

MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 1, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Z. Bhujju, Chair, Topsfield (8:30pm) T. Cooper, Vice Chair, Middleton
K. Prentakis, Middleton J. Ciampa, Middleton
D. Casamassima, Middleton W. Hodges, Topsfield
C. Miller, Boxford J. McLean, Boxford
T. Teleen, Boxford P. Bernhart, Boxford
M. Ogden, Topsfield

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: M. Harvey, Superintendent
J. Sands, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations
P. Bullard, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

- A. **Call to Order** – T. Cooper, Vice Chair, called the Regular Meeting of the School Committee of December 1, 2021 to Order at 7:03 p.m., in the High School Library.
- B. **Remarks from the Chair** – T. Cooper expressed our sympathy for the students in Michigan.
- C. **Comments from the Public** – None.
- D. **Negotiations Update** – T. Cooper informed the SC that the negotiation team has met twice with the mediator and she explained the virtual process. Progress is being made. There is some language to be revised, the last meeting scheduled is set for Monday.
- E. **Student Advisory Board Update** – Stella Nagle provided the update to the SC. Student government and student council are working on promoting community within the school. She thanked the teachers and staff for providing a safe space for students to learn. The midterm schedule is stressful for the students with regular classes on the same day. The students are asking if a study hall could be substituted for classes. The mental health is too important for everyone and this change in the exam schedule would benefit everyone.
- F. **Class of 2021 Report** – Irene Duros presented the report to the SC. There is a report: **Care Counts in Crisis: College Admissions Deans Respond to COVID-19**. This report covers the impacts on the admission counselors by the pandemic how the events caused by the pandemic would not be held against the students. Adjustments were made to the process as life was interrupted. Standardized tests were optional, academic records were evaluated differently and extra-curricular activities, sports, etc. were all put on hold for many. What mattered most to college admissions counselors was how students managed during the pandemic with self-care, academic work, service and contributions to others and family. College admissions trends resulting from COVID-19 show there have been increased applications to selective schools due to various factors; standardized tests being optional, virtual recruitment strategies reaching a wider audience of students, institutions moving to the common app. There is a

decrease in acceptance rates, but this does not translate to more spots, as a result acceptance rates have dropped. Transfer students decreased during the pandemic and are expected to increase now. There is more of a focus on inclusion, diversity and equity and other sub groups less represented in their student body and more attention is placed on the writing portion of applications.

School counseling services available to the students was reviewed for each grade and what is addressed during that time. College counseling services include individual counseling services, helping develop customized post-secondary plans, admissions strategies and timelines/checklists for managing the process, planning for standardized testing, resume building, etc. The blackboard resources available and parent programs for each grade were presented, including Annual Parents' College Admission and Financial Aid Night, Senior Parents' Night, Financial Aid Program for Parents and Community College Night. The key factors for college acceptance are the student's transcript, strength of application, counselor and teacher recommendations, resume and level of interest in attending that school. Most colleges are test optional.

Irene Duros reviewed the college admission statistics for the student at Masco from 2020 to 2021. As of November 1st this year, 65% of the college applications have been submitted. Also reviewed was the student outcomes which included 4 year colleges, 2 year colleges, other post-secondary schooling, employment, military and other.

K. Prentakis asked why a higher number of students have chosen employment than in the past. Due to the pandemic students are choosing to work for a year because they want to attend in person, not remotely. A committee member asked if we track college graduation rates. Masco purchased the Alumni Tracker software that tracks graduation rates through the National Clearing House database. Masco is consistently higher than the national average. W. Hodges has heard that the modified admissions process have led to high dissatisfaction of schools chosen because they are not able to do an in person visit. Irene Duros informed the SC that all options for students to view schools are reviewed with them. The hope is that campus visits will be back next year. The top college admissions for Masco students was presented. Masco has a 66% acceptance rate. Discussion followed of SAT testing being optional having testing at Masco. School day testing for SATs was held in April for Juniors only and PSATs were offered to Sophomores and Juniors. Both were a success. In March 2022 another SAT will be scheduled for Juniors only.

- G. **High School Principal Report** – M. Carabatsos informed the SC that her main goal is to create a community and get the students involved. She reviewed the events that have been held and events that are coming up. The athletic achievements and recognitions were presented. The High School Council kicks off Tuesday with a meeting for introductions. The revision of the handbook is the main focus this year. They hope to make it more user friendly. Meetings will be held both virtually and in person. Mask breaks are under a pilot program currently. A large number of students are opting out of mask breaks. A survey will be done next week to get feedback on this pilot. There is no class time missed because the 15 minute break is not during instruction time. Mask breaks are not a social time. The courtyard is a designated space for mask break at any time during the day. Looking ahead to the National Honor Society Tutor Program, which pairs up students with peers from the NHS to meet one on one for tutoring. Semester 1 exams were reviewed and the modified schedule to allow for longer assessment blocks. The changes in the resting schedule allows for review, relearning and assessment during class time. In the future, there may be a move toward the semester ending with no exams because assessments have been given during the semester. Senior internship planning was discussed. She is working with the Department Chairs on the School Improvement Plan. Social Emotional Learning remains in the forefront with programming allowing students to develop a toolbox and be able to discern normal anxiety.

P. Bernhart agreed that students need to learn to be independent.

- H. **Superintendent's Update** – M. Harvey provided an update on the COVID cases from 9/8-12/1. The cases are spiking up again this last week after Thanksgiving. Commissioner Reilly said to expect this spike through January and to continue to work with our Departments of Public Health. The MS numbers are disproportionately high right now. Our vaccination rate is at 78.35% through 11/30. The cases by vaccination are 2:1 with positive cases more prevalent in non-vaccinated people.
- There is a delayed opening coming up for PD and the options for teachers were presented. The search for an Assistant Superintendent of Student Services will be advertised 12/6 with applications due by 1/7/2022. An interview team will be assembled, resumes screened 1/11-1/14 and initial interviews 1/24. Two finalists will be recommended to Mike for a 2nd interview and visit the week of 1/31. References checks and a site visit the week of 2/7, the position offered 2/18 and presented to the SC on 3/9.

I. Subcommittee Reports

1. **Community Relations** – T. Teleen informed the SC that there had not been a meeting since the last SC meeting. W. Hodges is waiting for dates for the Holiday concert.
2. **Budget** – T. Cooper had no update. The Department Heads to meet 1/26 at the next budget meeting. She asked the SC to submit questions no later than 12/8.
3. **Anti-Racism** – W. Hodges informed the SC that no meeting was held since the last SC meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 7th at 7:00p.m.
4. **Policy** – M. Ogden will continue the discussion about the size of the SC and she will reach out to each member individually.
5. **Liaisons Update** – C. Miller attended the Boxford FC meeting and they assigned a 2.5% increase for this year's budget. They are aware of the increase in the allotment. They did not have any issue with reducing the SC from 11 members to 9. K. Prentakis spoke to the FC for Middleton regarding the reduction in size of the SC and proportionate voting and with removing the jail population. The annual tax classification hearing occurred with the growth reviewed and the upcoming Municipal Building project was reviewed. M. Ogden will be reaching out to the Topsfield leaders regarding the size of the SC this week.

J. Consent Agenda

1. **Approval of November 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes**
2. **Warrants of \$1,522,691.50 (10) signed since November 17, 2021.**
3. **FY23 Budget Calendar**

A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda by T. Cooper, seconded by C. Miller and unanimously approved

MOTION: To Approve the Consent Agenda

VOTE: 11-0, Motion Carried

- K. Adjourn into Executive Session for the purpose of strategy relative to collective bargaining with the Masconomet Teachers Association and Paraprofessional Association (Executive Session Purpose #3). The Chair has determined that holding this discussion in Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the District's Bargaining Position. The Committee will not return to Open Session after the conclusion of the Executive Session. A Motion was made by Z. Bhujji to enter into Executive Session and not return to Open Session; it was seconded by W. Hodges and unanimously approved by Rollcall Vote:

D. Casamassima - yes
C. Miller - yes
T. Teleen- yes
M. Ogden – yes
T. Cooper – yes
J. Ciampa - yes

W. Hodges - yes
J. McLean - yes
P. Bernhart - yes
Z. Bhuju – yes
K. Prentakis – yes

MOTION: To Adjourn into Executive Session and not return to Open Session

VOTE: Motion Carried

Submitted By: _____
Lynn Viselli, Recording Secretary

Approved _____
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. College Admissions in the COVID-19 Era
3. Principal's Report
4. Superintendent's Report
5. Consent Agenda