

MT. VERNON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2011-2014

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School Improvement Team

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Ryan, Shelley (FAC)
Schneider, Tammy
Shannon-Hornbeck, Teresa
Sharber, Stephanie
Uebelhack, Becky

All staff members were involved in some aspect of the School Improvement Plan under the guidance of the Steering Committee – i.e. School Improvement Team. The co-chairs of the School Improvement Team are: Tom Heckman and Jerry Funkhouser.

In addition to the School Improvement Team, parents attending the Parent Advisory Council meetings provide input. Support staff members also participate in our staff development discussions and our data analysis discussions.

The School Improvement Plan is readily accessible on the school website at www.jh.msdmv.k12.in.us.

The professional development program has been signed by the exclusive representative of NEA Mt. Vernon as an indication of support only for the professional development program component of the plan.

The School Improvement Plan and the staff development programs associated with the plan comply with the core principles for professional development set by the School Board.

SCHOOL MISSION & BELIEF STATEMENTS

We Believe...



- ❖ everyone has a basic desire to learn;
- ❖ everyone can learn
- ❖ learning is a life-long experience;
- ❖ all students can succeed;
- ❖ learning takes place in an environment that is safe, positive, trusting, cooperative, pleasant, and challenging;
- ❖ everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity;
- ❖ all students should be given opportunities to achieve their personal best both academically and socially;
- ❖ equal opportunity is essential in all school activities;
- ❖ students learn best when a partnership exists between home and school;
- ❖ students learn best when exposed to a variety of teaching methods;
- ❖ all students and staff should be technologically literate;
- ❖ learning should be relevant to the present and future lives of all students
- ❖ classroom instruction should be student-centered and active;
- ❖ interdisciplinary instruction should be used to the greatest extent possible;
- ❖ discipline should be structured to create and teach positive behavior, not to punish negative behavior; and
- ❖ staff members are passionate, enthusiastic motivators of learning. *(Dec. 2001, reviewed 2006)*

Mission

Our mission at Mt. Vernon Jr. High School is to fulfill state standards in each curricular area while maintaining a safe and caring environment. We will provide opportunities for each student to acquire knowledge, social skills, and emotional development in order to attain his/her maximum potential. *(Dec. 2004, reviewed 2006& 2009)*

Vision

MVJHS shall be a safe and secure place in which to learn and grow. The concerted effort of parents, educators and community resources shall be committed to fostering a school family. A student-centered focus and high achievement shall be the cornerstones of a quality education. *(Dec. 2005, reviewed 2006& 2009)*

Community Description



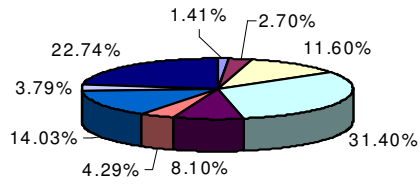
Mount Vernon Junior High School is located in Mount Vernon, Indiana, in the extreme southwestern tip of the state; and the Ohio River to the south and the Wabash River to the west border Mount Vernon. The topography is relatively flat, with more hilly regions to the north away from the Ohio River basin. The majority of County acreage is utilized for agricultural and livestock purposes. Mt. Vernon is a town with approximately 6,945 residents, and is twelve miles west of Evansville. The population change since 2000 has been -7.1%. Mount Vernon Junior High School's district spans 241.6 square miles of Posey County's total area of 410 square miles, accounting for approximately 60% of the student population in the county.

The estimate median household income in 2009 was \$43,898, and the estimated per capita income is \$23,201 – both of which are below Indiana's income. The median housing value is \$91,147. Eighty-one percent of the population 25 years and over have a high school or higher degree. Approximately fourteen percent of the population has at least a bachelor or higher degree. Approximately 9% of the residents have an education less than 9th grade.

The population has not changed much in ethnicity over the past ten years; the Hispanic, Asian, and Multiracial populations have grown, but not significantly. The breakdown is as follows: White 93.9%; African American 3.4%; Multiracial 0.7%; Hispanic 1.4%; Asian 0.2%; other races 0.4%. Families make up 68% of the households in the area, and residents with income below the poverty level are at 14.7%.

Agriculture and industry form the county's economic base. Local industry includes several plastics companies, drug research and warehouse facilities, roofing companies, a refinery and a river port with advanced material-handling technologies. Mt. Vernon is home to Countrymark Refinery, a former GE Plastics Plant - now owned by Saudi Arabia Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC), GAF, Bristol Myers-Squibb and Vectren Energy's A.B. Brown Generating Station. Two ethanol biofuel plants are also located in the immediate area, and these make Mount Vernon an important energy port. The Mount Vernon Southwind Port is also the largest port for coal shipments in the U.S. The John T. Myers Locks and Dam, located 13 miles SE of Mount Vernon, plays important shipping role for the area's river based industries. (See the following chart for a breakdown of the workforce.)

Workforce of Mt. Vernon



Agricultural Services	1.41%	Wholesale Trade	4.29%
Mining	2.70%	Retail Trade	14.03%
Construction	11.60%	Finance/Real Estate	3.79%
Manufacturing	31.40%	Services	22.74%
Transportation, Utilities	8.10%		

Data:
 Chamber of Commerce
 City-Data.com
 U.S. Census

School Information

Middle level-aged students located within the boundaries of the Metropolitan School District of Mt. Vernon go to one parochial school or to Mt. Vernon Junior High School. Over 95% of the students in grades six through eight go to Mt. Vernon Junior High School.

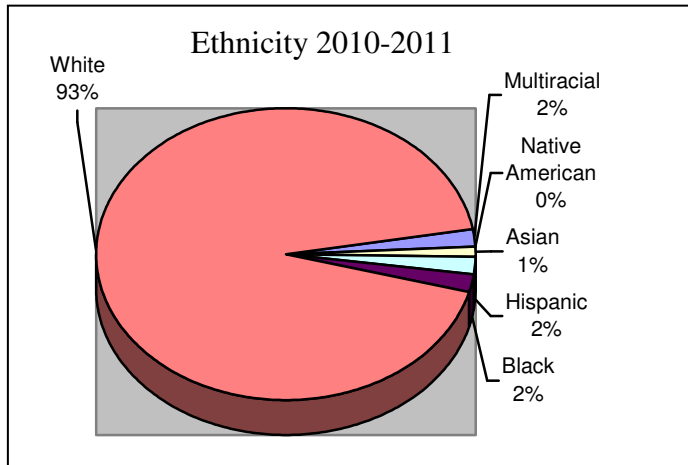
Mt. Vernon Junior High School is a 177,700 square foot building that has a capacity for 900 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. It presently has an enrollment of 542. The building includes forty-seven (47) classrooms, four (4) large computer labs, two (2) small computer labs, media center, staff work center, eleven (11) departmental/team offices, three (3) conference rooms, large receiving room, cafeteria with a stage, two (2) gymnasiums, swimming pool, locker facilities, and counseling/health center/administrative office suites. The sixth grade classrooms are located on the second floor, and the building is connected to the high school by an enclosed walkway. The media center serves as the “hub” of the school and has an adjoining large multi-purpose classroom, a small computer multimedia room, a TV broadcast studio, and a conference room. The instrumental music facilities and the performing arts center are located within the high school and are used by the junior high school. Outside facilities include tennis courts, softball field, soccer field, and the football field along with areas for physical education and team practice.

Forty teachers are on staff at MVJHS. The median years taught is 20.2 years, and the average age is 43 years. The majority of the teachers have a masters or higher. Additionally, 56% of the teachers belong to a professional educational organization pertaining to their subject/grade level, the entire staff belongs to the state’s middle level organization, and 85% read professional journals specific to their teaching area. The school has 1.5 counselors, .5 media specialist, and two administrators.

Student Data

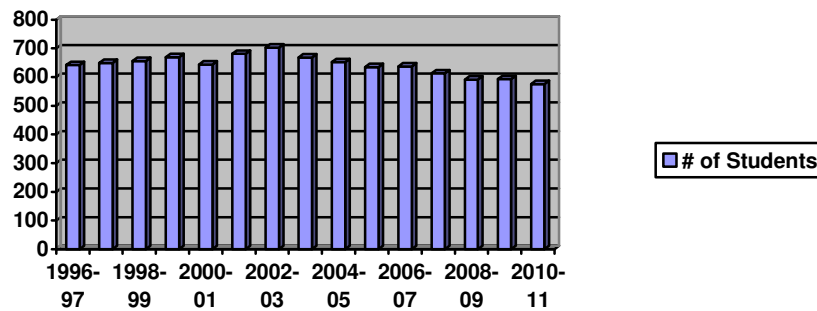
Ethnicity

The ethnic composition of MVJHS is predominately White. The following graph illustrates the composite of the school’s ethnicity. 7.0% of all students are non-White with the largest ethnic group being Multi-racial, Hispanic and Black at 2% each. The number of Multi-racial students and Hispanic students has increased slightly over the past five years in spite of the decline of the overall enrollment.



Enrollment

Enrollment peaked in 2002-2003 with 703 students and has gradually decreased to roughly 590 students. Basically, the male students outnumber the female students in most cases by approximately 10%.



Free/Reduced Meals

During the past several years, the number of students receiving free meal assistance has risen from 17.3% to 27.8%. Approximately 1/3 of our students receive some assistance for meals.

Year	Paid Lunch	Reduced Lunch	Free Lunch
2010-11 Preliminary	67.5%	4.7%	27.8%
2009-10	67.5%	4.7%	27.8%
2008-09	73.4%	4.9%	21.7%
2007-08	74.2%	3.9%	21.9%
2006-07	72.4%	6.1%	21.5%
2005-06	74.8%	4.6%	20.6%
2004-05	74.1%	5.5%	20.4%

2003-04		77.8%	4.8%	17.4%
2002-03		77.8%	4.1%	18.1%
2001-02		77.1%	4.4%	18.5%
2000-01		77.3%	4.3%	18.3%
1999-00		78.9%	3.6%	17.5%
1998-99		79.1%	1.7%	19.2%
1997-98		80.0%	2.8%	17.3%

Attendance Rate

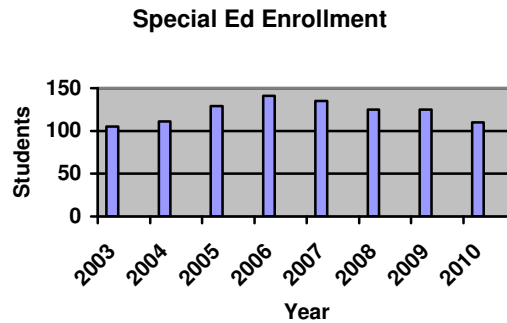
Our students like to come to school. The overall attendance has been relatively high ranging from a low of 96.4% to a high of 97.1%. In all cases, we have been above the state average for middle schools. Our average usually ranks as one of the highest averages among our district schools; however, we do provide incentives to try to maintain and improve our attendance rate. We offer incentives throughout the school year in our Bobcat P.R.I.D.E. program and an incentive trip to Holiday World that rewards students at the end of the year for high achievement and attendance.

Attendance Rate		
Year	State Average (Public and Nonpublic)	Attendance Rate 6953
2009-10	95.7%	96.3%
2008-09	96.1%	96.7%
2007-08	95.9%	97.1%
2006-07	95.8%	97.3%
2005-06	96.0%	97.1%
2004-05	95.9%	96.8%
2003-04	95.9%	96.7%
2002-03	95.8%	96.4%
2001-02	95.9%	96.6%
2000-01	95.7%	96.4%

Special Education Services

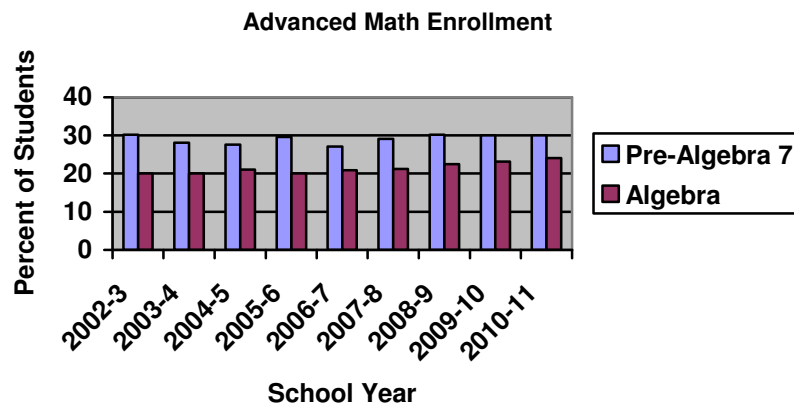
The percentage of students receiving special education services (excluding speech and hearing) has shown an increase through the year 2006 and has show small decreases since then. Currently, approximately one out of every 4.4 students receives special education services at MVJHS. A possible reason for this increase could be the increased number of parental requests for special education testing. Parents want additional assistance with the ISTEP+ testing, and they see inclusion into special education as a way of getting extra help in preparation for the End-of-Course Assessments in high school.

Hopefully, with a revised TAT Team (School Based Intervention Team), Rti Plans, and teacher referral system, we will continue to see a decrease in numbers. There will be a concerted effort to familiarize the staff about the referral system and the various tiers of assistance.



Advanced Mathematics Population

The percentage of seventh grade students enrolled in an advanced mathematics class (Pre-Algebra) has ranged from 30.1% to 27% of the total population during the last several years. Approximately 22-23% of the eighth grade students take Algebra. As the chart shows, this has been a fairly consistent pattern. The state average for 8th graders taking Algebra is 25%.



Student Behavior

The expulsion rate over the past several years has been minimal ranging from 1 to 5. Expulsion is a last ditch effort in dealing with student inappropriate behavior. As indicated on the Annual Performance Report for MVJHS, the number of external suspensions has ranged from a low of 39 in 2008-9 to a high of 49 in 2006-7. Internal suspensions have also decreased over the past three years.

Cultural Competency/Multicultural Component

Throughout the data analysis, the staff looked at the various subgroups and the specific disaggregated data. Specifically with ISTEP, we identified the subgroups as: (1) gender, (2) free and reduced lunch status, (3) and special education.

After much discussion and careful analysis, it was decided that our future actions will need to zone in on the improvement of the writing skills of those students identified as receiving free and reduced meals. Staff members realize that children with learning and other disabilities cross the economic spectrum. But those who suffer most are disproportionately typically from low-income families and communities with the least ability to advocate for themselves. This holds true at Mt. Vernon Jr. High School. Additionally, the majority of our special education students are male. Thus, it is felt that if the staff addresses the *subgroup involving poverty*, we will then have an indirect effect on two other subgroups – special education and the male gender.

During the past several years, the staff has introduced and explored a variety of information to support cultural competence within the staff and student body. Several of our staff development programs have provided information from Ruby Payne's program on a "Framework for Understanding Poverty". Hopefully, this dialogue of information and strategies will continue over the course of the next several years. The overall goals of these efforts are to expand the cultural awareness of our staff and students so that greater educational opportunities are extend to our students of priority and other cohort groups. The entire staff has recently been involved in a cultural diversity workshop and will have a follow-up workshop to discuss and review progress in this area.

MVJHS is aware of the cultural differences that are increasing within the school population and community. It is an essential part of our school goals to ensure that students are made aware of the cultural aspects. Bobcat P.R.I.D.E. (pride, responsibility, integrity, dependability, and effort) was developed and introduced as one attempt to help the students attain acceptance and responsibility of actions.

Throughout the year, MVJHS staff will plan to meet with community members and plan ways to help the students be more aware and accepting of the cultural differences that are present in our community.

Students at MVJHS are also involved within their community through various organizations and activities. A few examples of school programs that are in place to involve students in their community are Student Council, Builders Club, and Student Art Guild.

Staff Development Activities

MVJHS strongly believes in staff and program development. The professional development program implemented by MVJHS complies with the core principles set by the board for professional development. The MSD of Mt. Vernon School Board has set the following goals for the district:

- * meeting the educational needs of all students.
- * improving communications with the community.
- * providing for continuous improvement of technology.
- * providing an optimum learning environment.
- * demonstrating continuous improvement in academic achievement.

Listed below are SD activities that faculty and staff members have participated in during the last several years.

Academic Bowl Workshop	Internationalizing Curriculum Conference
AHPERD Conference	Internet Training
AIME Conference	ISTEP+ Regional Meetings
Alternative Assessment Workshop	Language Arts & Reading State Conference
Apangea Math Workshop	Leave No Child Behind Conference
APEX Learning workshop	Mambo Website Workshop
Aspiring Principals Conference	Managing Your Time Seminar
Assistant Principals Conference	Math Success Workshop
Athletic Clinics/Conferences	Media Workshop - SIEC
Authentic Assessment in the Classroom Workshop	Moodle for Beginners – SIEC
Autism Team Training	NCA State Workshop
Autism Workshop	NSTA Conference
Brain Research & Implications Seminar	ODD/Defiant Seminar
Brain Research Conference	Powerful Discipline Strategies Workshop
Character Education Conference	PowerPoint Training
Character Education in the Classroom Conference	Promethean ActivBoard Workshop
Child & Adolescent Violence Seminar	Reality Store Workshop
Collecting Data Seminar	Regional Leadership Roundtable Meetings
Community Wide Forum for Protection of Children	Ruby Payne’s Framework for Understanding Poverty
Crisis Intervention Training	Safe Schools Seminar
Cultural diversity	Safe/Drug Free Schools Conference
Curriculum Development Activities (summer)	School Law Seminar
Data Analysis Workshop	SIRSI Training
Developing/Implementing Teaming Conference	Six Trait Writing Workshop
Differentiated Instructional Workshop	Strategic Reading in the Content Areas
Due Process Training	Strengthening Your English/LA Program
Educational Equity Conference	Strengthening Your Math Program
Excelsior Training	Student Council Conference
FACS Workshop	Study Island Workshop
Fall IASP Professional Conference	Teachers of Writing Conference
Flexible Scheduling Workshop	Teaching for a Kinder, Safer World Seminar
GroupWise Training	Team Activities (summer)
Governor Commission on Drugs Meeting	Textbook Caravan
HASTI Conference	The Simple Six
ICE Conference	USI Teacher Advisement Workshop
ICTM State Conference	Using Technology to Boost Learning
IMEA Music Teacher Conference	Webpage Training
IMLEA Conference	Windows Training
Indiana Education Conference	Word Training
Indiana School Academic Improvement Conference	Working with Difficult Children Conference
Integrating Multimedia Seminar	Writing Across the Curriculum Workshop
Integrating Reading & Writing Across the Curriculum	Writing Development Training
Integrating Reading & Writing in Science	

Staff Development Discussion

In a recent staff development afternoon, the staff was divided into five discussion groups. Several items or questions were addressed. One of the questions was “what do you consider to be the school’s two greatest strengths?” The results are as follows and are in no particular order:

- A modern facility with a technology driven curriculum,
- Overall strong faculty dedicated to excellence,
- Excellent, team oriented staff with flexible attitudes,
- The team concept for students,
- A challenging curriculum suited for the needs of adolescents,
- A good physical learning environment that is well maintained and clean, and
- Good partnerships with USI and local businesses.

Also discussed was “what are the instructional patterns needed for all of our students to be more successful?” After much discussion, the staff identified the following instructional patterns that should be incorporated into the teaching methodology:

- Instruction involving the different learning styles,
- Individualize education,
- Repetition of basics – build on level,
- Cooperative learning,
- Better use of the Learning Triangle,
- Time to use applications and assessment,
- Lead-in activities to promote student interest,
- Use of student interests in planning lessons,
- Teach according to learning styles and multiple intelligences,
- Consistency and coordination in all things,
- Higher academic expectations for all students,
- Stress reading and writing skills in all subjects,
- Continue to strive for more than just average,
- Use cutting edge technology in the curriculum and classroom,
- Remain cognizant of the standards and make efforts to incorporate standards on a daily basis,
- Make learning fun and meaningful, and
- Employ re-teaching strategies immediately after a method of assessment.

The attitude – “as good as we think we are, how can we be better” – was placed on the discussion table. As well as looking at perceived strengths of MVJHS, the staff collaboratively identified some areas that are perceived as in need of strengthening:

- Enhance the curriculum through community involvement,
- Improve student writing through increased reading,
- Provide activities to enhance problem solving abilities throughout the curriculum,
- Provide longer periods for classes to be able to teach, apply, assess, re-teach,
- Investigate the use of alternative settings for specific high-risk populations,
- Investigate the offering of more elective courses to integrate reading and writing,

- Continue to build upon the team interdisciplinary concept throughout all grade levels, and
- Set common expectations for all students,

Curriculum

The school's curriculum is designed to include the activities and topics covered so that the students can ultimately meet the state's standards. Links to the Indiana Academic Standards are incorporated. Teachers utilize the Indiana Academic Standards as a guide in their daily lessons and activities; however, we are also transitioning to the Common Core Standards throughout the next three years. Technology is an important aspect of the school's overall curriculum. The public can easily access our both our curriculum and School Improvement Plan through our website.

Overview

CLUBS

Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 participate in club activities throughout the year during Advisory period once a month and at other times at the discretion of the sponsor(s).

COUNSELING

The Mt. Vernon Junior High counseling office houses one and one-half full time school guidance counselors and a half-day counseling office secretary. Counselors are available throughout the school day to assist students in working through personal, and school related, problems/concerns. Counselors are also responsible for the coordination of the MVJHS Advisory Program, the peer mediation program, school-wide convocations, standardized testing, and programs targeting specific groups of students, such as the Midwest Talent Search and 21st Century Scholars. They work collaboratively with the school's part-time social worker.

HOMEBASE

This twenty-five minute period is held at the beginning of each day with Advisory being scheduled for Wednesdays and enrichment and remediation being held on Tuesdays (Math) and Thursdays (Language Arts). Sustained Silent Reading occurs on Mondays and Fridays. Clubs meet during Advisory time once a month.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES (FACS)

Students in the seventh grade receive a semester of Family and Consumer Sciences. Subject areas that are covered during this semester are nutrition, food safety, manners, and cooking skills during the first nine weeks. During the second nine weeks, students cover fashion, grooming and hygiene, and sewing skills. A combination of large group discussions, lectures and labs are integrated.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The purpose of the Language Arts program centers on providing children with experiences enabling them to develop the literacy skills necessary to communicate effectively in an increasingly complex world. The importance of a strong foundation in language arts is

underscored when it is considered that facility in these skills forms the basis for thinking activities, success in other curriculum areas, and contributes significantly to being a lifelong learner. The program integrates reading, writing, grammatical study, and reflection and discussion, emphasizing rhetorical analysis and strategies for focusing, organizing, and developing writing skills. At each grade level there are two courses offered: Honors Language Arts and Regular Language Arts. Students in each grade level can be placed in the advanced courses by meeting specified criteria involving teacher recommendations, past performance in previous Language Arts courses, and standardized test scores. Parental permission is required to enter the advanced courses.

MATHEMATICS

Mt Vernon Junior High School offers eight different courses at three different grade levels. The sixth grade students have two courses offered to them: Regular Mathematics Sixth Grade and Honors Mathematics Sixth Grade. Seventh graders are offered three courses: Seventh Grade Pre-Algebra, Honors Seventh Grade Pre-Algebra and Regular Mathematics Seventh Grade. Pre-Algebra, Algebra and Honors Algebra are the three courses offered in the eighth grade. Students in the seventh and eighth grades can be placed in the advanced courses by meeting specified criteria involving teacher recommendations, past performance in previous mathematics courses, and standardized test scores. Parental permission is required to enter the advanced courses. All of the courses offered are intended to provide students with experiences and opportunities to learn and practice how to apply mathematics in future mathematics courses as well as the real world. Students are taught how to understand and solve real-world problems. Experiences that help promote effective communication using mathematics and the ability to interpret results are provided. Students are taught how to use the most appropriate tool to solve problems (i.e. paper and pencil, mental arithmetic, calculators, computers, measuring tools, etc.).

MEDIA CENTER

The media center is an integral, fundamental, and indispensable part of the instructional, guidance, and enrichment program of the school. Recognizing that both print and nonprint materials are relevant and valuable sources of information and stimuli, all types of materials and equipment are supplied by the media center. The instructional and administrative staffs, aided by media personnel, strive to become familiar with resource materials that are available in the media center and to make intelligent and efficient use of the center and those resources. The media personnel, aided by the entire staff, endeavor to teach students the skills of acquiring information through various channels and attempts to make them familiar with reference materials and media center resources.

MUSIC

Students have the opportunity to be involved in a variety of musical experiences: Exploring Music, Instrumental Music, and Vocal Music. Exploring Music is offered to seventh grade students on a semester rotation. Students are exposed to a wide genre of music as well as the history of music. Vocal Music opportunities are afforded seventh and eighth grade students in a choral class atmosphere. Sixth grade students have the opportunity to participate in an after school weekly choral activity. Student performances/concerts result from the participation of these students. Instrumental Music involves all grade levels. Students play band literature that is

age appropriate to their experience level. Student performances/concerts result from participation of the instrumental students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH

In physical education, emphasis is placed on the following: the values of teamwork, cooperation, respect for rules, respect for the diversity of others. Additionally, our developmentally based program emphasizes knowledge, skill, attitude, and behavior and practices that promote active and healthy lifestyles. Physical fitness is emphasized as an important part of a healthy lifestyle that is a lifelong commitment. This philosophy is pursued through a routine of exercise, team and individual sports, aquatics, and activities that stress the components of physical fitness. By being a part of the physical education program, each student will gain a better overall wellness and enhancement of the total school curriculum. Each student is involved in an aquatics program during their physical education class.

Our health education program is designed to help prevent health problems and improve the quality of life and total well being. Health education develops skills for daily living and prepares individuals for their future. Efforts are made to emphasize health as a value in life and to enhance critical thinking, decision making, problem solving and behavioral skills.

SCIENCE

The science program at MVJHS aims to give the students a valid understanding of the nature of science and of the way that knowledge in science is accumulated. The science curriculum attempts to develop in students an understanding that science is a dynamic process of discovery. Students have a variety of experiences that help them to question, investigate, and interpret so they will be led to grow in their understanding of science. Such experiences include lecture, hands-on activities, laboratory experiences, and use of technology to explore, analyze, and comprehend how science affects the students in their every-day life. A general science approach is taken in that each grade level introduces some aspect of physical science, life science, chemistry, and earth science. At each grade level there are two courses offered: Honors Science and Regular Science. Students in each grade level can be placed in the advanced courses by meeting specified criteria involving teacher recommendations, past performance in previous Science courses, and standardized test scores. Parental permission is required to enter the advanced courses.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies includes the study of the cultures and geography of the western world in the sixth grade, world cultures and geography at the seventh grade level, and U.S. history at the eighth grade level. Sixth grade students focus on western civilizations (Greece, Roman Empire, etc.). Seventh grade students are exposed to the Eastern Hemisphere with geographic emphasis on the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe/Russia, and Australia/Oceania. Eighth grade students are exposed to U.S. History as the focus of study. This is a survey course starting with Pre-Columbian America going all the way through Post World War II events such as the Korean War and the Vietnam Conflict. During election years, emphasis is placed on the governmental process of elections. At each grade level there are two courses offered: Honors Social Studies and Regular Social Studies. Students in each grade level can be placed in the advanced courses by meeting specified criteria involving teacher recommendations, past performance in previous

Social Studies courses, and standardized test scores. Parental permission is required to enter the advanced courses.

TECHNOLOGY (TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION)

Sixth grade and eighth grade students participate in Technology Education. It is an action-based program in which students develop both individual and group abilities needed to participate and contribute to society as active and wise consumers. Students are exposed to technology as it is applied in communication, construction, manufacturing and transportation.

VISUAL ART

The sixth grade art class endeavors to provide a wide variety of art experiences that enhance the academic program, enrich the personal experience, and develop the artistic ability of each student. Students are exposed to a variety of 2-D and 3-D projects. The eighth grade art program is a semester class. The art program's objectives are threefold: art history, art criticism, and art production. Examples of prehistoric art through modern art are reviewed. The study of art criticism emphasizes art vocabulary and the encouragement of students to describe, analyze, interpret, and judge works of art of others as well as their own. Art production will include drawing, painting, and some craft activities such as clay, weaving, carving, mosaic, and possibly computer art.

Technology as a Learning Tool

Because technology is changing at a rapid rate, MVJHS has worked to maintain and stay abreast of the most efficient uses for technology. The faculty at MVJHS integrates technology by engaging students in standards based, literacy rich and collaborative learning assignments. This is done through data collection, presentations, and using productivity tools such as spreadsheets and databases, word processing and multimedia (ActivBoards). All of these are being accomplished on computers in the media center, computer labs, and individual classrooms. Wireless netbooks on a mobile cart are available for use as well as a cart of Neo2's for AR and Math Facts in a Flash. A TV broadcast studio is available for student use. Two classrooms are piloting the use of iPads in their courses. Additionally, the school corporation has recently hired two Technology Integrators to help teacher learn methods to use technology in their classrooms in the most educationally sound and efficient methods.

Teacher's desktop PC's are networked to allow for communication within our school as well as communication on the internet. Our teachers are offered training classes on technologies available to them. We used technology for communication, attendance, information gathering, discipline files, scheduling and grades. A technology plan has been developed for the school and the overall district and focuses on student learning.

A building level technology committee meets on a regular basis and will take suggestions and concerns to the district level technology committee which ensures that the overall technology plan is adhered to as much as possible. Some of the software programs that have been implemented are: AIMSweb, Accelerated Reader, Math Facts in a Flash, Apex Learning, Study Island, and Apangea Math. All are integrated in the respective curriculum and are used for supplementary purposes as well as both remediation and enrichment.

School personnel have the capability to track the progress of students by analyzing the results of the students' work online as well as standardized tests. These results help staff members incorporate remediation and enrichment for students. Parents have the capability to check grades and assignment completion through Parent Internet Viewer.

In 2011, *Criterion*[®] Online Writing Evaluation Service software licenses were purchased for all of our students. This software evaluates student writing on the six point rubric virtually instantaneously. The immediate feedback that students receive is invaluable.

Parent Involvement

Parents may choose to become involved in two parent organizations: Parent Advisory Council and the Booster Club. Additionally, there are several other specific groups associated with athletic teams and the instrumental program. These groups provide parents and community members a means of working together to support and enrich Mt. Vernon Junior High School. Parent newsletters, parent e-newsletters, volunteer surveys, and other pertinent information are distributed throughout the school year. Several family and parent activities are provided such as Family Activity Night, Back to School Night, and various musical concerts. Parental support is very much a positive factor in the overall learning atmosphere. MVJHS recently began using Facebook as another tool to promote parental awareness and involvement.

Parents also serve on various committees such as the Textbook Adoption Committee, Advisory Committees, School Improvement Discussion Groups, etc. They also provide input via surveys, emails, interviews, discussions, and phone calls.

Awards

Mt. Vernon Junior High School has received several awards and recognitions over the years. This demonstrates the school's success in academics.

- Four Star Award from the IDOE
- Academic Bowl – Conference
- Math Awards
- Music – State Solo & Ensemble Competitions & Circle of State Choir
- Spelling Bee - County
- Spell Bowl – Area & State
- Technology Fair
- Writings Published

Service Learning and Partnerships

Our students participate in various service learning projects for the community throughout the school year. The Builders Club and Student Council play significant roles in organizing such activities.

The junior high school contributes to the two county papers on a regular basis. The electronic version of the *Parent Bobcat News* is sent to both newspapers. The local newspapers regularly

print articles and pictures about the various facets of the activities at MVJHS. Additionally, the school disseminates the school newspaper to area businesses as well as the school board. The *Parent Bobcat News* is posted weekly on the school's website and Facebook as well as several copies are provided in the office for hard copies.

The building's facilities are used frequently by community organizations. Various community groups use classrooms, the dining hall, the gymnasiums, and the pool on a routine basis after school hours. Occasionally, organizations - such as the Chamber of Commerce - will use a classroom during the school day if it is available. The local park and recreation departments frequently use various athletic/PE (inside and outside) facilities. Local university classes often meet in our classrooms.

Parent and community individuals are often used as resources throughout the school year and will visit the classroom to provide assistance with the curriculum. A volunteer survey is distributed to all parents and to various businesses in the community. Teachers then use this list of potential volunteers to enhance classroom activities. Several field trips are made to local businesses, the court system, etc., to take advantage of the resources that are made available to the teachers and the students. Prominent members of the community spend time in the building meeting with students in small groups, forging relationships based on the building of mutual respect and positive self-concept. Additionally, many parents and community leaders partner and support our annual school musical which typically involves about 15% of the student population.

A partnership has been developed over the years in which USI students and our students are involved. Recently, a university class is working with us after school to provide assistance working with at-risk students.

Safe and Disciplined Learning Environment

MVJHS staff and students teach and learn in a safe and secure environment. As indicated earlier, students, teachers and parents responded in surveys that they believe the school provides a safe environment for learning to take place. A feeling of safety is perceived by each of the groups.

Each teacher has a copy of the school safety/crisis plan in a prominent place within the classroom. Security procedures in place include, but are not limited to the following:

1. All visitors must enter through the front door into the front vestibule. They then must ring the bell and identify themselves, and the secretary or the nurse will then buzz them in. The visitors must sign the visitors' registry upon entering and acquire a visitor's badge.
2. Administrators, teachers and support staff monitor the hallways and restrooms before, during and immediately following the dismissal of students.
3. Custodians are on duty in the building around the clock during the week days. They are also on duty during the hours the school is being used for activities on the weekends.
4. Routine monitoring of the building is done by the local police department.
5. Exterior security cameras are in place around the entire building.

6. Interior cameras have strategically been placed in the hallways, locker area, and dining area.
7. The building principal is a certified safe school specialist as a graduate and regular attendee of the Indiana Safe Schools Academy.
8. School-wide emergency plans are in place for fire, tornado, bomb scares, earthquakes, and intruders. These plans are outlined in detail in the online Faculty & Staff Handbook.
9. All students and staff routinely practice the safety drills.

MVJHS believes that an environment conducive to learning can be achieved through its responsible citizens working together.

Bullying Issues

Bobcat P.R.I.D.E. is a program that has been established school-wide and encourages students to demonstrate pride in what they do, show respect to all, possess integrity, be responsible, and to apply effort. Our Advisory program regularly addresses these characteristics and provides many activities for the students to deal with bullying issues. Additionally, the counseling staff and the administration specifically address the students as a whole and individually on bullying concerns throughout the year. Other ways that bullying is addressed are: anti-bullying contracts are used; Strengthening Families programs are held; a Youth First school social worker is available through a grant; family fun nights are held; and convocations, which deal with making the right decisions, are made available to all students.

Our students annually are involved in a safe school survey which is then used to assess how successful such efforts have been.

BOBCAT P.R.I.D.E.					
	Pride	Respect	Integrity	Dependable	Effort
School-wide Expectations	View yourself and your peers as being capable and worthy of great things.	Treat others, including staff, the way you want people to treat your best friend.	Be unimpeachable in your words and actions.	Take care of your promises, commitments, and responsibilities.	Always participate fully and do your best work.
General School Rules	Strive to make yourself the best that you can be in your character and actions.	Keep unfriendly and overly friendly hands and feet to yourself.	Tell the truth at all times.	Be prepared and in the room with all materials before the tone.	Be persistent. Keep trying to solve problems and find solutions.
	Set high goals for yourself.	Use words and actions that are kind, welcoming, and helpful.	Follow all school and classroom rules.	Have your work completed on time.	Give your opinion and respect those of others around you.
	Be a good reflection of your school and community in all activities.	Be open-minded. Talk about ideas and not people.	"Do what is right, because it is the right thing to do."	Take credit for your achievements and accept the outcomes and consequences for any of your mistakes.	Seek help when you need help. Take the initiative be helpful to others when appropriate.
Arrival and Dismissal				*Have your homework ready to check and begin the "bell-ringer."	
Homework	*Turn in work that you are proud to put your name on.				
Transitions			* If you are late to class, avoid eye contact with peers so that the activity is not interrupted.		
Whole Class Activities					*SLANT listening: 1) Sit up Straight 2) Lean forward 3) Act interested 4) Nod occasionally 5) Track the speaker
Small Group Activities		*Listen to the ideas of others and be open-minded.			

* Prior to referring students to the office, contact needs to be made by phone or e-mail with parents/guardians.

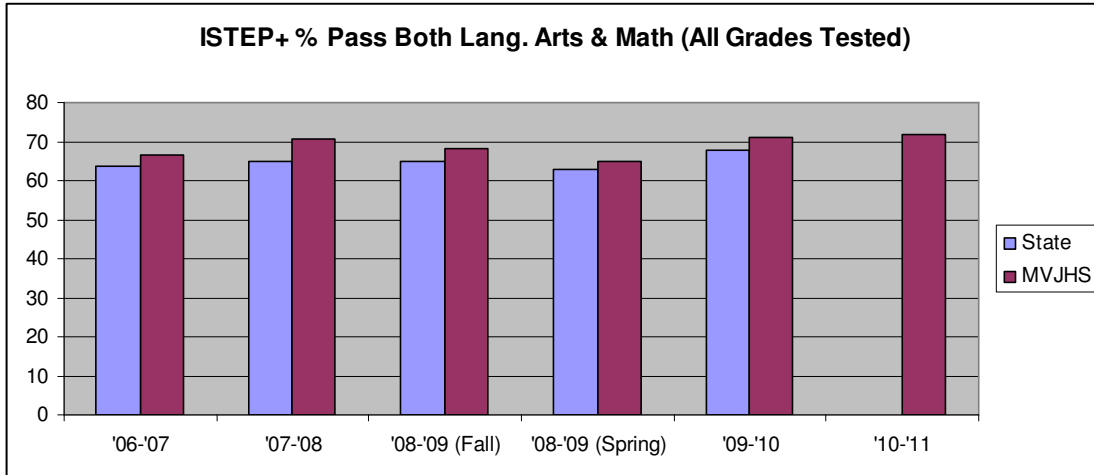
* Obviously, if the issue is severe enough, then the student should be referred directly to the office.

* Teacher communication with the home is very effective and is expected.

Existing Test Data

ISTEP+

In reviewing the test data from the ISTEP+ overview chart below, it is obvious that our students have done better collectively than the state average. While this is always an expectation that our staff has, we will need to continue working toward increasing the difference between the state average and the school's average.



In reviewing the percent passing ISTEP at each of the grades over the past few years, it appears that more of our students passed the math portion of the test than the language arts portion. Actually a higher percentage of our students passed mathematics in grades 6, 7, and 8 than language arts with the exception of the spring '08-'09 testing in the 7th grade.

Percent Passing ISTEP Per Grade Level Tested			
Year Tested	Grade	Lang. Arts	Math
'07-'08 (Fall)	6	76	84
'08-'09 (Fall)	6	76	82
'08-'09 (Spring)	6	75	77
'09-'10 (Spring)	6	76	77
'10-'11 (Spring)	6	73	83
'07-'08 (Fall)	7	73	83
'08-'09 (Fall)	7	75	82
'08-'09 (Spring)	7	74	73
'09-'10 (Spring)	7	77	79
'10-'11 (Spring)	7	74	78
'07-'08 (Fall)	8	73	87
'08-'09 (Fall)	8	68	81
'08-'09 (Spring)	8	67	74
'09-'10 (Spring)	8	80	89
'10-'11 (Spring)	8	80	85

In all but five cases, our students have done better than the state average at grades 6, 7, and 8. The three areas that we were just equal or below the state average were in language arts in the eighth grade in the Fall of 2008, in the seventh grade in the Fall of both 2006 and 2011, in the sixth grade in the Spring of 2011, and also in math in the sixth grade in the Spring of 2010.

8th Grade

Test Date	% LA Passing	% LA State/Diff.	% GenEd Pass	% SpEd Pass	Gender %	% Pd - % Free/R	% Math Passing	% Math State/Diff.	% GenEd Pass	% SpEd Pass	Gender %	% Pd - % Free/R
Fall 2005	78	68 +10	88	38	F-76 M-79	85 53	84	72 +12	91	54	F-80 M-87	88 69
Fall 2006	71	67 +4	79	42	F-78 M-64	76 58	78	71 +7	86	50	F-76 M-79	85 63
Fall 2007	73	69 +4	85	29	F-87 M-61	76 66	87	74 +13	92	64	F-91 M-83	89 79
Fall 2008	68	68 +0	82	20	F-80 M-54	74 48	81	74 +7	89	57	F-79 M-84	85 67
Spring 2009	67	65 +2	80	21	F-75 M-57	74 43	74	67 +7	81	49	F-79 M-68	80 53
Spring 2010	80	69 +11	87	42	F-87 M-73	86 67	89	72 +17	91	74	F-92 M-86	92 82
Spring 2011	80	72 +8	89	35	F-91 M-71	85 71	85	77 +8	90	58	F-82 M-88	92 71

7th Grade

Test Date	% LA Passing	% LA State/Diff.	% GenEd Pass	% SpEd Pass	Gender %	% Pd - % Free/R	% Math Passing	% Math State/Diff.	% GenEd Pass	% SpEd Pass	Gender %	% Pd - % Free/R
Fall 2005	74	68 +6	84	39	F-81 M-69	76 68	80	76 +4	89	47	F-84 M-77	86 63
Fall 2006	67	68 -1	79	21	F-85 M-52	73 49	79	77 +2	92	35	F-86 M-74	85 64
Fall 2007	73	70 +3	84	35	F-83 M-62	81 46	83	79 +4	90	59	F-85 M-80	89 64
Fall 2008	75	69 +6	89	16	F-83 M-67	78 67	82	81 +1	92	38	F-82 M-81	83 79
Spring 2009	74	67 +7	86	24	F-82 M-67	81 57	73	68 +5	84	27	F-74 M-73	80 57
Spring 2010	77	72 +5	87	34	F-78 M-75	85 64	79	73 +6	87	50	F-72 M-85	86 70
Spring 2011	74	77 -3	81	45	F-78 M-70	84 54	78	75 +3	84	58	F-75 M-82	85 65

6th Grade

Test Date	% LA Passing	% LA State/Diff.	% GenEd Pass	% SpEd Pass	Gender %	% Pd - % Free/R	% Math Passing	% Math State/Diff.	% GenEd Pass	% SpEd Pass	Gender %	% Pd - % Free/R
Fall 2005	77	71 +6	88	38	F-91 M-65	82 64	81	78 +3	93	38	F-86 M-77	86 66
Fall 2006	75	71 +4	84	40	F-82 M-66	81 53	84	80 +4	91	55	F-88 M-79	89 63
Fall 2007	76	72 +4	87	34	F-81 M-70	80 67	84	80 +4	92	55	F-87 M-81	87 77
Fall 2008	76	71 +5	87	31	F-81 M-71	82 63	82	79 +3	90	50	F-76 M-87	89 67
Spring 2009	75	69 +6	85	35	F-80 M-70	82 59	77	73 +4	84	49	F-70 M-84	84 63
Spring 2010	76	72 +4	88	38	F-80 M-72	84 62	77	77 +0	85	51	F-74 M-80	82 70
Spring 2011	73	76 -3	84	29	F-78 M-69	79 65	83	80 +3	92	47	F-82 M-84	88 76

In taking a closer look at the language arts section of the ISTEP, the chart below shows comparisons of the various cohort groups using the following writing standards: language conventions, writing process, and writing applications. We focused on the writing components since writing across the curriculum has been a school wide goal.

There are significant differences at each grade level when you compare special education and general education as well as free/reduced lunches and paid lunches. Although there are differences with the gender cohort, the differences are not as significant when comparing the other cohort groups.

6th Grade ISTEP+ Disaggregation Results									
Writing Standards	Gender								
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Language Conventions	84	64	85	71	81	72	85	73	
Writing Process	80	62	81	71	81	74	85	72	
Writing Applications	83	64	81	70	81	72	85	74	
Writing Standards	Special Education								
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)		
	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	
Language Conventions	40	84	39	87	36	86	36	89	
Writing Process	38	81	37	87	39	87	38	88	
Writing Applications	45	82	37	86	36	86	36	90	

Writing Standards	Free/Reduced Lunches							
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)	
	Free/Reduced	Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid
Language Conventions	51	81	69	81	60	84	61	86
Writing Process	49	78	71	78	65	83	64	85
Writing Applications	51	81	67	79	60	84	63	86

7th Grade ISTEP+ Disaggregation Results								
Writing Standards	Gender							
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Language Conventions	89	52	84	63	84	69	80	73
Writing Process	88	51	85	65	80	69	81	69
Writing Applications	89	55	83	62	83	68	82	69

Writing Standards	Special Education							
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)	
	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed
Language Conventions	23	81	35	86	22	89	29	87
Writing Process	23	79	37	87	16	88	31	85
Writing Applications	26	82	35	84	19	89	26	86

Writing Standards	Free/Reduced Lunches							
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)	
	Free/Reduced	Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid	Free/Reduced Paid
Language Conventions	53	74	50	81	73	78	63	81
Writing Process	53	72	50	83	65	78	58	81
Writing Applications	51	77	48	80	65	79	61	80

8th Grade ISTEP+ Disaggregation Results								
Writing Standards	Gender							
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Language Conventions	79	62	87	80	81	51	76	55
Writing Process	79	68	85	61			78	56

Writing Applications	79	63	88	61	83	53	79	60
Writing Standards	Special Education							
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)	
	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed	Spec. Ed	Gen. Ed
Language Conventions	43	77	39	84	20	80	20	79
Writing Process	49	80	34	82			26	80
Writing Applications	41	79	31	85	20	83	27	82
Writing Standards	Free/Reduced Lunches							
	2006-2007 (Fall)		2007-2008 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Fall)		2008-2009 (Spring)	
	Free/Reduced	Paid	Free/Reduced	Paid	Free/Reduced	Paid	Free/Reduced	Paid
Language Conventions	58	75	64	75	44	74	43	74
Writing Process	63	77	60	76			44	75
Writing Applications	58	76	64	77	49	75	45	78

AIMSweb

AIMSweb is a benchmark and progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment. The results are reported to students, parents, teachers and administrators via a web-based data management and reporting system to determine response to intervention. AIMSweb is an assessment program that serves our purposes better than NWEA; thus, we implemented AIMSweb during the 2009-2010 school year. We are anxious to continue using this assessment as it provides progress monitoring for our students. The two specific tests that we are using are the Math: Concepts and Applications (M-CAP) and Maze-CBM. Maze reading (Maze-CBM) can be used as a corroborative or supplemental measure to provide a more complete picture of students' reading skills. M-CAP measures students' ability to apply mathematical reasoning, analytical skills, and computational skills.

Both tests indicated that approximately 22 – 25% of our students scored below average. This data will be closely analyzed as we re-evaluate our school improvement plans in the future.

AIMSweb Data 2009-2011

MAZE (Lang. Arts)

6th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
% Well Below Average	10	8	9	9
% Below Average	15	15	15	12
% Average	46	50	50	52
% Above Average	18	16	14	14
% Well Above Average	11	11	10	10
Total % Ave & Higher	75	77	74	76

M-CAP (Math)

6th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
% Well Below Average	8	8	12	8
% Below Average	14	12	10	15
% Average	49	55	54	50
% Above Average	17	14	12	15
% Well Above Average	12	11	10	11
Total % Ave & Higher	78	80	76	76

7th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
% Well Below Average	9	9	8	8
% Below Average	15	15	15	15
% Average	48	48	52	51
% Above Average	16	15	13	15
% Well Above Average	12	13	11	9
Total % Ave & Higher	76	76	76	75

7th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
% Well Below Average	9	10	8	10
% Below Average	15	14	17	14
% Average	50	47	49	50
% Above Average	16	18	14	14
% Well Above Average	10	11	10	9
Total % Ave & Higher	76	76	73	73

8th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
% Well Below Average	10	9	9	8
% Below Average	14	14	14	16
% Average	50	51	49	48
% Above Average	14	15	16	15
% Well Above Average	12	11	9	11
Total % Ave & Higher	76	77	74	74

8th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
% Well Below Average	9	10	9	9
% Below Average	13	14	13	14
% Average	52	50	51	50
% Above Average	15	13	15	14
% Well Above Average	11	13	10	10
Total % Ave & Higher	78	76	76	74

MAZE (Lang. Arts)

6th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
@ 10th Percentile	12	14	13	18
@ 25th Percentile	16	19	19	23
@ 50th Percentile	21	25	24	30
@ 75 Percentile	27	32	30	36
@ 90th Percentile	32	38	35	42
Total @ 50th or Above	80	95	89	108

M-CAP (Math)

6th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
@ 10th Percentile	5	7	6	9
@ 25th Percentile	8	10	9	13
@ 50th Percentile	12	14	15	19
@ 75 Percentile	17	21	18	24
@ 90th Percentile	22	27.4	23	28
Total @ 50th or Above	51	62.4	66	71

7th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
@ 10th Percentile	13	16	15	15
@ 25th Percentile	18	22	21	20
@ 50th Percentile	22	27.5	27	27
@ 75 Percentile	29	33	33	35
@ 90th Percentile	35	41	41	40
Total @ 50th or Above	86	101.5	101	102

7th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
@ 10th Percentile	4	9.6	7	7
@ 25th Percentile	9	16	13	12
@ 50th Percentile	13	20	18	18
@ 75 Percentile	18	26	23	25
@ 90th Percentile	22	31	28	31
Total @ 50th or Above	53	77	69	74

8th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
@ 10th Percentile	13	14	14	12
@ 25th Percentile	17	20	22	17
@ 50th Percentile	22	24	26	24
@ 75 Percentile	29	31	32	28
@ 90th Percentile	33	37	38	33
Total @ 50th or Above	84	92	96	85

8th Grade	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
@ 10th Percentile	5	4.6	4	4
@ 25th Percentile	9	10	9	10
@ 50th Percentile	13	14	15	16
@ 75 Percentile	19	21	20	23
@ 90th Percentile	26	28	24	30
Total @ 50th or Above	58	63	59	79

Local Assessment – Writing Prompts

We have recently gone to a writing prompt at two different times of the year – the fall and the spring – in each of the grade levels as our third piece of the triangulation of data.

In 2008-2010, a six point language applications rubric was used and a four point writing conventions rubric was used. Both rubrics are available online for students and parents as well as in the students' assignment books. In 2011, *Criterion*[®] Online Writing Evaluation Service software licenses were purchased for all of our students. This software evaluates student writing on the six point rubric virtually instantaneously. The immediate feedback that students receive is invaluable.

The chart below shows some small increases from fall to spring in each grade level, and it also shows increase with the same cohort group from one year to the next. We are anxiously looking forward to continuous monitoring of the writing prompt assessments. We began this two years ago as a replacement to an 8th grade only test on language conventions. We feel this gives us more relevant information.

Writing Prompts Gains – Rubrics

2008-2009 (Fall to Spring)

	6th	7th	8th
Applications	1.4	1.0	0.9
Conventions	0.4	0.5	0.8

2009-2010 (Fall to Spring)

	6th	7th	8th
Applications	0.9	0.8	0.9
Conventions	0.5	0.3	0.6

Change from Spring 09 to Spring 10

	6th to 7th	7th - 8th
Applications	0.5	0.4
Conventions	0.3	0.6

Summary of Findings

◆ *What are the characteristics of the students served by the school?*

The population of Mt. Vernon Junior High School is 93% Caucasian, 2% Multiracial, 2% African-American, 2% Hispanic and 1% Asian. There are slightly more male students than female students. Approximately one-fourth of the student population participates in the free/reduced lunch program. Our student population has an overall good attendance rate as it normally is above 96.5% and is above the state average each year.

About 21% of the students receive some type of assistance through the special services department (excluding speech), and about 30% of the students participate in the advanced seventh grade math offering and 22% take Algebra in the eighth grade.

◆ *What are the unique community characteristics that impact the school?*

Many of community members work in manufacturing, service, and retail trade type jobs. Several of the manufacturing industries employ chemists, engineers, and other degree-type jobs; however, the majority of the workforce is composed of “blue collar” working families.

Opportunities are provided for parents and community resources to be involved in the school, and many of them take advantage of such opportunities.

◆ *What is the current status of student performance?*

In reviewing the ISTEP+ test, more of our students passed the math portion of the test than the language arts portion. Scoring above the math and language arts state averages is always a goal of MVJHS students and faculty. In looking at the past several years, there are a few times when this has not happened, and this has been primarily in the language arts areas.

In looking at the ISTEP+ Disaggregation results, it becomes quite obvious that there are significant differences between special education and general education, and between SES students – free/reduced and paid students. This was noted in the cultural competency section, and plans have been put into place to deal with this. There are differences in the gender cohort group; however, these differences are not as significant as the two other cohort group.

The local assessment also shows a significant difference in the cohort groups similar to the ISTEP+ results.

◆ *Is the curriculum sufficient to meet the needs of all students?*

Even though our students scored above state averages, there is a need to make modifications in our curriculum. Such changes are needed to address the achievement gaps between the cohort groups. Also, many of our special education students did not achieve mastery either

in language arts and math; therefore, there is a need to address such things as problem solving skills and their overall writing skills.

- ◆ *What school and community resources are available to support the school improvement efforts?*

The building is constantly being used by a variety of community groups – Red Cross, Scouts, Sabic Plastics, etc. The community is very accepting of several service learning projects in which our students participate. Partnerships continue to coexist between community groups and the school (Kiwanis Club, Circuit Court-Probation; IGA; CF Industries, and Sabic). Community resources are constantly being utilized – i.e. a team involvement in a mock court proceedings, a team involvement with the Hovey Lake/Wesselman authorities and investigation of factors of the environment, etc.

A partnership with the University of Southern Indiana’s School of Education has been established to provide our MVJHS at risk students remediation opportunities twice a week after school. The partnership will provide USI’s education majors field experiences as they provide targeted instruction to our students that have not passed the ISTEP+ test.

- ◆ *What is the community perception of the school’s effectiveness?*

Parents believe that their children are being prepared well academically, and that the school provides their children with opportunities for success and recognition. The community supports learning at MVJHS. The community involvement contributes to the overall effectiveness of the learning environment.

Realtors often provide the district’s and school’s report cards to perspective homeowners and people looking to move to this area. Realtors quite frequently take such individuals on a tour of the building as well as schedule short meetings with the counseling and administrative personnel.

- ◆ *What instructional patterns need to change in the school?*

Several suggestions were made during a staff development afternoon session to the question – “what are the instructional patterns needed for all of our students to be more successful?” The staff indicated the following instructional patterns should be incorporated into the teaching methodology:

- ✓ Instruction involving the different learning styles,
- ✓ Individualize education,
- ✓ Increased time to use for applications and assessment,
- ✓ Better use of the Learning Triangle,
- ✓ Repetition of basics – build on level,
- ✓ Cooperative learning,
- ✓ Lead-in activities to promote student interest,

- ✓ Use of student interests in planning lessons,
- ✓ Teach according to learning styles, differentiated learning, and multiple intelligences,
- ✓ Consistency and coordination in all things,
- ✓ Higher academic expectations for all things,
- ✓ Stress reading and writing skills in all subjects,
- ✓ Continue to strive for more than just a average,
- ✓ Use cutting edge technology in the curriculum and classroom,
- ✓ Remain cognizant of the standards and make efforts to incorporate standards on a daily basis, and
- ✓ Make learning fun and meaningful.

The committee recognizes that not all teachers participate in small group, collaborative and hands-on activities as much as others. Lecture still remains a preference to many teachers. The above listed suggestions should prove valuable to the entire staff.

Additionally, the staff indicated in their discussions a need for strengthening in the following areas:

- ✓ Enhance the curriculum through community involvement,
- ✓ Improve student writing through increased reading,
- ✓ Provide activities to enhance problem solving abilities throughout the curriculum,
- ✓ Investigate the offering of more elective courses to integrate reading and writing,
- ✓ Continue to build on the team interdisciplinary concept throughout all grade levels
- ✓ Focus on improved staff attitude, i.e. retreat, interactions, and
- ✓ Set common expectations for all students.

Recently, a program has been initiated that identifies all students that have not passed ISTEP+ in a given subject and then to develop an individualized Academic Support Plan for those students. The Academic Support Plan will be developed by each student's current teacher and will include several specific interventions. The plan will also include a method to assess a student's progress and then adapt the plan as necessary throughout the school year.

Overall Summary

Our profile committee has taken a look at the overall culture and climate at Mt. Vernon Junior High School. We incorporated surveys, test data, community data, and teacher in-service information into the school's profile. We considered the data to be our primary guide in making decisions.

After careful consideration, we believe we have profiled our school in terms of what has recently been and is currently taking place in the educational learning process at Mt. Vernon Junior High School. Learning is taking place; however, the profiling process has provided us a much clearer picture as to how we can continue to improve. We realize that the data indicate more than one area of need in respect to possible goal areas. However, we believe that the primary goal area has been targeted - i.e. writing skills.

During the process of collecting and analyzing the data, we have been able to develop a much clearer picture of our students. Former students have told us that they felt good about their preparation at MVJHS, but it appeared they felt less prepared in their writing skills. Again, this pointed toward a target goal - improved writing skills. Parent information has also indicated writing skills should be targeted. We will work with our community leaders to develop partnerships which will allow us to develop our improvement plan.

The key to the improvement plan will be staff development for ALL staff members. All staff members must understand and be able to apply skills and strategies necessary to improve writing in all areas of the curriculum. Knowledge about learning styles and differentiated learning as well as writing skills will be essential for the staff. As we initiate the block scheduling in the upcoming school years, it will be important for staff development activities be provided to make certain that teachers are effectively and efficiently using the larger block of time.

Waiver or Suspension of Statutes and/or Rules

Mt. Vernon Junior High School does not wish to suspend any statutes or rules regarding the operation of the school

Triangulation of Data

The three sources of data used to support triangulation of the data were the ISTEP+ scores, AIMSweb scores, and Writing Prompt Assessment scores.

After information was collected and analyzed, there was an indication that the number one area in which the students needed to improve was writing skills in Language Arts.

Goal

All students will improve their written communication skills across the curriculum.

Analysis

The writing process continues to be an area where students need to be challenged to improve their skills. The staff at Mt. Vernon Jr. High School will continue to implement various techniques to ensure that students understand the importance of good written communication skills.

The use of a uniform writing rubric and scoring rubric will continue to be emphasized and implemented across the curricular areas. Writing prompts will be used on a regular basis so that the student and teachers can score using the rubrics. The use of 6 + 1 writing traits, teachers modeling, integration of technology (Study Island, Apex Learning) emphasizing language conventions

Narratives

1. What is your school’s vision toward which this Professional Development Program will lead?

Our professional development goals will align with our school improvement goal. Professional development will help build the staff into a committed culture of professionals striving to give each student the opportunities to reach their maximum potential. Through a collaborative effort and continued support, the overall culture will commit to the continuous improvement of all students.

To demonstrate the commitment, the following will occur: regularly scheduled meetings to collaborate on the improvements of the students and the various strategies being used; in-service opportunities will focus on our cohort groups, staff training and program development funds and time will be made available; informal meetings will be scheduled to form a discussion group on the use of “best practices.” The School Improvement Team meets a minimum of twice monthly and will continue to discuss ways to improve.

2. What are the goals(s) of your Professional Development Program?

The goal is to assist all members of the MVJHS community in developing innovative strategies for all students to improve their written communication skills across the curriculum.

3. How will all staff members be involved in continuous learning? How will continuous learning be embedded in practice?

All members of the MVJHS community will be involved in specific staff development opportunities as initiated by the School Improvement Team. They will collaborate and work together toward the common goal of improving the written communication skills of all of the students.

Testing results will be used to identify strengths and deficiencies. Additional information will be gathered through surveys, discussions, and examples of writing in all areas of the curriculum.

Action Plan Narrative

MVJHS School Improvement Action Plan 2011

Goal: All students will improve their written communication skills across the curriculum.

Supporting Data: The writing process continues to be an area in which students need to be challenged to improve their skills. The staff is implementing various techniques and strategies to ensure that students understand the importance of good written communication skills.

Interventions & Strategies:

Intervention 1: All students will become familiar with the ISTEP+ writing rubric.

- Writing rubrics are posted in each room.
- Team time has been spent becoming familiar with the writing rubrics.
- Homebase time has been used to familiarize the students with the rubrics.
- The rubrics are printed in the Student Assignment Book.
- The rubrics are routinely posted on the in-house “informational channel.”
- The rubrics have been mailed home to the parents.
- Copies of the rubrics were also distributed at open house and P-T conferences.
- Rubrics are posted on the website.
- Writing rubrics were reviewed at a Parent Advisory meeting.

Intervention 2: All students will regularly write across the curriculum.

- Writing prompts have been given on a regular basis.
- The writing prompts have been scored using the rubrics (students & teachers).
- Students peer score using the rubrics – primarily in Language Arts classes.
- Students have written responses to school convocations, field trips, and advisory activities. Example: Using a traditional “letter format,” students recently wrote a letter of appreciation to a teacher or staff member that they wanted to recognize.
- Models of appropriate writings are reviewed and scored in language arts.
- Reflective writings are used by teachers across the curriculum to assess learning of a particular concept. This has been modeled during a staff in-service.
- Students wrote reflections for parent-teacher conferences.
- Departments have identified the communication skills standards and address them throughout the year in a variety of writings – i.e. lab reports, description of maps, journals, research papers, explanation of math steps, etc.

Intervention 3: All students will expand on vocabulary knowledge across the curriculum.

- Sustained silent reading occurs on a regular basis in advisory (2-3 X weekly).
- Vocabulary words are provided on a weekly basis via the bulletin.
- Students are expected to keep a journal of vocabulary words.
- Several individual teachers use a vocabulary wall in their classroom.
- Staff members (including administrators and counselors) routinely read to students in advisory and/or the classroom.

- Buddy-reading is encouraged as much as possible.
- A concerted effort has been initiated to get boys to read more. Staff members have attended conferences which deal with strategies to get boys to read more. Identification of appealing books is on-going and purchases are being made.
- A concerted effort has also been made to identify books appropriate for slow readers and below-grade level readers.
- Playaways are made available for slow/below-grade level readers.

Assessments:

ISTEP+

AIMSweb

Writing Prompt Results

Evaluation

School Goal: All students will improve their written communication skills across the curriculum.

I. Summary of data and evidence upon which this goal was based.

The needs assessment for this goal was developed from surveys given to parents, students, former students, faculty and parents. The supporting data for this goal was further collected from disaggregating test results and writing scores.

II. What new knowledge, skills and attitudes toward learning will result from your Professional Development Program?

We hope to create a culture where ALL faculty members come together to improve written communication skills across the curriculum. Through collaboration, workshops, mini-inservices, and etc., the use of the correct and positive written communication skills will be a school wide tool used in every classroom; and most of all, the skills will be expected by everyone.

III. What data and evidence related to new knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward learning will you collect to evaluate the PD Program’s impact on progress toward this school goal?

	Students	Faculty	Parents
Are students using better quality writing skills on all work submitted?	Measured by use of rubric writing	Collaboration; departmental meetings; use of the writing rubric to assess writing skills	Grade reports, PIV, & Conferences
Are students performing better on standardized tests and everyday assignments?	ISTEP+ increase by 1% AIMSweb will show an increase in the knowledge of writing conventions.	Continued use of data from tests and observation of students	Grade reports, PIV, & Conferences
Are teachers more confident in their use of the writing rubric.		Collaboration	

1. Will time be reorganized differently in your school to accommodate PD? If so, how?

Due to budgetary reasons, our staff was reduced; as a result, the block format was changed to a traditional seven period day and the loss of team time. As a result, attempts are being made to find time for teachers to meet periodically so that student progress can be discussed. Time will be encouraged for teachers to share successful methods and techniques as well as ‘best practices.’ The use of stimulus money allowed the corporation to provide 1.5 days of additional program development last year. The program focused on cultural diversity in the classroom.

2. How will technology be used in your professional development?

We currently have technology available for the instructional staff to use for diagnostic testing of the students (ISTEP+, AIMSweb.) We have accessed and will continue to access webinars through the professional organizations as well as Study Island, APEX Learning, and Apangea. The staff will take advantage of local and area workshops and discussion groups, i.e. SIEC, S.I.N.E. ActivBoards are used as a delivery method also.

3. What is your school’s vision toward which this PD Program will lead?

Our professional development goals will align with our school improvement goal. Professional development will help build the staff into a committed culture of professionals striving to give each student the opportunities to reach their maximum potential. Through a collaborative effort and continued support, the overall culture will commit to the continuous improvement of all students.

4. What are the goals(s) of your Professional Development Program?

The goal is to assist all members of the MVJHS community in developing innovative strategies for all students to improve their written communication skills across the curriculum.

5. How will all staff members be involved in continuous learning? How will continuous learning be embedded in practice?

All members of the MVJHS community will be involved in specific staff development opportunities as initiated by the School Improvement Team. They will collaborate and work together toward the common goal of improving the written communication skills of all of the students.

Testing results will be used to identify strengths and deficiencies. Additional information will be gathered through surveys, discussions, and examples of writing in all areas of the curriculum.

Summary

Our profile committee spent significant time collecting, preparing, and analyzing data for the MVJHS profile. The committee believes that it has examined the community in terms of what is taking place in the teaching and learning processes as well as what are perceived to be potential areas of necessary improvement.

When compared to other students across Indiana, Mt. Vernon Junior High students perform better than the average academically. Attendance is also better than the average. However, we realize that there are recognizable areas that can be improved.

The data collected has led us to focus on one primary area – that, if improved, will lead to improved overall writing performance across the curriculum. We expect to make continuous improvement that shows MVJHS to have demonstrated both high achievement and high growth, the upper right-hand quadrant of the Growth Model.

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN
Mt. Vernon Junior High School**

GOAL: All students at MVJHS will improve their written communication skills across the curriculum.					
Support Data 1. Jr. High Student & Ninth Grade Student Survey 2. Teacher In-service Discussion (Profile Pages) 3. ISTEP+ Scores		Standardized Assessments 1. ISTEP+ Scores – Language Arts Writing Standards 2. AIMSweb – MAZE test		Local Assessment(s) 1. Fall & Spring Local Writing Assessment Scores (Use ISTEP+ Writing Rubric)	
Intervention 1: All students will become familiar with the ISTEP+ writing rubric.				Research/Best Practice Sources: <i>Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools</i> Third Edition by Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde Writing Standards, IDOE <i>6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide.</i> Culham <i>The Neglected 'R': The Need for a Writing Revolution,</i> National Commission on Writing	
Activities to Implement the Intervention:	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline		Resources	Professional Development Activities
		Begin	End		
Teachers will become familiar with the ISTEP+ writing rubric.	All teachers Principal	8/11	Ongoing	ISTEP+ Writing Rubric	Staff Ongoing In-service Workshop opportunities Discussion and handouts for all staff After school collaboration time
Teachers will use a common writing rubric (ISTEP+) to assess conventions in student writing.	All teachers Principals	8/11	Ongoing	ISTEP+ Writing Rubric	After school collaboration time Staff Meetings
Teachers collaborate on ISTEP+ writing rubric.	All teachers	8/11	Ongoing	ISTEP+ Writing Manual	After school time
Students will become familiar with the ISTEP+ writing rubric.	Students LA teachers All teachers	8/11	Ongoing	ISTEP+ Writing Rubric Posted in each homebase; printed in all students' handbooks	Use of the inter-school television
Parents will be given information on scoring rubric.	LA teachers Principal	8/11	Ongoing	ISTEP+ Writing Rubric; Parent Advisory Meetings	Online (school's website)

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN
Mt. Vernon Junior High School**

GOAL: All students at MVJHS will improve their written communication skills across the curriculum.					
Support Data 1.. Jr. High Student & Ninth Grade Student Survey 2. Teacher In-service Discussion 3.. ISTEP+ Scores		Standardized Assessments 1. ISTEP+ Scores – Language Arts Writing Standards 2. AIMSweb Maze Testing Results		Local Assessment(s) 1. Fall & Spring Local Writing Assessment Scores (Use ISTEP+ Writing Rubric)	
Intervention 2: All students will regularly write across the curriculum.				Research/Best Practice Sources: <i>Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools</i> Third Edition by Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde <i>6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide.</i> Culham Writing Standards, IDOE <i>The Neglected 'R': The Need for a Writing Revolution</i> , National Commission on Writing <i>Well Designed & Taught, Writing-Intensive Courses Work</i> , U of L	
Activities to Implement the Intervention:	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline		Resources	Professional Development Activities
		Begin	End		
Students will be given writing prompt each nine weeks in homebase.	HB teachers Students	8/11	Ongoing	A school-wide writing prompt will be given each nine weeks; Homebase time	6+1 Writing Traits Workshop; collaboration
Students will peer score their writing prompts using the ISTEP+ writing rubric.	Students HB teachers LA teachers	8/11	Ongoing	ISTEP+ Writing Rubric; Homebase time	
Teachers will score the writings of the students using the ISTEP+ writing rubric.	Homebase teachers	8/11	Ongoing	ISTEP+ Writing Rubric	Staff In-service on scoring Examples provided to teachers After school collaboration time
Students will write responses to school convocations, advisory activities, and/or field trips.	All teachers Counselors Students	9/11	Ongoing	Homebase & class time	
Students will self-evaluate their writing periodically.	All teachers Students	8/11	Ongoing	Model rubric example; Sample writings reviewed	Model writing sample provided in staff in-service
Within 2-3 weeks of the school year, the special education teacher will meet with the general education teacher to discuss individual writing goals and specific needs of each student.	Special ed teachers and general ed teachers	8/11	Ongoing	Communication & Collaboration	Technology will be used to collaborate the goals – ICAN

Journal writing & reflective writing: students reflect on a given topic or summarize the main points of the lesson(s).	All teachers; Students	8/11	Ongoing	Class time; student-teacher collaboration	Teachers use for immediate feedback and for practice in communication skills; Reflective sheet training
Student will create a minimum of one piece of writing in each subject area each grading period.	All teachers Students	8/11	Ongoing	Class time	
Students will use a number of revision strategies to improve their writing.	LA teachers Students	8/11	Ongoing	Strategies provided to students; teachers model a revision strategies; Drafts	Staff In-service on revision strategies; After school collaboration time; 6+1 Writing Traits In-service
Students will apply conventions in their writing to meet common accepted standards of writing in the school and in real life.	All teachers Students	8/11	Ongoing	Writing Convention Standards; class time	Staff in-service on IDOE Standards for writing conventions; team collaboration
Students will develop well-constructed paragraphs: essays, exams, homework questions, summaries, research papers, lab reports, journals, compare/contrast writing assignments, etc.	Teachers Students	8/11	Ongoing	Class time; teachers share writing strategies	Department meetings; staff meetings for sharing information, resources and skills

GOAL: All students at MVJHS will improve their written communication skills across the curriculum.						
Support Data 1. Jr. High Student & Ninth Grade Student Survey 2. Teacher In-service Discussion 3. ISTEP+ Scores		Standardized Assessments 1. ISTEP+ Scores – Language Arts Writing Standards 2. AIMSweb – Maze Testing Results		Local Assessment(s) 1. Fall & Spring Local Writing Assessment Scores (Use ISTEP+ Writing Rubric)		
Intervention 3: All students will expand on vocabulary knowledge across the curriculum.				Research/Best Practice Sources: <i>Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools</i> Third Edition by Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde <i>Improving Reading and Writing Skills in Language Arts and Across the Curriculum</i> , High Schools That Work Brief Writing Standards, IDOE <i>Vocabulary's Influence on Successful Writing</i> , ERIC #157		
Activities to Implement the Intervention:		Person(s) Responsible	Timeline		Resources	Professional Development Activities
			Begin	End		
All students will read regularly during sustained silent reading time.		All staff members	8/11	Ongoing	Regular time provided;	In-service by consultant on integrating reading and writing
Students will keep a journal of vocabulary words and their meanings.		Teachers	8/11	Ongoing	Class time; subject area notebook	Continue to expand the professional resource room to assist in vocabulary building.
Students will be exposed to vocabulary words of the week.		Teachers Counselors Principal	8/11	Ongoing	Word of the Week provided by specific homebases; weekly words will be posted in the student assignment book.	Word of the Week will be given over the intercom/student newscast; WOW will be posted on the bulletin site.

Staff Development Activities Used to Accomplish Goal

- **New Teacher Training:** All new staff members will be trained in the use of 6+1 Writing Traits as well as the use of writing rubrics. The overall SIP will be provided and reviewed with all new staff members.
- **Faculty Meetings:** We meet as a staff on a regular basis throughout the school year. This provides us approximately 30 minutes of purposeful time. Such things as best practices are discussed or illustrated by staff members.
- **School Improvement Team Meetings:** Our SITeam meets a minimum of twice monthly to develop a shared vision, operational improvement plan, celebrate gains, and to begin the process of institutionalizing changes into our learning culture.
- **Departmental Meetings:** These will occur periodically throughout the school year to review the curriculum and to provide alignment to standards. Teachers share and collaborate during these meetings. The scoring of writing prompts usually occur during this collaborative time.
- **Professional Development Workshops & Conferences:** Our staff will be encouraged and financially supported to attend relevant sessions that target growth area needs to improve effectiveness of instruction aimed at improved student learning and achievement.
- **Staff Training or Program Development Opportunities:** After/Before school hours and/or summer opportunities will be supported by the School Improvement Team, and staff members are reimbursed for such approved hours.
- **Release Time:** Occasionally, release time will be provided using a substitute teacher to allow for professional development opportunities during school hours. Classroom visits can be arranged during this time.
- **Technology Meetings:** Building level and district level meetings are held regularly each semester. Building technology plans are reviewed and edited to accomplish our school improvement goal.
- **Newsletters:** School newsletters that present the SIP will be made available not only to the entire staff but also to other stakeholders. School newsletters are placed on the school's website on a weekly basis.

The following is a non inclusive listing of specific Professional Development opportunities that will enable us to better accomplish our school improvement action plan:

- 6 + 1 Writing Traits Workshop
- ISTEP+ Writing Rubric Workshop
- DOE Standards/ASAP Workshop
 - NCA Workshop
- Ruby Payne's Poverty in the Classroom Workshop/Seminar
 - Differentiated Instruction in Practice Workshop
 - Multiple Intelligences Workshop
 - Learning Styles Seminar
 - Data Analysis Seminar
- Effective Use of Peer Tutoring & Peer Review Workshop
 - Technology Workshops/Sessions
 1. Web Publishing
 2. Microsoft Office Word, Excel, & Power Point
 3. Internet
 4. ActivBoard

Assessments

Used Throughout the School Improvement Process

1. Multiple assessments (ISTEP+, AIMSweb, local assessments such as rubrics) of student performance results are analyzed and shared with all faculty and other stakeholders.
2. Teacher observations and reflection conferences are used to assess and confirm student achievement.
3. Departmental reflections and reports of progress of the school improvement strategies. Staff collaborations.
4. Curriculum documents are aligned with standards-based assessments.
5. Research-based interventions confirm increased student achievement.
6. Staff development activities are measured with multiple assessments and reported to the district office.