



PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, April 29, 2025
North Pembroke Elementary School Library
6:30 PM

Public Hearing on School Choice

Call to Order

Mrs. Glennon 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: Allison Glennon, Vice Chair; Katrina Delaney, Clerk; David Boyle and Susan Bollinger

Absent: Patrick Chilcott, Chair

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted to open the Public Hearing on School Choice.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Patrick Chilcott

Discussion on School Choice Participation for the 2025-2026 School Year

Mrs. Obey explained that there are a few different definitions of school choice. Tonight, the discussion is about inter-district school choice, which means allowing students from other communities to enroll in Pembroke Public Schools. The district has never participated in inter-district school choice. Additionally, there is intra-district school choice; however, Pembroke does not offer this option either. This means that students must attend the elementary school assigned to them based on their neighborhood. Through school choice, you can specify grades for student enrollment and set available seats. Accepting a student from another district involves a commitment to support them until graduation and comes with a tuition of \$5,000, averaging around \$7,000 per student when including special education costs. The \$5,000 does not cover the cost of hiring a teacher, a paraprofessional, or the cost of curricular materials. However, if there is a small class size, we could potentially place students in a classroom, which would help maximize efficiency.

Mrs. Obey said several PPS students participate in inter-district school choice. In 2024, there were 16 students from Pembroke Public Schools enrolled in various school districts. Of these, nine students are attending Tecca, an online virtual school, while the remaining seven are spread across different locations in Massachusetts. After reviewing their placements, it seems that the schools they attend correspond with the districts where their parents work as teachers.

The key factor in school choice is class sizes. The committee has frequently discussed elementary class sizes, especially regarding the reduction of a third-grade section at North and a sixth-grade section at Hobomock. There has been significant feedback from staff and families about the level of support needed for students in elementary grades after COVID-19. She stated that her current recommendation is to avoid opening school choice at the elementary level at this time.

Mrs. Obey said there could be consideration at the secondary level, as the scheduling at the middle and high schools is more efficient, allowing for the effective addition of a few students at those levels. However, she would not recommend introducing school choice for middle school next year since it is the first year implementing a split team, and it's important to let teachers adjust to this change before discussing school choice. She added that the focus should be on the high school. While this may not be the right time to act, it could be worth exploring next year, especially as potential vocational opportunities for students could result in a net loss of enrollment at Pembroke High School. However, with the significant changes to the graduation requirements, starting with the class of 2029, she suggests allowing a year for these changes to take effect in order to assess their impact on staffing. Overall, her recommendation is to hold off on enrolling in school choice for this year. However, it is something the committee should consider at the secondary level, either next year or the following year.

Mrs. Bollinger confirmed that a Pembroke student going to a school choice town does not get access to the vocational education in that town. Mrs. Glennon asked how the process for elementary school choice would work, and Mrs. Obey said the district would decide how many students and which grades. Mrs. Bollinger confirmed that incoming school choice students would pay tuition to join the separate behavioral program. Mrs. Delaney said that when new students arrive, it is essential to help them acclimate to how the school operates, and this process can require considerable effort from the staff, as procedures and expectations can vary significantly from one school or district to another. Therefore, moving slowly through the process makes a lot of sense. Mrs. Glennon confirmed that school choice students would pay the same fees as current students. Mrs. Glennon also confirmed that the School Choice paperwork indicates that an incoming student is not attending PPS solely for athletics. Mrs. Glennon said she would consider adding a small number of students to the freshman class. Mrs. Delaney asked Mr. Obey for feedback from PHS, and Mrs. Obey said there are concerns about the profile of students wanting to attend high school in a community where they do not reside. She added that there is a lack of information regarding their discipline and attendance records. Mrs. Bollinger stated that teachers already have a lot on their plates, and she would prefer to wait a couple of years for the new graduation requirements to unfold. Mrs. Glennon suggested starting now to see if there is an interest as a way to plan for the future, and Mrs. Delaney suggested starting small by opening a couple of seats for the 9th grade. Mrs. Bollinger expressed that while she thinks it's a good idea, she feels more comfortable waiting a year due to the demands in the classrooms and the decision on membership in South Shore Tech. Mrs. Obey noted that if the committee delays school choice for a year, there will still be time to gather data before PHS students potentially transition to South Shore Tech. Mr. Boyle said he also has concerns about the profile of the incoming students and indicated that he prefers to wait a year.

VOTE: On a motion made by David Boyle and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to opt out of School Choice for the 2025-2026 school year.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: Patrick Chilcott

VOTE: At 6:54 PM, on a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by Susan Bollinger, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

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

Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: Patrick Chilcott

Approved: May 13, 2025

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Katrina Delaney and seconded by David Boyle, it was unanimously voted to open the Public Hearing on School Choice.

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

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

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