



OMES at-a-Glance



News for Otis A. Mason Families

October 2026

207 Mason Manatee Way, St. Augustine, FL 32086
(904) 547-8440 – main
(904) 547-8445 – fax

Mrs. Monique Keaton, Principal
Mrs. Julie Hudson, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Elizabeth Dailey, Assistant Principal

Manatee Skill Highlight: Building Resiliency with a Growth Mindset

Here at Otis A. Mason Elementary School, we believe in the growth mindset. This term coined by Carol Dweck refers to the ability to improve qualities about yourself through hard work, persistence, and strategies. Setbacks, challenges, questions, struggles, and failures are not only *valuable*, but *integral* parts of learning. The growth mindset can apply to math, reading, science, music, art, sports or it can apply to social-emotional learning like communication, character-based decisions, problem-solving, putting words to our emotions, coping skills, sharing, public speaking, etc. We highly recommend that families read Dweck's book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* or watch her TED talk on the subject. In short, if we choose to practice something, we will get better at it. When you work with your child through any difficulty, approach it like coaching a sport. Just like sprinters improve their speed with every lap, children can improve any skill through guided practice and repetition. Having a hard time making new friends? Start by challenging them to say "hello" to someone new. Then practice again, by having them say, "Good morning! How are you today?" to that same new acquaintance. Over time, the task becomes easier and more natural. Not sure where to begin coaching your child? Speak to your child's teacher or with someone in our support team and we are happy to support YOU! One of the most common requests we receive is how to "grow through" difficult situations with other students:

Helping students ~~go through~~ "grow through" difficult situations

5 Protective Practices for Students



Self-control – focus on what I can control...
ME (my attitude, effort and responses)



Create PEACE – treat others the way
I want to be treated



Guard My Heart – choose healthy
relationships and environments



Be a H.E.R.O (Have Empathy Reach Out)
encourage kindness, help others



Get help from a Trusted Adult

~~~~~Building Healthy Manatees: FREE Health Screenings 10/13~~~~~

FREE health screenings are available to Kindergarten, 1st, and 3rd grade students. Screenings assess height, weight, hearing and vision. To opt out, please [sign and return the form linked here](#). The State of Florida recommends that all children receive a health screening. If your child wears glasses, please make sure they bring them to school. If your child has already received similar screening at the pediatrician, you may opt out!

Building Character: Manatees are RESPONSIBLE this October



Why is "RESPONSIBILITY" so important? We believe responsibility is an essential building block of a civil society. We strive to have the pillar of responsibility define us as a community. We here at Otis A. Mason Elementary believe that every parent, student, teacher, and member of our community should **strive to be responsible. How can we do that TOGETHER?**

- **Introduction:** How can we teach our child to be responsible for themselves and their actions? Perhaps we can guide them to not only be responsible for what they do, but also to take responsibility for causes they find to be important in our world. How can everyone contribute to improving the world around them?
- **Give clear, specific responsibilities to your child:** Give your child appropriate responsibilities and guide them in managing those responsibilities. These should be age-appropriate tasks and chores. Make sure that your child sees their contribution to family responsibilities and the household. Show your child that everyone has an important role and responsibility in the home, including them! Studies show that the earlier these roles begin, the better. Children feel an immediate sense of fulfillment when they are a part of household responsibilities!
- **Teach your child that caring and trying MATTERS:** We can't always get it right the first time and sometimes it is difficult to fulfill our responsibilities. It is okay to struggle & to ask for help sometimes! We can't fix most problems overnight, but taking the first step is important. If every person in the world picked up one piece of litter, there wouldn't be any! Please encourage your child to ask for help whenever they need it. Don't complete the task for them but guide them with advice or modeling. Then let them accomplish the task.
- **Responsibility at School:** Have your child pack their backpack, make their lunch, or create school routines as their age allows. Teach them the importance of punctuality and cleaning up after themselves. Have them label their belongings and check Lost and Found regularly. Even discussing and helping them build a balanced, healthy packed lunch is tremendously powerful for lifelong health and wellness. Taking ownership of these tasks is crucial!

The Character Counts! program is taught to students during their school day. Please check out the curriculum, themes, and activities linked above. In summary, we work with students to take responsibility for their day. We can't control everything, but we can control how we let it affect us. Sometimes things just happen through no fault of our own. That's okay! We can still go on to conquer our day and to be our best selves.

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude." -Maya Angelou

Basketball Season is Here: Come Cheer on the Mighty Mason Manatees

Date	Game Details	Game Schedule	Location
9/22	Webster vs. Otis Mason	Gamble Rodgers Middle School	
9/29	Osceola vs. Otis Mason	RJ Murray Middle School	
10/8	Otis Mason vs. Southwoods	Gamble Rodgers Middle School	
10/13	Crookshank vs. Otis Mason	Gamble Rodgers Middle School	
10/20	Otis Mason vs. Webster	RJ Murray Middle School	
10/27	Otis Mason vs. Hartley	Gamble Rodgers Middle School	
11/15	Tournament/Competitor*	TBA	

Basketball Game Information:

Cheerleaders and girls' basketball players should report to games at 5:00pm, with a girls' game start time of 5:30pm. Boy players should report by 5:45pm with a game start time of 6:30pm.

Games are free and all students and families are welcome to attend. We encourage you to wear your OMES shirt or colors to the game.

Concessions will be on sale at the game.

Thank you to our volunteers and those who donated to help with the cost of uniforms, snacks, security, and venues.



Character Counts Week is coming **October 19th through October 23rd**. We highlight character lessons and express ourselves with dress-up days. We will have special announcements and activities too. See below for dress-up days:

Monday 10/19: Red, White & Blue: Our country runs on good character! Show off how caring and trustworthy YOU are by wearing red; blue; or red, white, and blue!

Tuesday 10/20: Wear Purple or Green: Be incredible and show that YOU are a responsible citizen.

Wednesday 10/21: Wear Mason colors or spirit shirts because at Otis A. Mason, YOUR Character Counts!

Thursday 10/22: Be someone's sunshine! Wear yellow and/or orange and brighten someone's day by representing the pillars of respect and fairness.

Friday 10/23: We are the six pillars of character-be a rainbow of good character by wearing ALL the pillars of character.

Red Ribbon Week: October 26th through October 30th Red Ribbon Week is a part of the district's yearly prevention education. The materials used will help us to facilitate conversation around healthy choices and living. We encourage you to have conversations about what they are learning throughout the week and about the subject matter. Students will hear special announcements, will participate in spirit days, and will be provided with a class pledge to promote positive discussion around healthy living. Please contact Guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Materials: [St. Johns County School District Prevention Education](#), [Red Ribbon Week Materials](#), [St. Johns County School District Approved Materials](#)

Monday 10/26: Building our Future Together: Dress as a construction worker or Lego themed!

Tuesday 10/27: Dress for success: Think Fancy Nancy, suit and tie, or whatever "success" looks like to you!

Wednesday 10/28: Twinning is winning! Wear the same outfit as your friends and commit to supporting one another.

Thursday 10/29: Your future's so bright, you have to wear shades! Dress NEON and bring your sunglasses

Friday October 30th: Be a hero-this year's theme! Dress like one of your heroes, real or fictional!

Upcoming October Events:



From Your Incredible PTO:

It's not what your school can do for you, it's what you can do for your school!

The OMES PTO is a 100% volunteer-run organization made up of OMES families who have donated their time to support our school and the students, families, and teachers inside of it. Most of our volunteers are working parents who donate the time they can when they can. Please know that the PTO is YOUR organization. You are invited to join, to attend meetings, to volunteer, to donate, and to be a part of our school community in any way that you can. Many hands make light work (and move mountains!). We hope you consider your role with PTO-the organization that serves your school!

Support through volunteerism: Be a helping hand here on campus. [Sign-up for volunteer opportunities.](#)

Support the classroom: Amazon Wishlists for our school: [Staff Wishlists - Google Drive](#)

Support the school: OMES Spirit Wear Store-[Order using this link](#)

Support your child: [Rent the rock Sign-up](#)-paint a special message for your student!

Support your child: Celebrate your student's birthday with a Marquee shout-out: [Sign-up here!](#)

Building Gratitude: Appreciation Days



There are certain days throughout the school year where we shout-out to specific members of our school community to say, “thank you!” We hope your family will join us as we find different ways to show our appreciation. Gratitude can be expressed in many different ways: words, cards, art, a fist bump or high five, even a smile and kind tone can convey a message of appreciation.

October 2: Custodial Workers Appreciation Day: Our maintenance team is the BEST in the business. They work hard to make this school sparkle (and we’d sure be a mess without them!). Be sure to thank **Mr. Larry, Mr. David, Mr. Chad, Mr. Wes, and Ms. Carlita.**

The greatest gift to our team is speaking to your child about personal responsibility. Leaving every area BETTER than we found it is truly a group effort. Thank you, Maintenance Manatees, for taking such good care of us!

October 6: Athletic and Literacy Coaches Appreciation Day: Reach out to YOUR coach and say “thank you!” Our P.E. coaches serve all of our students: Coach Hollister, Coach Norm, and Coach Sarah and so does our Literacy Coach: Mrs. Hunting. We also would love to shout-out our Basketball and Cheer coaches for this season!

Building ESE Success: Meet our Team!

Meet the ESE teachers who bring extra love and support to our students and teachers throughout the school day:

Mr. Thomas: My name is Mr. Thomas, and I have been teaching at Mason for 12 years. Mason has been my home away from home my whole teaching career. I love being an ESE teacher because I get to work with a wide range of students and help them reach their full potential. In my free time, I enjoy woodworking and spending time with my wife, a former Mason teacher, and 2-year-old son.

Mrs. Hayes: Hi, families! My name is Mrs. Hayes, and I’m so excited to be teaching 3rd–5th grade reading and math for my 7th year at Mason! I am originally from New York City and I have a master’s degree in education. I am passionate about helping students grow academically while building confidence and a love of learning. Outside of school, I love spending time outdoors with my husband and our two girls, who keep us busy cheering them on at cheerleading competitions and gymnastics. I’m looking forward to a wonderful year of learning, growing, and celebrating success together!

Ms. Fallica: Hello! I’m delighted to be part of the Mason Elementary School community. I have 10 years of teaching experience, including five years at Mason, where I teach math and reading in kindergarten and second grade. Outside the classroom, I love spending time with my daughter. We enjoy trips to the park and watching movies together. I also have a black-and-white cat named Binx, named after the character in *Hocus Pocus*, one of my favorite movies! (Cont’d on page 6)

Child Find: Free Screening Resources

If you have developmental questions or concerns about a child birth to five years of age, Child Find may be able to help. Always bring any developmental questions or concerns to your child’s pediatrician. If you believe your child needs additional evaluation or support, consider calling Child Find.

Child Find provides the following for FREE:

- Information about community programs for children with special needs
- Professional consultation for parents
- Screening in communication, motor development, vision, hearing, and preschool readiness skills
- Assistance in placing children with special needs in appropriate exceptional education programs or other early intervention services

Call Child Find today if you have questions or concerns about your child birth to 5 years of age with speaking, understanding, moving, playing, seeing, hearing, getting along with others, learning, attention, self-feeding, dressing, or toileting. Call FDLRS/NEFEC Child Find 386-329-3811



September SJCSO Student of the Month: Tyrese!



Tyrese Harvey, 2nd Grade, was selected as the September SJCSO Student of the Month. He is a student leader who is infectiously positive, endlessly kind, and a helper to all!

Raise Craze Results: Congratulations to our Kind Kids!

Our community committed to kindness during our Raise Craze Fundraiser, and we are so proud of the kindness exhibited by students in school, on the bus, in the hallways and at home. Here are our totals:

Total money raised: \$21,803

Acts of Kindness Completed: 1,475

RAISE CRAZE™
FUNDRAISING THROUGH KINDNESS



Scholastic Book Fair



10/9: First Quarter Ends

10/10: Sykes Farm Corn Maze Spirit Day

10/12: Teacher Planning Day: No classes for students

10/13: OMES Health Screenings

10/16: PTO Meeting @ 3:15pm in the Media Center

10/16: Title I Annual Meeting @ 4:30pm in the Media Center

10/19: Fire Prevention Assembly for PK-2nd Grades

10/21: Report Cards on HAC

10/22-10/28: Scholastic Book Fair

10/23: Trunk or Treat here at OMES 5:30-7pm

10/24: JailBreak 5k at the Old Jail

Building ESE Success Continued: Students Grow at Different Rates

Ms. Lebon: Hello Mason Families, I lived in St. Augustine my whole life and became a part of the Mason Elementary School community since 2016. I began my career at Mason in VPK program and then in 2021 joined the ESE team, where I support the teachers on my team and in the classrooms. Working with students can be so rewarding. Think of me as an extra set of hands, eyes, and heart in the classroom. I work closely with the teachers to make sure every student gets the specific support they need to succeed. There is nothing more rewarding than watching a student unlock a new skill and realize that their potential is truly limitless. Outside of school, I stay busy with my son, who is in second grade, and my two-year-old daughter. I've been married to my high school sweetheart for 15 years. Our family also includes K-9 Raven, who serves as a canine officer for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office. I'm really looking forward to working side-by-side with our amazing **teachers** this year to build a supportive, inclusive environment where our kids can shine.

Ms. Smith: Hello Mason Families, I am a Va Beach native but have been traveling to Florida to visit family my whole life. This is our second time living here and we absolutely love it. We love the beach and all the natural beauty that surrounds us here. I have 3 adult children who also live here, and we enjoy doing things as a family, like shelling and surfing, exploring new beaches along the coast, going on cruises and going to MLS games.

I have worked in public and private schools for 27 years in different capacities and am excited to be a part of the ESE VE team. I have a passion for teaching and truly feel every moment is a teachable moment. I am teaching 1st and 2nd grade reading and math here at Mason and am excited to see how the students learn and grow throughout the year.

Ms Tatum: Ms. Tatum serves as a substitute teacher filling a 40% vacancy in our ESE department. She is a kind and calming guest teacher who decided to stay with us here at Mason until we fulfill the position. Her support and care are greatly appreciated.



Jailbreak 5K: Join our OMES Team on 10/24

[Grab your Halloween costume and head to the Old Jail!](#)

Runners will "escape the Old Jail" and evade capture in this 5K while helping to raise money for St. John's County Schools.



JAIL BREAK 5K

Presented by Old Town Trolley Tours of St. Augustine

& Investing in Kids (INK!)