

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, March 3, 2025

Herbert L. Jackson Council Chamber Room #106 - 215 Pleasant Street Malden, MA and
Virtual Meeting

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Mayor Christenson read docket items for the meeting.

Mayor Christenson led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for those who have served our country and for those who continue to do so.

Mayor Christenson turns it over to the Vice Chair who asks that we stand for a moment of silence for an educator we lost in Malden, Donna Quill. Ms. Quill worked at the Beebe and Linden K-8 Malden Public schools in Special Education. Ms. Spadafora asks that we take a moment of silence to honor her.

Roll Call

The following attendance was taken:

Mayor Christenson - Present

Mr. Drummey - Present

Mr. McCarthy - Present

Ms. Spadafora - Present

Ms. Macklin - Present

Ms. Hortie - Present

Mr. Gray - Present

Mr. Bernard - Present

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Present

Superintendent Sippel - Present

Student Representative Cathen Fontanilla - Present

Report of the Superintendent

Mayor Christenson shares that the Committee received an email from the New England Scholastic Press Association entitled “Malden High School Senior named one of New England’s top high school journalists”. The Mayor shares that normally when the Committee receives this kind of news, they prepare a presentation for the next meeting or a subcommittee meeting thereafter. But, with Mack Keating the Committee was so blown away by what was said in the email that in 24 hours it was arranged for Mack to attend the School Committee meeting so it could be expressed how proud they are of him. New England Scholastic Press Association named Keating to its first ever all New England high school journalism staff, which recognizes

the top high school journalists. NESPA named only 17 high school journalists throughout New England.

Superintendent Sippel takes a moment to congratulate Mack on his accomplishments.

Mayor Christenson calls a brief recess.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the adoption of minutes for the February 3, 2025 Regular Meeting of the School Committee. Mr. Drummey made the motion to adopt the minutes. Ms. Spadafora seconded and so it was VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Penny Kalman, Salemwood School Educator, 194 Bainbridge St.

Ms. Kalman states that she is there, to lean into the statement “do right by all children”. Ms. Kalman asks why the sixth grade Math, Science and ELA teachers at the Salemwood School teach 5 classes a day and an additional WIN block to 115 students but at a school down the road ELA, Math and Science teachers teach 64 students a day. Ms. Kalman shares that she and her colleagues feel that the Central Office, the Welcome Center and the School Committee make it impossible to do right by all. She goes on to explain that the teachers at one school are expected to meet the needs of 115 students, engage with families and an extensive list of other needs that need to be met. While other schools have far fewer students to account for.

Sarah Strayer, 43 Havelock St.,

Ms. Strayer asks the Committee if she can give her time to Penny Kalman so she can finish what she prepared for the Committee. Ms. Kalman concludes by asking, “Which students receive more small group instruction, which students receive more feedback, which students have a better shot at one-on-one time, which students get more attention? One of 115 or one of 64? Which students are we really doing right by in 2025?”.

Report of the Superintendent

1. Draft Entry Finding’s

Superintendent Sippel begins by sharing an overview of preliminary findings and conclusions from the Superintendent’s entry into the school district over the last eight months. Superintendent Sippel shares the vision for Malden Public Schools. Being that, Malden Public School students will develop the skills, knowledge, and character necessary to become informed, compassionate, and engaged members of a diverse local community. With the mission being to prepare all of our students to thrive in the broadest

possible range of opportunities after high school graduation. In his first eight months Superintendent Sippel has hosted town hall meetings inviting parents and caregivers, developed parent and caregiver and educator and staff surveys, and had over 50 meetings with community members as well as having visited over 400 classrooms. The Superintendent speaks on data reviews and projects with educators and district and school-based administrators conducted to learn the strengths and points of growth for Malden Public Schools. Some areas for collective action include affirming high expectations for all students, adapting instruction to meet diverse needs, ensuring fair access to opportunities, partnering with families effectively, nurturing a strong workforce, and building district strength and stability.

Superintendent Sippel shares that we need to manage our current resources while planning to ensure a strong and stable organization in the years to come, that we must collaborate with the City, our state legislative delegation, and the philanthropic community to establish sustainable funding for our educational programs. Continually assessing our buildings and resources.

2. Proposed School District Calendar for 2025-2026

Superintendent Sippel shares that there are proposals that have been presented in Negotiations with the Malden Education Association that may affect the final school calendar. So, in consultation with the MEA they have provided a calendar that assumes the status quo. This calendar is presented to the School Committee. Meaning educators would return to work on August 25th and the first day of school for Grades 1-12 would be Wednesday August 27, 2025, and September 4, 2025 for Kindergarten.

Ms. Hortie asks Superintendent Sippel about the 23rd of December, the day before winter break being a full day rather than a half day regarding attendance. The Superintendent shares that attendance rates for early release days actually tend to be much lower than full days. This is the reasoning for the proposal to not have professional learning days on half days.

Ms. Spadafora asks how early release days after 11am affect school lunches. Superintendent Sippel invites Director of Finance Toni Mertz to speak on the subject. Ms. Mertz explains that a 12:45 pm dismissal will mean lunch for everyone before they leave. Bagged lunches to go are not allowed. Superintendent Sippel adds that the lunch schedule will have to be adjusted on those days.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to adopt the district calendar. Ms. Hortie seconded the motion and so it was VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Subcommittee Reports and Discussions

Negotiations Subcommittee Update - Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora shares that the Negotiations Subcommittee met with the Malden Education Association on February 27, 2025 for their first official bargaining session. While they have met before this is the first meeting the MEA and the district presented proposals to each other. All of the district's proposals are on the Malden Public Schools website under School Committee Negotiations Updates. Ms. Spadafora shares one proposal being that they would like to eliminate half days as professional development days, and rather work professional development into the work day to improve student time on learning. Also, she adds that all of the proposals brought forth are student centered, and the focus is on making sure our students are getting what they need.

The next scheduled meetings are March 10, 2025, March 26, 2025 and April 10, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Ms. Horite asks about professional development days. Superintendent Sippel responds by explaining that professional development will be three full days rather than half days as well as a proposal to imbed professional learning time into the regular work day.

Motions and Resolutions

Attendance Policy - Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora brings forth the Attendance Policy specifically focusing on the unexcused absence policy. It reads that three unexcused absences will be allowed, but four or more unexcused absences in a quarter will require the teacher to give the student a 59 for that quarter, a failing grade. Students may use the attendance appeals process. However, there is no clear indication what the appeals process is across all schools.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to send the Attendance Policy to Policy and Procedure Subcommittee for review. Mr. Drummey seconded and so it was VOTED. Motion passed unanimously

Proposed School Assignment Policy - Ms. Rose-Zeiberg

Ms. Rose Zeiberg would like to make a motion to send the proposed school assignment policy to the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee to update and standardize the assignment process.

Mr. McCarthy asks a question to clarify that school assignment is the matter of where students will attend school.

Ms. Spadafora asks if they are looking for actions from the subcommittee sooner than later. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg says that she will be looking for the subcommittee to convene soon.

Ms. Rose Zeiberg made a motion to send the proposed school assignment policy to the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee. Ms. Hortie seconded and so it was VOTED. Motion passed unanimously

Personal Privilege

Executive Session

Mr. Drummey made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:31 p.m. Mr. Bernard seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes
Mr. Drummey - Yes
Mr. McCarthy - Yes
Ms. Spadafora - Yes
Ms. Macklin - Yes
Ms. Hortie - Yes
Mr. Gray - Yes
Mr. Bernard - Yes
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Yes
Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Christenson and Mr. Drummey recused themselves in Executive session because of a potential conflict of interest. Vice Chair Spadafora served as the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The committee reconvened to Regular Session at 8:33

Adjournment

Mr. Gray made a motion to adjourn at 8:36 p.m. Ms. Macklin seconded and so it was VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

I certify that a notice of this meeting was filed with the Clerk of the City of Malden in the manner provided under Chapter 39, Section 23A of the General Laws.

Ariana Langston

Ariana Langston, Clerk