

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 10, 2024
Herbert L. Jackson Council Chamber Room #106 - 215 Pleasant Street Malden, MA and
Virtual Meeting

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Mayor Christenson read 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 - Absent

Mr. McCarthy - Present

Ms. Spadafora - Absent

Ms. Macklin - Present

Ms. Hortie - Present

Mr. Gray - Present

Mr. Bernard - Present

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Present

Superintendent Sippel - Present

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the adoption of minutes for the August September 9, 2024 Regular Session of the School Committee. Mr. Bernard made the motion to adopt the minutes. Mr. McCarthy seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes

Mr. Drummey - Absent

Mr. McCarthy - Yes

Ms. Spadafora - Absent

Ms. Macklin - Yes

Ms. Hortie - Yes

Mr. Gray Present - Yes

Mr. Bernard - Yes

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Deb Gesualdo, Malden Education Association President

Ms. Gesualdo expressed appreciation to the School Committee and thanked everybody who co-sponsored the resolution and support of Yes on Question 2. Deb goes on to explain that a yes on question 2 would not eliminate MCAS testing, but would eliminate the 10th grade graduation requirement to pass the MCAS. And that the requirement puts a lot of students at a disadvantage, particularly students who are economically disadvantaged, housing insecure, newcomers to our country, and students on IEPs. She concluded by saying that she believes pulling back the graduation requirement will make it more of what it was originally meant to be, and level the playing field for all students.

Nikita Lamoure, 645 Cross St.

Ms. Lamoure approached the School Committee to ask for more involvement from community stakeholders, specifically concerning the education of black and immigrant children. Ms. Lamoure said that considering the circumstances of the cultural demographics in our district she would like to encourage the School Committee and its stakeholders to start meaningful conversations in a cultural context. Ms. Lamoure explains that in many cultures, such as her own, it is not common for parents and caregivers to be involved in decision making. With that being said, some families may be unaware of the possibilities for involvement. Ms. Lamoure encouraged all our black leaders to reach out to stakeholders to get them involved in school processes.

Report of the Superintendent

1. 2024 State Accountability and MCAS Results

Superintendent Sippel greets Mayor Christenson, the School Committee and members of the public in attendance and goes over his agenda items for the meeting. He explains he will be sharing a report on 2024 Accountability and MCAS results as well as entry plan updates. Dr. Sippel invites Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Komal Bhasin up to the podium, as he thanks Principals and Directors in attendance.

Superintendent Sippel then turns the presentation over to Assistant Superintendent Bhasin. Assistant Superintendent Bhasin goes on to explain that the MCAS and Accountability data we are about to go into is important to know and to share but that it does not tell the full story of Malden Public Schools, she says, “it doesn’t tell us about our engaged community, our committed and hard working Educators the amazing students and families, the relationships between Educators and students, the resilience

and cultural richness of our students or the music arts and enrichment and athletic success that our students experience”. But the data is part of the story, helping us to see how our students did on a common assessment taken by their peers across the state so we can embrace growth, and continue to improve our ability as a district to do right by all students.

Assistant Superintendent Bhasin explains what data is measured by the Accountability System. The Accountability system is measured by five indicators; MCAS Achievement, MCAS Growth Scores, ACCESS Scores, Chronic Absenteeism and High School Data. These indicators are measured, DESE distributes points for overall and specific group performance and a point total is combined in a weighted average with prior years to produce an Accountability classification. DESE creates a ranked list of districts across the state and districts are classified on whether or not they are in need of intervention. Assistant Superintendent Bhasin explains that she intends to show an overview of what data we have available, the trends in Malden’s data and some high level next steps we will be taking as a district, with this presentation specifically focusing on the academic indicators (MCAS Achievement, MCAS Growth Scores and ACCESS Scores).

The data shows that in English Language Arts there was a slight decline in Grades 3-8 while it stayed flat in High School. In Math, Grades 3-8 performance and growth increased meaningfully but dropped slightly in High School. In Science, performance stayed flat. And specific group performance was variable in English Language Arts while it increased in Math. The data shows that Malden students are making “typical growth” compared to the state. And finally, our ACCESS scores showed us that fewer students made progress last year than in prior years across the district and the state awarded Malden 1 out of 4 possible points for meeting targets in this area.

Assistant Superintendent Bhasin then moves on to discuss next steps. She explains that there are plans to enhance existing programs to support instruction as well as incremental adjustments being made as engagement with the curriculum, educators, leaders, students, and their families continues. Assistant Superintendent Bhasin concludes, “What I hope we take away from this analysis is that as a district, we have deep respect for the hard work of our educators, we’re excited to celebrate the progress that we have seen, and we are strongly committed to leaning into the areas of growth to do right by all kids”. Assistant Superintendent Bhasin thanks the School Committee for the opportunity and hands the presentation back to Superintendent Sippel.

2. Student Enrollment Update

Superintendent Sippel segways into a conversation pertaining to Enrollment. As of August 29, 2024, he shares, we had 6,261 students enrolled and the total enrollment

increased to 6,472 by October 1, 2024. This number is still tentative as we still have a number of students who may not have yet attended or enrollment status has changed. By October 23, 2024 we have a final certification of the October 1, 2024 Enrollment.

3. Entry Plan Reminders - Town Halls and Listening Sessions

Superintendent Sippel gives an update on his Entry Plan. Three Town Hall meetings have been held at Beebe, Salemwood and Linden. Parents and Caregivers have had an opportunity to engage with questions about what they love about Malden, what major concerns they have, and what the ideal Malden Public School District would look like. Superintendent Sippel has also been meeting with educators to ask these same questions.

Subcommittee Reports and Discussions

1. Policy and Procedure Subcommittee - Ms. Rose-Zeiberg

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg said there was a meeting on September 30, 2024 to discuss creating a new policy to create an ELC Enrollment Policy. Having gone through various channels and reviews, it was voted and passed favorably to present to the full committee.

Motions and Resolutions

1. Early Learning Center Enrollment Policy - Ms. Rose Zeiberg

Ms. Rose- Zeiberg made a motion to approve the Early Learning Center Enrollment Policy effective immediately. Seconded by Ms. Macklin. A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes

Mr. Drummey - Absent

Mr. McCarthy - Yes

Ms. Spadafora - Absent

Ms. Macklin - Yes

Ms. Hortie - Yes

Mr. Gray - Yes

Mr. Bernard - Yes

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

2. Yes on Question 2 - Mr. Bernard

Mr. Bernard stated that he believes the MCAS is a barrier to some children graduating and that the test should be a measure of how kids are doing and not as a hurdle to jump over. Mr. Gray states that he will be abstaining from the vote, with no further comment. A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes
Mr. Drummey - Absent
Mr. McCarthy - Yes
Ms. Spadafora - Absent
Ms. Macklin - Yes
Ms. Hortie - Yes
Mr. Gray - Abstained
Mr. Bernard - Yes
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Yes

Motion passed 6 in favor; 1 abstain

Personal Privilege

Executive Session

Mr. Bernard made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:09 p.m. Mr. Gray seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes
Mr. Drummey - Absent
Mr. McCarthy - Yes
Ms. Spadafora - Absent
Ms. Macklin - Yes
Ms. Hortie - Yes
Mr. Gray Present - Yes
Mr. Bernard - Yes
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Yes
Motion passed unanimously.

The committee reconvened to Regular Session at 7:45pm

Mr. Bernard made a motion to approve the contract for the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources for Dr. Sarah McLaughlin. Seconded by Mr. McCarthy. A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes
Mr. Drummey - Absent

Mr. McCarthy - Yes
Ms. Spadafora - Absent
Ms. Macklin - Yes
Ms. Hortie - Yes
Mr. Gray Present - Yes
Mr. Bernard - Yes
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Yes
Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Mr. Gray made a motion to adjourn at 7:47. Seconded by Mr. Bernard. A roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes
Mr. Drummey - Absent
Mr. McCarthy - Yes
Ms. Spadafora - Absent
Ms. Macklin - Yes
Ms. Hortie - Yes
Mr. Gray Present - Yes
Mr. Bernard - Yes
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Yes
Motion passed unanimously.