

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE MALDEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, May 5, 2025

Herbert L. Jackson Council Chamber Room #106 - 215 Pleasant Street Malden, MA and
Virtual Meeting

Mayor Christenson called the meeting to order at 6:05 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 - Present

Mr. McCarthy - Present

Ms. Spadafora - Present

Ms. Macklin - Present

Ms. Hortie - Present

Mr. Gray - Present

Mr. Bernard - Present

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Absent

Superintendent Sippel - Present

Student Representative Cathen Fontanilla - Absent

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Christenson brought forth the matter of the adoption of minutes for the April 7, 2025 Regular Meeting of the School Committee. Mr. Drummey made the motion to adopt the minutes. Mr. McCarthy seconded and roll call was taken as follows:

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes

Mr. Drummey - Yes

Mr. McCarthy - Yes

Ms. Spadafora - Yes

Ms. Macklin - Yes

Ms. Hortie - Yes

Mr. Gray - Yes

Mr. Bernard - Yes

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Absent
Motion passed unanimously.

Report of the Superintendent

1. Presentation of Citations

Claire Johnston and Hazel Queen were both recognized for their artistic achievements in regional competitions. Claire, a 5th grader from Forestdale, won first place in a statewide DCR art contest for her Arbor Day poster, which highlighted the positive impact of trees on the community. Hazel, a 9th grader at Malden High School, won a congressional art competition sponsored by Catherine Clark's office. Her artwork will be displayed at the Capitol for a year, and she will receive a trip to Washington, D.C. to see her art on display.

2. Superintendent's Entry Update

The Superintendent provided an update on his entry plan, emphasizing core values such as inclusion, collaboration, growth, and doing right by all students. The update included findings from town hall meetings, listening sessions, and classroom observations. The superintendent emphasized that the core values aim to ensure that all voices are included in decision-making, focus on growth potential, and advocate for all students, especially those without strong advocates. The Superintendent went over the phases of the entry plan, which included immersing in the community, holding town hall meetings with parents and caregivers, and conducting listening sessions with staff. Over 400 classroom visits were made to observe students and teachers in action. The Superintendent and his team have been analyzing feedback sessions with parents, caregivers, and staff, confirming the six areas for collective action, including: high expectations for all students, adapting instruction to meet diverse needs, ensuring fair access to opportunities, partnering with families, nurturing a strong workforce, and building district stability.

Dr. Sippel then discussed the district's academic priority for the 2025-2026 school year, which focuses on ensuring high expectations for all students and engaging them in reading, writing, questioning, discussing, and debating ideas. Dr. Sippel also shared goals regarding the Malden Leadership team. Since January, the Malden leadership team, including principals, assistant principals, and district directors, has been working collaboratively to refine the academic priority. Monthly meetings have been held to review classroom observations, mid-year data, and trends from teacher coaching and professional learning. The goal is to ensure that students are doing the heavy lifting in classrooms, feeling respected, empowered, and enjoying their learning. This approach is expected to foster a positive learning environment and promote student growth and achievement.

Superintendent Sippel then shared that school improvement plans will be presented in June, detailing how each school will address the district's academic priority, interventions, school schedules, attendance support, professional development, and resource allocation. School leaders are currently finalizing these plans, incorporating feedback from students, staff, and school councils throughout May. The improvement plans will align with the district's areas for collective action, ensuring that all schools are working towards high expectations for all students, adapting instruction to meet diverse needs, and building strength and stability for the district.

Subcommittee Reports and Discussions

1. Negotiations Subcommittee Update - Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora provided a Negotiations update. The negotiations subcommittee had a session on April 10th, where they provided economic responses to the Malden Education Association's financial proposals. The next session is scheduled for May 7th. Several tentative agreements have been reached, including new start and end times for K-8 schools, 30 minutes of recess for K-6 students, the elimination of monthly professional development half-days, and no school on the day before Thanksgiving. These agreements are pending by both sides. The subcommittee has four more sessions scheduled and aims to conclude negotiations before the summer. The next session will be held at Malden High School Gallery on May 7th at 5:30 PM.

<https://maldenps.org/school-committee/negotiations-updates/>

Motions and Resolutions

1. Food Services Contract - Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora discussed the renewal of the food services contract with Aramark, noting that the company has provided excellent service. The contract is for one year with three one-year rollovers, and there are no financial implications due to free universal food services. The renewal process is now managed by the state (DESI), which simplifies the process for the district. Only one vendor, Aramark, responded to the RFP, and the district has had minimal to no complaints about their services.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to enter into a one year with three one-year rollover contract with Aramark. Mr. Drummey seconded and roll call was taken as follows:

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes

Mr. Drummey - Yes

Mr. McCarthy - Yes

Ms. Spadafora - Yes

Ms. Macklin - Yes

Ms. Hortie - Yes

Mr. Gray - Yes
Mr. Bernard - Yes
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Absent
Motion passed unanimously.

2. Students Enrollment of School Department Personnel - Ms. Spadafora

Ms. Spadafora, as a reminder, explained that there is a policy allowing for employees to enroll their students in Malden Public Schools if they live outside of Malden, barring they meet the qualifications. Ms. Spadafora recommended approving the enrollment requests for children of school department personnel, including an ELC student, a Malden High School student, a Ferryway student, and a new request for a 6th grader at Forestdale. Once approved, Malden Public Schools will be at capacity for student enrollment of school department personnel.

Ms. Spadafora made a motion approving the enrollment requests for children of school department personnel. Mr. Bernard seconded the motion and roll call was taken as follows:

Roll Call Vote

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

3. “Assignment of Students to Schools” (to replace Policy JC/JCA) - Mr. McCarthy

On April 28, 2025 the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee met to discuss a proposed policy change for the assignment of students to schools, which includes new attendance areas and allows currently enrolled students to remain in their assigned schools. This will only affect *new* students coming to Malden and will go into effect May 15, 2025 if approved. Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the “JCA Assignment of Students to Schools” policy as presented.

Ms. Spadafora asked if the new Attendance Area Map had split streets. Superintendent Sippel invites Assistant Superintendent Macdonald to speak on the matter. Ms.

Macdonald explains that they worked really hard to make sure not to split streets, so mostly they are not split rather than some commercial areas in an attempt to get back to neighborhood schools. Ms. Hortie asked what the process would be if someone moves to Malden and they are on a split street. Ms. Macdonald shared that there is an appeals process if they are not at the school they wish to attend.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the “JCA Assignment of Students to Schools” policy as presented. Mr. Bernard seconded the motion and roll call was taken as follows:

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes

Mr. Drummey - Yes

Mr. McCarthy - Yes

Ms. Spadafora - Yes

Ms. Macklin - Yes

Ms. Hortie - Yes

Mr. Gray - Yes

Mr. Bernard - Yes

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Absent

Motion passed unanimously.

4. Attendance Area Map - Mr. McCarthy

In reference to Policy JCA: “Assignment of Students to Schools”, Mr. McCarthy brought forward the Attendance Area map and made a motion to approve the Attendance Area Map as presented. Mr. Bernard seconded the motion and roll call was taken as follows:

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes

Mr. Drummey - Yes

Mr. McCarthy - Yes

Ms. Spadafora - Yes

Ms. Macklin - Yes

Ms. Hortie - Yes

Mr. Gray - Yes

Mr. Bernard - Yes

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Absent

Motion passed unanimously.

5. (Policy JFAB): Admission of Non-Resident Students - Mr. McCarthy

Mr. McCarthy discussed a proposed policy for the admission of non-resident students, allowing currently enrolled 12th graders who move out of Malden to finish the school year if they request to do so in writing to the Superintendent or designee for the remainder of the current academic year only. Students must inform the district of their new address within 5 days of their moving date. Administration may grant requests for the remainder of the school year only, if continued attendance is granted transportation will not be provided. Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the proposed policy “JFAB” as presented.

Ms. Hortie asks why this is only being granted to 12th graders, and why it is not being afforded to a family who is in the district in more than one grade to finish the year. Mr. McCarthy responds saying this was discussed in the policy and procedure subcommittee. Because it is so difficult for a 12th grader to move out of the city, may they be having academic issues, to graduate in a new district in the middle of their final year. The chances of them not finishing are higher when they leave in the middle of their senior year. Mayor Christenson also adds that you do have to draw the line somewhere.

Ms. Spadafora asks for clarification on what the cut off is for a student to stay - for example, if they move the summer before 12th grade. Mr. McCarthy responds saying that they will be allowed to stay if they move the summer before. Ms. Spadafora asks that the subcommittee considers clarifying this in the policy.

Ms. Spadafora then addresses Ms. Hortie’s question about family members being allowed to stay in the district with their 12th grade sibling. Ms. Spadafora shares that she understands the concern but does not believe that it is financially feasible to allow a 12th graders' siblings to stay as well. Ms. Hortie questions the financial implications of keeping those additional students/siblings if it is after October 1, when they have already been accounted for. Ms. Macklin comments that after October 1st, there are so many additional students who move in that we do not get financial support for, so in a way it may be a wash.

Ms. Macklin asked if the student will automatically be denied if they do not inform the district of their move within the 5 days. Superintendent Sippel speaks to the current policy asking families to inform the district of their move within the 5 days and immediately unenroll. Superintendent Sippel also mentioned that the October 1st numbers, informs Chapter 70 funding for the following fiscal year (a year delay). Ms. Hortie shares that the way the policy is written does not sit well with her and that she does not like the way it makes the district look; she does not think the policy aligns with

our vision and goals for the way we want to communicate with the community and families in the district.

Mayor Christenson shares that from his perspective, the fact that we are taking these steps makes us an outlier on districts around us. We do not need to be doing anything, but us doing this makes us more compassionate. The policy can be amended if necessary but this is a baby step that addresses the most tenuous situation for someone in their educational career.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the proposed policy “JFAB” allowing currently enrolled 12th graders who move out of Malden to finish the school year if they request to do so in writing to the Superintendent or designee for the remainder of the current academic year only. Mr. Bernard seconded the motion and roll call was taken as follows:

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes
Mr. Drummey - Yes
Mr. McCarthy - Yes
Ms. Spadafora - Yes
Ms. Macklin - Yes
Ms. Hortie - No
Mr. Gray - Yes
Mr. Bernard - Yes
Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Absent
Motion passed 7-1, with one absence

Personal Privilege

Executive Session

Ms. Spadafora made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:33 p.m. Mr. Bernard seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Christenson - Yes
Mr. Drummey - Yes
Mr. McCarthy - Yes
Ms. Spadafora - Yes
Ms. Macklin - Yes
Ms. Hortie - Yes
Mr. Gray - Yes

Mr. Bernard - Yes

Ms. Rose-Zeiberg - Absent

Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Christenson and Mr. Drummey recused themselves in Executive session because of a potential conflict of interest. Vice Chair Spadafora served as the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The committee reconvened to Regular Session at 8:39.

Adjournment

Ms. Hortie made a motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. Mr. Bernard seconded and so it was 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.

Ariana Langston

Ariana Langston, Clerk