

Town of Mason, New Hampshire

Mason School District

2026 Deliberative Session

February 07, 2026

The First Session, The Deliberative Session, of the Mason School District was held in the Mason Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room, 13 Darling Hill Road, Mason New Hampshire on February 07, 2026.

At 0900 Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt asked attendees to take their seats. All voters and nonvoters are requested to wear appropriate credentials and be seated after signing in with the Supervisors of the Checklist at the back table. Nonvoters are to be seated to the Moderators right in the front row.

There were fifteen voters and two nonvoters present.

Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt recognized the coordinated efforts of individuals to prepare for this meeting including School District Personnel, Supervisors of the Checklist, Physical Plant Staff, Police, and Emergency Personnel.

Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt reviewed safety procedures, calling attention to the emergency exits.

There were no requests for Interpretative Services.

Roll Call and Introductions:

Chairman Colin Robinson

Vice Chairman Tim Leak

School Board Member Nate Choquette

School Board Member Mike James Judge

Absent: School Board Member Courtney Landry

Accounts Payable Brenda Wiley

School District Clerk / School Board Secretary Becky Partridge

Superintendent of Schools Kristen Kivela

Approved March 16, 2026

Procedure

The purpose of the Deliberative Session is to inform the voters about each proposed article, allow voters to ask questions, discuss and possibly amend the article to decide its final wording. When discussion is complete, the Moderator will call for a vote. This vote in the affirmative will move the final form of the article to the Official Ballot to be voted on at the Town and School District Elections on March 10, 2026.

After each article is read and seconded, there will be an opportunity for voters to comment on the article. When the Moderator recognizes you, please state your name and address. All comments and questions will be directed to the Moderator.

All amendments and substantive motions are to be in writing and signed by the maker and seconder. Any five voters present may request a secret ballot vote if the request is made before the voice vote on an article. For a secret ballot vote, voters will proceed down the center aisle and be given a paper with the words, **YES** and **NO**. Tear it in half and place the appropriate half in the ballot box.

Call To Order

Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt: By the powers vested in me by the State of New Hampshire, I now call to order the First Session, The Deliberative Session of the Mason School District Annual Meeting at 0908h.

Opening Exercises

The Moderator asked for School Board Members and the public to join in The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The first order of business is reading of the warrant. There was no objection to waive the reading of the warrant.

On Motion of Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt, duly seconded, it was **VOTED** to allow Superintendent Kristen Kivela to speak. Motion passed

On Motion of School Board Member Tim Leak, duly seconded, it was **VOTED** to place on the official ballot Article 1 as written

To choose the following School District Officer: School Board Member (3 years)

School Board Member (3 years)

School District Clerk (3 years)

School District Moderator (3 years)

On Motion of Vice Chairperson Tim Leak, duly seconded, it was **VOTED** to place on the official ballot Article 2 as written

To accept the reports of agents, auditors, committees or officers chosen as printed in the Annual Mason School District Report.

Warrant Article 3 read by Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt.

The average cost per pupil for the preceding year as calculated in accordance with RSA 189:75,1(a) is \$21,781. ELA Proficiency: 84%; Math Proficiency: 82%; Science Proficiency: 88%. Shall the Mason School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the First Session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **Four Million, Two Hundred Twenty Four Thousand, Three Hundred Fifty One Dollars** (\$4,224,351). Should this Article be defeated, the default budget shall be **Four Million, One Hundred Eighty Seven Thousand Four Hundred Thirty Seven Two Dollars** (\$4,187,437) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Mason School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only? **NOTE: This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in any other warrant article.** The School Board recommends this warrant article 4-0. (Majority Vote Required)

On Motion of Chairman Colin Robinson and duly seconded discussion began.

Discussion:

Chairperson Colin Robinson explained that the budget began at an increase of 11%. The board and administration, not happy with the increase, worked diligently to decrease the budget increase to around 7%. The decrease was hesitantly approved by eliminating staff and readjusting job descriptions. In addition to the elimination of staff, funds will be removed from the tuition reserve fund to offset the increase in tuition costs.

The largest increases are tuition numbers, insurance increases, IEP placements and maintenance of the older building.

The default budget is just under \$7,000 less than the proposed budget which reflects how minimal the increase of the budget is with what the administration can control.

No public questions

It was **VOTED** unanimously to place on the official ballot Article 3 as written.

Warrant Article 4 read by Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt.

Shall the Mason School District vote to raise and appropriate up to Forty Five Thousand Dollars (\$45,000.00) to be added to the previously established Educating the Educationally Disabled Children Capital Reserve Fund (established in 2010), with such amount to be funded from the June 30, unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 4-0. (Majority vote required.)

On Motion of School Board Member Nate Choquette and duly seconded discussion began.

Discussion:

Currently \$264,036. As we have seen in previous years special need costs continue to increase.

It was **VOTED** unanimously to place on the official ballot Article 4 as written.

Warrant Article 5 read by Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt.

Shall the Mason School District vote to raise and appropriate up to Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to be added to the previously established School Building and Grounds Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund (established in 2010), with such amount to be funded from the June 30, unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 4-0. (Majority vote required.)

On Motion of School Board Member Courtney Landry, and duly seconded discussion began.

Discussion:

Currently we have \$106,450 in the fund. The building is getting older and we have seen unanticipated repairs increasing over the last few years.

It was **VOTED** unanimously to place on the official ballot Article 5 as written.

Warrant Article 6 read by Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt.

Shall the Mason School District vote to raise and appropriate up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,00) to be added to the Tuition Capital Reserve Fund from the June 30 unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 01? No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this warrant article 4-0. (Majority vote required.)

On Motion of Vice Chairman Tim Leak, and duly seconded discussion began.

Discussion:

Currently \$230,000. Projecting student enrollment, the class sizes sending to Milford will continue to grow for a couple more years. This fund allows the board to decrease the financial impact of these student increases.

It was **VOTED** unanimously to place on the official ballot Article 6 as written.

Warrant Article 7 read by Moderator Dotsie Millbrandt.

Shall the Mason School District vote to designate Mason Elementary School as an open enrollment school and allow 5% of students from outside the Mason School District to attend Mason Elementary School as provided in RSA 194-D:2 and :3 and to allow 1% of Mason Elementary School students (k-5) to attend open enrollment schools located outside the Mason School District and further allow up to 10% of students attend open enrollment middle and high school other than the middle and high school with which the District has a tuition agreement. The School Board recommends this warrant article 4-0. (Majority vote required.)

On Motion of School Board Member Mike Judge and duly seconded, discussion began.

Discussion:

Point of Order: Brenda Wiley noted that the warrant article that was handed out and read today states 10% however the board signed warrant article 7 stated "5% of students attend open enrollment middle and high school other than the middle and high school with which the District has a tuition agreement." Therefore an amendment must be voted on to change the 5% to 10%.

On Motion of School Board Member Mike Judge and duly seconded, the amendment unanimously passed to read 10% of students.

Discussion continued: Board member Mike Judge explained that several points are still unknown statewide as this is a new initiative. Although several districts are not allowing students to leave their resident districts, legal counsel has advised that by voting on a percentage of Mason students being allowed to leave the district to attend other open enrollment districts it shows that Mason is making a good faith effort to comply with the law. Therefore, Mason will have the final decision instead of the state possibly over ruling and mandating districts to allow an unknown number of students to leave.

Board Member Nate Choquette, Valley Road - The board started out with 5% but with further discussion the board decided 10% which is why the amendment was needed.

Chris Jones, Townsend Road - What is 10% of students? Kristen Kivela - approximately seven students.

Tom Tramontozzi, Scripps Lane - Does the Milford contract state 80% and what does that mean? Kristen Kivela - Mason must send 80% of students attending public school to Milford. The 80% does not take into consideration charter, religious, private or homeschooling school enrollment.

Tonya Chesnell, Mitchell Road - Why only 10%? Kristen Kivela - Contract with Milford states that Mason will send 80% of students enrolled in public school to Milford, therefore 10% gives several students the option while still giving Mason some wiggle room.

Kate Batcheller, Starch Mill Road - What about transportation costs? Mike Judge - transportation is the responsibility of families.

Jeff Partridge, Brookline Road - What about SPED costs? Kristen Kivela - that cost will be passed on to the resident district.

It was **VOTED** unanimously to place on the official ballot Article 7 as amended.

There being no further business to come before the First Session, The Deliberative Session of the Mason School District a motion is in order to adjourn Sine Die. Motion by Chairperson Colin Robinson, duly seconded and **Voted** unanimously.

Adjourned Sine Die at 0936h.

Respectfully Submitted,



School District Clerk

Rebecca L. Partridge

