CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Strumello called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:32 p.m.
II. 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 by no later than 7:15 on Monday, January 11, 2021.

Sheree Higgins-Riley - Hi Mr. Champagne, I know it is important for the children to go back to school. Even though I am willing to send my child back to school, I’m worried about the January month being a dark winter month due to COVID-19. No one can control the teachers and families household to keep themselves safe from COVID. Will you be asking families and teachers, that if they are feeling symptoms and they are tested and waiting for a result, they should notify the school and stay away until the test result is back? The reason for this question, is that I found a lot of families and workers are taking the test and still returning to work while waiting for results. If their results are positive and they were around other children and staff members, these people are now exposed including their household, which causes them to quarantine. How will you protect these children and staff during these four days per week? I think the rotation was better and the school system should gradually get the children and staff in by doing three days per week with rotation, then continue to get everyone back. The prediction for January is grim. Also I would like to know how often these children and teachers are washing their hands, and wiping their desk down, proper social distancing, and the school enforcement on mask wearing over nose, not under their nose. The Seymour Public Schools has been very good and cautious so far in protecting the teachers, children, and families by doing the two day rotation in person learning. I think the schools should continue this rotation process. Even during this process, children and teachers were still having the virus, however the rotation limits the impact of the virus in schools and help reduce the transmission in the household of the families and teachers. I know this is a hard struggle for everyone, but we must continue to be vigilant in maintaining safety for everyone. I would like this letter to be read as part of the Public Comment. -Thanks for taking the time to listen.

Mia Bronson - Hello, My name is Mia Bronson and I am a senior at Seymour High School. With the Board of Education meeting happening on January 11, I just have a few suggestions. Although I know that the option for me to choose to stay home once school reopens, I would like the BOE to reconsider pushing for January 19 to be the date of school reopening. Rates in Connecticut are some of the highest they have been since April of 2020. Although I know that this decision was made to benefit students, I do think that this is counteractive in terms of students’ health. The daily rates in CT have been upward of 5% since November. Online schooling, despite having some struggle, will keep students and staff safe in a time which COVID-19 is spreading and infecting more, all the while having a smaller gestation window. Personally, I would rather go back to hybrid (and then possibly full-time) at a time in which it is absolutely safe to do so, meaning that we won’t need to keep switching hybrid and full-remote learning. Again, I know that the decision for me to remain online is open, but many other students and staff voice the same opinion in which they feel we should return to school at a much safer time. I urge you and the rest of the committee to consider the opinions of students and staff. Thank you,

Michael Rotatori - My name is Mike Rotatori. I live on 14 N Benham Rd, Seymour, CT 06483. For the past year we have all been through tough times dealing with the pandemic. We all want life to be back to normal. The positivity rate in CT was around 1% when the hybrid model started in the fall. By the time we got to November, the rate was up to 3%. At this time Seymour Public Schools decided to go to the full distance model. The positivity rate in CT now is close to 8.5%. We want to send the kids back to the hybrid model next week. This choice does not make any sense with the rate being so high. This seems to contradict why you went to the full distance model originally. It was to protect the health and safety of the kids, teachers and their families. With the rates being at an all time high, you seem to not be thinking about the kids, teachers, parents, and grandparents health and safety. There are no indicators that the virus is being contained and the positivity rate is going down. The number of vaccinations in CT is around 99,000. This is not even close to being herd immunity. Hopefully by May or June, we will have a better idea of where we stand with this virus and herd immunity. We need to think about the safety of all families and teachers. Does the Board Of Education and administrators think now is the right time to send the kids back to the hybrid model next week and possibly everyone going back in mid-February? I think the board of education should reconsider starting the hybrid model
next week. It would be better to look at it again at the end of March. At this time, it would be more logical to keep the kids safe and remain in the full distance model. Thanks

Cindy Dion - Good afternoon, I am sending this as public comment and as an email to the entire board. It appears that many parents are questioning why are students can be allowed in school, however our BOE can’t meet face to face. It is my understanding that in fact at least 10 members of the BOE can meet face to face as mandated by the State of Connecticut. Mr. Wilson, If that is the case, why isn’t it happening? I think the safest place is in our schools right now and I would like to see them go back. As someone who is on social media and participated in many groups on Facebook, this is the biggest question I see over and over again. Can you please provide feedback either via email or during the meeting tonight? I look forward to the answers and our students getting back in the classroom Sincerely,

Alison Brett - Good Evening, I am writing this evening to receive further clarification on the reopening phases that have been shared with the families. I am an active listener in every BOE meeting, and the consistent message that has been shared by the members is minimal change. Well, unfortunately change is inevitable and as we all know children all adapt to change. With that being said, I was inquiring when the administrative team will be sharing the increase in cohort sizes with the families? I thank Mr Freund in advance for taking the time to speak with me, however it is still unclear and I believe that this information is imperative when making an informed decision on whether to continue full distance or allow my child to return. With the current data as of January 8th, Seymour is 49.3% positivity rate and continues to be placed in the red zone. I question how social distancing can occur following the proper protocol that was shared by the district? With the new mutation of this virus spreading twice as fast, and the red zone guidelines of considering more distant learning, I am concerned that we are moving at a rapid pace. I would hate to see our children be placed back on distant learning after only being in the building a short time. As we all know, inconsistency is not what is in the best interest of children. I understand that students need to be in school however, continuing with the hybrid learning model would continue to keep our children safe while still having some in person learning. So, I ask Mr Wilson as well as the board to consider extending the hybrid learning model plan until our numbers subside. Thank You!

Dinalyn Garrow - Good evening Board of Education Members, I am writing to you tonight with regards to the current reopening plan. I was surprised by the decision that Central Office created an action plan to return to teaching in-person throughout the District schools without any representation from the Seymour Education Association. I know there were several teachers involved in the previous discussions for reentry at the beginning of the year, but it does not appear to be the same this time. It is important that representation from the SEA is invited by Central Office to sit at the table and be part of the discussion when an action plan as important as this is being developed so all stakeholders can have a voice. Thank you for your time. Sincerely,

Craig Prasauckas - Good evening Board of Education Members, I am writing to you in regards to the reopening plan for the Seymour Public Schools. I was both surprised and disappointed that representation from the Seymour Education Association was not invited or included to join in the dialogue with Central Office about the return to teaching in-person students next week. I find that it is imperative for Central Office to keep the lines of communication open with the SEA when formulating action plans that directly impact and affect the teachers. Sincerely,

Rebecca DeAngelis - Good evening Board of Education Members, It was disappointing that the Seymour Education Association was not asked to be part of the small committee Central Office formed to create the action plan for going back to teaching in the District buildings. This action plan has a direct impact on every teacher in the District so it is important to have representation from the SEA. Thank you for listening,

Pinkussohn, Julie - I would like the following read during public comment this evening: Good evening Board of Education Members, I am writing to you today with regards to the reopening plan for Seymour Schools. It was frustrating to learn that an action plan to return to in-person teaching in the school buildings was designed without any input from the Seymour Education Association. It is concerning that a decision was made by Central Office without any voice from the SEA as this decision affects every teacher in District. Sincerely,

Rebecca Champagne - Good evening. I play several roles as a member of our community. I was born and raised in Seymour and continue to reside here with my family. I truly adore the town of
Seymour, as we are a close-knit community with an excellent school system. I have three children in the district that attend Chatfield-Lo Prest School and Seymour Middle School. I am also proud to mention that I am a teacher of 18 years in this district. I have the utmost respect for our school district and the Board of Education, as both work tirelessly to do well by our students. Having said this, I must express my opinion regarding the upcoming phases of our school re-entry plan. I am very disappointed by the hasty decision made by the board at the December meeting. No time was given to explore the many pros and cons to the plan, and I truly feel it is an irresponsible decision that has been made to move forward with it. As a parent, I can make the choice to keep my children safe through distance learning; a choice that I’ve made unequivocally. Unfortunately, as an educator mandated to return to the school environment, the safety of my family becomes compromised. Despite differing opinions, one thing is very clear; as of January 8th according to the CDC CT COVID Tracker Map, Seymour stands at a 49.3 positivity rate, clearly in the red zone. When the positivity rate is above 25%, the zone calls for increased distance learning for school systems. Regardless of our governor’s “blurring of the lines” 49.3 is statistically a failing number for safety. Our current positivity rate is percentage points away from double the suggested threshold. Please consider that while distance learning is not the most ideal approach to education, it is the safest right now. Students and staff are all home safe and in a sound learning routine since November. At this point, it is through no fault of the school district that anyone has become ill. Finally, though it is not popular to share the opinion of teachers in the district, I speak for many when I say teachers and staff are scared. They are perhaps more scared now, than ever. I humbly ask that you revisit this plan at tonight’s meeting, prior to sending students and staff into a potentially dangerous and disruptive environment. Push the dates back for both phases. By the end of February or beginning of March, many educators may have the vaccine. We may also know more about the new mutation of the COVID virus. By pushing the dates back, we may ensure less transmission in the school environment. There is still time in this school year to return in-person when our positivity rate decreases. Thank you.

**Jaci Freddino** - Dear Board of Education Members, I am sending this communication to let you know about my concern that the Seymour Education Association was not asked to be part of the committee that designed the action plan for returning to teaching students in-person. As this decision impacts every teacher in the bargaining unit, it is critical that the SEA be included in the round table discussions based on our return. Sincerely,

**Caitlin Jurkowski** - Good evening Board of Education Members, It was disappointing that the Seymour Education Association was not asked to be part of the committee that designed the action plan for going back to teaching in the District buildings. This action plan has a direct impact on every teacher in the District so it is important to have representation from the SEA.

**Sandra Prefontaine** - Good Evening Board of Education Members, It was disappointing that the Seymour Education Association was not asked to be part of the small committee Central Office formed to create the action plan for going back to teaching in the District buildings. This action plan has a direct impact on every single teacher in the district so it is important to have representation from the SEA. Thank you for listening.

**Mallory Knutson** - Good Evening Board of Education Members, As the plan to reopen the Seymour Public Schools approaches, I am a little disappointed that teachers from the Seymour Education Association were not asked to be included in the process. As a member of the reopening committee, I was very distraught when I received the email with the plan to reopen knowing the committee was not a part of that decision. I would imagine that other committee members were also. There is a committee in place, yet it was not utilized to create this action plan. This affects all members of our community and therefore, their voices should be considered. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this concern. Sincerely,

**Barbara Gruttadauria** - Good evening Board of Education Members, It was disappointing that the Seymour Education Association was not asked to be part of the small committee Central Office formed to create the action plan for going back to teaching in the District buildings. This action plan has a direct impact on every teacher in the District so it is important to have representation from the SEA. Thank you for listening.

**David Willadsen/Jen Monaco (Reopening Committee Member)/Allen Aldrich** - Good evening Board of Education Members, This correspondence is being written on behalf of the interests of numerous Seymour High School teachers who have come forward to their building
III. REPORTS Part 1

A. HS Student Representative Report–Zach Braca, Karyna Weaver

Student Representatives Zach Braca and Karyna Weaver reported the following:

representatives. Many were surprised by the decision that Central Office created an action plan to return to teaching students in-person throughout the District schools without any representation from the Seymour Education Association. When an action plan such as this is being developed, we believe it is important that representation from the SEA is invited by Central Office to sit at the table and be part of the discussion. Additionally, it is the belief of many Seymour HS teachers that we are so close to vaccination distribution for staff through the hard work of our Health Department and believe it prudent to wait until our staff is vaccinated to return students to the building given the infection rate is currently higher than it was when we left. Sincerely,

Corry Overcash - Good evening Board of Education Members, It was disappointing that the Seymour Education Association was not asked to be part of the small committee Central Office formed to create the action plan for going back to teaching in the District buildings. This action plan has a direct impact on every teacher in the District so it is important to have representation from the SEA. It is also concerning that these decisions are made without BOE members coming into our buildings and seeing what they currently look like. For example, going into classrooms and seeing what it will look like with the number of students we will have. We, as teachers have a great deal of concern and our concerns and input should be considered since we are the ones in it everyday. I appreciate your time. Sincerely,

Heather Santo - Good evening Board of Education Members, It was disappointing that the teachers and the Seymour Education Association was not asked to be part of the small committee Central Office formed to create the action plan for going back to teaching in the District buildings. This action plan has a direct impact on every teacher in the District so it is important to have representation from the SEA. There are so many daycares and preschools in town in quarantine as I write this and more confirmed cases within district daily. Thank you for listening,

Susan Duke - Good Evening Board of Education Members, It is very disappointing to hear that the SEA was not asked to be part of the committee formed to create an action plan for the return to school. This plan has a direct impact on every teacher. Now more than ever I personally feel uncomfortable going back and teaching in person. What we are doing is working. Why risk spreading this virus? The numbers are high right now. I feel it is too soon to go back. What is wrong with waiting one more month until these numbers decrease? I think of how the flu spread like wildfire through the MS last January. It would be awful if that repeated itself with COVID. Thank you for listening,

Suzan Kalloz - Good Evening Board of Education Members, As a teacher it is quite disappointing knowing that the Seymour Education Association was not asked to be part of the small committee that Central Office formed in order to create this action plan that is about going back to teaching within the District buildings. This action plans has a direct impact on every teacher in the District so it is important to have representation from the SEA. Thank you for listening,

Lauren Senia - Good evening Board of Education Members, It was extremely disappointing that the SEA was not invited to be on the committee Central Office formed to create the action plan for going back to in-person learning. This decision not only impacts students, but teachers as well. Teachers could have provided valuable input to this plan. Many protocols that have kept us safe from this virus are being modified. Teachers are expected to teach full classrooms, but with no PPE. The results of these decisions could be catastrophic for families of students and staff if Covid is contracted from school and enters our homes. Teachers are being told to go back into school before receiving the vaccine. Many staff members and their family members have underlying health conditions. As of this evening, Connecticut has hit its highest positivity rate since the springtime. There were over 7,000 positive cases today, versus 3,000 on Friday. Hospilizations have increased, and are as high as they were at the end of April. This should serve as a reminder that this virus should be taken seriously. The health, safety, and well-being of students and staff should be of utmost importance. Thank you,

Meagan Krushinski - Good evening Seymour Board of Education Members, It was disappointing to find out that Central Office did not include any representation from the Seymour Education Association when creating the action plan for the return to in-person teaching and learning next week. Many teachers have reached out to their SEA representatives with concerns and/or ideas that could benefit both students and teachers. Anytime a plan so greatly impacts the entire District, it is crucial that the SEA is granted the ability to collaborate with Central Office. Sincerely,
1. The Class is currently shopping for a new rock to be put in the front of the school.
2. Would like to put together a School wide Clubs/Activities Committee
4. Holiday cards were sent to Veterans
5. PawPrint Newsletter has been distributed, encouraged all to read.
6. Mr. Braca said staying home is weighing heavily on him and his peers

Mr. Strumello cautioned the class saying they need to be in contact with the Alumni and let them know what is being planned. Mr. Freund said there have been many conversations about the rock. He said the Alumni Rock will remain the same and will be maintained by the Alumni. Mr. Stanek asked if there have been any conversations with the Alumni. Mr. Freund said Zach Braca and he can reach out to the alumni we know. Mr. Strumello reminded them that Mr. Paul Roy was very involved with the graduation banners and he might be a good contact. Mr. Stanek suggested putting information out on Facebook, the Seymour Schools website and the Valley Sentinel. Mr. Garofolo said he felt this was a good idea and suggested a rock garden for each graduating class. Mr. Hatfield said he felt we should try and get someone to donate a rock instead of having to purchase one. Zach Braca said they were working with Haynes on this.

IV. INFORMATION Part 1
A. Question and Answer Session on SIP Plans and Already Shared Videos on Website
   1. Bungay School
      Ms. Bruno asked how the parent workshops and office hours were going. Ms. Feige said office hours were developed through surveys and will be developed by the school counselor and the social worker. They are in the process of setting up office hours. There were no other questions by Board members. Mr. Hatfield thanked Ms. Feige and Ms. Reid for their work in developing the School Improvement Plan.
   2. Chatfield-LoPresti School
      There were no questions from the Board. Mr. Hatfield thanked Mr. Olechna and Ms. Albertson for their work on the School Improvement plan. Mr. Olechna spoke about utilizing Math Concepts in Distance Learning. He spoke about using Wednesdays for development engaging activities and are paired to have conversations in the break out rooms. Ms. Albertson talked about the creative use of technology so students could record themselves so all kids can view. She said this is similar to getting up to talk in the front of the class. Mr. Olechna said they are looking at individual students meeting goals and targets. Ms. Nesteriak asked when the MAP assessments would take place and Mr. Olechna responded that there would be no winter assessments this year. We will have the beginning assessment and the spring assessment. This is because the window of opportunity has passed.
   3. Seymour Middle School
      Mr. Hatfield thanked Ms. Roden and Ms. Freimuth for their work on the School Improvement plan. No other Board member had any questions.
   4. Seymour High School
      Mr. Garofolo said he would like to have a conversation on assessments at some point but did not have any questions at this time. Ms. Harmeling thanked the administration for their work on these reports. Mr. Hatfield echoed Ms. Harmeling’s gratitude. No other Board members had questions. Mr. Strumello thanked all the administration for the efforts preparing and presenting the School Improvement Plans.

V. CONSENT AGENDA
A. Approval of Minutes
   1. Regular BOE Meeting Minutes–December 7, 2020
   2. Special BOE Meeting Minutes–December 9, 2020
B. Financial Management Summary–ending December 2020

MOTION: (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Ms. Harmeling) 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

VI. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA
VII. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A. 2021-2022 School Calendar (Tabled from 12/07/20 BOE Meeting)

Roll Call on Option 1, Option 2, or Option 3

Ms. Harmeling asked to have the options reviewed. Mr. Wilson reviewed the highlights:

**OPTION 1:**
- Start Date for staff is August 26 and start date for students is August 30
- Holiday Break in December is two full weeks
- End date is tentatively scheduled for June 15

**OPTION 2:**
- Start Date for staff is August 30 and start date for students is September 1
- Holiday Break in December is one and half weeks
- End date is tentatively scheduled for June 15

**OPTION 3:**
- Start Date for staff is August 30 and start date for students is September 1
- Holiday Break in December is one week and 2 days
- End date is tentatively scheduled for June 13

Ms. Harmeling said she still wished we would build in some snow days. Ms. Bruno asked about early dismissal days would be remote days. Mr. Wilson said there are no remote days. It was pointed out that the calendars indicate remote days and Mr. Wilson said this was an error, that no remote learning days are planned in 2021-22. Mr. Hatfield suggested that maybe this is not such a bad idea, kids have the capability since they have Chromebooks. He felt this deserves a larger discussion, Mr. Wilson agreed but having this on the calendar was simply an error. The intent is to go back to full in person learning.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Hatfield/sec., Mr. Champagne) to table to the February 1, 2021 Board of Education meeting the approval of the 2021-22 school calendar and to include a discussion of remote learning days

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

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

**MOTION FAILS:** 4-5

Ms. Harmeling said she is not in favor of tabling and she would like to move forward. Ms. Bruno asked if there is a statutory date that this needs to be completed. Mr. Wilson said Board policy says January and he has no guidance from the State as of yet.

**MOTION:** (Mr. Champagne/sec., Mr. Garofolo) approve Option 1 minus the references to remote learning

**SO VOTED**

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. Champagne

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

**MOTION FAILS:** 1-8

**MOTION:** (Ms. Bruno/sec., Ms. Nesteriak) to approve Option 2 with the references to remote learning removed

**SO VOTED**

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

**OPPOSED:** Mr. Hatfield

**ABSTAIN:** Ms. Harmeling

**MOTION PASSES:** 7-1-1

Mr. Hatfield asked for rationale of 12/22, 12/23 and Mr. Wilson responded it was to give students and staff a break and that this would be a middle ground solution. Mr. Hatfield asked if these days would be remote learning days or a half day. Ms. Harmeling said for clarification half days are like they have always been. There was more discussion regarding professional development and remote learning days.

VIII. REPORTS Part 2
A. Committee Reports
   1. Finance Committee Meeting Minutes-December 7, 2020

B. Board of Education Report
   1. Chairman’s Comments
      Mr. Strumello asked Mr. Champagne and Ms. Nesteriak to set up the Ad Hoc Committee
      meeting and noted that the Thursday meeting for the grievance had to be postponed
      because they did not have a quorum able to attend. The attorney will work to set up a new
      date.

   2. Board Member Comments
      Ms. Nesteriak said she felt a discussion regarding the reopening plan should happen
      based on the public comments heard during this meeting.
      MOTION: (Ms. Nesteriak/sec., Mr. Stanek) to add to the agenda a discussion and possible
      action regarding the current reopening plan.

      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. Nesteriak asked to hear from the administration regarding their thoughts on the public
      comments. Mr. Wilson thanked Ms. Tencza and the committee for their hard work putting
      together the reopening plan during his absence. He said as always the health and safety
      of the students and staff was paramount. He said as was referenced in the presentation
      some parents are in favor of waiting while others want to come back. The date is fluid and
      we can move the date if necessary. The vaccine could come into play if the target date is
      moved. Right now, we will return to hybrid on January 19 with a target date of February
      17 for a full return. We will continue to monitor COVID cases and our Head Nurse
      continues to work closely with Naugatuck Valley Health. The cases in Seymour are still in
      the red. Many people are anxious. Ms. Nesteriak asked what Mr. Wilson’s
      recommendation for returning is and he responded that looking at the data he feels most
      comfortable with a hybrid plan but he has concerns because of the cases. He said he is
      not ready to recommend at this point. Ms. Nesteriak said based on the data today a hybrid
      opening can happen on January 19. Ms. Harmeling said she respects the view of the
      teachers and the public, she said she heard a mix of shouldn’t go back, should go back
      and some comments about the process. She feels we should move away from making a
      recommendation based on data. She said we should not be talking about moving the date.
      She feels we are going backward. We know more now about this disease and we know
      what is best for our kids. We cannot stay in a box. Students are not learning well on the
      platform. Mr. Stanek said he strongly feels we should delay and it’s clear that teachers are
      afraid. We are entering the vaccine program and he feels we should give some time for
      the safety of our teachers and students. He said we should wait two weeks or until
      Presidents Day. Mr. Champagne said a lot of public comment was regarding the fact that
      the SEA was not included in the discussion and he wondered why. We are talking about
      silent lunch, shuffling kids around, moving them for snack. He reminded the Board that we
      are not Derby, not Oxford, we are Seymour and we need to do what is best for Seymour.
      He agrees with delaying. Ms. Tencza explained that they were charged to put together a
      reopening plan presentation in a nine day window. She said it was never the intent to leave
      out the teachers’ voices. The group looked at the phases and were trying to identify what
      group will come next. The group at the table were aware of lunch, snacks, and recess. In
      retrospect, maybe everyone should have been involved but the Administrators were
      comfortable with conveying the feelings of the teachers and were confident of the
      decisions that were being made. Mr. Champagne said he felt over the last two weeks he
      has received many messages regarding this. It was a Board decision to put together a
      plan but the most important people, the teachers or their union reps, were kept out of the
      decision making. Ms. Bruno said public comment made her pause people are frustrated
      with the process. We know we can’t please everyone. We heard from the student rep that
      being home is hard, special education students are struggling. We have not been provided
an option for several months. There are concerns about the MAP assessment. She said she strongly believes kids are learning but not enough. This is concerning. Ms. Harmeling said she did not feel there was a slap in the face. This was a hefty charge to do this in nine days. We didn’t hear from teachers but it was not underhanded. She said this is not a new plan. She feels the toll on families is too much. The vaccine will not be effective for weeks. Other schools have opening successfully. We now know transmission in schools is low. She asked how long can we wait? Mr. Hatfield said he was struggling with his two roles as a Board member and as a teacher. He said many of our teachers might be concerned. He asked what we would do if teachers didn’t come back, what about substitutes and bus drivers? He said he didn’t feel what Ms. Harmeling said is not necessarily true regarding transmission. He felt we should think about pausing. Mr. Stanek said doctors say many people are asymptomatic and recommend staying away from people. This is a matter of life and death. Ms. Harmeling disputed the numbers saying it is a metric not a percentage. She said the negative people are more vocal. She said we need to think about students. We have mitigation in place. Ms. Bruno asked if there is anything new with the mitigation guidelines. Mr. Wilson said we have the hybrid model, social distancing, and mask wearing. He admitted it would be difficult if the student population increases. The hybrid model should be ok, but bigger might be a problem but we would do our best. Mr. Hatfield asked if we can have a conversation regarding the January 19 return date and about the second stage in February. Possibly review it at the February 1 meeting. Mr. Wilson said looking at the data, based on today schools are safe. If we have staff having to quarantine we would need to go to remote for that particular building only. He reminded the Board that everything is fluid and things can change. He said it is the same process looking at teachers being out if they contracted the virus or are quarantining. He acknowledged that it is a tough dynamic. Mr. Wilson will continuously monitor. He said it is the Board’s pleasure if they want to push back again saying things are constantly changing. Mr. Strumello said this is well taken, well explained but he feels this is spinning our wheels at this point and a decision should be made. A motion was made by Mr. Champagne and Ms. Harmeling said we are moving out four weeks before students would come back. This also means sports will be taken away. She said our student representative has stated that this is difficult for our students. Mr. Champagne said the student representative does not speak for the entire student body.

MOTION: (Mr. Champagne/sec., Mr. Stanek) change the start of the hybrid model to February 15 which is two weeks after the February 1st BOE meeting.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Stanek
OPPOSED: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Strumello
MOTION FAILS: 3-6

MOTION: (Mr. Stanek/sec., Mr. Champagne) change the start of the hybrid model to February 1 and schedule a special BOE meeting on January 27, 2021 to review

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. Champagne, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Stanek
OPPOSED: Ms. Bruno, Mr. Garofolo, Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Nesteriak, Mr. Strumello
MOTION FAILS: 3-6

Ms. Nesteriak asked for clarification about certain student to come back and what is the intent for them. Mr. Stanek said it would be extended to February 1 instead of January 19. Ms. Harmeling said this would prevent our kids from participating in sports. Mr. Wilson said he would contact the CIAC to get answers about whether our kids would be able to participate. Mr. Hatfield said we are split on this issue and different dates. He wondered if we can meet in the middle. Mr. Bruno said she felt it was not prudent to move from hybrid to full. Ms. Harmeling said the superintendent is fully empowered to make this call based on factors and administration can do this without us. She said we don’t need any more motions.
Champagne said he is wondering when hybrid will begin for those students with special needs and asked if we distributed numbers to parents so they can make a decision. Ms. Tencza said the number have not been shared with parents. She said the current numbers could increase. She said parents have called and requested this information and they are getting the information. She noted that this is very time consuming to prepare. Mr. Hatfield said no motion and it will stay as is unless administration changes it. Mr. Wilson said this was correct. He said it is contingent on how we are doing before bring back more students. He said they will consider the factors.

C. Superintendent Report
1. Pandemic Actions taken by Superintendent – None
2. We have been working very hard on with our team of Administrators to draft a budget and we look forward to our upcoming budget workshops to present this to the Board
3. Our Head Nurse and I have been working closely with NVHD to continue to monitor our numbers since we are scheduled to return to hybrid learning on Tuesday, January 19. We will continue to monitor these numbers to make our decisions on the continued phased extended reopening.

IX. INFORMATION Part 2
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 not a lot has changed and it is trending lower than our past history.

C. Staff Hiring–Appendix E
1. Willadsen, David
   - Debate Team Advisor
   - Seymour High School
   - Replacing Jennifer Monaco

D. Staff Resignation–Certified
1. Alcutt, Christine
   - Retirement
   - Social Studies Teacher
   - Seymour Middle School
   - Effective January 22, 2021
2. DeMarco, Eric
   - Retirement
   - Psychology Teacher
   - Seymour High School
   - Effective June 16, 2021

X. 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.

Kimberly Farmer - Dear Board of Education Members, I could not agree more with Mike Rotatori and Mrs. Champagne regarding pushing the date to return to any form of in-person learning. I am aware some families do not agree, but in my opinion, a positive, effective routine has been established by both teachers and students during this remote learning time. I have three children in three different school levels, and I believe it's obvious that the state Covid statistics dictate that we should NOT be heading back to the buildings in one week. I also would like to state that I don't understand why the BOE meeting participants are not shown live on Youtube/Zoom. Not meeting in person is one thing, but to not be live for the public to see is becoming unacceptable and a bit insulting to the community. If there is a legitimate reason for this, please let the public know. Thank you for your time,
XI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A. Discussion Regarding the Superintendent’s Employment: Possible Action Regarding Same

**MOTION:** (Mr. Champagne/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to invite the Board of Education into Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent’s contract and to invite Attorney Floyd Dugas into the Executive session

**SO VOTED**

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

**MOTION PASSES/FAILS:** 9-0

Entered into Executive Session: 10:05 pm
Entered into Regular Session: 10:59 pm

XII. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** (Mr. Garofolo/sec., Mr. Kubik) 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 11:00 pm

Submitted by: Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk

**NOTE:** The next scheduled Regular Board of Education meeting is on Monday, February 1, 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/m56oYfHx3AI