

Superintendent's Entry Findings

✦ *Spring 2025* ✦



Year-End Report

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Superintendent of Schools

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
District Profile	4
The District at a Glance.....	4
Entry Process	6
Phase One: Immersion into the Malden Community.....	6
Phase Two: Listening to Learn.....	6
Phase Three: Observing Schools in Action.....	7
Phase Four: Analysis and Sharing.....	8
Malden’s Strengths	9
Diverse and Talented Students.....	9
Engaged Parents & Caregivers.....	9
Committed Educators and Leaders.....	9
Supportive City and Community.....	10
Areas for Collective Action	11
High Expectations for All.....	11
Meeting Diverse Needs.....	13
Fair Access to Opportunity.....	16
Partnering with families.....	19
Nurturing a Strong Workforce.....	20
Strength and Stability.....	22
Charting Our Path Forward	24
Strategy for Improvement for 2025–2026.....	24
Vision for the Future.....	25
A New Beginning.....	26

Introduction

Dear Malden Public Schools Community,

I am delighted to share this detailed report of my entry findings from my first full year as Superintendent of the Malden Public Schools.

I began my tenure as Superintendent in July 2024 with the charge of leading the district to its next level of excellence, already convinced that the Malden Public Schools had the essential elements to become a high-performing school district: (1) Effective leaders, (2) collaborative teachers, (3) involved families, (4) supportive environments, and (5) ambitious instruction. I endeavored to make a thoughtful, transparent, and deliberate entry into the school district, and to take the necessary time to learn how these critical elements were already currently working together in Malden.

I planned my entry around phases that would give me as many varied perspectives about the district as possible, each of which will be described in greater detail within this report. As the year progressed, I confirmed the following **strengths** of the Malden Public Schools community: Diverse and Talented Students, Engaged Parents & Caregivers, Committed Educators and Leaders, and a Supportive City and Community.

The information I heard from parents, caregivers, staff, leaders, community members, and students--in addition to data my team and I collected from multiple sources-- all pointed toward six **areas for collective action**. I will speak to each of these areas within this report, highlighting the ways in which my administration has already begun to address them, and framing the next steps we will take to move the district forward.

As we look toward the future, I will share the strategy for improvement the district is pursuing in 2025-2026 to address priorities aligned with the areas for collective action. I will also identify other important topics for which the district will engage stakeholders to articulate an inclusive set of our collective goals and develop a long-term strategic plan to achieve them.

Thank you for your investment in improving the lives of all the students in the Malden Public Schools. I truly look forward to continued dialogue with the School Committee and our broader community as we begin this work together. Go Malden!

Sincerely,

Timothy Sippel, Ed.L.D.

Superintendent of Schools

District Profile



The District at a Glance

Student Enrollment: 6,354

Race/Ethnicity (2024-25)	% of District	% of State
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5	0.2
Asian	20.3	7.5
Black or African American	20.6	10.2
Hispanic or Latino	31.6	25.9
Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino	4.4	4.6
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1
White	22.5	51.5

Selected Populations (2024-25)	% of District	% of State
English Learners	30.2	13.9
First Language Not English	60.5	27.2
Students with Disabilities	18.8	20.6
Low Income	61.2	42.1
High Needs	75.4	55.8

Enrollment by Grade (2024-25)																
	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SP	Total
Beebe	0	100	104	105	121	106	92	100	93	100	0	0	0	0	0	921
Ferryway	0	109	105	106	110	100	96	95	100	99	0	0	0	0	0	920
Forestdale	0	50	55	55	57	67	58	64	59	74	0	0	0	0	0	539
Linden	0	85	89	80	95	98	93	100	82	91	0	0	0	0	0	813
Malden Early Learning Center	238	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	238
Malden High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	492	441	473	472	12	1,890
Salemwood	0	111	127	100	130	103	105	115	116	126	0	0	0	0	0	1,033
Out of District	1	0	1	4	1	4	3	4	5	7	7	11	4	11	7	70
Services Only	17	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
District	256	455	481	450	514	480	447	478	455	497	499	452	477	483	19	6,443

School Buildings:

Early Learning Center (Pre-K), Beebe School (K-8), Ferryway School (K-8), Forestdale School (K-8), Linden STEAM Academy (K-8), Salemwood School (K-8), Malden High School (9-12)

Malden School Committee:

Mayor Gary Christenson (Chairperson), Jennifer Spadafora (Vice Chairperson/Ward 3), Michael Drummey (Ward 1), Robert McCarthy (Ward 2), Dawn Macklin (Ward 4), Elizabeth Hortie (Ward 5), Joseph Gray (Ward 6), Keith Bernard (Ward 7), and Sharyn Rose-Zeiberg (Ward 8).

Administration and Staff:

Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents (3), Business Administrator (1), High School Principal (1), K-8 School Principals (5), Early Learning Center Principal (1), House/Assistant Principals (18), Directors (9), Program Managers (3), Educators (594), Education Support Professionals (162), Math and Literacy Assistants (45), Nurses (13) Clerical Support Staff (32), and Custodial Support Staff (23).



Entry Process

Phase One: Immersion into the Malden Community

During the summer months of 2024, I devoted my time to connecting with School Committee members, district and city leaders, school building principals, union leaders, and members of the City's state legislative delegation. The purpose of these gatherings was to foster relationships, ensure visibility, and share my educational philosophy and core values while learning about the dreams and desires of Malden Public Schools stakeholders. I began weekly meetings with the Mayor and School Committee Vice Chairperson, regular one-on-one meetings with individual School Committee Members, and introductory meetings with parent advisory groups (including SEPAC and the District Parent-Teacher Organization) and the leaders of local non-profit organizations. I attended multiple community events to start meeting families and members of the broader community. I also led a leadership retreat for all of the district's administrators and delivered the keynote address at the district kick-off for all educators and staff in August.

Phase Two: Listening to Learn

I actively engaged the community to gather their perspectives about the district through a series of efforts. I organized nine town halls specifically for parents and caregivers, providing a platform for open dialogue. Importantly, I ensured that simultaneous live interpretation was offered in multiple languages at each event to ensure as many families as possible could participate. Additionally, I conducted listening sessions with educators and staff at every school to ensure their voices were heard. Recognizing the importance of student input, I also held focus groups with students. To reach an even broader audience, I distributed surveys to both parents and caregivers, as well as



educators and staff, to confirm the themes that were emerging from the in-person listening sessions. Furthermore, I participated in over 50 meetings with community members, demonstrating my commitment to understanding and addressing their concerns.

Phase Three: Observing Schools in Action



I sought to understand learning within the schools by making 38 school visits over a span of 22 weeks, from September 2024 to February 2025. During this period, I conducted 402 classroom observations, continuously adding to this number to gain deeper insights. Additionally, I attended 36 community events across Malden's 7 schools, which allowed me to engage with students, caregivers and staff, building relationships

and developing a thorough understanding of each school's unique environment and culture.

In the fall, I also learned that district administrators identified nearly 40 different instruments that were being used to observe instruction and provide feedback to teachers. As part of the work of the Malden Leadership Team, which includes principals, assistant principals, and district administrators, my team led a process to identify the most essential common elements from these tools and consolidate them into one consistent set of "look-fors." This set would be used by administrators, coaches, and teachers to identify and support high-quality instruction.

I introduced the look-for document to all teachers and staff through a [video message](#) in December. Starting in January, I, along with other administrators, began using this common tool to calibrate our understanding of high-quality instruction and determine the support educators needed to provide it. We referenced these observations alongside multiple sources of other data that were analyzed during the next phase.

Phase Four: Analysis and Sharing

Over the course of the year the Cabinet and I reviewed multiple sources of information to better understand our district's strengths and areas for growth. We analyzed much of this data in partnership with other district leaders, including school principals. Additionally, we conducted other data reviews during regular School Committee meetings. The sources of data included the following:

- Student achievement results
- Student attendance
- Graduation and dropout rates
- Enrollment in college after graduation
- English learning progress
- School enrollment
- School culture and climate



I actively engaged with various groups to foster a shared

understanding of our district's strengths and challenges. I maintained a regular schedule of meetings with district and school-based administrators, creating opportunities for collaborative dialogue and strategic planning. I consistently met with individual School Committee members, in addition to participating in the regular public meetings of the Committee and its various subcommittees, to ensure decision-makers were fully informed about the district's priorities and could provide me with critical guidance and feedback.

Furthermore, I frequently collaborated with labor union leaders from the Malden



Education Association and SEIU, emphasizing the importance of deepening our partnership and mutual goals. I also organized feedback sessions with parents, caregivers, and other community stakeholders, providing a platform for diverse voices to contribute to the district's direction. Through these efforts, I facilitated the development of a consensus reflective of as many perspectives as possible.

Malden's Strengths

Here are four key strengths of the Malden Public Schools that I confirmed as part of my Entry Findings.

Diverse and Talented Students

Malden has the most diverse student population in Massachusetts. This diversity gives students tremendous opportunities to develop their unique interests and talents, learn from others' cultural backgrounds, and contribute to the growth of the Malden Public Schools (MPS) community.



Engaged Parents & Caregivers



Many caregivers cited the strong sense of community within Malden's schools as a reason why they love the district. Continuing to engage parents and caregivers will ensure that Malden can include their voices in decisions that impact them.

Committed Educators and Leaders

Students, parents, and community members agree that Malden's dedicated staff are one of the district's greatest strengths. Educators and staff members have demonstrated their commitment to the students and to shaping the future of the district.



Supportive City and Community

Community members and leaders show a strong interest in the well-being of students and the success of Malden Public Schools. City and community partnerships strengthen the district's ability to do right by all kids.



Areas for Collective Action

My team and I identified six themes for our district to pursue in order to realize its full potential. These “areas for collective action” emerged from multiple forums and surveys, school and classroom observations, and a thorough analysis of district performance data. I confirmed the themes during regular meetings with the School Committee and several feedback sessions with community stakeholders.

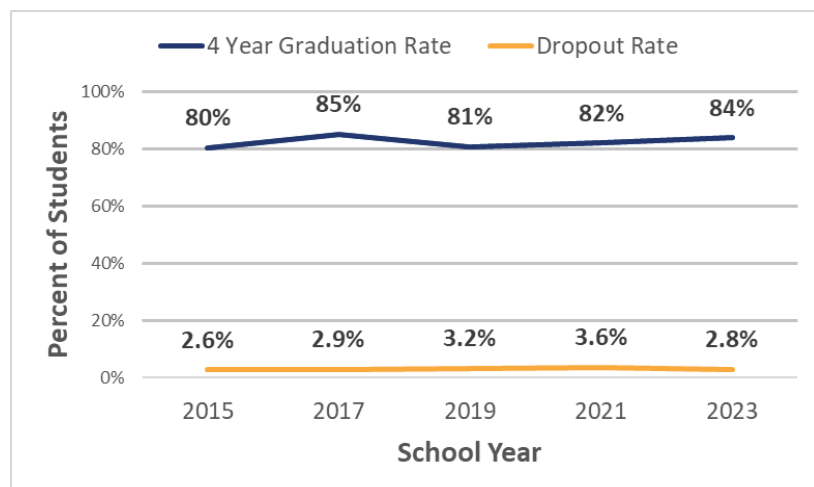


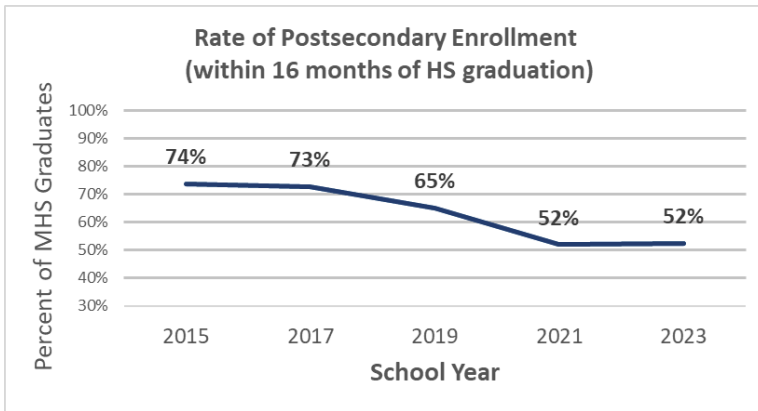
High Expectations for All

The district shares a deep commitment to preparing every student to succeed in the broadest set of options when they finish high school. The Malden community needs to set clear goals that students should attain each year across all student groups. These expectations should be aligned to the state’s rigorous academic standards and encompass opportunities to explore and develop talent in the visual and performing arts, health and wellness, technical skills, and the ability to communicate in other languages.

In a parent and caregiver survey administered in December 2024, the district solicited input regarding the importance of a rigorous and diverse curriculum that prepares students for future academic and career success. Notably, 93% of respondents considered addressing this issue as important or extremely important for the school district.

Similar to other urban districts across the Commonwealth, Malden has maintained steady graduation and drop out rates for the last several years despite the challenges brought by the worldwide pandemic in 2020.

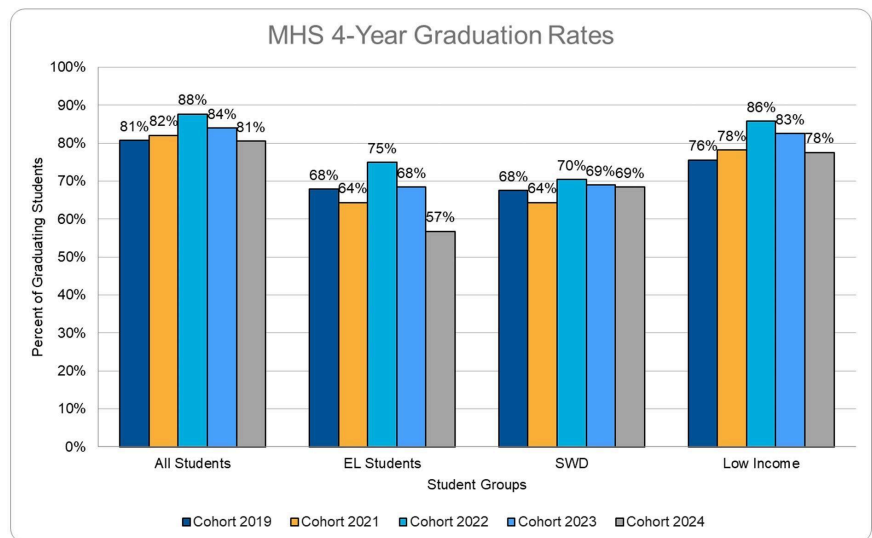




However, whereas 74% of Malden High graduates matriculated to postsecondary education (four year or two year college) in 2015, only half of the class of 2023 had done the same within 16 months of graduating (see the graphs below). Given the demographic shifts that the

district has continued to experience over the last decade, it is imperative that the district affirm high expectations for all students and commit ourselves to adapting instruction and programs to prepare students to meet these expectations. These needs are even more evident when examining the graduation rates for Malden’s various demographic groups.

Two groups of students whose outcomes diverge significantly from those of the overall student population are Students with Disabilities (SWD) and English Learners (EL). As demonstrated in the chart below, the four-year graduation rate for Students with Disabilities in 2024 was 69%-- 12 points lower than the rate for all



students. The graduation rate for English learners the same year was 57%-- 24 points lower than the overall graduation rate. These data require much deep collaborative analysis to ensure that actions taken can quickly expand post-secondary opportunities for students in these groups.

During the 2024-2025 school year, the district has focused on improving coaching practices to improve instruction and promote high expectations for all. As referenced above, district leaders collaboratively developed and implemented a consistent observation tool, for use as non-evaluative coaching support and centered on the needs of specific populations. The district also clarified the role of coaches in

improving educators' instructional practices, established caseloads for coaches, and assigned directors to schools to support coaching efforts.

During regular meetings of the Malden Leadership Team, consisting of Principals and Assistant Principals from all buildings as well as district leaders, reviewed data from interim assessments and the observation tool. This work informed the specific targets for achievement and growth for specific populations embedded in school improvement plans for SY26. Administrative teams set benchmarks for improvement in interim assessments over the next year and developed plans to support educators to help students meet these goals. Plans include increased coaching and professional learning support for educators, literacy interventions aligned with high-quality instructional materials, and professional development calendars that support curriculum implementation.

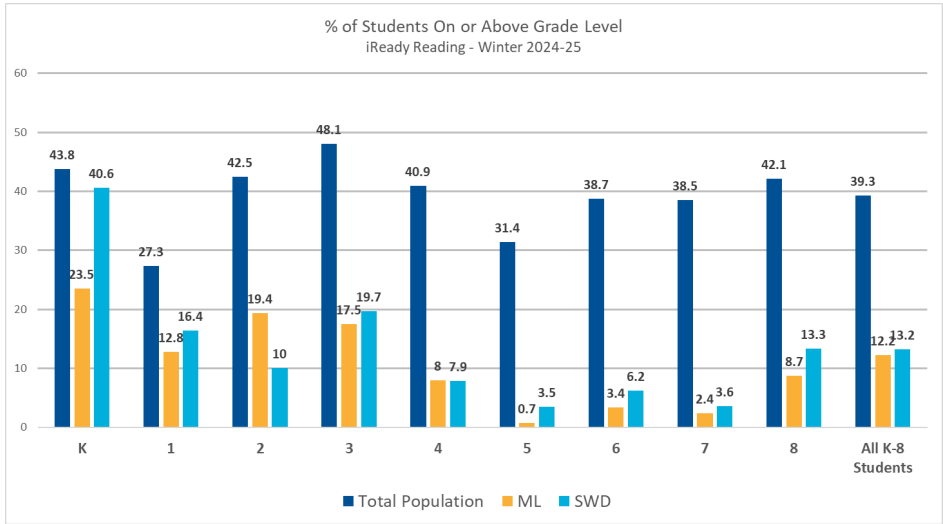
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Meeting Diverse Needs

One of Malden's greatest strengths is that the district's student population is the most diverse in the Commonwealth. In order to treasure this strength, the district must adapt systems, structures, and instructional practices to meet the unique needs of each of the diverse students. The district's educators are very talented and dedicated to student success. To ensure their greatest impact, the district must provide them with comprehensive training, coaching, resources, and support to enable them to effectively meet the evolving needs of students.

A January 2025 survey of district educators revealed that 83% of respondents considered it important or extremely important for the school district to provide increased support and resources for multilingual learners (MLs), particularly those learning English. Similarly, in a feedback session, a caregiver stated that, "It is crucial that our teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students, especially students with disabilities (SWD)."

In the winter of SY25, administrators compared the performance of MLs and SWD to the general population in Malden Public Schools on interim assessments in reading and math.

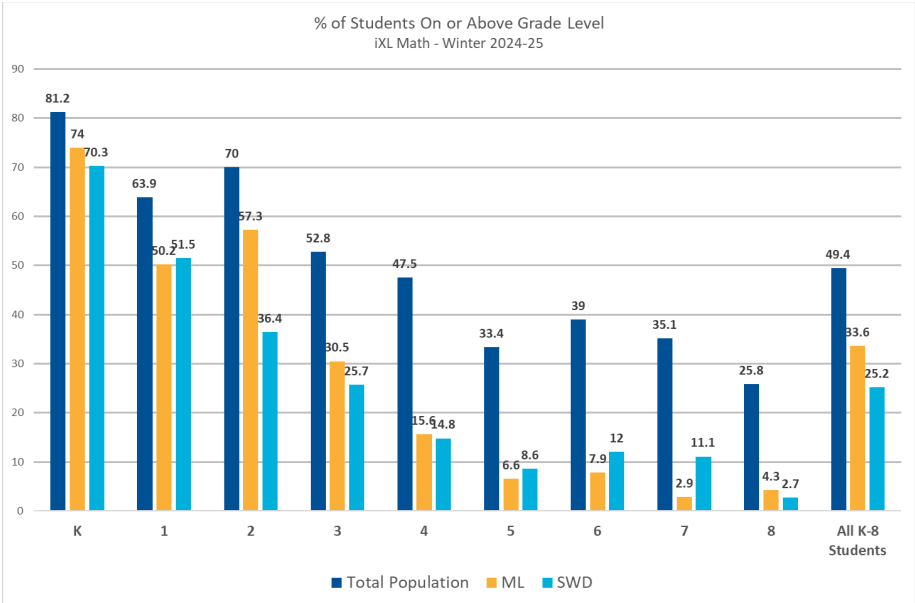


The results of these assessments revealed a disparity in the performance levels of multilingual learners and students with disabilities as compared to the general population.

In the effort to meet diverse needs, especially those of MLs and SWD, the district plans to place an increased focus on supporting the implementation of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for these student populations in SY26. Specifically, changes to ML programming and revisions to K-8 schedules will allow MLs and SWD greater access to core academic instruction as well as allow for more effective interventions for these students.

Students with Disabilities

Next year, the district is emphasizing increased time on learning and access to Tier 1 instruction for all students, but especially students with disabilities. In SY25, K-8 school schedules required many students with disabilities to be pulled for services from their regular classrooms and inadvertently missed



valuable core instruction. Without access to this core instruction, students with disabilities miss developing foundational skills that specialized services are not designed to replace.

In addition to increased access to core academic learning, the district is also strategically scheduling intervention blocks so that SWD receives both grade-level content and targeted support for their specific needs. In SY26, intervention blocks that do not conflict with core instruction are being prioritized at every school. This combination of core academic learning and strategic interventions for next year will allow for targeted skill development, differentiated pace, access to specialized curriculum, and time for addressing prerequisite skills.

Multilingual Learners

An analysis of SY25 interim assessments shows that, on average, MLs are also underperforming compared to the general student population of the district.

This school year, in several classrooms across the district, MLs at lower proficiency levels had been assigned to self-contained classrooms and had been nearly completely separated from their peers throughout the school day. These class assignments had been made to support English instruction at each student's level, but they had the unintended effect of making it harder for them to interact and learn English from their grade-level peers. These self-contained class models also fell out of compliance with state and federal law as they did not have clear exit/entry criteria and did not provide time for students to interact with peers outside of class, during lunch, "exploratory classes."

During the course of the 2024-2025 school year, the district took steps to integrate MLs by adjusting schedules to allow for them to attend lunch and exploratory classes with their English-speaking peers. For educators, the district-wide professional development in all grade levels and all content areas focused on supporting ML needs.

In SY26, the district will fully transition from self-contained sheltered English immersion (SEI) classes for MLs to integrated sheltered instruction classes. In order to make this shift, 10 additional English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching positions have been included within the proposed FY26 budget.

Shifting the ML teaching model will give these students greater access to core instruction while still providing ESL support in every classroom. Similar to the plan for SWD described above, the combination of increased access to core learning time and strategically scheduled interventions will help to significantly improve learning outcomes for MLs.

Advanced Learners

In listening and feedback sessions, caregivers emphasized the need to diversify learning opportunities for advanced learners to keep them engaged in learning, even when they are ahead of grade level. In SY25, the district piloted a Math program for advanced learners, providing them access to comprehensive and intellectually stimulating lessons and modules beyond the scope of the standard grade-level curriculum. The district plans to continue and offer expanded participation in this program next year. In SY26, the district will continue to build on these practices and engage with educators, caregivers, and students to further identify opportunities to challenge advanced learners in their academic growth both within the regular curriculum and beyond. We are committed to doing right by these students too!



Fair Access to Opportunity

Students must feel like they belong, receive high-quality academic instruction, and have access to broad enrichment opportunities, regardless of which school they attend. There is a strong consensus among parents and caregivers that opportunities should encompass art and music, hands-on learning, athletics, social development, field experiences, and world language. Fair access for all also involves strategically allocating the district's resources to equitably support the needs of schools and students.

Mid-year adjustments

Community voices, encompassing staff, students, caregivers, and school site councils, played a crucial role in advocating for enhanced access to opportunities within the limitations of the existing budget, addressing needs on a site-by-site basis for the 2024-2025 school year. For example, upon hearing many requests for middle school opportunities, the district allocated funding for after-school clubs and enrichment programs for middle school students. The FY26 budget continues funding to maintain this programming next year. These programs include opportunities such as chess, crochet, drama, band, and more. Additionally, discrepancies in exploratory access amongst the district's K-8 schools led to the addition of a Spanish language teacher to the Beebe staff mid-school year.

FY26 Staffing and Spending

With the start of FY26 budget planning, my team was able to complete a full analysis of the variability in class size, access to course offerings and materials, and programming across schools and develop strategies for improving fair access. To better provide this equitable access, my team developed enrollment-driven staffing guidelines for budgeting. At each school, staffing guidelines around average homeroom class size, special education staff-to-student ratios, shifts in programming for multilingual learners (MLs), and access to exploratory classes were applied to current enrollment numbers to determine staffing needs for rising students in FY26. At most schools and in most grade levels, current FY25 staffing levels already met these enrollment-driven staffing guidelines for FY26, resulting in no shift in staffing. Where guidelines were not already met, the FY26 budget shifts staffing to meet them, allowing for more fair access.

Additionally, in past years, all schools received the same flat fund for purchasing educational supplies regardless of enrollment. The FY26 budget takes a more equitable approach, distributing educational supply funding on a per student basis to each K-8 school.

Access for Multilingual Learners

Across the district, existing programming for multilingual learners limited their access to the breadth of programming offered by their schools. As discussed above in the meeting diverse needs of students section, the district is undergoing a shift from self-contained sheltered English immersion (SEI) classes for MLs to integrated sheltered instruction classes ahead of SY26 to address this problem.

In listening sessions centered around the SEI transition, K-4 ESL and classroom educators were invited to share what changes and support they thought would be needed to effectively complete this transition. The listening sessions found that it was important to create a shared sense of responsibility amongst all educators for MLs at all ELD levels and to provide support and training to help educators fulfill this responsibility. Additionally, as part of developing the plan to implement this shift, educators and administrators from the Beebe, Ferryway, and Salemwood schools visited elementary schools in other districts that have successfully integrated their SEI programs. The district also convened an advisory panel to provide guidance regarding the ML program at Malden High School. The panel similarly found that it was essential to cultivate a school-wide shared responsibility for the success of MLs.

Ultimately, the shifts at K-8 schools and the high school will provide MLs increased access to grade level content while maintaining support and required services to

assist their English language development. At the April English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) meeting, caregivers also provided input on how to communicate these shifts in programming to other caregivers across the district.

Malden High School Time on Learning

At Malden High School, entry findings highlighted problems with both the bell and master schedules that were impacting fair access to learning opportunities for students. Most significantly, the structure of the SY25 Malden High School (MHS) schedule allows for less than 840 hours of structured learning time per year. This is well under the 990 hours required by state regulations. The district, through a schedule design team that included representatives from faculty, the union, and the administration, worked on improvements that could be made to the schedule to afford students better access to the learning time they deserve.

Just over half of students (53%) in the high school currently have at least one semester of a "Directed Study" period in their schedule, further reducing their access to time on learning. The problem of directed studies does not impact the student population of MHS equally. Enrollment in directed study varies by grade with 9th, 10th, and 11th graders enrolled at just below 50% while about 75% of 12th graders are enrolled in at least one semester. Additionally, ML students take directed study at slightly higher rates, while SWD and dual-identified students take directed study at lower rates.

Access to non-core and advanced classes is also not evenly distributed amongst student populations. Specialized classes required for MLs and SWD have prevented these student groups from participating in the enrichment courses available to their general population peers. For example a student at an English Language Development (ELD) level 1 or 2 can only access up to two courses outside of the SEI program and, because of scheduling conflicts, at least one of these classes is likely to be a directed study. Next year, MHS is shifting to an integrated model for MLs to give these students more access to grade level content and enrichment opportunities even as they are gaining proficiency in English. To support this change, additional English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers were added to MHS for FY26.

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Partnering with families

Parents and caregivers have expressed a desire for better communication, increased involvement, and stronger relationships between families and schools to support students' success. Through timely and effective communication, the district can increase transparency around decision making while offering more ways to include and collaborate with families.

Family Engagement

As of March 2025, my administrative team had conducted over 404 classroom visits, met with families at 36 school-based events, held 11 town-halls, conducted listening sessions with educators at every school, and administered a district-wide family survey and a district-wide staff survey. The listening sessions have all had opportunities for multiple means of engagement (written and spoken) and provided simultaneous interpretation in 5 major languages. These sessions provided an opportunity to collect input and feedback from different stakeholder groups. The district continues to review participant data from these sessions and surveys as plans are made for next year.



At the school level, community feedback has informed school improvement planning. Information from the district-wide family and staff surveys were integrated into school improvement plans. The plans themselves have also been provided to staff, students, and school councils for feedback ahead of approval and implementation.

District Communication Services

At the beginning of the year, the district and school websites were difficult to navigate, with only 13% of caregivers who participated in a December survey saying they could find what they were looking for in under one minute. The district had a



pre-existing agreement with Finalsite, a website design platform, that is in effect through 2027. Under this contract, the district launched a newly designed website in late May 2025. The new website features increased translation options and allows community members to more easily find and access district services.

In a caregiver feedback session, many caregivers highly rated the idea, “we need a single method of communication for families.” To tackle this, the district has entered into a contract for FY26 with ParentSquare, a school communications platform. The new platform will provide a simple and safe way for everyone at Malden Public Schools to connect.

Community members also mentioned a desire for increased communications from the district office. Over the past year meaningful communications have increased, with monthly newsletters and timely updates. Next year, this will continue to improve as the district uses the new ParentSquare system.

5

Nurturing a Strong Workforce

Malden’s educators are the district’s most valuable resource. The district must invest in them, and attract new talent to the staff, by maintaining competitive compensation, providing meaningful training, and creating a collaborative culture. The district wants educators to stay in Malden and positively impact students throughout their careers. Entry findings highlight four critical levers the district must strengthen to cultivate and support a strong workforce:

- Competitive compensation
- Effective training and support
- Innovative recruitment
- Collaborative professional culture

Competitive Compensation

Malden Public Schools compensates educators at a rate higher than the statewide average for Massachusetts. For example, at the low end of the pay scale, a starting teacher in Malden might earn more than \$56,400 annually, compared to the state's average starting salary of just under \$55,000. At the high end, a seasoned teacher with advanced degrees and extensive experience could earn nearly \$112,000, while the statewide average for similar positions might be closer to \$107,000. The district is committed to maintaining this competitive edge so the district can continue attracting and retaining the most qualified teachers.

Effective Training and Support

As part of school improvement planning, schools are drafting professional development calendars aligned to overall improvement goals. In the spirit of meeting diverse needs, much of the next year's professional development will center around adapting instruction to the needs of MLs and SWD.



Innovative Recruitment

During the past year, the district has revised its approach to hiring new educators, shifting to an active recruiting approach to close the gap in finding candidates. In past years, Malden had not posted new/open positions until late spring. This year, initial postings went up in early March. Additionally, the district worked to develop effective communication methods with candidates, updating the website, job descriptions, and hiring process emails to be more candidate centered. The district also developed a new centralized support and screening process for hiring,

supporting principals in their hiring duties and equalizing candidate experiences across schools.

Collaborative Professional Culture

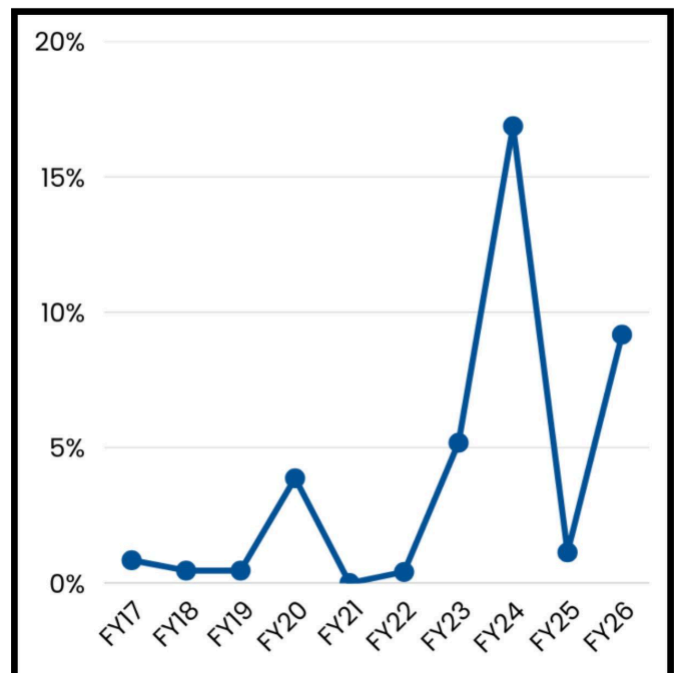
This year the district has been careful to seek staff feedback on decisions that affect them to the greatest extent possible. We learned many valuable insights through the staff listening sessions at all seven schools and the district-wide staff survey conducted in early January, which included questions regarding how the district could best support them.



Strength and Stability

Malden Public Schools needs to effectively manage current resources while taking the necessary steps to ensure a strong and stable organization in the years to come. The district must collaborate with the City, state legislative delegation, and the philanthropic community to establish sustainable funding for educational programs. State Chapter 70 funding accounts for more than half of the annual revenue for the Malden Public Schools' budget; unfortunately, the annual increases in aid from the state have rarely kept pace with inflation and have been wildly unpredictable from one year to the next (see graph to the right).

Fluctuation in Chapter 70 Funding Increases, FY17 to FY26



Because of the variability of this funding, the district must budget its funds strategically, being careful to not overcommit to increases that will not be sustainable in years of lower funding.

For FY26, the district's proposed budget is balanced and meets the state's net school spending requirement while continuing to strengthen district programming for all students.

Another part of maintaining strength and stability is continually assessing the adequacy of the district's buildings, facilities, and technology and making strategic investments to improvements that will support the district. As an example, the district is currently developing a plan to replace student Chromebooks on a rolling basis as a bulk of them were purchased simultaneously and are nearing the end of their lives.

Charting Our Path Forward

Strategy for Improvement for 2025–2026

Improvement plans are being finalized for next school year at the district-level and for each of our schools. At both levels, administrators are selecting priorities for instruction and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). Subsequent planning for schedules, professional development, and resource allocation will be centered around supporting success in these priority areas.

District-Wide Priorities

Instructional Priority: Ensure that students are doing the “heavy lifting” in classrooms

This instructional priority means that in every classroom, during every lesson, all students will be reading and writing, questioning and discussing with peers, considering and debating the ideas of others, and, most importantly, *enjoying learning*. To accomplish this priority, our district leadership team is making important shifts in professional development practices. Next year, district-wide learning walks and the use of the district’s common observation tool for non-evaluative coaching support will allow educators to learn from each other while strengthening a common language for improvement. The look-fors in the tool have a strong evidence base and are aligned with practices that best serve all students, including MLs and SWD. Additionally, the district will implement a consistent lesson study protocol to help educators better collaboratively support diverse learning needs. This implementation will be supported by training for administrators and coaches in June, 2025.

Priority for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (K-8): Students reading well below grade level will receive intervention support in the phonics skills they need.

All five K-8 schools are developing schedules to align with this priority by incorporating a dedicated intervention block, outside of English Language Arts (ELA) class, where students will receive this support. This strategic scheduling follows the practice of increasing consistent access to core instruction while maintaining adequate interventions and supports for diverse learners. Also, in the weeks following the end of school, the district is offering paid professional development opportunities for educators to preview intervention block content and receive training on how to implement it, specifically with MLs and SWD. This will allow these educators to receive even more advanced training in the fall while others receive this initial training on

district-wide professional development days. The district will also send some educators to DESE's literacy launch institute this summer for more training.

School Priorities

Each school has developed their own instructional and MTSS priorities as part of their school improvement plans (SIPs) for next year. Each school level priority fits within the overarching district priorities and is aligned to school specific mid-year data and district areas of collective action. Each school's SIP outlines how their schedule, professional development calendar, and resource allocations will help them achieve these priorities.

Vision for the Future

My entry process has also identified important aspects of the district's future for which there is a need to develop community consensus to support a longer-term strategic plan. For each of these topics, the district leadership will engage diverse stakeholders to articulate an inclusive vision for our collective goals and develop a long-term strategic plan to achieve them. The items in need of these collaborative planning efforts include the following:

Advanced Learners: Challenging all learners in their academic and social growth both within the grade-level standard curriculum and beyond; nurturing all students' intellectual curiosity and sense of agency within our society.

Preschool and Early Learning: Establishing access to quality preschool education for all children in Malden while ensuring that district programs are both strong and financially sustainable.

Digital Literacy and Computer Science: Ensuring that our students have the skills to thrive in our technologically changing world and learn to adapt to shifts that will profoundly affect society and the economy throughout their lives.

Expanding Access in the Performing Arts: Vocal and Instrumental Music, Dance and Theater are art forms that enrich our culture in ways all students should have the right to experience and explore; opportunities to engage in performing arts vary greatly across our K-8 schools and there are also tremendous opportunities to expand these opportunities at the high school.

High School and Postsecondary Success: Revisiting our "Vision of a Graduate" and ensuring that our middle and high school programs are aligned to prepare every student to succeed in the broadest range of postsecondary pursuits possible.

A New Beginning

Thank you again for your investment in improving the lives of all the students in the Malden Public Schools. My team and I truly look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration with the School Committee and all the members of our broader district community as we embark on this important work together.

Go Malden!



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