

MASON CITY SCHOOLS

MCS Consistently
GREAT



Annual Report

2014

From the Superintendent

MCS Consistently
GREAT



*"In the midst of
lots of changes,
we must focus on
the things that
really matter."*



A Message from Dr. Gail Kist-Kline, Superintendent

Mason Schools are Consistently Great

Our schools and community have much to be proud of as we offer an excellent education at a great value. We've had to make tough decisions, yet we are still able to deliver high impact learning and outstanding opportunities for children. This is thanks to our hard-working students and staff, and the continued support of our families and community. This annual report will demonstrate how maintaining our excellence - and being consistently great - is a priority for our schools.

We are committed to being wise fiscal stewards. Our schools spend money in an effective and lean manner while delivering an excellent education. As you can see in the Value Matrix on page 4, our Performance Index, which measures how well our students achieve academically on state assessments, is among the highest of the more than 600 school districts in Ohio. We met this exceptional mark while also having one of the lowest costs per pupil of our comparison school districts. This means our students are receiving an amazing education for a considerably lower cost - thus providing a great value to our community.

Our finances are lean. Following the 2010 levy failure, we reduced \$9 million from our budget by eliminating 150 administrators, teachers and staff, closing an elementary school, instituting pay-to-participate fees, and consolidating bus stops. We listened to and heard you. We have done all this while maintaining our academic excellence because we know that is important to our community.

Still, we will struggle to be consistently great if we continue to make cuts. In the future, new revenue will be needed if we are to protect what makes Mason special and strong. We face an avalanche of new mandates, and reductions in state funding. As you will see in more detail on pages 4-5, what happens in Columbus and Washington D.C. greatly impacts us here in Mason and is making a significant difference to our bottom line. Looking ahead, we will need our families and community members to stand up for our schools by advocating for state testing relief and stable state funding.

This report is a snapshot of our academics and finances. But, we know that there is a lot more to a Mason education than what is contained in these pages. In the midst of lots of changes, we must stay focused on the things that really matter - ensuring that our learners are being challenged and supported as they hone their talents and skills and passionately pursue their dreams.

Dr. Gail Kist-Kline

Academics

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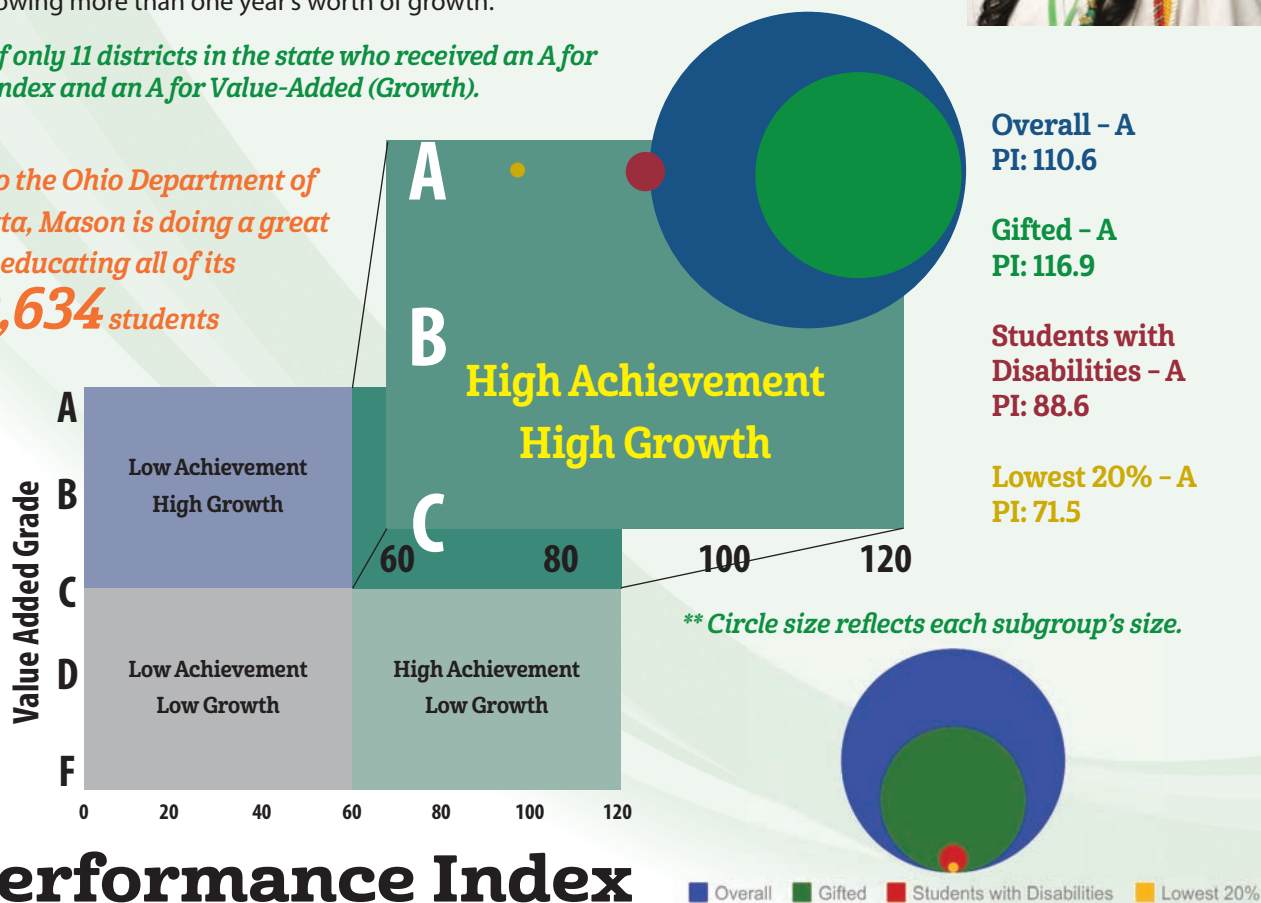


Achievement and Growth

Mason City Schools students consistently score above their state and national peers. Not only are these hard-working students performing at high levels, they are also showing more than one year's worth of growth.

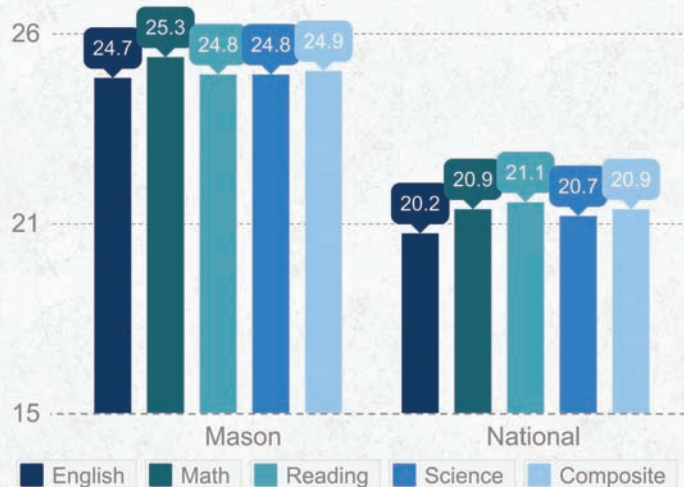
Mason is one of only 11 districts in the state who received an A for Performance Index and an A for Value-Added (Growth).

According to the Ohio Department of Education data, Mason is doing a great job of educating all of its 10,634 students

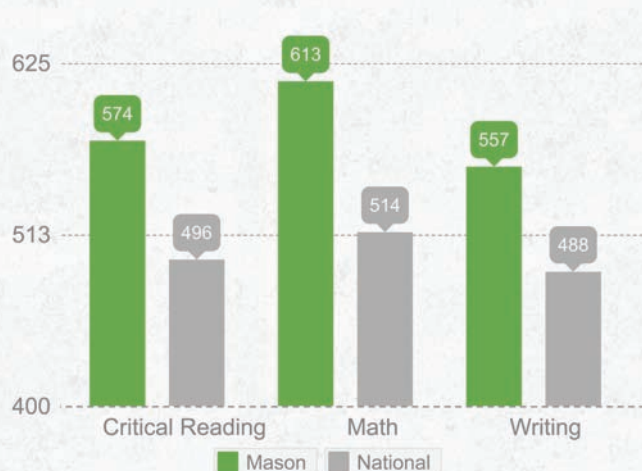


*** Circle size reflects each subgroup's size.*

2013 ACT Scores

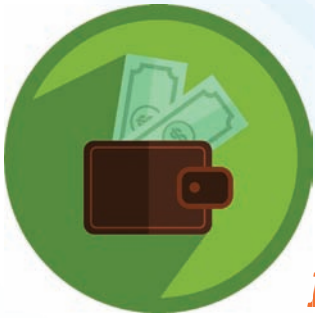


2013 SAT Scores



By the Numbers






Revenues & Expenditures



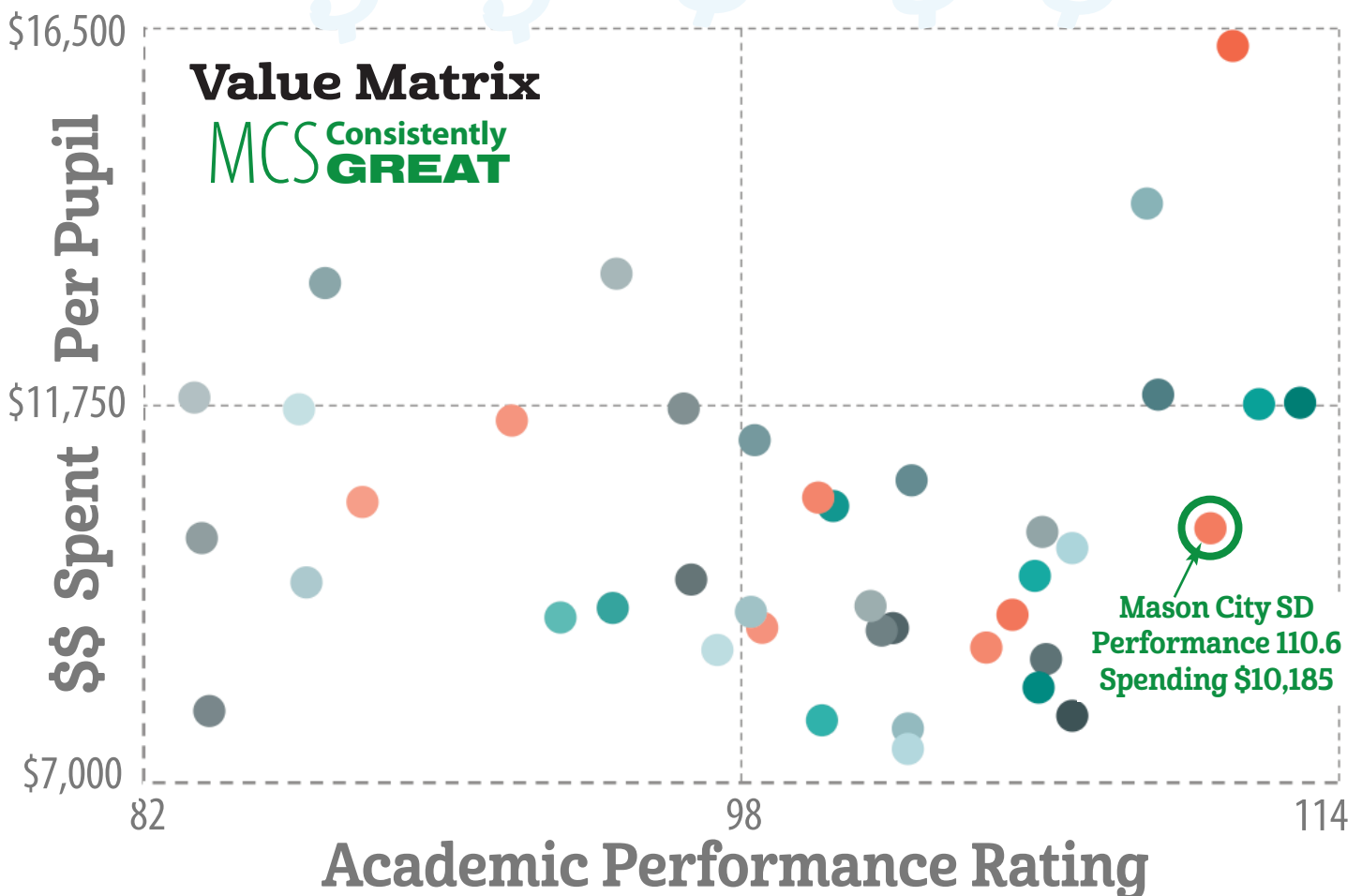
Total Spending
\$10,185
per pupil



How is the Money Spent?

	 Instructional	 Building Operations	 Administration	 Pupil Support	 Staff Support
Mason	\$6,310	\$1,979	\$1,081	\$597	\$218
State	\$6,130	\$2,004	\$1,363	\$594	\$355
Greater Cincinnati	\$5,987	\$1,905	\$2,512	\$611	\$500

We spend less and get higher results than nearly all 40 Greater Cincinnati school districts.



Protecting Your Investment



This is a “consistently great” place to learn and live because so many people have made an investment in Mason City Schools.

- Our parents do their part – they send us children who are ready to learn, and make many sacrifices to ensure their kids have the best possible opportunities.
- Our staff do their part – they set high expectations for their students, and work hard to ensure students feel cared about and supported.
- Our community members do their part – they volunteer in Mason classrooms, root for our artists and athletes, and support school fundraisers.

However, a growing number of Mason City Schools educators, parents and residents are concerned that decisions made in Columbus and Washington are eroding our school board’s local authority – and threatening this community’s investment in its schools. Two critical issues that continue to be high priorities for the Mason Schools are state testing and state funding.

Advocating for Reduction in State Testing

We recognize the need for assessments and accountability, and know that it is important for families and community members to have information about how their schools are performing. However, Ohio is currently struggling to find the right balance. Today, there is simply too much state testing. We recommend the following state testing reductions.

● Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Eliminate this mandate, and allow local school districts to assess their kindergartners’ needs. We strongly believe that we need to assess our students before school starts using our own measures (and based on our standards), so that we can actually begin meeting students’ needs on day 1.

This new mandate took up to 25 classroom hours of each MECC teacher’s time this fall – time spent away from the rest of the class and for which there was no additional funding. We hired substitutes (a real cost borne by our taxpayers) to teach the kindergarten class while the Mason teacher did each child’s assessment. However, this is far from ideal because in the very first month of a students’ educational experience we know it is most important that our children are building a relationship with their teacher.



Protecting Your Investment

Advocating for Reduction in State Testing

● 3rd Grade Guarantee

Eliminate this mandate that is used to label students as off track for promotion to fourth grade. ***All of the students who completed third grade in Mason last year passed the Third Grade Reading Guarantee (TGRG).*** This reaffirms that the robust strategies we had in place prior to this mandate are what makes the difference for our students, not more administrivia from the State.

We strongly disagree with the “one size fits all” premise behind the TGRG. Retention is an option that should be personalized to an individual student with input from the child’s family, teachers, counselors, school psychologists and administrators. That system ensures that the whole child is considered, and that if a student is behind grade level in reading, he or she is given the supports (which may include retention) to make progress.



● PARCC Language Arts & Math, AIR Science & Social Studies, OH Online Science

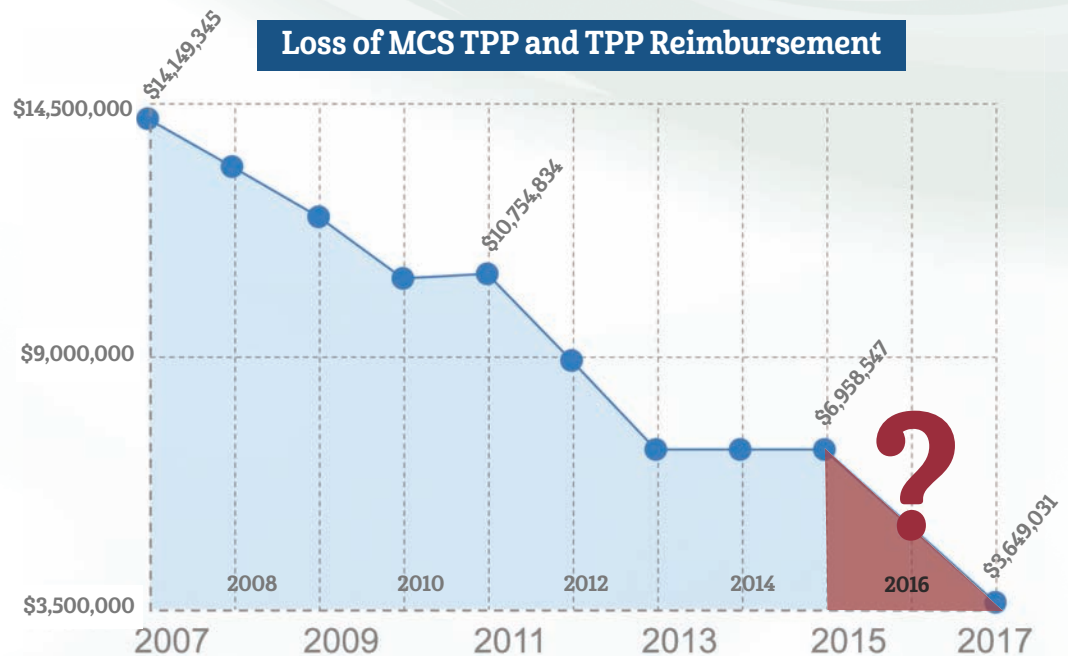
Reduce the number of subjects tested at each grade level. We believe that the state should only assess reading at grades 3 and 6, math at grades 4 and 7, science at grade 5, social studies at grade 8, and administer the nationally-normed ACT to all high school students for assessment of English, mathematics, reading, science, and writing, rather than end-of-course exams.

Advocating for Stable State Funding

Stable and adequate funding is essential to a sound educational system. Mason prefers a system where funding follows the student – and each Mason child would receive at least the same per-pupil amount as the chartered nonpublic schools in Ohio receive.

● Keeping Tangible Personal Property Tax Reimbursement Funds Critical

In 2005, the state legislature enacted a phase-out plan to eliminate the business Tangible Personal Property taxes in favor of the Commercial Activities Tax. Those tangible personal property taxes were local dollars that were earmarked for local governments and schools.



In FY 2007, Mason received \$14 million in Tangible Personal Property tax (business inventory) and TPP reimbursement. For FY 2013, that dwindled to \$7 million. Under the Governor’s budget proposal it will be reduced to \$3.6 million by FY 2017. It is critical for Mason’s financial stability that TPP reimbursement payments remain at current levels in perpetuity.

Protecting Your Investment

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To stave off the harsh economic effects of losing those revenues, the legislature created the hold harmless clause — directing state funds to school districts to make up for the losses. However, those amounts were based on projected revenues from the initial year of the hold harmless plan, and the full payments ended in 2011. At that point, our district began losing tangible revenues that resulted in losing \$7 million each year. Mason currently receives \$7 million in TPP reimbursement – 7% of the district’s budget.

Local Taxes Being Shifted to Columbus

Local businesses are still paying more taxes. Now, however, instead of a TPP tax coming directly to Mason City Schools, businesses pay a commercial activities tax (CAT) that is sent directly to Columbus.

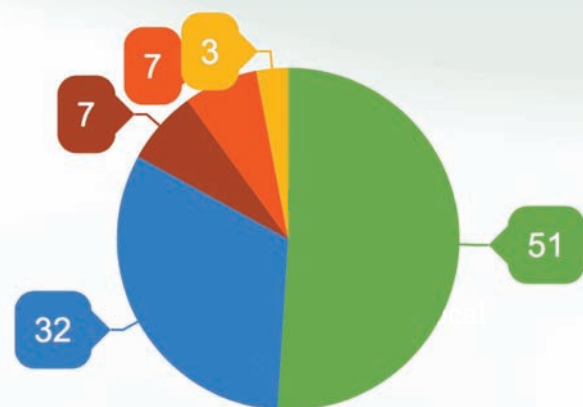


Revenues & Expenditures

In Mason, 32% of our funding comes from unrestricted state aid, while 51% relies on local property tax owners. Mason is one of 237 school districts “on the cap” for FY 15 – which is a loss of \$775,000. Ohio’s over-reliance on local property taxes to fund public education has and will continue to cause local burdens in fully funding the education system. It is essential to maintain an appropriate balance between state and local revenues.

“It is critical for Mason’s financial stability that TPP reimbursement payments remain at current levels in perpetuity.”

Where Does the Money Come from to Educate Your Student?



Mason City Schools



Fiscal Year 2015 Revenue Sources



Mason City School District

211 North East Street
Mason, Ohio 45040
(513) 398-0474
www.MasonOhioSchools.com
contactmason@MasonOhioSchools.com
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Mason Early Childhood Center

Grades: PK-2
4631 Hickory Woods Drive
513-398-3741
Principal: Melissa Bly

Western Row Elementary

Grades: 2-3
755 Western Row Road
513-398-5821
Principal: Eric Messer

Mason Intermediate School

Grades: 4-6
6307 Mason-Montgomery Road
513-459-2850
Principal: Greg Sears

Mason Middle School

Grades: 7-8
6370 Mason-Montgomery Road
513-398-9035
Principal: Tonya McCall

Mason High School

Grades: 9-12
6100 Mason-Montgomery Road
513-398-5025
Principal: Mindy McCarty-Stewart



www.MasonOhioSchools.com