



OCTOBER 2021

MT. VERNON

Mainstream

FUTURE GROWTH PLAN ADVANCES



Superintendent's Note

We began the 2021-2022 school year with great hope and excitement for a return to full in-person learning for our students. Our students need to learn together and in-person to achieve their highest potential, yet the Delta Variant has been troublesome to say the least.

We reached 100 cases of COVID positive individuals in our school on the 20th day of instruction, where last year we reached that milestone on the 68th day of instruction. While we are just now starting to see the back end of this current COVID spike, we know that winter will find challenges with more students getting a cold or the flu. Coupled with this new strain of COVID, we know that our battle to keep students continuously in school will be a long one.

While the numbers mentioned above dictate the need for additional resources, we have a team of nurses and clinic assistants who are working very hard to keep students in school.

WE HAVE A TEAM OF NURSES AND CLINIC ASSISTANTS WHO ARE WORKING VERY HARD TO KEEP STUDENTS IN SCHOOL.

Despite these pandemic challenges, our students and staff have persevered and continue to support one another. Recently, our Mt. Vernon High School FCCLA students volunteered to tend to Fortville Elementary School's garden. Mt. Comfort Elementary robotics club is meeting and teaching students about circuits and robotics. High school students and fans are supporting the athletic, theatre, and arts, providing a close to normal atmosphere and experience for our students.

These first two months of school have been challenging, yet we know that moving forward we are already stronger and

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New Vocational Programs Prep Students for Success

SEE INSIDE ►

Future Growth Plan (\$84M PROJECTS)



Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation (MVCSC) continues to move forward with its Future Growth Plan, designed to accommodate burgeoning enrollment during the next several years. In the latest development, the Board of Trustees in June unanimously approved resolutions that set the stage for a comprehensive \$84 million plan to substantially increase school capacity and address traffic issues near the Fortville campus.

The MVCSC Board's adoption of these resolutions during a June 21 hearing represents one more step in a process that has consistently engaged community members. The Future Growth Plan process dates back to a 2018 demographer's report predicting enrollment growth of 50 percent by 2029. That means an increase from 4,000 students in 2019 to 6,000 in 2029, which requires a Future Growth Plan that includes creating new space and maximizing the use of existing space.

During the 2019-2020 school year, MVCSC invited parents, residents, businesses and community members to be a part of

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**THE OPTION APPROVED BY THE BOARD
WILL BUILD A NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL;
CONVERT FORTVILLE ELEMENTARY BACK INTO AN
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL, IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW
AT THE DISTRICT'S MAIN CAMPUS AND BUILD A NEW
TRANSPORTATION CENTER ON THE FORTVILLE PROPERTY.**

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the “MV Community Champions” initiative to develop a 10-year Future Growth Plan. This invitation generated valuable input from more than 300 community stakeholders. Over the next year and a half, the school district and MV Community Champions Advisory Committee carefully designed and weighed various options.

Superintendent Dr. Parker shared, “We are pleased that the community shared their voice in the direction of how Mt. Vernon district should manage our growth. Their recommendation to build a new elementary and convert Fortville Elementary back into an intermediate school will allow us to meet the demand while allowing for continued growth. Every decision is made with the principle of being fiscally conservative and responsible with our taxpayer dollars.”

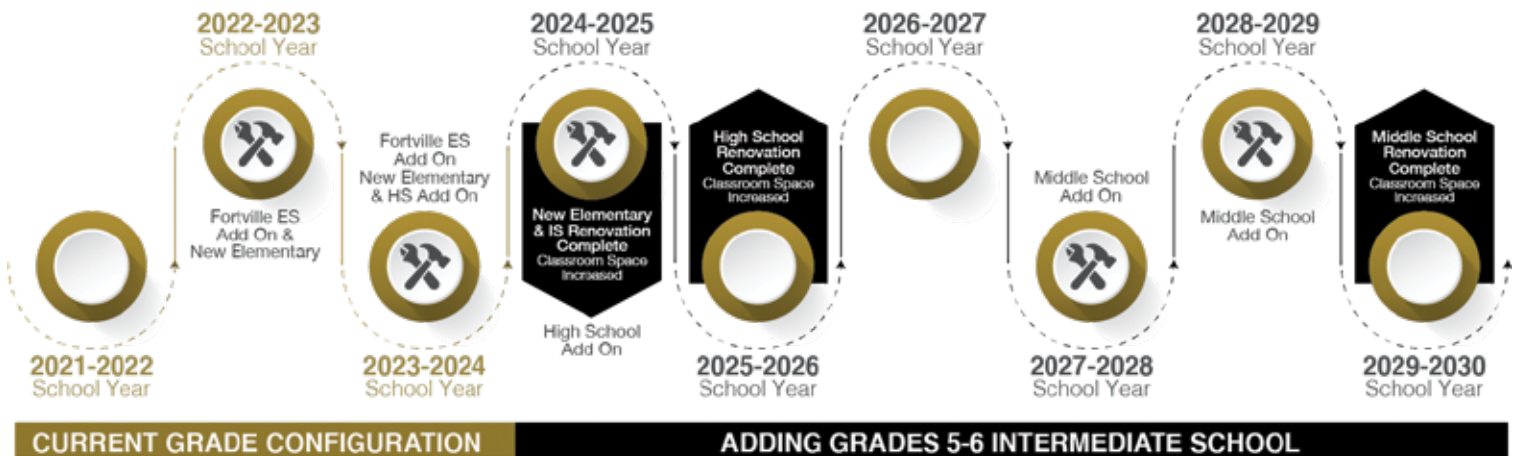
The option approved by the Board will build a new elementary school; convert Fortville Elementary back into an intermediate school, improve traffic flow at the district’s main campus and build a new transportation center on the Fortville property.

The new elementary will be built on the recently purchased property to the north of Mt. Vernon Middle School, a 37-acre parcel east of County Road 200W. MVCSC expects to reduce construction costs to the tune of approximately \$500,000 by utilizing a design already used by another elementary school. A new transportation center is also slated for the new property purchased in Fortville.

Fortville Elementary, which currently serves kindergarten through grade 5, will revert – with the addition of a pod housing a few more classrooms – to its original use as an intermediate school and serve grades 5 and 6 only. One advantage of this approach is that it peels one grade level each from the middle school and each elementary school, maximizing the capacity of those buildings to serve grades 7 and 8 in the middle school and kindergarten through grade 4 in the elementaries. The Mini-Marauder Preschool will likely be located in one of the elementary schools.

Traffic flow improvements will consist of several elements, including a campus access road to channel vehicles away from the intersection of County Road N 200W and State Road 234. Land was recently purchased just east of the current Transportation and Administration buildings to help with these improvements.

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more able to address the needs of our students by keeping them in school as much as possible, and supporting them with quality learning experiences. We will continue to improve as we focus on the health and safety of our students while accelerating their learning as much as we possibly can. Our community once again

has rallied around Mt. Vernon and the support we have received is appreciated.

Jack

Dr. Jack Parker, Superintendent

NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMPLETION EXPECTED TO OPEN FOR 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR.

GROWTH *continued from page 2*

MVCSC was able to sell land the district owned at Mt. Comfort Road and CR 100N to be able to purchase the two properties on the Fortville campus and remain cost-neutral.

The project cost – to be covered by \$84.25 million in construction bonds – breakdown includes \$48 million for the new elementary school, \$13 million for traffic flow upgrades and site improvements, \$9 million for the transportation center and \$8 million for additions to what will be the Intermediate School. Annual costs for the new elementary school are projected to require \$852,000 from the Education Fund, \$494,000 from the Operations Fund and \$70,000 for food service.

Greg Elkins, MVCSC chief financial officer, said he expects the elementary school to open for the 2024-2025 school year, although he said the opening date could be pushed back if the rate of enrollment growth unexpectedly declines before then. As Superintendent Dr. Parker has shared numerous times, MVCSC won't build until they see the whites of students' eyes and the building is needed.

School Health & Safety

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation (MVCSC) holds the health and safety of students and staff as its highest priority for a successful learning environment. Mt. Vernon wants every student to achieve their highest level of academic excellence and a successful future.

Students and staff alike were thankful and excited to begin the 2021-2022 school year in late July with in-person instruction. Everyone's hope is that in-person learning can be continued throughout the year. Our schools are backing that hope with rigorous cleaning and sanitizing, making every effort to keep our students and staff safe and healthy.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to chart an unpredictable course, MVCSC will continue to follow the expertise and guidance of the Hancock County Health Department and the Indiana Department of Health, which will take precedence over all MVCSC plans.

MVCSC appreciates the patience shared by our students, parents and staff as we forge an evolving path for providing the highest quality of learning opportunities that the community has come to expect from us while keeping the health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront during this challenging time. We will get through this together and will be a stronger community for it.

FEATURED MT. VERNON SCHOOL: McCordsville Elementary School Snapshot

- Attendance Rate: 2019-2020 – 97%
- STEM Certified by the Indiana Department of Education
- IREAD-3 Results: 2018-19 – 93%
- Indiana Department of Education Four Star School – 2020-2021, 2019-2020, 2018-2019
- Indiana Department of Education has rated MES an “A” school every year since 2017
- Strong community and PTO partnerships
- Each student has a touchscreen Chromebook
- Outdoor track, soccer/football field, baseball/softball diamond, 2 full playgrounds
- 3D printers
- Classrooms have whiteboards, projectors and Apple TV's
- Resource Officer on site daily
- Strong character education taught throughout the school year
- 7 club/extracurricular opportunities available
- Multiple school programs and activities
- Media Center – Almost 13,000 books, meeting the needs and interests of all students
- English Language Learners program
- Speech/language, special education, high ability & social worker programs



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MT. VERNON HIGH SCHOOL New Vocational Welding/Nursing Programs

**MT. VERNON HIGH SCHOOL (MVHS)
AGAIN IS DEMONSTRATING ITS FLEXIBILITY
IN PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS
BY MOVING QUICKLY TO OFFER LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES THAT MATCH STUDENTS'
INTERESTS TO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.**

New welding booths in photo at right



Mt. Vernon High School (MVHS) again is demonstrating its flexibility in preparing students for success by moving quickly to offer learning opportunities that match students' interests to career opportunities. Even when that means building a program requiring sophisticated infrastructure and instruction over the course of one summer.

NURSING

Last year, realizing that student interest in health science careers far exceeded the number of students actually preparing for these jobs, Mt. Vernon recruited key community partners and brought a Health Sciences I program to our own campus. All 15 students successfully passed their Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) state exams for a 100-percent success rate.

This year, an additional section was added to the Health Science program for second-year students, who will have externships with Hancock Regional Hospital and complete the program as Certified Clinical Medical Assistants (CCMA).

WELDING

This fall, students are benefitting from a similar effort in welding instruction. As a result, dozens of MVHS students will graduate with knowledge and skills that are in high demand and are well paid throughout central Indiana.

By once again finding and working with industry partners, Mt. Vernon High School pulled out all the stops over the summer to transform an underutilized space into a modern welding lab. The result is a state-of-the-art space in which students will receive training, earn 12 Ivy Tech College dual credits and an American

Welding Society (AWS) certifications that will launch well-paying careers close to home.

Updating the lab in such a short time required extensive planning, removing a partition wall, cleaning and painting, dropping a complex maze of wiring and conduits, installing LED lighting, building 12 welding booths and installing a safe, exterior distributor to feed gas lines - all governed by a single shutoff valve to enhance safety.

While finishing touches are still being applied, the welding lab is up and running. Teacher Jason Wiley already is introducing 24 students to skills that will lead to solid career opportunities. Students will be able to take four courses, all offering dual credit with Ivy Tech.

By completing Mt. Vernon's welding course sequence, students can earn an American Welding Society SENSE specialized welding certificate, indicating to prospective employers their readiness to learn and work and creating a potential advantage for graduates in both pay and job security.

Students also can earn an OSHA 10 card, proving to employers that they completed 10 hours of OSHA-authorized training on critical workplace safety topics. Entry-level workers with this credential have industry-specific knowledge and skills that help prevent injuries and keep workplaces safe and productive.

The new welding booths enable students to learn shielded metal arc welding, gas metal arc welding and gas tungsten arc welding. In the second and capstone year of the two-year welding program, students will be eligible for internships and apprenticeships that will give them a further boost toward earning their place in the workforce once they graduate.

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MT. VERNON HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER JASON WILEY INSTRUCTS STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL'S NEW WELDING LAB.



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Community partnerships were again key in expanding this opportunity for students. Assistant Principal Stan Wilkison worked closely with the J. Everett Light Career Center, which serves 13 central Indiana schools. Mt. Vernon High School also has received assistance from Lincoln Electric, Awning Innovations, Lennox, the Indiana Kentucky Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters, and Fortville Feeders. This welding opportunity for students would not be possible without the partnership of these community members.

While the lab is operational, MVHS still has a wish list and is still seeking grants and

business partners to add more state-of-the-art features. Business sponsorships are available. Local businesses can partner in an array of levels, such as serving as a guest speaker, serving on the advisory board, accepting student interns or investing financially via booth sponsorship. MVHS's goal is to have each booth sponsored with LED signage to recognize the local business. Any type of support would greatly benefit the program and its students.

Anyone interested in becoming a sponsor or in receiving more information about the program may contact Stan Wilkison by email – stan.wilkison@mvcsc.k12.in.us or by phone at 317.485.3131, Ext. 1788.

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Cost-Cutting Corner

The Stewardship Projects cost (mainly updating roofs & HVAC systems) continue to come in under the original budget projections, which allowed an additional \$500,000 to be added to technology infrastructure upgrades to the middle school, all while not adding to the 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 \$3 million dollar General Obligation Bond in one year, (for continued Stewardship Project improvements), thus saving on an additional year of financing and interest costs all without an increase to the debt service tax rate.

The cost for the installation of ionization air purifiers for all classrooms throughout the district has come in under budget with a savings of \$60,000 and is financed through the federal ESSER III grant.



FEATURED MT. VERNON SCHOOL:
**Mini-Marauder
 Preschool Snapshot**

- Named a Level 3 Paths to QUALITY™ program: Indiana's statewide quality rating system for early education
- Serving ages 3-5
- Special services are available to meet needs of students with disabilities
- Open 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. with school day instruction from 7:45 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Half day and full day options available
- Accepts CCDF vouchers as a legally licensed exempt provider in Indiana
- Outdoor playground with swings, jungle gym, merry-go-round, and sand table
- Chromebooks are used within the classroom
- Doors are always locked or entrance monitored by receptionist or staff
- Curriculum is aligned with developmentally appropriate best practices for young learners
- Ten learning centers including, but not limited to, science, art, library, dramatic play, sensory, and STEM
- Holiday or special theme activities for family involvement
- Young learners have access to large motor activities in gym and gross motor room
- Interaction with cadet teachers from Mt. Vernon High School
- Cafeteria with breakfast and lunch available through Mt. Vernon food service



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MVCSC Finances

The MVCSC Board of Trustees, during its August 16 meeting, approved a resolution to issue a General Obligation (G.O.) Bond of up to \$3 million. This represents short-term debt for projects that fall under the category of taking care of our current facilities. More specifically, the bond sale proceeds will cover roofing and mechanical system work with tech upgrades for some of the buildings that have not already had that work done.

MVCSC Chief Financial Officer Greg Elkins emphasized that the district can accommodate this bond issue under its current debt schedule without increasing constituents' tax rate for the debt service fund.

Elkins shared that the ongoing construction boom within the MVCSC district is significantly boosting the district's assessed valuation (AV). That, he said, gives the district additional capacity to issue bonds for needed work – without increasing the debt tax rate. Assessed valuation increased by 15 percent from only a year earlier. While Elkins advised that annual increases might not reach that level every year, he expects that double-digit annual increases are likely for the next several years.

Moreover, Elkins said, the increased AV will permit the district to:

- Repay this bond issue in only one year, with a resulting savings in interest payments.
- Begin to pay back funds utilized for the Stewardship Projects, which include new roofing on specific buildings, HVAC upgrades and replacements, as well as providing an adequate space renovation to the band and choir rooms at the middle school.
- Pay back the bus loan in only one year, again with a savings in interest costs.
- Continue to finance the waiver that enables the district's debt service fund transfer to savings, which will help offset the loss of the \$3.3 million Increment Dollars in 2023.

Finally, on the matter of finances, MVCSC is currently collecting the last year of its "Increment dollars," which is two-thirds of the \$3.3 million MVCSC received in the previous nine years. Under state law, Increment Dollars can no longer be collected, beginning in 2023, which means that MVCSC will at that time begin to experience a \$3.3 million loss annually in the Operations Fund.

Employment Opportunities – Join the MVCSC Team!



Community members who are looking for work or know someone looking for a rewarding position are encouraged to consider MVCSC employment opportunities.

The district is hiring **custodians,**

instructional assistants, food service and bus drivers – all offering competitive wages and all playing a vital part in the Marauder school family.

Custodians, so essential to keeping our schools clean and safe, are offered competitive pay and benefits, including health care options and paid vacation time.

Instructional assistants provide a positive impact on students' lives by working with teachers on all facets of classroom management, aiding students and supporting teachers. These positions offer competitive pay and a 7-hour day, along with sick and personal days. Instructional assistants enjoy the same

calendar-year breaks as students and teachers.

Food service team members are also needed for part-time positions. Enjoy a fun atmosphere and stay on the same school schedule as your child/grandchild.

Friendly and well-trained **bus drivers** are integral to the mission of student learning, helping set the tone for a successful day. This can be an ideal job for retirees or anyone looking for part-time work, with summers and breaks off. Pay starts at \$20/hour for a substitute driver and Mt. Vernon will provide the training needed for an individual to pass their CDL license. Additional income is also available for drivers interested in providing transportation for extracurricular activities.

Details and applications for all employment opportunities may be found at www.mvcsc.k12.in.us/employment. Come and be a part of the Marauder Family!



MVCSC Honored to Host Governor for Chamber Luncheon

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation was privileged to host Governor Eric Holcomb as he addressed the Greenfield Area Chamber of Commerce in July. During the luncheon, local business representatives learned about plans for Indiana's economic development, workforce and community development.

Governor Holcomb reflected on Hancock County's strengthening economy and recognized the county's work to stimulate this growth. The Governor also reflected that all it takes for communities to grow is to have honest, humble and hungry members of the community, which Hancock County has proven to have.

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation has demonstrated the growth that can come from working together as a community, such as providing new dual-credit opportunities and externships with local businesses for Mt. Vernon High School students, as well as the future construction of buildings and projects that will accommodate the impending growth. As Mt. Vernon continues to grow, the district's dedication to the local community will grow in tandem.



Seeking Committee Members

MVCSC believes in the importance of providing our students learning opportunities that foster resilience, respectful relationships, and self-awareness. We are seeking community members to participate in a committee to study Mt. Vernon's current work in addressing the needs of the whole child as well as to make recommendations for clarity and future actions. This foundation will maximize academic achievement within our students and prepare our students to reach their learning potential. Those interested should contact their principal or chris.smedley@mvcsc.k12.in.us to apply for the committee.



MT. VERNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

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MVCSC's Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of 9/11

On Friday, September 10, MVCSC hosted an event inviting all veterans, first responders, active military and community members to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of 9/11. Students were not born when the terrorism attacks changed our nation, however we all continue to be impacted by the war on terrorism and we support those who fight for our freedom while protecting our country.

The commemoration showcased a military color guard, the Mt. Vernon High School band and choir, scheduled moments of silence, and a student display of unity on the field.



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See Inside!!
New Programs Prep Students for Success