

Seymour Board of Education



REGULAR MEETING Minutes

February 2, 2026
Seymour Middle School
7:00 pm

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 2/3/26
TIME: 4:00 PM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Kristen Bruno, Chair
Chris Champagne, Vice-Chair
Kristen Harmeling, Secretary
Stephan Behuniak
Lori Nespoli
Jim Garofolo
Ed Strumello

MEMBERS ABSENT: Pete Kubik
Jay Hatfield

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Susan Compton, Superintendent
Shannon Levey, Board Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Pledge of Allegiance - Ms. Bruno called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM
- B. Introductions

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Bungay Building Committee Update

- 1. Mr. Strumello reported that the committee is in the process of hiring a project manager and is currently obtaining bids. The next step will be to solicit bids for an architect. He noted that the process involves more steps and requirements than he realized; however, the project continues to move forward.
- 2. Ms. Harmeling requested clarification regarding the difference between the Bungay School referendum funding and the proposed budget. It was noted that these are two separate funding matters, and additional information will be provided to the public to clarify the distinction.

B. Seymour Champion Recognitions – “Perseverance”

- 1. Bungay School
 - a. Amelia Miller
 - b. Lucas Del Sole
- 2. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - a. Juana Jara-Jimenez
 - b. Xhelal Qosja - absent, will be honored at follow up meeting
- 3. Seymour Middle School
 - a. Sofia Khalak
 - b. Colin Ritton
- 4. Seymour High School
 - a. Valeria Ganchala Chaves

C. Recognitions

1. AP Scholars – Seymour High School

D. Student Reports

1. SHS Student Representative Report – Jeremy Tomasheski and Daphne Shea

- a. Jeremy Tomasheski provided updates on recent student activities and events, including National Honor Society, Student Council, HOPE Club, athletics, Yearbook Club, Chess Club, Spanish Club, Multicultural Club, Performing Arts, Environmental Club, Debate Team, Car Club, Robotics Club, Newspaper Club, FBLA, Line Dancing, and Bible Club. He also highlighted the upcoming Game of the Week for girls' basketball, followed by Friday's game at Ansonia.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment provides the opportunity for the public to make a comment. It is not a dialogue between the Board and the public. Based upon what is heard during Public Comment, the Board may choose to add a topic to the agenda. If questions are posed that the Chairperson is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairperson's Comments portion of the agenda. The Board will not discuss personnel matters. Comments should be respectful and no longer than 3 minutes in length so that all who wish to comment may have the opportunity to do so. All the public wanting to comment will need to state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board.

Public Comment called three times, no comment.

IV. REPORTS

A. Enrollment Report

B. Special Education Report – Dr. Boyle

C. Financial Report – Salvatore Bucci

D. School Improvement Plan – Seymour High School, Paul Lucke and Stephanie Ciccone

Mr. Lucke and Ms. Ciccone thanked the Board for the opportunity to present and shared that they are proud of the work of the students and staff. They reviewed the school's mission and core beliefs, which emphasize lifelong learning, community empowerment, meaningful connections, and preparing students for success in a diverse society.

They discussed the changing educational landscape, noting that the student body continues to evolve and requires a more responsive and supportive instructional model. This year, 32 new students enrolled, with approximately 50% qualifying for free or reduced-price meals.

An update was provided on the NEASC accreditation process. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) serves as the strategic framework guiding progress toward the 2027 accreditation milestone. Key focus areas include curriculum standardization, technology improvements (including SQL/reporting expertise), and enhancements to the Library Media Center. NEASC recently visited and expressed satisfaction with the school's progress and planning. A follow-up visit is scheduled for March, with an expectation of demonstrated progress. A comprehensive data sheet is being developed to track all courses, associated curricula, and the most recent update cycle.

The school's strategic priorities, referred to as the "Strategic Triad," include:

- Academic Growth
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Family and Stakeholder Engagement

Goal 1 – Academic Growth:

Focus areas include PSAT/SAT performance, NGSS science standards, and AP participation.

Implementation strategies include departmental action plans, strengthening writing and expression skills, creating an educator question bank, exam preparation supports, NCSS alignment,

emphasizing command of evidence, and embedding test-taking and stress management strategies.

Goal 2 – Social-Emotional Learning:

The school is addressing increased anxiety, health concerns, chronic absenteeism, and academic decline. The target is to reduce chronic absenteeism from 20% to 18%, with attendance and tardy officers supporting these efforts.

Goal 3 – Stakeholder Engagement:

The school aims to move beyond informational updates toward meaningful engagement with families and the community through increased outreach, Unified Arts involvement, feedback opportunities, course catalogs with video communications, informational pamphlets, and exploration of Career Work Experience (CWE) opportunities.

Measuring Success:

Metrics include SAT performance, graduation rate, NGSS science results, ninth-grade on-track data, AP participation levels, and national recognition rankings.

The presenters also reviewed the school's "Vision of a Graduate," which emphasizes emotional intelligence, problem-solving, critical thinking, communication skills, and self-direction, with the shared mission of inspiring, enriching, and preparing every student for their future.

Board Discussion and Questions:

Mr. Champagne asked about graduation rates (91%) and chronic absenteeism (21%) and whether CATS students are included in those data points. It was noted that SHS is the only school in the area that includes these students in its dataset, which may impact rankings.

Dr. Compton stated a goal to reduce chronic absenteeism further to 15%. Ms. Harmeling inquired about practices at other schools and Dr. Compton noted that some operate under separate state school codes; applying for a separate code may be an option to consider.

Mr. Strumello asked about performance relative to state standards. The current passing rate is 46.6%, with a goal of reaching at least 50% for Physical Education. The new PE teacher is focused on skill-building and improvement. Vertical alignment across grade levels was discussed to better prepare students. Dr. Compton shared that initial curriculum focus will be on social studies and science.

Ms. Nespoli asked about the status of the Career Work Experience (CWE) program. Mr. Lucke explained that student course selections will determine staffing availability, as the adopted budget did not include CWE. Dr. Compton noted that innovative scheduling may allow staffing flexibility. It was confirmed that CWE requires specific certification and three courses.

Ms. Bruno expressed support for the "Vision of a Graduate" framework and suggested extending alignment across all grade levels, including preschool. Dr. Compton and Mr. Lucke agreed and stated that this is already being planned.

MOTION: (Kristen Bruno / Kristen Harmeling) to remove item A1 from the Consent Agenda.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Bruno requested the minutes for item A1 be updated to state that the structure of the committees would be reviewed, not the committee assignments themselves.

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

PASSES: 7-0-0

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

~~1.Regular BOE Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2026~~

2.Special BOE Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2026

3.Special BOE Meeting Minutes – January 20, 2026

B. Hiring – Non-Certified

1. Joseph Giannello
 - a. Paraprofessional Monitor - Part Time
 - b. Bungay School
 - c. Replacing Laura Ercoli

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / Stephan Behuniak) move to approve the consent agenda with item A1 removed)

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

PASSES: 7-0-0

VI. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular BOE Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2026

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / Chris Champagne) to approve the minutes for item V. A.1 (Regular BOE Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2026) with the correction that the structure of the committees would be reviewed, not the committee assignments themselves.

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

PASSES: 7-0-0

VII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Naming the Seymour Middle School Basketball Courts in Memory of Grayson Luyando

- a. Mr. Champagne explained the reason for the proposed naming of the basketball courts, along with the process and outline. If approved, a committee would be formed to guide the planning and implementation.

Dr. Compton spoke about the significance of basketball in Grayson's life, noting that naming the courts would be a meaningful way to honor his memory while creating a vibrant, positive space for students and the community. She added that, following Board approval, the proposal would also need to be reviewed at the town level in accordance with local ordinances.

Mr. O'Rourke requested permission to move forward with forming a committee to develop the memorial basketball area in Grayson's honor, with the possibility of recognizing others in the future. He noted that town ordinance approval may be required. He shared remarks about Grayson and the importance of commemorating his impact.

Ms. Bruno asked whether the project would both honor Grayson and improve the space.

Mr. O'Rourke explained that the committee would establish the timeline and next steps. He has been in communication with the family, who are supportive and wish to participate in creating a lasting tribute to their son. While the primary focus is memorializing Grayson, the project would also enhance the area.

He clarified that there is no expectation for Board or town funding. The project would be supported through a trust and community donations. Short-term plans include forming the committee, naming the courts, installing signage, and holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Longer-term goals may include resurfacing the courts and upgrading backboards and related improvements.

MOTION: (Chris Champagne / Stephan Behuniak) Pursuant to Policy 7551, to approve Mr. O'Rourke to start a planning committee to honor Grayson Luyando.

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Ms. Harmeling, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello

ABSTENTION: Mr. Garofolo

PASSES: 6-0-1

B. Board of Education Goals

- a. Dr. Compton asked the Board to review and consider assigning two Board liaisons to each school, noting that this is an idea that has been discussed for several years. She encouraged members to consider volunteering to serve as liaisons to strengthen communication and connection with each school community. She also asked the Board to review the district goals and work toward reaching consensus on priority focus areas and related statements. Ms. Bruno noted that this topic will appear on a future agenda. Dr. Compton added that a strategic planning working session will be scheduled prior to the next Board meeting.

VIII. INFORMATION

- A. Hiring – Volunteer
 1. Laura Grim
 - a. Unified Cheerleading Volunteer Coach
 - b. Seymour Middle School & High School
- B. Transfers
 1. Erica Cole
 - a. From Paraeducator to Secretary
 - b. Chatfield-LoPresti School
- C. Resignations
 1. Ganesh Singh
 - a. Paraeducator
 - b. Bungay Elementary School
 - c. Effective February 20, 2026
 2. Jillian Goodman
 - a. Tutor
 - b. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - c. Effective January 22, 2026
- D. School Events
 1. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 2. Bungay Elementary School
 3. Seymour Middle School
 4. Seymour High School

IX. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS & SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- A. Board of Education Comments
 1. Chairman's Comments
 - i. Ms. Bruno commended neighboring Oxford High School for hosting Mrs. Sora Vigorito, a Holocaust survivor, who shared her story as part of a living history presentation. Ms. Bruno described the presentation as meaningful, hopeful, and impactful, and expressed appreciation to Oxford for providing the opportunity.
 2. Board Member Comments - none
- B. Superintendent Report

1. Dr. Compton shared that the SHS football banquet was outstanding. She noted how proud the students were and commended the Wildcat Kickoff Club for their excellent work organizing the event.

She reported that the Principal position for CLS has been posted. The position was first shared with the union and has since been posted publicly, with no deadline and remaining open until filled. A posting for a Food Service Director will also be made. She recognized Cindy Brooks for her outstanding work.

The district has been selected to participate in the LinkIt pilot program, which will provide access to student data tools at no cost. Dr. Compton expressed appreciation to LinkIt for the opportunity.

She noted that Seymour will host the SCASA Superintendent meeting on February 20.

Additionally, the district is pursuing district-wide NEASC accreditation, with the application due at the end of February. She requested the Board's permission to proceed and noted that acceptance this year would include a discounted rate.

Dr. Compton also shared plans to collaborate with Jeremy and the social media class to produce a Seymour Public Schools showcase video and host a Q&A highlighting all four schools. She added that she has been meeting with leadership teams, student groups, and student representatives across the district, noting it has been a very busy and productive time.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM

YouTube Link (3/2/2026): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWu53mzFwWM>

Note: The next Regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 7:00 pm in Seymour Middle School.

Prepared by Shannon Levey, Board Clerk