

Highly Effective Schools Accreditation Plan

Mt. Vernon Middle School  
2021-2022

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation

## **Mt. Vernon Middle School Profile**

Mt. Vernon Middle School is located in Fortville, Indiana and is part of the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation. Mt. Vernon Middle School currently serves 971 students. The building's population consists of 292 sixth graders, 340 seventh graders, and 339 8th graders. Our largest population of students are white, making up 80.2%. 13.7% of students qualify for special education services, and 0.08% of students qualify for English as a Second Language services. 23.9% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged.

Mt. Vernon Middle School is one of five schools in the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation that participates in Professional Learning Communities. MVCSC and MVMS rebooted its PLC process at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. Over the past two years, MVCSC and MVMS have developed PLC teams which are focused on the three big ideas of a PLC. During collaborative team meetings, staff look at student data from formative and summative assessments and address the four essential questions of a PLC. School administrators visit PLC teams to observe PLC activities and engagement and to provide feedback. It is the belief of MVCSC and MVMS that all students can learn at high levels. This belief guides our PLC practices and is the driving force for our school growth and improvement.

# Maintenance Plan

## Professional Learning Communities

### A Focus on Learning

The mission of the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation and Mt. Vernon Middle School is to Engage, Educate and Empower today's students to seize tomorrow's opportunities. Our vision states, "Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation is where parents choose to send their children, students are successful, highly qualified personnel desire to work, and the community is proud to support. We are committed to serving a diverse population in a safe, secure, and challenging learning environment where students are engaged in rigorous, relevant and technologically-enhanced curriculum. Student success is nurtured through diverse instructional methods enabled by partnerships fostered between students, parents, school, and community. A strategic and fiscally responsible approach ensures a sustainable, highly effective learning experience inside and outside the classroom. We respect the uniqueness of each student as we engage, educate, and empower them to seize their futures as responsible members of society." All members of the school community have worked to create an environment where the core values and beliefs that are included within our mission and vision are brought to fruition.

In order to provide our students with a rigorous, relevant, and technology-enhanced curriculum, our staff has worked to set learning goals through developing “essential learnings” which provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all our students. Teachers have also developed common formative and summative assessments for these essential learnings so that progress toward mastery of those learning targets can be measured and monitored to ensure that all students are progressing toward high levels of learning.

Analysis of student results data drives our work to both intervene when students have not yet mastered the targeted essential learnings and to enrich learning when they have mastered it. This data analysis also helps to guide our own professional development as we can use it to help pinpoint and identify what forms of professional development would be the most impactful for our students’ learning.

### **A Collaborative Culture and Collective Responsibility**

In order to provide the time and opportunity for a collaborative culture and a collective responsibility for our students, MVCSC and Mt. Vernon Middle School operates on an “Early Release” schedule each Wednesday throughout the school year, with the exception of the first and last Wednesday of the school year. Each MVCSC school dismisses students 45 minutes early. After dismissal, teachers meet with their Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams and engage in the activities of a PLC. Each collaborative team’s work is guided with what we term an “Instructional Planning Sheet” which provides a framework for the teams to address each of the four essential questions of the PLC process. This includes collaborative teams selecting an essential

learning to focus upon and evaluating the curriculum to ensure that it will fully address that given learning target, building assessments to measure the students' learning, reviewing and analyzing achievement data of students from assessments, determining next steps for teaching and learning based on the data, and/or identifying the most effective and powerful instructional practices. By working in this collaborative manner, PLC teams are able to work together to ensure that ALL our students are able to progress toward mastery and high levels of achievement. All teachers support students' progress by supporting them during their Success period. Math and language arts teachers provide direct instructions to students identified as needing additional support through our PLC process. Other teachers support students working on maintaining math and language arts skills through online learning paths.

## **A Results Orientation**

Teachers at each grade level have identified essential learning targets for content areas. They have also connected those essential learning targets to prioritized state standards. Collaborative team members work to track progress on developed common formative assessments and common summative assessments. These PLC teams use Instructional Planning Sheets, a progress monitoring tracking tool, to evaluate assessment data. The PLC teams use the data to determine which students have mastered the essential learning targets, need additional instruction and interventions, or need enrichment activities. Teachers also use the assessment data to determine if adjustments need to be made to their instructional strategies and practices. When

students are identified as needing additional support, the PLC team establishes research-based interventions to implement at the Tier II level. Interventions are provided by all teachers during our Success period, by our special education teachers during resource periods, and by our reading and math specialists during our GOAL periods (tier II intervention period). Additionally, support is given in the classroom by classroom teachers. Students receiving interventions are reassessed and their progress is monitored to determine if interventions have been effective in helping students master learning targets. Mt. Vernon Middle School will maintain performance in this area by continuing to designate 45 minutes weekly for PLC team meeting time. Additionally, school administrators will continue to monitor the work of the teams and provide instructional support to teachers to ensure that all students achieve at high levels.

## **High Reliability Schools**

### **HRS Level 1: A Safe, Supportive, and Collaborative Culture**

To ensure that we maintain a safe, supportive collaborative culture at MVCSC, Mt. Vernon Middle School has created leadership teams. Leadership Team members are made up of teachers from grade level teams, special education/special area teachers, and administration.

Leadership teams meet monthly and as needed to support and communicate various district and school based initiatives. After each of these meetings the team members meet with their content area team to ensure all have a voice in the decision

making process. The Leadership Team is asked to provide feedback to building administration to ensure supportive and collaborative decisions will be made. The Leadership Team also gets input from their colleagues which is shared with the team. Decisions are made based on data collection and staff input and feedback with the Leadership Team coming to a consensus.

The Leadership Team has been instrumental to the climate and culture at MVCSC and Mt. Vernon Middle School. This team has focused our building into places where all voices are heard and valued. There is not a top-down approach and appropriate transparency is paramount.

Teachers meet in Professional Learning Communities weekly on Wednesday for 45 minutes. Based on our ELs (Essential Learnings that were created using a district team), the PLC teams set SMART goals, determine what they want students to learn, determine how they know if they learned the ELs, address student learning needs when students are not proficient in an EL, and address learning needs when students are proficient in an EL. Teachers track assessment data.

All PLC team members keep assessment data, to which all team members have access via the google drive. This data is utilized to better inform instruction for all students to learn at high levels. MVCSC will utilize this summer 2021 to create Common Formative Assessments that are aligned to the ELs to further ensure student achievement.

Although the Leadership Team has been integral in maintaining a safe, supportive and collaborative environment, we have work to do. Beginning with the

2021-2021 teachers will be completing Instructional Rounds with their peers. These visits will be guided by the MVCSC Instructional Model. The visiting team will have parameters to check off and make notes of what they observe, not what they do not observe.

Once Instructional Rounds are complete for each team, we will meet as a team to debrief and share the Instructional Model sheet with the teachers we visited. These rounds are meant to really highlight what teachers are doing well and are non-punitive or evaluative in nature.

We can collect much data from Instructional Rounds to focus on our strengths while recognizing areas of growth. These areas can then be further drilled down for our leadership and administrative teams.

## **HRS Level 2: Effective Teaching in Every Classroom**

MVCSC currently employs the RISE Rubric for teacher evaluation and utilizes Standards for Success as the vehicle to curate observations and evaluations. As part of our evaluation process, teachers receive short “walkthrough” observations by their evaluators throughout the year. MVCSC uses the RISE Rubric to identify teachers' instructional strengths and areas of growth. District and building administrators work with teachers to support growth by developing highly effective instructional practices through professional development. While the RISE Rubric will continue to serve as the evaluation tool for teachers, work is currently underway to more tightly link the RISE Rubric and concepts found in *The New Art and Science of Teaching* (NASoT) which will allow us to more fully develop our model of instruction.

Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, MVCSC will implement a new walkthrough model that is directly related to the ten design questions in The New Art and Science of Teaching (NASoT) as a foundation for our developing instructional model. Additionally, a crosswalk between the NASoT and the RISE Rubric has been identified. This rubric, where only practices that are observed are noted, serves as an instructional snapshot of what we should see in a classroom setting.

### 2021-2022 MVCSC Classroom Walkthrough Model

Ten Design Areas	
✓ YES	INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE
Feedback	
	1 - Learning goals are clearly communicated ( <i>RISE 2.1</i> )
	2 - Assessments are used to inform instruction and/or differentiation ( <i>RISE 2.5</i> )
Content	
	3 - Direction instruction provided (chunking content, processing content, and/or recording and representing content)
	4 - Practicing and deepening lessons (structured practice sessions, examining similarities and differences, and/or examining errors in reasoning) ( <i>RISE 2.6</i> )
	5 - Conducting knowledge application lessons (cognitively complex tasks, providing resources/guidance, and/or generating and defending claims) ( <i>RISE 2.6</i> )
	6 - Using effective strategies (previewing, highlighting critical information, reviewing content, revising knowledge, reflecting on learning, assigning purposeful homework, elaborating on information, and/or organizing students to interact)
Context	
	7 - Teacher notices when students are not engaged and adapts behavior to re engage

	students ( <i>RISE 2.3</i> )
	8 - Implementing rules and procedures ( <i>RISE 2.7</i> )
	9 - Building relationships ( <i>RISE 2.8</i> )
	10 - Communicating high expectations ( <i>RISE 2.9</i> )

To orchestrate growth in teaching practices at the classroom level, the walkthrough tool (Instructional Snapshot) will also be utilized as a framework for instructional rounds. The Instructional Snapshot approach to instructional rounds is different from the problem based approach touted by [Elizabeth City](#), but schools and their leadership teams may choose to focus on one area of the NASoT Snapshot that is most closely related to their individual school improvement plan.

### **Rounding Process**

School leadership teams will identify at least two times during the school year where all teachers will conduct instructional rounds. Small teams of teachers will visit a set number of classrooms and observe behaviors related to the NASoT Snapshot. Post observation(s), the small teams will discuss what they saw during their 10-15 minute visit. As the leader of the team (administration or specialist) facilitates the debriefing conversation, team members (teachers) will undoubtedly seek understanding how an observed colleague designed strategies to align with one or more of the elements from NASoT. As a resource, each faculty member will be provided with their own copy of [The Handbook for the New Art and Science of Teaching](#).

As the purpose of an instruction round is to focus on what the observer learns, teachers will be asked to declare areas of their instruction they wish to improve as related to NASoT.

### **Data Reviews and Growth**

With this school-year being the first where we have implemented instructional rounds, strategies for improvement will be more invitational. Cumulative data from rounds and from walkthroughs by administrators will be curated for each faculty to track and to help see where their collective instructional strengths lie. Opportunities to dive deeper into the 43 elements within the ten design questions as well as the associated instructional strategies will be ongoing during regular staff meetings throughout the year. Additionally, teachers will be provided opportunities for professional development. For example, math teachers are participating in a three-part professional development to improve spiral reviews that will directly impact student learning. Additionally, our math and reading specialists are involved in several professional development opportunities, including ways to accelerate learning and prepare for standardized testing and training related to the New Art and Science of Teaching Handbook. Finally, some of our language arts teachers will be receiving professional development in the area of writing.

### **HRS Level 3: A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum**

Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation and Mt. Vernon Middle School have developed a system for creating our Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum. We have a

committee of teachers representing grade levels, teaching teams, and schools who volunteer to be a part of our curriculum collaborators committee. This committee's work started by identifying essential standards deemed by teachers to be critical for students to learn from each content area and grade level. These essential standards we termed "essential learnings" or ELs and these ELs have resulted in the design of our Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum. The curriculum collaborator committee categorized ELs by nine week quarter views and have curated our curriculum on our curriculum website that all staff can access. Curriculum Collaborator committee members continue to meet periodically to unpack standards and adjust ELs as necessary.

Our individual school PLC teams collect student pre, post, and post-post data on each of their grade level and content area ELs to determine if all students are learning. PLC teams use this data to create SMART goals to inform instruction and develop interventions for students who need remediation to meet proficiency. PLC teams reflect and celebrate student success and achievement of SMART goals. Smart goals are set to help students master the Essential Learnings (curriculum developed by teachers based on state standards). Students mastering this content will perform better on NWEA and state assessments.

PLC teams acknowledge and note instructional practices that went well and what they want to do similarly or differently in the future. We are in the process of creating a district wide data dashboard to display and monitor school and grade level progress toward meeting our vision that all students will learn at high levels.

Mt. Vernon Middle School has a tiered system for instruction to ensure all students can learn at high levels. All four levels of instruction are built into the daily master schedule and have designated times throughout the school day. Tier I instruction is the uninterrupted high quality classroom instruction that all students receive. This core instruction is standards based, differentiated, and offers a variety of assessments that are used to monitor student progress toward mastery as well as guide instruction. Tier II instruction is supplemental instruction that is provided to students whose data shows a need for more intense instruction. Students in tier II are given additional time to practice the strategies and skills. Tier II instruction is often delivered by the teacher during the school day daily. Tier I.5 instruction is the differentiated instruction that students receive based on their individual learning needs or path during core instruction and daily during students' Success period. Some students receive enrichment or an extension of learning while others receive remediation. Tier II instruction is a separate time for each team of teachers to provide individualized remediation for identified students. There are times when students need more intensive tier III instruction. Tier III is a wrap-around approach to provide identified students the most intensive instructional support. Tier III instruction is in addition to the Tier I and Tier II supports in place and can occur at a greater frequency and/or a longer duration than Tier II.

<b>Sample Schedule for Students receiving Tier I, II, and III</b>		
Period 1	Success Period	Tier 1.5
Period 2	English/Language Arts	Tier I and Tier II
Period 3	Science	Tier I

Period 4	Math	Tier I and Tier II
Period 5	Social Studies	Tier I
Period 6	United Arts Elective Course	
Period 7	GOAL Math and/or ELA (tier II) or Resource Support (tier III)	Tier II or Tier III

We have hired specific teachers who serve as intervention specialists. These specialists work with grade level teams and their students to provide targeted Tier II instruction based on students' needs of learning the established ELs during a GOAL period. Students who do not respond to Tier I through Tier II instruction will be referred for Tier III support and/or intensified special education services which will provide an array of individualized instruction for identified students. The math and reading specialists work with students to set individualized and targeted goals.

Mt. Vernon Middle School will also implement data review meetings each month to review Tier II and Tier III student data. During these data analysis discussions, teams may adjust the intervention, continue the intervention, or dismiss the intervention if the student has shown mastery. At this time, all progress monitoring will be reviewed.

## **Growth Plan**

The mission of the Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation is to “Engage, Educate, and Empower today’s students to seize tomorrow’s opportunities.” This mission is the foundation on which Mt. Vernon Middle School has built its core belief

that all students can learn at high levels. While the staff members of Mt. Vernon Middle School have many successes to celebrate, they also recognize opportunities for growth and improvement. It is important to MVCSC and Mt. Vernon Middle School to continually grow and improve, as we believe that all students can learn at high levels. Three areas of growth for Mt. Vernon Middle School are 3.4 “The school establishes clear and measurable goals that are focused on critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement at the school level,” 3.6 “The school establishes appropriate school- and classroom-level programs and practices to help students meet individual achievement goals when data indicate interventions are needed,” and 2.6 “Teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching.”

## **First Area of Growth**

### ***3.4 The school establishes clear and measurable goals that are focused on critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement at the school level.***

The first leading indicator 3.4 was identified to ensure the school is focused on common, measurable goals to improve student achievement and ensure that all students are learning at high levels. The impact of the recent pandemic on student achievement and the school’s previous state testing scores and school letter grade make this an important area of focus. In addition to addressing the critical needs of student achievement, establishing clear and measurable goals allows staff to identify and address gaps and support all students so they can achieve at high levels.

Mt. Vernon Middle School has worked with team leaders to establish measurable goals in the areas of math and language arts. MVMS administrators will communicate those goals with all stakeholders throughout the year via team leadership and staff meetings. Additionally, staff will review data collected from NWEA testing, ILearn testing, and common assessments. Finally, teachers will utilize PLC data to set SMART goals, to identify students needing additional support, and to make adjustments to instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Data will be available to staff via an electronic data wall and from PLC team instructional data tracking spreadsheets. Data will be reviewed by administrators, teachers, and PLC teams to make informed decisions about instructional practices and student learning needs.

### 3.4 Goal Steps and Tracking

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| 1. PLC teams track student data on data tracking spreadsheets. PLC teams meet weekly.   |
| 2. PLC teams set SMART goals, reteach, reassess, and identify students for tier II and III. PLC teams meet weekly.  |
| 3. PLC teams review and discuss data to make informed decisions about instructional strategies and practices. Teams will document on the data tracking spreadsheet. PLC teams meet weekly.    |
| 4. Administrators meet with instructional teams regularly to discuss PLC progress, monitor instructional data tracking spreadsheets, and review SMART goals. Spreadsheets are checked weekly. |
| 5. Reading and math specialists will work with PLC teams weekly to determine which students need tier II interventions.   |
| 6. Special education teachers will work with PLC teams weekly to determine which students need tier III interventions.  |

After reviewing ILearn and NWEA data during the spring of 2021, three goal areas will be targeted. Math, writing, and reading are being targeted because of the following reasons:

- Inconsistent data results
- Inconsistent student learning opportunities during the spring of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. Some students experienced both virtual and in-person instruction, and some experienced only virtual learning.

Goal Area 1	School-Wide Goal
Math	75% of all MVMS students will increase their math proficiency by reaching their individual projected growth on the Spring 2022 Math test of NWEA. During the 2020-2021 school year, 60% of students met their NWEA projected growth in math.

Goal Area 2	School-Wide Goal
Writing and Vocabulary	75% of all MVMS students will increase their writing and vocabulary proficiency by reaching their individual projected growth on the Spring 2022 Language Arts test of NWEA. During the 2020-2021 school year, 59% of students met their NWEA projected growth in language arts.

Goal Area 3	School-Wide Goal
Reading	75% of all MVMS students will increase their Reading proficiency by reaching their individual projected growth on the Spring 2022 Reading test of NWEA. During the 2020-2021 school year, 36% of students met their NWEA projected growth in reading.

It is important to note some inconsistencies in our data. First, we have no NWEA growth data from 2019-2020 due to students not testing at the beginning of the pandemic.

Additionally, data from 2020-2021 could be skewed due to the fact that some students took the NWEA test from home, not in typical testing situations. For these reasons, data from 2018-2019 was included. We have no ILearn data from 2020-2021 because students did not take the test due to the pandemic. Students did take the ILearn tests in person last year.

Goals were based on 2020-2021 student data:

ILearn English/Language Arts	
2020-2021	% Proficient
6th Grade	44%
7th Grade	48%
8th Grade	46%
ILearn Math	
2020-2021	% Proficient
6th Grade	49%
7th Grade	36%
8th Grade	26%

NWEA Reading	
	% Met Individual Student Growth
2020-2021	36%
2018-2019	53%
NWEA Language Arts	

	% Met Individual Student Growth
2020-2021	59%
2018-2019	61%
NWEA Math	
	% Met Individual Student Growth
2020-2021	60%
2018-2019	58%

## Second Area of Growth

***3.6 The school establishes appropriate school- and classroom-level programs and practices to help students meet individual achievement goals when data indicate interventions are needed.***

Establishing clear and measurable goals helps MVMS focus on improving student achievement. However, the second leading indicator 3.6 will help MVMS establish programs and practices that meet the individual goals of all learners through interventions established from Tier I through Tier III.

As previously mentioned, the recent pandemic has impacted many learners. It is more critical than ever to address the individual learning needs of all students. All students will have access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum in core academic areas. MVMS developed a new schedule, which will allow time for all students to participate in Success Period, a designated time for all students to receive individualized support, including remediation and enrichment. Additionally, students

needing additional tier II support based on teacher recommendation, test scores, and classroom performance, can take a GOAL (Going Forward Always Learning) class for additional math and/or reading/language arts instruction and support. Math and language arts classes are 65 minutes (7th and 8th grade) and 85 minutes (6th grade).

MVMS has recently hired a reading specialist and a math specialist to support students needing Tier II math and language arts support. These specialists will work closely with general education teachers during weekly PLC team meetings to identify and provide interventions. The specialists will review the PLC data tracking spreadsheets of math and English teams. Teachers will develop and fine-tune common formative and summative assessments to determine which students need additional interventions and support for each Essential Learning. Teachers will work through the PLC process to support individual learners with the ultimate goal of supporting students so they can master identified Essential Learnings and learn at high levels.

Mt. Vernon Middle School recently hired an additional special education teacher to meet the needs of students needing Tier III interventions and support. It is the belief of MVCSC and Mt. Vernon Middle School that all students can learn at high levels. MVMS is an inclusive building and it is our practice that students receiving special education services are placed in general education classrooms for their primary instruction. Special education teachers support students collaboratively with general education staff in general education classrooms.

### 3.6 Goal Steps and Tracking

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| 1. PLC teams track student data and determine which students need tier II interventions in the classrooms and during the Success period.   |
| 2. Math and English/Language Arts Specialists work with PLC teams weekly and review PLC team data tracking spreadsheets to develop targeted goals for students receiving tier II interventions during their GOAL period. |
| 3. All students work on maintaining and enriching math and E/LA skills during the Success period.  |
| 4. During the Success period, math and English/language arts teachers provide direct reteaching and instruction to students identified as needing a tier II support through the PLC process.                             |
| 5. Administrators will monitor data tracking sheets, NWEA data and ILearn data, and meet with PLC teams.   |

## Third Area of Growth

### ***2.6 Teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching.***

The third leading indicator 2.6 was selected to provide time for teachers to observe and discuss effective teaching practices. Currently, teachers discuss instructional practices during weekly PLC meetings. MVMS teachers participated in instructional rounds during the 2018-2019 school year, but there have been many staff changes since then. Providing time for teachers to observe effective instructional strategies and practices, including behaviors related to The Handbook for the New Art and Science of Teaching will allow them to further their discussions of instructional strategies during the PLC process and to support their instructional goals and development.

As mentioned in the Maintenance Plan, school leadership teams will develop a schedule that allows for teachers to conduct instructional rounds once during the first semester and once during the second semester. Teachers will observe at least one teacher in their content area, and at least one teacher in another content area. All instructional rounds will be arranged in advance following a set schedule. School administrators will provide teachers with information and criteria for instructional rounds through in-person staff meetings, email, and shared slides and documents. Small teams of teachers will visit a set number of classrooms and observe behaviors related to the NASoT Snapshot. Post observation(s), the small teams will discuss what they saw during their 10-15 minute visit. As the leader of the team (administration or specialist) will facilitate the debriefing conversations. Debriefing conversations will include the following:

- What practices did you observe that reinforce your instructional strategies or practices?
- What practices did you observe that made you rethink your current instructional strategies or current practices?
- What new practice or strategy did you observe that you will develop for your own classroom?

Team members (teachers) will seek understanding about how an observed colleague designed strategies to align with one or more of the elements from NASoT. As a resource, each faculty member will be provided with their own copy of The Handbook for the New Art and Science of Teaching. Teachers will complete the debriefing questions and observation checklist, which includes NAaSoT elements.

The areas for growth support Mt. Vernon Middle School's mission statement, to "Engage, Educate, and Empower today's students to seize tomorrow's opportunities." By establishing clear and measurable goals for improving overall student achievement, establishing appropriate school and classroom-level programs and practices to help students meet individual achievement goals, and providing opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching, Mt. Vernon Middle School will ensure that all students learn at high levels and achieve success.

## Resources

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