

# Mount Vernon City School District

K-6 And 7-12 Building Configuration

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A PATH TO SUSTAINABILITY  
AND GROWTH

TOWN HALL - NOVEMBER 07, 2024



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# Reorganization Committee Members

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Mr. Noel Campbell, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

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Ms. Michelle McKitty-Bromley, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

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Ms. Jeanne Casino, Teacher and MVFT Vice President

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Dr. Pauline Pearce, Principal MVHS

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Dr. Jamal Doggett, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

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Ms. Carrie Peters-Smith, Parent

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Mr. Jose Formoso, Assistant Superintendent for Business

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Mr. Mark Raimondi, Associate Superintendent for Operations and Accountability

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Mr. Orville Gayle, Parent and Community Member

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Mr. Carlos Ramirez, Director of Technology

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Ms. Lorna Kirwan, Board Trustee

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Ms. Adriane Saunders, Board President

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Mr. Keith McCall, Teacher and MVFT President

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Mr. Chris McDonough, Board Trustee

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Dr. K. Veronica Smith, Acting Superintendent of Schools

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Dr. Crystal Waterman, Principal Williams and MVAG President

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Ms. Wanda White, Board Trustee

# MISSION STATEMENT

**The Mount Vernon City School District, comprising its board members, staff, scholars, parents, and community members, is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment that recognizes every scholar's unique qualities while providing a comprehensive and rigorous education that promotes respect, cultivates character, and inspires intellectual growth. The district is committed to empowering scholars to become lifelong learners, who are successful and responsible citizens and who positively contribute to their local and global communities.**

# VISION STATEMENT

The Mount Vernon City School District, through a shared decision-making process, is committed to helping its scholars, parents, teachers, and administrators enhance their academic, social, economic, and technological skills to prepare individuals to function effectively in today's global society.



# Executive Summary

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The Mount Vernon City School District is facing significant challenges due to declining enrollment and expenses continually exceeding revenue. This situation necessitates a shift from a PreK-8 educational model to a PreK-6 and 7-12 configuration. To ensure a successful reconfiguration, collaboration among district leadership, parents, trustees, administrators, teachers, community leaders, and students will be crucial. Input from all stakeholder groups will guide the development of this plan to ensure it meets the needs of our diverse community.

# How We Got Here

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**Pre 2017:** Community voices a desire for districtwide K-8 Neighborhood Schools

The thought was that this change was going to increase enrollment and decrease expenditures going forward.

**2017 - 2021:** Implementation of the 20/20 Vision

**July 2020 - June 2023:** Decline in enrollment strengthens

**What we have seen since the implementation:**

- Inability to retain certain staff due to having to travel between schools
- Decrease in enrollment and rising expenses.
- A continued rise in staff despite decreases in enrollment in large part due to resources needed to support 13 middle schools.



# Why We Need to Make Changes Now

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## **Position the District to address:**

- The current and projected declining enrollment.
- Staffing issues and inefficiencies
- Underutilized Buildings
- Capital improvements cited on the Build Condition Survey
- Contracts that need to be settled: MVFT (Expired 6/30/2022), MVAG (Expired 6/30/2024), CSEA (Expires 6/30/2025)
- Significant Fiscal Distress



# Continued Declining Enrollment

Enrollment of 8,190 in 2014. Subsequently, losses in each of the last nine years led to an enrollment of 6,483 students in 2023. This represents a loss of 1,577 students, or 19.6 percent during the historical period.

Additional losses are expected in each of the next ten years. The forecasted 2033 enrollment of 5,168 students represents a loss of 1,315 students, or 20.3 percent, when compared to the current enrollment.

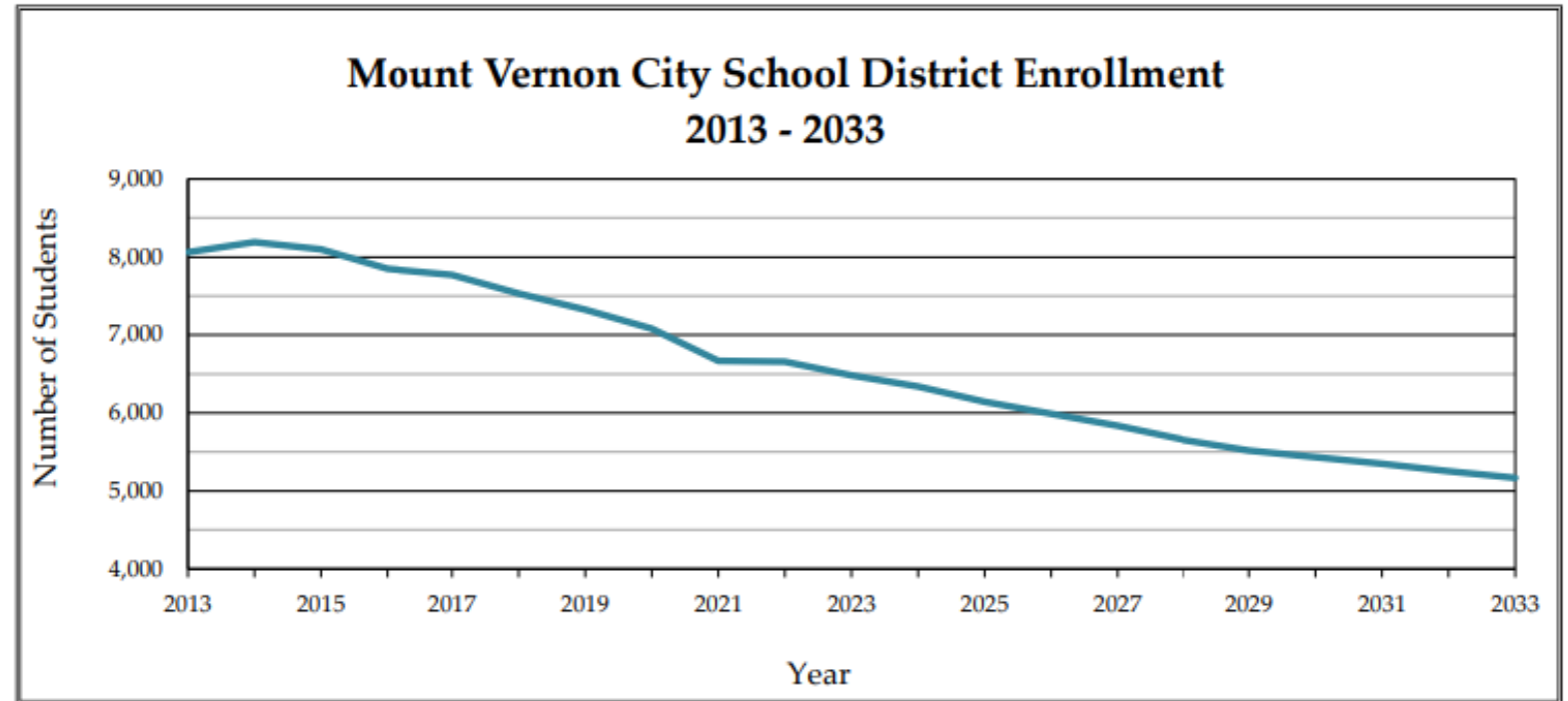


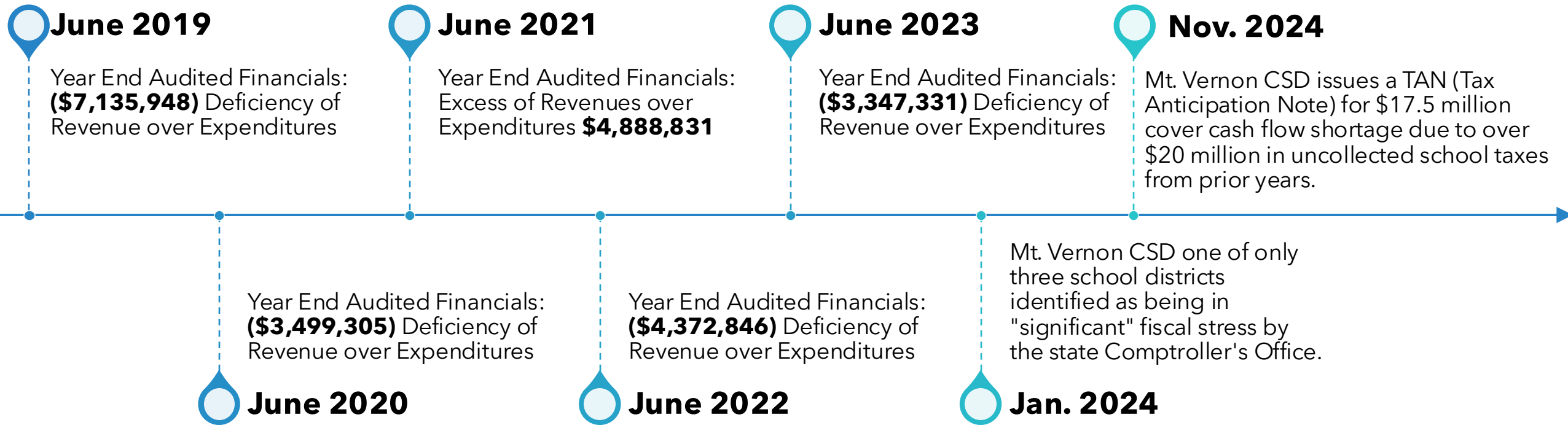
Figure 8 - Mount Vernon City SD, K - 12 Enrollment

# Enrollment K-12 (as of November 7, 2024)

School Name	KF	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	Students
Benjamin Turner Academy	32	45	55	35	36	29	21	23	65	0	0	0	0	341
Cecil H Parker School	20	27	40	24	30	36	11	42	36	0	0	0	0	266
Denzel Washington School of the Arts	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	61	47	93	96	52	49	430
Edward Williams School	64	55	39	41	42	45	48	15	33	0	0	0	0	382
Graham School	58	51	39	39	47	37	31	24	45	0	0	0	0	371
Grimes School	35	34	40	49	42	38	50	28	34	0	0	0	0	350
Hamilton School	21	40	37	32	44	45	47	32	30	0	0	0	0	328
Lincoln School	56	66	64	45	50	60	43	42	53	0	0	0	0	479
Mount Vernon High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	295	250	243	267	1055
Mount Vernon Honor Academy	28	31	32	40	27	28	48	23	31	0	0	0	0	288
Mount Vernon Leadership Academy	25	35	35	47	55	54	38	41	37	0	0	0	0	367
Mount Vernon STEAM Academy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	215	177	189	167	748
Nelson Mandela/Hosea Zollicoffer School	31	45	41	34	39	40	40	40	31	0	0	0	0	341
Pennington School	55	32	46	43	43	42	46	27	49	0	0	0	0	383
Rebecca Turner Academy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	19	38	99	164
Traphagen School	22	39	33	45	35	32	24	29	26	0	0	0	0	285
Grand Total	448	500	501	474	490	486	479	427	517	610	542	522	582	<b>6578</b>

# Declining Fiscal Condition

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# Uncollected School Taxes

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\*Uncollected taxes from prior school years:

- 2019-2020: \$4,984,627 (City making monthly payments)
- 2020-2021: \$3,512,416 (City expected to pay by May 2025)
- 2021-2022: \$3,919,198 (City expected to pay by May 2025)
- 2022-2023: \$4,985,255
- 2023-2024: \$6,845,942

Total: \$24,247,438

\*Figures taken from June 30, 2024 audited financial statements



# Financial Benefits of 7-12 Model

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Ability to consolidate resources and buildings to properly address the current and projected declining enrollment and rising expenses.

Areas where expenses would be significantly reduced:

- Buildings and Grounds
- Transportation
- Personnel
- Benefits
- Insurance

# Measures Mt. Vernon CSD Is Taking to Address Fiscal Condition



**Fiscal Analysis:** Expected to be completed by Capital Market Advisors by end of November 2024.



**Multi-Year Financial Plan:** Being completed in conjunction with Capital Market Advisors.



**Revenue from State Aid:** Working with State Aide Planning at Questar to maximize state aid.



**Efficiency Study for Transportation:** Working with transportation specialist at BOCES to optimize routes which would bring a reduction in overall transportation expenses.



**Facilities Study:** Being done with BOCES in order properly maximize the use of our facilities.

# Engagement Summary

Mount Vernon City School District (NY)  
Building Configuration Surveys



## Survey 1:

The MVCSD comprises 12 neighborhood schools for Pre-K through 8th grade and four high schools. Currently, the district is weighing options to remain Pre-K to 8th grade or create a configuration that utilizes separate Pre-K to 6th grade elementary and 7th to 8th grade middle schools.

To make an informed decision, the district is engaging in strategic planning that requires a thorough analysis of data and collaboration between the district, building-level administrators, and community members. The district believes that reorganizing the schools to optimize learning is a partnership with parents and the community. The district is evaluating the current model and values your feedback on this matter.



The graphic features a yellow background. In the top right corner is the Mount Vernon City School District logo, which includes a crest with a book and a torch, surrounded by the text 'MOUNT VERNON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT' and 'Since 1824'. Below the logo, the text 'Please Share Your Thoughts on Our School Building Configuration' is written in bold black font. The central illustration shows a red school building with a clock tower, a flagpole with a red flag, and a playground with a slide and swing set. Several diverse children are depicted playing on the playground and standing in front of the school. At the bottom left, the text 'Take Our Survey!' is written in bold black font, with the URL 'https://tejoin.com/scroll/413593617' below it. To the right of the text is a QR code.

**Please Share Your Thoughts on  
Our School Building Configuration**

**Take Our Survey!**  
<https://tejoin.com/scroll/413593617>



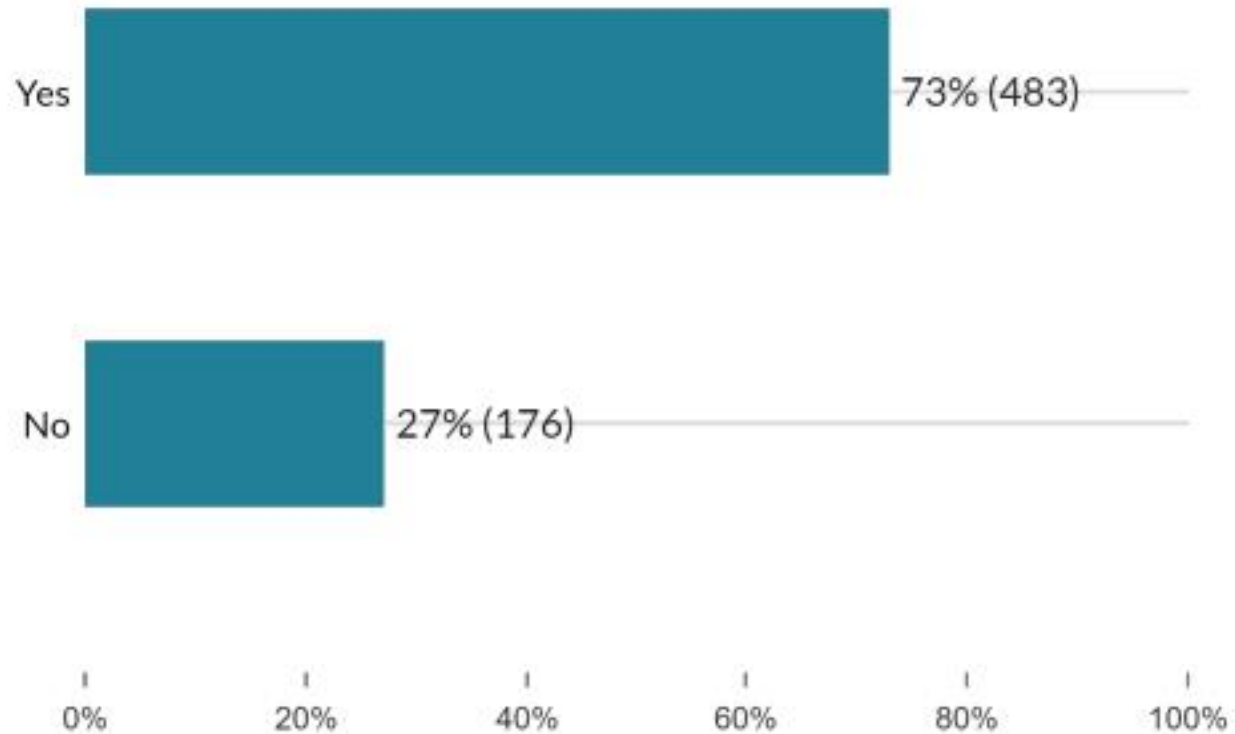


## PARTICIPATION

### Breakdown of Participation



Do you think it would be beneficial for our Pre K-6th grade students to attend elementary school in a separate building?





## Survey 2:

In an effort to reach the most stakeholders possible, the Mount Vernon City School District has introduced a focused follow-up building configuration survey. Please let us know how you feel about changing the configuration of our buildings. The District has recorded the thoughts of the community, and we hope that you will continue to share your opinions as we approach a decision. This survey will gauge the number of community members that want to change the building configuration, while the first survey helped us determine community thoughts and concerns about changing the configuration.



The poster features a yellow background. In the top right corner is the Mount Vernon City School District logo, which is circular and contains a shield with a book and a lamp, surrounded by the text "MOUNT VERNON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT" and "Since 1894 New York". Below the logo, the title "Building Configuration Follow-up Survey" is written in bold black text. The central illustration shows a red school building with a clock tower, a flagpole with a red flag, and a playground with a slide and swing set. Several diverse children are depicted playing on the playground. At the bottom, the text "Take Our Survey!" is written in bold black, followed by the URL "https://tejoin.com/scroll/708090364". To the right of the URL is a QR code.

**Building Configuration  
Follow-up Survey**

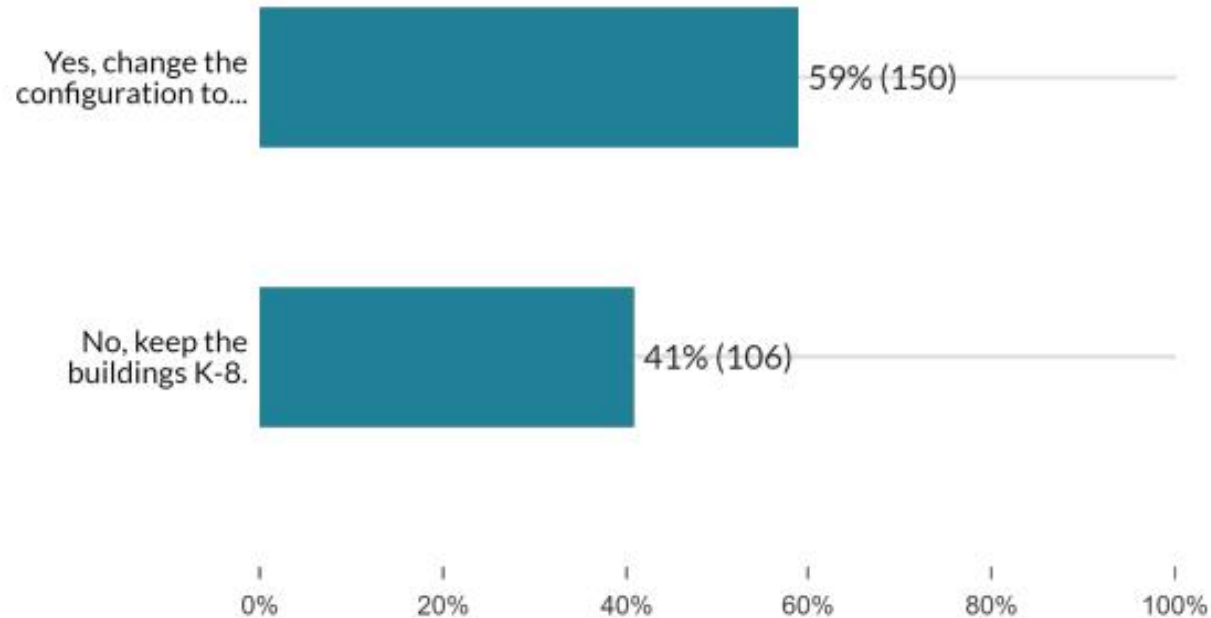
**Take Our Survey!**  
<https://tejoin.com/scroll/708090364>



## PARTICIPATION Breakdown of Participation



Should the Mount Vernon City School District change its primary school building configuration? (Currently K-8)



### Survey 3:

The Mount Vernon City School District thanks the community for their participation in its two K-8 building configuration surveys released in January and February 2024. The District has heard your input and will be establishing a committee to implement a transition from its current K-8 building configurations to a more age-appropriate and cost-effective model. 73% of respondents supported a change in the building configuration in our first survey and 59% supported a change in the second survey. Please answer the following survey questions before October 31, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. to help us determine the best methods to make this transition.



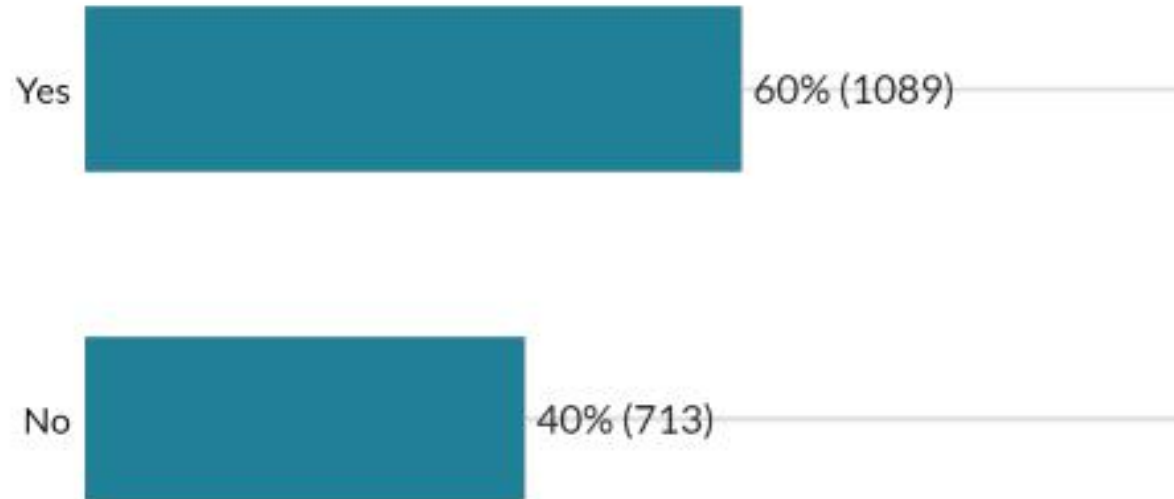


## PARTICIPATION

### Breakdown of Participation



Would you support relocating grades 7 and 8 from K-8 schools to our three themed high schools to ensure continuity of academic instruction related to graduation and career pathways? This move would help us foster a stronger sense of school community building. We will have designated age-appropriate instructional areas exclusively for 7th and 8th grade students.







## Analysis



The majority of participants expressed concerns about the appropriateness of having seventh and eighth graders in the same building as younger elementary students, with many advocating for a separate middle school environment. The general sentiment leaned towards the need for age-appropriate settings to better support the academic and social development of students.

Some respondents support the idea of integrating seventh and eighth graders with high school students. They believe that this configuration would provide better access to resources, sports programs, and a smoother transition to high school. Proponents argue that being in a more advanced setting can help middle school students develop maturity and prepare for future academic challenges.



# K-8 Model



# Middle School Staff





**1. Teachers have been split between schools during the week.**

Example: Monday and Tuesday (school #1)  
Wednesday, Thursday,  
Friday (school#2)

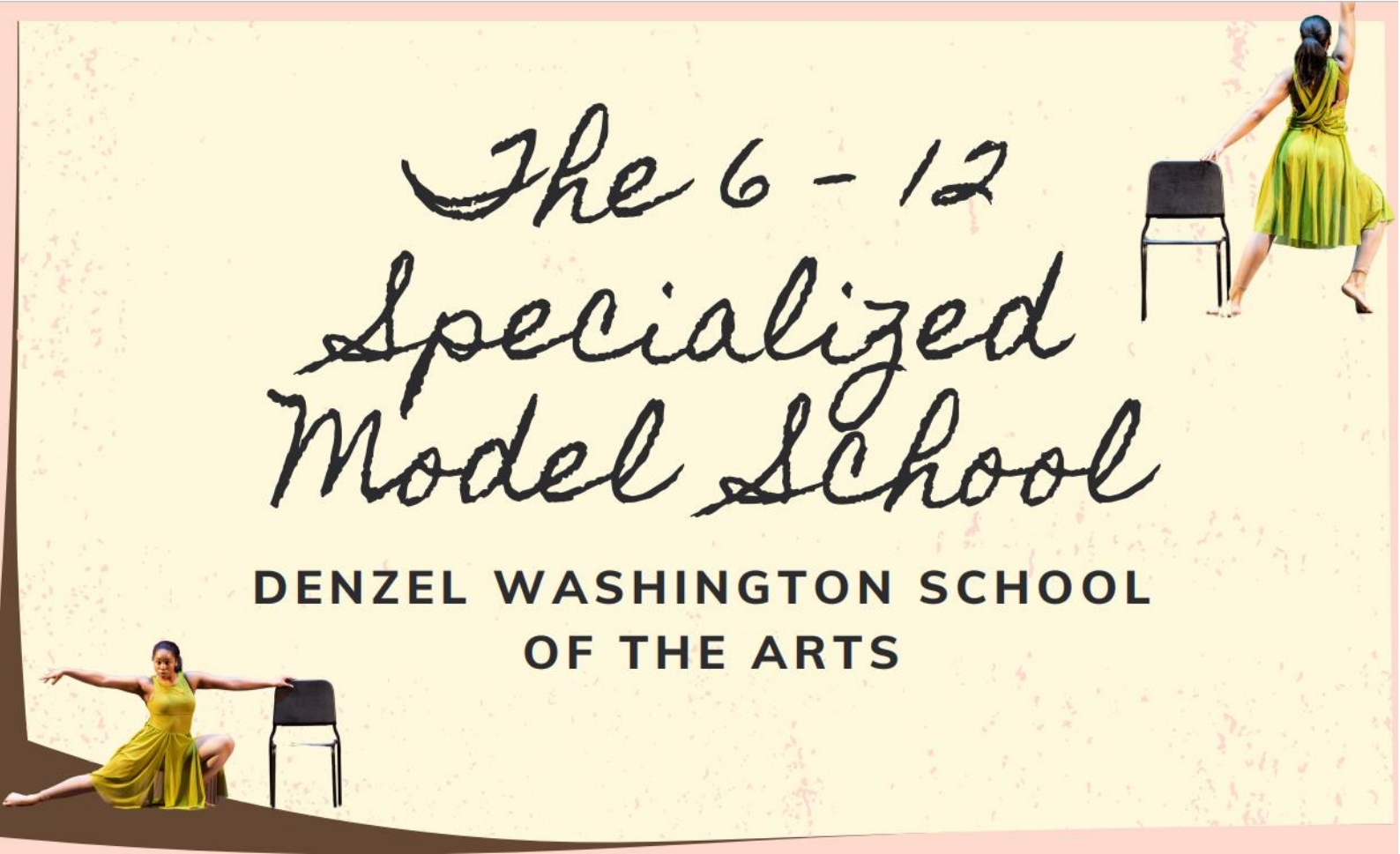
**2. Teachers travel to multiple schools during the day.**

Example: Morning classes at school #1  
Afternoon classes at  
school #2



**3. Limited opportunities for collaboration (subject areas).**





*The 6-12  
Specialized  
Model School*

**DENZEL WASHINGTON SCHOOL  
OF THE ARTS**

# Benefits of the 6 - 12 Model

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- **Students collaborating with industry professionals.**
- **Enduring relationships established with teachers, counselors, and mentors.**
- **Personalized learning opportunities, increased student engagement, more profound social-emotional development, a more focused curriculum, and better preparation for higher education**



## Benefits, cont'd.

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- According to a study published in Harvard Education Magazine, families benefit from attending a school that serves grades 6 through 12, as this arrangement minimizes transitions. Students can remain in a safe and developmentally appropriate environment that nurtures their growth and learning at their individual levels.
- Some studies have found that schools with more grade levels per building (i.e., fewer number of transitions) evidenced not only higher academic achievement but also better attendance rates, self-esteem, and attitudes toward school, with fewer suspensions and behavior problems, regardless of socioeconomic status (Alspaugh, supra) (Offenberg, R.M. (2001). *The efficacy of Philadelphia's K-to-8 schools compared to middle grades schools. Middle School Journal, 35(1)*).

# Benefits of a 7th - 12th Grade Model

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**Continuity of Education:** Combining middle and high school can provide a more seamless educational experience, promoting continuity in curriculum and teaching. Research such indicates that students benefit from consistent teaching styles and educational philosophies across grades.

**Social and Emotional Support:** Integrated school models can create a supportive environment where older students serve as mentors for younger ones. Studies show that peer mentoring can enhance social skills and help younger students adjust better to the challenges of adolescence.

**Increased Resource Utilization:** Combining schools can maximize resource usage, including faculty expertise, facilities, and extracurricular programs. This consolidation can lead to enriched educational experiences, such as a broader range of Advanced Placement (AP) courses or extracurricular activities, as noted in reports from educational organizations.

# Benefits of a 7th - 12th Grade Model

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**Fostering Community:** A 7-12 model can build a stronger sense of community within the school, as students remain in the same institution for a longer duration. Research suggests that a cohesive school community can lead to increased student engagement and a lower dropout rate, supported by findings from studies on school climate and student connectedness.

**Curriculum and Instructional Alignment:** With a dedicated middle-high school format, teachers can align curricular objectives more effectively across grades. Research by the National Middle School Association suggests that this alignment can enhance student preparedness for high school expectations.

**Data on Academic Performance:** Some studies indicate that students in middle-high school models demonstrate improved academic performance and higher graduation rates compared to those in traditional middle and high school setups.