

# Seymour Board of Education



## Special BOE Meeting with Student Council

May 5, 2025

Seymour Middle School

5:30 pm

Board Members Present:

Chris Champagne  
Ed Strumello  
Lori Nespoli  
Pete Kubik  
Kristen Bruno  
Jay Hatfield

Board Members Absent:

Stephan Behuniak  
Jim Garofolo  
Kristen Harmeling

Others in Attendance:

Paul Lucke, SHS Principal  
Stephanie Ciccone  
Carolyn Sweeney  
Melissa Anelli  
Dr. Susan Compton, Superintendent  
Shannon Levey, Board Clerk

### I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Mr. Champagne called the meeting to order at 5:49 PM. Introductions were made.

### 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. INFORMAL DISCUSSION

A. Informal discussion between the Seymour Board of Education and the Seymour High School Student Council

1. The Student Council concerns:

#### a. Homeroom/Advisory Period

##### Student Council President's Remarks:

- Requested the reintroduction of a scheduled homeroom or advisory period.
- Noted that the absence of homeroom diminishes school community and student engagement.
- Previously, homeroom provided time to:
  - Participate in club meetings without transportation issues.

- Vote on important matters (e.g., prom king/queen, school budget).
- Share information via Google Classroom.
- Decompress and connect with peers outside academic content.
- Suggested homeroom need not be daily—once or twice a week for 15–30 minutes would suffice.
- Advocated for a fixed time in the schedule (e.g., mid-morning block on Wednesdays) not tied to academic classes.
- Highlighted the importance of grade-level homerooms.

**Administrative Feedback:**

- Mr. Lucke noted past issues with low attendance and hallway wandering during advisory.
- Ms. Sweeney mentioned a club schedule was developed as an alternative.
- Mr. Kubik asked why advisory was removed; Mr. Lucke explained it was to increase instructional time and due to poor attendance.
- Dr. Compton acknowledged the importance of homeroom as a non-academic period for student communication and reflection.

**b. Restroom and eHall Pass System**

**Student Concerns:**

- Restrooms offer little privacy due to open door monitoring—audible pad use and flushing can be heard from hallways.
- eHall Pass system is not functioning properly:
  - Queue system does not notify when a pass becomes available.
  - Students must continually refresh or attempt to gain access.
  - Pass delays can be problematic in emergencies.
- Current restroom access is limited to 2–3 students at a time; some suggested increasing this.
- Noted issue of equity: most students are limited to 5 passes per day, while others with medical needs have exceptions.
- General frustration with policies that penalize all for the actions of a few.

**Administrative Feedback:**

- Dr. Compton stated that security and camera systems have improved restroom supervision.
- The high school will trial increased restroom capacity and is working to fix the eHall pass queue system.

**c. Cell Phone Policy**

**Student Feedback:**

- Acknowledged that phones are essential learning tools, especially in new tech-integrated courses.
- Expressed concern about restrictions limiting their ability to complete assignments, use reminders, take notes, and access resources.
- Cited issues with inconsistent Wi-Fi and cell service that affect submission of digital assignments.
- Advocated for a policy of responsible use, with consequences for misuse rather than a blanket ban.

**Administrative and Board Discussion:**

- Dr. Compton emphasized the need for balance and noted student responsibility has been generally good.
- Ms. Nespoli opposed locking up phones and supported teaching responsibility.
- Mr. Strumello raised awareness of possible statewide legislation banning phones in schools.

- Ms. Ciccone emphasized the need for clear consequences for misuse.
- Ms. Bruno recommended reviewing research on phone distraction and its psychological effects.
- Suggestion to revisit and potentially revise the district's cell phone policy.

**d. Student Drop-off Traffic – Ross Drive**

**Student Concern:**

- Requested opening the back gate year-round to reduce traffic congestion during morning drop-off.

**Administrative Response:**

- Dr. Compton stated this would require ongoing collaboration with local authorities and would need to be staffed.
- Mr. Lucke suggested altering the traffic pattern to improve flow.
- Mr. Strumello supported taking the proposal to the Facilities Committee, then the full Board, Public Works, and Police Commission.

**e. Study Hall Conditions**

**Student Feedback:**

- Expressed concern over the lack of functional workspace in study halls held in the cafeteria and auditorium.
- Noted that it's difficult to concentrate or complete assignments without desks or tables.

**Administrative Response:**

- Mr. Lucke explained staffing limitations and contract restrictions prevent relocating all study halls to classrooms.

**Closing Note:**

Many student concerns reflect budgetary limitations. There was shared acknowledgment that staffing and resource constraints are affecting key areas of student experience as a result of the budget.

**IV. REPORTS**

**A. Chairman's Report**

**B. Board Members Comments:**

1. **Mr. Hatfield:** Expressed appreciation to the Student Council members for sharing their concerns and participating in the discussion.
2. **Ms. Bruno:** Encouraged students to share their concerns with their parents, to continue learning about the budgetary process, both in Seymour and beyond, and to get involved.
3. **Mr. Strumello:** Advised students to not only inform their parents but also engage siblings, grandparents, and other community members in the conversation.

**C. Superintendent's Report**

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:46 PM

Prepared by Shannon Levey,  
Board Clerk