

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Monday, February 1, 2021
Online Meeting

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Christenson read the protocols in accordance with the format used for the meeting as follows: "In accordance Governor Baker's March 12th, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 18, as well as the Governor's August 23rd and December 8th, 2020 revised guidance prohibiting assemblage of more than 25 people, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. In-person attendance by members of the public is prohibited, but all effort will be made to permit public attendance of this meeting via remote access by internet, telephone and if available, public broadcast by Malden Access Cable Television/Urban Media Arts on public access television channels. Public access will also be provided by posting draft minutes and/or transcript recording or record of the meeting on the City of Malden website at cityofmalden.org as soon as practicable after this 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.

Roll Call

The following attendance was taken:

Mayor Christenson	Present
Mr. Drummey	Present
Mr. Froio	Present
Mr. Gray	Present
Mr. Iovino	Present
Ms. Luong	Present
Mr. McCarthy	Present
Ms. Spadafora	Present
Mr. Weldai	Present
Superintendent Oteri	Present
Student Representative Davidson	Present
Clerk	Present

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the approval of minutes for the January 11th, 2021 Regular Session of the School Committee. Mr. Iovino made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. McCarthy made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 11th, 2021 Executive Session of the School Committee. Mr. Iovino seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Drummey made motion to approve the minutes of the January 26th, 2021 Special Session of the School Committee. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Drummey made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 26th, 2021 Executive Session of the School Committee. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Ms. Deborah Gesualdo, President of the Malden Education Association (MEA)

Ms. Gesualdo said that COVID-19 vaccinations for Malden Public Schools (MPS) staff should be provided as soon as possible. Ms. Gesualdo asked the School Committee members and all in attendance to go to www.facebook.com/MaldenEducationAssociation and click on the "Action Network" link which is the pinned post on the top of the page to send a message to the state leaders that school employees must be moved up in the vaccine timeline for the sake of the safety of public education. Ms. Gesualdo asked everyone to share the message to as many people as possible.

Dr. Elizabeth Paulsen Tonogbanua, 31 Grace Street, Malden

Dr. Tonogbanua commented that the elimination of two days of instruction for the full-time students enrolled at the Early Learning Center (ELC) disproportionately affects students of color. Dr. Tonogbanua continued that the information was not communicated directly to the families impacted by the decision. The information was provided in the form of a chart. Dr. Tonogbanua said that students should be provided with five days of instruction in a hybrid model to ensure consistency to progress.

Ms. Eden Garhart-Smith, 16 Corey Road, Malden

Ms. Eden asked whether the money parents paid for their children's lunches will be reimbursed since students are learning remotely.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Oteri said that families can submit a request to have the residual balances in their children's lunch accounts to be refunded by emailing Business Manager, Ms. Toni Mertz at tmertz@maldenps.org. Business Manager Mertz asked that families complete a W9 form so that they can be set up in the accounting system to receive these refunds. Families can choose to leave the balances in the accounts so that the children can use it to purchase ala carte items when they return to school since breakfasts and lunches are free.

Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that there are students on IEPs and peer model students at the ELC in the hybrid model. At present, because of the pandemic, there is insufficient space in the classrooms for peer model students and therefore they have only 3 days of instruction. Classrooms are capped at 10 students due to the pandemic instead of 15 students. Prior to the pandemic, the peer model students were fee-based but during the pandemic, no fees are being charged. In response to Mr. Weldai and Ms. Luong, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that she would need to check with ELC Principal Rogers as to how many families were affected by the reduction of the days of instruction to three days. In response to Ms. Spadafora, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that Principal Rogers would be able to provide more clarification on whether the 3 days of instruction is in-person or remote and whether the other two days are offered remotely. In response to Student Representative Davidson, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald explained that the chart was presented during a parent forum because of the myriad of options. Superintendent Oteri said Principal Rogers and the ELC staff have been very proactive about working on a plan and communicating it to parents. Mayor Christenson requested Assistant Superintendent MacDonald to provide more information at a later time.

1. Employee's Child Enrollment Request

Superintendent Oteri said Certified Medical Assistant, Tracey Mahoney who lives in Woburn and works at the Parent Information Center, submitted a request to have her daughter enrolled in Kindergarten next school year at MPS. Ms. Mahoney has been working for MPS since 2016. Superintendent Oteri continued that Ms. Mahoney is making the request because she liked the school system and does not have anyone to transport her child to school in Woburn. Superintendent Oteri said that according to the policy set by the School Committee, a maximum of 5 students was set for enrollment of employees' children and that this year, the cap has already been met but there is a possibility that one of these students may not return next year. According to the policy, the deadline for applications is May 15th. Superintendent Oteri said that there may be additional requests that may be received between now and May 15th.

Mr. Gray said he is strongly inclined to approve the request. Ms. Spadafora said that this matter should be a motion to be referred to Policy and Procedures. In response to Mr. Drummey, Ms. Spadafora said that the employee who requested their child to be enrolled for only this year at MPS, would need to request again if the student is going to continue to be enrolled in Malden.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to refer this enrollment request to the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee. Mr. Weldai seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Special Education Update

Assistant Superintendent Pam MacDonald provided a special education update on compensatory services, tutoring, vacation programming, audit follow-up with further outreach to parents, early adopter program, dyslexia guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), tiered focus monitoring, remote assessments for students, eSped software training and implementation, as well as coaching and consultation for K-8 Pathways Program from McLean Hospital's School Consultation Department. Assistant Superintendent MacDonald thanked all staff for working hard to support high needs students.

In response to Mr. Weldai, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said the audit process is ongoing as the focus is to reach as many families as possible to build relationships and fill gaps in services that might exist. In response to Ms. Spadafora, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said the internal procedures are being streamlined to track things better as well as offering more professional development to help staff address the non-compliance issues highlighted by DESE. Ms. Spadafora said an internal audit is needed to ensure that staff are trained to ensure that these issues of non-compliance are addressed.

In response to Ms. Luong, Assistant Superintendent Chase said that the 300 seats for literacy tutoring mentioned in the presentation for grades K-3 because it funded by a grant that focuses on early literacy. Mayor Christenson said that the special education update should be a standing item under the Superintendent's Report during School Committee meetings. Superintendent Oteri and Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that this can be done. In response to Mayor Christenson, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that the corrective action plan has been accepted by DESE.

3. District Updates and Highlights

Superintendent Oteri said that PreK-2 teachers returned to the classroom on January 25th and the PreK-2 students would have returned today on February 1st but due to the inclement

weather, they will be returning on Thursday, February 4th. The Principals sorted the K-2 students into two cohorts. The priority was to keep siblings together as well as trying to balance the needs and services of the school. Roughly 50% of students will be returning to in-person hybrid learning on February 1st, 2021.

Prior to this, a forum was held for the Pre K-2 teachers on January 12th and over 175 staff members attended the zoom webinar. Topics discussed included livestreaming and valuable feedback was received from staff. A town hall meeting was also held on January 19th with nearly 600 participants. The hybrid schedule was explained as well as the option of switching from remote to in-person and vice versa. Many questions were answered. Superintendent Oteri continued that the principals and leadership teams worked tirelessly to ensure a smooth opening and return of students. Throughout the entire process of bringing students back, from union negotiations through implementation, the guiding principle was students' best interest and safety. Superintendent Oteri added that the district has been proactively addressing Google technology issues with the school and city IT team as well as technical consultants.

Superintendent Oteri said that February 2nd will be a traditional snow day as there is a forecast for 12 inches of snow coupled with high winds. There is an increased chance for power outages and internet connection issues. All schools and offices will be closed. Instruction will resume on February 3rd, which will be a normal remote learning day for all students. In person learning for the "gold cohort" of grades Pre K to grade 2 will resume on February 4th. This also means that there will be no food distribution program on February 2nd. Families were informed that they could pick up meals for all three days on February 1st at each school. Families will be informed if meals will be served on February 3rd.

There is a vaccine shortage in Massachusetts as well as nationwide. According to Governor Baker's latest classification and priority of vaccinating Massachusetts, educators are in Phase 2 Step 3. Superintendent Oteri said that Malden Public Health Director, Chris Webb, had tried to prioritize current in-person staff for vaccination and a clinic was set up for February 4th but that was cancelled as the vaccine was not available and the priority from the state was for higher, risk as well as higher age populations. Superintendent Oteri continued that as a member of the North Shore Superintendent Association and Massachusetts Superintendent Association, he has signed letters to Governor Baker asking to re-prioritize teachers in an effort to get students back in school sooner. The district will continue working with Mr. Webb to expedite this matter so all staff can get vaccinated as soon as possible.

The Pandemic - Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program situation is constantly evolving. Superintendent Oteri said that the P-EBT program has been extended through this school year and eligible students will have access to more monthly support for food assistance. The school district's role in the process is to provide the information regarding students to DESE. DESE then passes this information to the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). Based on this information, DTA will distribute the cards and funds to families. Superintendent Oteri said that

some families have already received the cards and funds. The school district has no direct connection with DTA. There have been a few hiccups in this process as the district did not receive clear directions on what information was required but this has since been resolved. Superintendent Oteri was informed last week that families could receive retroactive payments from September 2020. Superintendent Oteri will inform the community once more information about this matter is provided by DESE.

The Food Insecurity Grant received by the district allows the funds to be used whichever way possible to give more access to meals during the school shut down. In coordination with Business Manager, Toni Mertz and Food Service Director, Omar Hernandez, the district decided it would be best to utilize these funds to offer dinner to the community. Once all of these funds were expended, the dinner program was shut down at the end of December. That said, there may be an opportunity to bring it back by applying for CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) also known as the "dinner program". Superintendent Oteri said that the district is currently working with DESE to apply for this program.

The food service program piloted two new sites for food delivery last week at Bowdoin Street and Newland Housing. However due to low response rate at these sites, it will be shelved until the summer where there might be higher interest and participation.

Malden High School (MHS) offered the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in-person test on January 26th to 10th and 11th grade students, per the National Collegeboard testing requirements. There were over 150 students and 26 staff members in MHS on that day, the most people in the school since March 12th. Superintendent Oteri thanked Principal Mastrangelo's team, led by House Principal, Jayson Payeur and Director of Guidance, Erin Craven for their incredible hard work on making this day a success.

Last year, the School Committee put the Accelerated and Enriched Academic Program (AEAP) or "Gifted Program" on pause until this spring. Superintendent Oteri requested the School Committee to refer this matter to the Equity and Opportunity Subcommittee for consideration and direction.

Superintendent Oteri said that DESE is offering Extended Learning Time (ELT) money to Malden to use exclusively for the Ferryway School. Administrators met with Ms. Moira Connolly from DESE who is looking to spend the money set aside for ELT schools that they could not fund this year due to the pandemic. Even though last year the Ferryway School and the School Committee voted to not remain in the Extended Learning Time program, Ferryway is still eligible for this fund because it was an ELT School in School Year 2020. The money is significant, up to \$800,000. It is NOT for an extending the day, as DESE realizes in the pandemic this cannot happen.

Superintendent Oteri continued that the this money is almost like a preparation grant with no contractual obligation. It would be used to benefit the Ferryway students. This could be used for a number of programs and activities which would benefit the Ferryway students such as: developing programs to help the “COVID” slide or regression, professional development for teachers to help address student needs, vacation and summer programs, transportation, materials, and curriculum work. DESE has left this wide open for MPS to put into the grant application.

Superintendent Oteri stressed that DESE stated the school district this is not “tied into going back to being an ELT school.” In essence this is ELT funding with no strings attached. Superintendent Oteri informed the School Committee that the district will be applying for this grant that will expire at the end of August.

Last week, registration began for the February and April Vacation Virtual Learning programs for all English Learner students. These sessions are Tuesday through Friday of each school vacation from 9:00 a.m. - noon and will be done remotely in a structured and fun manner. Superintendent Oteri aid that this program is free and open to all K-12 students. Families have been contacted and the English Learner staff will follow-up to ensure enrollment.

Superintendent Oteri said February 1st marks the beginning of Black History Month. The district has already sent messaging to educators about resources, lesson and activity suggestions addressing Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Black History Month in classes. This year, given recent events in the country, and recognizing that Dr. King's teachings are more relevant and important than ever, all of the district directors feel that it is important to collaborate on this message. Superintendent Oteri said that it is our responsibility to honor Dr. King's memory not only with a federal holiday, but also by showing students his view of how the world can be when love and equality are realized for all.

Superintendent Oteri continued that this work is done while being mindful that moments which highlight the contributions of Black Americans should not be relegated to one month. Instead, February reminds everyone of the vital and ongoing work to ensure black students see themselves in the curriculum and provides an opportunity for all students to learn about Black History and contributions. It also emphasizes the need to create spaces in classrooms so that all students feel seen, safe, included, and celebrated.

Superintendent Oteri provided reminders that February 5th is an Early Release Day for staff Professional Development and that there is no school on February 12th as it is a Professional Day for educators. The February winter break is from February 15th – 19th, 2021. Superintendent acknowledged National School Councilor week and the passing of custodian Mr. Dan Driscoll earlier in the morning. Superintendent Oteri thanked all the administrators, teachers and staff who worked very hard at this herculean task of getting the buildings ready for students to come back.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Superintendent Oteri said that the administration team is already looking at how some of the ELT funds can be used in terms of professional development for the entire district. Ms. Spadafora asked if rolling backpacks could be allowed in schools to help them with all the things they need to bring back and forth to and from school. Superintendent Oteri said that principals are cognizant of the matter. In response to Mr. Weldai, Superintendent Oteri said that more ways to publicize the CEP and P-EBT benefits will be sought.

Ms. Luong made the motion to refer AEAP to the Equity and Opportunity Subcommittee. Ms. Spadafora seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Subcommittee Reports

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

Mr. Iovino said that student enrollment was 6,193 as of last Friday. Mr. Iovino added that there are two fewer students after the break compared to before the break.

2. Superintendent Search Committee – Mr. Weldai

Mr. Weldai said that the Superintendent Profile Report compiled by the Collins Center was received earlier in the day and it provides a big picture of the information gained from the forums, focus groups and survey of stakeholders about the direction that needs to be prioritized revolving around many areas such as addressing the pandemic, commitment to anti-racism, and communication improvement. Mr. Weldai continued that the Superintendent Search committee members and the candidates will receive this report. The report will also be uploaded to the website.

Ms. Luong made the motion to receive the Superintendent Profile Report. Mr. Iovino seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Motions and Resolutions

Personal Privilege

Executive Session

Mr. Iovino made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:32 p.m. Ms. Spadafora seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey YES

Mr. Froio voted YES

Mr. Gray voted YES

Mr. Iovino voted YES

Ms. Luong voted YES

Mr. McCarthy voted YES

Ms. Spadafora voted YES

Mr. Weldai voted YES

Mayor Christenson voted YES
Motion passed unanimously.

The committee reconvened to the Regular Session at 8:01 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Froio made a motion to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. Mr. Drummey seconded and it was so 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shirley Dorai', written over a horizontal line.

Shirley Dorai, Clerk