

**MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
20 ENDICOTT ROAD, BOXFORD, MA 01921
MEMORANDUM**

TO: MASCONOMET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
FROM: KEVIN M. LYONS, SUPERINTENDENT 
SUBJECT: SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – JANUARY 13, 2016
DATE: JANUARY 8, 2016

B. STUDENT PRESENTATION

Masconomet High School Chamber Singers, under the direction of Mr. Brian O’Cock, will perform a rendition of “Bohemian Rhapsody”, written by Freddy Mercury and performed by the rock group Queen. This was a big hit at the High School Holiday Concert.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve/Accept Policy JIB
2. Approval of Amended November 18, 2015 Regular School Committee Meeting Minutes (Addition of Comments from Audience)
3. Approval of December 16, 2015 Regular School Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Accept GE Star Award of \$500 (Ck. # 154527) to be Used by R. Schonewald, Mathematics Department
5. Approval of Use of Facilities Request and Fee Waiver from J. Pugh on Behalf of Mass. HS Football Coaches Association for the Auditorium on March 19 from 8 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
6. Warrants \$1,791,388.46 – Fourteen (14) Warrants Signed

Item 1, Policy JIB, has been reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee and presented with no substantive changes. A new review date is set for 5 years out. Item 4, Congratulations to Carolyn Fisk, Masco HS student receiving the 2015 GE Star Award. The \$500 cash award will be used to enhance mathematics teaching and learning by HS math teacher Rich Schonewald. Item 5, please see Jim Pugh’s memo in regard to this request. It is related to a charity football event co-sponsored by the MA coaches and the Shriners.

E. APPROVAL OF REVISED SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR 2016-2017

The already approved 2016-2017 calendar has been revised in draft form to reflect changes in the teachers’ labor contract effected after the calendar was approved. The new contract language allows an earlier start for teachers, this year allowing an August 31st reporting date (Wednesday). Seventh and Ninth Graders will attend school for orientation on Thursday September 1. Friday is a no school day per the contract language. All teachers and students will report on Tuesday September 6th, the day after Labor Day. There is also a revision to the calendar reflecting the School Committee decision to have a half-day of school on Good Friday

2017.

I. APPROVAL OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

The employment contract for Susan Givens, approved in executive session, has been signed by Ms. Givens and John Spencer, School Committee Chair. The contract, effective July 1, 2016, is on the agenda for approval.

J. FINANCIAL REPORT

Susan Givens will present the FY16 2nd Quarter Report and an updated FY17 Thumbnail. Susan emailed these to you on Friday afternoon.

K. BUDGET PRESENTATION

Dan Volchok, Chair of the Budget Subcommittee, will present a progress report on the FY17 budget development to the School Committee.

L. MCAS/PARCC DECISION

The Superintendent recommends to the School Committee that it choose the on-line MCAS 2.0 (PARCC) administration for testing in the spring of 2016. Our first decision is to stay with MCAS for one more year or move this spring to MCAS 2.0 (current renaming of PARCC) . If MCAS 2.0, There is then a choice to administer it in paper and pencil format or in the on-line version. The “old” MCAS will no longer exist after 2016 and all districts must administer MCAS 2.0 in 2017.

Districts selecting MCAS 2.0 will be “held harmless” for two years in which the new test cannot adversely affect the district’s accountability rating. Masconomet now has a Level-I rating for each school and for the District. Either paper and pencil or on-line MCAS 2.0 provides the hold harmless. There is no hold harmless provision for districts electing one more year of MCAS.

For districts choosing MCAS 2.0, only grades 7 and 8 are affected in 2016. There are no MCAS 2.0 tests available for high school in 2016. The traditional MCAS will be administered in 10th grade ELA and math. There is, however, a 2.0 test for 8th graders taking algebra. We have about 100 students in that category.. The old test also will be used for high school science and middle school science tests. Essentially, a 2.0 decision impacts only grade 7 and grade 8 math and ELA.

I found the most compelling arguments for MCAS 2.0 to be:

1. The option of seventh and eighth graders taking the new tests on-line before taking the high stakes 10th grade tests which must be 2.0 and will be required to be on-line no later than 2019.
2. The 2.0 tests are better measures of learning on the MA Curriculum Frameworks and more accurately measure what is now being taught.
3. There is much agreement that the new tests are better at measuring students’ abilities to apply learning to real problems.
4. Our 7th and 8th graders are “digital natives” and most are already experienced in taking on-line assessments—more true this year because of introduction of Chromebooks to Middle School.

5. We have the network capacity and number of devices available to implement the on-line tests, not true in many districts and it would not have been true at Masco in 2015. Our costs are minimal.
6. I met with the Spofford Pond School faculty who, last year, administered both the paper and pencil and on-line versions of PARCC. The Spofford Pond staff overwhelmingly recommended that we go on-line. They had a very good experience last year.
7. The on-line version has some accommodations for students with disabilities that are obvious only to the student. For example, a student with the accommodation of being able to use a calculator, will have a calculator pop up on her screen as the test recognizes her profile and the specific accommodations are entered in advance by staff.

I found the best arguments for staying with MCAS to be student and staff familiarity with the test and testing routines. It is also argued that with changes coming, perhaps, to the Frameworks and to the already developed PARCC tests, there may be no “experience advantage” for students who have taken the older (2015 and 2016) PARCC tests. I recognize PARCC type tests to be superior and I believe that moving now, rather than a year from now when you must move, is appropriate for Masco.

I found the best arguments to do MCAS 2.0 in (the more familiar) pen and pencil format to be the short time span to plan for change before testing begins in March, more intensive training needed for staff, and the risks associated with change to a new technology— possible technology failures. Failures in some districts last year resulted in more hours of testing time, and higher levels of aggravation. While I see these possibilities, some districts had very smooth on-line implementations last year. The DESE has reported fixing many of last year's problems due to test design or software design. I think that in terms of technology readiness we are well prepared. Our tech staff is confident that we are ready to go on-line.

As of January 4th, 235 of 360 districts chose MCAS 2.0 for 2016; 112 chose to stay with MCAS. Of those districts choosing MCAS 2.0, 46% chose on-line tests, 37% chose paper and pencil, and 17% chose a mix of paper and pencil and on-line.

I recommend that School Committee approve a motion to administer MCAS 2.0, on-line in spring 2016.

M. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

One-to-One Program Planning Update — I will be providing a brief update of our 1:1 implementation planning and process. Please see the last page of this report.

The Every Student Succeeds Act — I provided a very brief legal take on impacts of ESSA in your packet. The following is a link to a good resource explaining the various pieces and changes to the new law. http://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/inside-essa-the-new-federal-education-law/?cmp=cpcgoogewesea121615&ccid=ew_esea_12165&ccag=esea_key&cckw=essa&cccw=esea_EE&gclid=Cj0KEQiA2b20BRDj4buduIGy9EBEiQAhgMGFc5p4CeojjWBHtjR0t3JCUFyKXtoXc48Kp6oLB0fW_EaAuUI8P8HAQ

You might want to register for this bulletin when prompted.

High School Poetry Out Loud — Please see the program flyer in your packet. I caught just a few minutes of this annual Masco High School event. It is extraordinary. English Teacher Shannon Murphy organizes and energizes this contest every year. The competitors and their poems are on the back of the flyer.

What I Want to be When I Grow Up — I think you will find the student survey responses to the question interesting. I included the responses for the Middle School and High School students separately in your packet. This question was in the 2015 Masco Climate and Engagement Survey.

N. REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEES

Budget Subcommittee - D. Volchok

Community Relations Subcommittee – C. Miller

Policy Subcommittee – M. Cocciardi

1. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan: Approval of Revisions – 1st Reading
2. Naming Rights Considerations

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has been revised by SHAC to reflect changes to the Anti-bullying Policy and updates to the programs. Naming rights is related to the hope of MEF to offer naming rights to large benefactors of Masco projects, the STEM lab, for example.

O. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None known at this time

- P. **ADJOURNMENT & EXECUTIVE SESSION** (Discussion of two pending litigation matters, the public discussion of which may compromise the School Committee's position or strategy)

As always, please contact me if you have any questions about the report or packet.

2016 1:1 Timelines Overview MasconometRSD

