



Mount Vernon City Schools DISTRICT NEWS

Fall 2017

Connecting Our Community



Reading Comes Alive Under the Stars

Wiggin Street Elementary Principal, Dee Lowers; Pleasant Street Elementary Principal, Teresa Weaver; Fifth Grade Teacher Wiggin Street, Christy Grandstaff

To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark. (Victor Hugo)

We all know the importance of the ability to read, but it is just as important that children learn the love of reading as well. When parents and other family members are avid readers, students learn to appreciate the enjoyment and adventure they can find in reading.

After noticing that parents sometimes had difficulty helping their children with reading skills, the principals and staffs from Wiggin Street Elementary and Pleasant Street Elementary decided they would share the fundamentals of the elementary reading curriculum with parents.

And, that was how the ideas for "Camp Read-A-Lot" at Wiggin Street Elementary and "Camping Out With A Good Book" at Pleasant Street Elementary were born!

Wiggin Street fifth grade teacher, Christy Grandstaff, took the lead to develop a specially designed event for families that would include both an educational component for parents and a fun reading event for students. Pleasant Street Principal, Teresa Weaver and Mrs. Grandstaff worked with Lois Hansen, owner of Paragraphs Bookstore in Mount Vernon, to bring author and illustrator Jeff Ebbeler to visit both buildings.

Mr. Ebbeler conducted an assembly at each school in which he explained how he became interested in art and how he used it to enhance his stories. Mr. Ebbeler shared a book he illustrated entitled *Melvin The Mouth* which

tells the story of famous voice actor Mel Blanc, voice of well known cartoon characters such as Bugs Bunny and Woody Woodpecker. He shared with students his methods for creating the images to tell the story and then helped them begin to illustrate a story on their own.

Mr. Ebbeler returned to elementary buildings later on October 16th and 17th to participate in the project. Families, teachers, students, elected officials and Mount Vernon City School Board members visited the gym and library where campsites and tents and night sky simulations had been set up. Each child received a free book provided by Wiggin Street teachers and a mini flashlight provided by Friends of Wiggin Street to read by the sound of crickets in our transformed gymnasium.

"I liked reading under the stars best," stated first grader, Meera Bhadange. "I listened to the Arthur story."

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A Campfire Perspective

A message from Superintendent, William Seder Jr.



Autumn's warm days and cool nights make it the perfect weather for a fall campfire. Can you remember the last time you sat out at a campfire? Perhaps you reminisce about singing songs, telling stories, or roasting marshmallows only to sandwich it between two graham crackers and some chocolate...Good Times.

It's in those waning hours when everyone has gone inside that I find myself embracing the warmth of the fire and staring into the colorful, dancing flames reflecting upon my family, current world events, and the many educational issues surrounding us right here at home.

I have recently enjoyed spending some extended time in several of our elementary buildings. I've seen the countless smiles, boundless enthusiasm, and endless curiosity that is incredibly refreshing. What a wonderful reminder that there's a sense of hopefulness and optimism in a world that often seems so divided.

Two questions occupy my thoughts: "What more can we do to foster even greater curiosity, provide more opportunities that would allow our students to reach even higher?" and "How can we best prepare our students for a future of which we can only speculate?" I put another log on the fire and wonder if someone had asked these same questions when I was in school or when my children were in school.

As I find myself reflecting on our current district report card, I don't believe all the answers lie in a test. We spend too much time analyzing and teaching to a test that statistically seems

unreliable and unrealistic. When 80% of the districts in the State of Ohio get failing marks on the testing indicators there seems to me to be a greater problem. In spite of those problems, the district has improved on 18 of the 24 indicators. We raised the bar on K-3 Literacy from a "D" to a "B" and increased the high school graduation rate from a "C" to an "A".

We have recently implemented 'Second Steps', a social and emotional learning platform in grades K-8 to better address issues like Respect, Empathy, Problem Solving, Emotion Management, Peer Conflict, and Diversity. These life lessons are important topics that need instructional time for the positive development of our young people, even though they are not mandated on state tests.

Business round-tables tell us that we need graduates who are technologically proficient. We have implemented 1:1 technology at grades 6-12 and while it can be an excellent teaching and learning tool, we need to instill a sense of responsibility in this new digital age including the appropriate use of social media. The Governor's workforce development team continues to emphasize 21st century skills like collaboration, teamwork, creativity, imagination, and critical thinking. Ironically, we are 17 years into the 21st century, how are we doing?

The dancing flames of the fire have faded leaving only the warm glowing embers. The stars are brighter than ever and I can't help but wonder what you think. What are the views and perspectives of our students, parents, business and community members related to the questions that occupy my thoughts at the campfire?

While I can share my thoughts and vision for an educational future, it is your vision for the future that matters most. We find ourselves at that critical juncture where "WE" need to have those conversations. In the coming months, we plan to have a series of community meetings so we can develop an educational roadmap to the future you envision for our students.

I look forward to those conversations

Respectfully
William Seder Jr.

Senior Citizens - Your Fall Lunch is Served!



We are excited to announce that Thursday, November 30th at 12:00 noon, is the date and time for our annual Fall Senior Citizens Luncheon and Program! The event will be held in the gymnasium at Mount Vernon High School.

There is no charge for this event, thanks to the sponsorship of the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon and Knox County, the Mount Vernon City Schools Board of Education and our Food Service Department.

Master of Ceremonies, Superintendent Bill Seder is busy planning an entertaining and informative afternoon for area senior citizens.

If you have attended our luncheons before, you know what a great time we all have when we get together. Please join us for some good food, fellowship with each other, and an awesome time sharing with students.

So, don't hesitate!! R.S.V.P. by calling Terry Streby at 740 397-7422, ext 6025, or email her at tstreby@mvcgsd.us by Monday, November 27th.



Senior Citizens Fall Lunch

NOVEMBER 30th

Noon to 2 p.m.

**Mt. Vernon
High School**



Reading Comes Alive Under the Stars continued

He is kind of my favorite book character." A photo area was set up where families could take a camp photo. There were even some 'wild animals' such as a bear, fox, and raccoon running the halls thanks to Kindergarten and Reading teachers, Mrs. Zolman, Mrs. Bonaudi, and Mr. Otting.

Finally, the families were invited to the cafeteria where they made a book of their own with Mr. Ebbeler's help. Every child took home a S'more making kit to have a snack while they read their own story together.

Teacher, Jill Harris commented, "It is so important for us to create a sense of community among the families, staff, and students of Pleasant Street. It helps them see who we are and what we are about."

Sometimes creating a great ambience for reading makes all the difference in making reading FUN!! Reading under the stars by flashlight with a good book did exactly that!



Be a Hero!

MVMS Principal, Gary Hankins

When Mount Vernon Middle Schoolers came back to school in August, the staff was ready to roll out a new positive behavior initiative to help make the middle school experience even better! As part of this PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support) initiative, students were asked to consider what it means to Be a Hero!

A school-wide pep rally was followed by each student taking a survey to determine what positive character traits they possess, engaging in a lesson on what it means to be a hero, and completing locker tags highlighting their individual positive characteristics. Students were also able to sign a grade-level banner highlighting our positive behavior goals for the school year. Respect, Responsibility, and Empower Yourself and Others can be seen in the hallways of MVMS. To top the day off, every student and teacher in the building was given a Be a Hero T-shirt to show solidarity as we participated in an all-school kick-off rally at the high school football stadium. Parents, faculty, and administrators created a tunnel for students to run through. District Superintendent, William Seder welcomed students and encouraged them to ponder what it means to Be a Hero. Athletic/Activities Director, Justin Sanford gave a motivational speech explaining, inspiring and challenging students to live up to MVMS behavioral goals.

Since Be a Hero day, students have been recognized through PRIDE tickets given by teachers for their positive behaviors. The locker tags were laminated and now hang on student lockers. MVMS is currently working with Mount Vernon Nazarene University to hold a "Champions of Character" day in December.



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

10 • Musical - Elf Jr -
HS Theater - 7:30 p.m.

11 • Musical - Elf Jr -
HS Theater -
3:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

16 • 6th Grade Band and
Orchestra Concert -
MS Gymnasium - 7 p.m.

DECEMBER

11-13 • Holiday Program
(Grades 3, 4, & 5) -
Memorial Theater - 7 p.m.

12 • Winter Band Concert -
HS Theater

13-14 • Orchestra Winter
Concert - HS Theater

15 • Kindergarten
Gingerbread Man Program
- WS Gymnasium

18 • Sounds of the Season
Choir Concert -
MVNU Chapel

18-19 • Holiday Program
(Grades 3, 4, & 5) -
Memorial Theatre

19 • Holiday Program
(Grades 3, 4, & 5) -
Rosse Hall, Kenyon

19 • Winter Band Concert -
HS Theater

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



Columbia's New Outdoor Learning Pavilion and Playground

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

It has been a long time since our students and community of Columbia Elementary have benefited from new and updated playground equipment. For this purpose, several community organizations and our Columbia Elementary Parent Teacher Organization collaborated to ensure that both our students and community would have a great playground and an Outdoor Learning Pavilion. The Outdoor Learning Pavilion alone was organized and created through the leadership and dedication of MVHS Student, Logan Kaufman for his Eagle Scout Project. When Logan was asked why he decided to choose building the pavilion for our school as his Eagle Scout Project, he responded:

"When I was a student at Columbia, the teachers were wonderful to me, the school was wonderful to me, the classes, and I figured I wanted to give something back."

There are two main purposes of The Outdoor Pavilion: 1) To be used as an outdoor classroom to integrate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) along with other learning activities better, 2) A place for the families from our community and those visiting Ariel-Foundation Park to spend quality time together after school hours. This project was made possible by our community, and we want our community to benefit and take care of both the playground and Outdoor Learning Pavilion for many years.



During the last school year \$97,667 was raised to renovate our playground and to build our Outdoor Learning Pavilion. The following groups donated to the project: The Knox County and Mount Vernon Community Foundation Grant, The Ariel Foundation Grant, Anonymous Donations, Columbia Elementary PTO (including Fundraisers) (\$23,567), The Energy Cooperative PTO Grant, and The Knox County Health Department Grant. The monetary amounts raised over the course of one year, speaks volumes about our community. We are very blessed by and grateful for all of this support! The funds raised for these two projects covered the cost of the playground equipment, plumbing materials & labor, pavilion supplies and materials, blueprint drawings & labor for the pavilion, zoning permit fees, and other products and services that were required for the projects' completion.

While we are close to completion of both our projects, we will soon be completing the installation of a countertop in the pavilion, purchasing of STEM instructional materials for student use, and installing a border around the playground mulch.

We are very grateful of our proud partners of this project:

- The Ariel Foundation
- The Community Foundation of Mount Vernon & Knox County
- Mr. Logan Kaufman & his family
- The Columbia Elementary PTO
- The Energy Cooperative
- Mr. Rick Shaffer
- Custom Cutters
- 84 Lumber
- Mr. Loren Ing & his family
- Anonymous Donors
- Ohio Rental
- The Ellis Brothers
- Lowe's
- Kenyon College
- The Knox County Health Department
- Mount Vernon Nazarene University
- The Fanning Family
- The Mount Vernon City School District
- other unnamed friends of Columbia Elementary

"We love the playground, thank you!"





Popping For A Cause

Dan Emmett Elementary Principal, Margy Arch

The movie theater is not the only place to take in the sweet aroma of popcorn. On Fridays at Dan Emmett Elementary, the hallways are filled with the smell of popcorn popping. The students bring their pocket change to purchase bags of popcorn for themselves and, oftentimes, their friends and family. The change that students bring can really add up, and that's exactly what they are hoping for during the "Popping for a Cause" campaign.

"Popping for a Cause" was implemented to alleviate some of the hardship that families have faced from the hurricane that recently devastated the state of Florida. For every bag of popcorn that was purchased on Fridays during the month of October, the PTO of Dan Emmett donated the money to assist with hurricane relief. To spread the word about this campaign, a small group of students volunteered their recess in order to make posters to display around the school.

The students at Dan Emmett love popcorn Fridays! Even though the teachers may often forget, the students never do. The office counter is covered with baggies of loose change from every grade level each Friday. As for the month of October, the aroma filled hallway will be a reminder that popcorn Fridays will be serving a higher purpose!



East Elementary's Eagles' Nest

East Elementary Principal, Karly Watterson

East Elementary has partnered with United Way to create an after school program called The Eagles' Nest. The program began on October 2 and is currently serving 30 students. The Eagles' Nest provides services (tutoring, art, music, drama, physical activities, and club programs) for students in a safe, supervised after school educational environment. Emphasis is placed on social and educational mentoring programs geared to the elementary child. The focus and services provided in the program reflect the commitment of East Elementary School to improve student achievement.



The Eagles' Nest Team consists of Marilyn Nagy, director; Casey Melton and Jenny Merrilees, academic coaches; and Destiny Smith, academic aide. We have a growing list of volunteers from around Mount Vernon including East Elementary Alumni students, retired teachers, MVNU students, Siemens employees, United Women, several current East teachers, and RSVP-retired senior volunteer program- to name a few. Community partnerships built with this program include the Health Department, OSU Extension Office, 4-H Youth Development, Hot Yoga, Walmart, and Kroger.



Hailey, a fifth grade student that attends the Eagles' Nest, says "I love going to the Eagles' Nest! I look forward to all of the fun enrichment programs that are planned for us each day! It is so much fun!" "The volunteers at the Eagles' Nest really help me by checking my problems and reteaching me. I needed a lot of help with division and they were there. My favorite part is getting the help I need so my homework gets done. Then when I get home I can watch TV" says third grade student, Carter, about the Eagles' Nest.

It takes a lot of help to make The Eagles' Nest successful, and we rely on the generosity of United way, the passion of our volunteers, the support from our community partners, and the dedication of our Eagles' Nest Team, to improve students' achievement and enrich students' lives.



THE MOMENTS MATTER

MVHS Principal, Scott Will

Moment #1

Several of our students continue to represent the long-standing tradition of MVHS student success in the National Merit Scholarship Competition. We are fortunate this year to have four students (Conrad Stein, Aidan Clarkson, Olivia Matulich and Amanda Miglin - left to right) recognized as commended and one student (Noah Shremshock - far right) move on as a semi-finalist in the competition. These students have put themselves in the top 34,000 students of nearly 1.6 million students who have taken the PSAT exam nationwide. Noah has put himself in the top 16,000 and continues on with the competition into the spring.



Moment #2

Building culture and climate have become a major focus for the students, staff and administration of the high school over the course of last year and into the 2017-18 year. Building upon past traditions and creating new traditions are seen in weeks like Homecoming where the junior class took home the honor of best hallway. Our goal of rewarding positive behavior and growth is seen in our building PBIS program and in the leadership programming that is being created out of our athletic/activities department. It is important that we have ownership in our successes and setbacks. How we learn to positively respond to those moments allows us to grow stronger and effectively handle those moments as they occur in our daily lives.



Moment #3

HIVE Period. It was determined last year that a time was needed during the day to reach out to students who were struggling and required extra help, to allow students who have been absent the ability to meet with faculty and make up work, and the simple opportunity to have another time to meet with a teacher if needed. Teachers now can connect with students and not have to worry about whether that student has transportation to stay after school. Our teachers and students have commented on the benefits of the HIVE period and we will evaluate throughout the year to get the best possible results out of this time with students.

In reflection on just the few moments mentioned, I realize the older I get the more I realize how much the moments we live impact far more than the exact time and space in which they occur. We live in a day and age where self-gratification and instant reward tend to take precedence over the longer journey and the product of hard work over time. I believe that we are most fortunate in education to still have the opportunity to see the process of work over time making a greater impact that will result in significant moments throughout the lives of our students.



Live at the HIVE!

MVHS Activities/Athletic Director, Justin Sanford

BREAKING NEWS...when the news hit in mid August that after fifty plus years of coverage the Mount Vernon Friday Night Football games would no longer be aired on the radio, it would have been easy to simply sulk in the disappointment and turn the dial. Rather, Athletic Director Justin Sanford saw this as a new opportunity for the Jacket fans far beyond Friday night football coverage. Determined to not allow an entire season to go without Yellow Jacket fans having an opportunity to listen to Mount Vernon Football, he garnered up support from four local business leaders to help fund a new age broadcast program called Boxcast and bring it to Mount Vernon.

Yellow Jacket Live was launched on Friday, September 22, 2017 with live video and audio coverage of the Jackets football game vs Ashland. Mike Fuller and Shawn Carpenter joined the channel to call the game and thus, Yellow Jacket Live went...well, LIVE!

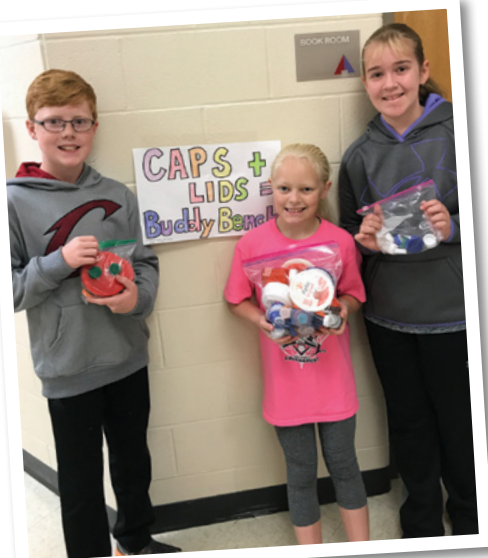


Since the debut, all Mount Vernon football games, along with a weekly Athletic Director's Update and most recently, a live broadcast of a Mount Vernon Board of Education Meeting have all aired on the Yellow Jacket Live channel. Yet, the best part of this broadcast is that this is simply a glimpse of the possibilities of coverage. The vision set forth for this channel will incorporate additional sport coverage, coaches' interviews, and students behind the microphones to bring coverage for all things Mount Vernon Athletics. What an opportunity for the students of Mount Vernon that might have aspirations of broadcast journalism in their future. So the news that might have broken as disappointment, has certainly turned the dial to a most exciting and positive story for the day...LIVE in Mount Vernon. Yellow Jacket Live - www.mvcsd.us/jacketslive.aspx

TWIN OAK'S BUDDY BENCH

Twin Oak Elementary Principal, Sue Miller

Twin Oak Student Council members are embarking on a yearlong project to purchase a Buddy Bench for the playground at Twin Oak after identifying a way to help students in their school. A Buddy Bench is used by students who are in need of a friend. When a student sits on the bench, it is a sign to other students to ask if they would like to join in a game or play. Student Council member Addie Cooperider explains, "Sometimes you see kids walking around the playground at recess all alone. You don't know if you should ask them to play, and you don't know how to help. If they are on the Buddy Bench, it's easy to know they want to play and want a friend."



The Student Council would like to collect 400 pounds of caps and lids to make this Buddy Bench. They will be collecting clean caps such as those from medicine bottles, milk jugs, detergent bottles, and bottled water, as well as caps with recycle numbers 2, 4, and 5.

Acceptable lids include those from coffee cans, mayonnaise jars, prescription bottles (with labels removed), and peanut butter jars, to name a few. The community can help by sending or dropping off clean caps and lids at the Twin Oak office.

Twin Oak student Dalan Vail likes the idea of recycling bottle caps and getting something else for the playground.

He also likes that he and the other Student Council members are helping kids make friends. Another fifth grader, Payton Hempfield, thinks it is a good idea because it "gets kids to be nice to each other and maybe find a new friend to explore games together as you get to know each other."

You can read more about this project by going to www.greentreeplastics.com. Green Tree Plastics is a company that recycles many types of plastic caps and lids to create benches, tables, and stools.





RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Keeping Our Students Safe

MVCSD Maintenance Supervisor, Rick Shaffer

The safety of our students is paramount to the faculty and administration of Mount Vernon City Schools. Rick Shaffer, Director of Maintenance has worked closely with first responders in our community to develop an Emergency Operation Plan for each of our building locations. This plan includes procedures for all emergency situations - fire, weather, explosion, bomb threat, medical, or intruder, among other hazards. Building level administrators are required to learn specific procedures on how to react during various emergency situations and in turn train their staff. Staff and administrators will work together to instruct children on how to respond safely during emergency situations. Mount Vernon and Knox County First Responders are active participants in all emergency drills in our school district and we appreciate all they do to help keep our children safe.



Mount Vernon City Schools is a part of the Knox County Emergency Community Planning Group. This group includes all Mount Vernon City and Knox County First Responders, Knox County Career Center, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Kenyon College, Central Ohio Technical College, The Ohio State University-Newark, Knox Community Hospital, Knox County Emergency Management Director, and Village of Gambier. This group meets monthly to collaborate on emergency plans, share resources and conduct training seminars.

Currently we are in the process of holding safety and security tabletop exercises that are required by the state of Ohio at each of our schools. This gives us a great opportunity to discuss our plan with the safety team at each school. Special attention will be paid to each of the four objectives of school safety: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in an emergency situation.

A major part of any emergency situation is communication. In most emergency situations the ideal way for the schools to communicate with parents is Knox Alerts. If you have not signed up for Knox Alerts please do so today using the website http://entry.inspironlogistics.com/knox_co_oh/wens.cfm. We will also send out notifications on our website and through local radio and television stations.



School Bus Safety

Please help us keep our students safe!

We have received too many reports of motorists passing school buses when the red lights are flashing and the stop sign arm is activated.

What Do the Red/Yellow Lights Mean?

Yellow/Amber Flashing Lights - The bus is preparing to stop and pick up or discharge students. Yellow/Amber lights are normally turned on approximately 300 feet before the bus stops. Motorists should prepare to stop as soon as the bus comes to a complete stop and/or the red flashing lights come on.

Red Flashing Lights - Motorists must stop. Students are exiting or boarding the bus. Stop 10 feet from the front or rear of a school bus and do not proceed until the bus resumes motion. Never pass a school bus that has red flashing lights on, even if the "stop sign" arm is not extended.

Stop Sign - Motorists must stop. Students are exiting or boarding the bus. Stop 10 feet from the front or rear of a school bus and do not proceed until the bus resumes motion. Never pass a school bus when the red stop sign is displayed or the red lights are flashing. Your attention to this important safety reminder is greatly appreciated.

Yellow Lights - Prepare to Stop

Red Lights/Stop Sign- Must Stop

