

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Monday, March 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 with 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 MATV/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 February 1st, 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. Drummey made the motion to approve the minutes of the February 1st, 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 February 22nd, 2021 Special Session of the School Committee. Ms. Luong seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Ms. Mollie Maxwell, 30 Silver Street, Malden

Ms. Maxwell Future ELC parent asked about the future plans for the Early Learning Center (ELC) as her child might be enrolling next year. Mayor Christenson said that this matter will be addressed during the Budget Subcommittee meetings that will be scheduled soon. Mayor Christenson added that Ms. Spadafora, Chair of the Budget Subcommittee will get in touch with her.

Amalia Tonogbanua, 2nd grade student at Beebe School

Amalia asked the School Committee to consider changing the ELC start time so that it would not be the same as the K-8 schools and allow time for families to drop off children at different schools. Mayor Christenson said that Ms. Spadafora and Mr. Weldai will be looking into this matter.

Mr. Patrick Fitzgerald, President of the Malden Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

Mr. Fitzgerald requested elected leaders to join the state elected leaders to continue to advocate for the frontline educators and staff to be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Mr. Fitzgerald also requested the Joint Labor Management Committee and collective bargaining teams to modify the memorandum of understanding if needed or identify a safe pathway for special education and 504 students to receive more than 2 days of in-person learning a week. Mr. Fitzgerald asked for greater transparency in communication regarding family and caregiver notifications of positive COVID-19 cases in school buildings so that families can make decisions best for themselves. Mr. Fitzgerald said there should be a consistent and equitable protocol as well as definitions of close contact, cluster that might cause a building to close and other terms.

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

Ms. Gesualdo urged all to contact Governor Baker at 617-725-4005 during business hours to ask for the reprioritization of all school staff for the COVID-19 vaccine as this will enable safer and broader re-entry into school buildings. Ms. Gesualdo added that other individuals and groups are also making these calls.

Superintendent's Report

1. Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth, Inc. Poster Project 2021 Presentation

Superintendent Oteri announced to the School Committee Tianxin Wang who is in the 7th Grade at Forestdale won the Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth (MPY), Inc. Poster Project 2021 for the Middle School level. Superintendent Oteri said the winning poster captures the spirit of what all of us should be doing which is working together. Forestdale Art teacher, Ms. Chelsea Powell said that all her students did the poster as an assignment for class and they were excited about the theme. The class discussed other aspects that went along with this theme such as loving engagement, diversity, empathy and restorative justice. Ms. Powell continued that the students were just instructed to show these topics in a visual way in the form of a poster. Ms. Powell said that she was very proud of the way Tianxin did her poster. In response to Mayor Christenson, Ms. Margie Daniels, Executive Director from Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth, Inc. said that in total, 215 posters were received. Ms. Daniels added that Tianxin's poster was the unanimous choice of the judges as they loved the message and bold colors. The winning poster is sent all over Massachusetts and is hung up on many schools' walls. Ms. Daniels thanked Superintendent Oteri for his support. Mayor Christenson thanked Ms. Daniels. Mr. Weldai congratulated Tianxin, Ms. Powell and Forestdale School. Principal Concannon said that a certificate was delivered to Tianxin and there is a picture of her holder the certificate.

Principal Concannon added that Tianxin's poster as well as the posters from all the other students who participated will be displayed in the lobby at the Forestdale School. Ms. Daniels said Tianxin will be receiving an Amazon gift card from MPY to thank her for her efforts. Principal Concannon added that this work was supported by Director of Humanities, Mr. Hurley, who delivered art supplies to all the schools. Superintendent Oteri commended Ms. Powell for her work.

2. Equity Update

Assistant Superintendent Chase provided a presentation about the work on equity happening in the district. The strategic planning was done by a group of diverse stakeholders highlighting diversity and inclusion for the mission and vision of Malden Public Schools (MPS). Assistant Superintendent Chase also spoke about why the district is committed to this work as well as the theories of action. Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson's slide on "Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion and Equity" was used to further explain the continuum. MPS is at the "Belonging" stage currently. Assistant Superintendent Chase provided a chart and elaborated on all the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work taking place in the district since 2018. Achievements as well as areas for growth were highlighted. Some examples of grants received by the district to support the work were provided. Assistant Superintendent Chase spoke about possible next steps and support requested such as a Diversity, Inclusion and Equity audit; finalization of the district vision; completion of the strategic plan; release time for administrators to participate in longer term Professional development; Barr Foundation debrief; human capital support for Central Office; affinity groups; continued summer curriculum work, etc.

Mr. Weldai said that he was willing to volunteer where needed and that some things should be built into the budget in order to support this work. Mr. Weldai continued that in the DEI audit, programmatic equity could also be included. Assistant Superintendent Chase said that there are many in the district who are involved with this work. Ms. Spadafora asked what is needed to move Malden from the "Belonging" stage to the "Inclusion" and "Equity" stages. Assistant Superintendent Chase responded that work needs to be done in the form of a survey or listening sessions with educators, parents and families about to what degree they feel they belong. Follow-up needs to happen once information is gathered. Superintendent Oteri said that the equity has been happening but additional support is needed. Ms. Spadafora asked what kind of professional development or training for new teachers is taking place in terms of special needs equity. Assistant Superintendent Chase said that this matter is addressed in different areas such as sub-groups affected by the achievement gap and lesson planning for culturally responsive educators. Ms. Spadafora said that the Budget Subcommittee will also be looking at the possibility of hiring a DEI Coordinator to support the Central Office. Mr. Weldai commented that all the supports needed should be brought forward to the Budget Subcommittee for consideration. In response to Mayor Christenson, Assistant Superintendent Chase said that the cost of implementing some of the recommendations could be funded through grants. Assistant Superintendent Chase continued that the district is considering a number of vendors who can help with the equity audit. Student Representative Davidson said that students are cooperating and working hard on DEI matters.

3. Special Education Update

Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that the new special education software went live on March 1st but there were a few bumps along the way. Malden High School (MHS) welcomed back a few more high needs students. There was a February break program run remotely by

MPS staff. The staff also delivered some arts and craft supplies to students' homes. Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that team chairs began reaching out to families who were not contacted or who did not respond to the special education survey audit in the fall and managed to contact many. The families left to be contacted now are; Beebe – 4; Linden – 43; Salemwood – 8; Ferryway – 10; Forestdale – 6, MHS – over 70; and ELC – 5. Assistant Superintendent MacDonald shared the resource page at located at <https://sites.google.com/maldenps.org/maldenstudentservices/home> because although this page was created in the fall, not many families knew of it.

Ms. Luong commented that families need to be informed about the resource page. Ms. Luong also asked if a more detailed report can be provided at the next meeting with the information from the families who were called recently. Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that the staff are having more personal conversations with the families instead of going through the list of questions from the initial survey. Ms. Luong said the audit is a work in progress and therefore these families should be asked the same questions. Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that the team chairs could look into this as well. In response to Ms. Spadafora, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that all of the out-of-district families have been contacted.

4. Transportation Contract

Attorney Greenspan said that NRT, the special education transportation provider, and the district are working on an amendment to the transportation contract similar to the amendment done last year due to COVID-19. Attorney Greenspan said he will follow-up with NRT's attorney on this matter and would bring this matter up for a vote at the next School Committee meeting.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Attorney Greenspan said that the amendment is only for year 2020-2021 similar to the amendment done in 2019-2020 due to COVID-19. Attorney Greenspan continued that the three year contract ends on June 30, 2021 and the School Committee has the option of extending this contract for one year at a time for a total of two years.

5. District Updates and Highlights

Superintendent Oteri said the community was informed about the tentative timeline voted on unanimously by the Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC) for staff and students to return to school by April 12th:

- March 8: Staff for grades 3-4 return to buildings
- March 15: Students in grades 3-4 begin hybrid learning
- March 22: Staff for grades 5 and 8 return (including grades 5-8 exploratory teachers)
- March 29: Students in grades 5 and 8 begin hybrid learning
- April 5: Staff for grades 6-7 begin hybrid learning
- April 12: Students in grades 6-7 begin hybrid learning

The tentative timeline for MHS:

- March 15: All high school staff return to the building
- March 22: Students in grades 9 and 12 begin hybrid learning
- April 5: Students in grades 10 and 11 begin hybrid learning

Families were surveyed about students returning to in-person hybrid learning or remaining in remote learning. Grades 3 and 4 families were surveyed last week, MHS families were surveyed this week and Grades 5-8 families will be the next group to be surveyed. Superintendent Oteri will host a family forum on March 9th via Zoom, similar to the last one where the return to learning plan will be presented and questions from families will be answered. The Zoom link will be made available to the public soon.

Superintendent Oteri said that last week, the Governor and the Commissioner issued statements about getting all elementary students in school, five days a week in April. Superintendent Oteri said that districts are awaiting the Board of Education's decision as well as further guidelines and answers to questions. The district will work with the School Committee, MEA and school attorney on this matter. Families will be notified once more information is available.

Superintendent Oteri elaborated on the programs offered at the ELC and changes to the programs. There are 2 Full-Day Integrated PreK classes this year. Since February 1st, one teacher teaches two cohorts in-person (M/T and Th/F), and another teacher teaches one cohort in-person (M/T) and one cohort remote (Th/F). This was done to align with the number of families who wanted in-person or remote. There are 2-Day, 3-Day or 5-Day students in these classes. All 3-day and 5-day students attend remote sessions on Wednesday. All 5-Full-Day students on IEPs attend full day in-person classes 2 days a week and remote 3 days.

There are 7 students who are 5-Full-Day students but who are not on IEPs. These students were receiving 5 days remote, but since February 1st, they receive 2 full days in person and 1 full day remote on Wednesday. The ELC does not have space for all of them to receive remote instruction on the other two days at the present time. The district is working to find a solution and is in the process of resurveying remote families to invite them to return to in-person on March 15th. Staff will be reassigning as needed. If staffing is in place, students will start on March 15th. Hopefully, this will open up slots for the 7 students in question to receive remote instruction on the remaining two days.

For the Half-Day Integrated Classes, all students including IEP and non-IEP, are receiving the 2, 3 or 5 days for which they signed up. There are 3 Half-Day teachers who teach in-person in the AM and remote in the PM as well as 1 Half-Day teacher teaches remotely AM and PM. At the moment, there is only 1 remaining in-person slot in the half-day program. As more families request in-person sessions, plans will be made to reduce the number of remote half-day sessions and add in-person sessions.

Nine of the Intensive Learning Program (ILP) classes have been in-person 4 days a week and 1 day remote since mid-October. Three ILP classes have been remote as per parent request. The district anticipates switching one remote class to in-person some time in March in response to recent parent requests for in-person sessions.

During the Month of March, STEM Director, Dr. Douglas Dias will be hosting K-5 Math Nights for parents and guardians. Math Night will share details of the math program and plans on how the district is working to continually improve student learning in math. In addition, this session will provide some tips for families to help their children see math as a daily part of their day, both in school as well as at home. The nights are as follows: March 9- Ferryway, March 15- Salemwood, March 16- Forestdale, March 23- Beebe, and March 24- Linden.

Superintendent Oteri presented the proposed 2021-2022 School Calendar for School Committee approval which has 180 school days. Kindergarten screening has been scheduled for three days on September 1st, 2nd and 7th in case not many screenings can be done in the summer due to the pandemic. Superintendent Oteri said that the calendar will be amended to show that September 1st will also be a Kindergarten screening day along with the 2nd and 7th.

Superintendent Oteri said that MHS Principal Chris Mastrangelo has the 2021-2022 Program of Studies ready to be presented to the Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee so that students can choose courses for the 2021-22 school year as soon as it is approved. Superintendent Oteri requested a motion for it to be referred to the Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee.

Since the FDA approved the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which is a single dose vaccine that needs no special storage, Superintendent Oteri hoped that this will be distributed soon and school staff can get vaccinated as soon as possible.

MPS is one of the 171 communities that have been approved for the pooled testing program through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). MPS has been matched with Concentric by Ginkgo as the district's medical partner. Participating districts and schools will receive the test kits, support from a testing service provider, and the testing software to track results, all at no cost to them, until April 18, 2021. Superintendent Oteri said that after this date, districts will cover the cost of testing as well as any optional services purchased through the statewide contract. Pooled testing involves mixing several test samples together in a "batch" or "pool" and then testing the pooled sample with a PCR test for detection COVID-19. This approach increases the number of individuals that can be tested at one time and allows MPS to regularly test the school community for COVID-19. Superintendent Oteri said that the district is planning to launch this program with smaller subsets in line with the tiered re-entry, before scaling up to a district-wide model. The district is exploring ways to begin slowly, which DESE recommends, for example, with sports teams, some staff, high school students before involving the whole district. Director of Nursing, Patti Tramondozzi is working collaboratively with Concentric by Ginkgo. Plans for pooled testing are underway and the program will begin on March 8th for students and March 15th for staff.

The pooled tests will be performed at least once per week with a shallow nasal swab for all participating students and staff members. Schools will receive the pool results within 48 hours.

If the result of the pool is negative, then all individuals are presumed to not have COVID-19. If the result of the pool is positive, then all individuals in the pool must be retested individually using the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests where they can receive individual results in 15 minutes. Because pooled testing does not give individual results, parents and staff will only be notified if follow-up testing is required.

Students and staff will be notified by email with consent forms for participation. Students and staff are required to register with Project Beacon as previously suggested for BinaxNOW testing, along with a consent form for Concentric by Ginko in order to participate in pooled testing, before pooled testing begins. Superintendent Oteri said that this is strictly voluntary for students as well as staff and not required in order to attend in person learning.

Winter athletics at the high school are underway and are set to begin interscholastic competition within the Greater Boston League starting on March 6th. Superintendent Oteri said that Girls and Boys Basketball, Co-Ed Swimming and Boys Ice Hockey will follow a league schedule with both home and away competitions at the Junior Varsity and Varsity levels. Games will be live streamed via Youtube and the links to the games will be posted via social media and on the MHS Athletics Official website. There are no fans allowed at the games. Teams will be transported via bus to and from away competitions following the latest state guidelines.

Pool testing for COVID-19 will be extended to sports teams as this is an effective use of pool testing especially since teams travel to different communities. Each sport will end the season with a varsity level league tournament to conclude the winter season which is 10 games for Boys/Girls Basketball and 6 Swim Meets. Both Co-Ed Gymnastics and Girls Ice Hockey concluded their seasons successfully last week.

Superintendent Oteri said that Merry Malden donated coats to Malden students and families. They work with Anton Cleaners to get gently used coats cleaned and reconditioned. A donation was also received from Staples. Former Forestdale Student and current Staples Manager, Mr. Juan Lopez, made a generous donation of school supplies to the Forestdale School. On February 10th, Juan delivered assorted supplies for faculty consisting of notebooks, pencils, note pads, pens and 170 gift bags for students in individual bags that contained hand sanitizer, notebooks, pocket folders, erasers, crayons and colored pencils. Superintendent Oteri thanked Mr. Lopez and Staples for this incredibly generous donation.

Superintendent Oteri announced that Director of Title I and literacy, Ms. Janice Raymond, an employee of MPS for over 20 years will be retiring at the end of June. Director of English Learner Education, Dr. Yvonne Endara, will also be retiring at the end of June. Superintendent Oteri wished both of them the best of luck for a happy and healthy retirement.

Superintendent Oteri reminded everyone that there is no school on March 12th as it is a Professional Day for educators. On April 2nd, which is “Good Friday” in the Christian calendar, there will be an 11:00 am dismissal.

In conclusion, Superintendent Oteri said that it was exciting to welcome even more students back into their classrooms and that this would not be possible without the tireless work of the administrators, teachers and staff. Superintendent Oteri also thanked the families who have shown their continuous support. Superintendent Oteri will keep the community updated as each group of students are brought back into the buildings.

Mr. Weldai made the motion to refer the MHS Program of Studies to the Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee. Mr. Iovino seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Superintendent Oteri said that DESE allowed remote learning to be used to substitute snow days for this year but no guideline has been provided for next year.

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to adopt the 2021-2022 MPS Calendar with the amendment indicating that September 1st is a Kindergarten screening day. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Superintendent Oteri said that for this school year, families still had the option of staying fully remote for the entire year. Ms. Spadafora asked if parents can drive their student athletes to games if they did not feel comfortable with the bus transportation provided. Superintendent Oteri said he would need to check with Director of Athletics, Mr. Charlie Conefrey because although it would typically be not allowed, there might be some options due to the pandemic.

In response to Student Representative Davidson, Superintendent Oteri said that there will be another survey to parents about whether they will be sending their children for in-person learning. Superintendent Oteri continued that parents can change their selection as the year progresses and that it is easier for the schools to accommodate requests to change to remote learning instead of in-person learning because of scheduling and capacity. DESE stated that requests need to be fulfilled in a six-week period but Superintendent Oteri said the district can probably do it in a shorter time frame. Superintendent Oteri added that parents can get more information on all the safety precautions, air quality studies and FAQs on the website.

In response to Mr. Weldai, Superintendent Oteri said that the pool testing can be continued to be funded through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act fund. In response to Mayor Christenson, Superintendent Oteri said that the survey results for grades 3 and 4 are not ready yet. In response to Ms. Luong, Assistant Superintendent MacDonald said that the tools

used for Kindergarten dyslexia screenings is Dibels and iReady. Kindergarteners will be screened as they register for school in the fall.

Subcommittee Reports

1. **Space and Enrollment Ad-Hoc Subcommittee – Mr. Iovino**
Mr. Iovino said that student enrollment was 6,176 as of February 26th.
2. **Superintendent Search Committee – Mr. Weldai**
Mr. Weldai said that the three finalists, Dr. Margaret (Margo) Ferrick, Ms. Lori Gallivan and Ms. Ligia Noriega-Murphy met with MHS students, central office team, and staff through forums. Mr. Weldai said that the feedback received will be passed to the School Committee later. This week, the finalists will be meeting with the school administrative team and they will also attend community forums where interpreters will be available. Next week, the finalists will have interviews with the School Committee and there will be a Special School Committee meeting on March 15th for a potential vote. Ms. Spadafora said that the participation has been very good and enabled many voices to be heard.
3. **Policy and Procedures Subcommittee – Mr. Weldai**
Mr. Weldai said a meeting will be scheduled during the week of March 22nd to review the employee's child enrollment request, student handbooks and other matters.
4. **Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee – Mr. Weldai**
Mr. Weldai said that next Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee meeting will be held on Thursday, March 18th to review the Linden Accelerated and Enrichment Program (AEAP) and the MHS Program of Studies.

Motions and Resolutions

Personal Privilege

Executive Session

Mr. Iovino made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 8:21 p.m. Mr. Froio 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

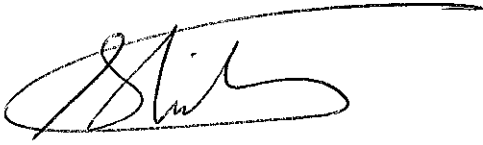
Motion passed unanimously.

The committee reconvened to the Regular Session at 9:48 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Drummey made a motion to adjourn at 9:49 p.m. Mr. Iovino 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