



Mount Vernon City School District Newsletter

Special Issue: Budget Notice 2015

## **SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE • TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2015**

### *Board of Education Adopts Budget with 0% Impact on Tax Levy*

*Each year, community members entrust the Mount Vernon City School District with their children and their tax dollars. Following are some examples of how the district plans to repair and build upon that trust going forward.*

The 2015-2016 budget, or Fiscal Plan for Academic Excellence, as district officials like to refer to it, is the first budget presented to Mount Vernon residents by Mount Vernon School's Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton. With an entirely new administration in place for this budget season, district officials used this as an opportunity to revamp the entire budget process with a renewed focus on efficiency, necessity, success and smart, sustainable growth.

According to Assistant Superintendent of Business, Ken Silver, the District used a zero-based budget approach this year rather than the traditional method of rolling one year's numbers to the next with slight increases for the new year. This approach enabled principals and administrators to take a close, thorough look at their programs, and rebuild them from the bottom up with a laser-like focus on efficiency, improved student achievement, and increased academic opportunities.

"We did not just ask them to create their ideal programs," said Silver. "Once their initial requests were submitted, each principal and administrator participated in a budget defense process which compelled them to demonstrate how their proposed requests would have a positive impact on students and academic outcomes."

"As the new Superintendent here in Mount Vernon, this process gave me an opportunity to engage in deep conversations about educational philosophy and priorities with our district administrative staff. I got a real feel for where our staff believes our priorities ought to be and where our focus areas are," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton.

The result of these efforts can be seen in a plan that recognizes the need to grow programs and expand opportunities while simultaneously minimizing the impact on an already tax-tired community.

This budget will see a number of key positions restored throughout the district. This includes the restoration of school nurses and guidance counselors in each building as well as funding for newly restored programs including Gifted/Talented Arts and Career & Technical Education (CTE).

#### **BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

<u>2014-2015 Voter Approved Budget:</u>	<b>\$227,475,244</b>
<u>2015-2016 Recommended Budget:</u>	<b>\$230,887,373</b>
<u>Total Difference: (Increase of 1.5%)</u>	<b>\$ 3,412,129</b>

**The 2015-2016 Proposed Budget will have  
NO Impact on the Local Tax Levy**

"When I first arrived here, I was saddened to see so many valuable programs had been lost due to reduced funding. The Arts play an integral role in student development. From building confidence to exposing our students to rich culture and experiences beyond the city limits the restoration of these programs is a top priority for my administration," said Hamilton.

"The CTE program is going to play an integral role in our school district. Some children will elect to go straight into the workforce. We need to provide them with the skills and tools that will help them establish well-paying careers in industry that desperately need a trained, and motivated work force. From manufacturing and culinary arts to auto mechanics and nursing, our CTE program will provide students with the skills and advantages to take on a 21st century job market," said Hamilton.

District officials realized in order to achieve their goals of a fiscal plan focused on success, they would need to identify savings to fund new priorities. Savings were found through participation in the Southern Westchester Schools Cooperative Health Plan, which has helped us to realize annual savings of \$2,481,949 since July 2012, as well as participation in BOCES Cooperative Bidding and the reduction of non-essential positions from the budget.

"I believe that the Fiscal Plan for Academic Excellence is a reflection of the positive direction the district is heading. It provides for increased opportunities for our students while maintaining costs with no additional impact on the tax levy," concluded Hamilton.

**BOARD TRUSTEE VOTE • TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2015 • THREE SEATS OPEN FOR ELECTION**

# “The Wiz” wows the crowd at Mount Vernon High

By Tamara Stewart, Mount Vernon Inquirer “Mount Vernon’s Hometown Newspaper”

SCHOOL NEWS



Pictures by Bryan Allen



On Friday April 17, the Mount Vernon City School District proudly ushered in the return of arts education to the City That Believes. Under the direction of Evelyn Collins, who is the Director of the Arts and Gifted and Talented Program, an energetic ensemble of students skillfully acted, sang and danced their way into the hearts of an appreciative hometown audience.

Prior to the curtain rising, the red carpet was abuzz with excitement and anticipation as Mount Vernonites mixed, mingled, and warmly greeted one another over hors d'oeuvres. The large number of notable guests present attested to the importance of the occasion. The Mayor, City Council members, the Comptroller, City Commissioners, the Superintendent of Schools, School Board members, Assistant Superintendents, ArtsWestchester affiliates, and Library Board Trustees, came dressed-to-impress and support our youth. Even a cast member from the original Broadway production of “The Wiz” was in the audience to pass the torch to a new generation of theatrical performers.

“The Wiz” is an imaginative modernization of Frank Baum’s “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” which was written by William Brown and which an all-Black cast. Unbelievably, the original production of “The Wiz” premiered 40 years ago at the Majestic Theatre in 1975 and took Broadway by storm, winning seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical. Some of the icons who were associated with the original, groundbreaking production include Phylicia Ayers-Allen, Dee Dee Bridgewater, André De Shields, Geoffrey Holder, Stephanie Mills, and Luther Vandross. “The Wiz” was made into a movie by Motown in 1978, and featured another group of famous performers including Lena Horne, Michael Jackson, Richard Pryor, Diana Ross, and Nipsey Russell.

Following in such august footsteps could, understandably, be intimidating to budding artists, but Mount Vernon’s young performers exhibited lion-like courage and delivered a wonderful performance. Supported by a small-but-melodious group of musicians, soulful pit singers, and a hard-working production team, Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion transported a willing audience from Kansas to Oz to meet the Wiz. The colorful costumes and creative application of make-up were charming, and the sparse-but-evocative scenic designs provided fitting backdrops for the heart-felt singing, dancing and acting in the foreground. With the exception of one of the Winkies who is a Mount Vernon High School alum, “The Wiz’s” talented troupe of performers are all current students in the district.

Superintendent of Schools Kenneth Hamilton is thrilled to be leading the district at this pivotal time in its history. Funded by a generous \$1.35 million in grant funding through a partnership with ArtsWestchester and Congressman Eliot Engel, Mount Vernon students’ education will be enriched over the next four years by the integration of all forms of the arts into the teaching of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Mount Vernon was one of only eight grantees that received awards in the Arts in Education Development and Dissemination category sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Education.

Inquiries about the school district’s new arts program can be directed to Evelyn Collins at [ecollins@mtvernoncsd.org](mailto:ecollins@mtvernoncsd.org).



The program, “Supt. Scoop,” airs at 7:30 p.m. on Mondays, 9 p.m. on Tuesdays, and 7:30 p.m. on Fridays on Channels 6 (Time Warner) or 33 (FiOs). This monthly program discusses major issues facing Mount Vernon students.





# Mount Vernon Ambassador (MVA) Program Organizes the 2nd Annual Pull-Tab Contest

Last year, the Mount Vernon Ambassadors (MVA) held their first district-wide “Pull-Tab Contest.” Together, we collected close to 152,587 tabs! These tabs were shipped to the Prostheses Foundation in Thailand to make artificial limbs, couplings/joints for the limbs; and canes/walkers for the elderly. This year, our goal is to collect 1 million tabs for the Ronald McDonald House (RMH). “Tabs have significant value in the recycling industry, representing the purest form of desirable metal for those who recycle. Additionally, these small tabs provide a tremendous source of charitable revenue for the RMH. The aluminum that is donated to the RMH is taken to a local recycling station where it is weighed and cashed in by the pound. The money is used to assist the House with operational expenses such as household supplies and utilities. The fee is waived for those families in need of financial support. All the collections do add up to make a heartfelt impact in working together to provide shelter and comfort to families during the medical treatment of their children (Ronald McDonald House, 2014).”



The deadline for participants to drop off their collected tabs to Mrs. Kirkland-Hudson or Mrs. Haywood at Longfellow Elementary School is Tuesday, June 2, 2015. Please make sure your bags are labeled with your school name and the number of tabs counted. The school with the highest number of collected pull-tabs will receive \$250.00! Congratulations to last year’s winner, Columbus Elementary School, for collecting 41, 422 tabs! Please contact Mrs. Kirkland-Hudson or Mrs. Haywood at Longfellow Elementary School via email or at 665-5388 with questions. We look forward to your participation and thank you in advance for your support!

# District Leadership Team Participates in a Future Ready Regional Summit in Atlanta, Georgia



<b>R</b>	<i>Robust, Rigorous Resources</i>
<b>E</b>	<i>Engaged Students with Equitable Access</i>
<b>A</b>	<i>Active Parents for Deeper Engagement</i>
<b>D</b>	<i>Dedicated Educators</i>
<b>Y</b>	<i>“Yes Culture” of Leadership</i>

The Mount Vernon City School District sent a team of school district leaders to Atlanta, Georgia, March 25-26, to participate in the third of 12 Future Ready Regional Summits, designed to help district leaders improve teaching and learning through the effective use of technology. President Obama announced the regional summits at the ConnectED to the Future Convening, hosted at the White House Nov. 19, 2014. The summit is being hosted by the U.S. Department of Education and the Alliance for Excellent Education with Clayton County Public Schools at the S. Truett Cathy Professional Development Center in Jonesboro, Georgia.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Jeff Gorman said, “If we are preparing our children to be college and career ready, integrating technology into daily instruction is a moral imperative. In 2015, technology is no longer an option, it is part of our fiber as a global society.”

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton and his district leadership team are furthering the Mount Vernon City School District’s commitment to becoming future ready by engaging in a series of workshops

that offer expert support to create or build upon an existing digital learning plan that aligns with instructional best practices. It must be implemented by highly trained teachers, and leads to personalized learning experiences for all students, particularly those from traditionally underserved communities.

“The Future Ready Regional Summits will be a forum where local leaders can share knowledge with their peers, engage leaders from outside their region and better equip themselves with skills and tools necessary to provide students with what they need to be successful in life,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

The summits are an important step toward realizing the goals of the ConnectED Initiative announced by President Obama in 2013 to connect 99 percent of students to high-speed Internet and empower teachers with the technology they need to transform teaching

and learning. The regional summits are expected to engage more than 1,800 district leaders nationwide. The other Regional Summits will be in Raleigh, North Carolina; Baltimore, Maryland; Vancouver, Washington; Phoenix, Arizona; West Warwick, Rhode Island; St. Louis, Missouri; Redwood City, California; Denver, Colorado; Wadsworth, Illinois; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Dallas, Texas.

“Future ready is about helping district leaders leverage technology to empower teachers, engage students, and close persistent equity gaps by creating a learning environment where all students have access to the tools and expertise they need to be prepared for the future,” said Richard Culatta, director of the Education Department’s Office of Educational Technology (OET).

The summits are open to district leadership teams that have made a commitment to developing the human and technological capacity needed to transform teaching and personalize learning using digital tools, by signing the Future Ready District Pledge. Already, more than 1,500 district superintendents nationwide have taken the pledge. For more information about the OET, including resources for students, parents and educators, visit <http://tech.ed.gov>. #FutureReady

*Superintendent's Letter***Making the Grade: Education Held to a Higher Standard in Mount Vernon**

It is an honor to serve as the Superintendent of Schools in the Mount Vernon City School District. My administrative team and I are deeply committed to turning the district around and making great strides in our efforts to do so. It is without a doubt that we can become a district of prestige and distinction as we raise expectations for staff and students. We have already begun planning for the restoration of some exceptional programs that are certain to have a high yield for our students. This plan includes the reinstatement of Career/Technology Education programs like cosmetology, auto body shop, and carpentry. We are very optimistic that we will be able to reopen the swimming pool at MVHS in the coming school year to reinstate swim teams, help students acquire lifeguard certification and, most importantly, to provide aquatics safety and swim instruction to the community.

Academic rigor is the cornerstone of the foundation upon which we are rebuilding the district. Teachers are being trained on new and innovative teaching strategies, while principals are being introduced to new evaluation systems in an effort to ensure there is an increase in accountability and application of professional standards throughout the organization.

We are excited to propose a Fiscal Plan for Academic Excellence that will be of no additional cost to the local taxpayer. Even with enhancements in technology and the restoration of guidance counselors, nurses, and student supports across the continuum of learning, this budget represents a modest increase without imposing further upon the taxpayer. We have created a win-win situation by planning for programs that raise student achievement, applying necessary repairs to our aged facilities, and providing students with the tools necessary to graduate on time so they may compete competitively in the global workforce.

Additionally, it is my hope that we can foster meaningful partnerships with the city, churches, civic organizations and all other stakeholders in the Mount Vernon community so together we can steer our schools in a positive direction and provide students every possible opportunity to be successful.

I have full confidence that we can do this and more because the children in Mount Vernon deserve it.

Yours for the sake of all children,

Kenneth R. Hamilton, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**BUDGET FACTS****What presentations of the proposed budget were presented to the public?**

March 14: Pennington School  
April 8: Education Center  
April 13: Dole Center  
April 14: The Armory  
April 18: United Black Clergy  
April 18: Traphagen Elementary School  
May 4: Greater Centennial  
May 5: PTA Council  
May 6: District-Wide Budget Hearing  
May 16: Longfellow Elementary School, 9am  
May 18: Pennington PTA, 7pm  
May 19: Budget Vote and Trustee Election

**How is the public assured that this budget is fiscally responsible?**

Through multiple stages of the budget development, the administration performed due diligence by exploring available options for cost and operational efficiencies. This included analyzing the pros and cons associated with cuts, consolidations, reconfigurations and additions. Most importantly, the budget puts children first.

**What guided the decisions leading to this budget recommendation?**

The Superintendent of Schools and his advisory team guided by the Board of Education and their district goals worked in collaboration with district administrators via a budget defense process. This process facilitated an understanding of the current and projected status of student and program needs, some revenue assumptions, enrollment, implications of laws and alignment with district goals.

**What is the district doing to fix the school buildings that are in such need of repair?**

During the current year, the district devoted as many resources as possible to making necessary repairs and improvements to school facilities. We are working on a plan, which will enable us to replace virtually every boiler and electrical fixture, repair inoperable windows, and many other items, all at no cost to the taxpayer, through an energy efficiency program. In addition to replacing all of these aging items, we will save hundreds of thousands of dollars every year from new energy efficiencies put in place.



## 2015-2016 Budget in Three Parts

Function or Account	Administration	Capital	Program	Total	TOTAL	Difference	
% of Total Budget	9.08%	16.30%	74.62%	2015-16	2014-15	Dollars	Percent
Board of Education	\$ 348,302			\$ 348,302	\$ 379,081	\$ (30,779)	-8.12%
Central Admin	\$ 681,223			\$ 681,223	\$ 567,568	\$ 113,655	20.02%
Finance	\$ 1,383,306			\$ 1,383,306	\$ 1,344,919	\$ 38,387	2.85%
Legal Services	\$ 525,000			\$ 525,000	\$ 600,000	\$ (75,000)	-12.50%
Personnel	\$ 768,622			\$ 768,622	\$ 593,360	\$ 175,262	29.54%
Records Management	\$ 6,600			\$ 6,600	\$ 500	\$ 6,100	1220.00%
Public Information	\$ 107,000			\$ 107,000	\$ 59,000	\$ 48,000	81.36%
Operation of Plant		\$ 11,567,504		\$ 11,567,504	\$ 11,507,535	\$ 59,969	0.52%
Maintenance of Plant		\$ 2,483,031		\$ 2,483,031	\$ 2,183,584	\$ 299,447	13.71%
Security		\$ 3,526,172		\$ 3,526,172	\$ 3,398,744	\$ 127,428	3.75%
Other Central Serv.	\$ 2,636,776			\$ 2,636,776	\$ 2,227,383	\$ 409,393	18.38%
Insurance Prop/Liab		\$ 1,273,258		\$ 1,273,258	\$ 1,160,675	\$ 112,583	9.70%
Judgments & Claims		\$ 135,000		\$ 135,000	\$ 95,000	\$ 40,000	42.11%
County Sewer Taxes		\$ 260,000		\$ 260,000	\$ 275,050	\$ (15,050)	-5.47%
Refund of Taxes		\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
Other Special Items	\$ 894,904			\$ 894,904	\$ 878,781	\$ 16,123	1.83%
Curriculum Devel.	\$ 2,656,439			\$ 2,656,439	\$ 1,185,730	\$ 1,470,709	124.03%
Supervision Reg School	\$ 5,770,161			\$ 5,770,161	\$ 5,287,840	\$ 482,321	9.12%
Supervision Special School	\$ 1,004,866			\$ 1,004,866	\$ 1,154,158	\$ (149,292)	-12.94%
Other Admin Support	\$ 214,848			\$ 214,848	\$ 257,327	\$ (42,479)	-16.51%
Regular School, LEP & PSEN			\$ 64,216,420	\$ 64,216,420	\$ 63,325,670	\$ 890,750	1.41%
Program for Special Ed			\$ 41,190,598	\$ 41,190,598	\$ 41,711,679	\$ (521,081)	-1.25%
Occupational Education			\$ 1,417,536	\$ 1,417,536	\$ 881,635	\$ 535,901	60.78%
Special Schools & Programs			\$ 192,285	\$ 192,285	\$ 218,847	\$ (26,562)	-12.14%
Media & Computer			\$ 5,429,126	\$ 5,429,126	\$ 3,470,859	\$ 1,958,267	56.42%
Pupil Personnel Services			\$ 9,679,580	\$ 9,679,580	\$ 8,511,768	\$ 1,167,812	13.72%
Extra-curricular & Interscholastic Sports			\$ 651,305	\$ 651,305	\$ 760,475	\$ (109,170)	-14.36%
District Transportation			\$ 118,938	\$ 118,938	\$ 119,438	\$ (500)	-0.42%
Contract Transportation			\$ 7,953,178	\$ 7,953,178	\$ 8,710,789	\$ (757,611)	-8.70%
Employee Benefits	\$ 3,972,028	\$ 6,454,546	\$ 39,223,778	\$ 49,650,352	\$ 52,911,217	\$ (3,260,865)	-6.16%
Debt Service		\$ 11,826,805		\$ 11,826,805	\$ 11,378,393	\$ 448,412	3.94%
Transfers to Capital		\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	0.00%
Other Transfers			\$ 2,218,238	\$ 2,218,238	\$ 2,218,239	\$ (1)	0.00%
<b>2015-16 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>\$ 20,970,075</b>	<b>\$ 37,626,316</b>	<b>\$ 172,290,982</b>	<b>\$ 230,887,373</b>	<b>\$ 227,475,244</b>	<b>\$ 3,412,129</b>	<b>1.50%</b>
2015-16 Admin. as % of Admin & Inst.	10.85%						
<b>2014-15 Budget</b>	<b>\$ 18,818,076</b>	<b>\$ 36,867,531</b>	<b>\$ 171,789,637</b>	<b>\$ 227,475,244</b>			
% of Total Budget	8.27%	16.21%	75.52%	100.0%			
2014-15 Admin. as % of Admin & Inst.	9.87%						

### How is money distributed in the budget?

#### Instruction: 75%

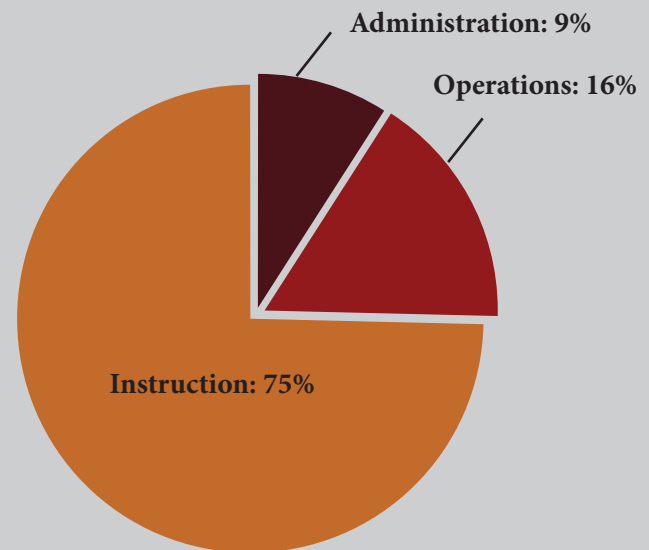
This category includes all expense items directly attributed to the education of students.

#### Operations: 16%

This category includes maintenance of school buildings and grounds, utilities, and business office functions.

#### Administration: 9%

This category includes salaries and benefits for all administrative personnel, including some central office staff as well as legal services and other central services.







## BUDGET REVENUE

### Where does the money come from?

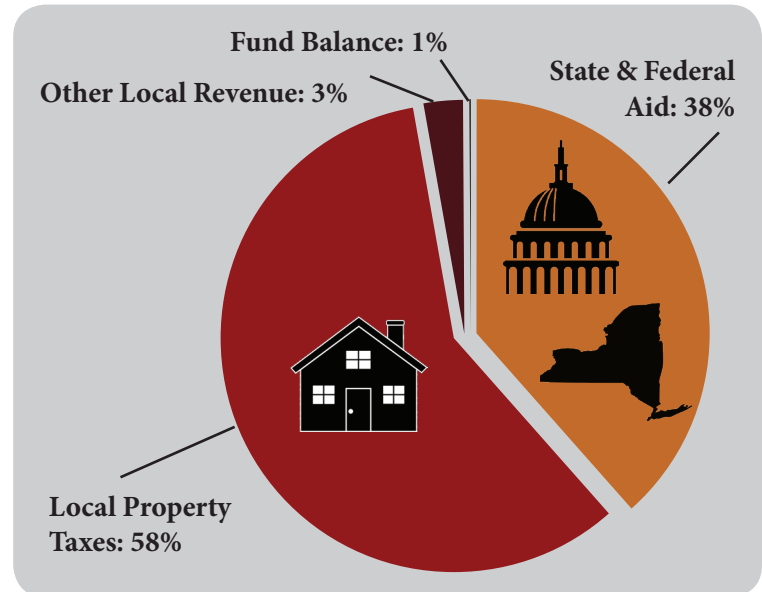
The district receives funding through a variety of sources. 58% of our revenue is derived from the local property tax, 38% is funded through state and federal aid. The balance of the budget is funded through local revenue sources and the district's fund balance totaling less than 4% of the entire budget.

### What is the fund balance?

Fund balance is money that has remained unspent from previous budgets. This money is like a bank account of savings, some of which may be used to close the gap between revenue and expense in future budgets, and some of which is set aside or is restricted to be used for a special purpose only. Such special purposes are designated by the board and may include payments for tax certioraris (tax refunds from reduction in assessments), or some other future special purpose.

### What are School Aid Runs?

School aid runs are the portions of money that is allocated to the school districts across the state. The state budget authorizes a certain amount of money to be devoted to school aid, and this money is distributed based on a school aid formula. The results are then listed in the school aid runs that are usually released with the budget. This way, school districts can plan their budgets for the next school year. These runs were released on March 31, 2015 and have now been incorporated into our 2015-2016 budget.



### How does the proposed budget affect my property taxes?

At this time, it is impossible to say with certainty what a typical tax bill would look like for a homeowner in Mount Vernon for the 2015-2016 school year. Factors outside the district's control such as assessments provided by the city, will not be available until after the budget vote. At the present time, we can estimate that a home with an average assessed value of \$10,270 will likely not be effected.

### 2015-2016 Property Tax Report Card

	Budgeted (A)	Budgeted (B)	Percent Change (C)
Total Proposed Spending	\$ 227,475,244	\$ 230,887,373	1.50%
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Including Tax Levy to Support Library Debt <sup>1</sup>	\$ 134,077,473	\$ 134,077,473	0.00%
Permissible Exclusions to the School Tax Levy Limit	\$ 5,212,012	\$ 4,846,354	
Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Not Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions or Levy to Support Library Debt	\$ 129,206,048	\$ 131,237,731	
School Tax Levy Limit <sup>2</sup>	\$ 134,418,060	\$ 136,084,084	
Difference (positive value requires 60.0% voter approval)	-5,212,012	-4,846,353	
Public School Enrollment	8,234	8,234	0.00%
Consumer Price Index			1.62%

<sup>1</sup> All proposed levies should exclude any prior year reserve for excess tax levy, including interest.

<sup>2</sup> For 2014-15, includes any carryover from 2013-14 and excludes any tax levy for library debt or prior year reserve for excess tax levy, including interest.

	Actual 15	2014- (D)	Estimated (E)	2014-15
Adjusted Restricted Fund Balance		13,011,414		13,014,553
Assigned Appropriated Fund Balance		9,832,678		2,044,893
Adjusted Unrestricted Fund Balance		9,041,582		9,235,494
Adjusted Unrestricted Fund Balance as a Percent of the Total Budget		3.97%		4.00%



## 2015-2016 School District Budget Notice

The information provided below is the "School District Budget Notice" as required by state law. School districts must distribute this notice, as prescribed, to all district residents.

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2014-15 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2015-16 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2015-16 School Year*
Total Budgeted Amount, Not including Separate Propositions	\$ 227,475,244	\$ 230,887,373	\$ 230,204,973
Increase/decrease for the 2015-16 school year		\$ 3,412,129	\$ 2,729,729
Percentage increase/decrease in Proposed Budget		1.50%	1.20%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.62%	1.62%
Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Including Levy to Support Library Debt, if applicable	\$ 134,077,473	\$ 134,077,473	\$ 134,077,473
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 5,212,012	\$ 4,846,354	
A. Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Not Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions or Levy to Support Library Debt	\$ 128,865,461	\$ 129,231,119	
B. School Tax Levy Limit, Not Including Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$ 129,206,048	\$ 131,237,731	
Difference: A-B (Positive Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)	\$ (340,587)	\$ (2,006,612)	
Administrative component	\$ 18,818,076	\$ 20,970,075	\$ 20,920,075
Program component	\$ 171,789,637	\$ 172,290,982	\$ 171,816,982
Capital component	\$ 36,867,531	\$ 37,626,316	\$ 37,467,916
<b>*Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2015-16 school year should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.</b>			
From the proposed 2015-16 budget, remove all non-contingent items: equipment purchases of \$50,000 for information technology, of \$58,400 for buildings & grounds, and of \$152,000 for classroom furniture, and of \$318,000 for computer assisted instruction, and of \$1,000 for guidance equipment, and of \$3,000 for PPS equipment, as well as a transfer to capital of \$100,000. The amount of the Administrative component at 10.85% as a percentage of the total of both of the Administrative and Program components in the contingent budget is greater than the percentage of the Administrative component in 2014-15 at 9.87%. This will require additional adjustments and reductions in the Administrative and Program components to maintain the percentage of 9.87%. The tax levy required will be the same amount, \$134,077,473, as during 2014-15.			
			<b>Under the Budget Proposed for the 2015-16 School Year</b>
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup>			\$2,195
The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2015-16 by the qualified voters of the Mount Vernon City School District, Westchester County, New York, will be held at at locations noted on page 8 of this newsletter.			

<sup>1</sup>The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

### What educational programing and new initiatives are in this budget?

There is a strong focus on College & Career Readiness in this budget with new programs such as AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) ([www.avid.org](http://www.avid.org)). AVID brings research-based strategies and curriculum to educational institutions in elementary, secondary, and higher education.

The AVID System annually provides more than 30,000 educators with training and methodologies that develop students' critical thinking, literacy, and math skills across all content areas throughout the entire campus.

We are also focusing on the restoration of the Arts, Career & Technical Education (CTE), technology, meeting the Common Core State Standards, balanced literacy as well as meeting the educational needs of children via Reading specialists, Literacy and Mathematics coaches, and a comprehensive staff development program

for our staff & administration. Response to Intervention (RTI), a strategic plan to provide extra services for children that are not reading and comprehending at their grade level and is managed by the state will be a focus in this budget.

English Language Learners (ELL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) is a focus on this budget to meet the needs of our diverse student population in our community. There is a new focus on meeting the needs of all children at all levels such as Gifted & Talented, and Special Education programs.

**Board of Education**

Elias Gootzeit, President  
Serigne M.Gningue, Vice President  
Brenda L. Crump  
Charmaine Fearon  
Rosemarie Jarosz  
Omar McDowell  
Darcy Miller  
Adriane G. Saunders

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Mount Vernon, NY

## BUDGET VOTE

### What am I voting on?

Residents are voting on a proposed \$230,887,373 budget for the 2015-16 school year, which calls for a 1.5 percent spending increase from the 2014-15 school year. Residents are also voting to fill three trustee seats on the Board of Education. Detailed copies of the proposed budget and additional information about the proposed budget and board candidates are available at the district office.

### Who can vote?

**Voter Eligibility & Qualifications:** You can vote if you are: 18 years of age or over, U.S. Citizen, if you are registered to vote, a resident of New York State and the City School District of the City of Mount Vernon for at least 30 days preceding the election, if you voted in the last election, you are eligible to vote in this election and if you are properly registered on the Westchester County General Election List. If you are not sure whether you are properly registered, call the Sr. Clerk/Records Access Officer at (914) 665-5866 or the District Clerk at (914) 665-5235.

### How do I register to vote?

If you are not sure whether you are properly registered, call the Sr. Clerk/Records Access Officer at (914) 665-5866 or the District Clerk at (914) 665-5235.

### Can I vote by absentee ballot?

Absentee Ballot Applications must be submitted to the District Clerk's Office by Tuesday, May 12, 2015 if the Absentee Ballot is to be mailed to the voter; or the day before the election on Monday, May 18, 2015 if the Absentee Ballot is to be issued to the voter in person. Absentee Ballots must be received in the District Clerk's Office by 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 19, 2015.

### When and where is the vote?

The school budget vote will take place on Tuesday May 19, 2015 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine. The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2015-16 by the registered voters of the Mount Vernon City School District, Westchester County, New York, will be held at:

- **Lincoln School**, 170 East Lincoln Ave. (EDs # 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 21A, 21B)
- **Parker School**, 461 South 6th Ave. (EDs # 4, 12)
- **Hamilton School**, 20 Oak St. (EDs # 5, 19)
- **Traphagen School**, Oakland Ave. (EDs # 6A, 6B, 8)
- **Edward Williams School**, 9 Union Lane (EDs # 7A, 7B, 18A, 18B)
- **Grimes School**, 58 South 10th Ave. (EDs # 3, 22, 27A, 27B)
- **Graham School**, 421 East 5th St. (EDs # 9, 13A, 13B, 23)
- **Mandela High School**, 250 Gramatan Ave. (EDs # 10, 15, 24)
- **Longfellow Elementary School**, 625 Fourth Ave. (EDs # 14, 20)
- **Pennington School**, 20 Fairway (EDs # 11A, 11B, 16, 26)
- **Holmes School**, 195 N. Columbus Ave. (EDs # 17, 25)

Call the District office at (914) 665-5866 if you're unsure where you should vote.

### What would happen if the budget is voted down?

Statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2015-16 school year should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law. From the proposed 2015-16 budget, remove all non-contingent items: equipment purchases of \$50,000 for information technology, of \$58,400 for buildings & grounds, and of \$152,000 for classroom furniture, and of \$318,000 for computer assisted instruction, and of \$1,000 for guidance equipment, and of \$3,000 for PPS equipment, as well as a transfer to capital of \$100,000. The amount of the Administrative component at 10.85% as a percentage of the total of both of the Administrative and Program components in the contingent budget is greater than the percentage of the Administrative component in 2014-15 at 9.87%. This will require additional adjustments and reductions in the Administrative and Program components to maintain the percentage of 9.87%. The tax levy required will be the same amount, \$134,077,473, as during 2014-15.