



DISTRICT NEWS

Connecting Our Community



Message from Superintendent

It has been a great start to the school year at Mount Vernon City Schools. I am inspired by the dedication shown by our students, staff, and families—efforts that are reflected in recent achievements and the positive momentum across our district.

This fall, Mount Vernon High School was recognized by U.S. News & World Report as the #1 high school in Knox County. This honor highlights the commitment of our teachers, the determination of our students, and the strong support of our community.

We are proud to share that Mount Vernon City Schools earned a 4-star rating on the Ohio State Report Card—an achievement that places us among the top 5% of similar districts statewide. This outstanding recognition highlights not only the academic growth of our students, but also the powerful partnerships between our schools, families, and community that make success possible.

At the same time, the Facility Advisory Committee brought together voices from across our community to shape recommendations for a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan. Their collaborative work has built a strong framework that will guide the Board in making thoughtful, responsible decisions to meet the needs of future generations. You can read more about this planning process and the next steps inside this newsletter.

I invite you to continue exploring this issue to see the many exciting things happening across our schools. Thank you for your continued support of Mount Vernon City Schools. Together, we are building a bright future for our students and our community.

Warm regards,

William Seder, Jr.
Superintendent
Mount Vernon City Schools

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You're Invited: Senior Citizens Fall Luncheon

Thursday, November 13
• 12:00–2:00 p.m. •
Mount Vernon High School
Gymnasium

Please join Mount Vernon City Schools for our annual Senior Citizens Fall Luncheon, a cherished community tradition. Enjoy a warm afternoon of fellowship, great food, and student entertainment, hosted by Superintendent Bill Seder. Expect music, smiles, and a few fun surprises!

RSVP by Friday, November 7

Contact Jessica Shelton at (740) 397-7422 ext. 6025 or jshelton@mvcasd.us to reserve your seat.





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Todd Conant
Director of Transportation



Message from the Treasurer

As Treasurer of Mount Vernon City Schools, I want to sincerely thank our community for your continued trust and support. I am proud to share that our district's financial position remains strong, stable, and healthy. We recognize that we are entrusted with your tax dollars, and every decision we make is guided by our responsibility to provide the best possible education for students while ensuring excellent value for the community.

Our record reflects this commitment. Mount Vernon's State Report Card results are among the strongest in the area, and we achieve them while keeping costs well below the state average. Our cost per pupil is \$10,892 compared to \$12,723 statewide—placing us in the top 20% of Ohio districts with the lowest operating costs. The district also continues to receive clean audits from the Auditor of State, a reflection of our ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency. This demonstrates that we can deliver excellent educational opportunities while carefully managing resources.

Looking ahead, we are developing a Financial Tax Policy designed to serve our community both now and in the years to come. This policy will offer clear, transparent, and responsible guidance to ensure every decision supports long-term financial health. By creating a framework that is both accountable and adaptable, we are preparing proactively for future challenges and opportunities, always guided by community values and fiscal stability.

We are also closely monitoring developments in the state budget and potential property tax reforms and will keep you updated as new information becomes available.

On behalf of Mount Vernon City Schools, thank you for your ongoing partnership. Together, we are building a future that balances strong financial management with outstanding educational opportunities for every student.

Sincerely,

Judy Forney
Treasurer
Mount Vernon City Schools

Creating Our Future One Student at a Time

An Update on Our Facility Master Plan

Over the past year, the Mount Vernon City Schools Facility Advisory Committee has worked closely with the Board of Education to study the district's long-term building needs. The group's recommendation—to build three new elementary schools and renovate Mount Vernon High School—helped shape this year's theme: "Creating Our Future One Student at a Time."

This plan would replace five aging elementary schools, many of which have faithfully served our students for 70 to 120 years. While these buildings hold deep meaning for generations of Mount Vernon families, they now face growing limitations. From rising maintenance costs and outdated designs to limited space for support services. Working with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission, it has become clear that replacement is the most responsible long-term solution.

Why Change Is Needed

Through months of careful study, several clear reasons for change emerged:

- **Aging Infrastructure** – Outdated systems and structural wear lead to costly repairs and limited functionality.
- **Increased Student Needs** – Spaces for special education and mental health support are overcrowded and insufficient.
- **Modern Learning** – Today's learning requires flexible classrooms, collaborative areas, and technology integration.
- **Efficiency** – Maintaining multiple older buildings is expensive; new schools would be more cost-effective.
- **Safety & Security** – Secure entrances, safer traffic flow, and updated emergency systems are necessary.

Timing Matters

This past summer, the Facility Advisory Committee and Board of Education agreed that placing a bond issue on the November 2025 ballot would be premature. With rising property tax valuations and ongoing financial uncertainty at both the state and federal levels, we believe it's important to proceed carefully. Instead, we'll

continue refining the plan, gathering feedback, and monitoring the economic landscape. As conditions stabilize and community input continues to shape the proposal, we anticipate that a future opportunity—potentially as early as spring—may offer a more favorable time to move forward.

Strengthening Financial Planning

As part of this process, the district is working with financial consultant David Conley to develop a community-focused tax guidance policy. This will help ensure future planning is clear, transparent, and financially responsible—helping our community understand how potential projects may impact local taxpayers.

Looking Ahead

While the timeline may shift, our commitment does not. We will continue to plan responsibly, involve our community, and keep student learning at the heart of every decision. Together, we're creating something that will serve students for generations to come—one student at a time.

The plan would replace five of our six elementary school buildings and significantly renovate the high school.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

Mount Vernon City Schools Earns Four-Star Rating

We are proud to share that Mount Vernon City Schools has earned an overall Four-Star rating on the Ohio Department of Education’s annual report card. This recognition reflects the commitment of our students, staff, families, and community to excellence in education. Even more impressive, Mount Vernon is rated among the top 5% of similar districts throughout Ohio.

Districtwide Highlights and What They Mean

Overall District Rating: ★★★★★

This overall rating reflects how our district performed across all six categories on the state report card. A Four-Star rating means that we are exceeding state standards in multiple areas and are among the top-performing districts in Ohio.

Achievement: ★★★★★

Achievement measures how well students performed on state tests. Mount Vernon students consistently scored above the state average, in some cases by as much as 20 percentage points in Math, English, and Science.

Progress: ★★★★★

Progress measures the academic growth students achieve from one year to the next. This rating demonstrates that our students are exceeding a year’s worth of growth year after year.

Gap Closing: ★★★★★

This measure assesses how effectively we are serving all students, including those in special education, from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, or other subgroups. A Five-Star rating means that Mount Vernon is excelling at closing learning gaps and ensuring success for every student.

Graduation Rate: ★★★★★

The graduation rate tracks the percentage of students who complete high school within four or five years. Our 94.7% rate reflects our commitment to helping every student succeed, and while this is a strong number, our goal remains 100% graduation.

Building-Level Successes

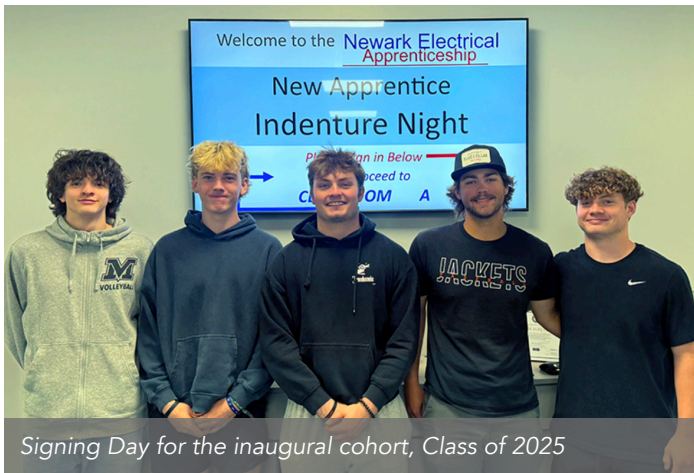
We would like to extend special recognition to East Elementary, Twin Oak Elementary, and Wiggins Street Elementary Schools, which each earned an overall Five-Star rating. These schools represent the highest level of performance recognized by the state, and their accomplishments are a source of pride for the entire community.

We are also especially proud of Mount Vernon Middle School, which increased its performance in every single category by one full star. This kind of improvement reflects the outstanding work of our staff, the dedication of our students, and the support of our families.

Looking Forward

We are very pleased with these results and proud that Mount Vernon is performing at the highest levels compared to similar districts across Ohio. At the same time, we remain committed to continuous improvement. When we “Exceed” or “Significantly Exceed” state expectations, it gives us reason to celebrate while motivating us to aim even higher.

Together, we are building a brighter future for Mount Vernon students—one star at a time.



Signing Day for the inaugural cohort, Class of 2025

Wired for the Future: MVHS Students Partner with Newark Electrical JATC

In 2025, Mount Vernon High School graduated five seniors who completed a pre-apprenticeship electrical program during their senior year through a partnership between MVHS and Newark Electrical JATC. Today, they are employed as journeymen apprentices working to build data centers (Meta and Google) in Licking County. This school year, four MVHS seniors are enrolled in the same pre-apprenticeship program.

#1 in Knox County: Mount Vernon High School Tops Local Rankings in U.S. News & World Report



Mount Vernon High School has earned distinguished recognition in the latest U.S. News & World Report, claiming the #1 spot in Knox County and ranking #134 among 1,502

public and private high schools across Ohio. This accolade reflects the school's dedication to academic excellence, student achievement, and cultivating well-rounded, future-ready graduates.



Wheels of Success: Mount Vernon's Bike Program Transforms Young Riders

Mount Vernon students are gaining more than just bike-riding skills, they're learning how to ride safely and confidently in their community. Thanks to funding from United Way, every elementary school has implemented the All Kids Bike program, which uses the Stride to Ride technique to help children master biking by the end of kindergarten. The impact has been dramatic: since the program began, 89% of kindergarten and first graders have learned to ride, compared to just 19% at the start. That's 330 new riders ready to enjoy Mount Vernon's paths and sidewalks.

Recognizing the importance of safety education, PE teacher Heather Barbour, who also serves on

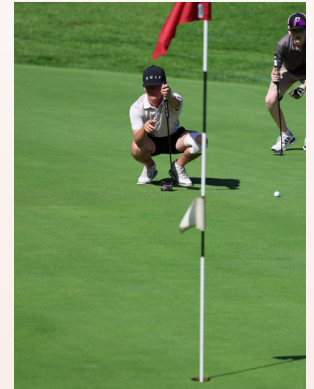
the Mount Vernon Recreation Board, introduced a mobile Safety Town program. In partnership with Community Engagement Sergeant Nick Myrda, she developed a weeklong course that teaches helmet fitting, hand signals, road signs, and bike path etiquette. Students put their skills into practice in a "miniature Mount Vernon," complete with 14 buildings hand-painted by local muralist Emily Morrison to represent real community businesses.

Looking ahead, Safety Town will expand to all Mount Vernon elementary schools next year, equipping even more students with the biking and safety skills they need for years of healthy, confident riding.

Feature from *The Jacket Journal*, MVHS's Student-Run Publication

Jacket Golf Team Wins League Title and Advances to District Tournament for First Time in Nine Years

Article by Sam Snyder



The Mount Vernon High School boys' golf team has had a historic and memorable season, marking significant achievements both individually and collectively. For the first time since 2009, the Jackets captured the league conference title, winning the Licking County League (LCL) Championship.

Head Coach T.T. Crouch, a former Jacket golfer himself, has now had the unique honor of contributing to the program's success both as a player and as a coach.

"We have a lot of talent on our team—a lot of depth," said Coach Crouch, reflecting on the season and the dedication of his athletes. The team's hard work culminated in a season-best score of 307 to secure the LCL title, an impressive comeback after trailing Granville in earlier tournaments.

Following their conference championship win, the Jackets continued their momentum into the postseason. Mount Vernon shot a season-low team score of 303 to qualify for the OHSAA District Tournament, which will be held at Apple Valley Golf Course. This marks the first time in nine years that the program has advanced to Districts.

The Jackets were led by senior Tyler Marsell, who posted a career-low round of 69—an outstanding performance that contributed

significantly to the team's advancement.

The team will graduate five impactful seniors this year: Griffin Beach, Tyce Davidson, Aiden Guillory, Tyler Marsell, and Carson Ruhl, all of whom played vital roles in the team's success throughout the season. Seniors Beach and Davidson earned First Team All-League honors, while Marsell and sophomore Kenton Strouse were recognized with Second Team honors.

Looking ahead, the future remains bright for Mount Vernon golf. "The sophomores show promise for next year," said senior Griffin Beach, expressing confidence in the younger players ready to step up and continue the program's upward trajectory.

Coach Crouch echoed that sentiment, challenging the underclassmen: "You've got big shoes to fill."

The district wishes the Jacket golf team continued success as they represent Mount Vernon at the District Tournament.

Log onto www.mvjacketjournal.org for a complete interview with Marsell, Beach, and Davidson under our Sports Zone tab.

Scan the QR Code to explore more in the **Jacket Journal**.



LEARNING IN ACTION

Showcasing moments of curiosity, discovery, and growth from classrooms districtwide.



HIGH SCHOOL

Mount Vernon High School teachers spent a professional development day exploring post-graduation pathways—Employment, Enrollment, and Enlistment. From touring local

businesses and hospitals to learning about selective college admissions and military opportunities, staff gained first-hand insight to better guide students toward their future goals.



COLUMBIA

Columbia Elementary celebrated National Walk, Bike & Roll to School Day with a safe and scenic ride along the Kokosing Gap Trail on October 8th! Led by community partners and cheered on by families and teachers, over 80 students kicked off their day with exercise, fresh air, and lots of smiles—showing the power of safe, accessible spaces for kids to thrive.



EAST

At East Elementary, our students are shining bright and soaring high this school year!

We're focusing on what it means to be a great citizen and have been learning about flag etiquette to show respect for our country. Our school-wide focus on growth mindset is helping students learn that with effort and perseverance, they can achieve anything. We recently enjoyed a fun and educational assembly called Uncle

MIDDLE SCHOOL



Mount Vernon Middle School launched the year with our annual SWARM Kickoff Day, a tradition that builds community and sets the tone for success. Throughout the day, students joined team-based lessons led by teachers that highlighted the meaning of SWARM—**Supportive, Welcoming, Adaptable, Respectful, and Mindful**—while also encouraging teamwork and connection. The celebration ended with an assembly where 6th graders were clapped in as new members of our school family. Students also heard a challenge from Principal Darin Prince to live out the ERIC (Extreme Representation of Impeccable Character) mindset as they start the year strong.



DAN EMMETT

Our 5th grade students at Dan Emmett are taking on an exciting leadership

role this year by creating weekly video updates for the entire school! Each week, they will record and share important announcements, reminders, and highlights with their fellow elementary students. This project not only keeps everyone informed, but also helps our 5th graders practice teamwork, communication, and presentation skills.



Mount Vernon City Schools
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PLEASANT STREET

Pleasant Street fifth grade Junior Jackets, along with fifth graders from all over Knox County, embarked upon a wonderful field trip to Memorial Theater to enjoy a program presented by Eric Payton. This percussion program was engaging and interactive. It even had some of our students and staff on stage, drumming. We are

so grateful for the fine arts collaboration that exists in this community so our students can enjoy various Youth Enrichment Series programs at Memorial Theater.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 13 · 12:00–2:00 p.m.
 Senior Citizens Luncheon
 High School Gymnasium & Theater

November 14 · 7:00 p.m.
 Fall Drama Production — Play On!
 MVHS Theater

November 15 · 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
 Fall Drama Production — Play On!
 MVHS Theater

November 19 · 6:30 p.m.
 Sixth Grade Orchestra & Band Concert
 Middle School Gymnasium

December 8 · 7:00 p.m.
 High School/Middle School Choir Concert
 MVNU Hodges Chapel

December 9 · 6:30 p.m.
 Columbia Elementary Winter Program
 Memorial Theater

December 10 · 6:30 p.m.
 High School/Middle School Band Concert
 MVHS Theater

December 11 · 6:00 p.m.
 Pleasant Street Elementary Winter Program
 MVHS Theater

December 15 · 6:30 p.m.
 East Elementary Winter Program
 MVHS Theater

December 16 · 6:00 p.m.
 Wiggin Street Elementary Winter Program
 Rosse Hall, Kenyon College, Gambier

December 17 · 7:00 p.m.
 High School/Middle School Orchestra Concert
 MVHS Theater

December 18 · 6:30 p.m.
 Dan Emmett Elementary Winter Program
 MVHS Theater

December 18 · 6:30 p.m.
 Twin Oak Elementary Winter Program
 MVNU Hodges Chapel

TWIN OAK

Twin Oak's Fit-A-Thon is more than a fundraiser—it's a celebration of movement, learning, and community spirit! With a SpongeBob theme, student favorites, and even teachers racing in inflatable costumes, this year's event was both a huge success and a tradition in the making. The day highlighted how much joy and connection can come from working—and playing—together as a school family.



WIGGIN STREET

Wiggin Street 4th and 5th grade students were introduced to Lt. Gov.



Tressel's Fitness Challenge that started on September 8th and goes through December 18th. Mr. Evans, gym teacher, and Mrs. Eilbacher, 3rd grade teacher, will be hosting fun exercises with all interested Wiggin Street students on Wednesdays with the help of Kenyon coaches and players. The Kenyon Women's Basketball Team led the students in ball handling and dribbling drills before school. Other teams such as the Kenyon Women's Lacrosse Team and the Men's Soccer Team will be helping students learn new skills while getting fit together! On Thursday, October 23, Wiggin Street welcomed Lt. Governor Jim Tressel for a special visit recognizing students' efforts in the challenge. His visit highlighted the school's strong commitment to health, fitness, and community partnerships.