programs – both of which include opportunities to earn dual credit and certifications, including, the coursework in CNA Preparation and Dementia Care in health science, and in welding, the TIG and MIG welding and welding fabrication certification. As the school corporation works with other Hancock County districts on the possibility of establishing a local career center, these opportunities will only expand.

## Upcoming Virtual Traveling Talks:

**TUESDAY, MARCH 8: NOON - 1 P.M.**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 17: 6 - 7 P.M.**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 22: NOON - 1 P.M.**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 29: 6 - 7 P.M.**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 12: NOON - 1 P.M.**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 26: 6 - 7 P.M.**

You may register to participate by visiting [mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://mvcsc.k12.in.us). The zoom link will be emailed to you before each Virtual Traveling Talks meeting.



# Learning Opportunities Baked into Fortville Gingerbread Project

Rarely has a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) lesson looked so delicious or charming.

Fortville Elementary School (FES) fourth grade students recently utilized a number of STEAM applications to create not only a single gingerbread house – but a gingerbread replica of Fortville.

Working in small groups, students researched a Fortville business, prepared a report and created a gingerbread visual. All buildings were then connected to create a delicious replica of Main Street along with Mt. Vernon High School, Mt. Vernon Middle School, Fortville Elementary and Memorial Park.



To launch their research, students took a field trip to Main Street and spoke with many local business owners such as Panda Chinese, Maduro, Foxgardin, ATA Blackbelt Academy, Seals Funeral Home and Sunrise Bakery. Students had the opportunity to ask the owners about their businesses and the Fortville community.

“I think it’s wonderful,” said Larry Harnish, the owner of Maduro on Main. “It’s my third year doing this and it seems like the students have learned a lot.”

This festive project was a fun way for the students to expand their knowledge in social studies, language arts, science, math, and art. Students learned about Fortville’s development in Indiana, how to locate features on a map and Fortville businesses’ contributions to the local economy.

Students also used language arts skills in reading, writing and researching their assigned building. Math was also utilized as students estimated the size and calculated materials needed to reconstruct each building.

These engaging project-based learning programs help students gain knowledge about the communities they call home. Special thanks to the Fortville business owners who met with the fourth grade FES students and visited to see their gingerbread creations.

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.



## DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT:

# Why is MVCSC Rated an “A” School?



- Two “A” rated schools led the district to receive an “A” rating by the Indiana Department of Education (MVHS & MES)
- Two four-star schools (MVHS & MES)
- One of the first two districts in the state to be STEM-Certified K-12 by the Indiana Department of Education
- Named a Special Olympics Unified Champions School District
- MVHS graduation rate of 98% with the class of 2020
- MVHS recognized as a “College Success Award” winner from the GreatSchools Organization
- MVHS offers 12 rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) courses, 16 dual-credit courses and three Advanced College Project (ACP) courses to challenge students while saving them tuition dollars.
- MVHS Athletics accolades and honors through 2021 include a 4A Football State Championship and our Boys & Girls Cross Country advanced to semi-state along with nine wrestlers. Six events in Boys & Girls Track qualified for state, along with one Boys Swimmer.
- MVMS was named a Gold Star Counseling Program by the Indiana Department of Education.



- Numerous clubs and activities are available K-12 for students to explore their interests.
- Enriching project-based learning activities engage students, such as the 8th grade “Walk on Water,” the elementary “Shark Tank” entrepreneurship competition, “Egg Drop” and the “Wax Museum”
- Student and staff safety is the number one priority with robust video surveillance, school resource officers in nearly all schools and Lobby Guard screening for visitors.
- Mini-Marauder Preschool was named a Level 3 Paths to Quality program by the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration.
- Named a Common Sense Media certified district
- English language learners, high ability, speech/language, special education and social worker/counseling programs are available K-12.
- 1:1 district (one computer device for every student/staff) since 2015
- Has a high-tech focus with most classrooms having interactive whiteboards, document cameras, projectors and Apple TV’s
- Strong community partnerships with local businesses, parents and community leaders

## for the April 23 Black & Gold Gala

**Cost is \$100 a person and beginning in March, tickets may be reserved at [MtVernonFoundation.org](http://MtVernonFoundation.org).**

The MVEF, led by its Board of Directors, with the help of many generous volunteers, seeks to inspire students with innovative educational programming that prepares students for a successful life journey. The organization 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.



# MT. VERNON

COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

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[www.mvcsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvcsc.k12.in.us)

## MVHS Earns College Success Gold Award

Mt. Vernon High School has been selected as one of a select few schools across the nation to win the inaugural College Success Award - Gold – an additional, elevated level of distinction to recognize schools that have a multiyear track record of college success. Awardees are selected based on available college preparation and postsecondary data provided by your state, awarding those with a strong track record of postsecondary success.

Casey Dodd, principal of Mt. Vernon High School, stated “It is very rewarding for both our students and our staff to receive this type of recognition. Our students work hard to achieve at high levels and our staff are dedicated to providing learning experiences that will help our students prepare for life after high school. An award like this is a symbol that, collectively, we are all headed in a positive direction.”

Mt. Vernon exemplifies its ability to prepare all students for college success as it is both an economic and a moral imperative for our country.

“We applaud Mt. Vernon High School for consistently prioritizing a high-quality public education and putting students on the path to bright futures,” said Jon Deane, CEO of GreatSchools.org. “Over the past two years, students, parents, teachers, and communities have relied on one another like never before. We congratulate and thank all of these individuals at Mt. Vernon High School for their unwavering, ongoing pursuit of college success for all students.”

