

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 16**  
**Board of Education Meeting**  
**August 12, 2020**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

		Weighted Vote <u>Per Member</u>
<i>Beacon Falls...</i>	Priscilla Cretella	.7
	Ben Catanzaro	.7
	Christine Arnold	.7
	Erik Dey	.7
<i>Prospect...</i>	Robert Dyer	1.3
	Robert Hiscox	1.3
	Roxann Vaillancourt	1.3
	Nazih Noujaim	1.3

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michael Yamin, Superintendent of Schools  
Tony DiLeone, Dir. of Finance and Business Operations  
Michele Raynor, Curriculum Director  
Matthew Brennan, Director of Technology

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Priscilla Cretella, at 7:00 p.m. in the gymnasium at PES, Prospect, CT.

**A. Roll Call**

A roll was taken; a quorum was present.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

**C. Revision/Additions to Agenda Order**

A MOTION was made by Nazih Noujaim and SECONDED by Roxann Vaillancourt to add the following as Action Item 8 to the agenda, "Act to accept Karen Murano's letter of resignation from LRMS as a World Language teacher."

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0) **20-087**

A MOTION was made by Nazih Noujaim and SECONDED by Robert Hiscox to add the following as Action Item 9 to the agenda, "Act to support the R16 reopening plan as highlighted in August 12, 2020 correspondence. R16 will open initially in the fall in a hybrid model."

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0) **20-088**

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of July 15, 2020, Board of Education Meeting (Ex.1)

A MOTION was made by Robert Dyer and SECONDED by Christine Arnold to approve the minutes of July 15, 2020, Board of Education Meeting (Ex.1)

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0)

**20-089**

### **III. COMMENT**

#### **A. Town Officials**

**B. Public Comments** *Note: The BOE will not reply to comments made at a meeting. However, either the Superintendent or Board Chair will respond to a concern within five business days.*

The Board received 16 questions from the public and Mr. Yamin said that he would do his best to respond to them via email. He further noted that he received several questions from Cher Michaud, which he will respond to via email. Most the questions asked online during tonight's meeting had already been addressed this afternoon at the Zoom meeting with the community.

Tracey D., resident of Prospect, asks about accommodations for students with an IEP and how they will receive support if they participate in distance learning rather than in-person attendance. Mr. Yamin said he will forward this question to Ms. Shelly McNulty, Director of Special Education, for her to respond.

Corry Overcash, resident of Beacon Falls, question/concern centered around wearing of masks, noting anything less than six feet apart is not acceptable. Mr. Yamin responded we will keep safe distances, wearing of masks in all common areas will be required. If specific needs arise, we will address these individually.

Kristopher Overcash, resident of Beacon Falls, questioned what lunch will look like in the schools. The Superintendent informed him that we have rented tents to spread out the students both in the cafeteria and tent areas to keep students safely apart during lunch periods. Students in their own cohort will be three feet apart, and six feet apart, when feasible.

Ann Marie Lamb, resident of Prospect, asked why the teams at WRHS are alternating days rather than having one team go Mon/Tues and the other go Thur/Fri. Mr. Yamin said that it was set up this way, as it would be challenging to not see a student for five consecutive days.

Ilyce Cronk, Beacon Falls resident, as if we go full distant learning what the grading policy at the high school will be. Mr. Yamin replied that, at this point, Board of Education policy on grading is in effect. If schools close due to a spike in COVID or if the governor issues an executive order to close schools, we will revisit the policy. At the start of this school year, both attendance and grading is required.

Audrey Fencil, resident of Beacon Falls, asks how students will be expected to carry all their books for eight classes without using lockers. Mr. Yamin stated students will not be expected to carry books to all eight classes and that we will not

overwhelm them to do so. Teachers will let students know on what occasion they will need their books for a particular class.

Odiri Emadu, Prospect resident, asks if parents will have the option to keep their children home or only send them to school 3x per week and what is the daily capacity of the schools. Mr. Yamin responded parents will have to follow the hybrid model (the current plan in place), opt their child(ren) out by filling out the distance learning form, or home school their child(ren). Elementary schools will be at full capacity, the middle school and high school at 50% capacity: 250 capacity at LRMS and 325 capacity at WRHS.

Janice Kindle, resident of Beacon Falls, asks what the average class size is at the elementary and middle school levels. Mr. Yamin replied the average elementary school class size is 18-22. We have hired two additional teachers this year in grades 4 and 5 to make those large classes smaller. The average class size at the middle and high schools is 10-12 students, with the hybrid model we will use.

Lucinda Felix, Beacon Falls resident, is concerned as to how students at the high school will be expected to do eight classes of homework in one night when compared to the regular schedule where they had two days to do four classes worth of work. She also asks if R16 plans on providing extra mental health resources to students. Mr. Yamin reported he will answer Ms. Felix's questions via email but recommends she go to our website and review our Reopening Plan, which addresses some of her concerns. He also commented that we are very receptive to the mental health of our students, and we will address any issue individually through our Pupil Personnel Services Department.

Melanie (no last name given), resident of Beacon Falls, asks if there will be specials such as gym (if so, inside or outside), chorus, band, etc. Mr. Yamin said that we will have electives and that he'd send a detailed response to Melanie to show her what they looked like. PE inside will require masks and will not be rigorous. Outside PE won't require masks as students will be sufficiently distanced from one another. As far as other electives, they will be specific to what your child(ren) has signed up for.

The last question came from "anonymous" from Prospect who asks what happens if a student comes to school on a day they are not scheduled to be there. Mr. Yamin said he had no answer to this question and that the building administrator will handle this situation on an individual basis, if necessary.

#### **IV. CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Superintendent 7/14/20 letter to the R16 community.
2. Superintendent 7/31/20 letter to the R16 community.
3. Superintendent 8/5/20 letter to the R16 community (with attachments).

## **V. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mr. Noujaim read the report as follows:

Balance in General Fund as of 8/12/20:	\$1,261,131.42
Tonight's invoices total:	\$1,283,400.60
General Fund:	\$1,280,648.48
Federal and State Grants:	\$2,752.12
Adult Ed, Other Grants, Athletic Fund:	\$0.00
Capital Non Recurring Project	\$0.00

## **VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT (Emma Flaherty, Gavin Moffat)**

Gavin Moffat gave a brief update on information available before the start of school.

## **VII. EXEMPLARY PEOPLE, PROGRAMS and AWARDS**

Reopening Committee members were sent a thank-you note and gift card to Amazon for their work. Chair Priscilla Cretella commented that the Reopening Committee did an outstanding job and are thanked for their herculean effort.

## **VIII. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

### **A. Superintendent's Update**

It was noted that there are many changes happening daily and weekly to some of the following updates.

#### **1. Reopening Committee**

##### **a. Staffing increases**

Mr. Yamin reported on new positions as a result of the cohorts/Covid-19 model. We are replacing four teachers who have resigned and have hired two elementary teachers at PES to make class sizes smaller. Three Spanish teachers have been hired for LRMS. We won't have a formal Italian class there this year, but will will pay someone a stipend to instruct the 8th graders in Italian who took it this past year so they can complete their requirement in Italian.

##### **b. Financial implications**

Mr. Yamin highlighted some specifics related to the financial impacts of some of the above noted changes. Some have been factored into the numbers and some are still unknowns. Between certified and non-certified staffing, we will be spending close to \$180K for staffing due to COVID-19. Mr. Yamin fielded some specific questions from Board members, and a lengthy discussion ensued.

#### **2. LRMS schedules changes due to COVID requirements**

These changes were discussed during the Curriculum Committee and detailed how many periods there will be per day, how students will be escorted to lunch, how much support staff will be available and a digital music program will be available.

#### **3. R16 Reopening Plan**

This plan was submitted to the state on 7/24/20. Correspondence was sent out to R16 families and staff on 7/14, 8/5, and 8/12, about updates to our Reopening

Plan. Included in the plan was a schedule from Ryan Mackenzie for both high school and middle school, which will be sent out once a month for updating, if necessary. A comprehensive plan was discussed at the community Zoom meeting this afternoon, participated by almost 400 people and was added as Action Item 9 to tonight's agenda. It was also noted that the first week of school (September 1-4) will be half days for students.

4. R16 Re-Entry Professional Learning (Michele Raynor)

Mrs. Raynor briefly outlined the PD schedule for staff, some virtual aspects and most in person. All staff to report to work on 8/26/20; the Back to School Breakfast on this day will be virtual, the faculty meetings at each school will be in-person. COVID Training will take place 8/27/20; scheduled professional learning on 8/28/20. On August 31st, all staff will report to their respective schools for in-person on site training with the administrators as presenters on preparing for re-entry and hybrid learning.

5. Discuss change to substitute teacher pay.

Mr. DiLeone researched some surrounding towns to make sure the Region was competitive. At \$90/day the Region falls somewhere in the middle for substitute teacher pay. Some recommendations were discussed such as bumping up the base pay, coming up with a tiered system etc. Mr. Yamin said this topic will be open to suggestions, no changes were made as of yet.

6. Welcome New Director of Facilities - Mark Parrino.

Mr. Yamin read a letter welcoming Mr. Parrino. Mr. Parrino stated that, as a Prospect resident whose children went through the R16 school system, he is excited to begin his new position and is happy to be able to give back to the community. His first day in Region 16 will be August 31, 2020.

**B. Action Items**

1. Act to approve proposed (revised) school calendar for 2020-2021.

A MOTION was made by Robert Hiscox and SECONDED by Christine Arnold to approve proposed (revised) school calendar for 2020-2021.

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0)

**20-090**

2. Act to accept LRMS Spanish Teacher Stacey Groshart's letter of resignation.

A MOTION was made by Ben Catanzaro and SECONDED by Nazih Noujaim to accept LRMS Spanish Teacher Stacey Groshart's letter of resignation.

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0)

**20-091**

3. Act to accept LRMS ELA Teacher Wendy Zullo's letter of resignation.

A MOTION was made by Robert Hiscox and SECONDED by Roxann Vaillancourt to accept LRMS ELA Teacher Wendy Zullo's letter of resignation.

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0)

**20-092**

4. Act to hire new certified staff for 2020-2021.  
A MOTION was made by Nazih Noujaim and SECONDED by Christine Arnold to hire new certified staff for 2020-2021: Marisa Macek, Heather Constantinescu, Molly Griffin, Christina Esposito, Moira Wynne, Jessica Jennings.  
**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0) **20-093**
5. Act to approve Greenleaf electrical work at WRHS.  
A MOTION was made by Nazih Noujaim and SECONDED by Christine Arnold to approve Greenleaf electrical work at WRHS.  
**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0) **20-094**
6. Act to set proposed line item change for staffing needs by adding a World Language teacher at LRMS and eliminating the approved Transitional Teacher for K-1.  
A MOTION was made by Robert Dyer and SECONDED by Roxann Vaillancourt to set proposed line item change for staffing needs by adding a World Language teacher at LRMS and eliminating the approved Transitional Teacher for K-1.  
**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0) **20-095**
7. Act to approve the change to the approved 2021 schedule of BOE meeting dates.  
A MOTION was made by Robert Hiscox and SECONDED by Christine Arnold to approve the change to the approved 2021 schedule of BOE meeting dates.  
**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0) **20-096**
8. Act to accept Karen Murano's resignation from LRMS as a World Language Teacher.  
A MOTION was made by Roxy Vaillancourt and SECONDED by Robert Dyer to accept Karen Murano's resignation from LRMS as a World Language Teacher.  
**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0) **20-097**
9. Act to support the R16 reopening plan as highlighted in August 12, 2020 correspondence. R16 will open initially in the fall in a hybrid model.  
A MOTION was made by Robert Hiscox and SECONDED by Ben Catanzaro to support the R16 reopening plan as highlighted in August 12, 2020 correspondence. R16 will open initially in the fall in a hybrid model.  
**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0) **20-098**

### **C. Director of Finance and Business Operations Report**

Mr. DiLeone updated the Board with the following: The process with the CARES act/ESSER and related applications for funds. New Payroll Coordinator Sarah Schauss has been hired, Lisa Jones signed on to stay with the Region until June 30, 2021, and Mark Parrino has been hired as Director of Facilities. Anthem has issued a \$53,000 check crediting April's health insurance bill. The majority of this refund will credit the Region's share of October's health insurance bill with a small amount to be refunded to employees who paid into the plan in April. Eversource has raised electricity delivery rates, inflating our July electric bills. PURA has ordered Eversource to temporarily restore June's rates. Greenleaf and Eversource have identified additional measures

that have the potential to bring savings to the Region's future electric bills.

**IX. OLD BUSINESS**

**X. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Yamin will schedule an additional Zoom meeting if the community desires.

**XI. ITEMS for NEXT BOE AGENDA**

1. Financial Implications
2. Document that will break down end of year surplus and four different options.

**XII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. FYI - Soccer field donated sign at WRHS.

**XIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Personnel and Negotiations Committee - **R16 Teacher impact bargaining.**
- B. Facilities and Transportation Committee
- C. Curriculum Committee - **Meeting August 12, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**
- D. Policy Committee
- E. Public Communications
- F. Technology Committee
- G. Recognition Committee  
PTO's in all four schools have been recognized for their hard work and dedication.
- H. Liaisons:
  1. Schools
  2. Wellness Committee
  3. Professional Development Committee: **Meetings 4 Monday of month, D.O. 3:30 p.m.**
  4. 2COM
- I. Parent Advisory Council

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

A MOTION was made by Robert Dyer and SECONDED by Nazih Noujaim to adjourn the August 12, 2020, Board of Education Meeting at 7:57 p.m.

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 8.0)

**20-099**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** September 9, 2020