

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Monday, November 13, 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 introduced newly elected Ward 5 School Committee Member, Ms. Elizabeth Hortie, and Student Representative, Meklit Abel.

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:

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

Mayor Christenson invited Ms. Spadafora 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 October 2nd, 2023 Regular Session of the School Committee. Mr. McCarthy made the motion to adopt the minutes. Ms. Macklin seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Ms. Violet Walsh, Ferryway School Educator

Ms. Walsh who teaches 4th grade Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) students works with Level I and II multi-lingual learners who are recent immigrants having diverse cultural and schooling experiences as well as diverse needs. Ms. Walsh said that even the people involved with designing the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum have indicated that it is not designed for Level I and II multi-

lingual learners. Ms. Walsh continued that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) states that multi-lingual learners are entitled to 90 minutes of systematic, explicit and sustained development of English as a Second Language. Ms. Walsh said that the portion in CKLA which is supposed to be for multi-lingual is only 30 minutes and that the rest of the classroom material is from the other parts of CKLA which is not for English Language Learners (ELL). Ms. Walsh added that since educators have been told to teach the program with fidelity and not create their own materials, they have been forced to use the CKLA curriculum which is not appropriate for SEI students. Ms. Walsh said that this has been brought to the attention of the district many times but the district has not responded with a plan for this population of students. Ms. Walsh asked for the data that supports educators using this curriculum for the SEI student population and for a plan to get something that will work for this particular population.

Mr. Michael Ziemba, Salemwood School Educator

Mr. Ziemba said that he practices professional autonomy in order to ensure that every learner in the classroom receives free appropriate education, he uses the curriculum framework documents directly from DESE's website to plan lessons. Mr. Ziemba said he tries his best to align each lesson for English, Math, Science and Social Studies class to each student based on their needs, IEPs and so on. Mr. Ziemba continued that he uses Open Up Math Resources, IXL, Vocabulary, Gizmos, CK-12, OER Project, Big History Project, and CommonLit in his classes, and would be happy to guide anyone else through his planning process and rationale for using this curricula. Mr. Ziemba said that for English Language Arts (ELA), he has substituted Amplify with CommonLit Middle School curricula since the last School Committee meeting because Amplify has not been working in his classroom for more than a year. Mr. Ziemba proceeded to describe all the work successfully done in class with CommonLit. Mr. Ziemba said that he has never met with colleagues or admin members during regular scheduled co-planning time to discuss his lesson plans and hopes that they will be able to make time to make lesson plans that the students deserve.

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

Ms. Gesualdo said opportunity, quality and professional autonomy impact teaching and learning which in turn impacts students' success. Ms. Gesualdo continued that the National Education Associations report on creating the culture for professional excellence talks about what is needed for school transformation to enhance learning for every student. Research shows that students' learning is impacted most powerfully by their teacher and Education Support Professionals (ESP) more than any other school factor. Student success and educator professional excellence are both impacted by the same elements of school culture. Ms. Gesualdo said that in order to have the culture needed for both professional excellence and students' success, changes need to be made here in Malden to address passion for learning, focusing on how every action such as choosing a rigidly scripted curriculum that is not culturally sensitive impacts a student's learning and rethink these decisions to make sure we are doing everything we can to have a positive impact on our student's passion for learning. Ms. Gesualdo spoke about assessment for excellence; culture of collaboration; authentic autonomy; as well as the need for genuine respect and caring, honoring each student, families, educators and the community. Ms. Gesualdo cautioned that teaching with only rigidly scripted curriculum and directives that aren't allowing teachers who know their students best to scaffold and make necessary modifications; all students will suffer and the teaching staff will become even more transient. Ms. Gesualdo added that since 2021-2022, 178 educators left the district and 35 educators retired. Ms. Gesualdo said dignity, respect and professional autonomy are important, and that an environment where there were 100 breakages of contract in 2.25 years cannot continue. Ms. Gesualdo continued that the culture of the schools need to be transformed to support professional excellence and student success in order to fulfill

the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and independent world.

Mr. Christopher Dreyer, 166 Mountain Ave, Malden

Mr. Dreher said that he has concerns with using Google products in public education because of data security and privacy. Mr. Dreher also spoke about the dominant theory of social structuring of education versus a multi-format such as classroom education. Mr. Dreher believes that the most optimal thing to do is multi-lingual, scaffolded and conceptual based format for education rather than focusing on rote knowledge because rote knowledge is secondary to concept driven scaffolded learning. Mr. Dreher supported what was mentioned by Ms. Gesualdo about the turnover being unreasonably high in urban areas, not just because of the cost of living but poor management of the lowest ranks of education all the way to the top. Mr. Dreher said that the process needs more integrity.

Superintendent's Report

1. Nature's Classroom

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy introduced educators from Ferryway, Forestdale and Salemwood Schools who were requesting permission for 6th and 7th graders to participate in 2-3 days overnight field trips to Nature's Classroom in Charlton, MA and Camp Cody, NH. The educators provided more information about their past experiences with Nature's Classroom as well as details about the upcoming planned field trips to Nature's Classroom pending the School Committee's approval.

In response to Mr. McCarthy, Ms. Swanson from the Ferryway School said that fund raising activities are held to help pay for students who are unable to afford the cost of the trip. Ms. Swanson added that some parents give outright donations to help pay for other students' trip fees and that she has never had a situation where a student was left behind due to financial reasons. In response to another question, Ms. Swanson provided examples of activities at Nature's Classroom.

Mr. Gray asked if Nature's Classroom can also be extended to the Linden and Beebe Schools. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that the schools do different activities for students such as bringing in guest speakers and the school communities are fine with the different approaches.

In response to Ms. Rose-Zeiberg, Ms. Swanson said that there is a nurse on-site and that any student medication and dietary needs are listed and sent to Nature's Classroom before the trip. Ms. Swanson that the nearest medical facilities are about 40 minutes away. In response to Ms. Hortie, Ms. Bratsis from the Forestdale School said that Nature's Classroom do not require students to buy any supplies for the trip. Ms. Bratsis added that if the students do not have sleeping bags, they could bring comforters or pillows.

In response to Ms. Spadafora's question about the timing of the Salemwood School trip to Nature's Classroom at the end of March when the weather might not be ideal, Ms. Strayer from the Salemwood School said that Nature's Classroom takes place in all kinds of weather and that it is a more affordable option.

In response to Student Representative Abel questions about cabin accommodations, Ms. Swanson said that the accommodations are rustic cabins with no electronics but they are heated, clean, with bunk beds and can accommodate between 16 to 30 students divided by gender.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to approve the Nature's Classroom field trips for Ferryway, Forestdale and Salemwood Schools. Mr. Bernard seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

2. District Updates and Highlights

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy welcomed Meclit Abel, Student Representative and Ward 5 School Committee member, Ms. Elizabeth Hortie. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy also recognized veterans who have served the country.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy recognized the achievement of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Ms. Emilys Peña from members of the Latino community in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for their contribution in the field of education. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that Assistant Superintendent Peña also received the Golden Hand Award for her work with the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Mayor Christenson called a brief recess at 6:21 p.m. to present a citation to Assistant Superintendent Peña. The meeting resumed at 6:23 p.m.

Superintendent Noriega-Murphy continued with updates on enrollment; class sizes; emerging priorities for instructional core; problem of practice; strategies to approach the program of practice; instructional framework; curriculum adoption process and different kinds of curriculum that has been implemented; and professional development.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Ms. Emilys Peña and Director of Literacy K-5 and Title I, Ms. Martha Jancaitis provided updates on literacy and curriculum at Malden Public Schools. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy provided more historical information about the curriculum adoption process and concluded her report with a video featuring the Ferryway School.

In response to Ms. Hortie, Director of History/Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, Mr. Gerard Tannetta, said that the TCI (Teachers' Curriculum Institute) curriculum is also used in Grades 5-7, whereas Grade 8 utilizes i-Civics as well as Primary Source. Mr. Tannetta added that Grade 8 students will have a Civic MCAS this year.

In response to Mr. McCarthy, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that for Malden High School (MHS) classes that have 30 students, there is generally no second educator or Education Support Professional (ESP). Superintendent Noriega-Murphy added that based on the programs that students are enrolled in, some classes may have a co-teaching model, or an educator with 2 ESPs or 1:1 for students. In response to Mr. McCarthy's question about whether a classroom with less than 15 students is a special education classroom, Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that it is most likely. Mr. McCarthy inquired about planning around class sizes and space as it might be an issue. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy responded that the district is monitoring

enrollment numbers. Mayor Christenson commented that upwards of 70% of classes have 25 students or less.

Student Representative Abel commented she will try to get some feedback from students because it is important to get students feedback about class sizes as well. Mayor Christenson suggested that student forums with the Superintendent can be held, as it was held in the past for other topics. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy mentioned that there are a few student advisors to the Superintendent at MHS and that she will introduce them to Student Representative Abel.

In response to Ms. Spadafora, Director of STEM, Ms. Cara Hovhanessian said that TCI and Amplify Science curriculums are being used by Grades K-5. Mr. Tannetta said that TCI History curriculum is being used by Grades K-7. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy clarified that the report only highlighted curricula that are being piloted and not existing curriculum.

Ms. Spadafora asked about how grade level learning is provided to students who are at below grade level in the classroom. Assistant Superintendent Peña spoke about the interventions in the classroom. Ms. Jancaitis explained about how students with a skill deficit or knowledge deficit are helped to access content through interventions. Assistant Superintendent for English Learner Education Ms. Ellen Kelleher-Rojas said that strategies that are used for multi-lingual learners have a wider range of grade levels because some students have experienced interrupted schooling but students are all exposed to grade level content through scaffolding, differentiated instruction and other strategies. In response to Ms. Spadafora, Assistant Superintendent Kelleher-Rojas said that the middle school 100 day Amplify curriculum gives some extra time to work with struggling learners. Director of ELA 6-8 and World Languages, Ms. Heather Castonguay provided more information about pacing guides and lessons.

In response to Mayor Christenson, Ms. Jancaitis said that for this year, there was only 1 educator who reached out with an issue regarding the curriculum and Mr. Tannetta said that for last year, there were 15. Mr. Tannetta proceeded to explain the process and how concerns raised were handled. Mayor Christenson asked about a public comment heard earlier in the meeting regarding ditching Amplify. Superintendent Noriega-Murphy said that the curriculum has already been adopted and therefore, it must be implemented.

Mayor Christenson requested Superintendent Noriega-Murphy to present some information about NEASC at the next meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

1. Technology and Student Resources – Mr. Gray

Mr. Gray provided an update on the Technology and Student Resources Subcommittee meeting that was held a previous week and attended by City of Malden, Director of Information Technology, Mr. Anthony Rodrigues. Mr. Gray said the topics discussed at the meeting included Chromebooks, computers for staff, training, online student registration, dashboard for parents, standardization of technology across the district, stability of the wifi and bandwidth. Mr. Gray thanked all the subcommittee members as well as Mr. Weldai. Ms. Spadafora made a request for future meetings of this subcommittee to be made available in hybrid mode. Mr. Gray agreed.

2. Budget Subcommittee – Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora said that the Budget Subcommittee met on October 26, 2023 to discuss the substitute teacher daily rate and elected officials’ salaries. Ms. Spadafora said that the City Council Ordinance regarding elected officials salaries had not been addressed since 2006. Ms. Spadafora said that this matter was approved by City Council unanimously.

Ms. Spadafora said that collectively, it is a \$50,000 increase to the budget and this was run by the Director of Finance and Operations, Ms. Toni Mertz, before a vote was taken at the Budget Subcommittee.

Motions and Resolutions

1. Substitute Teacher Daily Rate – Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora said that the last time an increase to the substitute teacher daily rate was approved was in 2019. Substitute teachers without a degree are paid \$75/day without a degree and \$95 for substitute teachers with a teaching certificate. Ms. Spadafora said that the Budget Subcommittee approved to pay \$100/day for substitute teachers without a degree, \$125/day for substitute teachers with a teaching certificate and \$135/day for a retired teacher who wants to work as a substitute teacher. Ms. Spadafora said that the increased rate is still lower than Boston, Chelsea and Somerville but it is still competitive with Medford, Revere, Saugus and Melrose.

Ms. Spadafora said that if the increase is adopted, the increase will go into effect the next day. Mayor Christenson requested Superintendent Noriega-Murphy to monitor and inform the School Committee if the increase helped attract more substitute teachers to work in the district.

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to increase the substitute teacher daily rate to \$100/day for substitute teachers without a degree, \$125/day for substitute teachers with a teaching certificate and \$135/day for a retired teacher who wants to work as a substitute teacher. Mr. Bernard seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Vandalism and Damage of District Property – Ms. Spadafora

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

3. School Committee Members Compensation – Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora said that the annual salary for each School Committee member will increase from \$7,000 to \$12,000 and it is effective on January 1, 2024.

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to approve the annual salary increase for each School Committee member from \$7,000 to \$12,000 effective January 1, 2024. Mr. Bernard seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey ABSENT

Mr. McCarthy voted YES

Ms. Spadafora voted YES

Ms. Macklin voted YES

Ms. Hortie voted YES

Mr. Gray voted YES
Mr. Bernard voted YES
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES
Mayor Christenson voted YES
Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absence.

4. **Malden Out-Of-School Time (MOST) District Coordinator's Compensation – Ms. Spadafora**
Ms. Spadafora made a motion to table this matter as it will be taken up in executive session. Ms. Hortie seconded and it was so VOTED. Motion passed unanimously.

Personal Privilege

Mayor Christenson said that anyone who has issues with eviction, falling behind on rent or looking for a new home can contact the Office of Housing Stability at 781-397-7000 ext. 5721 or email housingstability@cityofmalden.org.

Executive Session

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 8:08 p.m. Mr. Bernard seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey ABSENT
Mr. McCarthy voted YES
Ms. Spadafora voted YES
Ms. Macklin voted YES
Ms. Hortie voted YES
Mr. Gray voted YES
Mr. Bernard voted YES
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES
Mayor Christenson voted YES
Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absence.

The committee reconvened to the Regular Session at 9:15 p.m.

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to approve 3% salary raises for 2023-2024 for non-union employees pursuant to the attached list. Mr. McCarthy seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey ABSENT
Mr. McCarthy voted YES
Ms. Spadafora voted YES
Ms. Macklin voted YES
Ms. Hortie voted YES
Mr. Gray voted YES
Mr. Bernard voted YES
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES
Mayor Christenson voted YES
Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absence.

Ms. Spadafora made the motion to approve 4% salary raises for 2023-2024 for Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Ms. Pamela MacDonald as well as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Ms. Emily Peña. Mr. Bernard seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Drummey ABSENT
Mr. McCarthy voted YES
Ms. Spadafora voted YES
Ms. Macklin voted YES
Ms. Hortie voted YES
Mr. Gray voted YES
Mr. Bernard voted YES
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg voted YES
Mayor Christenson voted YES
Motion passed with 8 votes in favor and 1 absence.

Adjournment

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to adjourn at 9:17 p.m. Mr. McCarthy 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