



PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

North Pembroke Elementary School LGI

Call to Order

Mr. Chilcott called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 and David Boyle

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Pembroke Association for the Performing Arts (PAPA)

Mrs. Hoban spoke on behalf of PAPA. PAPA would like to raise awareness about the sudden and steep decline in the participation numbers in the performing arts program at PHS. After analyzing the data and much communication we have realized several contributing factors have led to the decline in participation. Four prominent factors are:

1. The introduction of the Pathways Program in the ninth grade which student schedules do not allow them to have space for music electives.
2. The removal of Orchestra and choir from the course offerings at the middle school several years ago
3. The freshman PE requirement
4. The messaging to eighth-grade students and families making them feel that they have to choose a Pathway.

PAPA has met with the superintendent and aims to develop ideas by participating in the education subcommittee meetings to find solutions. There is a large cohort of 5th and 6th graders, and we are requesting the reintroduction of orchestra and choir at PCMS next year. Many students have found a home in the performing arts program, even if they do not plan to pursue it after high school. We advocate for students to engage in both the Pathways Program and the music program. We urge the School Committee to consider all relevant factors. We request that investments in the music program continue, as its benefits are undeniable: it enhances communication skills, fosters teamwork and adaptability, challenges students to solve problems, and helps them develop time management skills and a strong work ethic. Additionally, the current 9th-grade schedule is restrictive. 8th graders are forced to make choices they should not have to. One suggestion is to delay the Pathways options until 10th or 11th grade or to add performing arts as a graduation requirement. Other ideas include teaching health in middle school, considering a block schedule, presenting information to parents in 8th grade, and exploring half-year courses. PAPA would like to be part of this process and work together to find solutions.

Student Marley Knox said I am a senior at Pembroke High School I'm also an avid member of the music department I spend three periods of the day there. I play trumpet in Wind Ensemble concert band and Jazz Band I also have the privilege of being one of our drum majors. This year the music department has made a tremendous impact on my life in the lives of many others if not for the music department at Pembroke my life would look totally different. Thanks to the music department I have been able to pursue my passions and will be a part of the United States Marine Corps band next year. In 8th grade, I was accepted into a charter school but ultimately decided to come to Pembroke because of our accredited music program. In my freshman year, we had a band of about 20 freshmen now we no longer have a 9th grade band class and upcoming freshmen have been integrated with concert band. These numbers have drastically dwindled and in the coming years, we are in danger of having just one ensemble whereas before we had

three. Concert Choir this year has five members whereas when I was a freshman the numbers were closer to 20. Orchestra has nine. The recent development of the Pathways Program has been detrimental to the music department as a whole we've watched our once flourishing community diminish after years. The manner in which the Pathways Program has been advertised to students makes it seem as though it is a requirement in reality this is not the case. It has become inaccessible for students who choose to enroll in advanced placement classes as an internship is a requirement of the Pathway. Those who are enrolled in AP classes have to come back for AP classes and then return to their internship and it becomes impossible. We must work towards finding a solution in which both programs can coexist without defacing the other. For example, editing the ninth-grade gym requirement by making it a part of the eighth-grade curriculum or breaking the three key units of sexual education, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental illnesses up into freshman Titan Time seminars throughout the school year. This would give students an additional period to take electives such as band, chorus, or orchestra and it would still leave an open period if students were to participate in a Pathway as well if they so choose. As a community we hold the music program here in Pembroke on such a high pedestal praising the positivity that comes from it so why do we fail to recognize the negative impacts that implementing a program such as the Pathways may have? This is not said with the intention of bashing the Pathways Program but rather coming to a solution that benefits all parties and making a change in restoring numbers to the music department is absolutely vital. The music department has greatly impacted the lives of so many people within the confines of the music hallway I have watched myself and many others grow not only as musicians but as people. Being a part of this program has been a fundamental part of my high school experience and I want to help ensure that all future students of Pembroke High School have the same opportunities I did.

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors

Mr. Chilcott welcomed the audience members.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None

Communications

None

Approval of Bill Schedule

Warrants were circulated electronically.

Consideration for Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2024

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of November 12, 2024 as presented.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Pathways Program Update – Maryellen Gates

Mrs. Gates mentioned that it's the third year of the program, which currently serves 266 students in grades 9 to 12, making up 38% of the student population. Among these, 113 freshmen have enrolled, representing 61% of the freshman class. There are eight Pathways available, with new additions this year including Music, Global Citizenship and Learning, and Information Technology. Mr. Chilcott asked about the possibility of a Fine Arts Pathway. Ms. Brust mentioned that there is a Digital Arts Pathway but they are open to considering the Fine Arts option. Mrs. Gates said across the eight Pathways there are 20 seniors, 54 juniors, 79 sophomores, and 113 freshmen and these numbers have gone up dramatically each year since the program was introduced. Mrs. Gates said last year she did one presentation for 8th graders during Titan Time at PCMS. She added that PHS teachers and the middle school guidance team reiterated the information about the Pathways Program throughout the year. She also presented at the Program of Studies night and was available to answer questions at the end. Additionally, during course registration, students were reminded that the Pathways are not required/mandatory. Mrs. Glennon confirmed that a student can take a Pathways course but not enroll in a Pathway. Mr. Chilcott said there is a concern in the community and this program is very important but the district must be careful how the program information is presented to 8th graders. He asked whether the music department leadership has the capacity to give presentations to students in order to generate excitement. Mrs. Obey

said the administration has begun exploring a few ideas in the course registration process including having “no” be a choice in the drop-down under the Pathways option. The other idea is to have Mrs. Chapman visit PCMS to talk about the music and art program before 8th students select their courses. Mrs. Bollinger said it’s very important to recognize that not every student taking a music class wants to pursue it as a career. Mrs. Gates said she needs to reconsider how the enrollment process for the Pathways is presented to students to improve their understanding. She added it would be beneficial to include current Pathways students and teachers in the presentation and to conduct smaller group sessions instead of presenting to the entire 8th-grade class at once. Also, she would like there to be communication with parents before registration via email to provide additional information. This ensures that parents can discuss the information with their student. It is also important to clarify upfront to all students that registration is not required. Mrs. Delaney suggested creating some questions for parents to help facilitate a conversation with their students about the pros and cons of the Pathways Program for them. Mrs. Bollinger stated that the Pathways program is a great option, but it needs to be reworked to allow for music and language courses in a student’s schedule. Mr. Chilcott emphasized the importance of considering what students want and said the goal is to find a way to make both programs work, which may require looking at them from different perspectives.

Mrs. Gates explained how the internships operate. Term 4 lasts for 6 weeks and requires 150 hours of work, there are also summer internships. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to find an internship. Certifications are available for Business, Computer Science, Digital Arts, Global Citizenship & Learning, and she is exploring a certification for Engineering. However, there are no certification options for Biomedical and Music at this time. As an alternative, for students interested in Engineering and Biomedical studies, there is a PLTW capstone class senior year that emphasizes team-based problem-solving. Mr. Chilcott asked what a designation means and whether it will have significance for college or entering the workforce. Mrs. Gates said if a student applies to an engineering school their PHS transcript will show they dedicated 22 credits of their electives to a particular area and passed a certification or completed an internship. This can give them a leg up on others. Mrs. Obey said there is a symbol in the graduation program that shows the student is a Pathways Scholar.

Mrs. Gates informed the committee that she initiated an industry expert speaker series. Speakers come in to discuss their fields with specific Pathways groups. She added that there is an opportunity for a pre-apprenticeship program by partnering with the MA Division of Apprentice Standards for Engineering and Biomedical for non-college-bound students. The pre-apprenticeship program happens during high school and may include an internship. This provides an opportunity for students to be eligible to interview for a registered apprenticeship program.

Mrs. Gates mentioned that there have been challenges with the internships, such as placements outside of local Pembroke businesses, which makes it difficult to accommodate students' schedules, especially those taking multiple AP classes. She suggested that implementing a block schedule could help alleviate this issue. Mr. Chilcott noted that while this option has been considered, it would require significant effort and would be a multi-year process. Additionally, Mrs. Gates pointed out that internships in engineering and biomedical fields require students to be at least 18 years old due to strict safety and liability regulations in the workplace.

Mrs. Obey stated the PAPA requests are reasonable. She added the Education Subcommittee will discuss the PE graduation requirement, the elective schedule at PCMS, and potentially adding the MA recommendation of a Fine Arts graduation requirement. From there recommendations will be brought to the full school committee and ultimately there may be opportunities to take some action.

Superintendent’s Report

Consideration for Approval: Overnight/Out of State Field Trips – DECA

Mrs. Obey said there are three field trips, January, February and April.

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the overnight/out of state trips as presented.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Consideration for Approval: MIAA Middle Level waiver for PHS Girls Ice Hockey

Mrs. Obey said this request comes every year since the end of the coop.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the 8th-grade girls' ice hockey waiver as presented.

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

Consideration for Acknowledgement: SY2024-2025 School Improvement Plans

Mr. Talbot said regarding achievement, one goal is earning the NEASC accreditation and PHS will know mid-winter. He informed the committee that one of his goals is to improve communication with all stakeholders. To facilitate this, he established "Re-entry Monday" meetings, where he meets with the day custodian, office staff, assistant principals, athletic director, and night custodians to discuss the upcoming week. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of a social-emotional goal: the implementation of the new, state-mandated IEP Improvement Project. This project includes professional development for special education staff and communication of changes to families and general education staff.

Mr. Murphy stated that by the end of the school year, North Pembroke aims to increase student proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math by 10% for identified subgroups, including students with English language learning needs and students with special education requirements. This will be measured through state assessments, benchmark tests, and unit assessments. In terms of communication, North Pembroke's goal is to enhance community involvement by organizing community-based activities. This includes reaching out to members of the Council on Aging to come in and read to students. Lastly, regarding facilities, the building administration will identify areas needing improvement, such as the sound system in the cafeteria. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) will assist in funding this project, and the school plans to add water filling stations throughout the building with support from a grant. Murphy stated that by the end of the school year, North Pembroke aims to increase student proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math by 10% for identified subgroups, including students with English language learning needs and students with special education requirements. This will be measured through state assessments, benchmark tests, and unit assessments.

Mrs. McGarrigle said she would like to highlight the Unified Sports Club. PCMS is collaborating with Hobomock Elementary School to have a cross-building club. Once a month, PCMS unified club members will travel to HES to engage in sports-themed activities for grades 5-8. Similarly, once a month HES unified club members will travel to PCMS for after-school activities like sports, arts & crafts, and cooking. In addition, the club will offer after-school field trips for interested club members once every 6-8 weeks.

In addition, the focus for this year's PCMS student council is on the development of voice and being agents of change. The student council topics have been around the transition to middle and how to make it easier for future students. The council has an active Google Classroom page where students share ideas on how to make PCMS a better place.

Mrs. Simmons said a goal for Bryantville is to have 80% of students in grades kindergarten to second grade demonstrate growth on DIBELS data by June 2025. Baseline data was gathered to determine student needs and/or learning gaps. Staff will review data monthly in order to adjust instruction and identify obstacles and progress will be monitored throughout the year to reassess student needs and intervention groups. A communication goal is to have student ambassadors facilitate community meetings and school-wide activities throughout the year. Also, provide opportunities for members of the community to volunteer/participate in classroom and school activities/events.

Mrs. Cross said a goal of Hobomock is focused around literacy and looking at data from DIBELS and iReady. DIBELS data will be analyzed to identify student needs and create targeted literacy groups to support differentiated instruction and strengthen literacy skills in kindergarten through grade 2. iReady data will be used to assess literacy progress and guide the formation of small, skill-based groups allowing for tailored instruction and enhancing reading fluency and comprehension for students in grades 3 through 6. A second goal is the creation of a Unified Sports Club for grades 5-8 to promote social connections between Hobomock and PCMS students. The club will focus on monthly sports-themed events. Lastly, a facility's goal is to assess and prioritize necessary playground work and collaborate with the PTO on equipment that needs to be replaced.

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2024-2025 School Improvement Plans as presented.

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

Future Meeting Dates and Topics

12/3 and 12/17

VOTE: At 8:00 PM on a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted, by roll call vote, to enter Executive Session Pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(4) to discuss school safety/security 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, David Boyle
Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

APPROVED: December 4 17, 2024

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of November 12, 2024 as presented.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the overnight/out of state trips as presented.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the 8th-grade girls' ice hockey waiver as presented.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2024-2025 School Improvement Plans as presented.

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

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none