



OTIS A. MASON ELEMENTARY

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# The Manatee Memo

## News for Mason Families

October 2, 2020



Mrs. Monique Keaton, Principal  
Mrs. Jill Hillier, Assistant Principal

Dear Manatee Families,

Despite the challenges, our Otis A. Mason School community has pulled together in a way that can only be described as Mason Mighty. We have banded together to keep our children and each other safe as much as possible. Even when restrictions were directed, we embraced them and forged forward.

*Attend to a few up and coming life and school happenings.*

The month of October brings a change in weather, our bodies reactions to the changing season *includes* the onset of sniffles, sneezes, hacks and coughs. Nurse Johna and I cannot express enough, the importance of wearing masks, washing hands, monitoring your student(s) for symptoms and checking your student's temperature. If your student(s) has a temperature, please keep them home from school. We are all responsible for each other.

On a different note, we are super excited about our unique approach to fundraising. Our school has welcomed RAISE CRAZE! This amazing fundraiser gives us the opportunity to show fellow friends and family in neighboring communities and states how A-OK our school community is. A- O- K is an acronym for ACTS OF KINDNESS! Did that just make you smile? Me too! Our goal is to raise \$15,000.00. Our Otis A. Mason Elementary PTO and I agreed to set the goal high, because we believe in us. Have you registered? If you have not already registered, selected your acts of kindness and enter the names and email addresses of friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, club members, church members and sports team members; the time to do it is now. And oh, don't forget, they can even live in Alaska, Hawaii and Canada! We have until October 12<sup>th</sup> to raise money for our school!

In addition to our RAISE CRAZE excitement, we are excited about having welcomed back nearly 40 distance learners to the brick and mortar learning environment and completed our first round of i-Ready testing. Our hard-working teachers are continuing to sharpen their distance learning and brick and mortar instruction to meet the needs of all OMES learners. I know you join me in thinking OMES has the finest instructional staff in our county.

Lastly, be on the lookout for more information regarding Parent/Teacher Intake Conferences. Intake Conferences afford you the personalized opportunity to meet with your child's teacher 1:1. During the conference, you will become aware of the Florida State Standards your child(ren) will learn this year, learn how they have performed on first quarter diagnostic and summative assessments, become aware of their academic strengths and or deficits and form a bond with your child's teacher. It is very important that home and school work together to ensure a successful academic year of learning. Each teacher will schedule a meeting with each family. Our student's education is very important. Our students and teachers are all challenged by the need to fill in the gaps in education from quarter four of this past school year and learning the Florida State standards of this year. TOGETHER, we can do it. Your child's teacher is looking forward to meeting.

Never underestimate how much you mean to us. Your kindness, support, and A-O-Ks mean the world. Thank you OMES families for being you!

Sincerely,

**Monique Keaton**, Principal

### OUR MISSION:

At Mason Elementary, we believe student success is fostered by a continuous commitment to improvement, which ensures well-rounded and motivated learners. We do this by maintaining a safe and dynamic learning environment, promoting high expectations for all students, nurturing determination, developing personal relationships, and involving our community.

### OUR VISION:

The "Mason Way" is one that nurtures a passion in every child for personal success, good character, and a desire to learn, explore, and better themselves as they grow to be responsible members of our community.

## Important Dates

- 10/6 Picture Day for Brick and Mortar students
- 10/7 DREAM TEAM Wednesday for 1<sup>st</sup> grade  
**Wear Green for Responsibility**  
**Early Release at 1:45pm**
- 10/12 Last day for Raise Craze Fundraiser
- 10/14 DREAM TEAM Wednesday for Kindergarten  
**NEW - Early Release at 12:55pm**
- 10/19 PTO meeting at 5:30pm via virtual conference
- 10/21 DREAM TEAM Wednesday for 5<sup>th</sup> grade  
**NEW - Early Release at 12:55pm**
- 10/26-10/30 **Red Ribbon/Character Counts! Week**
- 10/27 School Advisory Council meeting at 3:30pm via virtual conference
- 10/28 DREAM TEAM Wednesday for 4<sup>th</sup> grade  
**NEW - Early Release at 12:55pm**
- 10/30 End of First Quarter
- 11/3 **NO SCHOOL – Teacher Planning Day**

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE**

## Early Release Wednesdays A Note from Our Superintendent

**Beginning Wednesday, October 14** dismissal times on Wednesdays will be adjusted in order to provide additional time for teachers to develop and enhance your child's instruction. Though this may cause you to make adjustments in your family's schedule, this is an important opportunity for teachers many who teach both brick and mortar and distance learning students. **There will be a 50-minute adjustment to dismissal on Wednesdays.** Middle schools will release at 12:00 pm, **Elementary and K-8 Academies will release at 12:55 pm**, and High Schools will release at 2 pm. This 50-minute adjustment also provides the ability to allocate each school's maintenance/custodial team to sanitize high traffic areas such as corridors, cafeterium's, and media centers during an additional unoccupied period.

The total time in school each week continues to exceed the required instructional minutes set by the state. Each school will communicate any specific changes that may be necessary or unique to their school. Thank you for your support as we focus on high quality learning in our schools.

Sincerely,  
Tim Forson  
Superintendent of Schools  
St. Johns County School District

## Picture Day

Brick and mortar students will have their individual school photos taken on Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. Order forms for pictures will be sent home and are available in the front office.

Photo opportunities for distance learners will be available starting in mid to late October directly through Leonard's Studios. Students who take photos through Leonard's at their studios will be included in the yearbook for our school. There are two links below. Please choose the studio that you would like, and then click the link. All instructions are in the link. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to our representative, Lisa Urban at [lurban@leonards.com](mailto:lurban@leonards.com) or 904-671-3179.

Here is the link for the St. Augustine sign up.  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/LeonardsStAugustine>

Here is the sign-up sheet for our Jacksonville Studio.  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/LeonardsJacksonville>

Please click the link and sign up for your time.

Leonard's will be adding dates as these fill up. If you do not find availability of the date and time you are looking for, please just check back as additional dates are added.

## Disability Awareness 2020

During the first two weeks of October we will be observing Disability History and Awareness. We are proud to participate in promoting awareness of disability history and contributions of individuals with disabilities.

## School Hours

School Hours - 7:55AM to 3:45PM (daily)

Student Hours - 8:25AM to 2:45PM (M, T, Th, F)  
8:25AM to 1:45PM (Weds., 10/7)  
**NEW! 8:25AM to 12:55PM (Weds. 10/14, 10/21, 10/28)**

1<sup>st</sup> bell at 8:20, 2<sup>nd</sup> bell at 8:25  
Students arriving after the 2<sup>nd</sup> bell must be walked

## Dismissal Changes

If you are changing the way your child normally goes home, please contact the school in one of three ways: a note in the planner, written note from home, or via the Dismissal Change link on our Mason homepage. Dismissal changes will not be accepted after 2:15PM/12:15PM on Weds. unless there is an emergency.

## Red Ribbon/Character Counts Week

We will be celebrating Red Ribbon/Character Counts Week this year from October 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>. This year's Red Ribbon theme is "Send a Message, Stay Drug Free". Look for more information to come from your child's teacher about fun ways we will celebrate and learn about healthy lifestyles.

# OMES FOOD DRIVE

It's time to start thinking about the upcoming holidays! Starting October 19<sup>th</sup>, we will begin collecting food for our Thanksgiving holiday baskets. We appreciate any donations that you can make. Donations will be accepted now – November 13. We are asking each grade to donate specific items.

- PreK/Kgt: Instant potatoes, stuffing, packets of gravy mix, cranberries
- 1st grade: Mac and cheese, stuffing, Kool-Aid/drink mix, cans of green beans
- 2nd grade: Instant potatoes, cans of cream soup, rice, cans of corn
- 3rd grade: Cans of corn, rice, mac and cheese, canned fruit
- 4th grade: Packets of gravy mix, Kool-Aid/drink mix, cans of cream soup, cranberries
- 5th grade: Canned fruit, canned yams, cans of green beans, Kool-Aid/drink mix



## Raise Craze Fundraiser – Now until October 12<sup>th</sup>

Welcome to our **Raise Craze** fundraiser! This is a unique way for us to raise money for our school while making an impact in our community. During this fundraiser, students ask friends and family for donations via the online Raise Craze platform while paying it forward serving others. What a great way for us to teach our students the importance of kindness and gratitude while raising much needed funds. Students will spend time serving, not selling!

**Registration Link:** [my.raisecraze.com/A7ZV4F6](https://my.raisecraze.com/A7ZV4F6)

1. Enter your student's name
2. Select at least 3 Acts of Kindness
3. Enter 5-10 email addresses of potential supporters. Raise Craze will send all emails, reminders and thank you notes. Emails will never be shared with third parties or used for marketing.

### At A Glance:

Dates: September 25 - October 12 Our Goal: \$15,000

### School-Wide Service Projects:

Every student can participate in Raise Craze by completing Acts of Kindness (AOK) so we're aiming for 100% participation. As a little encouragement, teachers will be handing out daily "Kindness Coins" when they see students being kind so please talk to your student about ways, he or she might show kindness at school.

We are excited to see all the ways our students choose to serve others!

For daily updates, follow the OMES PTO on social media and be sure to check out the Leaderboard at [my.raisecraze.com/leaderboard/for/A7ZV4F6!](https://my.raisecraze.com/leaderboard/for/A7ZV4F6)

## Character Counts at OMES! Pillar of the month:

A green rectangular box with a white border. On the left side, there is a white icon of a hand with fingers spread, set within a white square frame. To the right of the icon, the word "RESPONSIBILITY" is written in white, all-caps, bold font. Below the word, there is a list of bullet points in white text: "Do what you are supposed to do • Plan ahead • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act – consider the consequences • Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes • Set a good example for others".

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Do what you are supposed to do • Plan ahead • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act – consider the consequences • Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes • Set a good example for others

## Resources Available to Families in St. Johns County

Attention All Parents: Join us via WebEx on 10/6/2020 to learn about resources available to all families in St. Johns County.

Topic: ACCESSING OUR COMMUNITY'S SOCIAL SERVICES & SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN and FAMILIES IN 2020/2021

Presenters: Care Connect/BRAVE, St. Augustine Youth Services, Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Johns County, SMA Healthcare, Department of Children and Families, Family Integrity Program, Children's Home Society and more...

Date/Time: 10/06/2020 from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Join the meeting online via WebEx

<https://sjcsd.webex.com/sjcsd/onstage/g.php?MTID=e4a9bda82faf38f176ec068e1a987cbf8>

or join via phone by dialing 1-844-992-4726  
and then entering the access code: 120 255 4726

### Accelerated Reader at OMES

This Fall we are thrilled to announce that your child has access to the Accelerated Reader (AR™) program. This guide is designed to answer your questions about AR. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, our Media Specialist, [Mrs. Bendt](#) or visit the Accelerated Reader website at [www.renlearn.com/ar](http://www.renlearn.com/ar).

#### 1. What is Accelerated Reader (AR)?

AR is a computer program that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. Your child chooses a book at his/her own level and reads it at his own pace. When finished, your child takes a short quiz on the computer. (Passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read.) AR gives both children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help your child set goals and direct ongoing reading practice.

Children using AR choose their own books to read, rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they can choose books that are interesting to them.

Teachers and librarians help your child choose books at an appropriate reading level that are challenging without being frustrating, ensuring that your child can pass the quiz and experience success.

#### 2. How much will my child read during the school day?

According to research, children who read at least 20 minutes a day with a 90% comprehension rate (average percent correct) on AR quizzes see the greatest gains. Therefore, your child should have at least 20 minutes set aside for reading during each school day.

Look for these icons on our [Links for Students](#) page:

Destiny Card Catalog welcomes you and your student for book browsing and check-out. When a student signs in to our Destiny Library, they are able to view their account status, place holds and borrow electronic books.



The AR Bookfinder allows you to check any book to see if it is an AR title that has a quiz.

The Accelerated Reader icon signs each student into the interface for reading quizzes as well as vocabulary challenges and teacher-assigned articles for reading.

**What are you Reading?**

## Costumes on Halloween

Students may wear costumes to school if:

- the costume meets student Dress Code as stated in the Code of Conduct.
- the costume is not too scary. No blood or guts, please.
- faces are visible and not covered with paint or a full mask.
- accessories such as but not limited to wands, weapons, toys, etc. stay at home.

Wearing a costume is completely optional. Thank you for adhering to the guidelines if your child does wear one to school.



## Masks & Temperature Checks –

Masks are to be worn by all students until a temperature check is completed and they can socially distance themselves from others. **Please make sure your child has a mask and it is labeled with his/her name.**

Temperature checks will occur upon arrival. Any student with a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees will be referred to the nurse and a parent/guardian will be responsible for picking up his/her student.

## Student Health Screening –

We appreciate your assistance in supporting our health and safety protocols here on campus. As a reminder, below is the student health screener questions. If you can say yes to any of the questions below for your child, please keep your child at home until you can say no to all questions or have a clearance from the local Department of Health or your medical care provider. Please contact Nurse Baxa at 547-8444.

### Student Health Screening Entry Form

Please assess your child daily for the following symptoms and answer the contact questions.

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Uncontrolled cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Muscle aches
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Is your child currently awaiting COVID-19 test results? **If yes, please keep your child home and notify the school nurse when test results received. Further instructions will be discussed at that time.**
- Does your child live in the same household with someone positive for COVID-19? **If yes, your child must quarantine for 14 days from the last date of contact with the positive individual. A negative test result does not reduce the quarantine requirement for the full 14-day incubation period.**
- Has your child had close contact with someone who in the past 14 days who tested positive for COVID-19? **If yes, your child must quarantine for 14 days from the last date of contact with the positive individual. A negative test result does not reduce the quarantine requirement for the full 14-day incubation period.**





### **Dress Code Reminders –**

- Hats, sunglasses, etc. must be taken off and put away upon arrival (except in case of medical necessity or special events authorized by administration). These items may only be worn outside.
- Shoes must be safe and appropriate. They must have a back – no flip-flops, heels, etc.
- No tank tops, spaghetti straps, or shirts/dresses that are cut out at midriff.
- Clothing must be free of logos or sayings with profanity, violence, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco or anything that would be disruptive to the learning environment.
- Skirts and shorts must be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee. Leggings are permitted to be worn under a skirt or long sweater/skirt. No yoga pants.
- Hair should be a natural color and styled in a way that is not distracting.
- No excessive make-up.

For more information please visit <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/schoolservices/conduct/> to access the St. Johns County School District Student Code of Conduct.

### **Fridays are Spirit Days at Mason! Students and staff are encouraged to wear Mason gear or colors every Friday.**



### **Special Celebrations –**

We love to celebrate when there is a special occasion! However, we ask that you please follow these guidelines if your child is celebrating while at school:

- Treats must be cookies, brownies, or anything sweet that is ICING FREE. No cupcakes, regular cakes or cookie cakes will be permitted. Icing is too messy and contains too much sugar!
- Treats may only be shared with your child's classmates and teacher.
- If needed, napkins, plates and/or utensils should be provided to the teacher.
- Communicate with your child's teacher about when you would like to bring something in, what you will be bringing and check if there are any allergies in the class. You will need to work with the teacher to determine the best time to have the treat (lunch or recess).
- No balloons or banners are permitted. Special shirts or buttons are allowed.
- Birthday invitations must include everyone in the class if they are being handed out at school.

### **Interpreter Requests –**

If you need an interpreter for an event at Mason, we ask you to send a request in writing at least two weeks in advance of the event. The school and/or district will arrange for the interpreter, but we need your help in asking to notify us as far in advance as you can. Please communicate these requests with your child's teacher and the Assistant Principal ([Jill.Hillier@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:Jill.Hillier@stjohns.k12.fl.us)).

We also ask that you let us know as soon as possible if you need to cancel a prearranged interpreter. This is an additional expense to the SJCS, so we appreciate your consideration and helping us to be conscious of these costs.