

Seymour Board of Education



BOE Working Session - Minutes

October 6, 2025

Seymour Middle School

5:00 pm

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DATE: 10/8/25
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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Members Present: Kristen Bruno
Stephan Behuniak
Kristen Harmeling
Ed Strumello
Pete Kubik
Lori Nespoli
Jay Hatfield

Members Absent: Chris Champagne
Jim Garofolo

Others in Attendance: Dr. Susan Compton
Paul Lucke
Stephanie Ciccone
Keith O'Rourke
Lauren Reid
David Willadsen
David Olechna
Jake Velleco
Tim Connors
Ed Henry
Shannon Levey

I. AGENDA

- A. Review of Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs
- B. Vision of a Graduate Draft
- C. Strategic Planning: Draft Goals/Framework/Administrators
- D. Board of Education Goals - supporting the District and Schools
- E. School Goals - Principals and Assistant Principals
- F. Communication/Marketing/Branding - Paul Lucke and Stephanie Ciccone
- G. Discussion to start working on a Seymour Public Schools District Logo

II. MEETING SUMMARY

Dr. Compton opened the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the district's mission, vision, and strategic priorities.

A Board member liaison concept ("Adopt a School") was discussed to strengthen school-level connections.

School Improvement Goals

Each principal presented their school's improvement goals and highlights:

Bungay Elementary School (BES)

- Focus on Social/Emotional Learning and continued use of the RULER approach.
- Reading and Math: Aimed at overall performance growth through differentiation and high-quality instruction.
- Family & Community Engagement: Aligning parent and student climate goals to foster stronger partnerships and shared language between home and school.
- Shared achievements and student performance data.
- Provided an overview of the Preschool Program (4 classrooms) and recognized the Inclusion Facilitator for exceptional work.

Chatfield-LoPresti School (CLS)

- Continued implementation of RULER and emphasis on sense of belonging.
- Targeting chronic absenteeism through initiatives like the *"Golden Cheetah"* award, recognizing classrooms with the best attendance.
- Discussed assessment scheduling changes: *Smarter Balanced testing* now precedes *MAP testing*.
- Addressed Kindergarten challenges, emphasizing play-based learning and development of self-regulation skills.
- Highlighted peer observation opportunities for teachers trained in play-based instruction.

Seymour Middle School (SMS)

- Outlined a 3–5 year improvement plan; first year focused on relationship-building and establishing "Cougar Pride."
- Upcoming Health & Wellness Fair exemplifies improved school climate and engagement.
- Climate survey results show strong communication and welcoming culture; next step is improving student belonging and peer respect.
- Year 2 focus: Instructional improvement through "Making Thinking Visible" strategies.
- AI Integration: Seymour is one of six districts in the state piloting AI use with students.
- Requested vertical alignment of curriculum and initiatives across grade levels.

Seymour High School (SHS)

- Recognized as #1 in the NVL and DRG, with strong composite SAT performance (noting slight dip in overall scores under review).
- Excited about collaboration with the new Director of Curriculum & Instruction on data analysis.
- Continuing to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to support workforce-bound students.
- Emphasis on grit, perseverance, and school morale.
- Significant improvement in school pride and student engagement through new initiatives.
- Social media journalism, sports marketing, and podcasting.

Curriculum

Administrators reviewed the Vision of a Graduate matrix, emphasizing:

- Backward design: defining desired student outcomes and aligning benchmarks K–12.
- Focus on curriculum, assessment, and vertical alignment to ensure consistency and coherence across grade levels and buildings.
- Determining key metrics to evaluate success and impact.

Safe School Climate and Culture

Goal: Sustain a safe, inclusive environment districtwide.

- Establish unified K–12 language and structure.
- Create School Climate and Culture Teams in each building.
- Conduct baseline assessments and SEL program audits.
- Develop systems for ongoing progress monitoring and family/community engagement.

Communication, Collaborative Partnerships, and Community

- Develop a district communication plan and cohesive marketing/branding strategy led by Central Office.
- Streamline Board policies related to donations and sponsorships (using Pomperaug's model as a reference).
- Introduce digital tools for managing sponsorships and donations.
- Strengthen community relations through partnerships with local organizations, such as Parks & Recreation.
- Explore adult community courses in school buildings to promote engagement and visibility.
- Launch alumni relations initiatives: photo submissions, website recognition, celebration days, and job shadowing opportunities.
- Establish consistent district branding with a new District Logo to align all schools under one unified identity.

Infrastructure

- Enhance learning environments and core infrastructure (classrooms, playgrounds, air quality, technology).
- Advance Bungay Building Project and maintain modernization efforts.
- Support athletics and extracurricular growth, exploring creative solutions for transportation needs.
- Maintain fiscal responsibility, aligning with the Board's contribution to the Town's Capital Plan.
- Continue collaboration with Directors of Facilities, Technology, and Security.
- Explore creation of a Seymour Public Schools Endowment Foundation.

This remains a working draft of the strategic framework. Ongoing collaboration among administrators, directors, and the Board of Education will continue to refine goals and implementation plans.

Prepared by: Shannon Levey,
Board Clerk