

Masconomet Regional School District

Annual Report

July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

Introduction

The Masconomet Regional School District (“Masco”) is thankful for the substantial and continuing support we have been given from residents and taxpayers across Middleton, Boxford, and Topsfield, regardless of whether they have children in the school system or not. We firmly believe that our school district is a community asset, with “quality of schools” commonly mentioned by those looking to buy homes in one of our three towns. We understand that Masco is a community center for the Tri Towns, and as such, continued community involvement is key in keeping and improving upon the quality school district that all of us have come to expect, that our children deserve, and know that ultimately we grow stronger as a community due to this partnership.

Highlights

On May 31, 267 seniors graduated, an achievement of which many members of the Masconomet community (students, parents & guardians, faculty, and administration) can all be proud.

95% of the graduating seniors went on to 2 or 4-year colleges (1.4% to other schooling and 1.5% to employment)

Masco offered 19 College Board Advanced Placement Exams. 186 students took 329 exams with 90% scoring 3 or better (5 point scale)

Enrollment across the Middle and High Schools per town as of October 1, 2018:

Boxford	676
Middleton	631
Topsfield	471
Total	1778

School Committee

Much of the 2018/2019 year was spent searching for our next leaders, as prompted by the news of Kevin Lyons’ and Susan Givens’ departures. A superintendent search was convened in the fall, and culminated in the successful hiring of Dr. Michael Harvey, previously superintendent of Hamilton-Wenham (HW). Once his hiring was complete, the search began for a new Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, resulting in the hiring of Jeff Sands, who had

previously held this position in HW. Dr. Dorothy Flaherty, Middle School principal, moved on to a position as director of curriculum in Beverly, and thus her position was filled on an interim basis by Jim Dillon, a long-time middle school science teacher at Masco.

Sports fees were examined as part of a 3-year cycle. While prices went up to the families, the percentage they were paying decreased from 60% to 55%.

The teachers' contract was successfully negotiated. Many other groups were negotiated as well, including administrators and secretaries.

The District Capital Investment task force had been working diligently in order to determine a plan for capital improvement over the next several years. Ultimately, given the upcoming change of leadership, a warrant article was determined to be the best option while transitions were ongoing. We appreciate the support of the 3 towns in helping us fund our stabilization account to be utilized in the next year(s) as aged systems need repairs. Critical roof repairs were completed that should sustain us until the time that a roof replacement is deemed necessary.

Grants

Numerous organizations and individuals have generously given grants to Masconomet, and any list is bound to inadvertently omit someone. Nonetheless, we wanted to highlight the generosity of the Masconomet Education Foundation (MEF) for the 14 grants they provided during the school year. These generous donations went towards funding field trips, stem equipment, and club competitions. In total MEF donated \$33,296 towards our students.

Arts

The Masconomet Regional School District has once again received excellent results at the Massachusetts 2019 **Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Competition**. This a testament to the hard work and talent of our students along with that of every member of the art department faculty. The high school received a total of **65 visual awards** (16 Gold Key, 17 Silver Key, and 32 Honorable Mentions) - this is the second highest total of any high school in the state- public or private. The middle school received a total of **20 visual awards** (2 Gold Key, 5 Silver Key, and 13 Honorable Mentions)- this is the highest total of any middle school in the state- public or private. All Massachusetts Gold Key artwork was then judged at the national level with other Gold Key work from across the country. Three high school students received national recognition for their artwork (Ebuka Udon—National Gold Key, Daria Adamczyk—National Silver Key, Rheanna Murray—National Silver Key, and 8th grader Amber Goudreau received a National Silver Key as well. This prestigious competition, which began in 1923, is the nation's longest running program for visual arts and writing for teens in grades 7-12.

The **AP Studio Arts** students created portraits of children from Puerto Rico for the Memory Project, which is a non-profit organization that invites art teachers and their students to create portraits for youth around the world who have faced substantial challenges, such as neglect,

abuse, loss of parents, and extreme poverty. Erica Ding (10th grade) achieved the Second Prize Award for her drypoint engraving at the 25th Annual 6th **Congressional District Art Show**, which was held at the Montserrat School of Art in Beverly. Two juniors (Jackson Bridge and Sophie Lane) were selected to participate in the 2019 **Massachusetts Art All-State**. This is an intensive two-day program that brings together 144 high school juniors of exceptional artistic talent and commitment from across the state to work with practicing artists to create collaborative installations.

The **Fashion class** collaborated with the Advanced Placement Spanish class on a design challenge based on an artist from a Spanish speaking country. The **Innovative Product Design** class collaborated with the Computer Aided Modelling students to design, refine, and 3D render a tool that improves their lives. The **Graphic Design** students once again created cover designs for the music programs given out at all the concerts throughout the year. These students also created posters for the annual Boxford Apple Festival and senior Whitney Bouthot's design was selected to be professionally printed and displayed throughout the North Shore in the Fall. Additionally, Rheanna Murray (11th grade) created a logo for the Tri-Town School Union.

Performing Arts

In January, 14 students participated in the **District Music Festival** in Wakefield, MA. In March, 3 students participated in the **Massachusetts All State Music Festival** at BSO Symphony Hall in Boston. During April break the High School Band and Chorus performed at **Disney** in Orlando. In 2019 Masconomet Music Parents (**MMPA**) **funded a number of workshops** for our students. There were four workshops involving our HS percussionists. The workshops were facilitated by Masco Alumnus (class of 2005) Derek Beckvold and Robert Jordan from **Teach to Learn**. They focussed on world cultures, Indian percussion and Tabla techniques. The students communicated via skype with professional percussionists from various international locations. I recommend following the attached link to **Teach to Learn** <https://www.teachtolearn.life/>. to see what a Masco graduate, Derek Beckvold, has accomplished after graduating from Masco. In March, Derek Beckvold returned with his Boston based Jazz Quartet. The members of the quartet coached the HS chamber ensembles on various aspects and nuances of performing in a chamber ensemble. The student ensembles that participated included our 2 saxophone quartets, the brass quintet and the clarinet choir. Following the morning coaching session the jazz quartet performed for our students and held a question and answer session that addressed a broad range of topics. In April Lyricora, <http://www.lyricora.org/#cover> a New England based professional choral ensemble, visited Masco and worked with our HS singers. In May Dr. Edward Orgil, professor of Jazz Improvisation and Saxophone from Westfield State University, came and worked with Jazz I and Jazz 2.0 ensembles. He was also the featured soloist for our spring Jazz Concert. In addition to the 10 formal concerts (curriculum based), music groups from Masco provided music for many school and civic events including: HS Pep band for home football

games, HS Choruses performed numerous times out in the community including at the Masconomet Nursing Home, Little Brook Village, Ronald McDonald House in Charlestown, Tri-town Sr. Citizen luncheon (HS Band and Chorus), International Dinner (HS and MS groups), both MS and HS Memorial Day Assemblies, Topsfield Fair Parade, Boxford Memorial Day Parade, HS Baccalaureate, Class Night, Graduation, Eighth Grade Moving On Ceremony, Junior National Honor's Society and 6th grade visitation day (MS ensembles).

Athletics

Overall, Masconomet **fall athletic teams** produced 30 league all-stars, three all-scholastics (boys' soccer, girls' soccer, field hockey) and one Boston Globe Coach of the Year (field hockey). The field hockey team advanced the EMASS Finals, their best finish in school history. They won the CAL Kinney Division and placed five players on the league all-star team, including the CAL Player-of-the-Year. The boys' soccer team won the CAL Kinney Division and advanced to the MIAA state semi-finals. The team produced five league all-stars. The girls' soccer team finished undefeated in the regular season and advanced to the Division Two North semi-finals. They placed five players on the league all-star team, including the CAL Player-of-the-Year. The boys' cross-country team finished 9-1 and 3rd overall in EMASS Division 3. The girls' cross-country team also competed in the EMASS Division 3 championships. The volleyball team won the CAL championship and finished its best season ever, advancing to the Division I North semi-finals. The cheerleading team won the CAL Championship, came in 3rd in the state, and qualified for the Nationals in Dallas, TX. The football and golf teams qualified in the Division 2 state tournament. Overall, Masconomet **winter athletic teams** produced 67 league all-stars during the winter 2019 season. Senior Jack Darling was the ALL-STATE CHAMPION at 132 lbs. The team came in 1st place in the CAL/NEC match. The gymnastics won the Division I state championship and had six all-stars! The boys' and girls' ice hockey teams had outstanding seasons both teams winning their respective league titles. The boys' and girls' swim/dive team both placed 3rd at the CAL Meet. The girls' ski team finished as co-champs of the North Shore Ski League (NSSL). The girls' basketball team qualified for the MIAA state tournament. The indoor track teams competed in the EMASS Division III Championships at the Reggie Lewis Center. Overall, Masconomet **spring athletic teams** produced over twenty-four league all-stars. Seven spring teams qualified for the state tournament in the spring of 2019.

Business & Technology

DECA, an academic club that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management is rapidly growing. Masco sent 140 DECA students to compete at the district competition in January 2019. 60 moved on to the state competition and 8 DECA students competed at the National Competition in April 2019 in Orlando, Florida. In

May, Masco hosted for the 3rd year in a row the **Junior Credit for Life Fair** run by the Institution of Savings. Close to 1,000 area high school students take on the role of a young professional and learn how to manage their finances. Close to 150 Masco students attended.

English

Several exciting activities took place through the English department beyond the typical curriculum. **Poetry Out Loud** (Grades 9-12) is our annual school-wide competition happens in January, after which our winner goes on to represent Masco at the state-wide competition in Boston in March. Last year our school winner was Sophia Kwiatek and she made it to semifinals for the state. **Student Day of Poetry** (Grades 11 and 12) - With the help of MEF we hosted poets from the greater Boston area as they came in and did poetry writing and reciting workshops with students, and culminated with an “Open Mic” portion in the auditorium where students and poets alike shared their work. A **Service Learning Curriculum** (Grade 10) was developed to have students experiencing new pieces of the curriculum which speak to community engagement and having a place in the greater world. This included a pen pal program with elementary school students in Lawrence, a visit to the school, and speakers who came in including our very own Andrea Alexis and her husband Igor who run a program to bring food, school supplies and clothing to students in Haiti. **Power of One** (Grade 7) - Beginning in the 18/19 school year all 7th-grade students participated in the “Power of One” culminating project which also couples with the “Innovation” project in 7th grade Social Studies. The “Power of One” challenges students to explore the difference that they can make just as one individual person. **Creative Media Children’s Book Project** (Grade 8) - Creative Media classes took their annual trip to a Tri-Town elementary school to read the children’s books they wrote and created to students. **Professional Development** - All English teachers grades 7-12 participated in meaningful PD last year including a multi-session Socratic Seminar workshop, an Argument Mapping workshop, and a presentation on fostering a love of reading in students and teaching writing in the digital age. All three of these began with presentations/workshops led by outside consultants and followed with subsequent opportunities to work the skills/activities into their curriculum and invite colleagues into see it in action.

Foreign Language

In September, the **Chinese exchange program** welcomed 13 students and two teachers from our sister school, Shanghai Pudong High School, to Masco. In April, 12 Masco Chinese students and two faculty members stayed with host families in Shanghai and toured Beijing and Xi’an. In October, we welcomed to Masco 25 students and two teachers from Huesca, Spain as part of the annual **Spanish exchange**. In February, 24 Masco Spanish students traveled to Spain to stay with host families in Huesca and tour Madrid and Barcelona. In October, we welcomed to Masco 19 students and two teachers from Rennes, France as part of the **French exchange**. In April, 19 Masco French students and two faculty members stayed with host families in Rennes, France and

they also toured Paris. In March, the department celebrated the learning of languages and cultures with the annual **International Dinner**. Hundreds of students from grades 7-12 and their families enjoyed an evening of international foods, music, dance, and presentations by student clubs and organizations. In April of 2019, we were pleased to induct 13 students into the **French Honor Society**, Société Honoraire de Français, 28 students into the **Spanish Honor Society**, Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica, and 7 students into the **National Chinese Honor Society**. In May, 41 9th-grade French students and 4 faculty members spent an immersion weekend in Quebec.

Math

In August 2018, 32 incoming seventh graders participated in one week of **Math Camp** and 6 students participated in both weeks of the program. For the fifth consecutive year, the middle school math team took home first place honors in its division. Eighth grader Haofeng Henry Liu earned a perfect score for the season. Long time division coaches believe this is the first time any student has had a perfect score for a season! In November, twenty-one middle school students participated in the annual **American Mathematics Competition, AMC8**. Eighth graders Shreya Subbu, Matthew Theriault and Michael Tran earned first place certificates tying with the highest score among Masco participants. During the spring all seventh graders completed a personal finance project. During the spring all eighth graders completed an end of year project modeled after TV's Shark Tank. Students created a product and applied math skills developed throughout the year to create their business plan. The **high school math team** placed third in its division. Senior James Gallagher was the team's high scorer. In February sixteen high school students participated in the annual **American Mathematics Competitions AMC10 and AMC12**. Sophomore Alex Theriault earned a first-place certificate with the highest score among Masco participants. The **curriculum redesign** moved to eleventh grade. Algebra 2 options were expanded to include college prep options of a traditional algebra 2 and a new course with a personal finance focus. High school math teachers participated in scheduled personal learning communities (PLCs) for the first time. Teachers of the same course met once a cycle to discuss curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Science Department

An **additional STEM elective** was added to the HS course offerings in response to student interest in courses that focus on inquiry and problem-based learning. The STEAMworks elective was designed so that any content area educator could teach it by adjusting the content and focus. Biology educators organized a field trip to Northeastern University in March 2019. They attended the **BioTech Biotech Futures program** run by MassBioEd. During this program students engaged with faculty and students while engaging in lab experiences and a campus tour. The objective of Biotech Futures is to expose students to the college experience while encouraging them to pursue life science education and careers. All 7th-grade life science and

high school biology teachers incorporated the **Amgen Biotech Experience** (ABE) curriculum into their courses. More than 600 students performed age- appropriate biotechnology labs. All students learned to micropipette and performed gel electrophoresis. High school students performed additional labs related to molecular biology. We have continued our partnership with ABE in 2019. Amgen generously supplies reagents and equipment to support the implementation of labs. 8th-grade educators planned and implemented a **Family Science Night**. All 8th-grade students and their parents participated in Family Science Night. During this night, students became teachers as they assisted their parents in one of the inquiry-based labs that are experienced in the 8th-grade curriculum. There was a guest speaker from Harvard University that spoke to students and parents about the pursuit of science. We received a lot of positive feedback from parents. They enjoyed the hands-on experience and working with their child. The 7th-grade science teachers made adjustments to the more traditional **science fair** so that students could choose from the following project types: experimental, engineering design, career shadowing, art and science, or volunteering with a focus on science. They worked all spring on their projects and hosted a science exhibition night for the community. The team adjusted the program in 2019 by adding the art and science project option and removed the judging of student projects. Without any project judging the tone of the evening focused on what students learned and how they shared that with the community. Two high school sophomores, Katie Bernard and Marion Duval, participated in **Biogen's Spark Video Contest** entitled "Counting on Biotech for a Cure". The video they submitted focused on the role biotechnology plays in the treatment of Type I diabetes. Their video was selected for public voting in March of 2019. In April 2019, it was announced that Katie and Marion had won. They were honored at the Cambridge Science Festival in April. The school received \$10,000 for their efforts and each of them received a GoPro camera. The **Science Team** earned a trophy by finishing 5th in the North Shore Science League. This was a very strong finish by a very young team. The middle school **Future Cities team** earned three awards at the competition held in Boston, January 2019. Ka Mua won the Tufts Health Plan Foundation Best Health System Award, the BSA Most Innovative Public Spaces Award, and was awarded 3rd place in the region. Team Amun-Ra won the CDM Smith Best Management of Water Systems Award and the Robinson + Cole Best Essay Award. Mrs. Wrobel stated that the Best Essay award is a big deal since it is usually awarded to the 1st or 2nd place team. In June of 2019, the Future Cities team took a field trip to Joppa Flats in Newburyport where they participated in many hands-on activities related to marine ecosystems.

Social Studies

All 7th grade students completed the **Innovation Project**, which challenges them to set goals to complete a task outside of their comfort zone. This project is interdisciplinary in nature and aligns well with the English Department's "**Power of One**" project. Middle School teacher Rebecca Calzini organized the 8th grade **Washington, D.C., trip** for the 2019-2020 school year to enrich students' study of government and American history. High school teachers were recognized in the Fall of 2018 by Essex Heritage with a Pioneer in Partnership Award for their

work on the **Essex County History Project**. High school teachers Pete Magner and Kim Marini presented on the Essex County History Project at the Northeast Regional Conference for the Social Studies at Framingham State University in March of 2019. The **Model United Nations Team**, led by advisors Laura Greeley and Pete Magner, participated in conferences at the Catholic Memorial School Conference in November, the Boston Invitational Conference in February, as well as the St. John's Prep and BC High Conferences during the year. Masconomet students were recognized and received awards for their exemplary performances at each of these conferences. High school teacher David Mitchell presented at several workshops offered by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, sharing his lesson plan ideas on topics in American History. Teachers organized **field trips** for students to enhance their learning of topics of study, which included: JFK Library and Museum, EMK Institute for the Senate, Harvard University, the Massachusetts State House, the International World War II Museum, and the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society in Boston. Teachers took advantage of professional development through Primary Source, Teachers as Scholars (offered through the district), and other organizations.

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

The **Community Resource Booklet**, a multi-page, local resource guide for families has been completely updated and is available to the community and staff via the District's and SHAC's homepage. The **Holiday Assistance Program** collected and organized donations from the Twelve Days of Giving, the Middle School Toy Drive and worked with Tri-Town Council and other outside community agencies to provide much needed assistance to the children and families in our own community. This year, we were able to provide assistance to 31 families (57 children and 3 grandchildren) in the form of toys, food and gift cards. This program, directed by Joan Murphy, has been in existence for over ten years and is a collaborative effort with the students, staff, outside community agencies and retirees. SHAC is developing a **Vaping Diversion Program** to support and educate students who vape. The program can be used for students receiving disciplinary measures as well as students interested in more information or looking for cessation resources. In January, a district-wide multidisciplinary team will attend a half day training provided by Tom Brow, of Seaside Educational Consultants. Starting in January, SHAC will begin work on the **School Health Index**, a self-assessment tool and planning guide that will help us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the District's policies and programs for promoting health and safety. This tool will help the council develop an action plan for improving student health and safety and involve staff, parents, students and the community in this process.

Health Services Department

This fall four **CPR classes** were held for central office staff, winter and fall sport coaches and support staff. Starting in January, the department will be holding **free CPR/AED, First Aid and**

Stop-The-Bleed classes to all interested staff. Besides contributing to the breadth of individuals' knowledge and abilities, having more staff trained in life-saving skills will increase the school's ability to respond more effectively and appropriately during emergencies. As of this writing, nearly 40 staff have signed up for classes. Our annual state-wide immunization report was just completed and 98% of the district's students are fully immunized! The nurses work diligently all year round to ensure students are properly immunized. **Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)**, a verbal substance use screening will be held next month on all 9th grade students. This is a collaborative effort between nurses and counselors that focuses on prevention, early detection, risk assessment, brief counseling and, when needed, referral. In November **Vision and Hearing Screening** was done on all 10th grade students. **Two new AEDs** were obtained and placed in the Gym and Field House respectively to be available for staff or outside community in these high traffic areas.

Conclusion

Thank you again for interest and support for the Masconomet Regional School District. We hope this year-end report provides you some insight into all the exciting things happening at Masco. Of course, this wouldn't be possible without the support of our community in our 3 supporting towns. And that isn't just about your tax dollars, but also your "constructive feedback" when needed, your support when warranted, and your engagement always. We would like to encourage you to attend some of our art shows, musical performances, athletic events, etc. As we feel that our community is stronger when we all come together.

I would also like to point out, that while technically not during the 2018/2019 year, we are very excited about our new school committee blog that was launched at the beginning of the 2019/2020 school year. Please follow it to stay informed about what is happening at Masco.

<https://www.masconomet.org/domain/207>

Respectfully Submitted,

Tasha Cooper

Chair, Masconomet Regional School Committee

Masconomet Regional School Committee Members:

Boxford Members

Kristen DeMarco

Carolyn Miller (Vice-chair)

Bonnie Thornborough

Daniel Volchok

Middleton Members

Joseph Ciampa

Tasha Cooper (Chair)

Arete Pascucci

Kosta Prentakis

Topsfield Members

Zillie Bhaju

Bill Hodges

Melissa Ogden