



June 12, 2025

Dear Pembroke Public Schools Families and Staff,

I am writing on behalf of the Pembroke School Committee to provide an update on contract negotiations with the Pembroke Teachers Association (PTA), which represents teachers, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and custodians in our schools. The School Committee has been engaged in negotiations since January with each of the bargaining units, with the intent of reaching agreement before the current contracts expire on June 30, 2025.

We are grateful to the residents of Pembroke for their support of our schools during the recent budget process. At Town Meeting in May, the community once again demonstrated their willingness to invest in our students and our schools. The final \$40.55 million budget for the 2025-2026 school year earmarked funding to cover anticipated costs in the first year of the new labor contracts, based largely on historical data for increases in salaries and benefits.

However, the proposals we have received from union leaders to date far exceed the projected costs that were included in the budget. For the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) for teachers (in addition to automatic “step” increases already built into the contract), union leaders have proposed a 5% increase in Year 1 of the contract, which we estimate would cost \$1.05 million for the 2025-26 school year alone. The School Committee has offered a COLA increase for teachers of a blended 1.5/2%, depending on step placement in Year 1, at an estimated cost of \$392,300 next year.

Here is an overview of estimated costs for some of the PTA’s latest proposals:

Union Proposal	Cost in SY25-26	Total cost over 3 years
COLA increase - teachers 5%/ year	\$1,052,776	\$3,318,877
COLA increase - paraprofessionals \$5/hour	\$394,016	\$1,182,048
COLA increase - cafeteria workers 10%/year	\$53,765	\$177,872
Longevity Increase - paraprofessionals	\$125,345	\$376,035
TOTAL	\$1,625,902	\$4,874,832

We are proud that salaries for our teachers exceed those in other South Shore communities, with Pembroke often at the top of the pay scale among comparable districts (see [comparison](#)). We are committed to negotiating contracts that continue to compensate educators and all of employees for their outstanding service to our students and families. At the same time, we have a responsibility to the taxpayers of Pembroke not to ratify contracts that exceed the Town’s financial resources. In other Massachusetts communities, we have seen the approval of

Our Mission: To ensure student achievement through excellence in teaching and learning.

contracts that included wage and salary increases that could not be sustained, requiring the district to reduce staff and/or discontinue programs and services.

In order to ensure that we maintain a balanced budget while continuing to negotiate a financial package with union leaders, we have directed Superintendent Erin Obey to take two immediate actions: (1) place a hiring freeze on open positions; and (2) make staffing adjustments, including identification of several positions that can be eliminated without significant impact on student learning. The Superintendent has instituted both of those steps. As a result, several employees did receive layoff notices today, in keeping with the notification requirements outlined in the contracts. The School Committee will discuss the impact of these actions at their next meeting scheduled for June 17, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

The School Committee will continue to negotiate in good faith to reach agreement on competitive compensation and other provisions of the contracts within our fiscal constraints. We had a negotiations session with union leaders earlier this week and have additional sessions scheduled in the weeks ahead. We are hopeful that we will reach agreement on contracts that are fair to our employees and ultimately support great teaching and learning for our students.

We thank you for your patience and encourage you to visit the [Contract Negotiations page of our website](#) for updates and additional information about collective bargaining.

Sincerely,

David Boyle
Chair, Pembroke School Committee