

Pembroke Public Schools

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PEMBROKE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING **Tuesday, March 3, 2026** **North Pembroke Elementary School Library**

Call to Order

Mr. Boyle called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

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

Present from Committee: David Boyle, Chair; Allison Glennon, Vice Chair; Katrina Scarsciotti, Clerk; Susan Bollinger and Katrina Delaney

Public Comment

None

Acknowledge & Schedule Visitors

Mr. Boyle welcomed the visitors.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None

Communications

Mrs. Scarsciotti said the Historical Society is looking for volunteers for the annual Fish Fry. Volunteers can include high school students and community members. Interested individuals should contact the Historical Society or reach out to her for assistance.

Approval of Bill Schedule

Bills are circulating electronically

Consideration for Approval: School Committee Meeting Minutes of February 3, 2026

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of February 13, 2026 as presented.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Superintendent's Report

FY27 Elementary Budget Presentation

Mrs. Obey stated that the district is beginning its annual series of budget presentations and explained that the process starts with building-based budget presentations for the elementary, middle, and high schools.

She noted that these early presentations are developed by each principal, who focuses on the needs of their building before the administrative team later ranks budget priorities across the district. She emphasized that although not all requests would be funded, it remains important for each building to articulate its goals for the coming year.

Mr. Murphy explained that the three elementary principals collaborate extensively, reviewing data and school improvement plans before identifying shared needs. He presented historical and projected enrollment data and noted that the variation is minimal when examined numerically. North Pembroke continues to have slightly higher enrollment due to its preschool program, which houses approximately 70 students. Current K–6 enrollment is reported as 399 for Bryantville, 382 for Hobomock, and 438 for North, with North’s total rising to approximately 515 when preschool is included. Homeroom counts remain consistent across buildings. He noted with current class sizes, all buildings maintain three teachers per grade level except Hobomock, which has two sections in grades 5 and 6 due to enrollment. Mrs. Obey clarified that Hobomock’s homeroom counts includes students from the districtwide substantially separate program, some of whom join peers for homeroom or selected subjects. Committee members asked questions about class size distribution, and Mr. Murphy confirmed that all buildings remain within district guidelines.

Mr. Murphy continued with projected class sizes for 2026–27. All buildings are expected to maintain three sections per grade level, except Hobomock’s rising fifth grade, which is projected at 61 students and would require an additional teacher. Kindergarten enrollment is projected at 60 students per building, though Mrs. Obey noted that if enrollment fell to 47 or 48, the district would staff three sections to maintain small class sizes. Mr. Murphy noted that when enrollment is distributed across all grade levels, class sizes remain within district guidelines of 22 or fewer students in grades K–2 and 25 or fewer in grades 3–6.

Mrs. Cross then presented historical and projected enrollment for the districtwide substantially separate programs housed at Hobomock. The programs serve students from all three elementary schools, with Bryantville contributing 40 percent of students, North 30 percent, and Hobomock 30 percent. The programs have expanded from three classrooms in 2020–21 to five in the current year, with continued growth expected. The district is also in the process of building a social-emotional program, though staffing remains incomplete; while an RBT has been hired, the district is still seeking a BCBA/LABA and a special education teacher for the program. For FY27, the district projects 16 students in the PACE program and 24 in the PTC program, with social-emotional program enrollment to be determined once staffing is finalized. She reviewed FY26 funded priorities, including the successful hiring of a full-time math interventionist shared across the three elementary schools. The districtwide social-emotional program was also funded in FY26.

A member of the community, Jean Comfort, asked about the criteria driving growth in special education programs. Mrs. Cross explained that overall numbers have remained steady and that placement decisions are based on individualized needs and placement in the least restrictive environment. Mrs. Obey added that grade-span requirements sometimes necessitate additional classrooms.

Mrs. Cross then outlined the FY27 Tier 1 and Tier 2 budget priorities for the elementary schools. Tier 1 requests include reinstating STREAM specialists by hiring three Paraprofessionals (one per building), hiring two additional Math Interventionists to ensure one full-time interventionist per building, hiring three Registered Behavior Technicians (one per building), hiring nine kindergarten paraprofessionals (one per classroom), adding one full-time moderate Special Education teacher at Hobomock, and purchasing the FOSS science curriculum and a Simplified Writing curriculum.

Tier 2 priorities include similar requests but at reduced levels if the full Tier 1 requests cannot be funded. For example, if the district cannot hire three STREAM paraprofessionals, they would request one rotating staff member instead. The same scaled-down approach applies to the Math Interventionists and Behavior Technicians. Additional Tier 2 items include installing a hydration station at Bryantville and hiring a 0.5 FTE

Social Worker to support the district-wide special education program at Hobomock, where six specialized classrooms are expected next year.

Mrs. Cross presented a detailed justification for the request for an additional moderate Special Education teacher. She reported that Hobomock currently has two moderate Special Education teachers serving students who are not part of districtwide programs. These students spend most of their day in general education classrooms but receive pullout services in areas such as ELA, math, science, social studies, and executive functioning. Historically, the two teachers have begun the year with a combined caseload of 30–35 students, or approximately 14–17 students each. However, projections for FY27 show 43 students already identified for services, resulting in caseloads of 21–22 students per teacher. Additional evaluations underway may increase the total further. She also reviewed evaluation data, noting that Hobomock completed 22 evaluations in 2021–22, 36 evaluations so far this year, and 50 evaluations last year. She then presented an analysis of required service minutes for FY27, showing that students currently on IEPs require a total of 870 minutes of daily pullout instruction across subjects, while two teachers can provide only 650 minutes. To meet student needs, the school has resorted to multi-grade and multi-subject groupings, which are legally permissible but instructionally not optimal. An additional Special Education teacher would reduce paperwork burdens, increase inclusion opportunities, and allow for more appropriate grouping of students. She explained that the moderate Special Education teacher is a required position for legal compliance and is typically removed from the “ask” list.

Mrs. Simmons started by emphasizing the importance of reinstating the STREAM program, noting that parents, students, and staff consistently expressed strong support for the opportunities it provided. She stated that restoring STREAM would be highly beneficial for all three elementary schools. She also highlighted the success of the Math Interventionist, explaining that small-group intervention has already produced measurable improvement in student growth, as reflected in recent iReady data. She noted that expanding math intervention to mirror the reading specialist model would allow all buildings to see similar gains. She spoke about the significant impact of having a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) in the building and explained that the RBT provides immediate, practical behavioral support and models effective strategies for teachers. She stated that consistent access to an RBT in each building would improve student outcomes.

Mrs. Simmons also addressed the need for kindergarten paraprofessionals, noting that today’s kindergarten students enter school with a wider range of developmental readiness and behavioral needs than in the past. She explained that having an additional adult in the classroom would allow teachers to address small issues without disrupting instruction for the entire class and would support long-term student success. She then referenced the positive impact of the new curriculum materials, noting that teachers piloting FOSS science units reported strong student engagement. She shared a note written by a first-grade class expressing enthusiasm for the lessons and stated that the writing sample also demonstrated the benefits of the Simplified Writing program and phonics instruction. She concluded by noting that the Tier 2 requests are scaled-down versions of the Tier 1 priorities.

FY27 PCMS Budget Presentation

Dr. McGarrigle reviewed PCMS enrollment data, noting a decline from 505 students in 2016–2017 to a projected 352 students for 2026–2027. She explained that the middle school’s team-based structure remains central to its instructional model as it allows teachers to collaborate closely, monitor student progress, and provide targeted support to students.

Dr. McGarrigle described the recent changes to the elective program, including the addition of a strength and conditioning elective, expansion of the Arts Pathway, and adjustment of the rotation of term-based electives to better align with student interests and staffing capacity. She noted that French enrollment has increased, in part due to the school’s efforts to promote language study through student ambassadors and informational sessions. Band participation has also strengthened, reflecting renewed student engagement in

the arts. These shifts have helped create a more balanced and responsive elective program, though they have also placed additional demands on staffing and scheduling.

Dr. McGarrigle presented the Tier 1 budget requests, which include restoring a Science and Social Studies teacher to return to a full team-based model. A second Tier 1 request is for a 0.6 FTE Special Education teacher to address rising needs, particularly in reading-based services. She noted that the school has seen an increase in students requiring specialized reading instruction, a trend she attributes in part to pandemic-related learning disruptions. The third request is for a 0.5 FTE Registered Behavior Technician to support students with behavioral plans, and the fourth is for a district-wide Coordinator of Counseling and Behavioral support for grades 7–12, a position that had been requested in previous years but not yet funded.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of the team-based model and the increasing complexity of student needs at the middle level and expressed appreciation for the school's efforts to maintain high-quality programming despite declining enrollment and staffing constraints. Student Representative, Joe Hoban, asked whether the district could expand its transition support efforts by having high school students from orchestra, choir, band, and French visit sixth graders as they prepare to enter seventh grade. He noted that while seventh-to-eighth grade band outreach already exists, there is currently no comparable opportunity for students transitioning from sixth to seventh grade. Dr. McGarrigle responded that the idea is excellent and aligns with current efforts to strengthen student-to-student connections. She described the existing "Titan Time Tuesdays" program for eighth-to-ninth grade transitions, where department heads bring high school students to speak about their experiences. She agreed that peer connections, especially with students closer in age, can be impactful.

FY27 PHS Budget Presentation

Mr. Talbot presented the high school budget. Current PHS enrollment is 674 students, with modest declines projected. Class sizes remain strong, and the school has maintained a broad range of course offerings. He noted that French enrollment continues to grow, reflecting the strengthened middle school pipeline, and that the PHS has been able to sustain robust participation in advanced coursework, including AP and dual-enrollment classes.

Mr. Talbot then presented the PHS FY27 budget requests, beginning with the district-wide Coordinator of Counseling. He explained that the Guidance Director position had been eliminated in the 2017–2018 budget cycle, leaving the district without a dedicated leader to oversee counseling services, coordinate postsecondary planning, and support the growing social-emotional needs of students. He emphasized that the demands on school counselors have increased significantly in recent years and that the absence of a director has created gaps in supervision, coordination, and program development. Restoring the position would provide consistent leadership across grades 7–12 and strengthen the district's ability to support students academically, socially, and emotionally. The second request is for a 1.0 FTE Special Education teacher to address rising caseloads and support the expansion of co-taught classes in math, science, and social studies. Mr. Talbot explained that the high school currently serves 125 students on IEPs and that the shift toward competency-based diplomas has increased the need for specialized instruction within general education classrooms. The third request is for an additional instructional Paraprofessional to support inclusion sections. PHS currently funds 28 Paraprofessional supported sections, but is projected to need 35 next year, creating a staffing gap that would limit the ability to meet student needs. The fourth request is for a full-time Custodian. Mr. Talbot noted that the high school has experienced staffing losses through attrition and reassignments, leaving the custodial team understaffed despite the building's heavy evening and weekend use. The fifth request is for a \$35,000 increase to the extracurricular activity fund. He explained that the school has several clubs and activities, such as mock trial, multicultural club, and various honor societies, that currently operate with volunteer advisors, and that rising transportation costs have further strained the extracurricular budget. The requested increase would allow the school to compensate advisors fairly and sustain a broad range of student activities.

Consideration for Approval: Updated Quebec City Trip – April 2026

Mrs. Obey said that there were not enough PHS students, so the trip has been opened to PCMS students.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Scarsciotti, it was unanimously voted to approve the April 2026 Quebec City Trip as updated.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Consideration for Approval: Updated Ireland Trip – Brussels/Amsterdam/Paris April 2026

Mrs. Obey said the decision was made to replace a planned trip to Ireland with a new itinerary covering Brussels, Amsterdam, and Paris. The changes were made to ensure sufficient enrollment and to provide students with a meaningful cultural and educational experience.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Scarsciotti, it was unanimously voted to approve the April 2026 trip to Brussels/Amsterdam/Paris as updated.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

Subcommittee Updates

Vocational Planning Committee

Mrs. Obey stated that the Vocational Planning Committee met a few weeks ago to discuss upcoming public information sessions. Over the next six to eight weeks, there will be opportunities for informational sessions, as well as opportunities to appear before other boards to answer stakeholder questions before the Town Meeting in May. The School Committee wants clear communication with the community to ensure that residents understand the options and the long-term impact of vocational education decisions.

Policy Subcommittee:

Consideration for First Read: Revised Policy BEDB: Agenda Format

Mrs. Obey reminded the Committee and the public that public comment is at the discretion of the School Committee Chair. She noted that while it is helpful to have a format printed in a policy, it remains within the Chair's purview to allow or limit speakers. She explained that both the existing policy and the proposed revisions require speakers to state their address when offering public comment. She clarified that the policy does not simply require a speaker to identify as a Pembroke resident or public figure; it explicitly requires an address. Additionally, changes were made to the policy to correct "citizen" to "resident," reflecting the Committee's authority to limit public comment to residents of Pembroke. She also noted a procedural clarification in the policy: requests to place an item on the agenda must be submitted in writing through the Superintendent, rather than made informally.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve as a first read Policy BEDB: Agenda Format as presented.

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

Voting No: none
Abstaining: none
Absent: none

Consideration for First Read: Revised Policy BEDH: Public Comment at School Committee Meetings

Mrs. Obey noted that the School Committee reserves time for public comment at the beginning of each meeting, with a 15-minute allotment. Public comment is reserved for Pembroke residents; however, parents or guardians of Pembroke students, who might not currently reside in town, are also permitted to speak. She added that if additional time remains within the 15-minute window, or if the Chair chooses to extend the public comment period, the Chair has the discretion to allow non-residents to speak as well.

She added that topics raised during public comment must fall within the School Committee's purview. She explained that existing policy language has limited public comment to items listed on that evening's agenda, but the Subcommittee agreed to amend that, finding it reasonable to allow comments on any matter for which the Committee has authority or responsibility, even if the topic was not explicitly listed on the agenda.

Mrs. Obey addressed clarifications under the third section of the policy. She noted that in recent years, there had been several instances in which the content of public comment required intervention by the Chair. To ensure transparency and consistency, the revised policy explicitly defines examples of inappropriate comments, including repetitive remarks, exceeding the time limit, being disruptive, unrelated to the Committee's purview, profane, or in violation of FERPA or other legal protections. She stated that these examples are included to provide clear guidance to the public and to support the Chair's responsibility to maintain order during meetings. Additionally, the Subcommittee also discussed procedures for timekeeping during public comment. It was decided that when public comment was extensive, the superintendent or his/her designee would be responsible for monitoring the time. She explained that this approach ensures that the five Committee members can give their full, undivided attention to the speaker.

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Allison Glennon, it was unanimously voted to approve as a first read Policy BEDH: Public Comment at School Committee Meetings as presented.

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

Consideration for First Read: Revised Policy BEE: Procedures for Conducting Public Hearings

Mrs. Obey stated that the Subcommittee reviewed over 40 school districts' policies regarding public comment to guide the proposed changes. She added that the Open Meeting Law gives a person the right to witness the meeting in public, but it does not guarantee the right to speak during the meeting. The Committee values public input and wants to hear from every stakeholder, but there is no requirement for public comment to be included on the agenda.

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to approve as a first read Policy BEE: Procedures for Conducting Public Hearings.

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

Mrs. Obey added that the Policy Subcommittee is not moving forward with any changes to Policy IKFB-R.

Mrs. Obey addressed community concerns regarding snow-day decisions. She explained that the district coordinates closely with town departments, monitors weather forecasts, and prioritizes student safety when making decisions about school closures or delays. She also noted that the state requires 180 instructional days, which limits the district's flexibility in responding to weather events. Her comments are intended to provide transparency and reassurance to families who had expressed frustration about recent weather-related decisions.

Future Meeting Dates and Topics

3/17 and 4/7, 4/14

VOTE: At 8:12 PM, on a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

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

APPROVED: March 17, 2026

MOTIONS

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to approve the school committee meeting minutes of February 13, 2026 as presented.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Scarsciotti, it was unanimously voted to approve the April 2026 Quebec City Trip as updated.

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

VOTE: On a motion made by Susan Bollinger and seconded by Katrina Scarsciotti, it was unanimously voted to approve the April 2026 trip to Brussels/Amsterdam/Paris as updated.

Voting Yes: David Boyle, Allison Glennon, Katrina Delaney, Susan Bollinger and Katrina Scarsciotti
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 as a first read Policy BEDB: Agenda Format as presented.

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

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 as a first read Policy BEDH: Public Comment at School Committee Meetings as presented.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: On a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to approve as a first read Policy BEE: Procedures for Conducting Public Hearings.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none

VOTE: At 8:12 PM, on a motion made by Allison Glennon and seconded by Katrina Delaney, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

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

Voting No: none

Abstaining: none

Absent: none