



Keynotes

Information and updates
for the Mason Community
from Mason Public
Schools

SPRING 2026

MACC Education Award
Page 1

2026-27 Calendar
Page 1

Bond Updates
Page 2

State Superintendent
Visit
Page 3

FFA Success
Page 3

New MMS Principal
Page 4

Kindergarten
Information
Page 4

MMS Band Thank You
Page 5

Mason 5K
Page 5

Board of Education
Meetings
Page 5

Team Mason
Page 6

Sen. Anthony Visit
Page 6

Safety Team Update
Page 7



COLLINS RECEIVES EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARD



Assistant Superintendent Randy Barton, Superintendent Dr. Gary Kinzer, Betsy Collins, MHS Principal Myriah Lillie

Mason High School (MHS) Teacher Betsy Collins has been selected as the recipient of the Mason Area Chamber of Commerce (MACC) 2026 Excellence in Education Award!

"Betsy exemplifies what it means to give her all for the success of her students," said her nominator Myriah Lillie, MHS principal. "She is typically the first person here in the morning and the last one to leave and takes on all of her duties with enthusiasm to go above and beyond every day to make lessons fun and engaging."

Each year, the MACC honors educators, individuals and groups who have shown deep commitment and impact to the Mason community. Collins was honored alongside other community leaders at the MACC Annual Awards Dinner.

2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

The 2026-27 School Year Calendar has been approved by the Board of Education (BOE). Important dates are listed below and the full calendar is available on the [calendar website](http://www.masonk12.net/district/calendars/) at www.masonk12.net/district/calendars/.

- Open Houses for all buildings- Monday, August 24, 2026
- **First Day of School- Wednesday, August 26, 2026 (1/2 day for all students)**
- First Late Start Wednesday- Wednesday, September 2, 2026
- No School- Friday, September 4 and Monday, September 7, 2026
- Winter Break- December 21, 2026- January 1, 2027
- Spring Break- March 26, 2027- April 2, 2027
- Last Day of School- June 9, 2027 (1/2 day for all students)

BOND UPDATES

PROPOSED TIMELINES FOR PRIORITY PROJECTS

New Transportation & Maintenance Facility

- Programming & Design
 - April 2026- January 2027
- Bid & Award
 - February 2027- April 2027
- Construction
 - May 2027- August 2028 (anticipated operational by 2028-29 School Year)

MHS Auditorium & Improvements

- Programming & Design
 - October 2026- August 2027
- Bid & Award
 - September- November 2027
- Construction
 - December 2027- October 2029

MMS Renovations

- Programming & Design
 - January- December 2028
- Bid & Award
 - September- November 2029
- Construction
 - December 2029- September 2031

Mason Public Schools (MPS) and the Mason community took a significant step forward for the future of its students and facilities when voters approved the \$66 million bond proposal in November.

This investment reflects the community's commitment to providing modern, safe and effective learning environments for generations to come. The approved bond will fund critical improvements in three main areas: extensive renovations to Mason Middle School, updates to the Mason High School auditorium and the construction of a new transportation facility.

This spring, MSP is moving forward with the process of selling bonds to secure the necessary funding, while simultaneously launching planning meetings with a team of experienced professional partners.

The district is working closely with contractors including Plante Moran Realpoint, architect GMB, and construction manager Christman Construction Company to carefully map out the scope, sequencing and design of projects across the district.

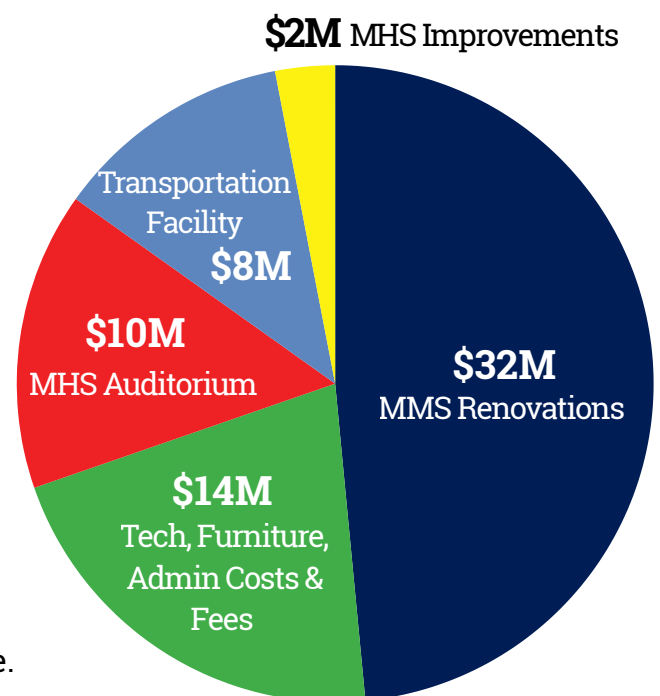
"We are excited to begin work on the bond projects and look forward to sharing more specific plans, artist renderings and additional information as we move through the planning process," said MPS Superintendent Dr. Gary Kinzer. "We are so thankful for the support from our community and look forward to developing these projects to serve Mason students now and in the future."

While planning is in its early stages, the district has developed a tentative schedule, as well as a breakdown of how the \$66 million will be allocated across the various projects.

Visit the [bond website](http://www.masonk12.net/bond) at www.masonk12.net/bond for updates and additional information about the three priority needs projects.

PLANNED BUDGET SUMMARY

Estimated costs reflected in the chart are based on current budget and building costs, subject to change.





STATE SUPERINTENDENT VISITS STEELE ELEMENTARY



Mason Public Schools (MPS) and Steele Elementary were honored to welcome State Superintendent Dr. Glenn Maleyko for a special visit!

During the visit, Dr. Maleyko met with students, toured classrooms and read stories to kick off March is Reading Month. He was joined by Michigan Board of Education (BOE) member Dr. Mitchell Robinson, who also read to students and answered questions; MPS BOE President Liz Evans; Superintendent Dr. Gary Kinzer and Steele Principal Craig Kueffner.



Dr. Maleyko's "Students First" initiative places students at the heart of every decision in the Michigan education system. He demonstrated this approach by answering questions from students, hearing their feedback about what they enjoy and do not enjoy about school and sharing information about his role leading the Michigan Department of Education.

MASON FFA SHINES AT STATE CONVENTION

Congratulations to the Mason High School FFA team for an impressive showing at the FFA State Convention!

The Parliamentary Procedure Team took home the State Champion title and will move on to represent Mason FFA and Michigan FFA at the National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis this fall.

In addition, Wesley Rogers was awarded the 2026 Michigan FFA Star in Agribusiness Award! The Demonstration Team also placed second in the state with a Gold Award, and Amelia Barnum was named second runner up in the Prepared Public Speaking contest.



**Mason High School FFA
Parliamentary Procedure Team**



**WILLOW AND HER
JUNIOR HANDLERS AT
STEELE ELEMENTARY**

NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL NAMED

Mason Middle School (MMS) Assistant Principal Mary Hilker-Loch has been named the new Principal at MMS.

She will assume the role at the start of the 2026-27 school year after the retirement of current Principal Ted Berryhill.



Ms. Hilker-Loch is in her 21st year in education and her eighth year with Mason Public Schools.

A proud Mason Bulldog and Michigan State University graduate, she spent 13 years in Chicago as a middle school history teacher and Dean of Culture before returning home, where she taught fifth grade at Alaiedon Elementary for three years.

She is passionate about promoting positive student behavior through PBIS and fostering an inclusive environment where all middle schoolers can grow as responsible members of their school and community. The district will begin searching to fill the MMS assistant principal position this spring.

REGISTER NOW FOR KINDERGARTEN

There is still time to register for Kindergarten for the 2026-27 school year.

Resident families with children who will be 5 years of age by September 1, 2026, are encouraged to register online using the Skyward system.

More information about registration and links to enroll are available on the [Harvey Education Center \(HEC\) Kindergarten website](https://bit.ly/kindergarten26-27) at <https://bit.ly/kindergarten26-27>.

In-person Round-Up will take place in May, by appointment. The HEC office staff will reach out to all registered families to schedule a time.

All Kindergarten classes meet at Harvey Education Center.

Any questions can be emailed to [Karla Harkness](mailto:harknessk@masonk12.net) at harknessk@masonk12.net.

We can't wait to meet the next class of Bulldogs!



**YOUNG FIVES STUDENTS AT HARVEY
EDUCATION CENTER**

THANK YOU MASON PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

The Mason Middle School band shared a big "thank you" to the Mason Public Schools Foundation for their generous donations to the band program over the past five years!

The Foundation has donated nearly \$18,000 worth of new percussion equipment to the middle school band program.



Join the Mason Public Schools Foundation for the Commercial Bank Mason 5K on Friday, May 1, 2026, from 6 - 8 PM in downtown Mason.

The kids' races start at 6 PM and the 5K begins at 7 PM. All proceeds support the Mason Public Schools Foundation and help bring more opportunities to Mason students and teachers.



Registration is open on the 5K website at <https://bit.ly/3PGx7LZ> or by scanning the QR Code.

UPCOMING BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

The Mason Public Schools Board of Education (BOE) holds regular board meetings the second Thursday of each month. Special meetings are scheduled as needed. Regular meetings begin at 7:00 PM at Mason City Hall.

A full list of committee meetings and meeting minutes are available on the [BOE website](http://www.masonk12.net/district/board-of-education/) at www.masonk12.net/district/board-of-education/

- Thursday, May 14, 2026
- Thursday, June 11, 2026



BUILDING A SAFER MASON

Mason Public Schools (MPS) is committed to making every building a safer place for students and staff. The Comprehensive School Safety Team (CSST) leads ongoing, intentional, district-wide updates to safety protocols and procedures.

This school year, MPS adopted the Standard Response Protocol (SRP), a framework that gives students, staff and emergency responders a common language during emergencies. The SRP defines five clear actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter, each with specific, practiced steps. To support this, the CSST developed instructional videos, distributed classroom posters and ensured Go-Bags are prepped and ready in every classroom throughout every building.

The CSST turns ideas into action- from brainstorming to planning, then execution and evaluation in order to review and improve. The team’s goal is to create a culture where every adult in the district feels empowered to think critically about safety and contribute to solutions. As the team puts it, "There is no single person whose job it is to shoulder the weight of safety. It belongs to everyone."



Harvey Education Center students participate in Shelter drill for severe weather.

Five SRP actions for emergencies



Hold



Secure



Lockdown



Evacuate



Shelter

Each building follows key safety standards, including designated crisis team roles, mandatory staging areas and student accounting procedures. After each drill, staff can complete a feedback survey to help identify gaps and improve the drill processes.

The district also participated in a tabletop exercise with local law enforcement. First responders, city officials and each building’s crisis team completed a series of training together. In addition, radios were upgraded for improved emergency communication.

To encourage real preparedness and reduce routine habits that lead to carelessness, evacuation and shelter drills were not announced in advance. Staff received notice within the week of the drill, but not the exact day or time. This approach is in line with safety best practices and was well received by staff and students as a way to feel truly prepared.

To learn more about the CSST, visit the [school safety website](http://www.masonk12.net/school-safety) at www.masonk12.net/school-safety.

MASON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
201 WEST ASH STREET, SUITE 2A
MASON, MI 48854



EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.

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

Dr. Gary Kinzer

kinzerg@masonk12.net

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Tracey Wooden

woodent@masonk12.net

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF ACADEMIC SERVICES

Randy Barton

bartonr@masonk12.net

DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION

Melissa Netzel

netzelm@masonk12.net

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Rick Brooks

brooksr@masonk12.net

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Lisa Bercaw

bercawl@masonk12.net