



REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

December 8, 2025
Seymour Middle School
7:00 pm

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Kristen Bruno, Chairperson
Chris Champagne, Vice-Chair
Kristen Harmeling, Secretary
Stephan Behuniak
Pete Kubik
James Garofolo
Lori Nespoli
Ed Strumello

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jay Hatfield

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr. Susan Compton, Superintendent
David Olechna, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Paul Lucke
Stephanie Ciccone
Keith O'Rourke
Lauren Reid
Dave Willadsen
Jake Velleco
Jim Freund
Dr. Kris Boyle
Shannon Levey, Board Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Pledge of Allegiance – Kristen Bruno called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM
- B. Introductions

II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. **Seymour Champion Recognitions - "Aware"**

- 1. Bungay School
 - a. Caden Stockmal
 - b. Charlotte Allegretto
- 2. Chatfield Lo-Presti School
 - a. Laney Willox
 - b. Adysen Champagne
- 3. Seymour Middle School
 - a. Hannah Tokarz
 - b. Zain Hassan
- 4. Seymour High School

a. Dejonay Watt

B. Recognitions

1. Schools of Distinction – Bungay School and Chatfield-LoPresti School
Dr. Compton congratulated Bungay Elementary School and Chatfield-LoPresti School for being named Schools of Distinction, recognizing their hard work and dedication. She noted that Chatfield-LoPresti School has earned this designation for three consecutive years.

Dr. Compton also recognized Ms. Darlene O’Callaghan, who will be retiring in February, and spoke highly of her commitment to literacy and her lasting impact on the district. She shared that she has been widely praised for her dedication to books and reading and noted that educators of her caliber are rare. Ms. O’Callaghan was given the opportunity to speak and reflected on her time serving the district, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to do what she loves as an educator. She stated that she leaves with immense pride and a full heart.

2. U.S. News Best High Schools, National 2025-2026 – Seymour High School
Dr. Compton also announced that Seymour High School has been recognized as a U.S. News Best High School at the national level for the 2025–2026 school year. She could not be more proud of our schools.

C. Student Reports

1. SHS Student Representative Report – Jeremy Tomasheski & Daphne Shea

The student representatives reported on a wide range of student activities and accomplishments at Seymour High School.

The National Honor Society volunteered at a Seymour Middle School debate event, organized a holiday craft drop-off night at SHS, and conducted a coat donation drive. Student Council hosted Spirit Week. The Hope Club participated as a vendor at the Seymour Historical Society fair. The KinderCats program supported reading skills and attended a kindergarten holiday performance.

It was reported that five SHS student-athletes have signed and committed to compete at the collegiate level. Winter sports have begun, with approximately 120 student-athletes participating this season. The football team completed a 9–1 season; while falling short in postseason play, it was noted as one of the most successful seasons in recent years.

The Yearbook Club completed Spirit Week and pep rally pages. The Art Club completed decorations for a parade float. The Chess Club has begun its season with matches against Woodland and Holy Cross. The Spanish Club shared that Christmas traditions are an important focus of their activities.

The Debate Club reviewed competition protocols and competed at the varsity level for the first time as a team. The ElectriTHON Car Club is designing a new car for April races. A robotics competition is scheduled to take place at Masuk High School this weekend.

The Newspaper Club set a goal to double production and publish six issues this year. FBLA reported a successful launch of its Spirit Shop, which will remain open year-round. The Line Dancing Club is learning more advanced dances and is planning an evening event. Best Buddies hosted a holiday party at Woodland in collaboration with Oxford.

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.

Called 3 times, no comment

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes

1. Working Session Meeting Minutes – November 5, 2025
2. Regular BOE Meeting Minutes – November 5, 2025

B. Hiring – Certified

1. Jillian Goodman
 - a. Literacy / Numeracy Tutor
 - b. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - c. Replacing Jodi Schraier

C. Hiring – Appendix D

1. Dan Carboni
 - a. Cross Country Coach
 - b. Seymour Middle School
 - c. Replacing Paul O'Connor
2. John Shea
 - a. Assistant Swim Coach
 - b. Seymour High School
 - c. Replacing Jennifer Widlar

~~D. Winter Athletic Coaches~~

E. Memorandum of Agreement - Coaching Agreements / Appendix D

MOTION: (Chris Champagne / Kristen Harmeling) move to approve the consent agenda as presented minus item 4D

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

PASSES: 7-0-0 (Mr. Kubik was not present at the time of voting)

V. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / Chris Champagne) to approve the winter athletic coaches

DISCUSSION: Mr. Strumello stated that he will recuse himself

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

PASSES: 7-0-0

VI. REPORTS

A. Bungay Building Project Update – Ed Strumello, Pete Kubik

1. Mr. Kubik: reported that the district is still awaiting conditional approval from the State, with final approval expected in May or June. He stated that the district is currently in the process of preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for architectural services; however, work cannot begin until state approval is received. The anticipated project completion timeframe is September 2028.

2. Mr. Strumello: reported that, while attending the CABA conference, several architects and firms expressed interest in working with Seymour. He noted that this information will be shared with the committee.

- B. Enrollment Report
- C. Special Education Report – Dr. Boyle
- D. Financial Report – Salvatore Bucci

1. Ms. Harmeling: stated that the district is currently running a deficit related to non-certified staff due to the use of an outside agency to hire paraprofessionals. She stated that the district would benefit from filling more paraprofessional positions directly rather than relying on outside agencies. She noted that a similar staffing issue with substitute teachers was addressed by increasing pay and requested that a market analysis be conducted on paraeducator compensation.

2. Mr. Strumello: asked whether other staffing agencies, such as Kelly Services, could be considered. He also referenced a CAFE conference booth from the Connecticut Department of Correction as a potential partnership opportunity and suggested that the Booster Club explore options to help reduce costs. He and Mr. Lucke additionally mentioned that Seymour High School is launching a student-run Spirit Store, with students responsible for planning, designing, and operating the initiative.

3. Dr. C: stated that the matter warrants further discussion, noting that recruitment challenges exist statewide and are not unique to Seymour. She emphasized that paraprofessional positions are a shortage area and that having district-employed paraeducators is preferable. She encouraged thinking creatively about recruitment strategies and stated that administrators will continue discussions with her to identify potential solutions. She concluded that this is both a budgetary and contractual issue and stated that the district will continue to work on the matter, emphasizing the importance of maintaining focus on long-term solutions.

MOTION: (Pete Kubik / Chris Champagne) add item F based on our curriculum committee meeting: 4 new courses

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / Stephan Behuniak) to add to the agenda a discussion of committee structure

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

VII. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

- A. Donation: Water bottles for members of the SHS football team – by Everett Sherwood (grandfather of Kegan Elkins)

MOTION: (Ed Strumello, Stephan Behuniak) to accept the donation of water bottles for the members of the SHS football team by Everett Sherwood.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Compton thanked the student's grandfather for his contribution. Mr. Lucke noted that the water bottle shown was a sample and provided a brief explanation of the final design. He explained that students will be responsible for designing the water bottle, which will then be produced.

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

- B. Administrators Union Contract Ratification

Dr. Compton: reported that the agreement has been ratified by the Administrators' Union. She extended thanks to the district's attorney, who is currently out of the country, and expressed appreciation for the work involved in reaching the agreement.

MOTION: (Chris Champagne, Pete Kubik) To approve the Administrator's Union contract as presented

DISCUSSION: Ms. Harmeling requested highlights of the agreement. Dr. Compton stated that the

details were included in the meeting packet that was provided prior to the meeting. Ms. Bruno noted that it was a challenging mediation, but the parties worked collaboratively to reach an agreement.

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

C. Food Service School Manager Contracts

Dr. Compton reported that each of the four schools now has staff members who are receiving official contracts for the first time. She emphasized the importance of providing these contracts, noting that they align with those of other employees and clearly outline terms and expectations.

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / Stephan Behuniak) to accept the Food Service School Manager Contracts

DISCUSSION: Mr. Champagne inquired whether the salaries for these positions have always been paid. Dr. Compton confirmed that they are part of the Board of Education budget.

Mr. Strumello asked if the process of replacing Cindy Brooks had begun. Dr. Compton responded that the process will start after Christmas.

Ms. Nespoli asked whether these were existing positions. Dr. Compton confirmed that they are, and that all terms and responsibilities remain the same.

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

D. SPS District 2026-2027 Calendar

Dr. Compton noted that there is ongoing discussion regarding the timing of spring break. She reported that the union president was pleased with the current plan and expressed that it is best scheduled later in April. She suggested that it would be beneficial for Valley school districts to align on a common spring break.

Mr. Strumello stated that the State Board of Education does not mandate a common spring break and noted that such a decision affects many areas, including spring sports. Dr. Compton indicated that the topic will be addressed at an upcoming meeting, possibly involving Valley superintendents or the NVL.

Mr. Champagne expressed appreciation that professional development days are now scheduled on the same day each month and align with April break, noting that this has been a goal for several years.

Ms. Harmeling offered a counterpoint, suggesting that a common spring break may result in students engaging in recreational activities such as movies or bounce houses. She also noted that June 18 should be marked off as a day of observance

MOTION: approve the Seymour Public Schools District 2026-2027 calendar with June 18th being the Juneteenth observed date.

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

E. Seymour Board of Education 2026-2027 Meetings Schedule

Dr. Compton stated that the district would like to hold future meetings at Seymour Middle School to maintain a consistent location. She noted that other locations are not conducive to meetings and highlighted that the auditorium's sound system has been recently updated by Rob Dyer in collaboration with the First Selectwoman. She added that the improvements allow speakers to be heard clearly, whereas the library media center can sometimes present audio challenges. She suggested trying out meetings in the auditorium.

Ms. Bruno noted that there will be two meetings in June: one for awards and one regular meeting, with the weekend in between likely reserved for graduation activities.

MOTION: (Chris Champagne / Ed Strumello) to approve the 26-27 Seymour Board of Education meeting calendar with rolling back and correcting the finance meetings dates.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Harmeling would like to consider having the meetings consistently at SHS in the future, but big proponent of having them consistent

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

F: SHS New Courses

Mr. Lucke provided an overview of four proposed courses for approval: *Educational Pathway*, *Graphic Design*, *Matters in Science*, and *AP Business with Personal Finance*. He noted that no additional staff would be required, as schedules can be adjusted to accommodate these courses. The goal of the program is to encourage and bring “homegrown” teachers back to Seymour.

Mr. Champagne asked what graduation requirement(s) these courses would satisfy, specifically whether they would count as elective credit.

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / James Garofolo) to approve course title Educational Pathways

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

MOTION: (Pete Kubik / James Garofolo) to approve the AP Business with Personal Finance

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

MOTION: (Chris Champagne / James Garofolo) to approve the Graphic Design course

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

MOTION: (James Garofolo / Chris Champagne) to approve the Matters in Science course

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

G: New Committee Structure

Ms. Harmeling stated that she believes Board committees should be aligned with the five focus areas of the District’s Strategic Plan, particularly Finance and Facilities. She noted that while Board leadership has traditionally assigned committees, Bylaws 9130 and 9132 allow for more flexibility in how committees are structured. She clarified that she was not making a formal recommendation at this time, but emphasizing that the Board has options and that bylaw changes are not overly complex. Ms. Harmeling shared that she would prepare several discussion points for the January meeting as “thought starters” and expressed strong support for combining the Facilities and Finance committees.

Dr. Compton added that all Board members should offer suggestions and encouraged reviewing committee structures used by other districts. She stated that the Board should examine its committees to better align with both the District’s Strategic Plan and the Town’s Strategic Plan. She noted that the Board previously had nine

committees, which were later reduced to six, and emphasized the need for a collaborative working session to generate new ideas and ensure committee alignment with district goals and long-term planning. Ms. Harmeling asked whether the Board is permitted to use Google as a collaborative workspace and requested that this be explored further. It was noted that Bylaw 9121 states that the Board Chairperson appoints Board committees; therefore, any proposed bylaw changes would also need to include a review of this bylaw. Board members were asked to submit their committee interests to Ms. Bruno by December 20, 2025.

VIII. INFORMATION

A. Hiring – Certified

1. Alana Zhingri
 - a. Spanish Teacher DSAP (Moreland University)
 - b. Seymour High School
 - c. Replacing Miguel Restrepo

B. Hiring – Non-Certified

1. Laura Ercoli
 - a. Paraeducator
 - b. Bungay Elementary School
 - c. Replacing Nicole Taraian

C. Retirements

1. Darlene O'Callaghan
 - a. Language Arts Consultant
 - b. Chatfield-LoPresti School
 - c. Effective February 1, 2026
2. Kurt Zeppetello
 - a. Science Teacher
 - b. Seymour High School
 - c. Effective end of 2025-2026 school year

D. School Activities and 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

1. Chairman's Comments

Ms. Bruno thanked fellow Board members for their support and shared that she is excited to serve as Chair. She emphasized career readiness, collaboration, and maintaining efficient meetings while ensuring that all Board members have the opportunity to be heard. She stated that she looks forward to working with the Board and District administration.
2. Board Member Comments

Mr. Strumello asked whether there was anything the new Chair would like reported back to CAFE and requested feedback from the recent CAFE conference.

Ms. Harmeling thanked Mr. O'Rourke for arranging last month's presentation on Artificial Intelligence. She noted that she has been learning more about AI as a collegial coaching or clerical support tool. She described the presentation as excellent and expressed interest in receiving an update in the spring.

Ms. Nespoli shared that World Kindness Day activities were successful and that she visited all

schools. She noted that each next year each school will create a kindness quilt. This year's activities included kindness rocks and student-centered social media engagement.

Mr. Champagne asked when the Board would begin budget workshops. It was noted that the Budget Summit for department heads is scheduled for January 14–15. The Board of Education will need to schedule a working session the week prior, as the Board of Finance has already established its budget meeting dates. The Board of Education requested to hold a working session prior to the January 12 meeting.

B. Superintendent Report

1. Dr. Compton expressed pride in the District's football program and school community accomplishments. She highlighted the excitement surrounding the Middle School's "Bedazzlement for a Cause" event held that morning, which challenged participants to raise more than 350 turkeys for the annual turkey drive. A total of 428 turkeys were collected, not including a \$300 donation from the Seymour Police Union. As a result, every family in need at Seymour Middle School and other schools was supported, with additional food available for the upcoming holiday. She noted that this is a 30-year tradition and shared how proud and excited the students were to participate, including bedazzling staff members and decorating holiday ornaments.

2. Additional Announcements

The First Selectwoman announced plans for a Polar Plunge event next year.

The Valley Soul Choir Concert was announced for the following evening at 6:30 p.m. at the church.

Dr. Compton also shared that the Seymour Middle School Bonfire was cold but fun and that she was happy to support the students.

She concluded by stating that the evening reflected a celebration of the District's accomplishments and schools, emphasizing that everyone should be proud. She added that students are looking forward to the upcoming holiday break.

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Kristen Harmeling / Pete Kubik) to adjourn the meeting.

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

PASSES: 8-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM

YouTube Link (12/8/2025) :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLoi3AICCYs>

Note: The next Regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Monday, January 12, 2026 at 7:00 pm in Seymour Middle School

Prepared by Shannon Levey,
Board Clerk