

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Monday, December 4, 2017  
Malden Senior Center, 7 Washington Street

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Christenson announced that the next School Committee meeting will be Monday, December 4, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the Malden Senior Center, 7 Washington Street.

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.

**Roll Call**

The following attendance was taken:

Mayor Christenson	Present
Ms. Beardsley	Present
Ms. Bordonaro	Present
Mr. Drummey	Present
Mr. Froio	Present
Mr. Iovino	Present
Mr. Leone	Present
Mr. Marsh	Present
Mr. Silverman	Present
Superintendent Oteri	Present
Student Representative Tsige	Present
Clerk	Present

**Approval of Minutes**

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the approval of minutes for the November 13<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the School Committee. Mr. Iovino made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Marsh seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the approval of minutes for the November 13<sup>th</sup> Executive Session of the School Committee. Mr. Leone made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Drummey seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment**

Ms. Bonnie Littlejohn, 127 Emerald Street, Malden

Ms. Littlejohn thanked the outgoing School Committee members, Mr. Leone, Mr. Silverman and Mr. Marsh for their work and dedication to the children and staff of the Malden Public Schools (MPS). Ms. Littlejohn wished them all the best and hoped to see them being continually involved with the community and schools.

Ms. Dawn Marie O'Toole, 130 Adams Street, Malden

Ms. O'Toole thanked the School Committee for their dedication and hard work to ensure the children of Malden have the best education. Ms. O'Toole said that their commitment to the children is evident through the policies, programs, events and decisions made, especially during budget time. Ms. O'Toole encouraged them to continue their hard work and thanked the outgoing members, wishing them the best for their future endeavors.

Ms. Deborah Gesualdo, President of the Malden Educators' Association (MEA) and Teacher at Linden School  
Ms. Gesualdo thanked Mr. Silverman, Mr. Marsh and Mr. Leone for their work and dedication over the past few years.

### Motions and Resolutions

#### **1. Brendan L. Duffy Achievement Award – Mr. Leone**

Mr. Leone said that Mr. Brendan Duffy was part of Malden and Malden High School (MHS) for over 40 years. He was a colleague of Mr. Froio and Mr. Iovino. Mr. Leone continued that Mayor Christenson and Superintendent Oteri had Mr. Duffy as a Principal. Mr. Leone and newly appointed school committee member, Ms. Spadafora had Mr. Duffy during his last year working at MHS. Mr. Leone said that Mr. Duffy was even teaching one of the courses he took at the Bunker Hill Community College. Mr. Leone said that Mr. Duffy was a mentor to him and always wanted students to achieve their highest potential. Mr. Leone explained that this yearly award will be for a graduating senior who has achieved the most and presented to the student in June at the last School Committee meeting of the year.

Mr. Marko Duffy, Mr. Brendan Duffy's son thanked Mr. Leone and the alumni who remember Mr. Brendan Duffy fondly. Mr. Marko Duffy said that his father worked very hard during his many years at MHS. Mr. Marko Duffy said that in addition to the scholarship fund, to have an award named after his father and to have his legacy living on means a lot to the family.

Mr. Leone made the motion to approve the annual Brendan L. Duffy Achievement Award. Mr. Marsh seconded it and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

### Superintendent's Report

#### **1. Washington DC Field Trip for Forestdale**

Principal Concannon came up to the podium with Ms. Diana Sullivan, the trip coordinator. Principal Concannon said that this trip is organized once every two years. This time, the only change is the vendor. The vendor is EF Explore America has been working with the Malden High School for a few years. Principal Concannon said that fundraising has already begun. In response to the Superintendent's request for more information, Ms. Sullivan responded that the trip will be from Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. The teacher to student ratio is 1:10. Ms. Sullivan continued that the cost of the trip before fundraising for an all-inclusive trip which includes transportation, hotel and three meals a day is \$965. The fundraising so far has collected about \$3,700 and this has already reduced the cost per student by \$100. Many other fundraisers have been planned. This trip was planned for about 30 students and up to now, 25 students have already signed up. The deadline to sign up has been extended to right before the winter vacation. As for security, Ms. Sullivan said that EF provides security personnel who went through CORI checks and are CPR and First Aid certified. They also have professional overnight security to monitor the halls and hallways. Superintendent Oteri said that he recommends the trip as it is very enriching. Superintendent Oteri added that Forestdale has been thorough in terms of organizing the trip and planning the fundraising. In answer to Ms. Beardsley's question, Principal Concannon said that there will be funds available for students who are not able to afford the cost of the trip. Mayor Christenson asked about the change in vendors. Principal Concannon replied that EF provided a better deal than the previous vendor based in Canada. Mr. Leone made the motion to approve the Washington DC field trip for Forestdale. Mr. Marsh seconded it and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **2. MHS School Calendar – Feb 5<sup>th</sup> and Mar 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Principal Lombardi said that February 5<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup> were initially scheduled as late entry days but both these days are MCAS make-up days for biology, english and math MCAS tests. Principal Lombardi requested that both these late entry days be converted to regular school days in order to accommodate the testing. Superintendent

Oteri recommended this change as it rectifies an oversight that happened last year. Superintendent Oteri explained that the State requires a full day of school on MCAS make-up days as the tests are untimed and in order to be in compliance, these two school days need to be regular school days. In response to Ms. Beardsley's question about whether the two late entry days need to be replaced, Principal Lombardi answered that there are many other late entries and early releases scheduled throughout the year for professional development. Mr. Froio made the motion to change the February 5<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 late entry days to regular school days. Mr. Silverman seconded it and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

### **3. District Updates and Highlights**

Superintendent Oteri informed about Mr. Israel Arbeiter's visit to Malden on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Arbeiter, President of the Massachusetts Jewish Holocaust Survivors Association was able to speak to the senior class and it was an opportunity for the students to hear him recount his experiences. Mr. Arbeiter is 92 years of age and he gave a very moving and informative presentation.

Superintendent Oteri reported that the former McFadden Manor which is located beside the Forestdale School is under construction and that the contractor extended an opportunity to the Forestdale School students to see the work in progress. Members of the construction crew explained to the students about the work that is being done.

The 130<sup>th</sup> Malden-Medford football game was held recently and Malden won the game. There was a luncheon on November 21<sup>st</sup> prior to the game which was attended by both mayors, superintendents, principals, captains, etc.

Superintendent Oteri thanked community partner, Stop & Shop for their generous Thanksgiving complimentary meal contribution to 7 deserving students and their families from the seven schools in the school system. Superintendent Oteri added that Stop & Shop was happy to do this and are planning to do it again for the upcoming holiday season.

High school senior, Raymond Jiang's achievement was highlighted by Superintendent Oteri because he was formally sworn in as a member of the United States Marine Corps and he was given his oath by the nation's top Marine, four-star General Robert B. Neller, the Marine Corps Commandant who was in Boston in early November. Raymond has become a group leader for the Marines, assisting other would-be recruits with their training and has about 18 future Marines under his "command." He has already passed all the written and physical tests required before his recent swearing in, as well as an intensive physical screening and examination. MPS is very proud of him and his accomplishments.

This week is a special week in education because it is the hour of code. Superintendent Oteri explained that coding will be done at all levels in the schools this week. This past weekend, MPS was able to send about 21 students to participate in the Black Girls Code Workshop in Boston. The workshop was open to all students and not just students of color. The students appreciated and enjoyed the workshop. School Committee members, Ms. Beardsley and Ms. Bordonaro along with the STEM Director, Dr. Dias helped in making this possible. This workshop focused on mobile app development with MIT AppInventor. AppInventor is a fun and simple tool that allows students to create their own mobile apps.

Superintendent Oteri announced that Principal Vatalaro of the Beebe School will be retiring this Friday. Dr. Susan Vatalaro has been with the Malden Public Schools for 45 years. Her dedication and loyalty is legendary. Superintendent Oteri said that she will be missed and wished her the very best. Superintendent Oteri added that

Dr. Vatalaro will continue to be involved with the students through endeavors by the Kiwanis, literacy projects, etc. Superintendent Oteri continued that after much search and effort, Ms. Barbara O'Brien will be the Interim High School Principal at Beebe. Ms. O'Brien is an accomplished former Principal, most recently retired after 6 years as the Principal of the Argenziano School in Somerville. Ms. O'Brien has extensive and productive years of success working with multicultural and diverse students and families. Ms. O'Brien is a champion of student success and subscribes to the notion that all students can and will succeed. To that point, she led the Albert F. Argenziano School at Lincoln Park to a Level 1 accountability rating. Superintendent Oteri said that he is thrilled to bring Ms. O'Brien on board to the Malden Public Schools and is convinced that she will be the perfect Interim to guide Beebe to success after the illustrious Dr. Vatalaro steps down.

Superintendent Oteri thanked outgoing School Committee members, Mr. Leone, Mr. Marsh and Mr. Silverman for their service and dedication to the schools and students these past several years.

#### **4. Next Generation MCAS Presentation**

Superintendent Oteri gave a powerpoint presentation on the Malden Public Schools performance on the spring 2017 Next Generation MCAS and the next steps. Ms. Bordonaro asked about what kind of tools are available to the educators to effectively implement new strategies to help increase test scores. Superintendent Oteri responded that firstly students need to feel safe and supported. Superintendent Oteri added that there are a number of other tiered interventions, trainings, common assessments, social emotional supports, programs that provide least restrictive educational settings as well as professional development opportunities. Ms. Bordonaro asked how the Superintendent can determine what changes are needed in order to improve scores in certain areas. Superintendent Oteri answered that this is done through the data analysis of the formative and summative assessments. The diverse urban environment of MPS requires many techniques and strategies because there are so many learning styles.

Mr. Iovino asked if the attendance rate of the testing is the "low hanging fruit" that is most easily achievable. Superintendent Oteri said that increasing the attendance and reducing the drop-out rate would help with the test scores. Mr. Iovino asked if there are strategies to increase the numbers. Superintendent Oteri said that a coordinated strategy which includes changing the climate and mindset of staff and students can produce an amazing change.

Ms. Beardsley asked if there are ways to manage the stress and anxiety levels experienced by students and staff in relation to tests. Superintendent Oteri said the focus should be on creating an environment where students feel confident. Superintendent Oteri said that practice should be more difficult than the test and that students should be made to feel that the tests afford them an opportunity to shine. Superintendent Oteri added that this same approach can also be applied to educators, where feedback based on what they are doing can inspire confidence that they are on target and have the students ready for the test. Ms. Beardsley said that computerized testing can also impact how students answer the questions such as trying to go through the questions as quickly as possible without giving it much thought. Superintendent Oteri shared her concerns.

Mr. Froio asked if there are technology instructors in all the elementary schools and if that would help with the science and technology scores. Superintendent Oteri said that there are makers spaces and science/math teachers. Superintendent Oteri added that the schools are looking as to why they lag behind the state average in this area. Superintendent Oteri added that last summer, a few directors positions were vacant for awhile before they were filled. There is also a new STEM Director on board now. Superintendent Oteri said that with more emphasis on STEM work in the schools, the hope is that it will translate into more confidence and better results.

In response to Mayor Christenson's question, Superintendent Oteri said that "Writing with Colors" will be implemented in all grades, K-12 and that some teachers have already implemented it. More workshops will be organized for the teachers. Mayor Christenson asked about the percentage of students who are not taking the test. Superintendent Oteri responded that the number needed is 95% test attendance and that the high school is about 89% but this is only an estimate as the Superintendent did not have the data in front of him.

Mayor Christenson asked if certain strategies in taking tests such as eliminating the least likely answers one-by-one for multiple choice questions could be taught. Superintendent Oteri responded that the goal is to teach the students how to solve the problem so that they will know the answer. Superintendent Oteri said that the design of the test is to test for readiness at grade level and the next level, and that the test is supposed to measure what the student knows instead of what the student does not know. Student Representative Tsige asked whether the Extended Learning Time in Ferryway made an impact on the results. Superintendent Oteri said that every school is different and so are their student populations. Superintendent Oteri continued that the schools are not comparable to one another.

Ms. Bordonaro commented that she used "Writing with Colors" for her post graduate studies and that she highly recommends this method.

Superintendent Oteri said that the Next Generation MCAS presentation will be uploaded onto the school website.

### **Subcommittee Reports/Discussions**

#### **1. Space and Enrollment Ad-Hoc Subcommittee – Mr. Iovino**

Mr. Iovino said that on December 1<sup>st</sup>, MPS enrollment was 6,716 which is an increase of 68 students since the beginning of the school year.

#### **2. Policy and Procedures Subcommittee – Mr. Leone**

Mr. Leone said that last week, the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee had a meeting regarding how holidays are celebrated in the schools. Mr. Silverman said that the meeting had a good attendance and a number of people voiced their opinions about the inconsistencies in the way holidays are celebrated in different schools. Mr. Silverman added that the subcommittee voted unanimously to accept the statement that Superintendent Oteri drafted about how school principals will work with various stakeholders to come up with reasonable and agreeable ways to celebrate and recognize the different backgrounds of people in our schools.

Superintendent Oteri read the statement:

"Malden prides itself on being an ethnically and culturally diverse community. The public schools are a reflection of that and we are committed to providing a welcoming, accepting and inclusive learning environment. At each school, in celebrating holidays and cultural celebrations, our principals will make decisions in a collaborative manner with input from School Councils, PTOs, families, staff and students to insure that celebrations are inclusive and respectful. As with any school celebration, families always have an option to not participate. We aim to embrace our diversity and always strive to make Malden the model community of harmony and cooperation."

Mr. Silverman added that different people have different and strong opinions about this matter and what he appreciates about the statement is that it leaves the decision-making with the stakeholders in each school. In response to Ms. Beardsley's question about how families can know what will be celebrated or not, Superintendent Oteri said that the principal of each school will communicate that to students and families. Mr. Iovino said that this statement should be voted on and once approved, it should take effect immediately. Mr. Leone made the motion to accept the statement regarding holiday celebrations in schools. Mr. Iovino seconded it. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Beardsley voted YES  
Ms. Bordonaro voted YES  
Mr. Drummey voted YES  
Mr. Froio voted YES  
Mr. Iovino voted YES  
Mr. Leone voted YES  
Mr. Marsh voted YES  
Mr. Silverman voted YES  
Mayor Christenson voted YES  
Motion passed unanimously.

3. **Start Time for MHS Discussion – Mayor Christenson**

Mayor Christenson turned over the Chair seat to Vice-Chair, Mr. Iovino for this segment of the agenda. Mayor Christenson said that the start time for MHS discussion first started last year when a number of students and teachers who were involved with Generation Citizen contacted him about this topic. Mayor Christenson said that Principal Lombardi had also requested him to work with the students on this matter and so, he met with a couple of classes and communicated with a number of students via email. The start time is controlled locally and not by the State. Two weeks ago, Boston Mayor, Marty Walsh announced that Boston was going to look at their start times and this prompted Mayor Christenson to consider our start times as well since some staff and students had already approached him about this topic. Mayor Christenson said that this will be done in consultation with the teachers, parents and teachers union. Mayor Christenson said that Superintendent Oteri volunteered to work with the student representative and other people internally to look into the possibility of changing the start times. Mayor Christenson asked the School Committee to show support to direct the School Superintendent to work with the different stakeholders at MHS about the feasibility of changing the start time and to provide an update in March 2018. Superintendent Oteri said in the last decade or so, lots of research has been done to find out how adolescent brains function and when they function best. Many communities have chosen to examine this and move their start time to a later time. Superintendent Oteri continued that Boston has a very early start time, 7:15 am which meant that students were on the bus as early as 5:45 am and so Boston partnered with MIT to look into ways of saving time on the bus routes and to move the start time to a later time. Superintendent Oteri said that a committee would be formed composed of students, teachers, union members, possibly community members from the health field, to carry out preliminary investigations and discussions so that they can provide a report in March 2018 to the School Committee. Mayor Christenson asked that the Mr. Charlie Conefrey, Director of Athletics, Physical Education/Health be also on this committee as one of the concerns over the years has been about how the start time would impact the students and their after-school activities. Superintendent Oteri agreed that Mr. Conefrey would serve a dual purpose on the committee as he has expertise in both the areas of athletics as well as health. Ms. Bordonaro asked if there were any proposal for start times and Mayor Christenson replied that there are no proposals yet, just discussions of 8:15 am or even 8:30 am but nothing concrete. Mayor Christenson made the motion to direct the School Superintendent to work with the different stakeholders at MHS about the feasibility of changing the start time and to provide an update in March 2018. Mr. Leone seconded it and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

4. **Revision of Agenda – Mr. Iovino**

Mr. Iovino read out a statement regarding the revision of agenda:

“Be it resolved that it is the sense of the Malden School Committee that once an agenda for an upcoming school committee has been posted, in accordance with the appropriate state statutes that regulate the Open Meeting Law, said agenda will not be revised, unless an emergency situation has arisen subsequent to the original posting. A situation will only be deemed an emergency by the superintendent of schools in discussion with the chair of the Malden School Committee.”

Mr. Iovino made a motion to reaffirm the statement. Mr. Froio seconded it and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Personal Privilege**

### **Executive Session**

Mr. Iovino made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 8:07 p.m. Mr. Froio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.  
Ms. Beardsley voted YES  
Ms. Bordonaro voted YES  
Mr. Drummey voted YES  
Mr. Froio voted YES  
Mr. Iovino voted YES  
Mr. Leone voted YES  
Mr. Marsh voted YES  
Mr. Silverman voted YES  
Mayor Christenson voted YES  
Motion passed unanimously.

The committee reconvened to the Regular Session at 8:28 p.m.

Mr. Iovino made the motion to approve the 2% raise in salary retroactive July 1, 2017 for Principal Bransfield, Principal Concannon, Business Manager Toni Mertz, PIC Manager Joan Federico, Database Specialist Kenny Tran, After-School Manager Karen Steele, Facilities Manager Peter Phelps and Accounts Receivable Coordinator Kathleen McCormack. Mr. Leone seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Beardsley voted YES  
Ms. Bordonaro voted YES  
Mr. Drummey voted YES  
Mr. Froio voted YES  
Mr. Iovino voted YES  
Mr. Leone voted YES  
Mr. Marsh voted YES  
Mr. Silverman voted YES  
Mayor Christenson voted YES  
Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Christenson requested that we keep Ms. Gillian Swart in our memory. Ms. Swart passed away in November 2017. She was a journalist for publications such as the Boston Globe and the Malden Observer. Mayor Christenson also thanked outgoing School Committee members, Mr. Jerry Leone and Mr. Lawrence Silverman who served for four years as School Committee members and Mr. Emmanuel Marsh who served for two years as a School Committee member.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Iovino made a motion to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. Ms. Bordonaro seconded and it was so VOTED.

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.



Shirley Dorai, Clerk