

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, May 2, 2022

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

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:00 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	Present
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 April 4th, 2022 Regular Session of the School Committee. Ms. Spadafora made the motion to approve the minutes. 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.

Public Comment

Ms. Julie Schmitt, Teacher at Linden STEAM Academy

Ms. Schmitt who taught 2nd Grade Accelerated and Enriched Academic Program (AEAP) for 6 years until it was paused said that she strongly believes AEAP program benefits and enhances student learning.

Ms. Schmitt continued to explain how the program makes a difference in students' lives. Ms. Schmitt requested the School Committee to un-pause the AEAP program.

Ms. Kate Carbone, Teacher at Linden STEAM Academy

Ms. Carbone who is a 4th Grade AEAP teacher said that students on Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 plans have also been included in the program. Ms. Carbone asked whether the district values accelerated learning and learners.

Hayam Ougarri, 3rd Grade Student at Linden STEAM Academy

Hayam requested the School Committee to un-pause and expand the AEAP program.

Emilio Bernales, Student at Linden

Emilio recounted some projects that was done in his AEAP class which kept the students engaged.

Emilio thanked his teachers.

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

Mr. Graham said his child does not learn at the same pace as her classmates and needs the AEAP program. Mr. Graham asked that AEAP enrollment for the younger grades be opened as it is about academic growth.

Betsy Li, Student at Linden

Betsy said that she loves to be challenged in class and asked that the AEAP program be made better instead of eliminating it.

Aria Rose Corpuz, Student at Linden

Aria who is in the 3rd grade AEAP program said that what is being considered now is only what the adults want and not what the students need.

Mr. Genci Leno, 41 Tea Party Way, Malden

Mr. Leno said that based on what he heard at a subcommittee meeting, the issues raised were more to do with the administration of the program and not the students. Mr. Leno continued that students are being punished for administration's failures in managing the program appropriately. Mr. Leno asked the School Committee to help the students who need the program.

Olivia Graves, Student at Linden

Olivia asked that the AEAP be allowed to continue and improved as different students learn at a different pace.

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

Ms. Garhart-Smith said that she is not in favor of the AEAP program and would prefer an honors program in all schools. Ms. Garhart-Smith said having a smaller class size for an AEAP class at the expense of larger class sizes for other students is not right. Drake Garhart-Smith, a non-AEAP student from Linden read the commendation another student wrote about him.

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

Ms. O'Toole said that there are many students across the city who due to where they live have not been able to participate in the AEAP program. Ms. Dawn O'Toole said that there are more than 5,600 students across the district who need to access to an equitable program.

Ms. Bonnie Littlejohn, 127 Emerald Street, Malden

Ms. Littlejohn said that all the teachers in all the schools at Malden Public Schools will teach and educate students. Ms. Littlejohn continued that she knows students can thrive and be challenged in other schools and non-AEAP classes because top students in the grade come from other schools as well. Ms. Littlejohn said that there needs to be equity across the schools.

Abigail Wightman, Chelmie Hyppolite, and Connor Schopp, Students at Linden

The students said that the AEAP program has been extremely helpful to students. They asked that the program be improved and be given another chance.

Ms. Rachael Running, 51 Bellvale Street, Malden

Ms. Running spoke In favor of eliminating the AEAP program. Ms. Running said that children should not be separated by real or perceived intelligence but rather there is a need for integrated classrooms that benefit all children. Ms. Running said that many other districts who have run gifted programs in the past have dismantled them because of equity. Ms. Running continued to explain some of the issues with these programs. Ms. Running said that teachers need fully funded classrooms to support all kind of learners.

Ms. Subasri Dorairaj, 878 Salem Street,#3, Malden

Ms. Dorairaj said that putting off the program in favor of something new in the future shows a lack of urgency. Ms. Dorairaj said that the program has to be fixed right now and be continually improved to the point that it is equitable for everyone.

Mr. Isaac Slavitt, 14 Gellineau Street, Malden

Mr. Slavitt said that the AEAP program is about competency based education. Mr. Slavitt hoped that the district can enroll in the UConn study and unpause the program. Mr. Slavitt said there is time between now and the fall to do something about the program.

Mayor Christenson thanked everyone for their comments.

Superintendent's Report

1. District Updates and Highlights

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy acknowledged the contributions of all educators, administrators and staff, as the district celebrates Teacher Appreciation Week. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy proceeded to provide updates and highlights on enrollment, attendance, the rising COVID-19 numbers, summer programs and kindergarten student enrollment.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy invited Mr. Amine Yakine, Malden High School History Teacher to speak about the Young Malden Diplomats Program. Mr. Yakine provided more information about the program and said that about 25 public schools are participating in the program. Mr. Yakine said that in connection with the program, students have the opportunity to go to the

United Nations in New York City. Mr. Yakine sought approval from the School Committee for this field trip for 20 students and 3 teachers.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that fundraising will be done and that there will be 3 chaperones.

Mr. Weldai made the motion to approve the trip to the United Nations. 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.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy informed the School Committee about the Fulbright Global Leaders Program Award that STEM Director, Dr. Dias received to go to Singapore for 2 weeks to learn with and from colleagues in high performing education systems; Alumni Hall of Fame induction ceremony; achievements of Hailey Tran (MHS) who was promoted to the rank of Cadet Airman First-Class and Artemijs "AJ" Jumutcs (Beebe School) who was promoted to the rank of Cadet Technical Sergeant (C/TSgt); and the adoption of new curriculum. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy concluded her report with a presentation from Principal Garcia about the highlights at Linden STEAM Academy.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Technology and Student Resources – Mr. Gray

Mr. Gray said that at the last subcommittee meeting on April 13th, Mr. Weldai was nominated as secretary. Mr. Gray added that the subcommittee will review the staff technology use agreement in May. Mr. Gray called upon City of Malden IT Director, Mr. Anthony Rodrigues to provide an update on technology. In response to a question from Mr. Gray, Mr. Rodrigues said that Malden will be receiving \$168,000 in e-rate funding for the next fiscal year, which will be used for bandwidth. Mr. Gray asked a few more questions about vendors and authentication systems that were answered by Mr. Rodrigues.

2. Superintendent Evaluation Ad-Hoc Subcommittee – Mr. McCarthy

Mr. McCarthy said that at the subcommittee meeting, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy provided her goals as part of the evaluation process. Mr. McCarthy said that every School Committee member needs to fill out the evaluation form and send it back to Mr. McCarthy. The results will have to be reviewed by the entire School Committee before it is submitted to DESE. Mayor Christenson requested Mr. McCarthy to email the form to all the School Committee members with the date by which it should be completed.

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

Ms. Spadafora thanked everyone for their advocacy. Ms. Spadafora continued that the subcommittee initially made a recommendation to dissolve the AEAP program but because of the feedback received, the subcommittee reconsidered to find out what can be done with this program.

Ms. Spadafora brought forth a motion that passed at the subcommittee level to dissolve the AEAP program where a YES vote will be to dissolve the program and NO vote would be to not dissolve the program. Mr. Weldai seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey voted NO

Mr. McCarthy voted NO

Ms. Spadafora voted NO

Ms. Macklin voted NO

Mr. Weldai voted NO

Mr. Gray voted NO

Mr. Bernard voted NO

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted NO

Mayor Christenson voted NO

Motion passed unanimously not to dissolve the program.

Ms. Spadafora provided the plan that if approved by the School Committee would be implemented in the 2022-2023 school year which entails data collection, pausing enrollment for grades 1-3, existing cohorts who will be advancing to grade 4-8 will continue, make any open seats in grades 4-8 available to students district-wide, Welcome Center will administer the AEAP enrollment, no preferential seating for siblings, specific entry criteria as well as assessments will be implemented, curriculum, professional development, a tri-lingual program coordinator, adding teachers, ad-hoc subcommittee created by the Superintendent to review the program and work on long-term goals.

In response to Mr. Bernard asked about having an odd number for the ad-hoc subcommittee and having a liaison and non-voting member from the School Committee be present for the meetings, Ms. Spadafora agreed with the suggestions. In response to Ms. Macklin, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said the students who are not grandfathered into the program will be assessed to determine their eligibility and there will also be a waiting list if the classes fill up.

Mr. Gray requested that the plan be tabled as there were some issues with the process. Mr. Gray provided some historical background information about the process of how the program was handled. Mayor Christenson said that every School Committee member has the right to have a say in how to proceed. Mayor Christenson continued that regardless of what has happened in the past, we have to look at the future. Mr. Weldai clarified some background information about the subcommittees and the equity work.

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg asked about the cost and scope of reforming the AEAP program. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg said that some parents at Linden did not know there was such a program at the school. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg that she has been trying to contact the advisory council set up by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for these types of programs although DESE does not provide a definition for gifted. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg also

provided her own experience when she was trying to enroll her child into the program and was told that her child will not qualify because of he had an IEP. Ms. Rose-Zeiberg raised questions about the selection process for the program and if there can be a district-wide program.

Ms. Spadafora spoke about the new curriculum and honors program proposed by Superintendent Noriega-Murphy that could be offered at every school. Ms. Spadafora also said that the pause in the program will allow data to be collected to inform any future decisions. Ms. Spadafora continued that the financial cost to the district is minimal as the training will cost less than \$5,000. Mayor Christenson said this is about compromise and not just dissolving the program. Mayor Christenson said the ad-hoc subcommittee will continue to meet and have results by January so that whatever is needed for the following year can be built into the budget.

Mr. Gray apologized if there were any misconceptions about what he said earlier. In response to the Mayor Christenson, Mr. Gray explained his stance about the AEAP program. Mayor Christenson said that it is good that the effort to review the AEAP program will now be led by the school administration.

Mr. Weldai said that this is a polarizing and emotional issue. Mr. Weldai requested that the staffing positions be taken out of the vote for the AEAP plan for 2022-2023 as that matter will need to be reviewed by looking at the budget. Mayor Christenson asked the School Committee if there was any objection to the request from Mr. Weldai and there was none. In response to Ms. Rose-Zeiberg, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that the UConn professional development program will be opened to educators and administrators. Ms. Spadafora summarized the plan again.

In response to Mr. Gray about why there is a pause in enrollment if the intent is to gather data, Ms. Spadafora said there are no MCAS scores for anyone below 3rd grade.

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to approve the AEAP Program plan for 2022-2023. Ms. Macklin seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey voted YES

Mr. McCarthy voted NO

Ms. Spadafora voted YES

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 7 votes in favor and 2 against.

Mayor Christenson called for a brief recess at 8:03 p.m. The meeting resumed at 8:11 p.m.

Mayor Christenson requested Superintendent Noriega-Murphy to hold a webinar to outline the next steps for the AEAP program at some point in the near future.

4. **Public Facilities and Safety Subcommittee – Mr. Drummey**
Mr. Drummey said that the subcommittee met on April 19th about the debriefing of the incident at Malden High School on April 7th. Mr. Drummey provided further details about the meeting.
5. **Budget Subcommittee – Mr. Weldai**
Mr. Weldai said that the subcommittee met on April 25th where an overview of the budget process was presented. Mr. Weldai continued that next year’s budget has been increased by 5%. The next meeting is scheduled for May 12th.

Motions and Resolutions

1. **School Choice Vote – Mr. Weldai**
Mr. Weldai said that this is an annual vote that the School Committee takes as all districts must report their School Choice votes to DESE by June 1, 2022. Mr. Weldai continued that the inter-district school choice law requires all districts to accept incoming school choice students from other districts unless the School Committee votes not to participate or votes to limit the number of incoming students in particular grades.

In response to Mr. Bernard, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that school buildings are currently at maximum capacity.

Mr. Weldai made the motion to vote no for school choice. Ms. Spadafora seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey voted NO

Mr. McCarthy voted NO

Ms. Spadafora voted NO

Ms. Macklin voted NO

Mr. Weldai voted NO

Mr. Gray voted NO

Mr. Bernard voted NO

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted NO

Mayor Christenson voted NO

Motion passed unanimously not to accept school choice students.

2. **Staff Acceptable Use Technology Policy – Mr. Gray**
Mr. Gray said that this matter will be discussed at the Technology and Student Resources Subcommittee before it is brought to the School Committee for a vote.
3. **Linden Accelerated and Enriched Academic Program (AEAP) – Ms. Spadafora**
This matter was addressed earlier in the meeting.
4. **School Improvement Plans – Ms. Spadafora**
Ms. Spadafora made the motion to table this matter until the next meeting. 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.

5. Program of Studies PreK-12 – Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to send the Program of Studies PreK-12 to the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee. 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.

6. Handbook PreK-12 – Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to send the Handbook PreK-12 to the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee. 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.

7. District Definition of Equity – Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to send the District Definition of Educational Equity to the Equity and Opportunity Ad-Hoc Subcommittee. 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.

Personal Privilege

Executive Session

Mr. Bernard made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:19 p.m. Mr. Drummey 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 9:47 p.m.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to extend the contract of the Supervisor of Attendance from July 1, 2022 to January 31, 2023. 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.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to increase the hourly rate for School Committee counsel to \$275/hour effective July 1, 2022. 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.

Adjournment

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to adjourn at 9:50 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