

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, May 1, 2023

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	Absent
Mr. Bernard	Present
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg	Present
Superintendent Noriega-Murphy	Present
Student Representative Hakkaoui	Absent
Clerk	Present

Mayor Christenson invited Mr. Weldai to provide details about joining the language access channels for the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the adoption of minutes for the April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 Regular Session of the School Committee. Mr. Bernard made the motion to adopt the minutes. 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 ABSENT

Mr. Bernard voted YES

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES

Mayor Christenson voted YES

Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absent.

### **Public Comment**

Mayor Christenson said that following the last School Committee meeting where comments were received regarding the needs at the Early Learning Center (ELC), the Budget Subcommittee focused on the matter and have a few updates. Mr. Weldai said that following the last School Committee meeting, many subsequent meetings were held between Mayor Christenson, school administration and ELC Principal Lawrence regarding the needs at the ELC. A Budget Subcommittee meeting was held last week and another one will be held on May 8<sup>th</sup> to address this matter as well. Mr. Weldai said that at the moment, the plan is to place 7 Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT), an additional classroom, educator and Education Support Professionals (ESP), additional floating staff member or building monitor, as well as full-time Program Manager at the Early Learning Center.

Alyssa Littlejohn, Malden High School (MHS) Senior

Alyssa spoke about her concerns regarding the inequities for math and science classes in the Program of Studies. Alyssa said that during her freshman year, contrary to her belief, the CP and Honors classes were completely different. The CP class was just a repeat of 8<sup>th</sup> grade math and she didn't learn anything new. Alyssa learned that there was a Math 2 CP but it was not offered to freshmen and is still not being offered to freshmen today. Even though there are changes this year for math, Alyssa said that this course is different in terms of curriculum and should be offered to freshmen. Alyssa said that because of the inequity, she lost a year of math and could not take calculus during senior year. Alyssa added that due to her disabilities and this inequity, she couldn't relate to her peers and friends when they were talking about math. Alyssa asked that the Program of Studies address this matter.

Bonnie Littlejohn, 127 Emerald Street, Malden

Ms. Littlejohn said that even after 3 years of trying for changes to the Program of Studies, inequities still exist for freshmen students with disabilities and those who are not at the Honors level yet. Ms. Littlejohn added that positive changes towards addressing freshmen inequities stated in the current Program of Studies draft are not truly happening. Although Math 2 CP and Biology CP are listed in the Program of Studies for freshmen, it is still not listed in the course selection sheet for incoming freshmen. Ms. Littlejohn also mentioned that the course selection form for freshmen does not state that parents can choose courses which are not provided on the form.

Ms. Penny Kalman, 194 Bainbridge Street, Malden and Educator at Salemwood School

Ms. Kalman asked the School Committee to provide help where it is needed most. Ms. Kalman highlighted that even fundraising at schools differ a lot from each other. With regards to safety. Ms. Kalman showed the first aid kit that educators received. Ms. Kalman asked for the door straps that the Malden Police mentioned on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

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

Ms. Garhart-Smith echoed Alyssa's and Ms. Bonnie Littlejohn's comments. Ms. Garhart-Smith added that incoming freshmen students and parents should be able to have a meeting or forum with MHS staff for more information. Ms. Garhart-Smith asked that the figure for the transportation line item be confirmed as soon as possible because the situation is very volatile and the process takes time. The current contract ends on June 30, 2023. Ms. Garhart-Smith said that taking into account what stakeholders want in the budget is important but so are the other line items.

Ms. Deb Gesualdo, Malden Education Association (MEA) President

Ms. Gesualdo asked the School Committee to uphold their responsibility by holding the Superintendent accountable for respecting and following the collective bargaining (CBA) agreements as well as stand

with educators in demanding an end to the repudiation of all the CBAs that were ratified in October. Ms. Gesualdo also asked the School Committee to work proactively to provide a safe working and learning environment for all students and educators across the district; work proactively towards fully staffing schools; demand that no further retaliatory actions be taken against the President of the MEA for union activities that are protected by state and federal laws; ensure that it is clear that no retaliatory actions will be tolerated towards any member of the MEA for protected concerted activity; and that no retaliatory actions will be tolerated towards any parent, caregiver or community member who stand with the MEA as an ally. Ms. Gesualdo continued by relating her experience of having her key card access to the 110 Pleasant Street employee entrance revoked about two and a half weeks ago without any communication or notice at the directive of the Superintendent. Ms. Gesualdo said that this action went against multiple sections of the Massachusetts General Law and the Freedom to Join Act 2019. Ms. Gesualdo added that this action trampled upon her rights and the rights MEA members as well as removing the privacy afforded by the law. Ms. Gesualdo said that her card only started working after many attempts at communicating about the issue. Ms. Gesualdo said that this behavior needs to stop.

Ms. Jessica Gold Boots, Malden Education Association (MEA) Vice-President

Ms. Gold Boots said that about a month ago, the Early Learning Center (ELC) union members voiced their concerns about safety and staffing at the ELC. Ms. Gold Boots urged the School Committee for a hasty and effective plan to protect the safety of students and staff as well as the integrity of education for the youngest learners. Ms. Gold Boots continued that it looks like some tentative steps have been taken regarding this matter and hoped that the work continues alongside ELC members and leaders. Ms. Gold Boots also spoke about the item in the contract that was ratified in the fall stating that any safety reports would be immediately shared with union leadership as well as school leaders. Ms. Gold Boots said that the MEA found out that safety reports are not being shared with the MEA. Ms. Gold Boots urged the School Committee to work together as partners to keep the entire community safe. Ms. Gold Boots said that everyone should work towards collaboration and not retaliation.

Ms. Rebecca Griffith, MHS Educator

Ms. Griffith said that she is awaiting to hear about an update regarding the ELC. Ms. Griffith added that she was dismayed that safety reports were not shared with MEA and looks forward to see how this can be addressed.

Mr. Evan Mauser, MHS Educator

Mr. Mauser said that there are 2 doors in his classroom on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor in the Brunelli House. Mr. Mauser expressed concern about safety because during past drills, it was discovered that the doors were very easily opened. Mr. Mauser said that in the event that those in the classroom are unable to escape through the stairwell, he brought in some household items to defend themselves. Mr. Mauser said that it would be good if other items to block the door was provided. On another note, Mr. Mauser said that more staffing is required at the high school especially if the Math 2 CP courses are going to be taught.

Mr. Jeremie Bateman, 5 Blaine Street, Malden

Mr. Bateman, a parent, expressed his dismay at the responses from the Superintendent's Office when parents have reached out with concerns related to the union. Mr. Bateman said that he was not aware of the many issues that were raised by the union during the meeting and will pay closer attention.

### **Superintendent's Report**

**1. Tornado Travelers Club**

Ms. Shauna Campbell, MHS educator who is also one of the advisors for the Tornado’s Travelers Club as well as Thalia Louigne, MHS Sophomore and Alison Yu, MHS Senior spoke about their experiences during the April break Puerto Rico trip.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Ms. Campbell said that the students who want to participate in overseas trips can get help from the school for passports and visas. Ms. Campbell said that there are two levels of insurance available where one covers changes due to weather as well as other unforeseen circumstances and the other which covers a change of mind, etc.

Mayor Christenson commented that Puerto Rico is a beautiful country with many different kinds of beaches.

Mr. Weldai made a motion to approve the London and Paris trip in April 2025. Ms. Spadafora 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 ABSENT

Mr. Bernard voted YES

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES

Mayor Christenson voted YES

Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absent.

**2. District Updates and Highlights**

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy mentioned that it was School Principals’ Day and acknowledged all the principals of MPS. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy continued to provide updates on educators’ week, school activities, curriculum, flyers for students to reporting matter in schools, last day of school on June 16, summer programs, district enrollment, hiring fair for after-school programs, efforts to fill vacancies which includes billboards and flyers, licensure status for educators, Program of Studies, Handbook, and the Harassment Policy.

Assistant Superintendent Peña provided more information about plans to support students who perform above grade level. Director of Finance and Operations, Ms. Mertz presented the preliminary budget including the Chapter 70 funding.

Mr. Weldai commented that changes to the Chapter 70 funding formula needs to take place and that this should be advocated. Mayor Christenson concurred stating that the focus is on the required contribution column and asked all to email the state delegation advocating for the “required contribution” column to be addressed because it has the potential of becoming a major challenge in the future. Mr. Weldai said that between now and when the budget would be adopted, more discussions will happen around how the funds will be expended.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that most of the funding will be allocated to the schools as opposed to Central Office. Mr. Weldai added that some of the funds will be used to meet the

needs of the ELC. Mayor Christenson requested all to thank the state legislators for the current increase in funds although more advocacy is needed around the local contribution aspect for future years.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

#### **1. Budget Subcommittee – Mr. Weldai**

Mr. Weldai said that the next Budget subcommittee meeting has been scheduled for Monday, May 8, 2023 via Zoom.

Ms. Spadafora commented that information was received from legal counsel that the contract for transportation services for students with special needs are exempt from having to undergo the bidding process. Ms. Spadafora said that after speaking with some transportation providers, only the current provider has the ability to service the large number of MPS students that require this service. The current provider, NRT, was recently purchased by Beacon Mobility, a national transportation company. Ms. Spadafora continued that Beacon Mobility was the only option as MPS transports around 400 students a day. Ms. Spadafora also mentioned that the increase for next year was miniscule as what was received in the past from other providers.

In response to Mr. Bernard if we have anything to hold against the transportation company for service delivery issues or performance, Ms. Spadafora said that meetings were held in the past when there were issues of breaking contractual obligations and that the Superintendent has weekly meetings with them. Ms. Spadafora added that the company responded by having more training for their drivers and have started using apps like “Find My Bus” which helps caregivers keep track of students. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that app will be rolled out soon.

In response to Ms. Rose-Zeiberg, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that staff are being recruited for the after-school and summer positions. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy added that flyers which include translations will be sent through ConnectEd to families so that they are aware of what is being offered.

### **Motions and Resolutions**

#### **1. Harassment Policy – Ms. Spadafora**

Ms. Spadafora said that the Harassment Policy, Student and Family Handbook PreK-12 and Program of Studies PreK-12 would need to be referred to the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee for further review before it is voted by the School Committee.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to refer the Harassment Policy, Student and Family Handbook PreK-12 and Program of Studies PreK-12 to the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee. 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 ABSENT  
Mr. Bernard voted YES  
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES  
Mayor Christenson voted YES  
Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absent.

2. **Student and Family Handbook PreK-12 – Ms. Spadafora**  
This matter was addressed above.
3. **Program of Studies PreK-12 – Ms. Spadafora**  
This matter was addressed above.

### **Personal Privilege**

Ms. Spadafora announced her candidacy for School Committee for the upcoming election season.

### **Executive Session**

Mr. Drummey made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:37 p.m. Ms. Spadafora 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 ABSENT  
Mr. Bernard voted YES  
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES  
Mayor Christenson voted YES  
Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absent.

The committee reconvened to the Regular Session at 7:58 p.m.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to approve a two-year contract from July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025 for Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Ms. MacDonald. 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 ABSENT  
Mr. Bernard voted YES  
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES  
Mayor Christenson voted YES  
Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absent.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Macklin made a motion to adjourn at 7:59 p.m. Ms. Spadafora 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