

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 16**  
**Special Board of Education Meeting**  
**February 15, 2023**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

		Weighted Vote <u>Per Member</u>
<i>Beacon Falls...</i>	Tiffany Burkitt-Lyga	.7
	Christine Arnold	.7
	Priscilla Cretella	.7
	Ben Catanzaro (remote for Exec. Session)	
<i>Prospect...</i>	Robert Hiscox	1.3
	Karima Jackson	1.3
	Roxann Vaillancourt	1.3
	Robert Dyer	1.3

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jessica Ritter, Atty. at Law, Shipman and Goodwin LLP

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Robert Hiscox, at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Woodland Regional High School in Beacon Falls, CT.

**A. Pledge of Allegiance**

**B. Roll Call**

Roll was called and a quorum was present.

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

**II. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Hiscox thanked everyone for their attendance and stated his intention to clear up any misinformation. It was clarified that the Board had no prior knowledge of the matter being discussed. Mr. Hiscox provided a timeline of how the events were discovered and the subsequent steps. Mr. Hiscox stated there was no cover up. Lastly, Mr. Hiscox requested that public speakers be respectful.

**III. COMMENT**

**A. Town Officials**

Gerard Smith, First Selectman, Beacon Falls spoke regarding a parking issue and called for a recommendation that would solve the issue.

**B. Public Comments - Note: Public Comment will be limited to five (5) minutes per speaker with a maximum of 45 minutes per subject. The BOE will not reply to comments made at a meeting. The Superintendent or Board Chair will respond to a concern within five business days**

Michele LoRusso, resident of Prospect, spoke in regards to Mr. Yamin's visibility in the schools and her feelings that Mr. Yamin makes decisions in the best interest of students.

Joan Overby, resident of Beacon Falls, spoke and quoted the CT Code of Professional Responsibilities. Ms. Overby felt that Mr. Yamin made a choice and not a mistake.

Vincent Balsamo, resident of Prospect, expressed his disappointment yet stated that the event does not define Mr. Yamin. He asked for the Board to retain Mr. Yamin as Superintendent.

Sandra D'Amelio, resident of Prospect, shared her belief that Mr. Yamin has a caring spirit and goes above and beyond. She also spoke of his presence in the schools and rapport with students.

Maureen Carroll, resident of Beacon Falls, posed a series of questions to the Board. Ms. Carroll shared her feeling that the trust of the public was violated and that she feels Mr. Yamin is not a good role model.

Allen Thibodeau, resident of Prospect, spoke in regards to clarifying an interview with a news media in which his comments were misrepresented. Mr. Thibodeau feels a serious mistake was made but that all people make mistakes and learn from them. Mr. Thibodeau shared his positive sentiments towards Mr. Yamin.

Kevin Killeen, resident of Prospect, referred to Mr. Yamin as compassionate and fair. Mr. Killeen feels that a person's recovery after a fall is what matters.

Peter Morcey, resident of Waterbury, spoke in high regards to Mr. Yamin. He also stated he did not feel his performance would be impacted.

Rima McGeehan, resident of Prospect, spoke through the lens of a principal, parent and resident. She shared her opinion that Mr. Yamin has made a tremendous impact on the school district and his strongest asset is providing a positive climate and culture.

Tina Valdez, resident of Beacon Falls, recalled a past experience with Mr. Yamin in which she felt chastised and that Mr. Yamin should not be immune from consequences.

Dino Verrelli, resident of Beacon Falls, feels the community and staff should be able to be surveyed anonymously. Mr. Verrelli went through the timeline of events and quoted a section of Mr. Yamin's contract. Mr. Verrelli shared his concern regarding integrity and morality. Mr. Verrelli also shared his concern about Mr. Yamin meeting his job requirements and the requirements of his plea deal.

Joe Rotella, resident of Prospect, spoke as a concerned parent. He appreciates the apology but worries about the double standard. Mr. Rotella was hopeful that tips would be shared on how to speak to the Region's children regarding this incident.

Lauren Hill, resident of Beacon Falls, spoke about her concern regarding transparency. Ms. Hill recalled an event in which her daughter was injured in the Region on a playground that she said had not been inspected. Ms. Hill encouraged Board members to make the right decision and to not be biased.

Rachel Cacace, resident of Prospect, shared her dissatisfaction with what the children are seeing on social media and the questions she is receiving from her child regarding the incident. Ms. Cacace is concerned for the impressionable children and implored the Board to make the right decision.

Jen Gilloren, resident of Beacon Falls, shared her disappointment with dishonesty and called for Mr. Yamin to be reprimanded. Ms. Gilloren hopes that Mr. Yamin will be able to build back the trust of the community but feels at this time the kids deserve better.

Laurie Lestage, resident of Prospect, shared that the Board owes it to Prospect to do the right thing and she wants the wrongs to be corrected.

George Mowad, resident of Prospect, shared his opinion that Mr. Yamin cares 110% about the kids and while he does not condone what happened he feels Mr. Yamin will do right by the children.

Mary Bernegger, resident of Prospect, shared her experience in which she felt Mr. Yamin did not have the best interest of her child in mind. She expressed her feelings of betrayal and distrust.

Ashtyn Dubroski, resident of Beacon Falls, shared her opinion that mistakes must come with consequences and she believes if the same was done by her son at WRHS that he would be heavily punished.

A MOTION was made by Tiffany Burkitt-Lyga and SECONDED by Robert Dyer to move to Executive Session at 6:57 p.m. to discuss Superintendent's performance to include Attorney Jessica Ritter and Superintendent.

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 7.3)

**23-019**

#### **IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*Mr. Catanzaro joined the Executive Session remotely.*

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:16 p.m. and the meeting resumed.

Mr. Hiscox read the following:

Whereas Michael Yamin, Superintendent of Schools, serves as a role model for the Region 16 Public Schools community, and

Whereas the Superintendent's conviction for misdemeanor reckless driving in Florida while visiting family is inconsistent with that responsibility, and

Whereas the Superintendent has conveyed his deep regret for his actions and accepts consequences as described below without objection, and

Whereas the Superintendent will provide proof of completion of an alcohol counseling program or other similar training.

Now, therefore, be it MOVED, that the Board hereby suspends the Superintendent for two weeks without pay for this unfortunate incident, and be it FURTHER MOVED that the Board Chair is hereby authorized to codify the mutual agreement between the Board and Superintendent that any recurrence of this or similar conduct will result in Mr. Yamin's termination from employment.

**V. ACTION ITEM**

A MOTION was made by Tiffany Burkitt-Lyga and SECONDED by Robert Dyer to suspend the Superintendent for two weeks without pay for this unfortunate incident, and be it FURTHER MOVED that the Board Chair is hereby authorized to codify the mutual agreement between the Board and Superintendent that any recurrence of this or similar conduct will result in Mr. Yamin's termination from employment.

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 7.3)

**23-020**

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

A MOTION was made by Tiffany Burkitt-Lyga and SECONDED by Karima Jackson to adjourn the February 15, 2023, Special Board of Education Meeting at 8:19 p.m.

**ALL IN FAVOR** (weighted vote totals 7.3)

**23-021**

Christine Arnold,

Board Secretary

*These minutes are subject to Board Approval,*

*Kelly Rodriguez, Board Clerk*