

**SEYMOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

December 7, 2020

Zoom

7:30 pm

**BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Kristen Bruno  
Christopher Champagne  
James Garofolo  
Kristen Harmeling  
Jay Hatfield  
Peter Kubik  
Beth Nesteriak  
Fred Stanek  
Ed Strumello  
Zachary Braca, Student Representative  
Karyna Weaver, Student Representative  
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent  
Sherry Holmes, Business Manager  
Kris Boyle, Director of Special Services  
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk  
Derrick Martin, Technology  
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS  
Paul Lucke, Assistant Principal, SHS  
Ernie DiStasi, Assistant Principal, SHS  
Jodie Roden, Principal, SMS  
Kathleen Freimuth, Assistant Principal, SMS  
Mary Sue Feige, Principal, BS  
Lauren Reid, Assistant Principal, BS  
David Olechna, Principal, CLS  
Stacey Albertson, Assistant Principal, CLS  
Rebecca Bennett, Head Nurse, BES

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Strumello called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:39 p.m.

B. Moment of Silence

1. Mr. Harry Gagliardi, Former Administrator, LoPresti School
2. Mr. Donald Flood, Former Business Manager, Central Office
3. Mr. Mike Mudry, Former Principal, Teacher, and Athletic Director
4. Ms. Joan Costabile, Former Secretary, Seymour High School
5. Ms. Suzanne Migani, Former BOE Member

Mr. Strumello also reminded everyone that today is the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor where 2400 American servicemen were killed.

**II. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Correspondence

1. Thanksgiving Message – Mr. Michael Wilson

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Please note: If you would like to have a public comment read into the first Public Comment section of this meeting, please email your brief (300 words or less) comment along with your full name and address to BOE Secretary Christopher Champagne at [champagnec@seymourschools.org](mailto:champagnec@seymourschools.org) by no later than **7:15 on Monday, December 7, 2020**.

Mr. Champagne received public comments for the agenda and reported one is being omitted because it contains personal information.

Donald Eng, Maggie Eng, 50 Bellevue Terrace, Seymour CT - Please accept the following as a public comment for the Dec. 7 Board of Education meeting. This is intended to be an update of my previous comment read into the record at the November curriculum meeting. Dear board members - I was disappointed to read that the Seymour schools would not be awarding their outstanding students with listing in an academic honor roll. This decision seems counterproductive. While the circumstances and learning environment have changed this year, the fact remains that we still expect our students to work and learn, and the students that managed to excel deserve their traditional recognition. Other school systems in our region have continued their traditional listing of honors students, rightly recognizing that a challenging academic environment should dictate that students who have managed to excel deserve more recognition, not less. At a time when parents have lamented that many children are struggling to remain motivated, removing what has long been an incentive for many to put forth academic effort makes no sense.

Heidi Mckenzie 4 Applewood Drive, Seymour CT - My name is Heidi Mckenzie and my son James is in kindergarten at Bungay school. I am becoming very concerned regarding the distance learning. The amount of time he has between live meets is minimal even to have lunch and to be able to do his work. He is basically tapped out by 1pm and he has begun to dislike school period. He doesn't want to get on any of the meets and is decompensating. Something needs to change. This is no way for a kindergartener to have to go through their first real year of school. Also my 5th grader has had to start with a therapist because she cannot see her friends in school. Thank you for listening to my concerns. Brooke Anderson, Mountain Rd, Seymour CT, Parent of BES Student - Good evening, I am hopeful to learn this evening the necessity of the notifications we receive for every district member who tests positive for Covid19. We are not physically in the School buildings, therefore we are not at risk of exposure to these individuals. If someone we came in contact with outside of school tested positive, we would hope the person or the health district would inform us through usual contact tracing protocol. However, we don't get a call from the first selectman's office every time someone in our neighborhood tests positive, why the email notification for district members? Thank you,

Richard Demko, 20 Greenwood Circle, Seymour, Chairman- Seymour Republican Town Committee - Greetings, I respectfully request that the following public comment be read into the minutes during the FIRST public comment portion of the next BOE meeting. To the members of the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and Administration-I am voicing my absolute opposition in regards to snow days being replaced by distance learning days. I strongly feel that this is not the time to be introducing another change to whatever normalcy that our children have left, especially considering that they have already sacrificed enough throughout this pandemic. Our children need something positive and exciting to look forward to, as days off from school due to weather is an exciting part of winter. This change is something that is completely unnecessary to impose on our children and parents at this time. I strongly urge the board to consider opposing this recommended change. With that said, I believe that once things start to transition back into a normal routine when this pandemic is a thing of the past, this action should be re-considered. Respectfully

Jodi Gerstenhaber, 8 Emma Street, Seymour, CT - Members of the board – I have a few questions this evening that I hope will prompt some discussion amongst you – Why is it that the school notification emails are received in the student's gmail accounts, particularly the elementary school email accounts? My 2<sup>nd</sup> grade children do not need to be notified each time there is a new COVID case in the school district. I understand sharing this information with the parents in the community but there is absolutely no reason the emails also need to be send to the students email addresses as well especially since the student emails are often received in advance of the email I receive as a parent. What has been done with the information that was derived from the last survey sent out to parents? Will there be any follow up to show how the information was utilized? Why is the superintendent still not responding to parent/community concerns? I personally messaged him after the last meeting several

times and have not gotten a response aside from a copied/pasted response that was also sent to several others who had pointed out that he is not following through and responding to concerns. Lastly given our extended in person closure (which I personally think is the correct course of action) why are we still not fully synchronous like the full distance learning students have been since the beginning of the school year? There is already a format in place for full synchronous learning and I can't understand why it has not been applied to all students now that we are all "long term" temporarily full distance learners. Being fully synchronous puts the responsibility of education back on the schools and takes it off of the parents/siblings/caregivers of the students learning at home. Thank you

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Minutes
  - 1. Regular BOE Meeting Minutes–November 2, 2020
  - 2. Special BOE Meeting Minutes–November 12, 2020
- B. Financial Management Summary–ending November 2020
- C. Nutrition Services Financial Report–October 2020
- D. Staff Hiring–Non Certified
  - 1. Klisus, Christina
    - Instructional Paraprofessional
    - Bungay School
    - Replacing Lisa Goodfellow
  - 2. Levy Sainfleur, Shasalee
    - Instructional Paraprofessional
    - Seymour Middle School
    - Replacing Shannon Hirth

**MOTION:** (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Mr. Champagne) move to approve the consent agenda as presented

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES:** 9-0

**V. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA**

None

**VI. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

- A. 2021-2022 BOE Meeting Schedule (Tabled from 11/02/20 BOE Meeting)

**MOTION:** (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the 2021-2022 BOE Meeting Schedule as presented

The Board asked that the meeting in November be changed to the date after Election Day as has been the tradition.

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Stanek) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the 2021-2022 BOE Meeting Schedule as amended

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES:** 9-0

- B. 2021-2022 School Calendar (Tabled from 11/02/20 BOE Meeting)

Choose Option 1 or Option 2

Mr. Champagne said he could see no difference in the two options except for the length of the holiday break. Ms. Tencza explained that Option 1 has school opening on August 30 and the first week is a full week. Option 2 has school opening on September 1 and the first week is only three days. Mr. Champagne asked what we have done in the past and Ms. Tencza said she believed we have started a little earlier. Ms. Harmeling said she thought this was different than in the past and we have never had such a long holiday break. She said she would like to build in snow days. Ms. Tencza said she believed the start date can be Board preference. After further discussion it was decided to table this item.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Champagne/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to table this item until the next meeting and ask the administration to provide a third option

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**OPPOSED:** Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Hatfield

**MOTION PASSES:** 7-2

- C. Snow Days as Remote Learning Days (Tabled from 11/02/20 BOE Meeting)  
Mr. Garofolo asked for clarification if this is for the current year only or for next year also. Mr. Hatfield indicated that the explanation provided and linked to the agenda said this is for the current school year only. Ms. Tencza said Mr. Hatfield is correct. Ms. Nesteriak asked how this will be communicated. Ms. Tencza explained the proposal provides for the first two snow days to be traditional snow days and any additional days will be remote learning days. Ms. Harmeling wondered why we would lock in ourselves in like this. She said we have had enough change, let's leave it be. Mr. Champagne worried that parents may not be able to support their kids with Remote Learning if they have to go to another house for a snow day. We need some reassurance regarding the internet and power issues. Ms. Bruno said we can't put a formula on the weather and asked what the criteria is for a snow day? She pointed out that making up days at the end of the year may be beneficial because hopefully we will be back in school. Mr. Hatfield asked if the motion fails, will we continue as we have in the past for snow days. Ms. Tencza confirmed this.  
**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Stanek) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to grant two "traditional" snow days as needed for inclement weather and to use remote learning days for any further needed snow days as well as to recognize the necessity for traditional snow days to be made up in June

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Hatfield

**OPPOSED:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION FAILS:** 1-8

- D. Capstone Class-Seymour High School  
Ms. Harmeling said the junior year is the year when students have a lot of involvement in the community for Capstone such as internships. Due to the pandemic, this is not able to happen this year. Many students may be able to continue their Capstone project but some may not.  
**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Garofolo) to approve the recommendation of the Curriculum and Technology Committee to make the Capstone Class optional for the Class of 2022

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES:** 8-0

- E. New Courses-Seymour High School
1. Allied Health Professions, Human Physiology in Health and Disease  
Ms. Harmeling explained that these courses provide skills that are needed in the real world and she is all for it. Mr. Garofolo said these courses will be pending until the Perkins Grant is approved and this is so the resources that are needed are paid for through the grant. Ms. Tencza thanked Mr. Lucke for all of his work to identify what is best for our students. It was noted that if the Perkins Grant is not approved, these classes will not happen.  
**MOTION:** (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the recommendation of the Curriculum and Technology Committee to approve the courses Introduction to Allied Health Professions and Human Physiology in Health and Disease pending receipt of the Perkins Grant

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES:** 9-0

2. Biochemistry  
Ms. Harmeling said Biochemistry is an up and coming field. This course will not be offered every year but we will have it in our repertoire. Mr. Freund said the prerequisites for this course is completion of chemistry and biology.  
**MOTION:** (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Ms. Harmeling) to approve the recommendation of the Curriculum and Technology Committee to approve the course Biochemistry which is not subject to the Perkins Grant.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES:** 9-0

F. Attorney Services

1. Interim Attorney Services  
Mr. Stanek asked how this item came to be placed on the agenda. Mr. Strumello explained that three Board members requested it. Mr. Stanek asked if we have an opening for counsel. Mr. Strumello said not to his knowledge. Mr. Garofolo said maybe the three Board members who asked for this item might offer thoughts as to why this has come forward. No one responded. Mr. Stanek made a motion.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Garofolo) to table this motion until the Ad Hoc Committee is formed and has reported to the Board of Education on new counsel for the Board of Education

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**OPPOSED:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak

**ABSTAIN:** Mr. Hatfield

**MOTION FAILS:** 3-5-1

Ms. Harmeling said it doesn't imply there is a vacancy; she feels that it dovetails nicely with the second motion. She said we are only talking about interim counsel while we are looking for permanent counsel. She feels it does not contradict with where we currently are. Mr. Garofolo said if we appoint this firm as interim counsel we would have two attorney services under contract. Would they solicit a contract or work on a per diem basis? We would have two attorney firms working for the Board. He said he can't see the particular need at this time. Also, if Bercham Moses is approved there could be a potential of conflict of interest since they are the Town's attorney. This would place the firm in a potential conflict of interest if the BOE and Town are in disagreement on a particular case. How would that be resolved? He doesn't feel this is a good solution. Ms. Harmeling asked if we have a contract for legal services. Ms. Holmes we have a letter of appointment with the current firm which we can dismiss at any time if we choose. She said she would think we would want to do this before we appoint an interim counsel. She said there is a potential for conflict of interest and it is bound to happen. She was not sure how that would work if the situation arises. In her history of employment as a business manager, there was always separate attorneys for the Town and BOE. Mr. Champagne said a letter of appointment is not a contract and he did not feel there would be a conflict. He feels we need to move in a different direction with our current counsel. Mr. Strumello reminded the Board that Ansonia had issues with using the same firm for Town and BOE. For them it ended up costing the taxpayers money. Ms. Harmeling said our history doesn't include any litigious situations between the BOE and the Town. She is in support of this motion, she is dissatisfied with some of the issues that our current counsel has handled. She feels it is time for a change. Mr. Garofolo said this is not a good thing for him and he asked for a little more information regarding the letter of appointment. He asked if there are time frames for termination of the services. Ms. Holmes said she would have to double check and she would share the letter with the Board. Mr. Stanek pointed out that the fees of Bercham Moses have not been discussed. Ms. Holmes confirmed that the current firm's letter of engagement does include rate information. She also confirmed it is a retainage letter. Mr. Stanek said it would be most appropriate to have the committee examine the information before we hire interim counsel. Mr. Strumello said it is his intent to get the ad

hoc committee's report to the Board as quickly as possible. Mr. Stanek said the first motion needed to be acted upon. Mr. Stanek said he wanted it on the record that he has no issue with Bercham Moses and they are a fine firm but he feels we have an obligation to the Town to have the facts before we make a change. He feels it is more appropriate to go forward with the Ad Hoc Committee.

**MOTION:** (Ms. Nesteriak/sec., Mr. Champagne) to approve the appointment of Berchem Moses, P.C. as interim counsel to represent the Seymour Board of Education on all matters, with the exception of scheduled hearings

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak

**OPPOSED:** Mr. Garofolo, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**ABSTAIN:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Hatfield

**MOTION PASSES:** 4-3-2

2. Ad Hoc Committee

Per Bylaws of the Board #9133, the Board Chairman shall create a special committee to recommend a new counsel for the Board of Education. The committee members are Mr. Strumello, Mr. Champagne, and Ms. Nesteriak

Mr. Champagne asked for an amended motion to change the wording from a special committee to a personnel search committee; Mr. Kubik seconded this. **AMENDED MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Kubik) Per Bylaws of the Board #9133, the Board Chairman shall create a personnel search committee to recommend a new counsel for the Board of Education. The committee members are Mr. Strumello, Mr. Champagne, and Ms. Nesteriak

Mr. Champagne said this will allow us to hold the meetings in private. Mr. Stanek said he did not feel this qualifies as a personnel search committee under FOI. Ms. Harmeling agrees since we are not hiring someone for the staff. Mr. Champagne reminded Mr. Strumello that we have a second on the amended motion. Mr. Strumello said he agrees with Ms. Harmeling that this is not a hiring matter. The committee can make multiple recommendations on choosing new counsel for the Board of Education. It is a special ad hoc committee and calling it a personnel search committee is not appropriate. Mr. Champagne said this would allow us flexibility in not having to post meetings and have the ability to meet whenever they want to and in private. Ms. Harmeling said there is no need for a vote. As chairperson, Mr. Strumello can create a committee if he wants to. Mr. Champagne read the definition of a Personnel Search Committee and Mr. Stanek said it does not apply to this situation. Mr. Stanek said the chairman can rule if the amended motion is appropriate. Ms. Harmeling said she felt like this was skirting the system. Mr. Strumello said the amended motion was out of order and called for a vote of the original motion.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Kubik) Per Bylaws of the Board #9133, the Board Chairman shall create a special committee to recommend a new counsel for the Board of Education. The committee members are Mr. Strumello, Mr. Champagne, and Ms. Nesteriak

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**ABSTAIN:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Hatfield

**MOTION PASSES:** 7-0-2

**VII. REPORTS and DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION**

- A. HS Student Representative Report–Zach Braca, Karyna Weaver  
Our student representatives reported the Student Council School Wide Elections Results: President-Zachary Braca, Vice President-Kelti Johnson, Secretary-Kayla Pollman, Treasurer-Tyler Bredice, Jr. Class Representative-Amanda Curtis, Sophomore Class Representative-Michael Casanova, Freshman Class Representative-Jay Patel. The Student Council Goals for 2020-21 are: The Class Rock - Explore getting a new senior class rock, on way to the field, or other prominent location, Tree Lighting (perhaps district-wide) culmination of the spirit week

December 4. (unfortunately this was unable to happen), Bring Back Senior Day, Cat Cave - Opening discussions with school Administration about revamping the Cat Cave, Spring initiative - Revitalize the Courtyard Garden, They also reported what Events/Activities that occurred during October which included 10/14 - SAT/PSAT administered to all juniors and seniors, and 10/26 - The school counseling department held a Virtual Paying for College Night. Zach also told the Board that staying home is starting to weigh on me and my peers. He said the educational, mental, social and emotional aspects of adolescent life are more important and completely outweigh impact of Covid on a student. Ms. Harmeling thanked Zack for expressing his feelings. She said it's becoming too much. She will be speaking about this during Board member comments. She asked Karyna about how other students are feeling. Karyna said the juniors are feeling the pressure in the classes that are harder. Mr. Strumello cautioned them about moving the rock. Alumni is very attached to this tradition and they need to be careful. Mr. Freund said this is not the first time a conversation about the rock has happened. We would almost need to get a new rock. The new rock could be a senior rock and the one in the back would be the alumni rock. Mr. Stanek expressed his concern about the rock. He said do not move the rock, do not change the rock. You will have a war on your hands. Past students are very attached to this rock. Don't do anything to change it. Leave it for the alumni at a minimum.

B. Committee Reports

1. Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

a. November 2, 2020

Ms. Harmeling talked about what was learned in the December 7, 2020 Finance Committee meeting. She found out that the Coronavirus grant would expire on December 31 and what the implications might be to the operating budget. She is concerned about the bus company give back. She also let the Board know that the Finance Committee would prefer a workshop for the Budget process. Ms. Holmes said the building subs will not be affected by the second grant since they are being paid out of grant #1. Mr. Hatfield said he was concerned about the bus give back also. He said maybe we need to look into parting ways with our current bus company. He spoke about several issues we have dealt with over the years. He asked when their contract expires. Ms. Holmes said she thought it would be one more year on the contract. She continues to work with them regarding our payment. She confirmed their contract ends in 2022. Ms. Harmeling indicated that the problems with our bus company are not unique to Seymour; they are happening all across the State.

2. Curriculum and Technology Committee Meeting Minutes–November 9, 2020

Ms. Harmeling said she would be pursuing an update to the textbook acquisition policy which she feels is out of date. She will be in contact with the Policy Committee regarding this.

C. School Improvement Plans (Tabled from 11/02/20 BOE Meeting)

Board of Education members are encouraged to ask questions regarding the School Improvement Plan videos sent on November 25, 2020

Mr. Strumello said that because of the lateness of the hour he asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to table the School Improvement Plans.

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Kubik) to table the discussion of School Improvement Plans to a special meeting to be arranged within the next two months

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**OPPOSED:** Mr. Champagne

**MOTION PASSES:** 8-1

1. Bungay School–Mary Sue Feige, Lauren Reid
2. Chatfield-LoPresti School–David Olechna, Stacey Albertson
3. Seymour Middle School–Jodie Roden, Kathleen Freimuth
4. Seymour High School–Jim Freund, Ernie DiStasi, Paul Lucke

- D. ELL – Vonda Tencza (Tabled from 11/02/20 BOE Meeting)  
Ms. Tencza did a brief overview of the ELL (English Language Learners) Program. She said there are currently 87 ELL students and it has grown over the years. In general we exit 6-7 students a year. They work in the classroom with classroom teachers and also they also work with the Language Consultant and SRBI teachers. They also receive tutor services. We have a summer program for ELL (except this year). Students take around 4-5 years to master the proficiency test. We are proud of our growth rates. We give assessments in the spring. She acknowledged it is tough for ELL students in a remote learning situation. Mr. Garofolo asked about parents and if English is spoken at home. Ms. Tencza said many students come to us with no English skills at all and the native language is often spoken at home. In many situations, the students are helping the parents with their English. Mr. Garofolo asked how we communicate with non-English speaking parents. Ms. Tencza said the state provides translating services for parents. Ms. Bruno asked if teachers are offered PD to teach ELL students. Ms. Tencza said Language Arts Consultants bring ELL resources to the teachers. She also asked about the attendance of ELL students and Ms. Tencza said she could not speak to this.
- E. Social Emotional Learning–Kris Boyle (Tabled from 11/02/20 BOE Meeting)  
Dr. Boyle said we are in the pilot phase at all levels. Staff is excited about the Caring Schools Community Program and it ties in nicely with the Responsive Classroom. There are 35 weeks of lessons embedded in each classroom. We are pairing older students with younger students. Parents receive resources once or twice a month and they are available in English and Spanish. At the secondary level, the program is Suite 360. There are weekly lessons that are computer based. These are followed with discussions. There are a variety of topics. There is a library of videos and articles for staff. In this pilot year, lessons are done every other week. Slowing down a little gives the students time to acclimate to the program. There was an assessment in September and another one will occur at the end of the year. Dr. Boyle said we will continue to make adjustments. Programs are going nicely and work well with what we are already doing. Ms. Bruno asked what the barriers are and Dr. Boyle said they are different at each level. We have scaled things down this year and this may impact the participation. He said they are probably reaching more than 70% of the students. Ms. Bruno asked about the secondary level and Dr. Boyle said they are meeting in homeroom and there is an effort to get them to homeroom and keep them engaged. Ms. Bruno asked if they only have access in Homeroom and Dr. Boyle said they could open it more but the kids would miss the discussions. They have one week to complete the assignments.
- F. Board of Education Report
1. Chairman’s Comments  
Mr. Strumello said many Board members have reached out to him about having a Board Retreat. In response to this, he will be in contact with CABE about what they are offering and the availability. It will probably be a Zoom meeting because of the pandemic.
  2. Board Member Comments  
Ms. Harmeling brought up the recent news that addressed failing grades in the secondary grades. She feels we should take a look at where we are in Seymour at the secondary and elementary level. She said Mr. Garofolo has asked about looking at some assessment data. She also said she would like to revisit the issue of honor roll. I will be asking to add to the agenda a discussion in terms of documentation regarding the process of how administration makes decisions to reopen schools. Second meeting in a row where we have not talked about going back to school and the process behind it. Ms. Bruno agreed and suggested that we discuss what we have learned, what needs to change, and how the kids are doing. She said we need an action plan.
- G. Superintendent Report
1. Annual Turkey Drive - Tremendous effort by staff and students.
  2. Holiday Gift Drive – Administrators spearheading a gift card gift drive. Drop off at one of the schools.
  3. Visits to Virtual Classrooms – We continue to visit virtually. We have seen amazing things. We have participated in celebrations. See some great things and we recognize that it is hard and it is not the same as in person learning.

4. Budget – Sherry is working hard on the new budget we will be meeting with the Administrators soon to discuss their budget requirements.
5. Goal Setting Meetings – Met with Administrators last week to discuss their goals.
6. Congratulations to Zach on his student council presidency and welcome to Karyna.
7. Pandemic Actions taken by Superintendent – None taken since last meeting.

Rebecca Bennett – Head Nurse said one of the things I wanted to discuss is the letters we send out regarding COVID19 cases. The DPH is the one who requires districts to send these letters out. At a DPH meeting recently a Superintendent asked if they still needed to send these out since many districts are in remote learning and the DPH said yes because they want to remain transparent, continue the communications and want the community to remember the virus is still out there. We meet every Tuesday with DPH, Superintendents and town officials. It is a great resource for updated information. For example, what to do now that winter is setting in. Many good discussions on what we will be doing after January 19. Ms. Bruno asked if there are any discussions around the mental health toll and social emotional needs of kids. Ms. Bennett said yes they do bring this up and everyone thinks about this all the time. However the focus is on the medical discussion of COVID19. We all have the same goal, which is to get our kids back to school safely. We talk about the reporting. We talk about mitigating factors. As soon as we can go back safely, we will. That's what everyone wants. The key is to do it safely. Ms. Nesteriak said Middletown was piloting testing in schools and wondered if Seymour is thinking about this. We would look into it but my concern was and is that kids would come to school sick so they can get tested at school rather than going to CVS. If they find that it is working, we would be willing to look into it. Mr. Garofolo said wouldn't testing in schools allow us to gather data so we can decide if students are equally safe in the classroom as they are distance learning. Ms. Bennett said it would probably be rapid testing which is not as accurate as the PCR test. We could be sending a kid to class based on a false negative. Most important thing is contact tracing. She is not sure rapid testing in schools is the answer.

### **VIII. INFORMATION**

- A. Activities and Recognitions
  1. Seymour Middle School
  2. Bungay Elementary School
  3. Chatfield-LoPresti Elementary School
- B. Special Education Monthly Enrollment Update–Dr. Kris Boyle  
Dr. Boyle said there is nothing specific on this report this month. There are a couple of blips showing, however these are artificial due to some cleanup of data which may have affected the numbers. All of our data is now up to date.
- C. Staff Resignation–Non Certified
  1. Maglione, Nancy
    - Retirement
    - Systemwide Bookkeeper
    - Central Office
    - Effective January 5, 2021
  2. Slie, Marcelline
    - Instructional Paraprofessional
    - Bungay School
    - Effective December 4, 2020
  3. Taramelli, Rhonda
    - Instructional Paraprofessional
    - Chatfield-LoPresti School
    - Effective November 16, 2020

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Champagne) to add to the agenda

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES:** 9-0

Ms. Harmeling would like to put something together to direct the Superintendent to develop an action plan regarding students to returning to school. Mr. Champagne said he likes the idea but hopes it will be driven by data not by feelings. Ms. Bruno said we should pay particular attention to students with high needs. Ms. Nesteriak expressed her desire for this document to be time sensitive and pretty specific. Ms. Bruno said she feels December 19 would be a good date. Mr. Hatfield noted this is a Saturday, so the date was changed to December 18, 2020

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Champagne) direct the superintendent to develop and present, no later than December 18, a data-driven action plan to present ways and ideas to get as many students back to school as soon as possible, including, but not limited to: models that bridge full remote and the established hybrid model and that pays close attention to maximizing in-person learning for students who are struggling.

After some discussion, it was decided to have a special meeting to be scheduled the week of January 4, 2021. The report will be shared on December 18, 2020

**REVISED MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Champagne ) Motion to direct the superintendent to develop and present, no later than December 18, for discussion at a special meeting prior to the January 11 regularly scheduled meeting, a data-driven action plan to present ways and ideas to get as many students back to school as soon as possible, including, but not limited to: models that bridge full remote and the established hybrid model and that pays close attention to maximizing in-person learning, particularly for students who are struggling.

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

**MOTION PASSES:** 9-0

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Please note: If you would like to have a public comment read into the minutes during the second Public Comment section, please email your brief (300 words or less) to BOE Secretary Christopher Champagne at champagnec@seymourschools.org. It must be received **prior to the Superintendent's Report** on the meeting agenda.

Vicki Babineau, Briarwood Dr, Seymour, CT - Dear BOE, This is my first ever letter of this type. After hearing Zach Braca speak, I felt moved to express my feelings, opinion on the matter. I have a High School senior and twins in the 7th grade. I see the toll remote learning is having on my children's learning and it breaks my heart. My son as a Senior has many classes that he needs to be physically present in order to learn, construction, robotics, honors advanced ensemble, concert Band, and forensics, He is in no way getting the education he deserves in these classes, they need to be physically present in a classroom to do labs, work on performances, learn how to use tools properly, I could go on and on. These are classes he was enjoying and could possibly be a career field for him. Our students need to be in school. They need to be educated in a way they deserve. I understand that these are crazy times but other schools in our area are keeping kids in school and giving them the education they deserve. Thank you,

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Champagne) to adjourn

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Ms. Bruno, Mr. Champagne, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 pm

Submitted by:  
Lee-Ann Dauerty  
Board Clerk

**NOTE:** The next scheduled Regular Board of Education meeting is on Monday, January 11, 2021 at 7:30 pm.

The Public is invited to participate in a listen only mode using the link below:

YouTube Link

<https://youtu.be/JYVsryjpamA>