Seymour Board of Education
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
NEASC Accreditation & Strategic Planning

November 4, 2026
Seymour Middle School
5:00 pm

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DATE: 11/5/26
TIME: 3:00pm
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

The meeting was called to order by Kristen Bruno with the pledge of allegiance at 5:33 PM.

I. Overview of K–12 NEASC Accreditation – Dr. Susan Compton

Dr. Compton provided an overview of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation process, including its history, initial steps, and requirements. She explained that while accreditation has traditionally focused on the high school, Seymour Public Schools is now pursuing districtwide K–12 accreditation. Dr. Compton highlighted the integration of the District's Strategic Plan into the five NEASC Accreditation Standards. She explained that participants would have an opportunity to explore this alignment in greater detail during breakout sessions. The District's goal is to achieve K–12 accreditation in the fall of 2029. This initiative encompasses the District's Vision of a Graduate and Pathway of a Wildcat, establishing a cohesive educational experience from preschool through high school graduation.

II. Seymour Public Schools: One District, One Journey – Mr. Paul Lucke

A. Overview of K-12 NEASC Accreditation Standards

Mr. Lucke provided an overview of the K–12 accreditation process, noting that NEASC has traditionally accredited high schools and that Seymour Public Schools is among a limited number of districts in New England pursuing districtwide K–12 accreditation. He explained that the accreditation process provides an opportunity for the District to evaluate its current practices, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and establish a comprehensive plan for continued growth. The process is organized around five accreditation standards, each containing specific subcategories and foundational elements. NEASC will evaluate the District's progress toward meeting these standards and ensuring consistency across all grade levels. Mr. Lucke outlined the District's current work, which includes gathering evidence, evaluating and prioritizing findings, identifying areas for growth, and developing a comprehensive self-reflection document. NEASC representatives will review the District's findings and provide an independent assessment of their accuracy. Following the anticipated accreditation visit in 2029, the District will develop a short-term improvement plan addressing identified areas of need. NEASC is expected to return in 2030 to assess the District's progress. Mr. Lucke emphasized the importance of honest, candid feedback throughout the process, acknowledging that some findings may be difficult to hear but are essential to meaningful improvement. He also discussed the Pathway of a Wildcat initiative, which identifies the characteristics and competencies students should demonstrate upon graduation. The elementary and middle schools have adopted the framework and are working to adapt the language to ensure it is developmentally appropriate for their respective grade levels. Regarding long-term assessment of student progress, Mr. Lucke noted that a portfolio-based review process may be considered in the future.

B. NEASC Accreditation Process and Flowchart

Mr. Lucke reviewed the organizational structure and flowchart for the accreditation process. Each school will

establish committees aligned with the five NEASC standards. Teachers have already been assigned to their respective standards committees and will collaborate to review evidence, assess current practices, and ensure consistency across schools. Committee chairs will also serve on the District Steering Committee, ensuring representation and communication across all schools and grade levels. Mr. Lucke noted that the timeline for completing individual components of the accreditation process may vary depending on the complexity and scope of each standard.

III. Strategic Planning Goals & NEASC Standards Crosswalk – Mr. David Olechna & Dr. Kris Boyle

A. Review of district strategic planning goals

Mr. Olechna reviewed the District's existing Strategic Plan, acknowledging that many participants had contributed to its original development. He explained that the plan had been reformatted to improve readability and usability while preserving its original content and goals. Mr. Olechna noted that the strategic planning goals share a common process involving multiple phases of implementation. He also identified the need to establish clearer timelines within the existing plan. The purpose of the evening's work was to examine how the District's current strategic planning goals align with the five NEASC Accreditation Standards and to begin incorporating those goals into the accreditation framework.

B. Crosswalk between strategic planning goals and NEASC Accreditation Standards

Mr. Olechna introduced the crosswalk activity, designed to align the District's existing Strategic Plan with the five NEASC standards. Participants were divided into five breakout groups, with each group assigned a specific standard. Groups were tasked with reviewing the existing strategic planning goals, identifying connections to their assigned standard, and contributing to the continued development of the District's accreditation documentation.

IV. Breakout Sessions

Participants separated into five groups to review and discuss the alignment of the District's Strategic Plan with their assigned NEASC Accreditation Standard.

The breakout groups were organized as follows:

A. Standard 1: Learning Culture
B. Standard 2: Student Learning
C. Standard 3: Professional Practices
D. Standard 4: Learning Support
E. Standard 5: Learning Resources

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Prepared by Shannon Levey, Board Clerk