

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, April 4, 2022

Herbert L. Jackson Council Chamber Room #106 - 215 Pleasant Street
And Virtual Meeting

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. Mayor Christenson read the docket items for the meeting.

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

Roll Call

The following attendance was taken:

Mayor Christenson	Present
Mr. Drummey	Present
Mr. McCarthy	Present
Ms. Spadafora	Present
Ms. Macklin	Present
Mr. Weldai	Present
Mr. Gray	Present
Mr. Bernard	Present
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg	Present
Superintendent Noriega-Murphy	Present
Student Representative Jean	Absent
Clerk	Present

Mayor Christenson invited Mr. Danyal Najmi from Rosetta Languages to provide details about joining the language access channels for the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the approval of minutes for the March 7th, 2022 Regular Session of the School Committee. Ms. Spadafora made the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Ms. Rachana Gray, 295R Lebanon Street, Malden

Ms. Gray said that her 3 children had all gone through the Accelerated and Enriched Academic Program (AEAP). Ms. Gray said that she always felt that the program was a special needs program because they need to be with their peers and in a situation that would allow them to thrive. Ms. Gray said that some of these students may feel anxiety and the need to hide that they know the answers to questions. Ms. Gray said that she has not seen any improvements in the program year after year possibly because of funding, resources or other factors. Ms. Gray asked whether the program was analyzed when it was put on pause. Ms. Gray said that instead of dissolving the program, it should be improved and made more equitable.

Ms. Elaine Corpuz, 35 2nd Street, Malden

Ms. Corpuz who is a parent of two students in the AEAP program advocated for the program. Being a child of immigrant parents, Ms. Corpuz spoke of her own experience of being in an accelerated program and how it helped her.

Ms. Tairi Ouahiba, 11 Skyline Drive, Malden

Ms. Ouahiba said she is an immigrant and spoke about how the AEAP program benefits her 3rd grade daughter. Ms. Ouahiba requested that the AEAP program be allowed to continue and be expanded.

Ms. Heddinah Otete, 44 Greenwood Street, Malden

Ms. Otete advocated for the AEAP program and spoke of her child's experience. Ms. Otete also suggested that this program should be extended to all the other schools.

Ms. Jasna Nightingale, 17 Diane's View, Malden

Ms. Nightingale who has 2 children in the AEAP program spoke about her older child's experience. Ms. Nightingale said that her experience as a teacher involved spending more time with her struggling students than the gifted students. Ms. Nightingale said she was afraid that her child would become disengaged from school if the AEAP program was dissolved.

Mr. Kevin Graham, 216 Belmont Street #1, Malden

Mr. Graham who is from Trinidad and Tobago spoke about his own experience. Mr. Graham advocated for the AEAP program.

Hayam Ougarri, 3rd Grade Student at Linden STEAM Academy

Hayam spoke about her 3rd Grade AEAP class and projects.

Mr. Bimal Mohanty, 180 Kennedy Drive #402, Malden

Mr. Mohanty who has 2 children in the AEAP program, asked to make the program better instead of shutting it down.

Juliana Davidson, Senior at Malden High School

Juliana said that she had participated in the AEAP at Linden before she started attending Malden High School. Juliana advocated for the AEAP program.

Ms. Wendy Lau, 124 Lyme Street, Malden

Ms. Lau who is a parent of two children, one of whom is in the AEAP program spoke about how the AEAP program helped her son and hoped that the program will continue and expand so that her daughter might get a chance to enroll as well.

Ms. Emmy Cerra, 39 Bowman Street, Malden

Ms. Cerra said that the AEAP program helps her child. Ms. Cerra said that dismantling the program will perpetuate privilege. Ms. Cerra asked that the program be reinstated immediately.

Ms. Julie Schmitt, Teacher at Linden STEAM Academy

Ms. Schmitt said she used to teach the AEAP 2nd grade program. Ms. Schmitt said that teachers, parents and students should be involved in the decision making process of the program. Ms. Schmitt said that the program should be expanded.

Ms. Jessica Langton, 216 Belmont Street #1, Malden

Ms. Langton said that her 6 year old is bored at school and needs the AEAP program. Ms. Langton requested that the program be allowed to continue.

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

Ms. Gesualdo urged the School Committee to vote unanimously in favor of the resolution in support of the Fair Share Amendment. Ms. Gesualdo said that passage of the amendment would mean a stronger economy for all, high quality public PreK through higher education and a working public transportation system. Ms. Gesualdo asked all to sign the pledge online at <https://tinyurl.com/fairshare-ma2022>.

Ms. Yolanda Wutkiewicz, 22 Olive Avenue, Malden

Ms. Wutkiewicz thanked Mr. Gray and all the parents who came to speak in support of the AEAP program.

Mr. Genci Leno, 41 Tea Party Way, Malden

Mr. Leno spoke in support of the AEAP program.

Ms. Smitha Chepyala, 17 Lake Circle, Malden

Ms. Chepyala asked that the AEAP program be evaluated and opened to more students instead of dismantling it.

Ms. Waldina Del Rio, 27 Shurtleff Street, Malden

Ms. Del Rio said one of her children is in the AEAP program. Ms. Del Rio said that the AEAP program helps her child. Ms. Del Rio asked that everyone work together to keep the program going.

Mr. Isaac Slavitt, 14 Gellineau Street, Malden

Mr. Slavitt said that he has a child at the Linden and another at the AEAP. Mr. Slavitt said that although the AEAP program can be improved in certain aspects, there is no emergency to prevent this program from continuing while it is evaluated. Mr. Slavitt continued that there has not been any analysis or evidence based conclusions. Mr. Slavitt requested that the Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee commence a discovery process.

Mayor Christenson thanked Ms. Spadafora, Ms. Macklin and Mr. Bernard for hitting the pause button on the decision. Ms. Spadafora thanked everyone who spoke and announced that another Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee meeting has been scheduled for Monday, April 11th.

Mayor Christenson called for a brief recess at 7:19 p.m. and the meeting resumed at 7:29 p.m. with the Employee Request for Sabbatical agenda item.

Superintendent's Report

1. 2022-2023 School Calendar Revision

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that since the state primary election will be held on September 6, schools will be closed and it will be a full day of professional development for educators. March 10th which was supposed to be a full day of professional development will be converted to an early dismissal day for professional development. June 2nd will be converted from an early dismissal day to a full school day.

Mr. Weldai made the motion to approve the changes to the calendar. Mr. Bernard seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

2. District Updates and Highlights

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy proceeded to provide updates and highlights on donations, enrollment, attendance, equity goals as well as the mission, vision and core values of the Malden Public Schools (MPS). Superintendent Noriega-Murphy continued with updates on the adoption of new curriculums for next year, acceleration road map, professional development, program of studies, summer programs, accountability data, Malden Out of School Time (MOST) program as well as the survey of needs for the MOST program.

In response to Mr. Bernard’s question about credit recovery, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that in cases where some students may not be able to afford the program, the high school continues to explore ways to help these students on a case by case basis but the focus is on encouraging students to pass as they still have time to do so. In response to Ms. Rose-Zeiberg, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said job postings have been made earlier for the other summer programs as well so that staff can be hired. In response to Ms. Spadafora, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that only Ferryway and Salemwood Schools have the summer Extended Learning Time (ELT) program which is grant funded. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy added that breakfast and lunch will be provided for these programs.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy continued providing updates about the preliminary academic roadmap for Malden High School (MHS) students. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy invited Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Ms. Pamela MacDonald, who provided an update about Student Services and COVID-19.

MHS Principal Mastrangelo accompanied by Assistant Superintendent of Diversity, Equity and Engagement, Ms. Laryssa Doherty, presented the accountability data for MHS. In response to Mayor Christenson, Principal Mastrangelo said that he hopes to see improvement when the next report is due.

Director of Athletics, Physical Education/Health, Mr. Charlie Conefrey provided updates on health and athletics. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy concluded her report with the acknowledgement that April is Autism Awareness Month.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Technology and Student Services – Mr. Gray

Mr. Gray said that the subcommittee voted unanimously to change the name of the subcommittee to Technology and Student Resources Subcommittee because of confusion with the Student Services Department of the school district which does not oversee technology.

Mr. Gray made the motion to change the name of the subcommittee to Technology and Student Resources Subcommittee. Mr. Drummey seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gray proceeded to provide a summary of the March 23rd subcommittee meeting that included Ms. Rose-Zeiberg's nomination and vote as Vice-Chair of Student Resources for the subcommittee and Mr. Bernard as Vice-Chair of Technology. The subcommittee also looked at technology policies. The subcommittee is also looking into the long-term technology plans for the district, overhaul of website, technology resources, better transparency of budget items specifically related to technology grants and donations.

2. Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee – Ms. Spadafora

This matter was addressed at an earlier section of the meeting.

Motions and Resolutions

1. Food Service Vendor Bid - Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora said that 3 vendors responded to the request for proposal for the Malden Public Schools food service vendor: Aramark, Sodexo and Whitsons. Ms. Spadafora thanked the Wellness Task Force who spent a lot of time and effort since January in meetings, reading the request for proposals, reviewing presentations, taste testing and ranking the vendors. Ms. Spadafora continued that Aramark came out on top in most of the criteria but from the financial angle, Whitsons was the best. Ms. Spadafora said that Aramark's offer projected a loss of \$73,000 to the district whereas Whitson's offer would benefit the district by \$169,000. Ms. Spadafora continued that although Aramark is projecting a lower revenue, it could be higher if the vendor provides better food. Ms. Spadafora said that Whitsons food offerings at MHS is good but they do not do so well at the K-8 schools. Aramark seemed more balanced at both levels of schools.

In response to Mr. McCarthy, Ms. Spadafora said that the school visit showed that the lines moved faster and students had time to sit and eat. Ms. Spadafora also provided details of the type of food that was taste tested. In response to Mr. Gray, Ms. Spadafora said that she is not in a position to say if MPS can afford Aramark as she is not the Chair of the Budget Subcommittee. Mr. Weldai said that the answer is maybe depending on the budget. In response to Ms. Macklin, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Ms. Toni Mertz said that Whitsons' projections for the 2021-2022 are on target. In response to Mr. Bernard, Ms. Spadafora said that Aramark's meals are culturally sensitive with the student demographics. In response to Ms. Rose-Zeiberg, Ms. Spadafora said that Aramark had a range of food choices but food portions posed a challenge because the schools are K-8 instead of just elementary but it could be resolved through some innovative ways like staggering lunch periods. Ms. Spadafora said that both Aramark and Whitsons had walk-throughs in high schools.

In response to Mayor Christenson, Ms. Spadafora said the term which begins on July 1, 2022 will be for 3 years with two 1-year extensions terms. In response to another question, Ms. Spadafora said that the \$73,000 loss could be higher if unexpected situations such as equipment breaking occur. In response to Mr. Drummey, Ms. Spadafora said that only ala carte items are charged because students receive free breakfast and lunch under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program.

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to accept Aramark's proposal. Mr. Weldai seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey voted YES
Mr. McCarthy voted YES
Ms. Spadafora voted YES
Ms. Macklin voted YES
Mr. Weldai voted YES
Mr. Gray voted YES
Mr. Bernard voted YES
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES
Mayor Christenson voted YES
Motion passed unanimously.

2. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan - Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora said that former School Committee member, Ms. Michelle Luong started this effort to revisit the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Assistant Superintendent of Diversity, Equity and Engagement, Ms. Laryssa Doherty provided more information on the work done on the plan as well as training of students on the Say Something Program.

In response to Mr. Bernard, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that the plan will be reviewed every year. In response to Mr. Bernard's question about audits, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that the district is striving to be data driven and Assistant Superintendent of Diversity, Equity and Engagement, Ms. Laryssa Doherty said that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education DESE requires reports annually. In response to questions about resources for parents, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that the Malden Police Department are providing workshops and having students engage in community services. In response to Ms. Rose-Zeiberg, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that there are many qualified staff and administrators as well as partnerships with outside agencies who provide services and resources to victims of bullying.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to adopt the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Mr. McCarthy seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Employee Request for Sabbatical – Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora said that a Malden Public Schools teacher at Ferryway who is also a Malden resident requested for a sabbatical to work on her Masters. The request includes a half year's paid salary and two semesters tuition paid.

Ms. Spadafora said that per the Unit A contract, a teacher can request a sabbatical and a small committee would review it before it comes before the School Committee. This 4 member committee comprised of a School Committee member, school administrator, President of the MEA and another union member voted 2 in favor and 2 against granting the request.

Mr. Weldai said as chair of the budget subcommittee, the district is not in a great place financially. Mr. Weldai said that the request involved a salary and a tuition portion.

Mr. Weldai made the motion to approve the salary portion of the sabbatical. Mr. Bernard seconded for purposes of discussion.

In response to Mr. Gray, Ms. Spadafora said the half year paid salary, two semesters tuition and the substitute salary would cost the district more than the teacher's current salary.

Mr. Weldai restated the motion to approve the employee request for sabbatical minus the tuition expenses. Mr. Bernard seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey voted YES
Mr. McCarthy voted YES
Ms. Spadafora voted YES
Ms. Macklin voted YES
Mr. Weldai voted YES
Mr. Gray voted YES
Mr. Bernard voted YES
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES
Mayor Christenson voted YES
Motion passed unanimously.

4. Donation from Town Line Luxury Lanes – Mr. Weldai

Mr. Weldai made the motion to accept the donation of \$5,000 from Mr. Anthony Decotis of Town Line Luxury Lanes to defray the cost of the Malden High School Prom. Mr. Bernard seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Weldai publicly thanked Mr. Decotis for his donation and commitment to the students of Malden.

5. Technology and Student Services Subcommittee Name Change – Mr. Gray

This matter was addressed at an earlier section of the meeting.

6. Resolution In Support of the Fair Share Amendment – Mr. Bernard

Mr. Bernard provided more information on the resolution which will help provide more money for education among other things. A discussion ensued on this matter.

Mr. Bernard made the motion to adopt the Resolution In Support of the Fair Share Amendment. Mr. Weldai seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey voted NO
Mr. McCarthy voted NO
Ms. Spadafora voted NO
Ms. Macklin voted YES
Mr. Weldai voted YES
Mr. Gray voted NO
Mr. Bernard voted YES
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES
Mayor Christenson voted YES
Motion passed with 5 votes in favor and 4 votes against.

Personal Privilege

Executive Session

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:20 p.m. Mr. McCarthy seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey voted YES

Mr. McCarthy voted YES

Ms. Spadafora voted YES

Ms. Macklin voted YES

Mr. Weldai voted YES

Mr. Gray voted YES

Mr. Bernard voted YES

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES

Mayor Christenson voted YES

Motion passed unanimously.

The committee reconvened to the Regular Session at 9:49 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Weldai made a motion to adjourn at 9:50 p.m. Mr. Bernard 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.



Shirley Dorai, Clerk