

Mason Public Schools Keynotes

Spring/Summer 2012

IMPORTANT DATES

May 3

Class Dismissed
One Hour Early

May 28

Memorial Day
(No School)

June 8

Last Day of School
K-8 Half Day;
HS Full Day

June 10

Graduation
3:00 pm

SPECIAL EVENT!

National Bullying Speaker
Coming to
Mason High School
Thursday, May 3rd
(see pg 4 for details)

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Jeremy Mills Honored

The 2011 Excellence in Education Award winner is Mr. Jeremy Mills! Jeremy is an English teacher at Mason Summit High School. Mr. Mills was honored at the Mason Area Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner at El Dorado Golf Course in



February. His contributions to his students could be illustrated as building bridges. Since being hired at Summit, Mr. Mills has worked to build a bridge of understanding with his students so that he could develop positive relationships with them, which is the cornerstone of Summit's program. He has been instrumental in the creation of the Mason High School Credit Recovery Program, and Summit's shift to the use of online learning in its main program. With changes to Michigan's graduation requirements and advances in technology, Mr. Mills played a key role

in sensing the need to help students recover credits and to learn in different ways. Mason Public Schools congratulates Mr. Mills for his hard work and dedication to our students.

Board of Education Openings

There will be five open seats on the Mason Board of Education at the November 6 election. Two of the seats will carry a six-year term, two of the seats will carry a four-year term, and the final seat will carry a four-year term in the 2012 election, and a six-year term thereafter. The term of office will commence on January 1, 2013. These positions are currently held by Ralph Beebe, Becky Brimley, Laura Cheney, Laura Fenger, and Julie Rogers. Candidates are required to submit petitions with a minimum of 40 valid signatures or file a \$100 non-refundable fee in lieu of petitions. **The deadline to file petitions or the \$100 non-refundable fee for the November 6 election is 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 14, 2012.**

Mason City Clerk Deborah Cwierniewicz is the Election Coordinator for Mason Public Schools. Those interested in obtaining petition packets or additional filing fee information should contact Ms. Cwierniewicz's office at 676-9155. Absentee ballots for the November 6 election are available through the city or township clerks.



Superintendent's Message

by Mark Dillingham

For this spring edition of *Keynotes*, I thought it appropriate to specifically target, and briefly summarize, progress made in all “six community commitments,” as outlined over the past year and a half in my communications with our school district stakeholders.

Commitment #1 – “Provide a carefully crafted and aligned K-12 curriculum taught by highly qualified, caring teachers using research-based interventions and state-of-the-art technology.”

Progress achieved:

- Continued expansion of technology around the district (mobile phone and e-reader pilots, Mason Technology Infusion Project – years four and five).
- Work continues to adopt the common core state standards.
- New K-5 mathematics program “Everyday Mathematics” implemented in 2011-12, and a new K-6 core reading curriculum will be implemented in 2012-13.
- Staff members are working with students in our Response to Intervention Program to provide research-based interventions, in order to master the core curriculum.
- Modification of middle school math program to stimulate improvements in academic achievement.

Commitment #2 – “Continue to provide a positive school environment where students feel safe and secure, in order to promote optimal learning conditions.”

Progress achieved:

- District-wide Bullying Task Force engaged in effort to develop a student climate survey, a new bullying policy and parent resources located on the district website’s (click on Anti-Bullying Resources tab). Each building has ongoing initiatives related to bullying as well.
- Nationally known speaker Kevin Honeycutt provided students, staff, and parents with three separate, but very similar, programs on bullying, cyber bullying, and social networking.
- All staff members are wearing identification tags.
- Grades 6-12 staff received Response to Intervention Program training in positive behavior intervention support.
- Completion of the installation of security cameras and new windows/doors in buildings that needed better sight lines.

Commitment #3 – “Provide the highest quality total educational experience possible with the financial resources available.”

Progress achieved:

- Use of district’s one mill sinking fund to update high school science labs, build a greenhouse and update classrooms across the district.
- Use of ED-2020, Study Island, Michigan Virtual High School, GenNet, seat time waivers, the American Academy, and the LCC Middle College STEM Program, as a means to meet the unique learning needs of all students.
- Addition of new Response to Intervention reading and mathematics courses at Mason Middle School and Mason High School.
- Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics program/classes implemented at Mason Middle School, and a STEM/Robotics program is ongoing at Mason High School.
- Provide for the implementation of a full-day kindergarten program commencing in the 2012-13 school year.

Commitment #4 – “We commit to ensure classrooms with high expectations for student success; effective teaching practices, and strong classroom management.”

Progress achieved:

- The district is very close to purchasing a data warehouse, which will allow “one-stop shopping” for staff to obtain data on a particular student or group of students in a single snapshot, or over time. All district (internal and external) assessments, tests, demographics, etc., can and will be housed for ease of accessibility.
- Staff members continue to meet on early release days, during staff meetings, in grade level and department meetings, and before/after school to conduct the work that must be completed to move our students, and student achievement, forward.
- Mason Public School’s New Teacher/Mentor Program was developed, implemented, and is operated by our Curriculum Department’s instructional support staff.
- Pilots are underway across the district with a K-5 electronic report card and Skyward Parent Access, and development of standards-based grading practices at Mason High School and Mason Middle School.

Message, continued on page 3

Message, continued from page 2

Commitment #5 – “We commit to manage and improve district facilities and resources to ensure quality appearance and operational efficiency and effectiveness.”

Progress achieved:

- Replaced aging District Energy Management System in 2012-13.
- Replaced aged fuel oil boiler at Alaiedon with natural gas.
- Analyze Central Office staff and all positions for district operational efficiency and effectiveness, as a result of retirements.
- Currently leasing the Oak Street property (former Mason Public School’s Central Office), with the intention of selling as soon as possible.
- Replaced aging district/building copier fleet while becoming more efficient by networking all copiers and drastically reduce/eliminate stand-alone ink jet printers.

Commitment #6 – “We commit to develop strong community and staff relationships with an emphasis on district and community communications.”

Progress achieved:

- Google calendar for parent/community use.
- Parental Instant Alert System fully functional.
- Mason Promise Scholarship Program and Mason Technology Infusion Project (with Mason Schools Foundation).
- Parent participation on School Improvement Team, PTOs, Bullying Task Force, and special committees.
- School district personnel membership in community service organizations.
- Superintendent’s presentation at service club meetings.

I want to thank you for investing the time to read the series of articles concerning the six commitments made to the community by your school district. I hope you noticed that we’re following a plan to continually enrich and expand learning opportunities across the district for both staff and students. We are committed to provide our students with a safe and positive school environment in which to learn. Lastly, we take stewardship of the district’s financial resources seriously, and pride ourselves in our ability to maintain our facilities in a manner worthy of our community’s trust.

2012-13 Budget Information

The 2012-13 budget forecast continues to be discouraging. Given that many revenue and expenditure variables remain undetermined, it is impossible to establish a completely accurate projection. However, all estimates indicate a projected budget deficit of over \$900,000. The Board of Education conducted a work session in mid-April to receive budget information from district administrators. The Board discussed financial strategies and cost reduction options.

School leaders will continue to process and evaluate options and develop a plan of action. The challenge is how to make significant reductions and minimize their impact on health and safety, student learning, district effectiveness and efficiency, appearance of buildings and grounds, and public relations.

Staff and community forums will be planned for late-May/early-June to review the reduction plan draft and receive input. The plan draft will then be revised as deemed appropriate and presented to the Board for consideration in June. A balanced budget must be approved no later than June 30. Community forum dates will be listed on the district’s website, www.mason.k12.mi.us.

Keynotes – Going Paperless

In order to reduce printing and postage costs, this will be the last edition of *Keynotes* to be printed and mailed. Beginning with the 2012-13 fall edition, the newsletter will be emailed to parents via the Honeywell Instant Alert System and also made available on the district’s website (www.mason.k12.mi.us). The list of classes/special events that are offered through the Mason Community Education Department will also be available online. A small number of *Keynotes* will be made available for pick up at the Harvey Education Center, 400 S. Cedar Street. Other locations that will have a small number of copies available include the Mason Library and the Mason City Hall’s Community Room, where the Mason Senior Citizens Group meets each Thursday.

The community will be alerted when each of the three editions are available by a notice being placed in the *Ingham County Community News*. Please be sure to visit the district’s website often, in order to receive current and updated information.

Classroom Technology Infusion Update

Over the past five years, Mason Public Schools has made a concerted effort to enhance the classroom learning experience through the addition of multiple technologies. In conjunction with the Mason Public Schools Foundation and with the generous support of the local community, the district has installed a data projector in every instructional classroom in the district. Additionally, many classroom teachers have document cameras and classroom response systems to provide and collect instantaneous feedback from their students.

Through thoughtful allocation of grant monies and federal technology funding, every elementary teacher and special education teacher in the district has received an iPad. Currently, Mason Public Schools is piloting the use of handheld devices at the middle school and high school and has supported this pilot with the purchase of 160 iPods since 2010. Each elementary building has access to approximately 30 iPods to share among the classrooms. We hope to expand the use of handheld technology in the very near future.

Along with iPods and iPads, approximately 100 Kindles and Nooks have been purchased to enhance the reading experience for our students. Using the Wi-Fi network (installed during the 2010-11 school year), teachers and students are able to use these various forms of technology to access the internet, download eBooks, and create projects from any classroom in the district.

Mason Middle School student uses an iPod to access the internet directly from her classroom via the district's Wi-Fi network.



Bullying Task Force Update

As Superintendent, I'm pleased to report that the District Bullying Task Force has been hard at work to complete three goals that were outlined at the start of the 2011-12 school year. All students in second through twelfth grades were administered a climate survey, which assessed various building level factors that impact bullying. This data has been, and will continue to be, analyzed and used to directly address student opinions and concerns as they relate to bullying.

Secondly, the committee addressed the need to update the district's bullying policy. New state legislation in the form of "Matt's Safe School Law," caused school districts around the state to either modify or to create a bullying policy. The Mason Public School's Board of Education is in receipt of the work of the Task Force, and will act upon it to update board policy in this important area by June 2012.

Lastly, the Bullying Task Force has created a website at <http://bulldogsagainstabullying.weebly.com>. You may also access this site by going to the district website and clicking on the "Anti-Bullying Resources" tab on the left side of the web page. This web site is intended to provide resources that families can use to access any number of issues related to bullying, and bullying behavior. Anti-bullying web sites, district information, building updates, and pictures of anti-bullying activities from around the school district are featured.

SPECIAL EVENT

National Bullying Speaker Coming to Mason on May 3rd!

Nationally-known Bullying and Technology Expert, Kevin Honeycutt, will meet with parents on **Thursday, May 3rd at 7:00 p.m. in the Mason High School Cafeteria.**

Mr. Honeycutt was the featured presenter to all district staff at the 2011-12 opening day professional development event. He followed up this staff visit with a second day in the district in November, when Kevin met with students in all five buildings. This May 3rd presentation is a culmination of a plan in which staff, students, and parents have the opportunity to be on the same page when it comes to bullying, and bullying behavior. Kevin will help parents to connect bullying and bullying behavior with their student's social networking practices.

Fellow Ingham County school districts (Dansville, Haslett, and Williamston) have also invited their parents to attend this presentation. Please make it a priority to attend. We look forward to seeing you there!

Local Veterans Visit North Aurelius

On November 22, local veterans Lloyd Remus and Doug Williams of Mason spoke to the third, fourth, and fifth grade students at North Aurelius Elementary School. Speaking on behalf of the Joe Foss Institute, the veterans spoke to students about patriotism, public service, integrity, and appreciating America's freedoms. The veterans presented North Aurelius Elementary School with the Joe Foss Institute Patriotism Award. Both men spoke about their experience in the U.S. Marine Corps as well. This is a great example of community members educating students on the importance of love of country and what it means to be a good citizen.



Reducing Energy Consumption

Mason Public Schools has made a concerted effort over the past seven years to significantly reduce energy consumption in our buildings. The following energy reducing upgrades have been implemented between 2005 and the present time.

- Cool roofs installed when membrane replacement is necessary. Extra insulation is also added. (Cool roofs are white, which reflect heat and make the building cooler during warm weather.)
- Three water-cooled compressors, used for walk-in coolers/freezers at the middle school, were replaced with more efficient air-cooled compressors, which reduced our monthly water consumption.
- Replaced toilet and urinal flush valves with low-water consumption valves.
- Replaced an old inefficient domestic water heater system at the middle school.
- Replaced 24 classroom heating/cooling uni-vents and upgraded the controls to DDC (Direct Digital Controls).
- Instituted a steam trap test/repair program, which not only reduces heating costs and improves comfort, but also qualified for a Consumers Energy rebate of \$7,400.
- Upgraded lighting in all facilities from T-12 fixtures to T-8, which also greatly reduced our electric consumption.
- Converted two buildings (North Aurelius in 2006 and Alaiedon in 2011) from fuel oil to natural gas for heating.
- Boiler tune-ups completed to maximize efficiency and paid for through the Consumers Energy Incentive Program.
- Installed an improved boiler water treatment program, which reduces energy usage and prolongs the life of the boilers.
- Installed a new Energy Management System in 2012 to monitor and control heating and cooling throughout the district.
- Installed VendingMiser, a photo-eye control installed on vending machines that will turn the unit/compressor off if no movement is detected in the area.
- Reduced amount of personal refrigerators in each building.
- Replaced exterior doors and windows where needed.
- Working currently to insulate our steam heating return lines covered under the Consumers Energy Incentive Plan.
- Replaced the lighting in the high school field house from 400-watt high bay fixtures to T8 fixtures.
- Our Supervisor of Maintenance and Grounds has completed the Consumers Energy Building Operating Certification Course, which goes into great detail outlining energy conservation techniques and electrical systems, HVAC systems and controls, efficient lighting fundamentals, and indoor environmental quality.
- JL Facility Services evaluated our buildings for possible energy usage reductions. The district will institute findings to further reduce our energy consumption.

We will continue to search for cost-efficient methods to be good stewards of our finite resources and to save money.

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Permit #48**

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March Madness Extravaganza – Great Success!



The Mason Public Schools Foundation Dinner/Fundraiser was held at the Mason Fairgrounds Community Building on March 24, 2012. The event was generously sponsored by Sheridan Auction & Realty and featured heavy hors d'oeuvres from the Vault Deli, with live and silent auctions. Approximately 150 community members attended the event, which raised approximately \$12,000. The Foundation has reiterated its intention to follow through on its commitment of a total contribution of \$150,000 over a five-year period (2008-09 through 2012-13). To date, Mason Public Schools has received \$120,000 towards the

\$150,000. The district's appreciation is extended to the members of the Mason Foundation for their continued dedication to the students and staff. The event was another smashing success!

