



# INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO: Mt. Vernon Senior High School  
FROM: Timothy Schultz, Hearing Officer, Indiana State Board of Education  
RE: Appeal by Mt. Vernon Senior School of its 2015-16 Letter Grade  
DATE: March 8, 2017

---

**Finding:** Mt. Vernon Senior High School's appeal of its 2015-16 category placement of a "B" grade should be denied.

## I. Facts

Mt. Vernon Senior High School ("Mt. Vernon"), part of the MSD Mount Vernon School Corporation, received a letter grade of "B" for the 2015-16 school year. Mt. Vernon appealed the "B" grade due to concerns regarding the long-term absence of an educator, with the resulting impact on students entitling the school to an improved category placement of an "A."

## II. Argument and Analysis

Mt. Vernon contends that its appeal should be affirmed due to an unforeseen extended absence of an educator at Mt. Vernon that impacted numerous students. During the educator's absence, a long-term substitute fulfilled the teacher's education duties. Mt. Vernon argues that the absence of the permanent teacher was a disadvantage to its students. To support this argument, the school noted that when comparing proficiency ratings, the students in the permanent educator's classes from the prior two years performed better than the 2015-16 students receiving instruction from the substitute educator.

Although unforeseen employment issues can prove a challenge for school administrators, such challenges do not relieve a school from its responsibility to educate students. Further, the argument that the drop in student scores was due solely to the absence of the permanent educator is impossible to ascertain. Moreover, during the previous four school years Mt. Vernon's grade designation ranged between a "C" and a "B." Accordingly, Mt. Vernon's letter grade of a "B" during the 2015-16 school year appears to be consistent with the school's prior academic performance. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to support Mt. Vernon's argument.

For the foregoing reasons, I find that Mt. Vernon's request for an "A" grade for the 2015-16 school year should be denied.