

# Seymour Board of Education



## Special BOE Meeting – Budget Workshop #1

January 9, 2025  
Central Office  
6:00 pm

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Champagne, Chairperson  
Stephan Behuniak, Secretary  
Ed Strumello  
Kristen Harmeling  
Pete Kubik

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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

### I. CALL TO ORDER

#### A. Pledge of Allegiance

1. Chris Champagne called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### II. 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.

- No public comment

### III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

#### A. Seymour Education Budget 2025-2026

##### 1. Budget Overview:

Dr. Compton provided an update on the current budget status, noting that personnel costs have risen by 2.5%, equating to \$400,000 per 1%. The biggest concern is insurance, with costs still undetermined pending discussions with the broker. Special Education costs are a significant challenge, driven by rising private school and transportation costs. The influx of students from outside the country has added strain on resources, which is a shared issue among valley districts. Dr. Compton also mentioned discussions with neighboring superintendents about educational cost savings and how ECS (Education Cost Sharing) funds are being utilized. Kristen Harmeling clarified the distribution of ECS funds, emphasizing that the town's largest revenue source comes from the state. Mr. Bucci pointed out that the perceived cost to taxpayers is often misunderstood. The Board agreed that there needs to be better communication about how the budget is structured and funded, particularly with regard to the state's contribution. Dr. Compton expressed optimism after a productive conversation with AMD about shared services and potential future support.

##### 2. Budget Details:

Mr. Bucci presented an overview of budget costs, highlighting the 2.5% teacher contract increase and upcoming negotiations for non-certified staff. There are no new positions in the

budget, and special education costs are supplemented by subsidies. Health insurance costs remain uncertain, with a potential increase of 12.5%, which could add \$150,000 to the budget. The district is actively exploring options due to high claims rates. Retirement costs will increase by \$129,000 due to three retirements. Out-of-district special education costs remain high at \$3.3 million, despite a slight decrease in the number of students. Dr. Compton is coordinating with valley superintendents to address these rising costs. Mr. Strumello recommended that the special education director seek more grant opportunities. Transportation costs, particularly for special education and homeless students, are also rising. Mr. Bucci suggested exploring the purchase of used buses and custodians driving them. Energy costs have been well-managed, but delivery charges are a concern. There was also discussion about property and liability insurance, with a proposal to consider increasing the deductible. Ms. Harmeling suggested researching how other towns manage and fund facility maintenance.

3. Status Quo Budget:

The current budget is a flatline, level services budget with no changes. Mr. Behuniak requested additional information on costs related to the Needs Assessment items, and Ms. Harmeling asked for salary details for the three shared services.

The meeting concluded with a focus on continued collaboration and communication to ensure the budget meets the district's needs while addressing financial concerns.

**IV. REPORTS**

**A. Chairman's Report**

1. None

**B. Superintendent's Report**

1. None

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

**A.** The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Prepared by: Shannon Levey,  
Board Clerk