



Mason Public Schools

# Keynotes

Spring 2020

School Closure Requires Strong Community Support  
Page 1

MPS Improves Student-Utilized Greenhouse  
Page 2

MPS Welcomes International Thought-Leader  
Page 3

Students Participate in Kindness Diaries Lesson  
Page 4

MMS Teacher Presents at MI Science Teachers Conference  
Page 4

Mason Makes Investment in New Band Equipment  
Page 5

MMS Students Participate in Search & Rescue Training  
Page 5

MHS Student Artists Wins Award  
Page 6

MHS Student Recognized at FFA Convention  
Page 6

Kindergarten Enrollment is Open  
Page 7



Food Service team on Day 1 of school closure

## SCHOOL CLOSURE REQUIRES STRONG COMMUNITY SUPPORT

***“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” - Henry Ford***

During the last month, our community, the State, the Nation and the World have faced some new challenges. One thing has held true in Mason during this difficult time, the community has come through to support Mason Public Schools. We wanted to take a moment to thank you as a member of this community. As Governor Whitmer declared a State of Emergency and ordered the closure of all K-12 school buildings throughout the State, we knew it would be time to ask the community for support.

During the first week of closures, the food service department, transportation department and countless volunteers were able to distribute 7,344 meals to students in need. This will continue as long as we are mandated to keep our doors closed.

While there are still lots of unanswered questions, we are doing what we can. We are encouraging families to do what you can during this time and to inspire our students to continue to inquire, discover, innovate and learn during this time when we are away from each other and our routines. Thank you for supporting our students academically and by promoting social distancing. As the parent or guardian, we know it is difficult to keep a child away from friends, especially as the weather turns warm.

We can't predict the future so we do not know when we will be returning to normal. However, we know that if our community is patient, supports one another (from a distance) and continues to promote a positive attitude during these difficult days, we will come back together, stronger than ever.

**INSPIRE | EMPOWER | SUCCEED**



Plants in the greenhouse

## MASON PUBLIC SCHOOLS IMPROVES STUDENT-UTILIZED GREENHOUSE

Students who participate in FFA or are enrolled in the botany curriculum have been using the District’s passive solar greenhouse since it was constructed in 2011. Utilizing sinking fund dollars, the District invested in a new heating system in the greenhouse to allow for year-round use.

Prior to this investment, the greenhouse had been used for limited experimentation and to grow cool season crops such as lettuce, spinach, kale, radishes and other leafy salad greens. The crops have been sold to the public and served during school lunch. The challenge has been with cold and cloudy Michigan winters, there is limited time for the greenhouse to enhance learning during the school year.

This year, the greenhouse investment will add a heating element to allow students to use the greenhouse year-round. Students will be able to conduct longer-term research projects with a much broader array of topics, grow new types of crops and explore the impact of

conditions on plant growth during the year. Student research projects will allow for greater participation in both the State and National FFA agriscience fairs. Additionally, plans are underway to hold a hanging basket and patio planter sale later this spring which will be open to the public.

“Mason students have had great success participating in competitions as well as during class time in which the greenhouse is used. By extending the time frame in which it is usable, students can develop even more skills and further enhance their learning opportunities. Students are already making great use of the space during this traditional off-season,” said Mason High School teacher, Peter Barnum who serves as the local FFA advisor.





MPS Staff and Dr. Muhammad

## MASON PUBLIC SCHOOLS WELCOMES INTERNATIONAL THOUGHT-LEADER

Many school districts conduct professional development sessions for staff on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday while students are not in session. This year, the Mason Public Schools (MPS) staff listened to and worked alongside a world-renowned leader in Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Anthony Muhammad, PhD. MPS implemented PLCs in the fall of 2016.

Dr. Muhammad has been a practitioner of education for 20 years, serving as a middle school teacher, assistant principal and high school principal as well as an author and educational consultant. Dr. Muhammad is recognized as a leading expert in school culture and developing strong PLC schools.

Dr. Muhammad kicked off the day in front of the entire MPS staff speaking to transforming school culture. Throughout the day, Dr. Muhammad worked directly with the secondary (middle school and high school) staff and elementary staff. The whole staff came back together to close the day and discuss the role of teachers and leaders in school transformation.

“Mason Public Schools is extremely lucky to be working with Dr. Muhammad on our school improvement. He brought with him a wealth of knowledge on building Professional Learning Communities and our staff walked away feeling invigorated and supportive of the work we are doing every day,” said Ronald Drzewicki, Ed.S., Superintendent of Mason Public Schools.

Dr. Muhammad has worked with schools in all 50 U.S. states, 10 Canadian provinces, the Caribbean, Africa, South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. Dr. Muhammad is a best-selling author of the books *Time for Change: The Four Essential Skills of a Transformational School Leader*, *Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change*, *The Will to Lead and the Skill to Teach*, *Transforming Schools at Every Level*, *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* and a contributing author to the book *The Collaborative Administrator: Working Together as a Professional Learning Community* and he has published 26 articles in education journals and publications in seven different countries.

# THE KINDNESS DIARIES



Netflix Photo

## STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN KINDNESS DIARIES LESSON

At Mason Middle School, Ms. Lenneman's PAWS class, Surfing Around the World, focuses on world travel by exploring information about world travel, developing a world travel wish list and using the research, writing and presenting process to plot and share a virtual travel trip.

The class recently had an amazing opportunity to Skype with Leon Logothetis who is an author, TV host, traveler and producer of the Netflix series The Kindness Diaries.

Leon has traveled the world relying on the kindness of strangers and giving back. Students asked Leon questions about his life, his travels and his upcoming projects. Leon's message to Mason Middle Schoolers is to Be Kind, whenever you can!

## MASON MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER PRESENTS AT MI SCIENCE TEACHERS CONFERENCE

Tiffany Henfling, one of Mason Middle School's science teachers, presented to her science teacher colleagues

from around the state on Friday, March 6 at the Michigan Science Teachers Conference held in Lansing, Michigan. Her presentation was entitled, "Consensus Meetings in Science: Making Student Thinking Visible and Incorporating Student Voice."

The session focused on the what, why and how of implementing interactive, student conversations into the science classroom. The consensus meeting provides a fresh way of incorporating student voices to heighten engagement by exposing them to multiple ideas, revealing misconceptions and promoting in-depth understanding of science concepts.

Ms. Henfling captured the attendees from the moment they arrived by greeting everyone at the door. Once the learning target for the session was posted and discussed, it was an hour of intense and productive 'minds on' learning for 60 Michigan science teachers. The level of adult engagement was off the charts as Ms. Henfling modeled a lesson. A video from Ms. Henfling's classroom along with the consensus meeting reenactment prepared teachers in the audience for launching this strategy in their own classrooms.



HS Band students with some new instruments

“Ms. Henfling has been instrumental in implementing the consensus meeting strategy in Mason Middle School Science classes – and the exciting news is her colleagues have followed suit – each with his/her own spin on the process,” said Ted Berryhill, Mason Middle School Principal.

## **MASON MAKES INVESTMENT IN NEW BAND EQUIPMENT**

Mason Public Schools has made a significant investment in the band instruments used by students on a daily basis. In order to provide better learning opportunities and performance experiences the following instruments have been purchased: 2 tubas, 1 euphonium, 4 double French horns, 1 tenor saxophone and 1 baritone saxophone for Mason Middle School. The High School received the following new instruments: 3 sousaphones, 2 concert tubas, 1 euphonium and 4 French horns.

The band students and directors are grateful for this investment that will serve many generations of young musicians.

## **MMS STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN SEARCH & RESCUE TRAINING**

In January, Michigan Search and Rescue (MISAR) visited Ms. Bailey’s PAWS class at Mason Middle School. Students were introduced to what volunteers, both human and canine, do as a part of MISAR.

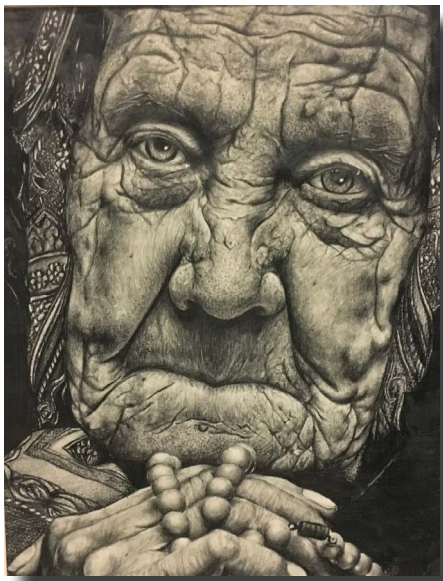
Cris and Brendan, along with Rizzy and Zander, taught students about searching for lost and injured people, as well as disaster and recovery efforts. They also detailed the type of trainings each search and rescue team must do. In March, a larger group from MISAR, from around the State, came to MMS to work on training in a building. Fourteen National Junior Honor Society students helped out by hiding cadaver parts in the gym and locker room areas as well as hiding themselves for the live dog teams to find.



Allison French and family

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ARTIST WINS AWARD

Each year, Michigan State University Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) holds the MSUFCU Student Art Exhibition in which over 200 pieces of student art are displayed at the company's headquarters. This year, Mason High School Senior, Allison French took home the 1st Place Award. Allison received a cash award and her artwork will be displayed on a billboard in downtown Lansing. Allison also took 3rd place in the popular vote among all social media entries. Congratulations Allison!



## STUDENT RECOGNIZED AT FFA CONVENTION

At the Michigan FFA State Convention held at Michigan State University in March, it was announced that Mason student, Emma Barnum has been selected as the #1 Outstanding Junior Award recipient of over 400 applicants.

The Outstanding Junior Award recognition is for 3rd-year members of Michigan FFA. Applications are evaluated on a member's Supervised Agricultural Experience, leadership development, involvement in chapter, regional, state and national FFA activities as well as participation in community service.



**WHERE  
BULLDOGS  
BEGIN**

## **KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT IS OPEN**

Online enrollment is currently open for students starting Kindergarten in the fall. As Kindergarten Information Night was cancelled in March, much of the information you will need can be found online. Kindergarten RoundUp will tentatively be held in May.

New this year, Mason Public Schools will be expanding to offer a Young Fives Kindergarten Program. Students considered for Young Fives must be age 5 by December 1, 2020. Young Fives Kindergarten will follow the same full-day schedule and calendar as Kindergarten. Young Fives Kindergarten offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to meet the needs of children who may need one more year of social, emotional, and/or academic development. The program is child-centered and provides additional time for emotional, social, intellectual and physical growth through learning activities that foster development. The Young Fives classroom builds on expanded Preschool or Early Learning elements that work to prepare the child for their upcoming Kindergarten year.

**Online enrollment is open:**  
[www.masonk12.net/enrollment](http://www.masonk12.net/enrollment)



**Additional information on  
kindergarten is available:**  
[www.masonk12.net/node/1381](http://www.masonk12.net/node/1381)



Mason Public Schools  
201 West Ash Street, Suite 2A  
Mason, MI 48854



**INSPIRE | EMPOWER | SUCCEED**

Mason Public Schools  
**Keynotes**

Mason Public Schools is committed to academic excellence in a safe environment where students develop critical thinking skills, are empowered to succeed, and are encouraged to serve their community.

**SUPERINTENDENT**

Ronald Drzewicki, Ed.S.  
drzewickir@masonk12.net

**CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

Adrienne Barna  
barnaa@masonk12.net

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM**

Matthew Stuard  
stuardm@masonk12.net

**DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

Rick Brooks  
brooksr@masonk12.net

**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

Becky Hinman  
hinmanb@masonk12.net