



# Mason Public Schools Keynotes

Winter 2021

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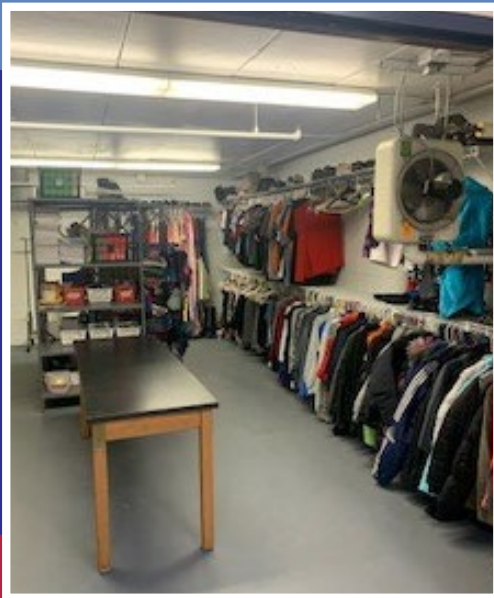
Sample Classroom Technology

## MASON PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEACHERS RETURN TO THE CLASSROOM WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

As the methods for delivering instruction had to be completely reimagined in 2020, it was evident that technology would continue to play a large role even as students and staff are permitted to return to the classroom. In November, a committee of K-12 teachers recommended the District purchase the following items to enhance both in-person and remote instruction:

- Wireless headsets for teachers
- Wired headsets for students
- A wireless mouse and keyboard set
- A second monitor as needed
- A docking station as needed
- A stylus to use with teacher laptop touch screens

In December, the District accepted bids and awarded contracts to vendors and over the holiday break the District began receiving new equipment. New devices were delivered and are being installed in all buildings. In addition to the new equipment, the District is working with technology consultant, Communications by Design, to provide training on how to use the new technology as well as other technology purchased through the Capital Improvement Project.



Mason Optimist Closet

## MASON OPTIMIST CLOSET GETS AN UPGRADE

Nick West, freshman at Mason High School, has been working to renovate the Mason Optimist Closet (MOC) located at the high school. Nick chose to renovate the closet as part of his Eagle Scout project. He cleaned out the former storage room, filled with old desks and equipment, painted the room and installed shelves to hold the items in the MOC.

The MOC was created by National Honor Society (NHS) members Claudia Vondra and Jane Barkholz in 2017. The MOC is maintained by NHS students and contains food, clothing, school supplies and hygiene products donated by the community. The Mason Optimist Club funded the initial project and has continued to be a strong supporter of the MOC.

## DISTRICT CELEBRATES BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH

January is School Board Recognition Month. During January, we recognize these individuals who approach their volunteer work like it is a full-time job and with extraordinary dedication to public schools. They are citizens whose decisions affect our children and build our community.

The role of a Board of Education member has changed a great deal since last January. This year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of a Board Member has been more challenging as school districts work to make decisions which are best for students, families and staff. The Board of Education has been meeting frequently to support district planning as Mason Public Schools works to align safety protocols and guidance while continuing to be an exemplary learning community.

We encourage all members of the community to thank a Board Member. Take this opportunity to show your year-round appreciation for these servant leaders and begin to better understand how local trustees work together to prepare today's students to be tomorrow's leaders.

The men and women serving Mason Public Schools and their years of service are:

- Ralph Beebe – 21 years
- Kurt Creamer – 8 years
- Liz Evans – 4 years
- Christopher Mumby – 4 years
- Michael Kelly – 2 years
- Patrick O'Connor – 2 years
- Steve Duane – 1 year

For more information about the Mason Public Schools Board of Education, visit [www.masonk12.net/get-involved/school-board](http://www.masonk12.net/get-involved/school-board).



## STEELE CONSTRUCTION PLANNED FOR LATE SPRING

At the February Board of Education meeting, the Board approved the recommended bids for construction contractors to begin the work on Steele Elementary later this spring. This will mark the beginning of Phase 2 of the Capital Improvement Project. Information and updates will continue to be shared on <http://bondprojects.masonk12.net>.

Members of the Steele Elementary design committee worked with GMB, the District’s architecture partner, to help shape the design of the project.

In April, \$19.2M in bonds will be sold to fund the projects in Phase 2. The construction on Steele will break ground in April as well. The building is scheduled to be completed in Fall 2022.

## DISTRICT UPGRADES HVAC SYSTEMS

At the November 2020 Board of Education Meeting, the Board voted to upgrade the District’s heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system and install an air cleaning method as an additional measure to keep students and staff safe from airborne pathogens and

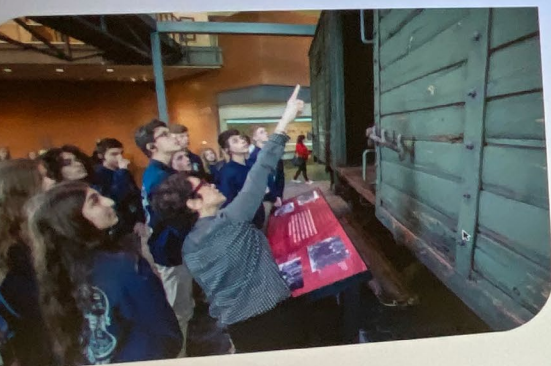
COVID-19. Mason Public Schools (MPS) will purchase the Dynamic Air Quality Solutions system, which according to the company, “captures the droplet nuclei that play a role in aerosol transmission of the COVID-19 virus while contributing to reduced maintenance and lower energy costs, compared to high-efficiency conventional filters.”

MPS will spend \$472,000 to upgrade the HVAC systems in each of the District’s six school buildings using this new technology. The project will be paid for by a combination of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds and sinking funds.

**“The health of our students and staff must be our top priority so they can learn and support kids in a safe environment. COVID-19 is at the top of our minds right now, as it should be, and this new state of the art HVAC system will add one more measure of safety to our buildings to assist in minimizing the spread of any airborne illnesses for years to come,” said Ronald Drzewicki, Ed.S., Superintendent.**

The vendor, Trane, will work with MPS administration to install the new Dynamic Air Quality Solutions system in the coming weeks.

## Holocaust Memorial Center



Mission: Engage, educate, and empower by remembering the Holocaust

Founded in 1984 by Holocaust survivors - first in the United States

65,000 visitors each year

Guided tours, traveling exhibits, public programs & events, teacher workshops

20,000 square feet of permanent exhibit space



## EIGHTH GRADERS PARTICIPATE IN VIRTUAL HOLOCAUST EXPERIENCE

On January 28, eighth-grade students from Mason Middle School visited the Holocaust Memorial Center, virtually. Students traditionally visit the museum in person but due to COVID-19, teacher, Laura Lewis had to make an adjustment.

Students first listened to a survivor of the Holocaust and then were guided through activities that stem from the "Pyramid of Hate."

This lesson comes as the current curriculum, "In Time of War" addresses World War 2. With the essential question for the unit being, "What does our response to conflict say about us?" Students spent time discussing:

- Bystanding vs. stepping in, even if it puts you at risk.
- Propaganda and how to determine reliable sources.
- How conflict can bond people together and help bring about positive change at a local, state, national or worldwide level.

This unit will be followed by "A Moral Compass" in which students look at what we all find to be right or wrong, based on who they are individually and as a community at large.

## MPS STAFF EXPLORE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Mason Public Schools (MPS) Diversity Committee was created to examine the District's strengths and weaknesses when it comes to diversity and inclusion. Initial discussions of the committee focused on curriculum and has moved to changing the dialog and behavior in our school buildings and the way we operate within the District and the broader Mason community to ensure all feel welcome.

Part of the Diversity Committee's effort is to assess the voice of staff through focus groups and surveys to inform future policies, practices and professional learning.

It is important to remember that the work of the committee is all-encompassing. While race is an important component of this work, many other aspects make up diversity, equity and inclusion. Additionally, on February 26, our staff will come together for a special in-service training to hear from experts about diversity, equity and inclusion and how this impacts the District. We will be addressing our motivations, the importance of this work, exploring the personal aspects of this topic and how to create culturally inclusive classrooms and instruction.



# STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE



## ALL MASON STUDENTS RECEIVE VIRTUAL LIBRARY CARDS THROUGH CAPITAL AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY

Through the Student Success Initiative (SSI), Capital Area District Library (CADL) has worked with Mason Public Schools to allow all Mason students to receive free virtual library cards. All students in the district are eligible for a free card. Students do not have to live in Ingham County. Through this program, no fines will be charged.

Students can use the SSI card to:

- Use the public computers in any CADL branch (when available under current health department guidelines).
- Check out three physical items at a time. This includes books, audiobooks on CD, Vox audio picture books and print magazines.
- Check out digital items such as OverDrive ebooks and audiobooks, RBDigital magazines, Hoopla ebooks, audiobooks, music albums and movies, Kanopy independent and foreign films, and documentaries including Kanopy Kids content like Sesame Street and BookFlix.

- Use databases such as Pronunciator language learning, video learning platforms Lynda.com and Knowledge City, Consumer Reports, directory information from Reference USA, genealogy information from Ancestry.com and newspaper databases.
- Access tutoring services through tutor.com. Live tutors are available from 2:00-9:00 PM each day, with drop-off review options and subject and test preparation tutorials from the Princeton Review.
- Use services available to CADL members through the Michigan Electronic Library, such as Learning Express test preparation.

More information can be found at [www.cadl.org/studentsuccess](http://www.cadl.org/studentsuccess).



Students outside Green Acres Assisted Living

## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS "SPREAD THE CHEER" TO THE COMMUNITY

In December, Mason Middle School art teacher, Tracy Casali presented a "Spread the Cheer" project to her classes. She reached out to Green Acres Assisted Living next to Mason Middle School to see if they could bring some holiday cheer to their 40 residents. They were on board with the idea and very excited!

Mrs. Casali presented this project to her classes with the requirement to use their art skills to create a special card for one of the residents at Green Acres. She explained to students that residents have not been able to have visitors since last spring and how the holidays will look different for them. Her students were kind, thoughtful and so very generous. Students could drop off a small gift to add to a basket that Mrs. Casali put together.

Over 275 gifts were donated by students. There were many thoughtful items including 40 homemade scarves as well as a poinsettia that Mrs. Casali purchased for each resident.

Mrs. Casali, along with 10 students, dropped off the items at Green Acres. While they were not allowed inside and could only leave the gifts at the door, they were able to walk past the windows and wish the residents a Happy Holiday.

Mrs. Casali said, "We have amazing students, and I did not want their efforts to go unnoticed! Even during all the challenges that we have faced with COVID, we have caring, hardworking students who want to help others in their community."



## **MASON PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION HOLDS 5K RUN BOTH LIVE AND VIRTUALLY**

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Commercial Bank Mason 5K and Bulldog Runs Hybrid will offer runners a live and virtual option this year. The Mason Public Schools Foundation (MPSF) is gearing up for this event to help kick off Mason’s Spring Fling event on April 30, 2021, starting at 7:00 PM. All proceeds will benefit Mason Public Schools. Registration is currently open and can be found at [www.runsignup.com/Race/MI/Mason/commercialbankmason5k](http://www.runsignup.com/Race/MI/Mason/commercialbankmason5k).

If the event needs to be altered to be entirely virtual due to CDC guidelines and/or State Emergency Orders, all participants will be converted to virtual registrations. The MPSF will use email as the main communication as well as posting to its social media sites.



## **MASON PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECEIVES A \$45,000 UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION GRANT**

Last fall, Mason Public Schools officially cut the ribbon to open the new tennis courts at Mason High School. Prior to the home opener match against Williamston, Board of Education members, players, coaches and parents helped the District celebrate the occasion. In January, the District was notified they received a \$45,000 grant from the United States Tennis Association (USTA) to partially support this project. These dollars were provided by the USTA to “provide communities access to safe, appealing and functional tennis environments.”

The project broke ground in spring 2020 and was completed in the fall. Originally, the project was funded utilizing sinking fund dollars. Since these USTA dollars were granted to the District, sinking fund dollars can be reallocated to other District projects. This project allowed for the renovation of the eight existing courts and four additional courts to accommodate the competition level of the Mason High School tennis teams. These courts are open to public when they are not in use by the District.

Mason Public Schools  
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**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.

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