



Mason Public Schools

Keynotes

Spring 2024

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Welcome Sully and Lewis!

There are some new, furry faces around the Mason Public Schools (MPS) buildings!

Two Goldendoodle puppies, **Lewis** and **Sully**, are the first members of the Bulldog Bark Squad, our first two therapy dogs! We hope to add additional dogs to the Squad in the future.

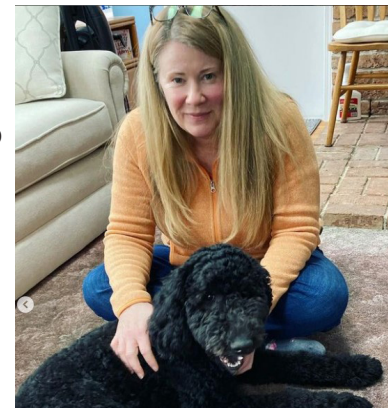
Lewis and Sully are currently training with their host/handlers: teachers Krista Sherman, who has Lewis at Mason High School (MHS) and Erik Cargill, who hosts Sully at Mason Middle School (MMS).

The host/handlers and their families are training with the dogs and they have started spending time in the buildings, getting to know students and staff.

We are thankful to our two sponsors who have supported the purchase of the dogs. **Deb Dansby** is a Mason alum who is the VP of Marketing for Farm Bureau Insurance and the owner of **Dog Gone Fun in Okemos**. Deb was also instrumental in getting this process started as she reached out to us after seeing other local districts have tremendous success with the program. Deb and her team at Dog Gone Fun are sponsoring Sully at the middle school.

Our second sponsor is the **Mark Voss Agency- Farm Bureau Insurance**. Mark, a Mason community member, and his agency have generously stepped in to fully support Lewis at the high school. If you get an opportunity to see either of our sponsors, please give them a big thank you.

Stay tuned for more exciting news and photos of our newest, furry staff members!



Student Safe Driving Initiative

The Mason High School National Honor Society brought students together to raise awareness and honor the memory of their friends and classmates, Amanda Blue and Lillian Klages, during a safe driving event at the high school.

Led by junior Aidan Daenzer, the event included distracted driving and impairment simulations as well as offered students the opportunity to sign a pledge to drive safely.

Local businesses and the Mason community supported the effort with donations for the event as well as pledged funds to continue to raise awareness about safe driving. Students plan to continue their awareness campaign this spring with a billboard reminder to drive safe paid for with a grant from **Clean Team USA**.



MACC EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Congratulations to the Mason Area Chamber of Commerce (MACC) Education in Excellence award winner Lauren Fusilier!

Lauren is a special education teacher who has recently taken on the role of the PreK-12 Special Education Teacher Consultant/Autism Consultant for the district.

"We appreciate the MACC's recognition of the importance of education and its role in the community by honoring one of our exceptional educators each year," said Dr. Gary Kinzer, MPS superintendent. "Lauren is such a resource to our staff and a committed advocate for our students."



She supports all students in the district and provides professional development to staff while supporting teams in a professional, organized and enthusiastic manner!

Her nominators, Krista Voss and Angie Vandecar, said she is, "an exemplar in the field of education and a true leader in the MPS district and beyond."

Lauren was honored with the other MACC awardees at a ceremony in March.

Strategic Plan Update

Nearly a year into the launch of our new strategic plan, teams are working to implement actionable initiatives into the district's day-to-day operations. The plan outlines four areas of focus:

- Instructional Improvement and Innovation
- Student Supports
- Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development
- Facilities and Infrastructure

I'd like to share with you some of the unique and specific projects and programs we have initiated this year that tie into our areas of focus and align with our overall mission to serve Every Student. Every Day.

Instructional Improvement and Innovation

This portion of the plan focuses on cultivating an innovative teaching and learning community to improve educational outcomes for all students and prepare them to become active and engaged citizens. So far this year:

- Educators are providing all prekindergarten-12th grade students with instruction and assessments aligned to standards.
- MPS teachers are reviewing core curriculum material.
- A committee of 22 teachers, coaches and administrators reviewed three math programs and will select two to pilot next year.
- Prekindergarten through 5th grade administrators are working to strengthen tier-one literacy instruction through effective practices on essential standards.

Another focus in this area of the plan is to build a collaborative culture for all staff members to empower teachers and students to take risks and try new strategies. We have done this by:

- Reviewing meeting structures to support a more collaborative decision-making process.
- Employing a number of instructional coaches to help support innovative and creative teaching practices.

Student Supports

With an emphasis on building an intentional culture that generates systems and strategies to increase authentic engagement, this portion of the plan focuses on promoting positive perspectives toward self and others that will establish healthy relationships. Work in this area includes:

- Expanding our social emotional learning programming to include all grades.
- Implementing a therapy/facility dog program in the district with dogs at the middle and high schools and plans to add dogs to all buildings in future years.
- Creating a District Improvement Team and building increased capacity in the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) processes to focus on building structural support systems and strategies.
- Building cultural awareness which is represented in our schools through the district's inaugural Inclusion Week in March.

Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development

The strategic plan also includes a portion focused on the district's aim to attract a larger and more diverse candidate pool, retain talent through efforts to build a system of staff supports, and develop staff to better serve students and improve the employee experience. This year, the district is:

- Transitioning to a new recruiting platform in order to improve the ease of applying for positions, to modernize the recruitment software and to improve advertising networks.
- Adding professional development for targeted employee groups that will be expanded in coming years.
- Providing staff an opportunity to complete a survey to assess their experience as a team member and to identify areas of emphasis to grow the culture of the district.
- Next year, a marketing budget will be established with the purpose of reaching a wider audience during recruitment and allowing the district to more broadly share our story and opportunities.

Continued on page 4

Strategic Plan Update, Continued

Facilities and Infrastructure

In addition to student and staff, the strategic plan also focuses on modernizing current district facilities and planning for future improvements as well as enhancing safety and security in the district. Work on these goals includes:

- Focusing on updating the Sinking Fund language and any future bond offerings for the middle and high school buildings along with the transportation and maintenance buildings.
- Selecting Plante Moran Realpoint as the district's owner's representative to assist with pre-bond planning services. Plante Moran Realpoint has experience leading K-12 schools in capital bond planning/programs for more than 45 school districts throughout the state.
- Upgrading interior door locks, public address systems, and interior/exterior cameras in all buildings.
- Implementing a School Resource Officer (SRO) program and hiring a full-time SRO, in consortium with the City of Mason and funded by a grant received by the district.

This strategic plan is a living document and a roadmap for continuous improvement for all of us in the district. Our teachers, administrators, staff and community all play a role in ensuring our students have the best environment and opportunities to learn. We look forward to sharing an online dashboard of progress with you this spring along with continued progress of implementation of our strategic plan in action.

Sincerely,

Gary Kinzer, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Mason Public Schools

Bond Work Updates

Work on the final series of updates from the 2017 bond has continued this school year with improvements and updates to buildings, systems and infrastructure. Work has been ongoing to improve:

- Mechanical, HVAC and electrical systems
- IT capabilities, including upgrades to camera and intercom systems
- HVAC systems and equipment
- Security, including classroom door locks and building entry systems
- Audio/visual equipment and connectivity

Construction and improvements planned for Summer 2024 include work on offices and classrooms at the middle school and high school as well as secure entries at both buildings.

Families and community members should expect limited access to the high school and middle school this summer as construction projects take place. A temporary main office, athletics office and counseling offices will be set up at the high school this summer.

A map of the temporary high school offices is available on the MPS website, and we will continue to provide updates about construction-related building closings and changes via the MPS website and Facebook page.

Thank you for your patience as we work to fulfill the improvement plans and make updates to our learning spaces, systems and infrastructure.

Spring Aquatic Center Closings

The Mason Aquatic Center will be completely CLOSED **May 1-June 9, 2024**, for construction. There will be no aquatics activities during that time frame. Thank you for your understanding while the Aquatic Center undergoes improvements this spring.

Thank You For Your Support

Nearly 200 Mason students and their families had a brighter holiday season this year thanks to the generosity of Mason students, staff, community organizations, City of Mason departments, private corporations, faith communities, scout troops, school clubs, and local individuals and families who donated gifts and funds to adopt families.

This year, the Adopt-a-Family program saw an increase in requests, with 184 students receiving support.

“Everyone who asked for help was adopted and received gifts this year,” said Jodi Sommerville, Adopt-a-Family organizer. “This program doesn’t work without all of the individuals, businesses, and groups who donate and support it, so thank you!”

Thank you to the Mason students, staff, community organizations, City of Mason departments, private corporations, faith communities, scout troops, school clubs, local individuals and families who donated gifts and funds to adopt families this holiday.



THANK YOU ADOPT-A-FAMILY SPONSORS

Kylie Olanowski Family

Teresa Wren & Keans

Rotary Club & Shanda Wrozek

One Love Home, Five Star Realty

Nicole Anderson

Mason First United Methodist Church

Cub Scout Troop

Mason Presbyterian Church

Spartan Barricade

Miller Family

Bad Brewing

City of Mason Employees

Maple Street Mall

Hannasch Family

Riley Family

Mason Mom's

Deep Roots 4-H

Mindy Wood and daughter

Deb Stuart Family

Linda Hakim

Turner Family

MHS National Honor Society

Laura Lange & Family

Cheryl Evans Family

City of Mason

Lansing Lawn & Snow

REMAX – Kelly Hude

Egan Family

Girl Scout Troop 30012

Ramsey Family

Blue Family

Jenn Walkington Family

Oesterle Family

Kelly Beaubien

Jesse Cross

Mason Varsity Cheer

Mason Community Church

Nardone Family

Kibbey Family

Tuttle Family

Girl Scout Troop 30364

Julie Casper

Danielle McCann

Betty Beanue Family

Wieland Co.

Girl Scout Troop 30752

Mason Jr. Football Club

Santa's First Responders Event

Pat Lange

Mason Hometown Storage

Kym Hall

Debbie Yerks Family

Becky Flores Family

Wares Pharmacy

Nang/Tarrant Family

Nicole Evans

Sheila Fraizer

Mason Middle School Staff

Michelle Perkins Family



WELCOME OFFICER DEMO

This fall, Officer Justin Demo began serving as the district's School Resource Officer (SRO). The SRO position is in cooperation with the Mason Police Department and the City of Mason Government.

Officer Demo is an experienced law enforcement officer who completed specialized SRO training prior to taking on this role. He has been working alongside our district administrators and teachers to ensure a safe, supportive, and secure learning environment for all students.

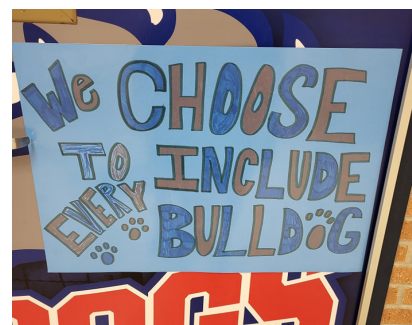
He has been supporting students and staff in all buildings to help foster student well-being, build trust and open lines of communication between everyone in our school communities.

INCLUSION WEEK 2024

March 11-15, the district hosted its first ever, district-wide Inclusion Week! Our students and staff took part in five days of learning, understanding, compassion, outreach and appreciation for one another's differences.

Inclusion Week was developed by the MPS Diversity Committee and is modeled after similar events in school districts across the state and country. Each day of the week has a theme, word and associated activities to take place in all of the MPS buildings.

Through grade-appropriate events and activities, students and staff explored themes including self-acceptance, diversity, empathy, inclusion and belonging.





FALL AND WINTER SPORTS WRAP UP



Congratulations to the Mason Bulldogs fall and winter Varsity and Club sports teams who have worked to achieve post-season success! Several teams and individuals advanced to the divisional, regional and state playoffs this year. Way to go Bulldogs!

Our Mason Bulldog athletes and coaches thank parents, teachers, friends and community members for your support on and off the field. Especially those who trekked to Ford Field to cheer on the Bulldogs in the State Football finals.

The Mason Bulldog brought one of the largest crowds that Ford Field has seen for the high school finals. Our community is what makes Mason so special; thank you for supporting our student athletes!

REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN

Register now for Fall 2024 Kindergarten. Registration information is on the Harvey Education Center website. Kindergarten Round Up will take place in May.

Families can learn more and register at <https://www.masonk12.net/buildings/james-c-harvey-educational-center/> or scanning the QR code.



CHECK OUT TEAM MASON



Get a glimpse inside the classroom by checking out our Team Mason series on the MPS website.

Team Mason articles shine a spotlight on students, teachers, programs, and projects in all buildings and grades in the district. Team Mason articles are written by Dr. Janet Alleman, instructional consultant for Mason Public Schools.

Scan the QR Code to read Team Mason articles at <https://www.masonk12.net/district/team-mason/>

Mason Public Schools
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Every student. Every day.

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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