

# Seymour Board of Education



## Special Meeting Agenda

November 11, 2024  
Seymour Middle School  
7:00 pm

### BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Champagne, Chairperson  
Kristen Bruno, Vice Chairperson  
Stephan Behuniak, Secretary  
Ed Strumello  
Pete Kubik  
Lori Nespoli  
Jay Hatfield (late arrival 7:06PM)

### MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Kristen Harmeling

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr. Susan Compton, Superintendent of Schools  
Salvator Bucci, Business Manager  
Mary-Sue Feige, Director of Curriculum & Instruction  
Jim Freund, Seymour High School Principal  
Keith O'Rourke, Seymour Middle School Principal  
David Olechna, Chatfield Lo-Presti Principal  
Ernie DiStasi, Seymour Middle School Assistant Principal  
Stephanie Ciccone, Chatfield Lo-Presti Assistant Principal

## I. CALL TO ORDER

### A. Pledge of Allegiance

- Mr. Champagne called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:01PM.

### B. Introductions

## II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Seymour Champion Recognitions – Hard Working

- **Bungay School**
  - Evelyn Gonzalez – 5<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Dhuha Hadi – 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- **Chatfield Lo-Presti School**
  - Alicia Breda – 5<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Daisy Dushi – 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- **Seymour Middle School**
  - Camden Kelley – 6<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Juliet Lin – 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- **Seymour High School**
  - Zach McKirryher - Senior
  - Breyonce Feliciano - Junior

### B. Recognitions

- **Michael Widlar** – SHS Swim Team
  - Cathy Federowicz explained that the swim team equipment was not working properly.

The time to fix all of it would have been months out. On behalf of the Athletic Department and SHS Cathy wants to publicly thank Michael Widlar for his time, generosity, and efforts in volunteering to fix the swimming/pool equipment.

- **Wyatt Smarz**
  - Wyatt serves as the student representative on the Best Buddy Committee for the State of CT Carr. Dr. Compton stated she is very proud of this young man. He is always in the hallway smiling and has put in a lot of hard work.
- **National Merit Scholar (from October meeting)**
  - Robert Carrafiello – Mr. Freund recognized him for his SAT score in 2023 which made him honored as a National Merit Scholar
- **Red, White & Blue Award**
  - Dr. Compton, Lori Nespoli, and Annmarie Drugonis presented each school with the Red, White and Blue Award. This was centered with the Kindness initiative in the schools and around the town. Dr. Compton thanked Lori Nespoli, Annmarie Drugonis and Mary Sue Feige as well. Kindness will be celebrated again this year November 13, 2024. Dr. Compton also mentioned that Chatfield Lo-Presti School was recognized as a School of Distinction for the second year in a row. That will be celebrated in January.
- **SHS Electrathon**
  - Electric Car Club – regional competition in New England. They build electric racing cars. This year the club place well in all of New England

### C. Student Reports

- **SHS Student Representative Report** – Kaitlyn Hamilton, Jeremy Tomasheski
  - National honor society
  - Student council homecoming and pep rally
  - Hope club – fundraisers, popcorn, sock drive, blankets for homeless
  - Babysit at Bungay school
  - KinderCats – pumpkin activity, math and writing activity is next
  - Fall sports are finishing up: girls' soccer, boys' soccer, girls swimming, girls volleyball, football team, cross country
  - Yearbook club, working on the cover for 2025
  - Art club working on multimedia words of art
  - Spanish club celebrated Dia de Los Muertos
  - Bronx zoo trip coming up
  - Electrathon annual car race
  - Newspaper club working on the December issue
  - FBLA conference at UHeart
  - Mr. Strumello asked about the swimmer that achieved an award – Kylie McKirryher. Dr. Compton wants to bring her back to a BOE meeting to recognize her achievement.

### 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.

- Annmarie Drugonis, First Selectwoman of Seymour, 111 Middle Benham Rd. Seymour, CT - the town is putting together a charter committee, and they are looking for students to join. They will not have any voting rights but will gain a lot of knowledge.

#### IV. REPORTS

A. Bungay Building Update – Antinozzi Associates Architecture & Interiors

- Mr. Stanek introduced the Antinozzi Associates members. Next committee meeting is November 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00pm. This architecture firm has assisted the committee in the Bungay Building Project. Mr. Michael Losarro explained the preliminary process and the educational specifications. Lisa Yates and Fran DeFiore presented the educational specifications. They stated how they spoke with Bungay School staff members. They were able to obtain a lot of information from the staff. The staff told them what they currently have and what they would dream of having. Based on the information staff gave them, the firm started making a preliminary plan. They also review the numbers and determined the square footage. You must get what you need but it also has to equal the amount of space that the state will reimburse. Bungay School's existing school is currently 4,000 square feet under the needed for special education. Ideally Bungay would gain 12,000 square feet. Ultimately this document represents 50 years of planning, but also the document that the committee will be asked to approve and one component to the state for grant money. Any input is welcomed. Mr. Stanek also mentioned that Beth Nesteriak is present and can be of help. Dr. Compton also thanked Beth Nesteriak for all her time and effort with this project.

B. Special Education Enrollment Report – Dr. Boyle, not in attendance

C. Financial Report – Salvatore Bucci, no presentation of report

D. Nutrition Services Financial Report – Cindy Brooks, not in attendance

E. School Improvement Plan – Keith O'Rourke & Ernie DiStasi, Seymour Middle School

- Mr. O'Rourke started by saying that they start with the data from the prior year then put together a list of areas they feel they need to improve upon. He is proud of SMS and what they have been able to accomplish last year. This plan is composed of three major areas: social emotional learning, academic growth, and stakeholder feedback/community engagement. Data driven decision is something that lives within the plan and building on a daily basis. Always looking at ways they can get better, at the teacher level and student level. If you want to drive home the first to goals, the third goal has to be achieved. SEL builds the culture of a school. 71% of students felt fairly and respectfully treated by their peers. 63% viewed their peers as friendly. 54% felt comfortable sharing their thoughts. Mr. DiStasi discussed the Cougar Pride is SEL program that they are developing this year – is one of the strategies being used to achieve their goal of achieving an environment that is fair, respectful, and meaningful connections. One book, one school was used in Cougar Pride. Identifying students that need more individualized support. Also, using clubs to help achieve these goals. Goal: Academic Growth – all students will meet or exceed grade level standards in reading, math and science. The goal numbers are very ambitious, but Mr. O'Rourke would rather be ambitious than cut the students short. Academic Growth key strategies: DDDM, new school schedule, personalized and small group instruction, integrating the school media specialist to support research and literacy, restorative practice initiative, critical thinking and making thinking visible, professional development/observation and feedback. Final goal, stakeholder feedback: home-school communication, monthly opportunities for families, increase parent survey to 25%. Strategies to achieve this goal: Paw Print Newsletter, school and teacher websites, Morning Jo with Mr. D and KO, continued opportunities for families (bonfires, dances, etc.). Mr. DiStasi stated that he is extremely proud of the SMS team and after hearing the great work that was being done there, that is why he returned to the middle school. Mr. O'Rourke discussed the accountability index. 8<sup>th</sup> grade math growth on the smarter balance assessment was in the top percentage. Mr. O'Rourke thanked Dr. Compton and Mr. Lucke for supporting their math program. Mr. O'Rourke stated that all results of the surveys were published in the Paw Print.

## V. CONSENT AGENDA

### A. Approval of Minutes

- [Finance Committee Meeting Minutes](#) – October 7, 2024
- [Regular BOE Meeting Minutes](#) – October 7, 2024

### B. Hiring – Non-Certified

- [Andrew Venditti](#)
  - School Nurse
  - Seymour High School
  - Replacing Samantha Miles-Rigoli
- [Amanda Sokolski](#)
  - Long term secretary substitute (2 days/week)
  - Chatfield Lo-Presti
  - Substituting for Karen Murphy

**MOTION:** move to approve the consent agenda as presented (Mr. Behuniak / sec. Mr. Strumello)

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

**PASSES:** 8-0-0

## VI. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

## VII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

### A. Seymour Public Schools [Calendar 2025-2026 \(Draft\)](#)

- Dr. Compton asked the board not to vote on the calendar yet. But, wanted to present it to get input. She also would like to get input from other surrounding districts.
- Mr. Strumello is going to the CABA Convention. CABA encouraged all districts to align their vacations to be the same time. He is going to bring that up at the CABA Convention.
- Mr. Champagne thinks is best to see what the surrounding towns are doing and go with the most popular week.
- Mr. Hatfield questioned the PD/Early Release not being consistently on the same day each month. He stated it could be hard on the people to find childcare. Dr. Compton said it is the same as last year. If the board can find a better plan for PD days then she will support it. Mr. Hatfield still insists on having the days each month. Dr. Compton suggested looking at Fridays for PD, she understands their concern. September and November would have to stay. A new draft will be made with consistent PD days. Action will be taken in December. Ms. Bruno requested that we look at attendance on other holidays that are not recognized in Seymour.

### B. Board of Education Meeting Schedule 2025-2026 [\(Draft\)](#)

- Mr. Behuniak cannot make the Finance meetings. We will have to come back for finance meetings. December 8<sup>th</sup> preferred; January 12<sup>th</sup> preferred. The board would like to change the meeting locations. Ms. Bruno suggested having the meeting at Bungay right before the referendum. Mr. Strumello suggested asking the principal if there was a specific month they'd prefer to host the meeting. Mr. Hatfield suggested the schools doing the SIP at their own schools.

### C. Seymour Public Schools [Improvement Plan 2024-2025](#)

- Dr. Compton explained the plan. She stated it was important to have a long range improvement plan. Part of the reason for the plan is also the Bungay Building Project. Mr. Hatfield said this is an important document and they need to spend more time reviewing it and have more conversation around it. Dr. Compton said the board's input is valued and needed. Some of this can be integrated into the strategic plan and vision of a graduate, also aligned with the town. Mr. Hatfield wanted to know what they as a board can do. Mr. Champagne asked if Mr. Hatfield had any suggestions or input. Mr. Hatfield didn't have any at the moment. Mr. Strumello suggested having a special meeting to just cover this. Mr. Champagne said they can do that but all the

board members need to actually read the document ahead of time and come prepared. Dr. Compton suggested having a working session. Ms. Bruno agreed on the working session as that should also guide our budget. Mr. Strumello requested that we use Doodle to schedule working sessions. Dr. Compton suggested the first and third Monday work best. Mr. Behuniak has some conflict earlier on the first Monday of the month.

## VIII. INFORMATION

### A. **Hiring – Non-Certified**

- a. Sol Christian
  - i. Instructional Paraeducator
  - ii. Chatfield Lo-Presti
  - iii. Replacing Jamie Trantum
- b. Samantha Rosetti
  - i. Head Softball Coach
  - ii. Seymour High School
  - iii. Replacing Ken Pereiras

### B. **Hiring – Volunteer**

- a. Matthew Maisto
  - i. Boys Basketball Volunteer
  - ii. Seymour High School

### C. **Resignations – Certified**

- a. Michael Avena
  - i. Science Teacher, Head Girl's Tennis Coach, Attendance Officer
  - ii. Seymour High School
  - iii. Effective November 14, 2024

### D. **Resignations – Non-Certified**

- a. Cristina Tacinelli
  - i. Girl's Basketball Assistant Coach
  - ii. Seymour High School
  - iii. Effective immediately

### E. **School Events**

- a. [Chatfield Lo-Presti School](#)
- b. [Bungay Elementary School](#)
- c. [Seymour Middle School](#)
- d. [Seymour High School](#)

## IX. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS & SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

### A. **Board of Education Comments**

- Chairman's Comments
  - Reminder the Bungay Building Committee meeting is November 21<sup>st</sup>. He also wants to recognize the two SHS soccer coaches next meeting.
- Board Member Comments
  - Mr. Strumello: if someone wants him or Mr. Hatfield to bring something up at the CABA Convention then let him know. He initiated an acknowledgment of Mr. Garofolo for being a veteran.
  - Ms. Nespoli: Kindness Day reminder on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Many activities will be occurring throughout the schools and town.
  - Mr. Hatfield: kudos to Ms. Brown working with the town on the Veterans banners hung around town.

**D. Superintendent Report**

- Teacher of the year, Kindness Day, Veterans Day assemblies, Ms. Brown's banners and flags. Proud of our CATS at the high school, the program has been a huge success. The kids are very happy.
- The water company is going to be shutting down the waterline on Wednesday evening. They scheduled it with the town, security and the schools.
- We will be working with the booster clubs and athletics programs along with the Athletic Committee and Policy Committee to work together to get the signage figured out.

**X. SUPERINTENDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

**\*A. Discussion and possible action regarding a matter concerning security strategy (may be discussed in Executive Session)**

**MOTION:** Move that the Seymour Board of Education enter Executive Session in accordance with the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes Sections 1-225(f), 1-231(a) and 1-200(6)(C) to discuss a matter concerning security strategy. I further move that the following individual(s) be invited to attend the Executive Session:

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Susan Compton and Mr. Salvatore Bucci (Ms. Bruno / sec. Mr. Kubik)

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

**OPPOSED:** Mr. Hatfield

**PASSES:** 7-1-0

Entered Executive Session 9:04 PM

No action taken.

Out of Executive Session 9:33 PM

**\*B. Discussion and possible action pertaining to the employment, performance, and evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools (may be discussed in Executive Session)**

**MOTION:** Move that the Seymour Board of Education enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employment, performance, and evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools. I further move that the following individual(s) be invited to attend the Executive Session:

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Susan Compton

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

**PASSED:** 8-0-0

Entered Executive Session 9:37 PM

No action taken

Out of Executive Session 10:01 PM

***\*It is anticipated that the asterisked items will be discussed in Executive Session from which the public will be excluded.***

**XI. POSSIBLE ACTION AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**A. Discussion and possible action on a matter concerning security strategy**

- No action

**B. Discussion and possible action on the Superintendent of Seymour School's Evaluation**

- No action

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION: to adjourn the meeting**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:02 PM

YouTube Link (11/11/2024): [https://youtube.com/live/po\\_Y02VCmtY?feature=share](https://youtube.com/live/po_Y02VCmtY?feature=share)

**Note:** The next Regular Board of Education meeting will be held on **Monday, December 9, 2024** at 7:00 pm in **Seymour Middle School**.

Prepared by: Shannon Levey  
Board Clerk