MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

April 9, 2025

MEMBERS' PRESENT:	J. McLean, Chair, Boxford	T. Currier, Vice Chair, Middleton
	W. Hodges, Topsfield	J. Horrigan, Boxford
	A. Heaphy-Tenney, Topsfield	K. Petrone, Middleton (zoom)
	L. MacInnis, Middleton	C. Bolzan, Boxford
	M. Alexander, Middleton	M. Ogden, Topsfield (zoom 7:35pm)
MEMBERS ABSENT:	E. Clements, Boxford	
OTHERS PRESENT:	M. Harvey, Superintendent	
	J. Sands, Assistant Superintendent & Chief Procurement Officer (zoom)	

A. **Call to Order** – J. McLean, Chair, called the School Committee Meeting of April 9, 2025, to Order at 7:03pm, in the High School Library.

B. School Committee Public Hearing on School Choice Participation for 2025-2026 School Year and Vote on School Choice Participation

M. Harvey advised that under the school choice law (G.L. c. 76, sec. 12B) as amended in 1993, all school districts in Massachusetts are presumed to participate in and to admit non-resident students through school choice. A receiving school district can withdraw from school choice only if a school committee holds a public hearing on this issue and then votes to withdraw from the school choice program prior to June 1st. Any resolution to withdraw from school choice must contain the reasons for the withdrawal.

M. Harvey reviewed the school choice enrollments from 2020-2026 for grades 7-12. It is estimated that currently Masco has 57 school choice students enrolled. The projected enrollment in 2025-2026 includes 3 faculty children and 43 school choice students. Discussion followed regarding 10 school choice students for grade 8 due to the large class size. The addition of 10 students would be distributed throughout all sections of classes, which would increase by 1 student per section. This would maximize capacity without the need to add resources.

The school choice application is on the District website. If more than 10 students apply for a grade then a lottery will be held. If a student does not accept the offer, the next student on the list is offered the spot.

Public Comment – None

A motion was made by C. Bolzan to move that the Masconomet Regional School District withdraw from participation in the School Choice Program for the 2025-2026 school year in grades 8, 10, 11 and 12 due to enrollment. Furthermore, I move the Masconomet Regional School District limit School Choice participation in Grades 7 and 9 to ten students for each grade for the 2025-2026 school year. The motion was seconded by M. Alexander and approved by Roll Call vote:

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

MOTION: Withdraw from School Choice except Grades 7 and 9
VOTE: 9-0-0; Motion Passed.

C. Remarks from the Chair

J. McLean spoke regarding the budget communication plan to be discussed and the budget increases for this budget and the decline in student enrollment next year. He also spoke regarding federal funds received by Masconomet and that those funds are not at risk at this time.

D. Public Comment

Carol Crispo, Topsfield, spoke regarding the increase in sports fees and proportioning of those fees. She also suggested the District apply for more grant opportunities.
Russ Fiore, Boxford, spoke regarding the District's Title IX Policy adoption and subsequent revote of the Title IX Policy at a previous meeting and the possible loss of federal funding and to tell the School Committee "I told you so".

E. **SAB Update** – Ethan Silvano provided the update to the Committee. The Cultural Fair is coming up; Junior Prom tickets are available to be purchased; Senior Prom was held last week, and the Senior Internships have started. Student Elections have taken place, and the baking competition was held last week.

F. **State Legislative Updates from Kristen Kassner, Tram Nguyen, Sally Kearns and Bruce Tarr**

Both Sally Kearns and Kristen Kassner are working on the Ways and Means Committee, and many communities are facing budget challenges. The House held public hearings during the budget process and the main takeaway was the mental health of students. A Supplemental Budget was passed today for education and transportation with Districts receiving benefits from the Fair Share Funding.
J. Sands stated that the additional funds received this year for circuit breaker were 44% and the District planned for 75% reimbursement which resulted in an increase cost of $238,000.
Sally Kearns informed the School Committee that the Attorney General's Office will be investigating the increases in special education transportation and transportation in general as well as procurement procedures and the fluctuation in costs. Universal School Meals are continuing and $15M was voted into school transportation costs today in the House.
C. Bolzan stated that Masco will be undertaking a lot of Green Improvements in the Capital Projects and asked how to access funds available for these improvements from the State.
There was discussion regarding the proposed State Audit. Financial audits are done yearly in the legislature. The ballot question which passed is not looking at only finances but committee assignments, etc.
J. McLean presented his own slides regarding the cost drivers, both controllable and non-controllable, at Masconomet and what will occur if the budgets do not pass at Town Meetings.
Bruce Tarr stated that the Senate is working to reduce the circuit breaker threshold, and the Senate will take up the Supplemental Budget discussed next week. He also discussed changes to Chapter 70 funding distribution by changing the formula.

G. **Application for Approval of St. George Classical Academy Upper School Grades 9-12**

Julianna Joyce reviewed the prior approval for St. George Classical Academy, the school opened with 21 students in grades PreK-8, and then 10 additional students enrolled. They are now enrolling for next year hoping for 50-60 students and opening up grades 9 and 10. She reviewed the courses of study, including math, science, humanities, theology, fine arts and language. Time on learning is 166 days per school year.

C. Bolzan asked for a breakdown of class sizes. There are 8 students in the 3–4-year-old class; 9 students in K-1st grade; 6 students in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades; and 6 students in 6th, 7th and 8th grade. The educators are contracted for part-time jobs with additional educators hired to teach HS classes next year.

A motion was made by T. Currier to move the Masconomet School Committee vote to approve St. George Classical Academy Upper School grades 9-12 as presented. The motion was seconded by C. Bolzan and approved by Roll Call vote:

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

MOTION: Approve St. George's Classical Academy Upper School
VOTE: 9-0-1; Motion Passed.

H. **Town Meeting 2025 Communication Plan**

M. Harvey reviewed the Masconomet Budget Fact Sheet to be mailed out. A. Heaphy-Tenney added that she included as much information as possible on the flyer which will be posted on the website and handed out at Town Meetings. T. Currier suggested adding an explanation or graph showing the non-controllable costs. W. Hodges expressed his concern with the omission of the outcome if the overrides fail. L. MacInnis asked for the flyer to be reviewed by Legal Counsel. Discussion followed regarding a consistent message for all three towns and the timeline for distribution of mailers.

I. **Approve Revised August 28, 2024, School Committee Minutes**

M. Harvey advised the revisions are a response to an Open Meeting Law Compliant filed regarding the Retreat Minutes in August 2024. The Minutes needed to be amended to include more information.

A motion was made by T. Currier to move the Masconomet School Committee vote to approve the revised August 28, 2024, School Committee Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by A. Heaphy-Tenney and approved by Roll Call 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**
J. McLean - yes		

MOTION: Approve Revised August 24, 2024, Minutes
VOTE: 10-0-; Motion Passed.

J. Approve Amendments to CREST Charter

a. Crest Articles of Agreement

b. Crest Proposed Changes to Articles of Agreement

Masconomet belongs to the Special Education CREST Collaborative. The Board of Directors have made a change to the cap on non-member tuitions in the agreement. DESE reviewed the proposed changes and made additional changes. This amendment will provide greater flexibility to CREST's board in approving the annual budget. The most significant change is the removal of a cap that nonmembers districts' tuition premium cannot be more than 20% above member districts' tuition.

A motion was made by T. Currier to move that the Masconomet School Committee vote to approve the Amendments to CREST Charter as presented. The motion was seconded by A. Heaphy-Tenney and approved by Roll Call 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**
J. McLean - yes		

MOTION: Approve Amendments to CREST Charter
VOTE: 10-0-; Motion Passed.

K. Superintendent's Report

The gymnastics team won their 5th State Championship since 2019. DECA had 10 students qualify for the International Conference in Orlando, FL. The Middle School Science Department received a $44,700 grant to use over the next three years to support new curriculum. Annika Rogers won a silver medal for excellence and originality in the Scholastic Arts Competition. The Model UN Team competed in the Clark University competition and the Middle School Math Team finished undefeated this year. The next HS coffee will be held April 18th at 8:30am.

L. Subcommittee Reports

1. Community Relations – they are having a working meeting next Thursday and the next Community Dialogue is schedule for April 30th at 6:00pm. The website is up and running.
2. DCI/Budget – no updates at this time.
3. VOCAL – meeting next week and they are looking at Masco trends compared to state trends.
4. Policy – no updates at this time.
5. Liaison Updates – Middleton is working on the Warrant language and working with the Elementary School reps. May 1st is the meeting to discuss the overrides at the Library. Topsfield's moderator forum is coming up in preparation for Town Meeting. Boxford is discussing OOD placements over the last 6 years growing from 14 to 33 students.
6. Negotiations – meeting with the Administrators Union on Monday at 3:00pm and meeting with Support Staff Wednesday and MPFT Union Thursday.

M. <u>Consent Agenda</u> –

1. **Approval of March 12, 17 and 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes.**
2. **Warrants in the amount of $1,863,497.71.**
3. **Acceptance of 3 MEF Grants.**
4. **Accept Annual Report.**

A motion was made by T. Currier to move the Masconomet School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by M. Alexander and approved by Roll Call 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**
J. McLean - yes		

MOTION: Approve Consent Agenda
VOTE: 10-0, Motion Carried.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:41pm on a Motion by C. Bolzan, seconded by M. Alexander and unanimously approved by Roll Call 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**
J. McLean - yes		

MOTION: Adjourn meeting
VOTE: 10-0, 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. School Choice Participation
3. Application for Approval of St. George Classical Academy Upper School
4. Revised August 24, 2024, School Committee Minutes
5. Amended CREST Articles of Agreement
6. Consent Agenda