

**Ben Russow - Mason Middle School**  
**Administrative Report**  
**Date: January 3, 2026**

- Friends of Rachel: Our FOR Club's sock drive wrapped up with an impressive 80+ pairs of socks donated to brighten the holidays for seniors. This project was sparked by Aubrey Hodge, who organized and wrapped the socks alongside some of her friends. The club also met during lunch to create Christmas cards to accompany the socks, which will be delivered to local assisted living and nursing facilities in the county.
- PBIS: Our recent PBIS activities were a great success, with 150 students attending a special showing of *Zootopia 2* at Phoenix Theatres, which students enjoyed. Additionally, one of our December Eagle Power lessons focused on kindness and compassion as students created heartfelt cards for a classmate undergoing treatment for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. The cards were delivered and deeply appreciated, showing a true testament that we are a community that cares for everyone!
- I am monitoring the D/F list for MS students weekly. Our at-risk coordinators and RTI teachers have created a covert plan to support students prior to the end of the semester to improve these numbers. We will continue to make our RTI process a priority to support the at-risk students.
- Our PLC teams have been focused on collaboration and curriculum work. We are currently working on our CFA's and curriculum cycles. I have been very pleased with our curriculum team's efforts and commitment to the PLC initiative. We are using this time to better our methods and enhance our process.
- I have been very pleased with our new hires. Both Traci Fackelman (6<sup>th</sup> grade Special Ed) and Chris Phillips (MS gym) have embraced their roles as teachers at MMS. They have been very reliable and eager to learn. I have high expectations for both new teachers.
- YIG Update:  
We are thrilled to share the phenomenal success of our Youth in Government (YIG) students at this year's conference, held from November 23-25, 2025. Under the guidance of our dedicated advisors—Ms. Blackburn, Mr. Chysochoos, and Mrs. Otting—28 students from grades 6-8 committed two months to intensive preparation. They wrote real legislative bills, mastered complex parliamentary rules, and honed their debate skills, showing amazing dedication to civic leadership.

Our students didn't just attend—they were leaders, taking on a huge range of responsibilities and earning top honors! Seven students stepped up to fill critical roles at the conference, including Inspiration Speakers, Committee Chairs, and Reading/Writing Clerks. This depth of participation shows how ready our students were to take charge. A major highlight was the election of Madeline Kolbe, who won her race and served as the highly respected Speaker of the House AND acted as committee chair when the House was not in session. This is a massive achievement and a testament to her skills and hard work.

#### Legislative Wins and Top Honors

The hard work paid off with incredible individual and team achievements:

- **Legislative Triumph:** A bill co-authored by Henley Stubbleski and Emmy Heck was successfully debated, passed by the youth legislature, and formally signed into law by the Youth Governor! This is a standout success, showing they can turn an idea into real policy.
- **Top Delegate Awards:** Our students earned two of the conference's most prestigious individual honors:
  - Riley Brighton was named Outstanding Committee Chair for their excellent organizational skills and leadership in guiding discussions.
  - Easton Cousino earned the Outstanding Delegate award in the Red Legislature, recognizing their superior performance in debate and legislative knowledge.

This year marked our first time competing in the Contemporary Issues Forum, and our students absolutely excelled. The Contemporary Issues Forum is a debate between two-member teams based on the Big Questions Debate format. It is specifically designed to encourage students to research, explore, and engage in thoughtful discussion on complex public topics. Six of our students participated in this challenging area, coached by Jamie Otting. They did an incredible job building and executing their arguments, demonstrating sophisticated research and public speaking skills. Their success in a program area new to our group is a testament to their adaptability and dedication.

The Youth in Government program is a powerful opportunity that goes far beyond the classroom. The success of these students in debates, elections, and committee roles proves they are developing the critical thinking, public speaking, and leadership skills necessary to become engaged, successful citizens and future leaders. We are incredibly proud of their accomplishments!