



# Ram o Gram

January 2010

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## Message From The Superintendent

The second semester is here already. It seems that only a short time ago the new school year was beginning. It has been a truly exciting time for me as the new superintendent here at Mt. Vernon Township High School. There have been many innovative changes in the first few months of this year. A redesign of the district budget and financial reporting system is in place. This new system will assist the district toward staying "on track" with the three year deficit reduction and balanced budget plan. An expanded Positive Behavior Intervention and Support system is working well through recognizing students for positive choices. The Freshman Academy is continuing to make a positive impact on the students at that level. A district Data Team is in place which assists teachers in maintaining a student academic performance database. This information will be used so that progress can be monitored and needed interventions designed to improve learning. A separate team of teachers and administrators will work with the new data team to specifically design targeted assistance for students in need of help with their school work. The data team will then monitor each student's response to those interventions forming the new system called "Response to Interventions" or RTI. The district is also employing through grant dollars a reading specialist and a math specialist to assist in designing this system of targeted learning activities.

In addition, winter athletics are in full swing and spring sports are preparing to start practices soon. Congratulations to all fall sport activities for their successes and to all the various student clubs and activities for their involvements here at school and throughout the community. There are still plenty of opportunities for students to become involved and all are encouraged to participate in one of these great groups. Again, thank you to all students who have worked hard to make your high school experience be all it can be so far this year. As mentioned, the district has placed many items in motion to assist students in achieving a great high school experience. It has been a pleasure being the superintendent of a school with so much to offer. I look forward to an even greater second semester. Remember the door is always open for students and parents to stop by.

Sincerely,  
Michael E. Smith, Superintendent



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### Important Notice Second Semester Schedules

**School will resume on January 4, 2010.** Students will report to their first semester, first period class at 8:20 a.m. to pick up their second semester class schedule. Students will be dismissed at 8:30 a.m. to move to their assigned second semester first period class which will begin at 8:35 a.m.



### Holiday Vacation/Break December 23—January 3

School will be dismissed at 1:40 on Tuesday, December 22, 2009, to begin the holiday break. School will resume at 8:20 a.m. on Monday, January 4, 2010.

Have a safe and happy holiday season. Catch the Rams in the Centralia Holiday Tourney December 28-30 or the Lady Rams at the Mascoutah Tournament December 28-30.

Encourage your son or daughter to include academic excellence and perfect attendance on his/her New Year's resolution list.

### Students Selected As Illinois State Scholars

Congratulations to the following senior students who were selected as Illinois State Scholars. Typically, only the top ten percent of students in the state are chosen for this award. State scholars are selected based on a combination of ACT score, grade point average and class rank.

|                 |                        |                |                   |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Mallory Adams   | Ayesha Akhtar          | Cody Allen     | Samantha Allen    |
| Steven Beckham  | Caitlin Bullock        | Mollie Burdett | Brandon Calvert   |
| Samuel Cortez   | Alex Crisel            | Blake Fields   | Braden Hayes      |
| Rya Heady       | Lucas Hurst            | Erica Kirsch   | Trisha McPheeters |
| Ericka Opalecky | Priya Patel            | Ben Payne      | Dillon Payne      |
| Amanda Pike     | David Price            | Alicia Sheldon | Alexander Taaka   |
| Brett Tucker    | Sarah Wagner           | Paige Wallace  | Darwin Walters    |
| Tyler Weston    | Christopher Williamson |                |                   |

### Writing Contests Underway

The Illinois Association of Teachers of English sponsors an annual writing competition for Illinois high school students. Several Mt. Vernon high school students have been recognized by the state for their writing in the past. Such recognition improves college and scholarship applications. The deadline is the end of January. If your son/daughter is interested, please have him/her contact Mrs. Garrett in the library for details.

In the spring the Southern Illinois Association of Teachers will sponsor a prose writing competition and the Regional Office of Education will sponsor the Writing Talent Search in March or April. Students should listen to the announcements or see their English teachers or Mrs. Garrett in the library for details.

### PBIS Writing and Art Competition

The library will collect written and artistic entries the fourth Monday of each month that encompass the PBIS word of the month. November was the first month of the competition and the winner of a \$25 Wal-Mart gift certificate was Kat Bullock for her poem on responsibility:

I could while away the hours, conferring with the flowers, and consulting with the rain. I totally could--but should I?

There are so many things I could be doing to help others rather than myself but we busy-bodies busy ourselves to a point when suddenly we lose track of ourselves and then there's nothing more we can do. But there's always time.

I suppose I should help.  
I suppose I should be more aware.  
I suppose the lives of others are my responsibility, too.





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## Special Olympics—Basketball

Eighteen Special Olympics athletes from MVTHS competed in the Individual and Intermediate Basketball Skills Competition at Carmi-White County High School on Thursday, December 3, 2009.

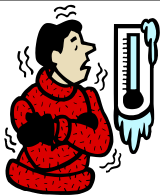
**Gold Medal Winners:** Courtney Sammons, Thomas Braddy, Dustin Todd, Jarris Davis, Katrina Mestel, John Donovan **Silver Medal Winners:** Elizabeth "Buffy" Guthrie, Alicia Yates, Norman Burwell, Nathaniel Chwarczinski, Caleb Ritchey, Corey Copple, Grant Cobb, Nicholas Meador **Bronze Medal Winners:** Haley Dehn, Heather Ince **Ribbon Winners:** Jessica Harper

Our "FIRST-EVER" MVTHS Special Olympics Basketball TEAM competed in our first four games of the season. Victorious in both games against Brownsville School (56-35 and 62-45) Victorious in both "nail-biter" games against Cahokia (29-28 and 39-31) **The TEAM members include:** Donyale Black, Rachel Flanagan, Nathanael Garner, Jacob Gass, Sydney Irvin, Rhacal Kidd, Michael McCluskey, Antonio Moore, Ivan Nason, Aaron Rudolph, Shakur Sadiq, Anthony Wood.

**WE ARE SO PROUD OF ALL THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND GREAT SUCCESS! WAY TO GO!**

## Congratulations November Students of the Month

|                   |                 |                    |                     |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Bria Allen        | Artrena Badger  | Rylie Bruce        | Olivia Bullock      |
| Reis Barnfield    | Emily Hoffman   | Clay S. Jackson    | Keatyn Kujawa       |
| Conner Lundius    | Zach Maher      | Matthew McClintock | Mary McDonald       |
| Carter Scarbrough | Samantha Smith  | Kenzie Tate        | Karleigh Turrentine |
| Kelly Williams    | Taylor Woodward |                    |                     |



## Coat Drive Underway at MVTHS

Cold weather has arrived along with the need for warmer outerwear. Anyone who has **clean, new or used** coats, scarves, gloves or hats, please bring them to the Guidance Office, room 206A or call Mrs. Renth at 246-5931. These will be made available to students. Thanks for your help!

## Hi-Tri Sweetheart Dance to be Held January 16

The annual Hi-Tri Sweetheart Dance will be held on Saturday, January 16. The dance will be held from 8:00—11:00 p.m. in the Changnon Gym. This year's theme is *Winter Wonderland* and the colors are blue, white, and silver. Music will be provided by Kickin' It! Music Productions.

A king and queen from each of the four classes will be crowned at the dance. Coronation will begin at 10:00 p.m. In early January, students will be allowed to vote for a boy and a girl from their own class to be Sweetheart kings and queens. The names of those elected are kept secret until they arrive at the dance. Spectators are welcome to attend coronation and are asked for a donation of \$1 per person at the door.

The cost of tickets is \$14 for Hi-Tri members and \$16 for non-members. Tickets will be sold **after school only** during the week of January 4-8. Students must purchase tickets at this time. Tickets cannot be sold at the door. All school debts must be cleared before tickets can be purchased. Any student or former student who is attending the dance as a date must also have cleared their debts.

Please note that if you are on social suspension you will not be allowed to buy tickets or attend the dance. You will need to be cleared by the Attendance Office in order to do so. Please check with the Attendance Office with any questions about social suspension.

## From the Nurse: Staph Infections

It's that time of year again when staph infections seem to be more prevalent. What is staph? Staphylococcus aureus is a bacterium that is commonly found in the nose and on the skin of healthy people. Approximately 25-30% of the populations carry the bacteria without becoming ill.

What does staph infection look like? Most infections caused by staph are skin infections such as pimples or boils. Staph skin infections can be red, painful, swollen, or have pus or other drainage. **Sometimes it may resemble a bug or spider bite.** More serious staph infections can also cause pneumonia and infections of the blood and joints.

Over the past several years, treatment of some staph infections have become problematic because the bacteria have become resistant to some antibiotics. Methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a type of staph that is resistant to some antibiotics, including the antibiotic methicillin.

How can staph infections be prevented? Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based gel. Also practice good hygiene— showering with soap and water, changing clothes daily, etc. Staph can be transmitted by contact with secretions from infected skin lesions, wounds, nasal drainage, and objects and surfaces contaminated with staph. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, and uniforms.

In addition, since staph infections start when staph enters the body through a break in the skin, keeping skin healthy and intact is a good preventive measure. If you have any questions, please call the nurses office at 246-5832.

Wishing you and yours a safe and healthy new year.  
Judy Knolhoff, R.N., School Nurse

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