MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 26, 2025

MEMBERS' PRESENT:	J. McLean, Chair, Boxford (zoom)	T. Currier, Vice Chair, Middleton
	E. Clements, Boxford (zoom)	M. Ogden, Topsfield
	A. Heaphy-Tenney, Topsfield	K. Petrone, Middleton
	L. MacInnis, Middleton	C. Bolzan, Boxford
	J. Horrigan, Boxford	M. Alexander, Middleton
	W. Hodges, Topsfield	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: M. Harvey, Superintendent
J. Sands, Assistant Superintendent & Chief Procurement Officer

A. **Call to Order** – T. Currier, Acting Chair, called the School Committee Meeting of February 5, 2025, to Order at 7:02pm, at the High School Library.

B. Remarks from the Chair – None.

C. **Public Comment**
Christian LeBlanc, MS Teacher, spoke regarding budget cuts and advocated for no staff cuts.
Melissa Stanley, HS Teacher, spoke against cutting teachers and preserving the student facing positions. Staffing is the biggest expense, but teacher cuts will have the biggest impact on the students.
Michael Kelsen, HS Teacher, read a statement from MTA Union President, Nicko Tzortzis regarding cutting teachers to save money and the need for individualized student instruction.
Meagan Hildebrand, HS English Dept. Head, spoke against the proposed budget cuts. She stated that 23 positions had been cut over the last 10 years and spoke regarding the impacts on classes and clubs.
Kathleena Scarpato, Topsfield, spoke regarding the cuts of student facing positions and asked for scenarios including cutting administrators.

D. Student Advisory Board Update – None.

E. FY26 Budget Deliberation T. Currier reminded everyone that the Administration has recommended a level service budget.
J. Sands reviewed the final costs of Health and Dental Insurance premiums. Health insurance premiums have increased 14.71% and Dental insurance has increased 6.18%. Over the past 6 years, health and dental insurance premiums have increased on average by 5.26% and 0.91% per year respectively. The total impact to the budget is $172,694.00. The updated FY26 Assessment by Town with the updated Health and Dental insurance premiums were reviewed.
J. Sands reviewed the scenario planning proposals. Scenario 1 includes the reduction of 7 FTEs from each core department, 1 HS Guidance FTE and 1 HS Support Staff FTE

through attrition. The deferment of Fraud Assessment and HS Student Activity Account audit to FY27 and a 1-year subscription for Math resources for Algebra 1 & 2 instead of a 6-year subscription. The total savings to the budget would be $649,752 and a total reduction of 7 FTEs.
Scenario 2 includes the proposed reductions in Scenario 1 plus the reduction of 1 HS Nurse Position FTE, Assistant Principal Position FTE through attrition and reduction of 1 MS Library position FTE. The total savings in Scenario 2 are $1,024,387.00 and a total reduction of 10 FTEs.
FY26 Assessments by Town were reviewed with each Scenario.
Katie DiNardo, HS Principal, informed the Committee that the administration is in the scheduling process and is trying to eliminate study halls, which will increase class sizes and result in less class choices for students. M Block will remain in place. She reviewed the concerns and impacts of faculty/staff reductions, including the impact on unique educational offerings and loss of critical support roles. Once a class is cut, it is very difficult to get it back. Position cuts could limit future educational opportunities and growth and would lead to a more static curriculum and fewer choices for students, with less individual attention to students as classes and caseloads are increased. The proposed average class sizes compared to FY25 for each subject were presented. Each proposed position cut was presented by Brad Denton and Phil McManus, including class size impacts and courses that could be impacted, and how the school could be impacted by the cuts.
M. Alexander asked if there are ongoing discussions with Administrators regarding other options. Discussions are taking place daily regarding other options.
M. Ogden stated there is a balance between the taxpayers' needs with the students' needs. The delivery of education has changed in the past 10 years and there is more reliance on public education. The students entering Masco this year are the most impacted by COVID, so she does not want to cut teachers/staff in this budget. A. Heaphy-Tenney added that this is a complex situation. The 2 largest expenses are salaries and maintenance, which has had no investment in many years. Creative solutions are being used across the budget and any further staff reductions would impact the quality of education. T. Currier stated that our caseload for School Counselors is low compared to other districts. Our counselors provide more services, including work in the classrooms. J. McLean asked what the latest date the budget decision could be made without impacting scheduling. Once all requests for classes are completed, then the Administration will know the impact. J. Sands reminded the Committee that the Administration is recommending a level service budget.

J. Sands reviewed the Non-Controllable Expenses. These are fixed expenses for the District which total $2,370,369.00. He reviewed the remaining increase including salaries, and the 2.5% increase to the FY25 Operating Assessment. The potential target reduction is $701,945.00. The 10-year Staffing Model from FY16 to FY26 was reviewed. Over the 10 years, there was a total District staff reduction of 4.66 FTEs.
J. Sands reviewed the FY26 Capital Costs including Debt Service and reviewed the recommended priority projects which total $690,000.00. Key Assumptions highlighted where total operating costs of non-salary items included no new programs or services and are currently budgeted to increase by $3.903M or 9.2%.

Revenues are budgeted to increase by $606,000 or 8.2%. J. Sands reviewed the Cherry Sheets, interest income and E&D figures with the Committee. The FY26 Assessment Overview was reviewed which includes total expenditures, and total funding sources.
E. Clements asked if the MS could add other creative ideas to non-student facing reductions as she is concerned about class sizes above 20 students. J. Sands reviewed the 3 proposed non-student facing items to be cut. J. McLean suggested reviewing increases in sports and club fees.

F. Competency Determination for HS Graduation

Katie DiNardo presented the new competency guidelines for HS graduation. Grade 10 MCAS will still be administered, not as a graduation requirement, but as a data collection point. The MCAS scores still impact the eligibility for scholarships and awards. MCAS scores will continue to be used to evaluate school and district performance as well as student growth and achievement. DESE uses these scores to assess our progress toward meeting educational goals.
The competency determination shall be based on students satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests. Satisfaction of the requirements of the competency determination shall be a condition for high school graduation. DESE will not be providing a list of courses that meet the new language of the law.
M. Ogden asked if this information would be provided in the handbook. Yes, it will be added to the handbook and website. M. Alexander asked if this would change teachers teaching to the MCAS. This change is a positive one will be embraced by teachers.
A motion was made to approve the Competency Determination to include either Science 9 or Biology; English 9 and 10; 2 years of Mathematics, either Algebra 1 or an equivalent course and Geometry or Geometry and Algebra II; and other equivalent courses as determined by the principal by W. Hodges. The motion was seconded by C. Bolzan and approved by Rollcall vote:

W. Hodges – yes	**A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes**	**M. Alexander – yes**
C. Bolzan – yes	**K. Petrone – yes**	**J. Horrigan – yes**
L. MacInnis – yes	**M. Ogden – yes**	**T. Currier - yes**
E. Clements – yes	**J. McLean – yes**	

MOTION: Approve Competency Determination
VOTE: 11-0, Motion Passed

G. Policy 2nd Reading

M. Ogden informed the Committee that no changes have been made since the last School Committee meeting. Policy EEDA has been stricken.
Discussion followed regarding Title IX policies and threats of the loss of federal funding.

A motion was made to approve the Policies as presented by A. Heaphy-Tenney, seconded by M. Alexander, and approved by rollcall vote:

W. Hodges – yes	**A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes**	**M. Alexander – yes**
C. Bolzan – yes	**K. Petrone – no**	**J. Horrigan – yes**
L. MacInnis – yes	**M. Ogden – yes**	**T. Currier – no**
E. Clements – yes	**J. McLean – yes**	

MOTION: Approve Policies as presented
VOTE: 9-2-0, Motion Passed

H. Superintendent's Report

On February 10th the Girls Varsity Soccer team visited the State House to celebrate their State Championship and received citations. The Administration thanked the coaching staff and congratulated the team.
On February 13th an All-School Assembly was held at the MS in remembrance of Holocaust Remembrance Day.
The public hearing on the School Committee Budget is March 5, 2025, at 7:00pm.
HS course selection night for grades 8-11 will be held March 6th at 6pm for families.
MS Coffee is February 28th at 8:30am and HS Coffee is March 21st at 8:30am.

I. Sub-Committee Reports

Community Relations – A community dialogue was held tonight prior to the SC meeting. There are concerns over lower enrollment and staffing. Promoting the Masco experience and class offerings was discussed. The next working session will be held Friday via zoom. They are working on creating a tab on the Masco website regarding the budget.
DCI/Building Committee – no new meetings scheduled.
Anti-Racism/VOCAL – will be meeting in early March.
Policy – meeting Monday via zoom to approve all of the policies.
Liaison Updates –W. Hodges will be meeting Monday with the Chairs of SB and FC of Topsfield and then present to the FC. T. Currier stated that Saturday is budget day in Middleton. J. McLean stated that there is a Joint SC budget meeting on March 11th with Boxford.
Negotiations – obtaining dates for the Administrators Union. M. Harvey and J. Sands have reached out to MPFT and Support Staff to begin negotiations.

J. Consent Agenda

1. **Approval of February 5, 2025, Minutes.**
2. **Warrants in the amount of $2,334,328.53.**

K. Petrone voted no to Policy 1st Reading in the Minutes.
A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, by C. Bolzan, seconded by W. Hodges and approved by rollcall vote.

W. Hodges – yes	**A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes**	**M. Alexander – yes**
C. Bolzan – yes	**K. Petrone – yes**	**J. Horrigan – yes**
L. MacInnis – yes	**M. Ogden – yes**	**T. Currier - yes**
E. Clements – yes	**J. McLean – yes**	

MOTION: Approve Consent Agenda
VOTE: 11-0, Motion Carried.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:06pm on a motion by A. Heaphy-Tenney, seconded by M. Alexander and unanimously approved by rollcall vote:

W. Hodges – yes	**A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes**	**M. Alexander – yes**
C. Bolzan – yes	**K. Petrone – yes**	**J. Horrigan – yes**
L. MacInnis – yes	**M. Ogden – yes**	**T. Currier - yes**
E. Clements – yes	**J. McLean – yes**	

MOTION: Adjourn meeting
VOTE: 11-0, Motion Carried.

Submitted by: ______________________________ Approved: ______________________
Lynn Viselli, Recording Secretary Date

Per the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the list of documents that were either distributed to the Masconomet School Committee before the meeting in the packet or at the meeting.

1. Agenda
2. Superintendent's FY26 Recommended Budget
3. Policies ADF, MASC 2024, Title IX Policies, KBG, EEBA, ECF
4. Competency Determination
5. Consent Agenda