

Pembroke Public Schools

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PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, September 3, 2024 North Pembroke Elementary School Library

Call to Order

Mrs. Glennon called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Present from Administration: Erin Obey, Superintendent; Marybeth Brust, Assistant Superintendent; Jessica DeLorenzo, Director of Student Services

Present from Committee: Allison Glennon, Vice Chair, Katrina Delaney, Clerk; Susan Bollinger and David Boyle
Patrick Chilcott, Chair arrived at 6:15 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

None

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors

Mrs. Glennon welcomed the audience members.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None

Approval of Bill Schedule

Warrants will be sent out electronically.

Consideration of Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2024

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to approve the School Committee meeting minutes of August 20, 2024 as presented.

Voting Yes: Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Patrick Chilcott

Fall Sports Numbers

Mrs. Obey presented the most up-to-date fall sports numbers. 40% of PHS students are participating in fall sports. Volleyball will have some cuts. There is a new JV girls soccer coach, a new football coach, and a returning golf coach from previous years because Mr. Hall has left the district.

Communications

Mrs. Obey reminded the committee not to use their cell phones during the meetings as the text messages could be requested as public records.

Opening of School Remarks

Mr. Chilcott said he attended the opening day for staff on 8/26. He welcomed them on opening day to kick off the year by showing partnership and gratitude on behalf of the school committee. He also encouraged future school committee chairpersons to participate in this day.

Discussion of Adherence to Federal Guidelines

Mr. Chilcott said the committee has to follow laws and regulations imposed by the government. He said the school committee has rights around communication, how the law is executed, and some rights around adjudication. He said it is unfortunate that MA did not sign on with the other 26 states to challenge the Title IX changes so it went into effect on 8/1. He emphasized that federal and state funding is essential for public education and cannot be viewed as optional. Even with all the GoFundMe campaigns in the world, it would not be possible to raise 15 to 17 million dollars of sustainable revenue for a school district annually.

Discussion of School Committee Goals – Process & Timeline

Mrs. Obey said the committee has the goals from September 2023 and a copy of another district's goals for comparison supplied by Mrs. Glennon. She suggested the members review and give suggestions on the September document. Mrs. Glennon said she shared the document as a guide as she liked how this district graded itself and said it is important for the committee to follow up with the goals. Mrs. Obey said she envisions a scorecard and the committee revisiting the goals every couple of months to gauge progress. Mrs. Glennon asked if the committee should task the Education Subcommittee with the goals document and Mrs. Obey said all school committee members should participate in the goal work. Mrs. Delaney said scheduling a meeting solely to develop the goals would be a good idea and Mrs. Bollinger agreed and added that having a discussion is important. Mrs. Bollinger suggested discussing the goals as an agenda item in a regular school committee meeting, where all members share their ideas and then send them to the working group for incorporation into a document. Mr. Chilcott said getting the input of all five members first is important. Mr. Boyle said he would like to see concrete numbers associated with the goals and Mrs. Delaney agreed saying having more measurable pieces written in plain language would be helpful. Mrs. Glennon and Mrs. Delaney both expressed their willingness to be part of the working group, and Mrs. Delaney emphasized the importance of all five members meeting first. Mrs. Glennon added that the committee must move forward as one unit into the budget season and negotiations. Having the goals in writing keeps the committee accountable. Mr. Chilcott said goals are only as good as what you do with them. He highlighted the necessity for goals to be actionable with a deliverable and Mr. Boyle added that goals should also be achievable. Mr. Chilcott stated that there is consensus that the proposed goals be discussed in a meeting with all members. Subsequently, a working group will consolidate the ideas and present them to the full committee for review. Mrs. Delaney proposed that the working group help with analyzing the data to ensure alignment with the set goals. Mrs. Obey reminded the committee that the school committee's goals impact the superintendent's goals, which then affect the administrator's goals and subsequently the teacher's goals. The committee agreed to have a thorough discussion in one of the upcoming meetings and then assign the task to a working group moving forward. Mrs. Glennon suggested all members come to that meeting with their ideas.

Superintendent's Report

School Year 2024-2025 Opening Update

Mrs. Obey said students need to be registered for the bus to be added to a route. She added that there is conversation at the national level about a bus driver strike as there is unrest between First Student and the Teamsters union. If a strike occurs the Pembroke First Student drivers will be a part of the strike in a show of solidarity. If there is a vote to strike, they will have to wait 21 before doing so. Mrs. Glennon confirmed that schools would have to close if there were no buses. She will keep the committee informed of any updates to this situation.

Mrs. Obey said voting today took place today at the new Community Center. She informed the committee that she visited all five schools today and things are going well.

Draft Meeting Calendar and Topics

Mrs. Obey presented the draft calendar through the end of May. Mr. Chilcott requested the committee send their agenda items to him or Mrs. Obey for inclusion in the calendar. He anticipates a challenging budget year, so additional meetings may be necessary. He mentioned that the superintendent's evaluation should be added to this document.

Subcommittee Updates - Policy Subcommittee:

Consideration for Second Read and Approval: Elementary Student Handbook

Mrs. Obey said she included Policy GBAA: Sexual Harassment and the model MCAD Sexual Harassment Policy. Mrs. Glennon asked for a paper copy of the meeting documents before the meetings. Mrs. Obey said 2-3 copies will be

available on Fridays at the Central Office if the committee members want to pick it up. Mr. Chilcott said the packet should still be sent out electronically. Mrs. Obey reminded the committee that if packets are received before the meeting, they are not public documents until they are discussed at the meeting.

Mr. Chilcott said he would like to open the discussion about the language in the handbooks. Mrs. Obey said the handbook is a resource for students and families around expectations and stated if something is not in the handbook but is a policy, the district is held to the policy. Mrs. Bollinger said she spent the last week understanding the nuances of the Title IX changes. She explained that Title IX is the landmark civil rights case of 1972 that determined what constitutes sex discrimination in education and provides protections for women in education. Recently the Biden administration came up with the Title IX Final Rule which also includes gender identity, sex characteristics, sex stereotypes, and added additional language to the Title IX regulations. Mrs. Obey clarified that current Mass General Law 76 Chapter 5 defines sex discrimination and gender identification. She said she believes there is confusion between what's happening federally and what already happened in Massachusetts. Mrs. Bollinger said that Massachusetts already considers gender identity as a protected class and not every state has done that. She said she researched the decision from the Supreme Court and her understanding is that there are 26 states, Moms for Liberty, Alliance for Freedom, Female Athletes United and Young America's Foundation that are exempt from the Title IX requirements. She said this means if a child of a member of Moms for Liberty were in the school district, then the entire district would be exempt from the Title IX Final Rule according to Mr. Emerson, legal counsel. Mrs. Obey explained that the exemption is specific to the school and not district-wide and it's not exactly an exemption, but rather the school is not obligated to adhere to the new Title IX federal guidelines. She added a school cannot choose to disregard something that is a Massachusetts General law. Mr. Chilcott clarified that the injunction makes the states exempt from the new Title IX regulation and during the injunction the existing regulation that was in effect from 1972 until August 1st of this year is in effect. He added that the injunction is temporary until the courts make a decision. Mrs. Obey said the Massachusetts 2012 gender identity law amended Chapter 76, Section 5 to include gender identification as a protected class, and that has existed in MA for more than a decade. Mr. Chilcott said the decision the committee must make is around what language to put in the handbook so that families understand the new regulations. Mrs. Bollinger said the proposed handbook language is very strict, which she confirmed is from the current sexual harassment policy. She added that her concern is about adding the term intent. Mrs. Obey stated that the term "intent" has been included in the sexual harassment policy since its inception, and it is also present in the sample policies from MCAD and MASC. Regardless of whether the term "intent" is included, it is crucial in the decision-making process and in determining the appropriate consequences. Mrs. Bollinger suggested using the bare minimum language that the federal government suggests. Ms. Brust explained that being found guilty of sexual harassment/discrimination involves proving multiple elements, and intent is just one of them. It's necessary to demonstrate that the situation was extremely severe, pervasive, and objectionable to a reasonable person, resulting in a student's loss within their education. Mrs. Glennon said part of the committee's job is to give people as much information as possible and the information should be easily available. Mrs. Bollinger said she doesn't think all of the proposed language is needed in the handbooks. Mrs. Obey said the committee doesn't have to make any changes to the handbook because complaints will continue to be handled the same way. Mr. Boyle said it is a slippery slope and the committee should give out an adequate amount of information, and make it straightforward and not overwhelming. Mrs. Delaney pointed out that MCAD from 9/16/17 references intent. Mrs. Obey said her communication with legal counsel has been around what amount of information should be shared and where so that people are informed. Mrs. Glennon said she is concerned not all members are privy to legal counsel's opinion. Mrs. Obey clarified that Mr. Emerson, legal counsel, suggested putting the definitions into the handbooks. Mr. Chilcott said going forward he would have all school counsel information come through the Chair of the committee so that all members have the same information and added that Mrs. Bollinger was doing her due diligence by reaching out to Mr. Emerson. Mr. Chilcott stated that the handbook serves as a reference tool for students and parents to understand their requirements and those of the district. It should always be in line with both policy and the law. He said he believes that because of the content of the changes in the Title IX regulations, legal counsel suggested they be added to the handbook. He said he takes issue with putting this much information in the handbook and suggested putting some information along with a link to the changes as parents have to be informed when something has changed. Mrs. Obey suggested adding a link to the Title IX changes and the MA general laws in the handbooks. Mrs. Bollinger referenced the draft language of the US Department of Education and suggested adding that language and Mrs. Obey said to also cite the MA General Law. Mrs. Glennon said she questions what is being accomplished by adding less information. Ms. DeLorenzo confirmed that there are current links to the federal and MA Law as well as links on the website under the Student Services tab and in the handbooks to the Title IX grievance procedures. Mrs. Delaney said she wants to ensure that the difference between discrimination and harassment is clarified and that changes to the grievance procedure are included. Mrs. Glennon suggested leaving the definition of sexual harassment and sexual discrimination, taking out the bullets, and leaving the procedure for complaint. Mrs. Bollinger said that the definition of

sexual harassment is already in the policy so there is no need for it here. Mrs. Obey suggested keeping the first paragraph regarding discrimination, Title IX & Civil Rights and adding links to the new Title IX, Policy GBAA: Sexual Harassment, and MGL Chapter 76, Section 5. Mrs. Glennon said she would like to leave the section on the procedure of complaint and investigation. She added that she does not feel comfortable voting on this without seeing the final version. Mr. Chilcott suggested that Mrs. Obey send out the revised version before posting the handbooks.

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was voted to accept the handbook language as amended to include the discrimination, Title IX and Civil Rights paragraph with the blurb that it has changed, and Title IX which would include the definitions, the current policy GBAA, and current Massachusetts Law will be linked and it will be in each of the handbooks in a uniform way.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle

Voting No: Katrina Delaney, Allison Glennon

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Mrs. Glennon said she voted no because she would like to leave the section on the procedure of complaint and investigation. She added that she does not feel comfortable voting on this without seeing the final version. Mrs. Delaney voted no because she thought the committee should follow the guidance of school counsel and include all of the language.

Consideration for Second Read and Approval: Elementary Student Handbook

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was voted to accept the PCMS Student Handbook as a second and approval read as amended.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle

Voting No: Allison Glennon

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Consideration for Second Read and Approval: PCMS Student Handbook

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was voted to accept the PCMS Student Handbook as a second and approval read as amended.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle

Voting No: Allison Glennon

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Consideration for Second Read and Approval: PHS Student Handbook

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by David Boyle, it was voted to accept the PHS Student Handbook as a second read and approval as amended.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle

Voting No: Allison Glennon

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Future Meeting Dates and Topics

9/17

VOTE: At 8:00PM on a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss a legal matter as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

APPROVED: October 1, 2024

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to approve the School Committee meeting minutes of August 20, 2024 as presented.

Voting Yes: Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: Patrick Chilcott

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was voted to accept the handbook language as amended to include the Discrimination, Title IX and Civil Rights paragraph with a blurb that it has changed, and Title IX which would include the definitions, the current policy GBAA, and current Massachusetts Law would all be linked and it would be in each of the handbooks in a uniform way.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle
Voting No: Katrina Delaney, Allison Glennon
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was voted to accept the PCMS Student Handbook as a second and approval read as amended.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle
Voting No: Allison Glennon
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was voted to accept the PCMS Student Handbook as a second and approval read as amended.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle
Voting No: Allison Glennon
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by David Boyle, it was voted to accept the PHS Student Handbook as a second read and approval as amended.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle
Voting No: Allison Glennon
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

VOTE: At 8:00 PM on a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss a legal matter as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the legal position of the School Committee, as declared by the Chair

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and David Boyle

Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none