

MINUTES OF THE SPACE & ENROLLMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 16, 2014
Superintendent's Office – Malden Government Center

Attendees: School Committee members: Pietro Cicolini, John Froio, Leonard Iovino, Maria Doucette, Larry Silverman and Adam Weldai. (Notes take by P. Cicolini)

-MEETING OPENED at 5:30 PM-

- 1) Update on current enrollment numbers.
 - a) Iovino presented the subcommittee with current enrollment figures from the beginning of the current school year through 10/15/2014.
 - i) Generally, the numbers are climbing throughout the district.
 - (1) Total enrolled in Malden on 9/26/14: 6,616 students.
 - (2) Total enrolled in Malden on 10/15/2014: 6,690 students.
 - (3) Almost every grade grew in numbers.
- 2) Subcommittee continued review of the district wide policy on school registration and placement.
 - a) Doucette began the discussion returning the attention to the transportation section of the policy.
 - i) Doucette felt that the new placement policy along with the changes to the wait list (now known as the Voluntary Transfer List) should combine to begin decreasing the district's dependence on a transportation system (the busing).
 - (1) Cicolini asked to review the placement policy changes to see how much the busing would decrease.
 - (a) Cicolini was worried that the new placement policy would prevent families from attending schools of choice because distance from a particular school places them low on the priority list.
 - (i) The subcommittee generally agreed that the Voluntary Transfer List should compensate for that problem.
 - (ii) Voluntary Transfer List will kick into effect once all placements have been finalized and space is still available at a school. Any transfers will be cutoff each school year, no later than Oct. 1.
 - (b) Weldai felt that the issue of school choice or some schools getting better credibility/desirability within the district is more a problem of public relations than of actual quality.
 - (i) Schools like the charter school and Linden do an incredible job at public relations.
 1. These schools saturate the market with feel good stories, publicized events, and pictures.
 2. Mystic Valley even has a full time staff member who takes care of publicity.
 - (ii) If Ferryway, Forestdale, Salemwood, and Beebe had a full time staff member or even a part time employee dedicated to publicizing the school, Weldai felt that the issue of families wanting to trek across town to the Linden would go away.
 - (iii) The subcommittee discussed the idea of bringing on Paul Hammersley or Nancy Weiss on a stipend or part time salary to push out public relations stories for our schools.

- b) Without official vote, the subcommittee chose to leave the transportation section as is and agreed that the changes made to placement and wait list policies should decrease, over time, our dependence on bussing.
- 3) lovino turned the discussion toward space and classroom availability.
- a) lovino stated that enrollment numbers are going up, space is staying the same, and the money is not there to hire more teachers.
 - i) The subcommittee brainstormed ideas to resolve or mitigate the large class sizes in the district in the lower grades.
 - (1) Renting classrooms in other schools in the district and filling them with teachers (newly hired) and kids.
 - (a) This would cost the district between \$700,000 to \$1 million.
 - (i) Roughly 9 classrooms at 20-23 kids per class, and 1 full time teacher each starting at approx. \$45-50K.
 - (2) Teachers would participate in job sharing where teachers work in teams to take on large groups of students.
 - (a) Job sharing requires the right combination of staff.
 - (i) Only works when the teachers want it to work.
 - (3) Hiring part time teachers to fill in and take on elective classes, freeing up teachers to help in other grades.
 - (a) Part time teachers are hard to keep around.
 - (i) Turnover is high
 - (ii) Loyalty and quality are an issue.
 - (4) Subcommittee looked at macro analysis of total classrooms per grade and total students.
 - (a) On average, the district has approximately 24 students to a classroom.
 - (5) Subcommittee looked at numbers in specific schools.
 - (a) Enrollment at some schools in grades 1 and 2 are now at **27 and 28 kids per class.**
- 4) Discussion began circling around and repeating past discussion without benefit.
- a) The members agreed that the next meeting should have the mayor and the superintendent present to discuss how much money is actually available.
 - b) Whichever solution works best, the district would need more money to either rent additional space, hire more teachers, bring in more classroom equipment, buy more books, desks, etc., or all of the above.
 - c) The next subcommittee meeting should have the mayor present to begin flushing out the budget situation.
 - d) The subcommittee agreed to schedule the next meeting for **Oct. 27 at 5:30 PM** in the superintendent's office.
- 5) **MOTION – by lovino – to adjourn.**
- a) **SECONDED by Doucette.**
 - b) **Voted unanimous in favor.**
- MEETING ADJOURNED at 6:27 PM-**