

Dear Mount Vernon Community School District Patrons:

It is an honor to be writing to you as the new superintendent for the Mount Vernon Community Schools. While having only been here for a short time, I cannot thank the community enough for the warm welcome my wife and I have received. It is also obvious from conversations with many of you that you have great passion for the Mount Vernon Community School District. Having students, parents, staff members and community members that care deeply for what is happening in the schools is the foundation for doing great things together. My main purpose in these first few months is to listen more than to talk, and to learn more than to teach. I do not come in with any set agenda other than doing everything I can to work with you to build upon the great history of the district, while doing everything we can do insure a positive future for our schools.

I am interested in hearing from you regarding your hopes and dreams for our schools. Please feel free to call or email me if you would like to find a time to get together and meet. Additionally, if you would like to put together a group of your neighbors and friends and hold some form of gathering where I could come in and listen to your thoughts about the future direction of the district, please contact me and we will see what we can put together. Please know I am always here for you and value your feedback, as this is the only way we will continue to grow and thrive as a first class school community.

I don't want to bore with you a long biography of my life; but I will share briefly that I have been in service to students for thirty three years as a teacher, coach, school counselor, adolescent mental health therapist, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent and now superintendent. The variety of experiences in which I have been involved has prepared me well to lead the Mount Vernon Community Schools. I am a firm believer that we are responsible for the social-emotional growth as well as the academic growth of our students, because without one you really will not have the other. I believe in the life balance that is expressed in our motto of excellence in academics, fine arts and athletics. I also know that students in the twenty first century are growing up in challenging times, and that it is incumbent upon all of us to give them the support and the guidance they need to do great things. I am asking that we all work together as a team to give our students the exemplary school experience that they deserve.

Dr. Hal Urban is a former teacher and leader in Character Education in the United States and beyond. Once when he was concerned about the effort being displayed by a group of students, he put up a sign in his room. That sign simply read, "Why not your best?" I challenge all of us to bring our best effort each day in support of our kids, and that we support one another in these efforts. We all bring different gifts, talents and perspectives to this partnership. I am proud to be working side-by-side with you in this journey, and I look forward to meeting you and talking with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Greg Batenhorst, Ed.D.
Superintendent