



Keynotes

Information and updates
for the Mason Community
from Mason Public
Schools

WINTER 2026

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**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADS LESSON DURING
INCLUSION WEEK**

THANK YOU!

On November 4, 2025, Mason community members voted on a zero-tax-rate increase bond proposal, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in the election.

The successful passage of the 2025 bond proposal will allow Mason Public Schools (MPS) to move forward with several major projects. Building upon the success of the 2017 bond that updated our elementary buildings, the new bond will support extensive renovations to Mason Middle School, updates to the Mason High School auditorium and the construction of a new transportation facility.

This vote is a strong statement of support from the Mason community for our schools, and we are thankful for the ongoing trust of our community. We look forward to sharing our progress as transparency will remain a key part of this process.

In the months ahead, we will begin work on initial projects including finishing HVAC work and other behind-the-scenes improvements. As work begins on the three priority projects, we will share updates and progress reports to keep families and community members informed every step of the way.

Thank you again for your continued support and commitment to improving MPS!

Dr. Gary Kinzer
Superintendent, Mason Public Schools



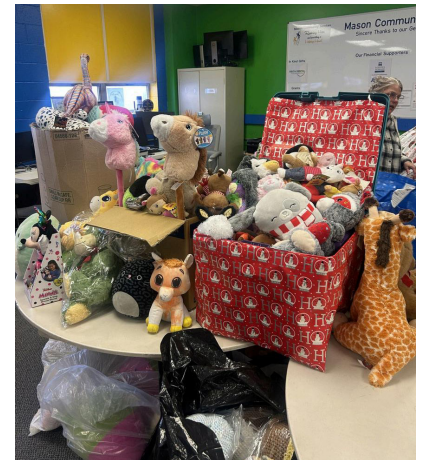
HOLIDAY GIVING- THANK YOU MASON!

Each year, Mason Public Schools (MPS) and Mason Community Services team up to provide assistance and support for families in need around the holidays.

This year more than 254 students and children in Mason received gifts along with food and other household items for their families during the holiday season.

For the second year in a row, toys and stuffed animals were collected through donation boxes placed at local businesses. Thank you to local businesses, organizations, clubs and families for supporting this year's giving campaign and making the holidays brighter for children and families in Mason.

- RE/MAX Realty – Kelly Hude
- Bad Brewing
- Kean's
- Mason Mom's
- First Church of Nazarene Student Group
- Neil Sheridan Family
- Roy Fisher
- Mason Hometown Storage- Mauldon Family
- Gillis Family
- Christa Oesterle Family
- Mason Community Services
- Weiland Construction Co.
- Mason Rotary Club
- Mason First United Methodist Church
- Spartan Barricade
- Mason Community Church
- The Depot Diner
- Mason High School NHS
- Kylie Orlanowski Family
- Kym Hall Family
- Nicole Anderson Family
- Mindy Wood Family
- Rita Ramsey Family
- Ware's Pharmacy
- Mason Varsity Cheer
- Maple Street Mall
- Shattuck Family
- The City of Mason Employees
- Amber Arevalos State of Michigan -Vehicle Record Activity Unit
- City Limits Sports Bar and Grill, Angie Miller and Tiffany Selover
- Mason First Presbyterian Church
- Danielle McCann Family
- Aubrey Alexander Family
- Cochrane Family
- Jeff Every Family
- Mason Assembly of God
- Coston Chiropractic
- Boston Scientific
- Gerger/Dipple Family
- Betty Beanue Family
- Jesse Miller Family
- Dan Nedry Family
- Phil & Mindy Nardone
- Walkington Family
- Riley Family
- Lindsay Cater-Hair on Ash
- Mid Michigan Billing
- Vision Realty
- Howard Hannah Realty
- Dennis Blue Family



UPCOMING BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

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

- **Thursday, February 12, 2026**
- **Thursday, March 12, 2026**
- **Thursday, April 16, 2026**



MASON FFA HOMECOMING PARADE FLOAT

BOARD OF EDUCATION APPRECIATION MONTH

January is School Board Appreciation Month! Thank you to the Mason Board of Education for their service and support to our students, our schools and our community.

Board members give many hours to set goals, review policies and make tough decisions with care, all while prioritizing the district mission to serve “every student, every day”.

Board of Education members pictured: Bryan Droscha, Christopher Mumby, Steve Duane, Matt Bennett, Lacy Harding, Liz Evans and Amy Lark



WHAT'S NEW WITH THE BULLDOG BARK SQUAD?



Lewis took to the stage in the MHS production of “Annie”!



All four members of the Bark Squad attended the Harvey Education Center PTO Fall Festival!



Steele Elementary launched a Student Handler program for fifth grade students to help out with Willow during the school day!





MHS STAFF HOMECOMING 2025

TARA BECKER-UTESS NAMED MICHIGAN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Mason High School (MHS) Principal Tara Becker-Utess who was named Michigan’s 2026 High School Assistant Principal of the Year by the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals and the Michigan Association of Student Councils and Honor Societies!

MHS staff surprised Mrs. Becker-Utess with the announcement during a staff meeting, joined by representatives from the associations, Mason Public Schools (MPS) district leaders and her family and friends.

Mrs. Becker-Utess is known for her collaborative leadership and deep commitment to students. She has helped drive academic growth and strengthen school culture, has led initiatives to help students succeed and has championed mentoring programs, academic growth days, restorative practices and family engagement efforts during her four-year tenure at MHS.

Colleagues describe her as “the heart of Mason High School,” and as a servant leader who leads with integrity, optimism, and care for both students and staff.

Mrs. Becker-Utess will represent MPS and Michigan in the National Association of Secondary School Principals’ High School Assistant Principal of the Year competition, with winners announced in April 2026 in Washington, D.C.



CHECK OUT BULLDOG ATHLETICS ON STUDIO M

Did you know athletic events hosted in the Mason High School Fieldhouse can be viewed online? Check out the Studio M YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@StudioM-1001 or by scanning the QR code. Don’t miss a minute of the home Bulldog action in the Fieldhouse!





7TH GRADE MYSTIC LAKE CAMP TRIP

INCLUSION WEEK 2025

By: Kendall Strouse, Communications Intern, MHS Senior

During Mason Public Schools' (MPS) 2nd annual Inclusion Week, students from Mason High School (MHS) had the chance to teach inclusion lessons in each elementary school. The MHS Inclusion Committee is made up of students and staff throughout the district who created lessons highlighting the idea of including others around you, accepting yourself and others, and being kind to those who surround you.

Elementary students had the chance to engage and interact with each other after the lesson allowing for a new perspective on classmates and friends! The Inclusion Committee is already looking forward to this event in the coming years to continue to change inclusion together!



MHS students lead discussions and activities with elementary students about inclusion, self-acceptance, empathy, respect and unity.



MHS students and staff kicked off Inclusion Week with a pep assembly featuring Mason Unified Team athletes.

TEAM MASON- MYSTIC LAKE CHATTER - WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT?

Team Mason articles shine a spotlight on students, teachers and projects across the district. Team Mason articles are written by Dr. Janet Alleman, MPS Instructional Consultant and Professor Emeritus at Michigan State University. Read all of the [Team Mason articles](http://www.masonk12.net/district/team-mason) at www.masonk12.net/district/team-mason.



Mason Middle School Science Teacher Tiffany Henfling presented at the National Science Teachers annual meeting in Minneapolis. The title of her session was “Take Them to Camp,” with a focus on the power of authentic learning in the outdoors. Her goal was to inspire attendees to engage students in an outdoor experience, like camp, and be equipped with the tools to actualize it.

She shared her story, which began with her own love of the outdoors fostered as a child, and then gave the audience the jarring, but not surprising, news that our adolescents spend far more time on their devices than outside. These two things helped build a case for why outside matters. She also provided some mighty compelling quotes such as, “The more nature, the better you feel.” (Florence Williams, The Nature Fix).

She zeroed in on Mystic Lake as an exemplary space, creating the context with beautiful visuals laced with concrete examples of activities the students experience on-site. For those of you wondering how Mystic Lake relates to state and national standards, rest assured that specific standards were addressed and actually came to life for the kids!

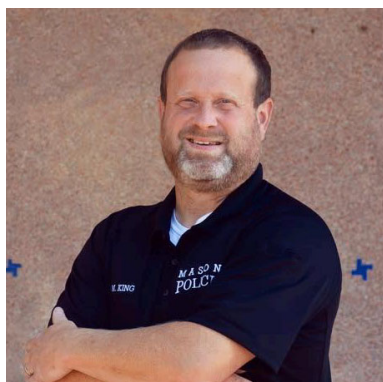
Focused on determining the evidence of the impact of the Mystic Lake trip, she administered pre- and post- surveys which revealed 30% of the students said, as a part of the Mystic Lake experience, they were committed to spending more time outside, and would you believe nearly 100% of students who took the survey found value in the camp experience? One of the conference attendees said, “Now, that is no small feat!”

While I’m sure many of the attendees would love for their students to have the Mystic Lake experience, the teachers who attended the session left convinced an outdoor experience was a win for students.

Thanks to Tiffany and MPS, the experience and tools to make it happen are now on their radar.



MEET OFFICER MARC KING



Meet Mason's new School Resource Officer (SRO) Marc King. He joined the Mason Police Department (MPD) this fall and has been committed to spending time in every building, getting to know students and staff. His presence helps strengthen the connection between our schools and local law enforcement, supporting safety, trust and positive relationships across the district.

Before joining MPD, he spent more than 25 years with the Livingston County Sheriff's Office working as a detective and SRO in multiple schools. Welcome Officer King!

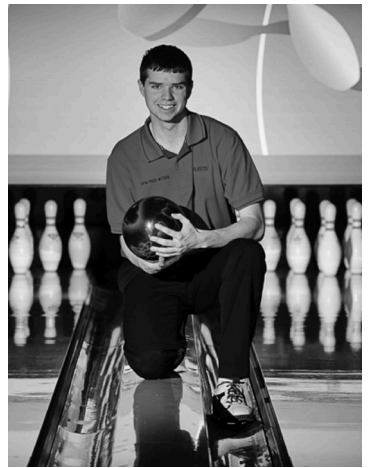
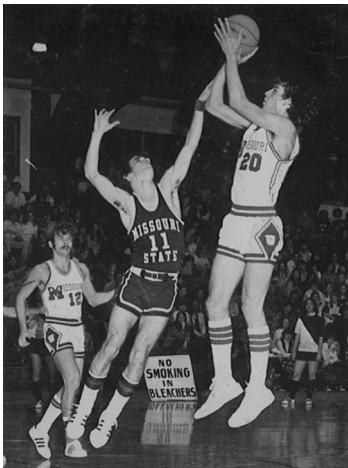


MASON HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

Each year, Mason High School (MHS) honors a group of standout student athletes, coaches and supporters by inducting them into the MHS Athletic Hall of Fame.

The 2025 honorees included the **2020 Girls Bowling Team**, **Dan DeMartin**, Class of 1971; **Tony Greathouse**, Class of 2002; **Abby Meirndorf**, Class of 2012; and **Travis Valentine**, Class of 2011.

The Athletic Hall of Fame honorees were recognized during the Mason High School football game on Friday, September 12, 2025.



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.

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