



# From the Desk of the Superintendent

Volume IV No.2 AUGUST NEWSLETTER August 31, 2020

For timely updates and information.... Twitter: @MaldenPublic Website: [maldenps.org](http://maldenps.org)

## Malden High Class of 2020 gets a great sendoff with 'live' Graduation ceremony



Supt. Oteri addresses the Malden High School Class of 2020 on Graduation Day .

**More, inside on Page 5**  
*Josh London Photo*



Abigail Labadie is all smiles at Graduation! *Josh London Photo*

## BACK-to-SCHOOL has arrived! Here is an update for MPS

—Malden Public Schools educators returned to full-day activities on August 31 and began an intensive, 10-day Professional Development period which focuses on COVID-19 Safety Protocols and sessions on enhanced Remote Learning, equity and social justice training.  
—**INSIDE:** Supt. Oteri's letter to the MPS Community outlining and detailing the Remote Learning Plan which begins for students on Wednesday, September 16.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all in the Malden Public Schools Community,

It is a year where it has been difficult to forecast what might happen next, on many subjects and in any time frame you might choose. There has been some certainty, though. Here are two givens: School and learning would return in one form or another and educators and administrators can't wait to start working with their Malden Public Schools students. A tremendous amount of time, effort



Superintendent John Oteri

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# Supt. Oteri updates the Malden School Committee on school re-entry plans for 2020-2021

## ***Malden Public Schools classes will begin on Wednesday, Sept. 16 for all PreK-12 students***

**By Steve Freker**

**For the Malden Public Schools**

School bells signaling the start of the new year will ring a bit later than originally scheduled this year for the Malden Public Schools, but planning is moving along well, according to Superintendent John Oteri. Supt. Oteri updated the members of the Malden School Committee at its meeting Monday, Aug. 24 on plans for the start of school and how it will look in the era of the coronavirus pandemic.

As the School Committee already voted earlier in August, Malden Public Schools will be administering classes in a full Remote Learning Mode and instruction will begin on Wednesday, Sept. 16, Supt. Oteri said.

"I'd like to thank everyone who has worked on the re-entry planning and commend them for all of their efforts," Supt. Oteri said, noting the non-stop work that gone on all summer from both his central administration cabinet, Malden Public School directors, the School Re-Entry Advisory Task Force and many city officials, including the members of the School Committee.

"It has truly been a team effort and we are grateful for the diligence, compassion and focus that everyone involved has contributed to this vitally important process," the Superintendent said. The Superintendent said he and his staff were especially impressed and encouraged with the "unprecedented response" they received from a series of surveys and community listening sessions



The Malden School Committee includes, top row, from left, members Robert McCarthy (Ward 2), Leonard Iovino (Ward 4), Chairperson and Mayor Gary Christenson, Michael Drummey (Ward 1), Adam Weldai (Ward 5). Front row, from left, Joseph Gray (Ward 6), Michelle Luong (Ward 7), Jennifer Spadafora (Ward 3) and John Froio (Ward 8). **Courtesy Photo/ City of Malden**

held to solicit feedback from caregivers and family members of the district's nearly 7,000 students.

"Their input was so valuable in assisting us in developing our strategy for reopening the Malden Public Schools (MPS)," Supt. Oteri said. He reported that 3,615 parents responded to an online survey asking for opinions of what form of learning MPS might use to educate **Cont. on Page 8**

# Superintendent Oteri's *Letter to MPS Families & Community on Back-to-School planning updates*

## To the Malden Public Schools Community:

Believe it or not, it's just about back-to-school time for our students and educators! Although it might not feel like the traditional return, we are nonetheless excited to welcome back our school community. Our first day for staff will be Monday, August 31st. After 10 days of professional development around safety training, curriculum and instruction, remote learning, social emotional learning, trauma sensitive practices, technology and more, the first day for our students will be on Wednesday, September 16th.

A lot of things feel fluid right now, and it's hard for us as a community to be comfortable with the uncomfortable. The School Committee is working as quickly as possible in partnership with the School Department to finalize negotiations with the Malden Education Association (MEA) so that we can return to learning in the district. That process may seem long, but we appreciate the partnership of our educators in the district and know that we're working toward a safe and productive re-entry for our students and staff.

### *Here are a few important updates from the district:*

#### **The Early Learning Center**

In May, the School Committee made the decision to support keeping the Early Learning Center open and fully functional while we waited for what the future held. As the situation progressed and our re-entry plans were finalized, the picture became clearer. As we begin the 2020-2021 school year, we are committed to providing our students and families at the ELC remote services that they can engage with from home. We also realize the expectation for a preschooler to be at a computer screen for extended periods of time is unrealistic, and the day/activities will be modified accordingly. **During this remote period, we would not expect any family to pay tuition to the ELC.** If and when we are able to transition to a hybrid model, the number of students in the building will also be far smaller and require less staffing.

The decision to have programming be tuition-free at the ELC creates a 1.2 million dollar budget deficit for the



district. The School Committee decided that in order to save costs for our ELC families, and to avoid making any budget cuts we will be transferring 7 teachers, and 17 paraprofessionals from the ELC into open positions in our K-8 schools for a one year period. This was an incredibly difficult decision, however we are committed to keeping those staff members from the ELC employed in the Malden Public Schools, and are fortunate to be able to provide a temporary, cost-neutral option for what would have created a very large deficit for the district to handle.

We will continue to connect and communicate with our ELC families over the coming weeks as we welcome a new Principal to the ELC community and plan for our remote fall together. Currently, here's what we know:

- If you are a general education student in the ELC who has already paid a deposit, you will receive a refund
- Since the School Committee voted to begin the year remotely for all students, until they vote to transition the district into a hybrid model for all students, general education students at the ELC will be able to participate in some remote activities which we are currently developing.
- To reiterate, programming for those general education PreK students will be tuition free
- We are still working to provide in-person services for our highest-need Special Education students, if families decide to choose into that option
- We anticipate more information coming within the following week for our ELC families about what to expect for a remote option - please stay tuned! **Cont. on Next Page**

# **SUPERINTENDENT OTERI'S LETTER to the COMMUNITY with UPDATES on BACK-to-SCHOOL PLANNING: Remote Learning begins Sept. 16**

## **Our Highest Needs Learners**

As we have stated since our decision to begin the year remotely, the School Committee is committed to providing the option of in-person instruction to our highest needs learners. Our students in substantially separate settings truly benefit from in-person educators who can work with the unique needs of their students and provide the therapeutic services they require. Of course, families will still be able to have their students participate remotely if they choose to do so. With the full student body starting in a remote model, it will be much easier to take appropriate safety precautions and socially distance with our high-needs students onsite. We are currently in the process of negotiating that return with the MEA, but are hopeful that in early October we will be able to begin welcoming these students back in a hybrid model.

The staff who are present will have full access to personal protection equipment (PPE) like smocks, gloves, gowns, masks, and face shields – to name a few. There are many more precautions that will be taking place and while we are planning we appreciate the advocacy of both our School Committee members and partners in the MEA to keep safety a top priority.

## **Routine and Rigor**

We have heard loudly and clearly from our families that with the new year beginning remotely, having structured routines and some added rigor for our students was a high priority. Our Assistant Superintendent Kelly Chase has been working hard with the curriculum directors and principals to make sure that the school day that students experience when they return on September 16th resembles as close to a “normal” school day structure as possible. There will be synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (independent) learning activities every day, and the

(independent) learning activities every day, and the curriculum will be matched to our state frameworks and aligned grade-level to grade-level. The expectation will be that students use Google Classroom as the main platform for learning, and Google Meet will be utilized as the district preferred communication method (the upcoming updates to the platform itself look very promising and helpful to our students and staff). There will be time built in for educators to check in with students and families, and communication will be prioritized at both the classroom and school level.



## **Free Breakfast and Lunch**

As we outlined in our most recent School Committee meeting, free breakfast and lunch pickup will continue through Friday, September 11th in its current form. Thanks to the leadership of Business Manager Toni Mertz and Food Services Director Omar Hernandez, breakfast and lunch pickup will resume on Monday, September 14th; however, more announcements about the specifics around this essential community service will be forthcoming. We are excited that this program will continue for our Malden families into the school year.

**The Malden Public Schools 2020-2021 Academic Year begins on Wednesday, September 16. All students will begin the school year with a Remote Learning Plan. More information on details of Remote Learning for MPS students is available on our website: [www.maldenps.org](http://www.maldenps.org)**

# MALDEN HIGH SENIORS RECLAIM SOME TRADITION: Closely-supervised Graduation Day ceremony held



## MPS Director of Nursing leads entire staff in training session on COVID-19 safety



Malden Public Schools Director of Nursing Patricia Tramondozi led an extensive, detailed COVID-19 safety training session with the entire MPS staff on Tuesday morning, Sept. 1. In the training session, she outlined a series of protocols —based largely on when students and staff return to school buildings for “in-person” learning— which have been formulated along school, city, state and CDC guidelines. The protocols included topics such as identifying COVID-19 symptoms, general hygiene and safety procedures and proper use of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). The Nursing Director said that MPS now has extensive supplies of PPE equipment and cleaning supplies and regimens that will keep MPS safe.

# *SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE: The #1 priority of our response to the crisis caused by the pandemic has been the safety & well-being of our students and their families and that will not change*

## **Continued from Page One**

and energy has been dedicated to forging a new approach to the Remote Learning plan that we have adopted to begin the 2021-2022 school year. I can not thank enough the many Malden Public Schools "heroes among us" who have stepped up immensely this summer to help ensure that our students and staff will have all that they need to guide them to success this year. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kelly Chase, our Director of Educational and Instructional Technology Natalia Brennan and Business Manager Toni Mertz have all been instrumental in every step of the planning and strategy-making for this school year. Above all, the top priority of all the planning has been to safeguard the health and well-being of our Malden school community, students, their families, our staff and the families of our staff members. With the assistance of our 31-member School Re-Entry Advisory Task Force and the results of our parental survey and Community Listening Sessions, we were able to cull enough feedback to guide us in developing the right planning to fit the needs of our unique Malden Public Schools students. As I informed our educators and staff on their first day of back-to-school, on Monday, August 31, "you chose the most challenging career there exists today – you are educators, and this will be the most challenging year of your careers." I have the utmost confidence in the ability of our educators to preserve the academic integrity of our students while using new methods to work their craft. I believe in Malden and we will see this through, together. —Supt. John Oteri

***Please take advantage of updates and other information related to Re-Entry to the new school year and other plans for the Malden Public Schools during the COVID-19 crisis, detailed on Twitter (@MaldenPublic), and on our website (maldenps.org).***

# **Superintendent's Letter to the MPS Community**

## **Continued from Page 4**

### **Technology**

We've said it before, but it's worth repeating – every student in the Malden Public Schools will have access to both a device and internet for the upcoming school year. Thanks to the leadership of Business Manager Toni Mertz and Director of Instructional Technology Natalia Brennan, no student will be without technology access this fall. As opposed to the spring where devices were given out primarily per family, we will have a touch-screen device for all students in PreK through Grade 1, and a chromebook for all students in Grades 2 – 12. If you do not have internet access, will be able to provide you with a hotspot for internet access. The orders for these devices were made as early as possible, and while we await deliveries of devices, know that we will keep you apprised of developments within the next week. We recognize that families have varying levels of experience with technology devices and the platforms used on them. To that end, we are planning ways to provide families with easily accessible tech support and assistance in understanding and using tools and platforms that will help them work with their students to access their learning – more details are forthcoming!

### **What the Future Holds**

The uncertainty of the future is challenging. We know that there are many families who are feeling an additional strain right now, and want to make sure we partner with you as effectively as we can to make sure we make this year as productive as it can be for our students. Our goal has been and will continue to be the safety of our students and staff. We want to return to school – in a safe and healthy manner. Throughout our negotiations process, we have consistently emphasized that principle and will continue to do so. Currently, we are putting in the work of independently auditing our HVAC systems in our buildings, as well as ordering necessary safety supplies and supports for a potential return. Of course, any return to our physical buildings will be reliant upon health and safety metrics provided by the city and the state, our percent positivity rate as a community, successful consultation with our Board of Health, and other additional considerations that all will ultimately guide our decision to potentially transition from a remote phase to a hybrid phase. As we move forward together, please know that any official plans and communications will come from our department, the Malden Public Schools, and we will strive to be as communicative as possible as we navigate this uncharted territory together. We anticipate the release of another update within the next week. As we get ready to begin the year together, we look forward to partnering with you to create the best experience we can for our learners.

**Stay safe, John Oteri, Superintendent**

# The Malden Public Schools: 'Our Diversity is Our Strength'

The Malden school district is ranked #1 as the most culturally diverse by *niche.com* in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with Malden High School rated the #1 most culturally diverse secondary education school overall. Throughout the district, all educators, administrators and students are unified in our stated mission to cherish and embrace our diversity, striving for excellence in the classroom and beyond.



#MASKUP #VolleyballisLife Malden High girls and boys volleyball players received a donation of some PPE masks from the Malden Police Dept. recently to help promote health, safety and athletics. *Courtesy Photo*

## A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

*IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMON  
LANGUAGE USED, EXEMPLIFYING  
THE BELIEFS, VALUES, STRENGTHS IN RELATIONSHIPS  
AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY*

# School Committee receives update on Malden Public Schools startup

Continued from Page 2

their children in 2020-21, either in-person, hybrid, or remote learning. Oteri said a series of three community listening sessions on the same subject drew over 500 participants. MPS also conducted a survey (which drew nearly 100 responses) to parents of special education students. "The support and trust that these participants in our surveys and listening sessions demonstrated in our school community was inspiring to us. "Our primary goal through all of this is the safety of our students, their families, our educators and staff," Supt. Oteri said. "That has driven all of our decisions and strategies in starting this school year, which is like no other." The Superintendent said teachers will be returning to working full-time on Monday, August 31, where they begin 10 days of training in professional development related to school safety protocols and the MPS commitment to remote



learning to start the school year.

Labor Day will be observed on Monday, September 7 and classes will begin remotely on Monday, September 16. Supt. Oteri said that the district is awaiting the delivery of remote learning-related electronic devices for students in the PreK-Grade 4 levels. By the first day of school, students in Grades 5-12 were issued a Chromebook for educational needs. Any student or family without access to WiFi internet in their home will be provided access via a hotspot from MPS. In a survey result of note, over 95 percent of MPS reported they had access to internet in their homes. Oteri said much work has been done in preparing a "robust and detailed

remote learning curriculum" that will be both valuable and inclusive to the Malden school community, and "one geared to the academic progress and academic integrity of all students".

The safety of the students and educators when there is, as is hoped, an eventual return to the school buildings, will be enhanced by some extensive purchases of PPE (personal protective equipment) for use by students and school personnel and many other safety practices involving cleaning and disinfecting. Much of the cost for these items is being covered by a federal CARES grant administered to the school districts through the state. Supt. Oteri said he and his central staff are in continuing discussions and negotiations on protocols, guidelines and response strategies related to training and implementation of protocols with the Malden Education Association (MEA), which represents MPS teachers and some other staff members.

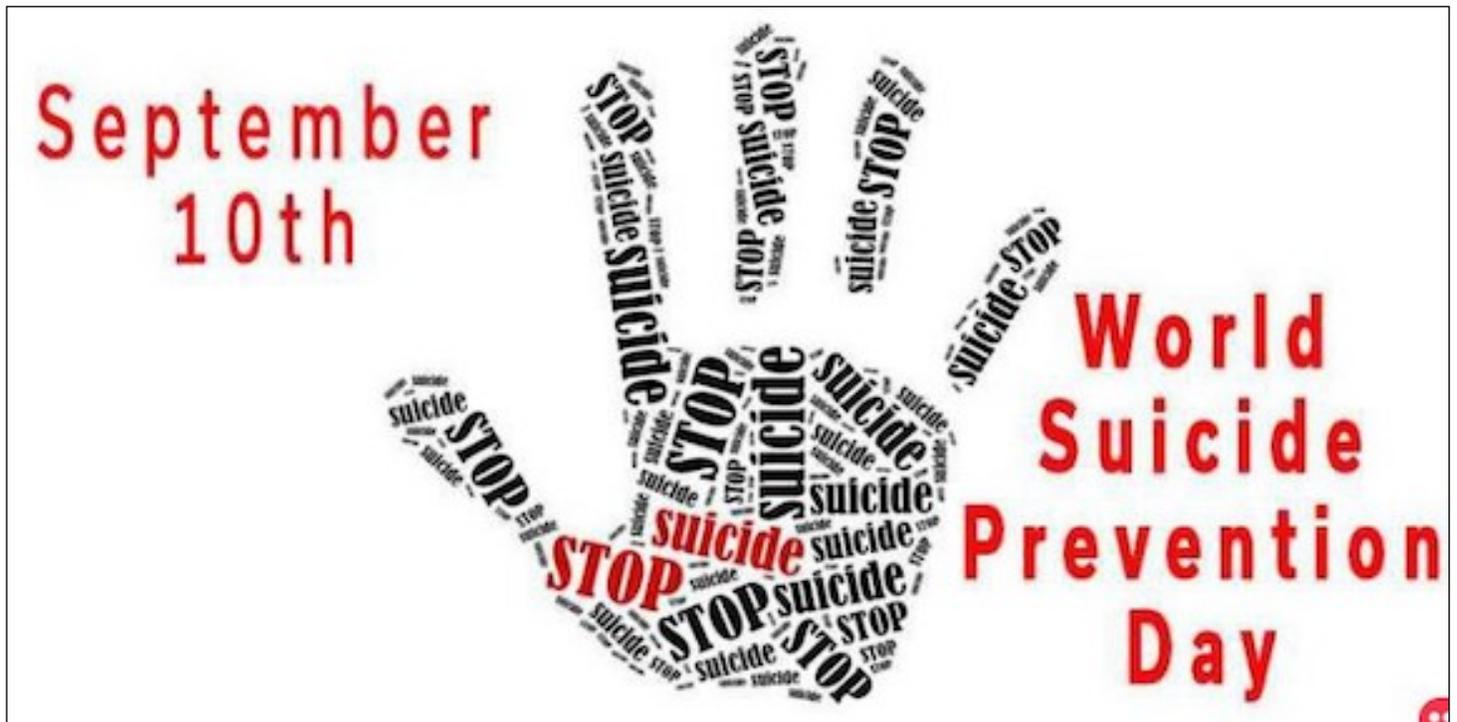
## Malden Public Schools Mission Statement

Malden Public Schools is a place where students are encouraged to follow their dreams and become well rounded members of our community. The Malden Public Schools prepare students to be independent thinkers and enthusiastic learners who: Work hard; Respect others; Cherish our diversity; Seek challenges; Discover and Develop their individual talents; Strive for academic excellence; and look to Demonstrate personal and social responsibility. Malden Public Schools graduates are prepared to be active participants in our economy and democracy.

# Take part in the Malden Community Food Security Survey as city officials seek information to assist our residents

Take the Malden Community Food Security Survey. This survey is designed to better understand where you get your food and any barriers that prevent you and your family from getting the food you need. The information obtained through the survey will assist in creating a picture of Malden's Food System.

**The deadline to complete the survey is October 9th, 2020.** The survey is available in English and seven other languages on the city of Malden website which is found at: [www.cityofmalden.org](http://www.cityofmalden.org).



## **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION**

**for the 2020-2021 School Year remains available online at Malden Public Schools website located at [www.maldenps.org](http://www.maldenps.org) All forms and information are available on the website!**

An accurate Census count is critical to local & state school funding by the federal government

# BE COUNTED



Young people were drastically undercounted in the 2010 U.S. Census—which missed more than 1 in 10 children under the age of five. When we fail to count children, the programs that support their well-being—such as childcare, schools, health insurance, housing, and public transportation—lose out on needed funds for the next 10 years, an entire childhood.

## What is the census?

The U.S. Constitution requires the government to count everyone who lives in the United States every ten years. To start the count, each household will receive a mailing from the U.S. Census Bureau by mid-March. If households don't reply by late April, a Census employee will follow up in person.

## Why is the census important?

- ✘ Census information is used to distribute more than \$1.5 trillion in federal funds, including funding for schools, hospitals, and roads in every community.
- ✘ The census is used to determine how communities are represented in the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, and even on school boards.
- ✘ The census helps determine how much money your school receives to reduce class size, support educators, offer free and reduced meals, and help students with special needs. All children gain when they and their friends are counted.

## The census is safe.

- ✘ Census information is used for statistical purposes only, to better understand our population and communities.
- ✘ Federal law strictly prohibits using census

information for law enforcement, immigration enforcement, or any reason related to an individual or family. Census employees who disclose confidential information can be punished by 5 years in prison and \$250,000 in fines.

## How to get counted?

- ✘ Count everyone who stays in your home, whatever their age or relationship, especially if they might not be counted somewhere else. Babies count (even if still in the hospital), and so does your nephew, stepdaughter, grandmother, or grandchild who stays with you.
- ✘ The census is easy. Households can complete the form by return mail, by phone, or online. Forms are available in English and 12 other languages. Census guides are available in 60 languages.

**Safe. Important. Necessary.**

**Fill Out Your Census Today**

- ✘ At [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov)
- ✘ By Phone, toll free
- ✘ By Mail, postage paid

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