

Your Guide to

MASON CITY SCHOOLS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

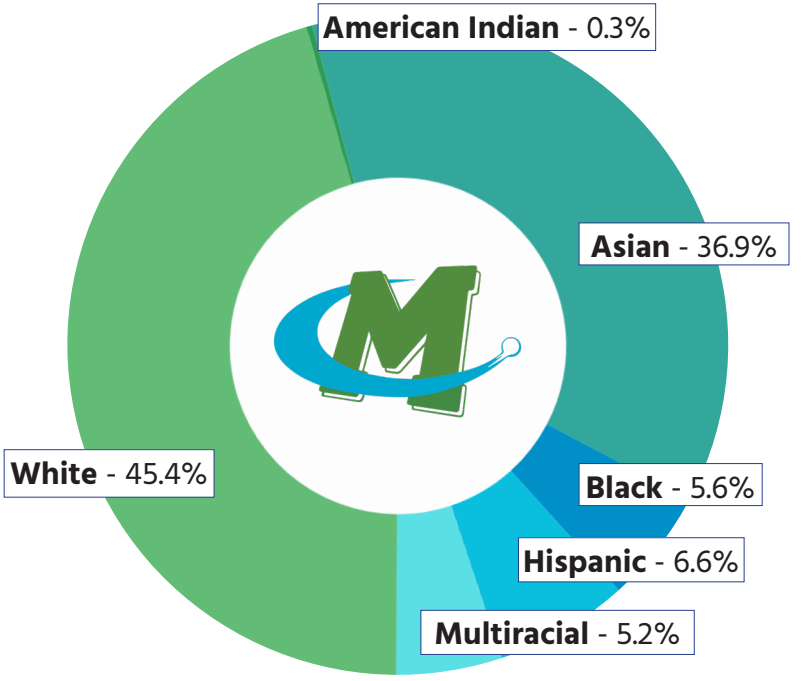
The Mason City School District is guided by three Big Rocks—Culture, Inclusive Excellence, and Personalized Learning. These foundational values support our Vision to create a district where each and every Comet discovers purpose and potential, and our Mission to grow learners, leaders, and citizens through purposeful learning and meaningful experiences within a connected community.

These Big Rocks also connect to our Portrait of a Comet, which calls on all of us—educators, students, families, and community members—to grow in Integrity, Empathy, Adaptability, Critical Thinking, and Communication.

This guide reflects the collaborative efforts of our teams over several years to align our work with these values. It provides a shared approach to decision-making that centers students and reflects the heart of our Comet community.

ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

One of the reasons the Mason City School District thrives is the diversity of our neighbors. We live in a multicultural community, and we have a responsibility to ensure our students are prepared to flourish in the global world. It is important that our schools are safe spaces where our learners are seen, valued, cared for, and respected as their full selves.



Based on 2025 Data

9.4% Students with Disabilities

17.9% Economically Disadvantaged

11.9% English Language Learners

34.3% Students Identified as Gifted

100+ Languages spoken by Comet families

ABOUT MASON CITY SCHOOLS



MASON EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER	MASON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MASON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL	MASON MIDDLE SCHOOL	MASON HIGH SCHOOL
Grades PK-2	Grades 3-4	Grades 5-6	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12

Mason City Schools educate 10,500 students in five grade-level schools.

Mason **prioritizes the classroom**

Expenditures

- **Instruction** — MCS: 61.5% / OH Avg: 56.8%
- **Building Operations** — MCS: 18.5% / OH Avg: 20.3%
- **Administration** — MCS: 9.5% / OH Avg: 13.5%
- **Pupil Support** — MCS: 7.3% / OH Avg: 6.3%
- **Staff Support** — MCS: 3.2% / OH Avg: 3.1%

STAFFING

44 Administrators	673 Certified	534 Classified

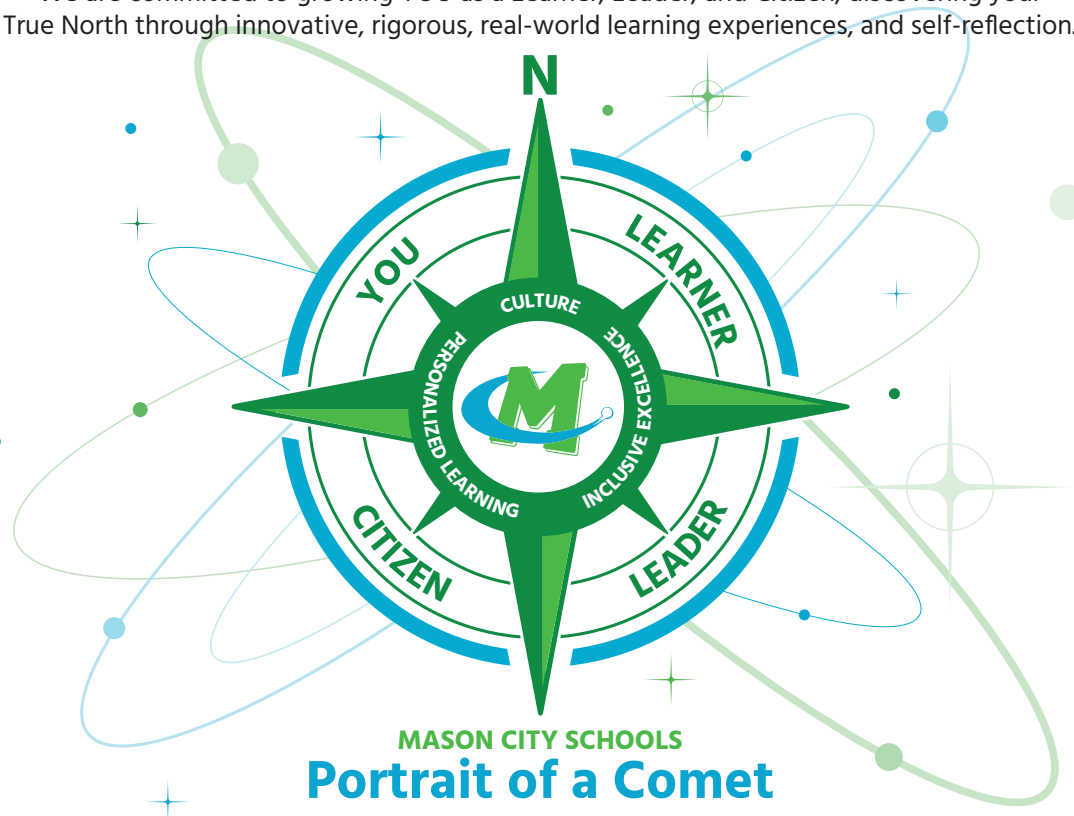
MASON CITY SCHOOLS MISSION AND VISION

VISION: Each and every Comet discovers purpose and potential.

MISSION: Growing learners, leaders and citizens through purposeful learning and meaningful experiences within a connected community.

Mason City Schools Comet Commitment

We are committed to growing YOU as a Learner, Leader, and Citizen, discovering your True North through innovative, rigorous, real-world learning experiences, and self-reflection.



MASON CITY SCHOOLS

Portrait of a Comet

INTEGRITY

Comets do the right thing, especially when it's hard. They earn others' trust and respect through honest, principled choices and behaviors that reflect their beliefs. They own the moment, grow from their experiences, and take responsibility for their actions.

ADAPTABILITY

Comets adjust, adapt, and prepare for the future. They demonstrate flexibility, persistence, and resilience. They respond productively when presented with an uncertain event, feedback, praise, criticism, or a setback.

EMPATHY

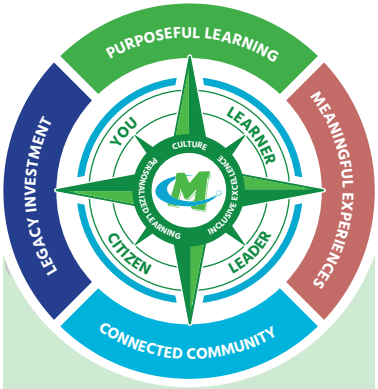
Comets build meaningful relationships so that everyone belongs. They invest the time to listen, care, connect, and act. With a spirit of curiosity, they grow awareness of self and understanding of others' feelings, opinions, experiences, and cultures.

COMMUNICATION

Comets build skill in developing and sharing their voice. They listen, seek feedback, and collaborate with the intent to include and undertand others' viewpoints. They confidently share their ideas in a variety of forms and contexts, and take responsibility for their impact.

CRITICAL THINKING

Comets engage in worthy challenges. They identify innovative and creative solutions to complex problems. They understand the bigger picture, and apply analytical thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence and multiple perspectives



VISION: Each and every Comet discovers purpose and potential.

MISSION: Growing learners, leaders and citizens through purposeful learning and meaningful experiences within a connected community.

FOUNDATIONAL VALUES: Culture, Inclusive Excellence, Personalized Learning, Fiscal Stewardship.

PORTRAIT OF A COMET: Integrity, Adaptability, Empathy, Communication, Critical Thinking.
(Mason City Schools Enduring Skills)

OUR PRIORITIES

PURPOSEFUL LEARNING

GROW, DISCOVER & CHART YOUR PATH

- **Interdisciplinary Pathways and Creative Scheduling** — Pathways and schedules support limitless learning
- **Responsive and Personalized Professional Learning** — Agile personalized professional learning pathways for each Mason staff member
- **Learner Centered Systems of Support** — Aligned systems ensure learners thrive
- **Portrait of a Comet/ My Mason Journey** — Each learner discovers and shares their strengths and dreams

MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES

INSPIRE, EMPOWER & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- **DREAM Centers & Learning Parks** — Innovative spaces inspire Comets to dream big and take action
- **Peak Moments** — Memorable experiences create an inspiring, energized learning community

CONNECTED COMMUNITY

BELONG, THRIVE & BUILD COMMUNITY

- **Service Learning** — Comets serve and shape our community in powerful ways
- **Family Welcome Systems and Centers** — A world-class welcome experience that exceeds new families' expectations
- **Wellness Opportunities** — Mason City Schools is known as a community of well-being

LEGACY INVESTMENT

ENVISION, DEVELOP & SUSTAIN MASON QUALITY

- **Future-Focused Staffing and Program Models** — Recruiting and retaining the best staff and educators in the world
- **Next Gen Mason Quality** — Fiscally responsible solutions sustain excellence

OUR CULTURE ROCK

Our culture is the heart of our district. It is what we believe, how we behave, and the experience our behavior produces for others. Our culture makes Mason City Schools a special place to learn, teach, and grow.

We strive for progress over perfection. We honor our past, take pride in the present, and are excited about the future.

BELIEFS	BEHAVIORS	EXPERIENCES
OWN THE MOMENT	•Adjust, adapt & persevere •Build on your strengths & learn from others •Do the right thing, especially when it's hard •Take responsibility for your actions & impact	Better today than yesterday, better tomorrow than today
BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS	•Ask for & accept support •Care, listen & connect with others •Respect & encourage each other •Show up for people & be dependable	Everyone has someone they can count on
YOUR STORY MATTERS	•Believe in who you are & who you can become •Celebrate & honor our diverse identities •Develop & prioritize healthy habits •Discover purpose & potential	We care for ourselves and others

EVENT + RESPONSE = OUTCOME

Events happen in our lives and every person chooses how to 'R'espond to those events. Our response to an event has a direct influence on the outcome. Building and sustaining Mason City Schools' culture requires intentional effort from everyone in the organization.

In 2018, MCS began using **E+R=O** to help our Comets create better experiences for themselves and others by "taking care of our 20 square feet" and "owning the moment." The way each of us manages our 20 square feet is what creates a better experience for others.

6 STRATEGIES

The R-Factor Disciplines, created by Focus 3, "provide a system for managing [responses] with intention, purpose, and skill."



Culture is what we believe, how we behave, and the experience our behavior produces for others.

OUR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE ROCK

Inclusive Excellence is an ongoing journey. We try to be better today than yesterday and better tomorrow than today. With a spirit of humility and curiosity, we can support and empower ALL Mason learners by learning about, reflecting on, and acting for our Inclusive Excellence principles: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice. Putting these principles into action will help ensure that each Comet feels safe, valued, supported, and empowered.



DIVERSITY

We celebrate and honor the rich identities in our learning community.

EQUITY

We design educational experiences that ensure each learner thrives.





INCLUSION

We intentionally build relationships and empathy so that every learner belongs.

JUSTICE

We step up against bias in our actions, policies, and practices.



Every child deserves to believe that they belong in our schools, and that their learning community cares about them.

In Mason City Schools, every Comet (student, staff, community member) is called to Step Up Against Bias. Acts of racism, sexism, ableism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance, and other forms of harassment hurt our Comet Culture and have no place in our schools. Even when an act of bias is unintentional, the impact remains the same. Working together to challenge bias and respond is a crucial step toward creating the safe learning community that every Comet deserves.

INTERRUPT

Speak up against every biased remark — every time, in the moment, without exception. Think about what you'll say ahead of time so you're prepared to act instantly.

TRY: "I DON'T LIKE WORDS LIKE THAT," OR "THAT PHRASE WAS HURTFUL."

QUESTION

Ask simple questions in response to hateful remarks to find out why the speaker made the offensive comment and how you can best address the situation.

TRY: "WHY DID YOU SAY THAT," OR "TELL ME MORE."

EDUCATE

Explain why a term or phrase is offensive. Encourage the person to choose a different expression. Hate isn't behind all hateful speech.

TRY: "DO YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF THAT WORD?"

ECHO

If someone speaks up against hate, reiterate their anti-bias message. One person's voice is a powerful start. Many voices together create change.

TRY: "THANKS FOR SPEAKING UP. I AGREE THAT WORD IS OFFENSIVE AND WE SHOULDN'T USE IT."

If you experience or witness an act of bias in our Comet Community, please report the incident on the Mason City Schools LiveSafe Tipline by calling, texting, or scanning this QR code.

LiveSafe Tipline 513-972-4910

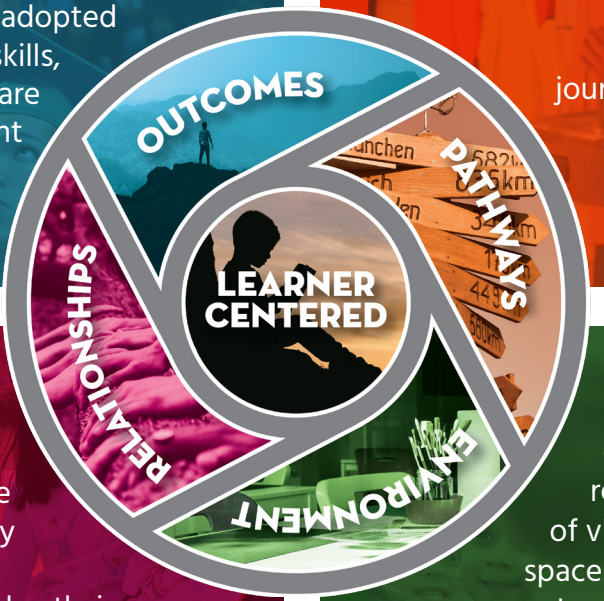
OUR PERSONALIZED LEARNING ROCK

The challenges of the future are unknown. Personalized learning develops knowledge, skills, and mindsets for growth in a complex and uncertain world. All learners want to positively contribute to society now and in the future. Personalized learning honors the learner as a co-creator and valuable member in the learning process. By personalizing learning, individuals are prepared to be independent learners who approach problems through a lens of equity and empathy. They are prepared to adjust and adapt to an ever-changing world and value learning as a lifelong process.

LEARNER CENTERED

We put the learner at the center of our learning experience designs.

Outcomes are the adopted standards, critical skills, and mindsets that are essential for student goal-setting and content mastery.



Pathways are the journeys learners take toward intended outcomes.

Meaningful **relationships** foster learning environments where students successfully navigate learning challenges and develop their network.

Our learning **environment** is a responsive design of virtual and physical spaces, learner groups, and our use of time.

4 ATTRIBUTES OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING

Learners recognize the power of their own ideas as well as the shift that can happen by being exposed to others' ideas.

VOICE

Learners clarify learning outcomes and co-construct the learning path. They are invited to be active participants at the learning design table.

CO-CREATION

Learners respect, encourage, and collaborate with others to build understanding as they engage in discourse, inquiry, and/or problem-solving in pursuit of a common goal.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Learners discover who they are as a learner and the skills and mindsets needed to navigate through challenges. Learners can express areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

SELF DISCOVERY

Personalized Learning is a progressively learner-driven design where learners deeply engage in meaningful, authentic, and rigorous challenges to demonstrate desired outcomes.

YOUR GUIDE TO MASON CITY SCHOOLS

This guide reflects our district's commitment to being a learner-centered community. Mason's Big Rocks—Culture, Inclusive Excellence, and Personalized Learning—are our foundation. But we also look to the horizon, guided by our Portrait of a Comet skills: Integrity, Empathy, Adaptability, Critical Thinking, and Communication. These are the habits our learners practice to thrive in a complex, ever-changing world.

As we chart our Journey to 2030, we prioritize:

- Purposeful Learning that nurtures curiosity and critical thinking
- Meaningful Experiences that inspire personal growth
- A Connected Community where every voice is valued
- Legacy Investments that ensure equity, safety, and sustainability

Together, we are shaping a district where every Comet is empowered to flourish—today and for generations to come.

MORE ABOUT MASON'S JOURNEY TO 2030