

Seymour Board of Education



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES (REVISED 2/3/26)

January 12, 2026

Seymour Middle School

7:00 pm

Board Members Present:

Kristen Bruno, Chair
Chris Champagne, Vice-Chair
Kristen Harmeling, Secretary
Stephan Behuniak
Jay Hatfield
Pete Kubik
Lori Nespoli
Ed Strumello

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DATE: 2/3/26

TIME: 4:00 PM

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Members Absent:

Jim Garofolo

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 7:14 PM
- B. Moment of Silence for Raymond Necio
 - 1. Mr. Strumello shared heartfelt remarks honoring Mr. Raymond Necio and his lasting legacy as an educator. Mr. Necio was remembered fondly and is deeply missed by the school community. A moment of silence was observed.
- C. Introductions

MOTION: (Chris Champagne / Kristen Harmeling) moved to add a proclamation recognizing Fall Sports to the agenda

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Bungay Building Committee Update – Pete Kubik and Ed Strumello
 - 1. Mr. Kubik reported that preliminary approval has been received from the State of Connecticut. Final approval is anticipated in April or May. He also noted that the committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow evening.
 - 2. Ms. Bruno informed the Board of a recent change in state statute indicating that the Board Chair is responsible for designating Board of Education members to the Bungay Building Committee. In accordance with this statute, Ms. Bruno designated Mr. Ed Strumello and Mr. Pete Kubik to serve on the committee.
- B. Seymour Champion Recognitions – "Motivated"
 - 1. Bungay School
 - a. William Kuna

- b. Scarlett Harrison
 - 2. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - a. Alesio Peraj
 - b. Colin Pederson
 - 3. Seymour Middle School
 - a. Savanna Bednar
 - b. Adley Overcamp
 - 4. Seymour High School
 - a. Mackenzie Wichman
 - 5. Recognitions
 - a. AP Scholars – Seymour High School
 - b. Boys' State and Girls' State
- C. Student Reports
 - 1. SHS Student Representative Report – Daphne Shea and Jeremy Tomasheski
 - a. The student representatives reported on a variety of student activities and initiatives at Shelton High School. The National Honor Society is offering midterm study sessions and is organizing a blood drive. Updates were also provided on activities and events from Student Council, Hope Club, KinderCATS, and the Athletics Department, including recognition of Coach Cleveland. Additional reports were shared from the Yearbook, Art Club, Chess Club, Spanish Club, Environmental Club, Debate Team, Electrathon Car Club, Robotics Club, Newspaper Club, FBLA, Spirit Shop, Bible Club, and Best Buddies.

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.

- **Catherine White:** 49 Sagamore Drive - Ms. White addressed the Board regarding senior privilege and student scheduling. She thanked the district for the educational experience provided, noting that the most meaningful aspect of her education has been the relationships she has built. Ms. White shared her plans to study accounting and explained that she carefully planned her schedule with the goal of earning senior privilege, including enrolling in three study halls. She expressed disappointment that schedule changes could not be made, which prevented her from taking advantage of senior privilege and related employment opportunities. Ms. White requested that the Board consider the issue of senior privilege and scheduling.
- **Aleksandra Czerwony:** 74 Briarwood Drive - Ms. Czerwony expressed concerns that students feel they are being treated as placeholders in their schedules and are unable to switch classes due to low class sizes. She stated that students were told they would be able to utilize senior privilege if they structured their schedules accordingly and worked toward that goal. Ms. Czerwony emphasized that this privilege was clearly promised to students and asked the Board to consider the circumstances of students who demonstrated dedication and effort, and to honor the commitments made to them.
- Public comment called three times, no further public comment

IV. **REPORTS**

A. Eagle Scout Project Student Presentation

- i. A proposal was presented to replace picnic tables at Chatfield-LoPresti School, as the existing tables are in poor condition. The plan includes constructing four new picnic tables: two wheelchair-accessible tables and two standard tables, to be used in both the interior and exterior courtyards. Dr. Compton expressed support for the project. Mr. Hatfield requested that consideration of the project be moved up on the agenda.
MOTION: (Jay Hatfield / Chris Champagne) to advance the Eagle Scout project on the agenda
AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello
PASSES: 8-0-0
MOTION: (Jay Hatfield / Chris Champagne) to approve the proposed Eagle Scout project
AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello
PASSES: 8-0-0

B. Enrollment Report

C. Special Education Report – Dr. Boyle

D. Financial Report – Salvator Bucci

E. School Improvement Plan: Bungay School – Lauren Reid and Dave Willadsen

- i. Ms. Reid and Mr. Willadsen presented the Bungay School Improvement Plan to the Board. Board members were provided with three documents: a one-page overview of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, and the full detailed SIP. The plan outlines four primary goals:
 1. Fostering a supportive and connected school community;
 2. Advancing reading comprehension and fluency;
 3. Developing deep mathematical understanding; and
 4. Strengthening family and community partnerships.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Board Meeting - December 8, 2025
2. Organizational Meeting - December 8, 2025
3. Finance Committee Meeting - December 8, 2025
4. Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting - December 8, 2025

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / Pete Kubik) move to approve the consent agenda as presented

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

ABSTENTION: Mr. Hatfield

PASSES: 7-0-1

VI. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

VII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Eagle Scout Project

B. Resolution Honoring School Security Officers

The Resolution was read and formally presented to Officer Ron Barnard. Members of the Board, along with Dr. Compton and Ms. Reid, shared heartfelt remarks recognizing Officer Barnard for his exceptional service. He was commended not only for his dedication to the safety and protection of students, staff, and school facilities, but also for consistently going above and beyond in his support of the school community. The remaining resolutions for the other school security officers will be presented at a later date.

C. Board of Education Subcommittees

Ms. Bruno explained that some subcommittees received more interest than others and that she made efforts to balance members' requests. *She noted that the structure of the committees would be reviewed, not the committee assignments themselves;* and that potential bylaw changes may be considered in the future.

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / Chris Champagne)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Hatfield thanked Mr. Behuniak for his service on the Liaison Committee.

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

MOTION: (Jay Hatfield / Kristen Harmeling) moved to add Senior Privilege to the agenda.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Lucke and Ms. Ciccone stated that there is no intent to eliminate senior privilege. Mr. Hatfield requested clarification, after which Mr. Lucke explained the high school scheduling process and the PowerSchool algorithm, which prioritizes students' primary course selections. He noted an increase in seniors requesting to drop Period 8 courses, creating concerns about insufficient enrollment in certain classes and overpopulation in others. Students had selected these courses the previous year but now wish to drop them due to the time of day.

Mr. Kubik asked for clarification regarding whether students are being told they cannot drop courses. Ms. Nespoli asked if this was a PowerSchool issue, and Mr. Lucke reiterated that the system attempts to honor students' primary choices. He noted that future solutions may include blocking certain periods to better preserve senior privilege.

Ms. Bruno asked whether course "locking" was new this year; it was confirmed that it was not. Ms. Harmeling asked whether students who have sufficient credits are still being told they cannot drop courses, to which Ms. Ciccone discussed the impact of running classes with very low enrollment. Ms. Harmeling expressed support for running classes with smaller numbers if necessary.

Mr. Champagne noted that the Board does not become involved in individual scheduling decisions but is willing to listen to concerns. He referenced policies for Advanced Placement courses, stating that the current situation is not covered by such agreements.

Dr. Compton acknowledged that students may need to be allowed to drop courses but emphasized the importance of preventing this issue in the future and maintaining a quality educational experience. Ms. Harmeling expressed understanding of student frustration, noting changes in credit requirements and expectations surrounding senior privilege.

Ms. Ciccone reported that approximately 40–50 students have approached guidance thus far, with Zoology, Statistics, and Trigonometry being the most frequently requested courses to drop.

Mr. Behuniak suggested that if certain classes were at risk of being canceled due to low enrollment, staff could potentially be utilized in alternative ways, noting that denying students' requests could have negative effects on morale. Mr. Lucke and Ms. Ciccone welcomed Board input and expressed a desire to maintain strong school spirit.

Ms. Bruno summarized that there is currently no specific policy governing this situation. The administration is comfortable reviewing the issue, recognizing the challenge of running classes at non-optimal sizes while also working to establish procedures to prevent similar concerns in the future. She commended the students for bringing their concerns forward and doing so respectfully.

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Behuniak, Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nespoli, Mr. Strumello
PASSES: 8-0-0

VIII. INFORMATION

- A.** Board of Education Chair to appoint board member(s) on the Bungay Building Committee due to State Regulations
- B.** Parent Volunteers – Seymour Middle School
- C.** Hiring – Non-Certified
 - 1. Samantha Walfall
 - a. SLP Intern
 - b. Bungay Elementary School
 - 2. Hugues Charles
 - a. Substitute Custodian
 - b. Seymour High School
- D.** Transfers
 - 1. JoAnn Roberts
 - a. Secretary
 - b. Transfer from CLS to Central Office
 - c. Replacing Elisabeth Thompson
- E.** 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 - none
 - 2. Board Member Comments - none
- B.** Superintendent Report - Dr. Compton asked the Board to confirm that the dates of January 20 and January 27 will work with the budget development schedule. He reported that a Superintendent's meeting is scheduled for Friday, and that a Commissioner's meeting is held on the third Friday of each month to discuss budget matters, special education, and funding.

Dr. Compton stated that a Facilities Committee meeting will be held and that certain facility concerns will also be discussed during budget meetings. Ms. Bruno and Ms. Harmeling indicated that these items should be included as part of the budget discussions. Dr. Compton noted that some facility items may require a referendum and emphasized the need to prioritize. He suggested that it would be beneficial if the Board and the Town could set aside funds annually to address facility needs.

Ms. Harmeling stated that the facility issues being discussed are not new and questioned who is responsible for raising them. Dr. Compton responded that the situation has developed over time and is not the fault of any individual.

Mr. Champagne cited concerns regarding athletic facilities, noting that the district nearly lost the ability to host track meets due to equipment issues and that the current track condition may limit outside use. He suggested exploring sponsorships as a potential funding source. Dr. Compton expressed support for pursuing this option.

Mr. Behuniak suggested more regular collaboration with the Facilities Director, potentially through quarterly meetings, and emphasized the importance of utilizing that role on both the school and town sides. Dr. Compton stated that the Facilities Director is available and has been working diligently. He also noted that it may be beneficial to include the First Selectwoman and Mr. Miller in future discussions.

Ms. Harmeling clarified that she was not assigning blame but was seeking clarity on responsibility and process. Dr. Compton proposed beginning with a working session to review projections and priorities, noting that town leadership has expressed a willingness to help.

Ms. Bruno summarized that current practices have not been effective and emphasized the need to establish a more structured and strategic approach. She stated that facility planning should be incorporated into presentations to the Board of Finance to avoid reactive decision-making.

Mr. Hatfield expressed concern that these discussions may send mixed messages given the proposed budget figures. Mr. Behuniak noted that the Board has not yet weighed in on the budget.

The Board agreed to extend invitations to Mr. Miller and Mr. Connors to attend upcoming meetings.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 PM

Prepared by: Shannon Levey, Board Clerk

YouTube Link (1/12/2026): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLoi3AICCYs>

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