



**Dr. Amy Brennan**

**Mason City Schools, Mason, Ohio**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dr. Amy Brennan serves as Deputy Superintendent of Mason City Schools, where she leads system-level efforts to ensure each and every learner discovers purpose and potential. In her role, she oversees teaching and learning and guides strategic initiatives that bring this vision to life across a district of more than 10,000 learners.

Dr. Brennan's leadership is grounded in a belief that meaningful change happens when systems are designed with people at the center. She is known for building human-centered, future-oriented structures that translate vision into practice, empower educators and students, and create coherence across complex organizations. Through her work, Mason has strengthened its tradition of excellence while reimagining learning in ways that prepare students for a rapidly changing world.

Under her leadership, Mason City Schools has consistently earned top marks on Ohio's State Report Card, risen to #2 in Ohio on Niche rankings, and achieved top-tier performance in student growth and gap closing. These outcomes reflect a commitment to aligned, purpose-driven, and collaborative systems, and a shared belief that all students' growth is all of our responsibility.

## **Education**

Ed.D., Educational Leadership – Miami University, 2021  
M.S.Ed., Secondary Education – University of Pennsylvania, 2005  
B.A., History and Education – Swarthmore College, 2000  
Principal Licensure – Xavier University, 2011

## **Experience**

Dr. Amy Brennan brings more than two decades of experience in education, spanning research, teaching, and system-level leadership. She is in her seventh year serving as Deputy Superintendent of Learning for Mason City Schools, where she oversees PK–12 teaching and learning, supervises building principals and district leaders, and leads the development and implementation of the district's strategic priorities. In this role, she has played a central part in advancing Mason's focus on culture, inclusive excellence, and personalized learning, while strengthening systems that support student growth and staff development across the organization.

Prior to joining Mason, Dr. Brennan served as Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment in Oak Hills Local School District in Ohio. In this role, she advanced leadership capacity, supported districtwide instructional improvement efforts, and launched teacher-led professional learning systems that increased educator ownership and collaboration.

Her earlier leadership experiences include serving as an elementary principal and high school assistant principal, where she focused on building strong, learner-centered cultures, empowering teacher leadership, and using data to support the growth of each student.

Dr. Brennan began her career in Philadelphia, working in nonprofit organizations focused on research and advocacy for public schools. These experiences grounded her leadership in a deep respect for the voices of students, families, and communities, a value that continues to shape her work today.

### **Outstanding Achievement(s)**

Under Dr. Brennan's leadership, Mason City Schools has sustained and strengthened its tradition of academic excellence, consistently earning top marks on Ohio's State Report Card, rising to #2 in Ohio according to Niche, and achieving top-tier performance in student growth. Most notably, the district has made significant progress in closing achievement gaps, moving from the top 17 percent of districts statewide to the top 3 percent over the past two years.

These outcomes reflect a commitment to building aligned, human-centered systems that translate vision into daily practice, positioning Mason as a model for personalized learning that hosts educators from across the country for site visits and collaboration.

A central driver of this work has been the development of Mason's Learner-Centered Systems of Support, a districtwide framework that ensures every learner receives the appropriate level of challenge and support. Designed through collaborative, team-based processes, this system aligns academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports through shared decision-making structures and regular data review cycles.

Dr. Brennan also led the creation of Staff Learning Journeys, a personalized professional learning system for every staff member in the district, ensuring that all employees, regardless of role, engage as learners and contributors. Grounded in Mason's belief that "We are a Community of Learners," this model provides meaningful, sustained, and choice-based learning and has transformed professional learning into an experience built on a foundation of staff voice, resulting in strong engagement, ownership, and application to practice.

In addition, she has played a central role in bringing Mason's Portrait of a Comet to life through embedded learning experiences and Student Journey Days. Together, these efforts ensure that students explore their interests, reflect on their growth, and connect learning to real-world experiences, from elementary learners engaging with community partners to high school students participating in immersive, career-connected experiences.

Dr. Brennan's leadership extends beyond Mason through her work with national networks focused on the future of education. She serves on the Steering Committee for KnowledgeWorks Foundation's Lead for Learners National Network, is an advisor to the K12 Futures Collaborative, and is a member of Miami University's Advisory Council for School Leadership and Superintendent Licensure Programs.

While these outcomes are significant, Dr. Brennan measures success by the extent to which students and staff feel seen, valued, and empowered, and by the degree to which leadership is shared across the organization and beyond.

## **AN INTERVIEW**

### **Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.**

Today's superintendent leads both people and systems, navigating complexity while creating clarity and coherence across the organization. The role requires a balance of future-focused vision and deep respect for the human experience within schools.

At its best, leadership at the system level is about designing conditions in which others can thrive. This means building aligned, purpose-driven systems that support educators, rather than overwhelm, and that empower students to take ownership of their learning. It also means ensuring that every decision, from instructional practices to operational structures, ultimately serves the learner experience.

In an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, superintendents must lead as both architects and connectors, bringing people together, honoring their strengths, and creating shared ownership of a vision that prepares students not only for today, but for an unknown future.

### **What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?**

What I have come to understand more deeply is the difference between seeking input and truly engaging people as co-creators.

In high-performing systems, there is already tremendous expertise and commitment. Lasting change comes from honoring existing strengths and creating structures that invite the people closest to the work to the table, not only to share perspectives, but to actively shape the direction of the work. There is a meaningful difference between responding to feedback and designing for shared ownership, and that difference often determines whether change is implemented or truly lived.

I have also learned the importance of coherence. It is easy for organizations to take on too much. Progress accelerates when systems are aligned around a clear purpose and when leaders are intentional about how initiatives connect and add value to the daily experiences of students and staff.

Ultimately, leadership is about creating the conditions in which people feel valued, empowered, and responsible for collective success.

### **Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.**

One strategy that has been particularly impactful in our work is the intentional process of putting core values into writing through collaborative design.

In Mason, this includes the development of guides aligned to our three "Big Rocks" ([Culture](#), [Inclusive Excellence](#), and [Personalized Learning](#)), instructional compasses that articulate our core beliefs about

instruction within each content area (for example, [mathematics](#)), and an [OKR system](#) that transparently shares our goals and strategies with our community each year.

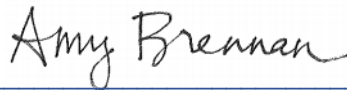
The process of creating these documents is just as important as the final product. It brings people together to build shared understanding, clarify priorities, and develop a sense of collective ownership. Through collaboration, what could be abstract ideas become clear, actionable commitments.

Having these shared understandings in writing also provides an anchor for our organization and leaders. They help us stay grounded in times of uncertainty, guide decision-making as we look toward the future, and ensure that new members of our learning community quickly understand what we value and how we work.

When done well, these tools are not static documents, but living representations of who we are and what we believe, helping to align both our thinking and our actions over time.

**Submitted by:**

Amy Brennan



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**Name/Signature**

**Date**