



Mount Vernon City Schools

DISTRICT NEWS

Spring 2017

Connecting Our Community



May 2nd Renewal Levy Renew. Protect. Preserve.

This is a Renewal of existing levies. Keeping this funding in place is urgent to maintain our programs and staffing at current levels.

Renew

- May 2nd - Emergency Levy Renewal for Mount Vernon City Schools that will combine two existing levies into one.
- Levies first approved in 1981 and 2013 will appear as one issue.
- ZERO ADDITIONAL TAXES. Approval of this issue keeps Mount Vernon City Schools' funding at current level and helps us to keep the programs and high quality teachers that we have.

Protect

- This levy represents 10% of our general fund budget.
- These funds are crucial to keep our high quality staff at current levels.

Preserve

- Our Board, Administration and Staff have focused on very careful spending trends in these three key areas:
 - Classrooms and students - high quality teachers, necessary supplies and curriculum.
 - Safety and security - student and staff training and upgraded facilities.
 - Technology - providing state-of-the-art equipment and innovative/interactive programs for our students.

WHEN AND WHERE

- Vote at your local polling place on May 2nd **OR**
- You may vote absentee beginning April 4th. To request an absentee ballot, download and fill out this form: www.co.knox.oh.us/offices/boe/absentee.pdf
- April 29th is the deadline to request an absentee ballot.
- May 1 is the final postmark for absentee ballots.
- Early voting in person begins on April 4th.

It is important that we **renew** these levies in order to **protect** our funding, and **preserve** our great school district!

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Random Acts of Kindness

A message from Superintendent William Seder



I recently heard a story of a businessman heading to Chicago. As he found his assigned seat and settled in for the three hour flight, ten soldiers boarded the plane and took seats next to him. The man introduced himself to several of the soldiers and one of them said they were heading to Chicago for two weeks of training before heading to Iraq.

Halfway through their flight the stewardess announced over the intercom that they were offering a "Brown Bag lunch" for \$5.00. The businessman overheard one of the soldiers ask his buddy if he was going to buy a lunch. "No, that seems like a lot of money for a sack lunch. Probably wouldn't be worth the five bucks. I'll wait until we get to Chicago." None of the soldiers were buying a lunch.

The businessman walked to the back of the plane and handed the stewardess a fifty dollar bill. "Please take a lunch to those soldiers." The stewardess grabbed his arm with tears in her eyes and said "My son is a soldier in Iraq; It's almost like you're doing it for him...Thank You."

Picking up the ten sacks, she headed up the aisle and handed a sack lunch to each of the soldiers. She stopped at the seat of the businessman and asked, "Which do you like best – Beef or Chicken?" The businessman perplexed by her question replied "Chicken". Minutes later the stewardess returned with a dinner plate from first class. "This is yours, thank you."

When the businessman went to the back of the plane to stretch, a man stopped him. "I saw what you did. I want to be a part of it here, take this." He handed him twenty dollars. Soon after the Flight Captain came down the aisle and with a smile, held out his hand, and said, "I want to shake your hand." With a booming voice he said, "I was a soldier too – a military pilot. Once, someone bought me a lunch. It was an act of kindness that I never forgot."

When the businessman landed in Chicago a woman shook his hand while exiting the plan and put a twenty dollar bill in his palm. Waiting just inside the door, another man put something in the businessman's shirt pocket, turned, and walked away without saying a word. Another twenty dollars!

Upon entering the terminal, the businessman saw the soldiers gathering for their trip to the base. He walked over to the soldiers and handed them the \$60.00 that had been given to him and said, "It will take you some time to reach the base and I'm sure you may want another sandwich along the way. Be safe and Godspeed."

A moment after the businessman left, a voice called out, "Sir!" the man turned to see ten of our nation's finest standing at attention, looking him straight in his eyes and rendering the crispest salutes he had ever seen.

We are living in extraordinary times where it seems our nation is more divided than united. Our children are looking to us to lead the way, to be the example. As you read many of the articles in this newsletter and see first hand the incredible things our students do everyday, maybe - just maybe, we could learn a lesson from their example.

How do we change the world? One Random Act of Kindness at a time...Pass it on!



UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

- 10 -17 • Spring Break
- 20 • Senior Citizens Luncheon 12-2pm MVHS
- 28 • Tops & Pops Jazz Band Concert - MVMS Commons

MAY

- 1 • MS Choir Concert- MVHS Theater
- 3 • MS Spring Orchestra Concert MVMS Gymnasium
- 5 & 6 • May Fiesta Choir Concert MVHS Theater
- 8 - 10 • Fifth Grade Outdoor Education Camp Heartland Conference Center
- 8 • ABC Awards Night Memorial Theater
- 9 • Senior Awards Night MVHS-Theater
- 10-13 • 8th Grade Trip to Washington D.C.
- 13 • Prom - Kenyon College
- 16 • MVHS Band Spring Concert - MVHS Theater
- 17 • MS Band Spring Concert - MVMS Gymnasium
- 18 • HS Orchestra Spring Concert - MVHS Theater
- 21 • HS Commencement MVHS Stadium (weather permitting)
- 24 • Last Day for Students Early Dismissal

Call 740-397-7422 or email Terry Streby at tstreby@mvcsd.us for times and other details regarding events



Students Pay It Forward

Dan Emmett Elementary Principal, Margy Arck

As the old African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child," one could only imagine then that it would take a community to raise a school. At Dan Emmett, we believe the answer to real education/school transformation is strong community connections. When families, community groups, business and schools bond together to support learning, young people achieve more in school and enjoy the experience more.

There are many opportunities for Dan Emmett students to experience the community surrounding our school. We find ways to connect curriculum beyond the classroom by serving people. One of the best ways to connect and create an authentic bond is to go to the people who matter most, the people of our community, and meet them on their own turf. Much of what we learn as students and adults happens outside the classroom through real world experiences.

At Dan Emmett, we strive to make sure our students are able to engage in these positive experiences. Some of the projects they have enjoyed are helping a local church serve hot meals, raking leaves and general yard clean up at homes near the school, working in the Stone Garden at Faith Lutheran Church, making cards for local police officers, making and delivering cookies to Mount Vernon Police Department, Mount Vernon Fire Department, and the Knox County Sheriff Department, and hosting Wake Up Wednesday, which is an open invitation to local first responders to come into the school to get a cup of coffee and mingle with the students.

We also thrive on interaction from the community and families through events such as Red Cross Blood Drives, Food for the Hungry, Pennies for Patients, Study Club (a wonderful group of volunteers from Faith Lutheran and Mulberry Street United Methodist Church), and Engineers from Siemens who came to present a STEM lesson to our 5th grade classes. Additionally, our PTO is a strong source of community interaction with families by hosting family events throughout the year.

To lift our schools to a place that suits all 21st century learners, help needs to come from many parts of the community and the students at Dan Emmett Elementary are excited to embrace many new opportunities from our community's involvement.



Above and to the right:
Wake Up Wednesday



Engineers from Siemens and
5th Grade STEM

STEM at Pleasant Street

Pleasant Street Elementary Principal, Karen Boylan

Each week fourth graders at Pleasant Street Elementary have been transformed into young scientists, engineers, and mathematicians.

"STEM is the best thing ever! We get to do amazing stuff like make circuits, make toy toilet paper-roll cars, power cars with balloons, make towers out of paper, make a map of the classroom, and tons more fun things!" explains student, Sam Cadoret.

What is STEM? This acronym stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Sometimes it turns into STEAM by adding the Arts to the activity. Whatever we adults call it, the students call it fun. "Science, technology, engineering, and math. All four of those individually are fun, so putting them together makes them even more fun," reports fourth grader, Rebecca Davis.

The fourth grade teachers at Pleasant Street have incorporated STEM into their weekly schedules. "Not only does it focus on our science and math standards, it prepares students for high school and beyond," said teacher, Tracy DeBord.

Jayden Ellsworth says everyone should be doing it. "It helps us cooperate, and learn what to do and what not to do."

Weekly lessons ask students to try and solve a problem by working in groups. They know they will make mistakes, but trial and error is part of the process. "I think that STEM is a really fun way of doing hard work. It doesn't matter if they're hard to do or you can't get it done in time because you tried your best," says Ava Pullins.





Wiggin Street Emphasizing “Informational Writing Across the Curriculum”

Wiggin Street Elementary Principal, Deanna Lowers

Teachers at Wiggin Street have been studying ways to improve students’ informational writing this year. Informational writing is a specific style that helps students communicate their thinking about nonfiction topics. Students might write to tell others how to complete a task, they might write a report or a research paper, or they might write a paper to inform others about a topic. This style of writing is much different than telling a story and can be difficult for students.

Early this year, the teachers at Wiggin Street looked at data they had collected about student writing and determined that informational writing would help students not only in Language Arts, but also in the content areas of social studies, science, and even math or the arts. Through group research, teachers coordinated efforts to guide and challenge students to produce real-world writing. To assist the students development, teachers created student guides and checklists to help students understand what a good writing sample contains. Samples of exceptional student informational writing have been collected and shared with the students to serve as a guide to show students what good writing looks like.

The concentrated focus on informational writing across the curriculum is having a positive impact on students. Students are writing to inform on a more regular basis. In recent weeks, fourth grade students have written about rain forest themes while first graders have been writing a how-to guide about how to create their favorite book. Upon completion, the first graders will be publishing a book complete with photos. In addition to the development of real-world writers, Wiggin Street teachers are also finding ways to improve students’ keyboarding skills so they can transfer their excellent writing into finished products while learning important technology skills at the same time.

Writing plays a crucial role in communication. Informative writing and research are skills students will need to be successful as they move to high school and college as well as to 21st century careers. The emphasis on writing to share knowledge will aid our students in other content areas and will increase their ability to read nonfiction critically as well.



New Directions...Hive Period

MVHS Principal, Scott Will

If you have taken a recent trip on Route 13, barriers are now up and construction is taking place on a section of North Sandusky Street. It is a subtle reminder that we are getting close to the time of year when the orange barrels come up and the detour/change of direction signs come out. While some may cringe when barrel season begins, I tend to look forward at what the finished product will provide. There is always a reason for these projects to occur and it is usually focused around an improvement in traffic or routing/rerouting of utilities.

When you really think, it is not too different from changes that go on within the walls of Mount Vernon High School. There are times when we have to evaluate the systems in place to see if there are improvements that can be made that will be beneficial to the students as a whole. Our daily schedule is one of the systems we will be overhauling in the coming school year. One barrier that our students experience during the course of the

day is finding time to make up work and get individual help from teachers when needed. Students can potentially fall behind or not get the instructional support needed to move forward to the next concept.

To address this need, we will be adding a “Hive” period at the end of the day. Teachers will be available to individually meet with students and help them with specific instructional support. Through the flexibility of our teaching staff and reworking our homeroom time, we have been able to create this period to address specifically what our data is telling us in terms of student need. We will also be using this time to limit the number of interruptions that occur during the typical school day. As we navigate through the “detours” and “changes of direction” in our daily educational path, we look forward to the potential of the “Hive” period in serving the needs of our students.



Writing Biographies

East Elementary Principal, Eric Brown

Third grade teachers at East Elementary School recently promoted the idea of writing biographies. This is one of the literary genres that the third grade students have been studying this year. During the month of February, Mrs. Tiffany Firebaugh and Mrs. Casey Melton encouraged their students to write a report and present on a famous person of their choice. This event has become an annual writing project where students in both classes select, research, write, and present on their chosen individual.

Within the classrooms, students focused on writing their biographical information into a report. They were encouraged to be creative and to select their own famous individual, but they were also provided writing prompts and other supports when needed. Throughout the month, the children wrote during the school day but many were so eager to work on their individual biography, that they took their projects home to write more.

Students neatly and creatively placed information they had researched and learned about their famous individuals on a Google Slide presentation. Students were also encouraged to dress up and "become" the famous individual that they were studying. Students presented to multiple audiences ranging from classmates, to students in other grades, and to parents. At the end of each presentation, the audience was given a chance to ask each presenter questions on their famous individual. This provided an opportunity for students to learn how to provide constructive feedback.

Ben Franklin, Bill Gates, Babe Ruth, and Rosa Parks were some of the famous individuals who made an appearance at East. Through their projects students were able to sharpen their skills in researching, writing, technology, and public speaking. During the event, the children had fun, worked on the state standards, and hopefully acquired an appreciation for the famous individual that they studied.

Lunch Buddies

MVMS ELL Teacher, Jeremy Ketterman

No matter who you are, middle school can be a challenging time. When you are still learning English, that challenge becomes even greater. The MVMS Lunch Buddies serve to help students face that challenge by being a homework help and mentoring program.

Over the years, many parents of English Language Learners (ELLs) have told us their students struggle with homework and could use some extra help. However, most of the students ride the bus and are unable to stay after school and get help from the teacher. Mr. Ketterman, the Mount Vernon Middle School ELL teacher, started to think of ways that we could help these kids during the school day. He decided to have students from MVHS come over to the Middle school during lunch and assist our ELL students with their assignments. The high school students spend some time talking and having lunch with the ELL students and then move on with their homework.

We decided the best place to find high school students willing to come to work with middle school students was the Key Club. Key Club International is a student-led community service organization that seeks to encourage leadership through serving others. The students who participate in the club complete different service projects in the community throughout the year. Mr. Ketterman went to one of their meetings and explained the need to assist our ELL students. The response was amazing because so many high school students signed up to participate, that we were able to provide homework help and mentoring not only to support the needs of some of the ELL students, but to many other middle school students as well! Thanks to the efforts of the MVHS Key Club students, the program has been quite successful.

Here is what some of the MVMS students who participate in the program have to say about it:

"I like that they help me with my math homework" - M.B. grade 6

"They help me with my homework and help me if I don't know a word when I am reading" - N.N. grade 6

"Homework help ROCKS!" - Y.C. grade 8

"I like it because they are good people and they want want to be your friends. They help you finish your homework." - A.M. grade 8

We look forward to seeing the program grow and helping more and more students every year!





Kids Changing the World

Columbia Elementary Principal, *Matthew J. Dill, Ed.D.*

At Columbia Elementary, a banner drapes the stair entrance with the words "Only the Best and the Brightest Enter These Doors." Our students see this phrase and hear it everyday. We expect our students to strive daily to achieve their set goals, to be successful, and to be prepared for their future. We purposely strive to help them become the Best and the Brightest through academics, a Tiger Up Mentorship program, guest speakers, community partnerships, Kenyon College lunch buddies and pen pals, Mount Vernon Nazarene University student Bookworms, and other avenues.

Few things are as exciting as seeing our students' faces light up when they begin to think of something "big." One of those students was a second grader, Addison Barber. Addison decided that she wanted to make a difference in the world. What Addison did from there is evidence that she is one of the "Best and the Brightest."

Addison didn't just talk or dream about wanting to make a difference, she set a goal and made a plan to accomplish it. "I knew that I have all these great things and other people don't, so I just wanted to help. I wanted to help people that need help." She began to research ideas on her Chromebook. After a few days of research, her plan was formed. She was going to make a club at Columbia

Elementary called "Kids Changing the World." With the help of her teacher, Mrs. Erin Humphrey, Addison developed a proposal and presented her ideas to me.

Addison's club meets during recess every Thursday. So far, the members have made Valentine's Day cards for the residents of The Living Center and they are currently in the process of making fleece blankets for Nationwide Children's Hospital. Addison's future plans for the club include writing thank you notes (with a surprise attached to the note) for our local first responders, collecting items for the dog pound and holding a fundraiser for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. Columbia is very proud of these students and the partnerships that have been established by their work! We would like to thank these students for paying forward to others!



WAGS *MVMS English Teacher, Trudy Debolt*

Something pretty amazing has been happening at the Knox County Animal Shelter; kids have been begging to go there...to read. Trudy Debolt, 6th grade English teacher, began WAGS (Working Dog Awareness Group) as a way to honor military working dogs and their devotion to serving our military and country. WAGS started with one teacher and fifteen students on a mission. They wanted the people of Knox County to know of the sacrifices dogs make for humans. Today, WAGS has grown to thirty-seven students strong. The kids are rotated on a monthly calendar to enable as many students as possible to read to the dogs for one hour on Saturdays. The goal of the group is to help the dogs become more adoptable by giving them consistent close human contact. The results...incredible!

The students first quietly walk through the kennels to find "their dog" for the day. Staying calm, speaking softly, and using encouraging words of praise while community members come to see the dogs, is what the students are trained to do. "When WAGS first began, the dogs barked non-stop for at least forty minutes. Despite their barking, the kids continued to read quietly in front of



the kennel gates. As each week passed, the dogs barked for a shorter time, to the point that most just wagged their tail and came to the front of the kennel and sat ready to listen," Debolt said. "I couldn't believe the effect the students had on each dog's behavior." The greatest reward of their quiet mission is when the word, "adopted" is placed on a dog's kennel sign. The students can't help but feel partially responsible for each dog that finds a home.

After reading for one hour, the students pack up their books, towels, and boxes of dog treats. Instead of saying they'll see the dogs next week, the kids say, "I hope I DON'T see you again," because that would mean their dog for the day had found a home. "Although we all get attached to the dogs very quickly, we know why we come to read. We don't want to put the Animal Shelter out of business...we just want the dogs to be adopted faster," Mrs. Debolt said. The most incredible part of all, some of these students will admit that they really don't like to read. You'd never guess that on a Saturday afternoon at the shelter.



MVHS Art Students Recognized *MVHS Art Teacher, Deanna Badger*

MVHS is very fortunate to have a strong art program. Art teachers, Deanna Badger and Danielle Hoff, enjoy filling the display cases as a way to showcase their students' artwork. Students see that their artwork is important enough to be shared with the broader school community. Earlier this year we had several students recognized for scholarship opportunities as a result of their work and development. Each year the art teachers encourage students to submit artwork for The Governor's Youth Art Exhibition. The exhibition is open to all of Ohio's 1,112 high schools. MVHS students, Sean Badger and Jessica Stitts, had artwork selected for the Governor's Youth Art Exhibition. Sean's hand cut paper light box and Jessica's digital image ranked in the top 300 pieces out of over 11,000 pieces in the State of Ohio. When asked about his artwork *Of Monuments and Men*, Sean Badger said, "Structural designs fascinate me, so I thought bringing some of the most iconic structures together would make a unique project. This was a new project for KAP Digital Imaging and after making a smaller light box, I decided to create a second larger piece. I wanted the artwork to be compelling." Sean and Jessica's artwork will be on display at the James A. Rhodes State Office Tower in Columbus, Ohio, from April 23 – May 18. Maya McDonald had a digital image that ranked in the top 350 pieces. Her image, *The Violet Room*, will be on display in a cameo show at the State Department of Education. When asked about her image Maya said, "I've always been intrigued by abandoned structures. I think there is so much life in them that gets overlooked, so I wanted to shed some light on the personality of this specific house." All three students will receive an award April 23 in a ceremony at the Columbus Athenaeum. MVHS students Rea Bennett, Ryan Bielecki, Fredericka Bockover, Elizabeth Garcia, Cierra Goeppinger, Joy Henry, Mary Lowe, Maya McDonald, Katelyn McKinley, Miranda Purdy, Jared Robbins, Zak Shannon, and Lauryn Williams had artwork selected for the 2017 North Central Regional Governor's Youth Art Exhibition. Seventeen MVHS pieces were accepted. The Regional show runs from March 18 – April 16 at the Mansfield Art Center.

TWIN OAK FIFTH GRADE BUILD STORIES WITH BRICKLAB

Twin Oak Elementary Principal, Sue Miller

Students have been inspired in unimaginable ways in Aimee Humphrey's 5th grade classroom. Aimee was awarded a grant from 'The Energy Cooperative Round Up Foundation' for the purchase of a BrickLab STEM set which emphasizes hands-on projects to explore the foundations of communications, construction engineering, mathematics and physics. All projects begin with communications skills. Students write stories that use words causing emotional thoughts for the reader. Then, using the 'BrickLab', they 'build' a chart where the story plot is represented as layers of bricks. The colors of the bricks used represented the feelings as noted by readers. The challenge of this project is to have another reader build the same plot chart after reading the story. Using a variety of communications tools, all levels of skills could be tested with the ultimate goal to have the same graph of blocks as anyone else reading the story. The projects were built to combine learning with fun through experiential activities.

Additional projects are scheduled to enhance comprehensive understanding, application and an end project from the bricks. Other fifth grade 'BrickLab' projects will include engineering concepts such as, structural design and durability. Later, mathematics and physics concepts will be used to explore cubes, circles, fractions, tessellations, measurements and effects of friction. Throughout all projects, emphasis is on using the correct terminology and memory recall. In an increasingly digital world, communication skills are more important than ever and have become a highly sought after 21st Century skill. Activities requiring students to follow specific instructions, communicate with precision and use technology to communicate with a variety of systems is important. As future leaders, the 5th graders at Twin Oak thank Operation Round Up Foundation for giving them this fun start in communication.





Mount Vernon City Schools

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RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

**Spring Senior Citizens Luncheon
Fun - Fellowship - Entertainment - Surprises**

Area Senior Citizens: Superintendent Bill Seder requests the honor of your presence at the annual Senior Citizens Spring Luncheon, sponsored by the Mount Vernon Board of Education. The luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, April 20, 2017, from noon until 2:00 p.m.

Senior Citizens are encouraged to attend the luncheon which will be hosted by various student high school groups. Student entertainment is always a highlight as well as a fabulous lunch prepared by the District's very own Food Service Department (lunch is sponsored in part by the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon and Knox County).

If you would like to attend or have any questions regarding the luncheon, please contact Terry Streby at 740-397-7422, extension 6025, or email at tstreby@mvcasd.us. Reservations are requested by Friday, April 14, 2017 - please include your name and a contact number.

Your presence will be the highlight of our day!



**Online
Registration**



Mount Vernon City Schools has been transitioning to an online registration system this past year. For 2017-2018, the District will be fully transitioned to an online registration platform. New Students (K-12) and all Open Enrolled Students will be required to enroll through the online registration process.

All parents who reside in the District and have students attending Mount Vernon City Schools will be required to have a "OneView" account. Your "OneView" account will be used to complete the student emergency medical form and district building forms. If you are a parent of a current student and have not completed this process, please do so by following the directions for the "OneView Parent Portal Link" and create your account.



For additional information please visit the "New Student Registration Center" located in the "Parents" Icon at the top of the web page.

**MOUNT VERNON CITY SCHOOLS KINDERGARTEN
REGISTRATION - 2017**

(PROSPECTIVE KINDERGARTNERS FOR THE
2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR)

Please call your home attendance area building to schedule an appointment

East	740-393-5985	May 5, 2017	8:00 a.m.
Wiggin Street	740-427-4262	May 12, 2017	8:00 a.m.
Dan Emmett	740-393-5950	May 15, 2017	8:00 a.m.
Twin Oak	740-393-5970	May 16, 2017	8:00 a.m.
Pleasant Street	740-393-5990	May 17, 2017	8:30 a.m.
Pleasant Street	740-393-5990	May 18, 2017	8:30 a.m.
Columbia	740-393-5975	May 22, 2017	8:30 a.m.