

Pembroke Public Schools

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PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

North Pembroke Elementary School Library

Call to Order

Mr. Chilcott called the meeting to order at 8:01 P.M.

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

Present from Committee: Patrick Chilcott, Chair; Allison Glennon, Vice Chair, Katrina Delaney, Clerk; and Susan Bollinger

Absent: David Boyle

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

None

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors

Mr. Chilcott welcomed the audience members.

Communications

Consideration of Naming School Liaison to PHS Student Advisory Group

Mrs. Obey said a student rep was elected to the school committee. Five PHS students were elected to the Student Advisory Group. Of those five elected, they will choose one student to attend the School Committee meetings. The school committee will select a member to be the liaison to the group and meet with the full student group. Mrs. Bollinger, Mrs. Delaney and Mrs. Glennon all offered to be the liaison and will attend meetings on a rotating basis.

Approval of Bill Schedule

Warrants were circulated electronically.

Consideration for Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of October 1, 2024

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of October 1, 2024.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

Superintendent's Report

Consideration for Approval – Surplus Hobomock Library Materials

Mrs. Obey said Mrs. Nugent compiled the list of surplus Hobomock library materials and followed the school committee policy.

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to approve the surplus Hobomock library materials as presented.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

Achievement Report

Ms. Brust said that for grades 3-8, MCAS serves a diagnostic purpose. The test helps to understand where students are excelling, where adjustments are needed, and where we should invest our efforts. It's important to note that the test changes from year to year, just as the students do.

The 3-8 MCAS results are used to evaluate curriculum and instruction effectiveness. For grades 9 and 10 it is used for competency determination. The content supervisors dedicate hours to analyzing data and examining trends. They collaborate with teachers to review curriculum materials, ensuring that these resources meet the needs of our students. They also explore alternative options to determine if there are better materials available.

MCAS was implemented in 2017 for grades 3-8, and high school Math and ELA was introduced in 2019. The Competency Determination (CD) was modified for the class of 2026, which corresponds to the class that took the MCAS in the spring of 2024. In 2022, following the pandemic, the Department of Education decided to change the scoring requirements for the class of 2026, raising the necessary score to 486 for ELA and Math and 470 for Biology and Physics. To fulfill the Competency Determination required for a graduation diploma in Massachusetts, a student must achieve a minimum score of 486. However, a score of 470 with an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) in place can earn a diploma. The district has such a plan, which mandates the completion of four years of math and four years of English. Students who score 470 and have an EPP are on track to graduate successfully.

2024 grade 10 ELA MCAS at PHS reports that 71% are meeting or exceeding expectations, which is strong. In 2019 it was 74%. Ms. Brust noted that ELA scores across the country have been declining as reading and writing scores are not as high as they have been in the past. The analysis of our district's student performance indicates that there are deficiencies in vocabulary and writing skills. Many students are not reading as much as they did in the past, relying instead on alternatives such as audiobooks and notes.

2024 grade 10 Math MCAS reports that 65% are meeting or exceeding expectations. In 2019 it was also 65%. Grade 9 Biology reports 68% are meeting or exceeding and this is a strong score, well above the state. This shows When the students are taking an end-of-year test in a specific subject they are able to master that content. Mr. Chilcott said it is important to note that every year is a different cohort of students and the test is a little different. Ms. Brust stated that the district is slightly lower in certain areas, but we understand the reasons for this. We know what steps we need to take to support students and to evaluate our curriculum and instruction.

Ms. Brust mentioned that a benefit of the MCAS test is the John & Abigail Adams scholarships, which can be used toward tuition at UMASS Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, or Lowell. The scholarship is based on scoring in the exceeding expectations category on one of the tests and also scoring meeting expectations or exceeding in the other two tests.

Ms. Brust emphasized that for grades 3-8 MCAS serves primarily as a diagnostic tool. The data is utilized to guide instructional and curriculum decisions to better support students. Mr. Chilcott said these scores are not good news. Ms. Brust said the district is aware of that and that these results are typical across the Commonwealth. Grades 3-8 ELA MCAS reports 43% meeting or exceeding expectations whereas in 2019 it was 60%. Grade 7 ELA is reporting 42% ME+, which is below the district's target, and strategies for improvement are being considered. Grade 8 ELA reports 41% and is also not where the district wants to be. Ms. Brust noted that last year, two tools were introduced after observing that the scores were not as strong as desired. One of these tools is No Red Ink, which is an effective program for developing the skills that have been identified as weaknesses among our students. Newsela is another tool that allows teachers to differentiate the reading level so that students can understand the content as well as learn the words.

On the other hand, grades 3-8 Math reports 59% ME+, well above the State, and similar to 2019 of 60%. Grade 7 Math reports 47% ME+, which was 54% in 2019. Grade 8 Math reports 71% ME+, which is at the top of the Patriot League and the top of our DART schools. Grade 5 Science, Technology and Engineering reports 43% ME+, not

where the district wants to be. Ms. Brust said as a reminder, this test is a three-year spiraling test which is demanding for students at the end of their fifth-grade experience. The test is transitioning from a traditional format that includes short answer constructive responses and multiple-choice questions, to a simulated response format. This new approach aligns more closely with current science education, which emphasizes inquiry-based teaching methods. Improvements are expected as a result of this test change.

Mrs. Glennon asked if differences are seen between the three schools and Ms. Brust said there are differences but the practices and materials being used are consistent. She said the addition of the K-6 Content Supervisor working with the three elementary schools will strengthen the programs.

Grade 8 Science, Technology and Engineering reports 31% ME+, down from 47% in 2019. Ms. Brust noted that the curriculum was not fully aligned when the students were preparing for or taking this test, as a new curriculum was in the process of implementation. With the interactive elements of the new test in spring, the district is hopeful for positive results.

Ms. Brust mentioned that the district receives data from the state and conducts multiple analyses. One is an item analysis of the questions. This analysis helps assess how well each question was answered and identifies the relevant standards. Based on this data, the district can determine which standards need more attention. A second analysis involves a deeper dive into demographics. For example, we can examine how high-needs 4th-grade students performed at Bryantville, North, and Hobomock, and determine if one group performed better than the others and if they did anything differently. This analysis includes various special populations: high-need students, students with disabilities, low-income students, and English language learners. A third analysis involves looking at grade cohorts such as the class of 2025 which is current grade 12 students.

Ms. Brust stated that the data is used to compare our town with others in the Patriot League and the PPS DART schools (school identified by the State as being most comparable). PPS administrators get together with leaders from different towns to discuss their practices and evaluate PPS thinking in relation to theirs.

Ms. Brust said the MA accountability system consists of two components, a normative component (accountability percentile) and a criterion-reference component (targets). The State will use the PPS score for 10th-grade English Language Arts (ELA) in 2023 to set a target score for 2024. Depending on our performance, we can earn zero, one, two, three, or four points. These points will then be totaled. Sixty percent of our score is based on this year's performance, while forty percent comes from last year's performance. This calculation gives us our target score. The criterion-referenced score helps us assess how well we are meeting our own targets. The State wants to ensure that strong schools keep pushing. The normative component rates us against other schools with a similar population.

Ms. Brust noted that it is significant for PPS to have exceeded attendance expectations across all schools, marking a major accomplishment. Mrs. Delaney confirmed that there are differences in demographics between the schools.

Ms. Brust stated that the Advanced Placement (AP) experience at PHS remains very inclusive. PHS has received an AP recognition award for its participation. The PHS culture encourages students to take AP classes, and the district utilizes AP potential to identify more students eligible for these tests. Mr. Chilcott explained that Pembroke has a long-standing philosophy and tradition of allowing all students to enroll in AP courses. He added that it is well-documented that students who take AP courses perform significantly better when they advance to college or university. Mrs. Glennon said parents aren't always of this AP philosophy and this may need clearer communication.

Mrs. Delaney inquired about the limits on the number of AP classes a student can take, and Ms. Brust responded that the Guidance Department is effective in advising students based on their past performance. Ms. Brust added that 14 students received AP scholar with distinction for receiving an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on five or more exams. 47% of students are earning at least one qualifying score. Ms. Brust explained that AP potential is a tool used to assess 10th and 11th graders' performance on the PSAT, predicting their likelihood of scoring three or more on an AP test. For example, AP chemistry had 30 students identified as AP potential and 3 students did not identify as AP potential, but out of the 33 students, only 3 did not receive a qualifying score. Ms. Brust said the next steps are to explore AP pre-calc and AP seminar.

Ms. Brust said SAT scores are flat and ACT has seen a dramatic drop in MA.

Subcommittee/Liaison Updates:

MASC Delegate Working Group: Review of Voting Recommendations for Annual Meeting

Mrs. Glennon said she and Mrs. Bollinger agreed to all except for Resolution 1: Development of an Alternative to the High Stakes MCAS Test. She suggested abstaining from voting on Resolution 1 and the committee agreed. Mrs. Delaney said she disagrees with the no vote on Resolution 3: Safe Storage of Fire Arms. Mrs. Bollinger said this is not within the purview of the school committee. This resolution gets into telling parents what to do in their homes. KD said 2022 was the highest year in school shootings. Mrs. Obey stated that the committee has twice considered conversations from Moms Demand Action, the group that advocates for firearm safety, and has declined their requests both times.

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously vote to move forward to direct the liaison to vote in accordance with what is presented on Resolution 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was voted to move forward with a no vote on Resolution 3.

Voting Yes: Patrick Chilcott, Susan Bollinger

Voting No: Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was voted to move forward with a yes vote on Resolution 3.

Voting Yes: Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney

Voting No: Patrick Chilcott, Susan Bollinger

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

Due to a tie (2-2), the delegate will abstain from voting on Resolution 3 at the upcoming MASC conference.

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was voted to move forward with a yes vote on Resolution 1.

Voting Yes: Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney

Voting No: Patrick Chilcott, Susan Bollinger

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to instruct the delegate to abstain on Resolution 1.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

Vocational Planning

Mrs. Obey said the vocational planning committee met a couple of weeks ago and Tom Hickey from South Shore Tech gave an update on where their project is. SST submitted to the MASB at the end of

August and they'll be presenting there at the end of October. Mrs. Obey said the next steps involve putting together some financial numbers based on the best information we currently have, to present to the school committee in

November or December. The committee discussed conducting the vote to join in two parts: first, a vote to join, and then a vote to pay. However, the committee believes that these votes should occur simultaneously. If we ask the community whether they want to join now and then wait six months to ask them to pay, there's a risk they might say no at that point. This conversation will take place with the committee in late fall or early winter. The school committee will decide whether to move forward and place it on the warrant. The Selectboard also has the option to include it on the warrant for Spring 2025 if the school committee chooses not to proceed. Mrs. Glennon confirmed that they are still interested in PPS joining. Mrs. Obey said the committee will know in January of 2025 whether enough of the member towns voted to move the project forward. If the project is not moved forward then there probably wouldn't be appetite for Pembroke to join because their building capacity won't change. Mrs. Delaney mentioned that there is a slight financial benefit for them in taking on another town. Mr. Chilcott said the committee will know more in January and have a discussion.

Policy Subcommittee

Consideration for Second Read and Approval: Rescind/Recode of Numbered Policy Sections

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to accept as a second read and approval to rescind/recode of numbered policy sections.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

Mrs. Glennon asked Mr. Chilcott about his meeting regarding school safety. Mr. Chilcott said there was a brief meeting with the chief and Deputy Chief of Police, the Town Manager and the Chairman of the Selectboard about communications and protocols around school safety. They will establish a clear protocol, and the school resource officer will collaborate with the superintendent. This document will be distributed to the committee for further discussion. Mrs. said the new SRO will attend an upcoming meeting.

Mrs. Obey said she went to the PAPA meeting and the group wants to help the district work on ideas and this will be a December agenda topic.

Future Meeting Dates and Topics

11/12 and 11/19

VOTE: At 9:14 PM on a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to adjourn.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

APPROVED: November 12, 2024

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of October 1, 2024.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to approve the surplus Hobomock library materials as presented.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously vote to move forward to direct the liaison to vote in accordance with what is presented on Resolution 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was voted to move forward with a no vote on Resolution 3.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was voted to move forward with a yes vote on Resolution 3.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was voted to move forward with a yes vote on Resolution 1.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to instruct the delegate to abstain on Resolution 1.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to accept as a second read and approval to rescind/recode of numbered policy sections.

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

VOTE: At 9:14 PM on a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to adjourn.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: David Boyle