



REGULAR MEETING AGENDA Revised

April 7, 2025

Chatfield-LoPresti School

7:00 pm

Board Members Present: Chris Champagne, Chairperson
Kristen Bruno, Vice Chairperson
Ed Strumello
Jay Hatfield
Lori Nespoli
Pete Kubik
Stephan Behuniak, Secretary

Board Members Absent: Kristen Harmeling

Others in Attendance: Dr. Susan Compton, Superintendent
Annmarie Drugonis, First Selectwoman
Mary Sue Feige, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Lauren Reid
Dr. Kris Boyle, Director of Pupil Services
Paul Lucke
Stephanie Ciccone
Dave Olechna
Keith ORourke
Dave Willadsen
Shannon Levey, Board Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Pledge of Allegiance – Mr. Champagne called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM with the pledge of allegiance
- B. Moment of Silence for Patricia Sabatini – Ms. Feige and Mr. Strumello shared heartfelt tributes in memory of Ms. Sabatini.
- C. Introductions

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Bungay Building Committee Update

1. Mr. Kubik reported that the proposal for the new Bungay School was approved by the Board of Selectpersons. This approval enables the architects and the town to submit the necessary documentation to the State of Connecticut. The project (building a new Bungay School) is now scheduled to go to referendum on October 9th.

B. Seymour Champion Recognitions – “Optimistic”

1. Bungay School
 - a. Ainsley Ricard
 - b. Sophie Narvaez
2. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - a. Jace Northrop
 - b. Hawa Popalzai
3. Seymour Middle School
 - a. Greyson Luyando

- b. Audriana Poulin
- 4. Seymour High School
 - a. Payton McDaniel

C. Superintendent Recognitions

1. Chatfield-LoPresti School - School of Distinction (Second Consecutive Year)

The Superintendent highlighted the outstanding achievement of Chatfield-LoPresti School, which has been named a *School of Distinction* by the Connecticut State Department of Education for the second year in a row. This recognition celebrates the school's exceptional work in closing the achievement gap, from K through Grade 5. A banner was presented during the meeting to commemorate this honor. The Superintendent praised the dedication of the students, staff, and administration, noting that this recognition is a direct result of their hard work, motivation, and commitment to excellence. Gratitude was also extended to the families and caregivers whose support makes such success possible. To celebrate, an ice cream party will possibly be held at the school. In recognition of their contributions, *Student Ambassadors* will also receive special pins.

2. Chatfield-LoPresti School - Student Ambassadors

The Superintendent recognized the Chatfield-LoPresti *Student Ambassadors*, a leadership group composed of 4th and 5th grade students. This year's ambassadors were selected from a pool of 60 applicants. Their responsibilities include leading morning announcements, representing the school in town parades, providing school tours, and managing the school store. Each ambassador was introduced and acknowledged for their service and leadership. Dr. Compton will deliver their special recognition pins at school the following day.

D. Student Reports

1. SHS Student Representative Report – Kaitlyn Hamilton, Jeremy Tomasheski

Kaitlyn Hamilton and Jeremy Tomasheski provided an update on recent activities and accomplishments at Seymour High School, including:

- **Student Council:** Continued involvement in school events and leadership initiatives.
- **NEASC Feedback:** Students reviewed and discussed the feedback from the recent NEASC evaluation.
- **HOPE Club:** Participated in a collaboration with the Seymour Historical Society during a 3rd-grade field trip. The *Hats for HOPE Day* fundraiser raised over \$2,000.
- **Courtyard Beautification Project:** Students are working to grow vegetables in the school courtyard, which will be donated to the community.
- **KinderKats Project:** Students planted seeds and flowers and read stories to their kindergarten buddies as part of a mentorship and engagement initiative.
- **Spring Sports:** Spring sports season has officially begun, starting with softball. Other teams are kicking off this week, with several new coaches joining the programs.
- **Yearbook:** The main yearbook has been completed, and work has begun on the spring supplement.
- **Art Club:** Students explored various artistic mediums based on their personal interests.
- **Spanish Club:** Hosted a highly successful *Multicultural Fair*, representing over 20 countries and attended by more than 150 people.
- **Agricultural Club:** Continued student participation in agri-based learning and activities.
- **Debate Club:** Held a "Shake-A-Can" fundraiser and is preparing for their end-of-year celebration on April 24th.
- **Car Club:** Currently holding elections.
- **Newspaper Club:** Published the third edition of the school newspaper.

The board commended the students for their dedication, creativity, and community engagement.

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.

- **Jodi Gerstenhaber, 8 Emma Street**
Ms. Gerstenhaber expressed her appreciation to Dr. Compton, Ms. Feige, and Mr. O'Rourke for taking the time to listen to her concerns regarding the Physical Education policy at Seymour Middle School. She clarified that her concern is not about the makeup assignment itself, but rather the perceived inconsistency and unfairness in how the policy is applied—particularly regarding who is required to complete the written assignments. She expressed hope that this issue will be addressed in the upcoming policy revision and shared her gratitude and optimism moving forward.
- **Annamarie Drugonis, 111 Middle Benham Road**
Ms. Drugonis commented on an anonymous letter she received regarding coaching positions. She clarified that coaching decisions are not made by the town and stated her trust that the best candidates are being hired. She also expressed understanding of the concern over the upcoming referendum being scheduled during spring break, citing a lack of communication about the timing. She noted that absentee ballots are available: Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, and Friday from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM.
- **Enzo Altomare, 1 Rolling Hills Drive**
Mr. Altomare addressed concerns about student behavior incidents at Seymour Middle School. He suggested the implementation of additional security cameras to help monitor hallways and classrooms. He believes this would provide clearer accountability and ensure that accurate records are available when incidents occur.

IV. REPORTS

- A. Nutrition Services Report: January and February – Cindy Brooks
- B. Special Education Report – Dr. Boyle
- C. Financial Report – Salvatore Bucci
- D. Enrollment Report

E. School Improvement Plan: Chatfield-LoPresti School – David Olechna & Stephanie Ciccone

Ms. Ciccone and Mr. Olechna presented the School Improvement Plan for Chatfield-LoPresti School for the 2024–2025 school year.

Improvement Goals:

1. Increase a sense of belonging for all students and families, including those on the “edges” of school engagement.
2. Improve student literacy skills, with targeted strategies to close achievement gaps for students performing below grade level.
3. Improve student mathematical understanding and outcomes, again with a focus on supporting students below grade level.

Key Strategies & Initiatives:

- **Community Engagement:** Phone calls, emails, in-person meetings, Instagram communication, and Cheetah Chats.
- **Social-Emotional Learning & Belonging:** Responsive Classroom, RULER program, diversity/cultural celebrations, staff spotlights, Career Day, Breakfast Club, CLS Beautification Club.
- **Literacy Support:** Read 180, Into Reading, DIBELS, IXL, Lexia, multilingual instructional strategies, alignment with Common Core Standards.
- **Math Support:** Math centers, “Math Talk,” 3-Act Math tasks, Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments, IXL, Splash, Khan Mappers, Bridgets, and EnVisions.

Celebrations:

- CLS was named a *School of Distinction* in two categories for the second consecutive year.
- Based on Smarter Balanced data, CLS is the top-performing elementary school in the DRG F district.

Board Questions and Discussion:

- *Mr. Kubik* asked if there were any negative trends in the data.
 - *Mr. Olechna* responded that chronic absenteeism continues to be a challenge. Attendance was at 95% five years ago and efforts are ongoing to return to that level (post COVID).
- *Mr. Champagne* asked for clarification on RIT scores.
- *Mr. Strumello* asked about state-level support in addressing chronic absenteeism.

- Mr. Olechna explained that state support is limited, but noted that chronic tardiness is also a significant issue. Repeated late arrivals result in missed instructional time. In severe cases, DCF (Department of Children and Families) is contacted, and their support has been helpful.

Remove E6 from the Consent Agenda

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. [Regular BOE Meeting](#) – March 3, 2025
 - 2. [Special BOE Meeting](#) – Mar 24, 2025
 - 3. [Liaison Committee Meeting](#) – March 31, 2025
 - 4. [Special BOE Meeting / Public Forum](#) – March 31, 2025
- B. [Intra-District Transfer Requests](#) for the 2025-2026 school year
- C. [Early Graduation Request](#)
- D. Hiring – Certified
 - 1. [Karrie Paz](#)
 - a. Special Education Teacher (DSAP)
 - b. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - c. Replacing Karrie Paz as a Long Term Substitute
- E. Hiring – Non-Certified
 - 1. [Amber Desiderato](#)
 - a. Literacy/Numeracy Tutor (grant position)
 - b. Bungay Elementary School
 - c. Replacing Alleyah Trotman
 - 2. [Keyajha Muhammad](#)
 - a. Instructional Paraprofessional
 - b. Bungay Elementary School
 - c. Unfilled position
 - 3. [Sarah VanHook](#)
 - a. Instructional Paraprofessional
 - b. Seymour High School
 - c. Replacing Mark Angeletti
 - 4. [Demi Sheahan](#)
 - a. Food Service Worker
 - b. Seymour Middle School
 - c. Replacing Evelyn Olivetti
 - 5. [Kaitlyn Tanner](#)
 - a. Food Service Worker
 - b. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - c. Replacing Carol Sejdija
 - 6. ~~[Carrie Clark](#)~~
 - a. ~~Food Service Worker~~
 - b. ~~Chatfield-LoPresti School~~
 - c. ~~Replacing Deanna Osborne~~

MOTION: move to approve the consent agenda removing E6 as presented (Ed Strumello / sec. Kristen Bruno)

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

PASSES: 7-0-0

VI. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

- Item E6 was removed from the Consent Agenda

VII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. Set Graduation date for Class of 2025

MOTION: to approve setting the date of graduation for the Class of 2025 to be June 11, 2025 with a rain date of June 12, 2025 (Stephan Behuniak / sec. Kristen Bruno)

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

PASSES: 7-0-0

B. Set Last day of School

MOTION: to approve setting the last day of school for the 2024-2025 school year as June 12, 2025 (Stephan Behuniak / sec. Kristen Bruno)

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

PASSES: 7-0-0

C. Early Graduation Request - approved above under Consent Agenda

D. Donation – Weightlifting equipment purchased with funds raised by the Wildcat Kickoff Club

MOTION: to approve the donation of weightlifting equipment funded by the Wildcat Kickoff Club and to direct the Superintendent to distribute the donation at her discretion. (Jay Hatfield / sec. Stephan Behuniak)

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

PASSES: 7-0-0

E. Donation – Tennis balls

MOTION: to accept the donation of tennis balls and direct the Superintendent to place them appropriately. (Jay Hatfield / sec. Kristen Bruno)

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

PASSES: 7-0-0

VIII. INFORMATION

A. Hiring – Appendix D

1. Deirdre Sponheimer

- a. Assistant Athletic Director
- b. Seymour High School
- c. Replacing David Willadsen
- d. Effective immediately

2. Michael Magnotta

- a. Middle School Baseball Coach
- b. Replacing Jared Pettinella

B. Hiring – Non-Certified

1. Kaylee Sudimick

- a. Long-Term Classroom Substitute Teacher - 5th grade
- b. Bungay Elementary School
- c. Substituting for Nicole Hiscock

C. Hiring - Volunteer

1. Kristen DeLorenzo

- a. Volunteer Dance Coach
- b. Seymour High School

D. Resignations

1. Lisa Goodfellow

- 1. Paraeducator
- 2. Chatfield-LoPresti School
- 3. Effective immediately

2. Alyssa Latanowich

- a. Paraeducator
- b. Bungay School
- c. Effective Apr 2, 2025

3. Melissa Labbe

- a. Music Teacher
- b. Chatfield-LoPresti School

- c. Effective end of 24-25 school year
- E. School Events
 - 1. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - 2. Bungay Elementary School
 - 3. Seymour Middle School
 - a. **8th Grade Promotion Ceremony – Wednesday, Jun 11, 2025 at 10:00 AM**
 - i. **Located at the SMS Auditorium**
 - 4. Seymour High School

IX. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS & SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

A. Board of Education Comments

1. Chairman's Comments

The Chairman expressed disappointment with the low turnout at the recent town meeting. He emphasized the importance of next week's budget vote, noting that the budget has been through significant revisions. The Chairman encouraged students and staff to participate in the vote, as it directly impacts school funding, especially in District Reference Group F (DRG F). The district was two DRG's higher last year. He also stressed the importance of public input like on the PE policy, urging the community to come out and share feedback with the board on different topics/concerns so that decisions don't become stale.

1. Board Member Comments

Mr. Strumello: He expressed disappointment over the cuts to the budget, stating that while grandparents and citizens understand the value of education, this message is not being effectively communicated. He urged the public to come out and vote.

Mr. Behuniak: He pointed out that the district is in the bottom 7% of per-pupil spending.

Ms. Bruno: She emphasized that voting in the upcoming referendum is essential for everyone in the town. She encouraged voters to participate in person at the community center on April 17th or obtain absentee ballots at town hall. She also took a moment to comment on the memory of Pat Sabatini.

B. Superintendent Report

The Superintendent began by emphasizing that the district's most precious assets are its students, and that the quality of education is a key factor in attracting new families to the community. She underscored the importance of making education a top priority, stating, "You're only as good as your education."

The Superintendent shared recent district highlights:

- She attended the **Multicultural Fair**, praising the teachers for their hard work and noting that the students had a great time. The event celebrated diversity, and the "passports" given to students were a hit. Many students were from the countries represented at the fair.
- She also attended the **Performing Arts Show**, commending the performance as excellent.
- The **Winter Sports Teams** were recognized for their outstanding achievements, especially reaching the **Final 4** for the first time since 2004.
- She participated in the **Walk-A-Thon** and attended **Signing Day** for senior athletes, highlighting the excitement of seeing four senior girls earn scholarships.
- The Superintendent expressed pride in the district's accomplishments, specifically praising the leadership of the district's administrators, mentioning **CT Assistant Principal of the Year** awards for **Paul Lucke** (last year), **Lauren Reid** (two years ago) and **Ernie DiStasi** (previously). She noted that these leaders make a real difference in the district.
- **Top Senior Achievements:** The Superintendent proudly announced that the top valedictorian has been accepted into prestigious universities, including **Harvard, Yale, MIT, and Berklee**. Another student was accepted into the **United States Air Force Academy** and is awaiting confirmation from **West Point**.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM

Prepared by: Shannon Levey, Board Clerk

Note: The next Regular Board of Education meeting will be held on **Monday, May 5, 2025, at 7:00 pm** at Seymour Middle School.