

---

M C K I S S I C K  
A S S O C I A T E S  
A R C H I T E C T S

---

05/24/11

## **MR. JAMES ESTEP .....SUPERINTENDENT**

**FORMERLY, MT. UNION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT (814) 542-8631**

- Feasibility Studies.....2004-2005 & 2007
- District Administration Office Addition ..... 2010
- Renovations/Additions to Jr/Sr High School (inc. Geothermal)..... 2011
- Renovation of Jr/Sr High Auditorium ..... 2012

**CURRENTLY, MIFFLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (717) 248-0148**

- District-Wide Feasibility Study ..... 2010
- Capital Projects ..... 2011

## **MR. RICHARD FRY .....SUPERINTENDENT**

**BIG SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT (717) 776-2000**

- Feasibility Studies.....1997, 2003, 2005 & 2008
- Miscellaneous Capital Projects..... Ongoing
- Renovations/Additions to Big Spring MS (inc. Geothermal)..... 2005
- New District Administration Office ..... 2005
- Community Fitness Center ..... 2005
- Renovations/Additions to Mount Rock Elementary School ..... 2007
- Renovations/Additions to Newville Elementary ..... 2010
- New Plainfield Elementary (LEED™ Silver) ..... 2013

## **MR. PAUL KADRI .....SUPERINTENDENT**

**FORMERLY, NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT (215) 809-6000**

- District-Wide Feasibility Study .....2007 & 2009

**CURRENTLY, GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS (860) 572-2100**

- District-Wide Feasibility Study .....2010, ongoing

## **DR. KATHLEEN KELLEY .....SUPERINTENDENT**

**WILLIAMSPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT (570) 327-5500**

- Feasibility Studies.....1989, 1997, 2003, 2006, 2008 & 2009
- Roosevelt Middle School Facility Study..... 2010
- New Jackson Elementary School..... 1998
- New Vocational Wing (High School Addition)..... 1998-1999, 2000
- Cochran Elementary School Additions & Alterations..... 1998-1999, 2001
- Woodward Alternative School Roof Replacement ..... 2004
- Cochran Elementary Basement & Exterior Waterproofing..... 2004
- Lycoming Valley Middle School Renovations ..... 2006
- Hepburn-Lycoming Elementary School Renovations ..... 2003-2006
- New District Service Center ..... 2010
- Round Hills Elementary School Roof Replacement..... 2010
- Curtin Middle School Rood Replacement ..... 2011
- New Roosevelt Middle School..... 2012

**MIFFLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

201 Eighth Street - Highland Park

Lewistown, Pennsylvania 17044

TELEPHONE (717) 248-0148

FAX (717) 248-5345

James A. Estep, Superintendent

Edward R. Curry, Assistant Superintendent

Tracey M. Jones, Director of Special Education

Vance S. Varner, Director of Middle Level Education

Sean A. Daubert, Chief Financial Officer

May 23, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been asked to write a letter for Vern McKissick, Principal Architect of McKissick Associates, and I'm very pleased to do so. The Mifflin County School District has been working with Vern since August of 2010 as he collaborated with the district and our community to complete a feasibility study to address school program needs and physical plant needs against a backdrop of declining student enrollment. Although this process is always a big deal in the life of a rural public school system, political, economic and social events/trends that have occurred this year have really driven the significance of the study to an entirely new level. With that said, we have found McKissick Associates' assistance indispensable, as he has helped us lay out a plan to close five school buildings, merge the two county high schools, and reconfigure the remaining buildings into primary, intermediate elementary, middle school, junior high and county wide high school (K-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-12).

Vern's comprehensive understanding of the feasibility process, along with his capacity to provide a district-wide GIS study has enabled us to completely redraw attendance lines in order to garner greater equity in elementary class sizes, a problem that the district has perpetually struggled with under the former elementary school configuration. Because we were facing an approximate \$6.5 million budget deficit, he was able to compress the entire feasibility process into six months. At this time, our conservative estimate is that the new configuration will save the district in the neighborhood of \$4 million in its first year of implementation. These closures and consolidation of buildings alone have allowed us to reduce faculty, administrative and support staff by approximately 90 positions, representing the lion's share of savings.

What most impressed our board during the study was Vern's ability to articulate the need for such large-scale change to our community. Not only did he do excellent work standing and delivering information to large, anxious crowds in our high school auditoriums, but also in providing all options for review and inspection on our district website so that any community member who couldn't make the public meetings would have an opportunity to review the information by simply clicking on a link. Further, Vern allowed all of his presentations to be both live-streamed and taped so that they could be viewed on the local public TV stations as well as on the district website. It's difficult for school boards to face the opposition often associated with school closures; I sincerely believe that McKissick Associates' willingness to do repeat presentations, along with the constant sharing of presentation data with the public and local media made it possible for the board to come together and overwhelmingly support the final option.

*Educate each student to meet life's challenges.*

May 23, 2011  
Vern McKissick Letter of Recommendation  
Page Two -

This is my second feasibility study experience working with Vern McKissick, and based on my dealings with his firm thus far, it won't likely be the last time we work together. Not only have I been impressed with his comprehensive understanding of the PlanCon process and his ability to get the PA Department of Education to work with him to maximize reimbursement for construction work, but I've also been amazed at the breadth of the body of his work. I have witnessed firsthand that he has not only demonstrated comprehensive design knowledge to build something brand new, but also understands what it takes to resurrect something that others may have looked for any excuse to demolish. This appreciation for community landmarks and structures is what I believe sets Vern apart from other architectural firms I've worked with. I have found Vern McKissick to have a keen understanding of the need to marry forward thinking with local culture and history; more than any other quality, this one is what makes me give you my strongest recommendation to consider McKissick Associates as a viable firm to perform facilities work in your district.

If you have further need of clarification, you may reach me at 717-248-0148 or via email at [jae13@mcsdk12.org](mailto:jae13@mcsdk12.org).

Very Truly Yours,



James A. Estep  
Superintendent



**GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Groton, Connecticut  
*Administration Offices*

1300 Flanders Road • P.O. Box K, Groton, Connecticut 06340 • (860)572-2100 • FAX (860)572-2107

May 20, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to offer my recommendation on behalf of the McKissick Group regarding architectural services, and in particular developing strategic planning documents. On two occasions in two separate districts, I hired the McKissick Group to conduct a thorough analysis of existing facilities and to help formulate potential options for the future. Obviously the quality of work the McKissick Group did in the first district, Neshaminy School District in Langhorne, PA, was excellent. Their work in the second district, Groton, CT, was equally of high quality.

What makes the McKissick Group outstanding is their blend of architectural experience with the use of advanced technologies. In particular, the McKissick Group created a GIS overlay of our students to be able to easily calculate the ethnic, economic, and transportation impact of building locations. The group's detailed, up-front analysis resulted in clear cost estimations that allowed for easy analysis of the cost benefits related to upgrading, renovating to new, and new construction. The group also was able to take operational and staffing data and assist in making staffing forecasts, which also contributed to the financial aspects of various options.

The McKissick Group has an extensive background in dealing with new facilities and renovations of historic buildings. Their history in education is extensive and during our initial review we found their references to refer to outstanding work which aligned with our experience. An intangible benefit which has great value is Mr. McKissick's willingness and ability to assist in the facilitation of a referendum or meetings designed to clearly explain options and consequences of different actions. He was available by phone 24 hours a day and the company's turn-around time was very short for getting important information to the district.

In his most recent assignment he was asked to follow work that was considered sub-par by another architect. The time frame was short and the environment was sensitive. Mr. McKissick took extraordinary efforts to not only meet our requirements, but he did so in an exceptional way. I have no hesitation in continuing to work with the McKissick Group and recommending them to anyone who inquires.

If I can answer any other questions please feel free to contact me at 860-572-2141, or via email at [pkadri@groton.k12.ct.us](mailto:pkadri@groton.k12.ct.us).

Sincerely,

Paul J. Kadri  
Superintendent of Schools  
Groton Public Schools



## Williamsport Area School District

2780 West Fourth Street Williamsport, PA 17701  
(570) 327-5500 • www.wasd.org

May 23, 2011

Re: Letter of Reference

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Vern McKissick has been affiliated with the Williamsport Area School District either as an architect for Hayes Large or representing his own firm, McKissick Associates, PC since 1988 completing several renovation projects. I have known and worked with him for five years in my capacity as superintendent in the district.

In 2008, we completed a feasibility study for all facilities in the district. One building that we intend to renovate is the Roosevelt Middle School, which was built in 1951. This project will be approximately a forty million dollar project. Following that project we will embark on a 40-50 million dollar project at our Senior High School. Currently, we are completing a District Service Center project which is located at one end of the Roosevelt Middle School, which will be renovated beginning in September 2011.

Mr. McKissick and his staff have worked closely with our district staff to develop plans for various building projects that reflect vision and energy efficient features and at the same time reflect the district's financial condition.

In addition, Mr. McKissick possesses the personal attributes of honesty and integrity—two necessary attributes when taxpayer dollars are involved. Therefore, I recommend McKissick Associates, PC as a firm that you should consider for future construction and renovation projects.

If you have any questions or want more specific information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kathleen R. Kelley, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

*Developing responsible citizens through excellence in education.*

Kathleen R. Kelley, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

Don C. Adams, Ph.D.  
Assistant Superintendent

Jeffrey L. Richards  
Business Administrator

Debbra J. Savage, Esq.  
Director-Human Resources

David C. Wright  
Director-Student Services



**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**  
1801 Darby Road, Hazertown, PA 19083

November 15, 2006

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

This letter is in reference to Mr. Vern McKissick of McKissick Associates who has been our architect on our Chestnutwold Elementary School project (new school on small site) and our next elementary school project, Manoa Elementary School. Vern has developed attractive, practical and economic designs that we had essentially challenged him to create in light of space limitations and our need to preserve recreational space in a land-locked school district/township. As a school district that has a reputation for quality schools at a reasonable competitive cost, Vern has addressed our need for instructional and common support space with flexible solutions. He is creative and responsive to our identified educational needs and at every turn has attempted to meet those needs with creative and cost effective solutions. His knowledge of PlanCon, school experience and ability to work with a myriad of professionals shows intellect and resilience. We have engaged Vern in two major projects and will invite him to develop proposals for a third. We are confident in his abilities and recommend his firm to you without reservation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

William S. Keilbaugh, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Telephone (610) 853-5900, Ext. 5530 \* Fax (61) 789-5379 \* E-mail: keilbaugh@havsdl.net

M C  
A S  
A R

05/24/11



## Neshaminy School District

2001 Old Lincoln Highway • Langhorne, Pennsylvania 19047-3295

*Joseph V. Paradise, Business Administrator*

Mr. Paul J. Kadri  
Superintendent

January 10, 2008

Mr. Vern McKissick  
McKissick Associates PC  
317 North Front Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. McKissick:

Your firm was contracted to perform a District Wide Facilities Study for the Neshaminy School District on February 8, 2007. During the months since that date, I have had the pleasure of working with you and the members of your firm. To be honest, it could not have been a more positive experience. The quality of the study has been "second to none".

We chose your firm over many others because we were impressed with your presentation and initial proposal. We have never second guessed that decision for a minute. Frankly, our interaction with you and your staff has been outstanding, and your work second to none. The presentations made to the Board of School Directors, and to our Community, have been first-rate.

The written reports, graphics, and conclusions are clear, concise, in-depth, and complete with superior supporting documentation. Your use of "easy to understand graphics" is exceptional and has greatly assisted the Board and the Community with an understanding of complex issues.

In summary, we could not be more pleased with your outstanding work and we look forward to continuing our relationship in the future when such needs arise.

Sincerely,

Joseph V. Paradise  
Business Administrator

JVP:eb  
McKissick Associates PC

Neshaminy District Offices - 215-809-6000

Neshaminy High 215-809-6800 • Maple Point Middle 215-809-6230 • Neshaminy Middle 215-809-6100 • Poppoising Middle 215-809-6210 • Carl Beechong Middle 215-809-6288  
Pond Buck Elem. 215-809-6300 • Samuel Elwell Elem. 215-809-6303 • Oliver Hackman Elem. 215-809-6949 • Herbert Hoover Elem. 215-809-6940 • Lower Southampton Elem. 215-809-6363  
Walter Miller Elem. 215-809-6680 • Joseph Forstner Elem. 215-809-6340 • Albert Schmitzer Elem. 215-809-6680 • Tamella Learning Center 215-809-6240

M  
A S  
A F





**MOUNT UNION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

28 West Market Street  
Mount Union, Pennsylvania 17066

Mr. James A. Estep  
Superintendent

Telephone  
814-542-8631

January 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been asked to write a letter of recommendation for Vern McKissick, Principal Architect, *McKissick Associates*, and I am very happy to do so. The Mount Union Area School District has been working with Vern McKissick and his team since the end of 2005. During that time, *McKissick Associates* has invested literally hundreds of man hours in the development of a feasibility study to help us best determine a plan to address district-wide school program and physical plant needs.

When Vern's firm agreed to do the feasibility study for the District, they did so for a miniscule fee of \$3,500. People often say "You get what you pay for." In this case, we know we have received far more than we have given. Vern has made himself available to me as District Superintendent every time we have contacted him. He has made numerous trips to our District to meet with me, the School Board, and other critical stake holders, probably expending as much money in gas and long distance phone charges as he has actually received for two years of feasibility study work. This level of commitment demonstrates the importance that *McKissick Associates* place on cultivating a relationship with the community.

Our sense of Vern is that he has acted with integrity, exhibited loyalty to the Mount Union Area School District and that he demonstrates a true understanding of the Plan-Con process, the means to maximize project reimbursement and the inner workings of PDE's office of Division of School Facilities. Vern's understanding of PDE was best exemplified for me when he successfully assisted our District in securing a variance to begin renovations at our High School before the end of the 20-year window allowing reimbursable facilities work.

Although there is clear evidence that Vern's firm has extensive experience building brand new facilities, I sense that he has a particular passion for restoring older buildings. I believe he sees the intangible value of the "old community school building" in the minds of the people in rural communities like ours. I have found Vern to have a keen understanding of the need to marry forward thinking with local, cultural history; more than any other quality this one is what makes me give you my strongest recommendation to consider *McKissick Associates* as a viable firm to perform facilities work in your district.

If you have further need of clarification, you can reach me at 814-542-8631 or via e-mail at [jestep@muasd.org](mailto:jestep@muasd.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James A. Estep".

James A. Estep  
Superintendent

M  
A S  
A F

## Hazleton Area School District

Office of the Secretary / Business Manager  
1515 West 23rd Street  
Hazleton, PA 18202

**Anthony Ryba**  
Secretary/Business Manager  
(570) 459-3111 Ext. 3106

Anthony Moran, Assistant Ext.3107  
Robert Krizansky, Assistant Ext. 3128

June 23, 2004

**Attn. Superintendent of Schools:**

**On behalf of the Hazleton Area School District, it is my pleasure to recommend McKissick & Associates to be your Architect.**

**The Hazleton Area School District became involved with the firm initially by having them perform a feasibility study for the District. Later the Board awarded McKissick Associates the contract for the 2004 Building Project the District is currently pursuing totaling over \$30,000,000. I am very pleased with the work that Mr. McKissick and his staff have been doing for the Hazleton Area School District. It is without reservation that I highly recommend McKissick Associates to you.**

**Should more information be required, please don't hesitate to contact us at 570-459-3111.**

Sincerely,



**Frank Victor**  
Superintendent of Schools



**Anthony Ryba**  
Secretary / Business Manager

**FV-AR/jms**

M  
A S  
A F



**District Administration Office**

**2 Charles Street  
Wellsboro, PA 16901  
(570) 724-4424  
FAX: (570) 724-5103**

**Dr. Donna L. Mettler, Superintendent**

**Kimberly VanCorder, Business Manager      David Krick, Middle School Principal  
Patrick Hewitt, High School Principal      Wesley Kuratomi, Elementary Principal**

**May 26, 2005**

**Vern L. McKissick, AIA  
McKissick Associates  
317 North Front Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101**

**Dear Vern:**

**On behalf of the Wellsboro Area School District, thank you for participating in the Dedication Ceremony for our new high school. Your review of the school's unique features was Informative and Interesting. Your comments were much appreciated and fit nicely into a program designed to both celebrate the completion and inform the public about our successful project.**

**Our successful partnership has spanned nearly seven years and two major construction projects totaling over \$30,000,000. McKissick Associates, and you personally, have been a pleasure to work with. I am in awe of your creative design elements in both our Charlotte Lappla Elementary School and the new Wellsboro Area High School. No "cookie cutter" designs for us! Both of these schools are focal points and a source of great pride for Wellsboro and surrounding communities.**

**As a "rookie" Superintendent in April 1999 when we started our long journey, I appreciated working with an architect who held a comfort level with the PlanCon process and who was so responsive to our every question and idea. Your knowledge and experience with school construction, especially "green buildings," and your commitment to creative design solutions are, I believe, the source of your success.**

**You also worked very well with our School Board Members and administration through years of planning and through several politically challenging situations. We are indebted to you and McKissick Associates for your leading role in providing our community and young people facilities that will improve and enhance their educational opportunities.**

**In a few short weeks, I will be retiring as Superintendent and our partnership will end. I want you to know that I will always hold you in high regard and value our professional relationship.**

**Best wishes for much success as you continue your work in our District. I look forward to congratulating you during the dedication of the auditorium!**

**Sincerely,**

**Donna L. Mettler, Ed.D.  
Superintendent**

**"The Wellsboro Area School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer  
and is in compliance with Title VI and Title IX."**

M  
A S  
A F



## Scranton School District

425 North Washington Avenue  
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18503

MICHAEL M. SHERIDAN  
Chief Executive Officer

PHONE: (570) 348-3465

FAX: (570) 348-3563

E-MAIL: [mickysheridan@yahoo.com](mailto:mickysheridan@yahoo.com)

WEB-SITE: [www.scred.org](http://www.scred.org)

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

McKissick Associates has done excellent work for the Scranton School District over the past eighteen months. They carefully studied all of our eighteen schools and developed extensive plans for their renovations and possible construction of a new elementary school. They costed out their plans and were able to formulate costs based on the needs of various sections of the city.

McKissick made many visits to the city and appeared at several Board of Education meetings. They were very well prepared and respected by public officials, administrators, parents and the local media.

I can highly recommend McKissick Associates to anyone needing a well designed in depth analysis of their facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael M. Sheridan".

Michael M. Sheridan  
Chief Executive Officer  
SCRANTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

MMS/ml