

MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

March 2, 2026

MEMBERS' PRESENT: M. Alexander, Middleton, Chair (zoom) (left meeting at 9:45pm)

A. Heaphy-Tenney, Topsfield, Vice Chair
T. Currier, Middleton K. Petrone, Middleton
M. Ogden, Topsfield L. MacInnis, Middleton
W. Hodges, Topsfield (zoom) M. Giberson, Boxford

MEMBERS ABSENT: C. Bolzan, Boxford, J. Horrigan, Boxford, J. McLean, Boxford

OTHERS PRESENT: M. Harvey, Superintendent

- A. **Call to Order** – M. Alexander Chair, called the School Committee Meeting of March 2, 2026, to Order at 7:02pm, at the High School Library.

B. Comments from the Audience –

Brennan Gerspach, Boxford, Masco Class 2020 spoke in support of the Chinese program and against not filling the World Language Department head positions.

Weston Shamsai, Boxford, Masco Class of 2024 spoke in support of the Chinese program and the benefits of speaking Chinese. He suggested rotating foreign languages in the MS to expose the students to all the languages offered.

Emily Kaiserman, Masco 8th grade student – spoke in support of the Chinese program in the Middle School and her experiences in the class.

Heather Cote, Masco English Teacher – spoke against cutting an FTE from the English Department and impacts to the department, electives offered and students.]

Jessica Steffens, Topsfield, spoke in support of the Chinese program which helps develop students to be globally responsible.

Owen Getchell, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program and his experiences in class.

Patrick Mahoney, MS Masco Teacher – spoke against the cutting of a MS team and the impacts on the average class size and other negative student impacts. He does not support a swing team at the MS.

Colin Moran, Masco Senior – spoke in support of the Chinese program and his experiences in the class.

Natasha Bhatia, Masco Senior – spoke in support of the Chinese program and how it has benefitted her at Masco and in college admissions.

Nicko Tzortzis – Masco MS Teacher and Union President – stated that some parts of the proposed budget plan are agreed upon. He spoke against cuts to educators and the impacts on the students. He spoke against the change to the MS structure.

Renee Young, Masco Social Studies Dept. Head – spoke regarding the proposed elimination of the Social Studies Dept. Head position and the impacts on students and staff.

Shannon Murphy, Masco English Teacher – spoke about how the class sizes impact the students learning and how cutting a position redistributes the work to the remaining teachers.

Arjun Shreyakar, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program and his experience and how it is applied to the real world.

Cameron, parent – spoke in support of the Chinese program on behalf of his daughter.

Belle DiCarlo, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program and presented a petition with 300 signatures in support of the program.

Ella Blaus, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program and her experience in the class.

Stacey Manheim, Masco Art Dept. Head – spoke in support of keeping the Art Department Head position.

Zoe Chen, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program and her experience speaking Chinese with her grandparents and the benefits of a low-class size.

Samia Lalikos, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program and her experience in the class with fewer students.

Dorothy Hussey, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program.

Nathan Kaiserman, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program and his experience. He added that this is the only non-European language offered.

Ishan Shreyakar, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program.

A Masco student (who did not sign in) spoke in support of the Chinese program and the impact to the Global Diplomacy Program.

Rose Leon, Masco student – spoke in support of the Chinese program and her experiences in the program.

Ai Li, Masco Chinese Teacher – spoke regarding preserving the Chinese program and the impacts to the students and Vision of Learner criteria.

Amy Hussey, Masco parent – spoke regarding the commitment made by Masco to the students who take Chinese to continue the program.

C. Comments from the Chair – M. Alexander thanked the people who spoke tonight and the people who sent emails to the SC. He spoke regarding the difficult decisions to be made to balance the budget.

D. Student Advisory Board Update - None

E. FY27 Budget Deliberation – M. Harvey presented the FY Budget Agenda for tonight. Health insurance premiums will increase by 14.4% and Dental insurance will remain unchanged. Placeholders for Health insurance was 16.0% and 5.0% for Dental insurance. As a result, the District's FY27 Level-Service Operating Assessment has decreased by \$80,822, a 4.6% increase in Operating Expenses and an increase of 7.2% in Operating Assessment.

M. Harvey reviewed the requests not included in the FY27 Level Service Budget. This includes \$741,000 in new staffing program and project cost requests which were received earlier this fall and originally shared with the SC on 12/18/25.

M. Harvey reviewed the response to the SC request for an updated budget scenario for scenario two requested 2/7/26 and 2/10/26. Scenario 2 represents the SC's list of itemized Level-Service Budget cuts and added Design & Permitting Contract for Softball, Track & Field, and Tennis project to "Capital Costs including Debt Service". FY27 SC List of Level-Service Budget cuts together with a transfer from E&D in the amount of \$443,483 brings the increase over last years budget to 4.2% and 9.2 FTEs impacted. The Capital Costs including Debt Service in Scenario 2 include the replacement of 900 Chromebooks which are at the end of life; replacement of 30 Chromebook carts; renovation of the MS front sidewalk including an ADA ramp at Endicott Road; and design and permitting contract for softball, track & field and tennis totaling \$587,154.

FY27 Assessment Overview for Scenario 2 was reviewed. The assessment per town was reviewed, Boxford increases by 2.8%, Middleton increases by 2.2%, and Topsfield increases by 2.6%.

M. Ogden reviewed the projected enrollment for the MS over the next 3 years, which projects an increase of 51 students. She is concerned with the impact to the MS students and would like to add half of the team back. She added that the SC's responsibility is to deliver the best education to the Masco students, not the SB or FC and we need to gain support for our schools and budget.

Discussion followed regarding the request to get to a 2.5%-3.0% increase in assessment and the tax increase implications to residents.

A. Heaphy-Tenney stated that there are no no-impact options and a few low impact options. The MS structure is limiting with no flexibility and asked if a junior high model would be better.

T. Currier responded that a change to junior high needs to be studied.

M. Giberson spoke regarding small teams which limit scheduling options and enrollment impacts on the teams.

Discussion followed regarding the class sizes of the Chinese program and the SC policy regarding lowest class size average. Online classes and tutoring were discussed as an option for students to continue Chinese and Global Diplomacy.

M. Ogden asked for further information regarding the Global Diploma impacts and a back-up plan for Juniors enrolled in the program.

Discussion regarding combining the World Language and Social Studies Department Heads and delegation of authority to fill the Dept. Head positions took place.

M. Giberson stated that this would be a new position and would need to hold both licensures as the primary evaluator.

Discussion regarding a reduction to 23 busses for 2026-2027, which would result in a savings of \$100,000. M. Harvey added that the late bus must remain for equity for students who need to stay late.

The reduction in a Principal was discussed. A. Heaphy-Tenney suggested it is a creative solution with low impact. T. Currier informed the SC that it would be a new position and would have to be posted, and would require a strong candidate.

Capital Costs for FY27 were reviewed, including the replacement of the Chromebooks and Chrome carts.

M. Alexander stated that the budget increase is 2.9% and there will still be overrides in the towns.

F. First Reading Policy DBJ

T. Currier reviewed the policy. MA law limits the amount in a regional school district's Excess & Deficiency account. The Masco School Committee may annually use an amount from its E&D account in certifying the District's budget. The amount used in any year must maintain the E&D balance at a level that:

1. Shall not be less than three percent of the operating budget and its budgeted capital costs for the succeeding fiscal year.
2. Comply with the law.
3. Preserves the cash flow needs of the District.
4. Preserves the District's ability to fund unanticipated operating expenses taking into consideration the projected surplus or deficit in the current fiscal year; and
5. Minimize fluctuations in the use of E&D in the budget taking into consideration the projected surplus or deficit in the current fiscal year.

Any added funds exceeding four percent shall be returned to the member communities to reduce their assessments in accordance with the law.

T. Currier made a motion to accept Policy DBJ as amended and presented, seconded by M. Ogden and unanimously approved by Rollcall vote:

T. Currier – yes
K. Petrone – yes

M. Ogden – yes

A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes

M. Giberson – yes

L. MacInnis - yes

W. Hodges – yes

MOTION: Approve Policy DBJ

VOTE: 7-0, Motion Passed

G. Superintendent's Report – The MA Scholastic Art & Writing competition took place. The MS art students received 27 awards in Writing and Art. The HS received the second largest number of awards at 47.

M. Harvey congratulated Sam Richardson one of the top journalists in New England with the morning update as the program director.

M. Harvey congratulated the 1-meter diving state champion and the girls indoor track team with a Masco record in the long jump and state championship in the Pentathlon,

J. Sands will be retiring March 27th and Mike thanked him for his service to the Masco community.

March 4, 2026, is the Public Hearing for the Budget.

Tri-Town Council is hosting Anthony Sideri who will speak about his study of addiction and recovery. March 12, 2026, the Tri-Town is hosting a Multicultural Lingual Night.

The next HS parent coffee is March 20 and MS coffee March 27 both at 8:30am.

H. Sub-Committee Reports

- a. Community Relations – scheduling the next meeting and a community dialogue.
- b. DCI/Budget – meeting March 13 at 1:00pm.
- c. VOCAL – no update.
- d. Policy –met today before the School Committee meeting.
- e. Liaison – Middleton is holding a Community Listening Session, and the budget meeting is March 7. Topsfield is meeting next Monday with Listening Sessions scheduled for the 2nd weekend in March.
- f. Negotiations – no update.

I. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of February 4, 2026, Meeting Minutes.
- b. Warrants of \$3,460,220.92.
- c. Approve Superintendent Finalist Interview Meeting Minutes February 9, 2026, and February 11, 2026.
- d. Accept PAC Donation.

M. Ogden made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented, seconded by T. Currier and unanimously approved by Rollcall vote.

T. Currier – yes	M. Ogden – yes	M. Giberson – yes	W. Hodges – yes
K. Petrone – yes	A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes	L. MacInnis – yes	

MOTION: Approve Consent Agenda

VOTE: 7-0, Motion Passed

T. Currier made a motion to adjourn at 10:06 PM, seconded by M. Ogden and unanimously approved by Rollcall vote.

T. Currier – yes M. Ogden – yes M. Giberson – yes W. Hodges – yes
K. Petrone – yes A. Heaphy-Tenney – yes L. MacInnis - yes

MOTION: Adjourn meeting
VOTE: 7-0, Motion Passed.

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. First Reading Policy DBJ
3. FY27 Budget Presentation
4. Consent Agenda