



## Mason Teachers – Challenge Accepted Program Summary

*“In Mason, our people are the heart and soul of our school district. Our teamwork and collaboration make the difference each and every day in the lives of our students.” - Ronald Drzewicki, Ed.S., Superintendent, Mason Public Schools*

Mason Public Schools (MPS) along with all other schools in Michigan had to shift to online learning on March 16, 2020. During the initial weeks of the pandemic, Mason Public Schools began working on a campaign to bring the community together to support our students and each other. In 2017, Mason passed a \$69.7 million bond proposal in which the slogan, “Stronger. Smarter. Safer.” was utilized in the campaign. The renewed version of this campaign, “Stronger, Smarter, Safer, *TOGETHER*” was launched.



Throughout the summer we saw community-wide use of this slogan, logo, and hashtag, #strongersmartersafertogether. The District provided yard signs to be placed throughout the community and recognized graduating seniors with downtown light post banners. Additionally, the Mason Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Development Authority launched a program in which community members could purchase gift cards to support local businesses.

Students returned to school on August 26, 2020 in a fully online environment. Throughout the fall, we were able to gradually bring students back in a hybrid hyflex model and in March 2021, all students had the option to return to full in-person learning.

In a traditional school year, MPS offers many professional development opportunities to staff all in the spirit of growth mindset which include classroom observations. By observing their peers through programs such as Instructional Rounds and Instructional Walkthroughs, staff can learn from one another. These efforts “address the beliefs that teaching and learning are scholarly activities.” During a time of online learning, it was necessary to develop new strategies and modify existing ones to continue these efforts.

MPS has been working with Dr. Janet Alleman, Professor Emeritus, Michigan State University as an instructional consultant since 2012. Dr. Alleman traditionally leads the Instructional Walkthroughs, co-facilitates Instructional Rounds and supports the New Teacher Academy. She worked with the Curriculum Director and Superintendent to develop a modified online strategy for coaching Mason’s teachers through Zoom.

After Dr. Alleman witnessed the creative teaching strategies and the resiliency of our students, it became clear that these incredible experiences should not stay within the walls of administrative offices. As a result, the Superintendent engaged the Communications Team to help spread these stories.

The “Mason Teachers - Challenge Accepted” campaign officially launched to the public on November 3, 2020. Since that time, this campaign has featured close to 40 positive teacher, staff and student stories submitted by either Dr. Alleman or by a Mason staff member on the District’s Facebook page and there are another 25 stories scheduled for the future. Each time we share a new feature, the posts average a reach of about 2,500 while other District posts average about 1,700.

This initiative has been a welcome addition to the District’s social media efforts and serves as one more piece of evidence that our people really are the heart and soul of the District. It has generated pride in the teaching staff and has affirmed the good work happening in our classrooms on a daily basis.

*“For your continued efforts to write content for Mason Teachers-Challenge Accepted. Your efforts are highlighting the outstanding work of Mason educators and fostering pride for all involved.” - Ronald Drzewicki, Superintendent (To Dr. Alleman in a staff Nice Job Note)*