

Seymour Board of Education



SPECIAL MEETING 2 MINUTES

October 21, 2019
Bungay Elementary School
Cafeteria
7:00 p.m.

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 10/30/19
TIME: 3:20pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Kristen Harmeling
Jay Hatfield (9:15 pm)
Peter Kubik
Jennifer Magri
Fred Stanek
Ed Strumello
Ashley Sirowich, Student Representative
Zachary Braca, Student Representative
Christopher Champagne

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

James Garofolo
Edward Hendricks

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michael Wilson, Superintendent of Schools
Vonda Tencza, Associate Superintendent
Kris Boyle, Director of Special Services
Lee-Ann Dauerty, Board Clerk
Jim Freund, Principal, SHS
Paul Lucke, Assistant Principal, SHS
Ernie DiStasi, Assistant Principal, SHS
Jodie Roden, Principal, SMS
Mary Sue Feige, Principal, BS
Lauren Reid, Assistant Principal, BS
David Olechna, Principal, CLS
Kathleen Freimuth, Assistant Principal, CLS
Lisa Mariano
Allison Cunningham
Rebecca DeAngelis
Darlene O'Callaghan

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Magri called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:13 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment provides the opportunity for the public to make a comment. It is not a dialogue between the Board and the public. Based upon what is heard during Public Comment, the Board may choose to add a topic to the agenda. If questions are posed that the Chairman is able to answer, those questions may be addressed under the Chairmen's Report portion of the agenda. The Board will not discuss personnel matters. Comments should be respectful and be no longer than two minutes in length so that all who wish to comment may have the opportunity to do so. All public wanting to comment will need to state their name and address for the record prior to addressing the Board.

None

III. REPORTS AND INFORMATION

A. SBAC Highlights – Mrs. Tencza

Mrs. Tencza said the SBAC was an overview that was sent to all the members of the Board for review and give them the opportunity to submit any questions that may have. She said she did not receive any questions from the Board and there was no plan to present a Power Point this evening. She explained that each Administrator will take 10 minutes to describe their school improvement plan and where they are going. She said this is an important meeting and it ranks right up there with graduation and budget meetings. This meeting is where you learn the information that can be taken back and shared with the public. This is where you learn what we are doing in the schools and where we hope to go. Mrs. Tencza briefly went through the information she shared with the Board. She discussed how many students are meeting or exceeding goal and she noted that more are achieving goal in ELA than Math. There was a discussion on the ongoing problem with getting the results in a timely fashion from the State of Connecticut. Mr. Strumello said they should be held to a timeline that works for education. Mrs. Tencza said a little celebration is the high needs subgroup which includes Special Education, ELL, and Free & Reduced Lunch students. She said we are achieving good growth and we should be proud of our strong special education program. She said she is pleased to see that all students are growing. Our instruction is strong.

B. School Improvement Plans

Please note: all School Improvement Plans can be found on our website www.seymourschools.org

1. Seymour High School – Mr. Freund

Mr. Freund did a brief presentation of the School Improvement plan for Seymour High School. He reported on what the School Level Data Team found as they evaluated the student performance data and they identified areas of growth based on a state/nation comparative data set. None of the high school improvement goals were met last year (2018-19). Three goals were set: Goal 1 - the average student performance on the school day administration of the SAT will improve by several points (526 EBRW and 509 Math) over the previous year's performance in the areas of evidence based reading and writing and the math portion during the March 2019 School day SAT administration. Goal 2 - The May 2019 Parent Feedback Survey indicated that 79% of our parents reported that they agree or strongly agree with the following statement: "I am well-informed about my student's academic progress in school through the use of the PowerSchool Parent Portal, Google Classroom, teacher emails/phone calls, report card mailings and other forms of communication." Mr. Freund said the goal is to increase this by three or more percentage points so that 82% or more of our parents will agree or strongly agree with the statement on the May 2020 administration of the Parent Feedback Survey. They will focus on making sure all email address are accurate.

Goal 3 – Reduce Chronic Absenteeism. He wants to improve our processes with a three tiered support system involving SEL, Academic and Behavioral intervention (Called The Wildcat Way) and address system causes of absences - Out of School Suspensions (11%), Seniors (44%), Juniors (23%), Sophomores (15%), and Freshmen (15%). Mr. Lucke reported on Math results and Mr. DiStasi reported on ELA results.

2. Seymour Middle School – Mrs. Roden

Mrs. Roden and Mrs. Freimuth reported on the School Improvement plan for Seymour Middle School. Mrs. Roden said there was a very slight increase in ELA results and Grade 8 met the ELA SBAC goal. She said their focus is on Social Emotional Learning and Discipline and this year SMS is revisiting their PBIS model. The PBIS committee reboot included 30 staff members, and are looking to increase positive celebrations. The students enjoyed the PBIS celebration and 95% of the students participated. As far as the data goes, we need to dig deeper into Math data and ask “how do you know?” and to provide data whether it is good or bad. She said the classrooms that are succeeding are the ones where there is the most talking from student to student. Mr. Kubik said he found the involvement refreshing and feels confident that scores will increase. Ms. Harmeling asked about purchasing what we needed for the assessments. Mrs. Roden said Engage NY (which is free) will be entered into Google forms so that the students can enter their answers and show them where they need help. Ms. Harmeling asked if the kids knew the road map and that she felt kids needed to know where they are. She asked about integrating PBIS into academics and Mrs. Roden said PBIS is part of the daily language. She wants to have a strong handle on behavior before they concentrate on academics. She said the staff is working hard together. Mr. Stanek expressed his concerns about the math scores and feels we really need to concentrate on why scores are so low. Mrs. Roden said they are continuing with vertical conversations and teachers are looking at things in a different way. Mrs. Roden said they are working together and they know the scores need work. She knows this but it will take time. She is hoping for a small increase by the end of the year. She said they greet their students every morning and want them to come to school with a smile. There will be rewards for those students who follow expectations. There are pop-up rewards for students as well as for teachers. This is done by the Culture Club. They will leave a surprise for someone if they know they are struggling. She said they need to get a handle on discipline and it is a part of the daily language. They want the kids to know how to make connections with other teams. Mrs. Roden said her “phone call of the week” includes all students. Teachers nominate a student from each grade who has done a fantastic job that week. Mrs. Roden will their parent in front of their peers. The student gets to choose a trick call or a truth call. It’s similar to the surprise squad on Channel 3. This has been very well received.

3. Chatfield-LoPresti School – Mr. Olechna

Mr. Olechna and Mrs. Freimuth presented the School Improvement plan for Chatfield-LoPresti School. For the DRA2 teachers are monitoring throughout the year, they are tracking reading instruction and exploring how to reach benchmarks. They are having vertical conversations for the MAP Reading and Math. All teachers need to know what to do to get the kids to move up. Kindergarten hit 70 or higher for the third year in a row. Smarter Balance grade 3 performance higher than previous three years. Grade 4 Reading scored higher than 72% of country. The staff is embracing professional learning and we are seeing the benefits. We will get there. There have been great gains in chronic absenteeism and CLS has seen positive growth.

The target for reading is 75% it was 68% last year. It is ambitious but we feel it is achievable. Guided Reading is done 4-5 days a week. For those students in the lower grades, the language arts consultant gives support to those students who are below to help them get over the hump. In grades 4-5 the students really take off; they soar. In grades K, 1, 2 a new phonics program has been implemented. 65% of all students in K-5 reach the Math RIP target. Mr. Olechna feels CLS is growing in Math. Teachers have taken the next steps in Math Workshops. All of them have responded positively. They have a Math Olympiad program two afternoons a week, kids volunteer to participate. They have communicated the Homework Philosophy. They have encouraged all students to know three different adults they can go to and know the steps to take when they are struggling or stressed. This provides them with a greater sense of confidence. Teachers have taken the math workshop at CREC and have brought it back to integrate into the classrooms. Teachers are buying into it. 32 teachers saw the presentation this summer. The presenter has met with every K-5 teacher. The presenter also pinpointed which teachers were ready for the next steps. All this was done in collaboration with Bungay School. Mr. Olechna told Mr. Kubik that he feels CLS should get a B or B+ since 68% of all students are hitting their targets. Mr. Olechna also said Mrs. Freimuth and Mrs. Roden will be a wonderful team at Seymour Middle School.

4. Bungay School – Mrs. Feige

Mrs. Feige and Mrs. Reid presented the School Improvement plan for Bungay School. Mrs. Feige thanks all the members of the School Level Data Team who took the time to analyze the data. She said they are a very strong team and she is very proud of them. Physical Education students are achieving goals 76% boys/79% girls. DRA2 at or above 74%. On the SBAC Reading/Math every grade level met/or achieved target. Bungay School is going in the right direction. Some of the strategies to achieve growth include small flexible groups, DRA, Running Records, Common Core Assessments, Strategies, Rubrics, Check Lists, Students are setting their own goals, self-reflection, and books. Teachers are excited about mini lessons. In math, K-1, 3, 4 exceeded target. Grade 2 and 5 did not but by a very small margin. They are making sure student voices are being heard. Teachers will continue with Professional Learning. They are picking workshops that are going to change instruction. They are looking at the learning environment, using school counselors to solve problems, and sharing at-home strategies with parents. Mrs. Feige said we are doing a lot of great work at Bungay School. We are learning. Mr. Strumello asked about the student outcome indicators. Mrs. Feige said they are setting realistic goals. They are also using peer observation and having school climate meetings. Teachers are going into other classrooms to observe. Mrs. Feige and Mrs. Reid will often provide coverage so the teachers can observe their peers.

Mr. Stanek thanked Mrs. Feige and Mrs. Reid for a very good and concise presentation.

C. Superintendent Goals – Mr. Wilson

Mr. Wilson presented his draft goals for the year:

DRAFT GOALS FOR MICHAEL WILSON 2019-2020

By collectively working with the Board of Education, I feel that the following goals are aligned to benefit all of Seymour schools.

The method which I have again chosen to highlight my goals is based upon Theory of Action Statements. While significant progress was made on each of the goals below, it was collaboratively determined to update the same goals used for the 2019 – 2020 school year.

Mission of Seymour Public Schools

The mission of Seymour Public Schools is to fully know our students as learners, to educate and inspire them through a range of experiences that reflect high expectations for learning and prepare them to meet the challenges of an ever changing world.

Vision Statement of Seymour Public Schools

Seymour Public Schools works diligently in order to promote individual student learning. We strive to have all students succeed in all social and academic areas so they can become well rounded individuals who show compassion toward others and who can confidently confront and solve any problem with which they are faced.

1) Implementation of our Strategic Plan will be visible throughout the entire year.

This new strategic plan will be used as a road map (along with other core documents) to move our district forward in making its Mission/Vision a reality for all our children and will be completed and placed into action for the 2019-2020 school year. Initiatives set forth in the plan will be advocated for during our budgetary planning process. This year, you will notice that the new Mission and Vision Statements will be visible in all schools. You will also have at the end of the year a planned design to address the Social Emotional Learning Components as outlined within the plan.

2) *When we provide a challenging learning environment that motivates all of our students, then each student will achieve his/her maximum individual potential.*

In order to sum up the hard work and focus that all of our schools are already doing, I would say that as a district, we are streamlined into three overarching goals surrounding Numeracy, Literacy, and College and Career Readiness. These goals will be reviewed with the Board as well as with the entire staff. Progress on these goals will be monitored on how well our students perform on a variety of indicators such as DRA 2, NWEA (MAP), PSAT, and SAT. Below is our updated goal chart. Data was reviewed from prior years with Administrators at our Summer Retreat in order to determine appropriate growth as well as to identify focus areas. These goals were developed by using cohort data in order to ensure same student growth.

GRADE	SBAC ELA 2019	2020 SBAC GOAL	NWEA ELA 2019	2020 NWEA GOAL	SBAC MATH 2019	2020 SBAC GOAL	NWEA MATH 2019	2020 NWEA GOAL
3	N/A	58	188	197	N/A	55	190	199
4	64	66	201	210	55	58	203	213
5	55	57	211	215	52	55	213	222
6	60	62	214	217	54	56	224	227
7	53	55	219	222	49	51	225	228
8	44	47	220	223	45	41	230	233
SAT	511	526	N/A	N/A	493	509	N/A	N/A

The creation of a challenging learning environment will be progress monitored through a data review conducted by the Associate Superintendent in conjunction with me as well as through Central Office walkthroughs. The data gleaned will be shared at our monthly Administrative Council meetings as well as with the Board of Education.

3) When we communicate effectively, all staff and stakeholders will feel informed.

Each of our schools do have a parent communication goal attached to their School Improvement Plan which I will monitor throughout the year since it is critical to communicate with parents/guardians and the community as a whole.

Communication will take place using a variety of modalities such as: letters to the community approximately four times throughout the year, emails, memorandums, District Data Team, an end of the year parent survey, our District Webpage, and the use of a District Facebook page where we can share all of the great things that are happening within our Schools with our parents and community members. I will also hold 2 nightly meetings to be held with community members that center around a variety of topics (such as: the budget and standardized test scores). I will also continue to be a visible leader by getting out into the school buildings at least once per week and by attending various community and school sponsored events. This will be evidenced through observation and documentation. My Team and I have started this last year and will continue to improve upon it. One continuing initiative will be our "Caught Being Awesome" recognition program. This is just another way in which we promote all of the wonderful things that our staff does for our children.

4) When we provide and create a rigorous curriculum that aligns and adheres with the Common Core State Standards, our students will achieve and show growth through multiple assessments.

Each of the schools will present curriculum concerns to our Associate Superintendent at our monthly Administrator Meetings. They will also share their progress on growth on the NWEA assessments.

I will continue to work with the Associate Superintendent to evaluate long-range curriculum objectives in order to challenge the academic skills of all students in the District. This process shall again require interactions with the Associate Superintendent, all building level administrators, and professional development committee to identify the special and unique demands of students at all grade levels. I will direct the evaluation of all resource materials on a regular basis to ensure that all material is appropriate. The results of the NWEA assessments (given three times throughout the year) and SBAC results will be shared at District Data Team as well as at Board of Education meetings.

The new SPI or CT Accountability Index will again be reviewed with Administrators, District Data Team, and with the Board of Education. A new growth indicator is now used to calculate this number. This number is compared to last year's baseline calculation and growth points are now awarded. This will be measure by showing an increase in our SPI rating. The SPI rating is based on the year prior, therefore this year's SPI will serve as my baseline as Superintendent. I will share this number one we receive it from the state.

5) When the Board and I collaborate and work together toward our district's success, organizational leadership will be evident to see.

I will continue to work collaboratively with the Board to develop and monitor district policy and administrative regulations related to Organizational Leadership. I will ensure that priorities and initiatives are in alignment with a clearly defined and well-articulated vision for the district. I will also work with the Board and the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations to develop and monitor district policy, procedures, and administrative regulations related to District Operations and Financial Management. Together, we will successfully accomplish financial and budgetary priorities including meeting all timelines associated with the annual budget. This will be measured by the amount of communication held with the Board as well as with the Town in terms of the submission of documents (i.e. policy changes, procedural changes, and budget just to state a few) to the town in a timely manner. I feel that strides have been made in this area in terms of process and procedures changing in terms of budget monitoring. We will continue to improve this in order to keep all stakeholders informed.

Mr. Hatfield suggested changing the wording "Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations" to "Business Manager. He also suggested changing #3. Mrs. Harmeling asked if this was something to be voted on and Mrs. Magri said she thought we have not voted on the Superintendent Goals in the past. This is just a topic for discussion, Board members can make suggestions but it will be up to Mr. Wilson to decide if he wants to put them in his goals. Mr. Hatfield voiced a concern at not having goals that were easy to measure and how to show what you have done to complete your goals. Mr. Strumello suggested rewording the goals so they can be evaluated. Mr. Hatfield said he would like to have data provided show data from last year to this year. The Superintendent Goals will be presented again at the next BOE meeting.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

***MOTION:** (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Kubik) move that the Board enter Executive Session to discuss a matter that would result in the disclosure of public records or the information contained therein as described in Connecticut General Statutes Sections 1-210(b)(2), (11) and (17). Further, that the Board invite Mr. Wilson to attend the executive session.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION: 10:00 pm **RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION:** 10:11 pm

VI. POSSIBLE ACTION AFTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: (Ms. Harmeling/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the proposed stipulated agreement for the student discussed in executive session.

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Mr. Strumello/sec., Mr. Hatfield) to adjourn

SO VOTED

AFFIRMATIVE: Ms. Harmeling, Mr. Hatfield, Mr. Kubik, Ms. Magri, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Strumello

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

The meeting adjourned at 10:12 pm

Submitted by:
Lee-Ann Dauerty
Board Clerk