

District 201 fund balances improve

Actions initiated years ago helped improve balance to the positive

BY ALLEN PARKER

allen.parker@register-news.com

MT. VERNON — A number of actions initiated approximately two years ago have helped Mt. Vernon Township High School District 201 improve its total

fund balances nearly \$1 million to the positive.

MVTHS Dist. 201 Superintendent Dr. Michael Smith said in July 2009 the district had to borrow \$500,000 just to end the fiscal year with its education fund in positive

territory.

"It was clear then that in 2010-11 the district was headed for financial difficulty," said Smith. "As 2009 came to a close we looked at ways we could build the fund back, resume our pro-

grams for the kids and cut costs. How can we maintain and reduce costs?"

The majority of the budget, as with any district, are salaries and benefits. The district, through layoffs and planning by the board was

able to maintain itself then improve its financial position.

"We had a number of layoffs and made some tough decisions early on and moving forward," Smith noted. "Costs were also cut signif-

icantly in other areas. We were able to not only maintain but we were able to expand programs and add electives. We did not lose one program for the kids."

see FUND/Page 3A

FUND

continued from 1A

Smith said the district was able to add programs such as Project Lead the Way. Electives biotech/biomedicine and math/engineering were added to the curriculum.

"If we had not carried through with action we would have been put on the financial watch list. We were in warn-

ing as it was," said Smith.

Instead, the district moved in a positive direction from the warning list to review, Smith explained. The district also narrowly missed financial recognition by 1/10 of a point, which would have qualified for the highest rating.

A large area of savings for the district, according to Smith, came through re-bidding contracts such as phone services, utilities, district in-

surance, copiers and student insurance.

"We left no stone unturned," Smith said.

Smith said the receipt of federal stimulus funds also helped but some just replaced lost state funding.

"We were able to get some additional dollars that helped us too. It wasn't just a reduced budget but also a severe revenue problem. The federal stimulus helped offset that," Smith said.

11/23/11 Register-News