

MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Wednesday October 21, 2020 – 7:00 P.M., Middle School Library
Regular School Committee Meeting

SUMMARY MEETING NOTES

Note: These summary notes are NOT meeting minutes.

Official meeting minutes are approved by the school committee and posted on the website. Neither is intended to be a transcription of the meeting.

In accordance with Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, there will be no In-Person Public Access to this Meeting. Members of the public who wish to follow the proceedings of the School Committee through livestream may access the meeting at the following link: <https://youtu.be/mnAtNUGOrKq>

Additionally, members of the public who wish to submit a brief statement or question to be read during the "Comments from the Audience" section of the agenda may submit their statement or question to the School Committee Chair at the email address: cmiller@masconomet.org by noon on Wednesday, October 21, 2020. Please type "Statement to be read during 'Comments from the Audience'" in the Subject line of your email. The Chair may choose to omit comments that have been previously addressed, or delay reading comments until a later School Committee Meeting if the time allotted for "Comments from the Audience" has been exceeded. As is the case with in-person "Comments from the Audience," the Committee will not respond to these emailed comments at this meeting. The Committee may choose to address the topics raised through an agenda item in a later meeting.

A. Regular Meeting – Call to Order at 7:00 PM

B. Remarks from the Chair – C. Miller

Hybrid model began on Oct. 19 - glad to see people are giving it some time

Call from Union Rep - S.Dearborn - Both parties are usually supposed to submit proposals by Oct. 30 in a year of renewal of contract, which is scheduled for June 2021. Given the unique status of things this year, SC members suggested postponing that date - will collaborate with union rep on that.

C. Comments from the Audience – **SEE ABOVE**

K.McVey - Question - with shift to hybrid, has a policy for quantity and due dates for assignments and homework load been revised? Comment - If we return to remote, please return to the remote schedule. Liked later start time, opportunity to meet with others and that the homework load was more equitably spread throughout the week.

Lindsey Byman - Class of 2022 SAB - read [this statement \(linked here\)](#) :
Summary points:

- gratitude for all the hard work of everyone building learning environment
- students feel happy to connect w their teachers in person
- Teacher split attn and reduces productivity, more distraction
- 7 classes burnout potential with more homework already this week
- Auditorium has limitations for study hall: no power outlets, unreliable wifi
- everyone (students) she's surveyed wants to reinstate WIN block
- eager to share more input and ideas from student body toward positive learning environment for everyone

D. [Approve MOU with the Paraprofessional Union](#)

Approved unanimously.

Comparable language to teacher contract, adhering to DESE guidelines, and staff & student protocols.

Because of a change in the schedule this year (no homeroom), about 10 min a day, 50 min a week, were added in this MOU. This will result in approx. \$17K to be added to budget; -this is the only budget impact of this MOU w union.

E. [Approval of Appointment of Paul Worth as the Boxford Representative to the Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School District Committee](#)

Paul Worth - before retirement, worked 22 years at NS Tech and was there when it merged to become ENSAT.

All Boxford representatives unanimously approved his appointment.

F. [Middle School Principal Report \(link here\)](#) – P. McManus

Principal McManus reviewed the Pros and Cons in his slide presentation

Reported that many students had selected hybrid in the emailed survey but switched to full remote in the week prior to the start of the hybrid model. While the option to change which option a student has selected remains open, students are asked to try and commit to one as much as possible, and allow for one to two weeks to accommodate requests to switch from remote to hybrid.

Attendance: if a student's cohort is scheduled for in-person but that student can not attend in person, parent must call the main office; if that students can participate in classes on remote that day, specify this to the office and the student can be marked "remote present" as they attend each class virtually that day. Office and nursing staff are working hard to track all students daily.

G. [School Reopening Update \(link here\)](#) – M. Harvey and J. Sands

[Attached update](#) includes photos that were shared on slides during the meeting - showing how things are looking with students back on campus - drop-off, classrooms, lunch, cleaning after lunch, and a video of band practice outside under the tent!

Some points of note in update:

Thanks to Jeff Sands, Doug Batchelder, Steve Burt and their teams for the many hours they've put in over the last month to get us here.

Lunches: decided to increase day porters to 5 part time (from 3 full time) contracted janitorial staff, and using more high powered equipment to handle the disinfecting spray, allowing them to efficiently cover the whole cafe within the time between lunches. (cleaning is like a NASCAR pit crew) - the spray has a one-minute dwell time (kills pathogens in that time)

Teachers are doing their best; hearing some frustration; new experience for everyone, described as feeling like they are "all first year teachers this year" no matter how long they have been teaching - It's going to take time and practice. Admin. is looking into ways to help teachers with time for lesson prep and related ways to support teachers' capacity to deliver the strong educational programs they want to be able to.

IT issues:

- many students needed to remove their phones from Masco network because it's one device per person on the network
- On Tuesday, after rebooting our firewall on Monday night, the system didn't come back online properly and slowed internet traffic to a crawl. It was resolved by Tuesday evening. Thanks to Vin Ruocco and the IT Staff for working through both of these issues as quickly as possible. (Dr. Harvey noted that the rebooting of the system was part of the ongoing remediation work that has been taking place to address the impact of a lightning strike over the summer that affected numerous areas of the facility)

Proctors: Our current need is 15 full-time equivalent (FTE) proctors. We've hired 11 FTE proctors to date. The need is lower than originally projected because it's not 1:1 - Leadership team and service providers on staff collaborated on individuals' weekly schedules so that less proctors are needed to cover accommodations (for example, over five weekdays, one Proctor can cover three accommodations if they are each one or two days a week)

Power sources for laptops are being explored; Most chrome-books between 8-10 hours; limitations w firecode and charging stations. It was noted that power cords can be borrowed from library if needed.

SAB NOTED: no power outlets accessible to students spread out in the auditorium for study hall.

Questions/Discussion:

It is all being figured out. Considerations regarding equity for full-remote students.

Q - What would cause us to go into full remote?

A - Will depend on the situation. Detailed data from nurses' offices being collected. While there are some protocols in place from DESE, the SC Chair made it clear the administration has full authority to make a call on this decision for our district at any time, if they feel it is appropriate for the safety of our students and staff.

It was noted that there can be two kinds of building "closures" due to Covid19:

- the first would be a short term, for example two days, for a "deep clean" of the entire facility based on active positive cases identified while in the buildings
- the second could be longer term if there is a community-wide spike or trend, and the Tri-Town Covid19 Response Team, in collaboration with the Departments of Public Health, determines together that this is the appropriate decision for the given situation

Q - SAB asked Dr. Harvey, how will the superintendent and HS principal listen to and engage with students who have expressed that they want to be looking at the schedule?

A - Dr. Harvey responded "good question" and "we've heard you" The message from a large number of students advocating for WIN block is clear. Dr. Harvey said they are still working on this - talking with Mr. Delani; the schedule is being evaluated.

Q - Response to comments implying lack of responsiveness to faculty inquiries?

A - Dr. Harvey said he is trying but it has been like a "firehose of emails" this year. Leadership Team going through their FAQ so they can go back to their own departments with much of the information people are seeking. Dr. Harvey mentioned that many of the questions he gets can be better answered by one of the other people in leadership within the district (example given was about how to take attendance)

Comment - Thanks to everyone at Masco for stepping up to the plate when the SC's voted to move into hybrid with a tight timeline to get all of the operational pieces in place - it was all "under the wire" but it got done by Monday morning of the 19th.

That said, there was a great deal of anxiety prior to shift to hybrid, and this seemed connected to communication gaps. Based on that - hope to hear more in future updates from admin regarding how the internal relations at Masco are being worked on. Communication is so important, now more than ever. Hope to hear about whether more frequent communication among broader team of people at Masco who best know the various details for how things work (from operational to attendance to teaching methods). It seems like it would help a lot if full leadership (not just exec leadership) are included more in process and decision-making. Want to hear more in the next update about how the "team" of Masco will be more engaged in process, and how communication within the district can be made better.

Response - This is something being looked at: What can admin do to support teachers? Right now it seems the biggest thing will be TIME - for prep and for dept heads to have opportunities to pass knowledge on from summer PDs about teaching in a hybrid model. One PD grant came in double this year, so need time to use it.

Q - SC member asked about whether more time for PLCs among teachers can also help them help each other by sharing about what's working and not working for each other as they adapt to hybrid. This seemed to help a lot for the remote model.

A - Dr. Harvey said that they are evaluating the schedule(s) with this kind of need (PLCs, PDs, prep-time, etc) in mind, as well as with the consistent feedback from students and teachers about the benefits of WIN block.

H. [Anti-Racism Resolution](#) – T. Cooper

Update - back in summer, dept heads shared about how students who thought they weren't getting ed/skills about this topic at Masco contacted them, but when looking closer realized they are actually covering a lot in this area within the curriculum. However - the piece that is missing for most students is exposure to many real-life situations and/or broad diversity while at Masco.

Attached is a letter two departments, Jill Story and Meagan Hildebrand, wrote after students and alumni wrote letters asking Masco to do better.

The subcommittee met with these department heads, who took our draft resolution and started using it as a working doc for a plan for what to do next. One idea was in connecting with other communities (example Lawrence) to not just do service projects but to collaborate on mutual projects together - service projects or educational programs. (now might be a uniquely good time bc can meet remote)

It was suggested that we put the resolution on the SC page of Masco website.

The Anti-Racism resolution was approved by all members present.

I. School Committee Responsibilities and Protocols – C. Miller

1. [School Committee Responsibilities and Protocols](#)
2. [Policy BBA- Powers and Duties of School Committee](#)
3. [Policy BCA – School Committee Member Ethics](#)
4. [Policy BDD- School Committee/Superintendent Relations](#)

Last year, the SC created a “Responsibilities and Protocols” document for members to sign each year, typically in a meeting shortly after town elections. In the disruption from Covid19, this got pushed back and is on agenda tonight.

All SC members present signed the document in person at this meeting.

The Chair spoke about how the pandemic has created some gray areas on the distinction of roles between the School Committee and administration, which makes sense given the unique situation.

That said, some reminders of policies in place regarding roles were reviewed.

Summary:

- School Committee is responsible for “leadership in district vision, policy, budgeting, planning, program evaluation, and advocacy.” *(from doc linked above)*
- “It is the Superintendent’s responsibility to oversee personnel issues and to manage the day-to-day operations of the district. It is the School Committee’s responsibility to evaluate the Superintendent’s effectiveness in these matters.” *(from doc linked above)*
- SC members should work to direct concerns through the [Chain of Command](#).
- SC members like to hear from all stakeholders (Dept Heads, teachers, students, families, community) through appropriate channels in order to better understand and inform decisions about policy, budget, superintendent, vision and planning.

Discussion:

It was noted that with the unique circumstances of this year, this is a good time for things like looking at anti-racism curriculum in schools, good time for looking at changes because things are so different this year, and it’s a good time for teachers to speak up and feel comfortable doing so because there is zero down side to that right now - hope they know that.

If we never hear about what’s not working, how can we help to make things better (through policy/resources)?

SC members expressed that they want to hear about what’s working and what’s not. It is important to hear from all stakeholders as it pertains to decision-making for the district (policies and resources) - so beyond principals and exec leadership updates, and the student (SAB) updates, members of the SC would like to also hear more from teachers and department heads in the district - directly in our meetings. It was noted that last year, plans were laid out to begin inviting Department Heads to meetings to share reports spread out throughout the year, but when the pandemic closed the building this was set aside.

School Committee members' role is **not** to try to solve problems directly for staff, but to encourage them to share their concerns with everyone, not just with SC members, so that the message is heard where it can be best and most appropriately addressed.

J. Subcommittee Reports

1. Policy – M. Ogden

- a. [AC, Non Discrimination and Harassment, 2 Reading](#) - passed unanimously
- b. [MASC Policy Review](#) - passed motion to pursue working with MASC on this

2. Community Engagement – B. Thornborough

Reviewed that this committee held a community forum before remote, a first listening session before decision about hybrid, and a second listening session after hybrid decision. Forum was quite structured; listening sessions more free-form.

Seek to improve understanding - community to better understand Masco and Masco to understand the community - some gray area - but dialogue is needed - still looking for how best to do this - trying out listening sessions has been one way.

Need to make sure that it is made clear at the beginning of listening sessions what the role of the SC is and purpose of listening as just that - listening - and that the SC is not tasked with solving problems. It is important that we hear the concerns of the community - even if we can't respond directly but can redirect the concern when appropriate.

One member noted that staff and parents seem more comfortable and feel better heard in listening sessions versus the public comments during regular business meetings. This lends credence to our process because we are wanting to hear from stakeholders.

Important to have a pulse on students, admin, faculty, parents to support confidence in decision making process as an SC member.

Public comment during regular public meetings has several drawbacks for the public, which was a key reason why the listening sessions are being tried out as a more informal opportunity for public engagement on SC matters.

Possible that moving forward the listening sessions might also reach community members who do not have children in the district—especially when budget is being developed.

Future “business” meetings will include looking at community partnerships (ie TTC), collaboration with other subcommittees, news publications and a range of other possibilities.

Discussion concluded that:

- Seems like monthly listening sessions might be enough unless there is specific reason to need one prior to one of the alternating SC meetings.
- Summary “take-aways” from listening sessions have been shared with superintendents & principals, and will be shared with full SC as well (for those who could not attend)
- In between, will also have regular subcommittee meetings without the listening session part in order to address other business and goals of the subcommittee
- Next regular subcommittee meeting will be on 10/28
- Planning a Listening Session on Mon. 11/16

K. Consent Agenda

- 1 [Approval of October 07, 2020 Meeting Minutes](#) - approved with one edit

2. [Warrants \\$1,659,161.55 \(09\) warrants signed since October 07, 2020](#) - approved

L. Adjournment

Next Meetings:

Date	Type	Time and Location
November 4, 2020	School Committee Meeting	7:00 p.m., MS Library
November 18, 2020	School Committee Meeting	7:00 p.m., MS Library
December 2, 2020	School Committee Meeting	7:00 p.m., MS Library

*** Members of the audience who are recognized by the chair to offer comments may also submit a signed, written copy of their remarks for inclusion in the meeting records. Written comments will be posted on line with all meeting documents.

NB: School Committee meeting minutes are not intended to be a transcription of the meeting. All meetings are video recorded and the complete videos are posted on-line at: <https://www.masconomet.org/domain/41>

Masconomet Vision 2025

Student learning is highly interdisciplinary and connects students to solving real-world problems.

Students feel safe, happy, emotionally secure, and physically well. They are builders of a culture of respect and kindness.

Curriculum and instruction is learner – centered: All students are achieving the same standards in multiple ways and can demonstrate their learning through a variety of different assessments.

Instruction is personalized to the individual learning styles and unique needs and interests of ALL students.

Our students are culturally sensitive, globally aware through their study and experiential learning, and they act confidently with an understanding of their impact on the world.