In The Matter Of:

DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

December 17, 2019

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ARKANSAS DIVISION OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

DECEMBER 17, 2019

APPEARANCES

PANEL MEMBERS:

DR. IVY PFEFFER Chairperson/DESE Deputy Commissioner
MR. GREG ROGERS DESE Asst. Commissioner –
                  Fiscal and Admin. Services
MR. MIKE WILSON Attorney & Education Advocate
MR. PHIL BALDWIN CEO, Citizens Bank
DR. ANGELA KREMERS Deputy Director –
                  CTE/Ark. Dept. of Career Ed.

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT DESE Attorney

ALSO APPEARING:

MS. TRACY WEBB DESE Coordinator of Monitoring
                  and Systems Support
MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN DESE Public School Program Advisor

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
- Auditorium
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas

TIME: 9:06 a.m. - 2:47 p.m.
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EXHIBITS

A-3: MOUNTAIN HOME HS CAREER ACADEMIES

EXHIBIT ONE (1)
Mission Statement, ReVisioning, and Career and Life Readiness Definition

EXHIBIT TWO (2)
MHPS Pathways Crosswalk Handout

B-2: ACADEMICS PLUS CHARTER SCHOOLS

EXHIBIT ONE (1)
Letters of Support
- December 17, 2019

PROCEEDINGS

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Good morning. We're going to call the December 17, 2019 Charter Authorizing Panel to order. I want to welcome everyone here today. My name is Ivy Pfeffer; I'm the Chair of the Charter Authorizing Panel. And we've got a little bit smaller number today, but we do have four members of our Charter Authorizing Panel here and so we can go ahead and proceed. Mr. Greg Rogers will be joining us later, but we'll just pick him up on the next agenda items after he gets here.

I would like for you to check your cell phone devices to make sure they have been silenced.

And, Ms. Sharon Hill, we want to welcome you here, our court reporter. She will be providing a transcript of the meeting and it will also be posted on the DESE website. Since she is doing this we ask that anyone who's going to be speaking today speak clearly in the microphone so that we can get it recorded and also so our viewing audience can be watching via live-stream.

CONSENT AGENDA

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we'll go ahead and begin this morning with our Consent Agenda. And we have our meeting minutes and also the meeting schedule on
the Consent Agenda. So if you've had time to review that, and if we're ready for a motion, I'll entertain a motion.

MR. WILSON: Madam Chair, I move the adoption of the entire Consent Agenda, both items, if that's proper.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We have a motion to approve our Consent Agenda.

DR. KREMERS: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And a second.

All those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And so the Consent Agenda is approved, and we can move on with our Action Agenda.

A-1: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION – SILOAM SPRINGS

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So the first item is a hearing for our public charter school renewals, and the first district is Siloam Springs. And, Ms. McLaughlin, will you introduce that for us?


We have Siloam Springs High School. They are a district conversion charter that was initially
authorized on November 19, 2014. The charter is approved to serve students in grades 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 1600.

We have representatives from the Siloam Springs School District that are appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel to request a renewal of the current charter through June 30, 2026. Mr. Jody Wiggins, superintendent, Rob Lindley, high school principal, and Jerrie Price, high school assistant principal are here to make the presentation. And you will want to swear them in. They will have 20 minutes to make their presentation. If there is no opposition, they will have an additional 5 minutes. And then that will be followed up with your questions and answers.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So if all the representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in opposition please stand to receive the oath. You can come on up here because y'all will probably want to stay near the front. All right. If you will raise your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So please state your
name for the record as you speak, and you're recognized and we'll go ahead and get started. You have 20 minutes.

SUPT. WIGGINS: Good morning. I would like to thank the Panel for allowing us to come down and present this morning. Rob Lindley is our high school principal, Jerrie Price is our assistant principal at the high school, and they'll be doing most of the presentation.

I would just like to say at the beginning that five years ago we came down and asked for our original charter because of a need in our community. And that need had been presented to us by the Coalition of Industry Leaders and our Chamber of Commerce, and it was centered around CTE, career and technical education specifically, industrial maintenance program of study. And so we started there and have grown that, and I think Jerrie is going to expand upon that quite a bit. But I want to thank you for the original charter and I want to thank you for this opportunity. And I'll turn it over to Jerrie.

MS. PRICE: Good morning. I'm Jerrie Price. I am the assistant principal at Siloam Springs and I'll be doing the majority of our presentation this
morning. I do want to thank you for the opportunity to tell our story, and that is what we feel that this is; it really is an opportunity for us to tell a little bit about who we are and kind of what our goals are and what we hope to do in the future.

At any point that you tell your story hopefully most of it is positive but you have some things that you're working on. And so in our presentation today we hope to present to you the things that we've done in the past five years under the charter that we were granted, and then look at the things that we need to do better as we move forward, as well as things that we want to iterate on as in repeat and do even more of the work that we're doing in our community.

I'd like to begin just with a review of our charter of the last five years. And the things that we're going to highlight here are the types of program that we are typical for in Siloam Springs, which are just partnerships between us and our community that kind of marry our community needs with the skills of our students to bring together to a place where our kids are getting real-life experiences that are going to lead to careers in our community that are valued and needed. With this, that partnership and that rich history is really how
we developed all of our programs.

And I'm going to start with our Industrial Maintenance program, which is kind of a Keystone program for us at Siloam Springs. Our Industrial Maintenance program, as Mr. Wiggins said, started when our industries came to us and just asked for help. They were really having a difficult time getting skilled labor within the different plants and industries in our region in the areas of maintenance in particular; so we began the process of researching and trying to develop a program that could meet that need. In 2015, when we started this program 69% of the industries in northwest Arkansas reported that they were having trouble finding skilled labor to fill the needs that they had in their different industries, and in particular in the industrialized plants that we have in northwest Arkansas. We started our program as a -- in a desire to not only give our kids opportunities but to meet that need. In 2017, that need had gone from 69% not being able to find skilled labor down to 50 -- sorry -- down to 57 -- or, sorry, 46% not being able to find skilled labor; so we made a reduction of 23% in northwest Arkansas. Now while our program is not the only program that has filled that gap, we feel like that
this partnership between high schools, technical schools, and the industries has been what has led to filling that gap. And then our program -- we were the first of its kind in Arkansas, probably one of the first in the nation to have an Industrial Maintenance program in a high school. And what we've done is really just come together as a team with our industry partners, built a curriculum that works to meet their needs, and then also exposes our students to everything that they need to be successful in the realm of industrial maintenance.

The next program that we tackled after Industrial Maintenance in our CASS program is our Registered Medical Assistant program. So, typically Registered Medical Assistant programs are found in technical schools in junior colleges. We were the first in the state of Arkansas to house one in our high school. And so with Registered Medical Assistant our goal was simply to meet the need for shortage in nurses. Now while our students don't leave as nurses, what it does do is that our -- we found that our local clinics and our hospitals were starting to use Registered Medical Assistants in their shortage of nurses to fill that gap. So we felt like if we offered something different -- this
is above CNA, it's different than CNA, and it allows
our students to go in and actually fill a very
specific need that hospitals and clinics need. And
so in our Registered Medical Assistant program it is
kind of a capstone where they end all of their
medical professions classes with a class called
Medical Specialization. They receive over 200 hours
of classroom training leading up to that year, and
then 100 hours of clinical training. So they
actually go into the hospitals, into the medical
clinics and learn what nurses do. We thought this
did two things: it gave them a leg-up in their
opportunities, not only for jobs right out of high
school but also in nursing school. Those that want
to go on to be nurses have something kind of in their
hands that they can say "hey, I have this and I have
this experience and that allows me a little bit
better opportunity in nursing school." It's very
competitive with the shortage that's happening, and
so we kind of married those two things together.

One that I want to visit about as well is
Panther Creative. Every school -- not every school,
but lots of schools have a Small Business Operations
class, and so they run things like a school store or
something similar to that. In Siloam Springs we
developed a marketing firm. So what we did was we took our Small Business Operations students, those business minded kids; we got them to go into the community and connect with our small businesses to see what their needs were. And what we found was that the need was really for marketing materials, for training videos, marketing videos, paper goods that they could send out in marketing. So we developed a marketing firm. Our students that are the business students connect with the small businesses; they bring that need back, they connect with the creative team; the creative team fills the need, whether that's promotional videos, training materials, marketing materials that are paper; and then they send that back to the small businesses for them to use in their areas. This allows small businesses an opportunity to have high-quality marketing materials at a very affordable cost to them and it allows our students to do really -- like real-life projects that we feel are just so important. It fills the need for our community and, secondly, it gives our kids needed skills and internship hours.

Our other program that I don't have listed here is a Bilingual Customer Service program where our upper-level Spanish students, our AP Spanish students
participate in a class where they learn customer service and then they go fill a need for translation services in our small businesses. So in our community we're about 35% Hispanic, and that allows those small businesses that really don't have a Hispanic person working for them an opportunity to have translation services; it gives our kids good internship hours and very practical experience, and then meets the needs in our community.

As you can tell with all of those programs what we have done is take the needs of our community, marry that to the skills of our students, and bring that together in a way that gives real-life experiences for our kids but also meets the needs of our stakeholders.

I'd like to highlight a few of our CTE programs of study. Of course, we have kind of just the normal things. I think some of the newer things that have come in since we were here last is our drones course. So we have an FAA certified drone pilot as one of our teachers and she teaches that course, and we're going to work on expanding that as well. The other expansions that we're bringing onboard, hopefully coming up in the next cycle of our charter, are cyber security; we're going to re -- kind of add back in
that EMT program to go with our medical specializations; and then the CASE curriculum, which is a very rigorous agriculture curriculum that focuses on the sciences.

In Siloam Springs one of the things that we really focus on, as do a lot of schools in the state of Arkansas now, are industry certifications. I feel that in a lot of ways we really led -- with our Industrial Maintenance program we really led the charge with this. We used the NCCER core curriculum, which has a series of certifications that are nationwide. We also offer within that program an AWS welding certification. That certification is recognized -- it's probably the most nationally recognized welding certification out there, and our kids have the opportunity to lead with that certification. We also, again, do the FFA -- FAA drone certification, and then we have several others, including American Allied Health, our Registered Medical Assistant, phlebotomy, those things as well that I've already talked about.

In Siloam Springs last year our students earned 624 total industry certifications. Most of those were in Microsoft, and so our kids leave well-versed with a tremendous amount of computer skills. But we
also have some very specialized certifications, like childcare. We offer a parapro for students that might want to go on and even maybe work as a parapro and work their way through college to become a teacher. We have several others that you can see on our list up there.

One of the things that we really pride ourselves in Siloam Springs with is our connection. As you can tell, our connection between our students and our industry -- we start in the 8th grade with a hands-on career fair; we have our industry representatives come in and they have something for the kids to do. For example, La-Z-Boy brings a chair, a part -- all the parts of a chair and the students go through and they put together a La-Z-Boy recliner. So that's a hands-on career fair; that starts in the 8th grade. In high school we do industry tours to give our kids exposure to all of the different things that are available in northwest Arkansas. We do those in Siloam Springs; we do those in all of northwest Arkansas. And then we have representatives from industry come in, and sometimes our students go to their places on a tour and then they provide lunch for the students and HR directors go through all of the things that they do in that business.
And then, finally, we have a reverse career fair. This is a capstone project for our students in our CTE program, and what they do is the students prepare a visual portfolio. And so we have them all set up in our -- in the concourse of our gym and our industry representatives come in and do informal interviews with the students. And after those interviews they give them feedback on their communication skills, their professionalism, their presentation, and it just really gives the opportunity for our kids to kind of have a little bit of practice in those soft skills that are so needed.

With this I've included a few of the flyers. The students prepared these flyers about themselves. It's just one thing -- these are take-aways, so the industry folks can grab this and take it with them if they are looking at hiring in the future or they just want to show kind of what we're doing at Siloam Springs High School. So you can get a close-up of one of those flyers. This one is Caroline Dinger, so one of our former students.

So the only other things that's really new that I didn't present here is more of an academic course. We've developed a personalized learning program in Siloam Springs, and that program is a flexibly-paced,
mastery-based, project-based program of learning. We have about 300 students that participate in that program now, with about 200 of those students completing all of their core courses in a personalized learning environment, similar to an online environment or a virtual environment except that we have the teachers right there in the classroom, we utilize a digital curriculum, and we allow the students to flexibly pace their way through those programs. And I can answer questions about that when we finish up if you have more questions there.

At this time I'd like to go through our original charter goals. So these are our -- the original goals that we set when we developed the charter, and I'm just going to walk through each one of them individually.

So our first goal was that 70% of our graduating seniors would meet the four ACT college readiness benchmarks. This is one of the goals that we did not meet. And while we're performing above the state average on the ACT, these readiness benchmarks have been very difficult for us to master. As you can see, those percentages are quite low. And so we've put some things in place over the last few years, and
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I'm going to talk about several things that are actually working towards this goal, along with our goals for ACT Aspire. But in the -- just for this part I'm going to talk about how we have developed kind of a focused, very systemic growth plan for our school. And so I know everybody has a SLIP plan, they have their school level improvement plan. Ours really revolves around these readiness benchmarks and around literacy skills. And so what we've done, last year we actually implemented professional learning communities across the board. So we had professional learning communities in our core classes before last year, but last year was the first year that we had across-the-board school-wide professional learning communities. This year we also added common planning time for all PLC teams, and that's electives and core. And then we also initiated our intervention program. So every Wednesday we have a 40-minute intervention period that our students participate in and those interventions are designed revolving around the way students perform in their class, but primarily around literacy skills and ACT benchmark readiness skills. Okay. That's pretty much that.

We also -- well, we'll go on. I'll talk about our literacy plan as we kind of move forward.
So our second goal was that all CASS -- now when I say CASS I mean Industrial Maintenance on the front-end, but we also include that medical specialization program that's under the CASS umbrella as well. So CASS stands for Career Academy of Siloam Springs, and that's really primarily our CTE students. So our goal was that all CASS students would take the ACT their junior year. We didn't meet this goal. We did in medical professions; they have all -- so far all taken the ACT. But in our Industrial Maintenance program there are a lot of those students that do not plan to go to college. They either are going to go to a technical school or they're going to go straight to work, and so some of those students did not take the ACT.

Our third goal was to meet or exceed the ACT state average and we've met that goal. We have been above the state average just slightly through the years.

Our fourth goal -- and this is where we're kind of going to camp; we're going to kind of sit awhile here because this is where we found that we need the most improvement at Siloam Springs High School. So our goal was to meet or exceed the state average on English Language Arts for -- originally it was the
PARCC assessment, of course now it's the ACT Aspire. As you look at this chart, you can see that we really only met this goal one year of the four that we're in in our charter so far and we really struggled with our literacy overall. And as we really broke down our literacy scores, particularly last year and this year, we really just came to the conclusion that a lot of our problem is a systemic problem. It's not necessarily our English teachers' problem; it's that we have honestly just not done a good job of teaching the literacy skills across the curriculum in every area. As we break down those literacy skills that are tested on the ACT Aspire, we've really just taken the approach that everybody in our school is becoming a literacy teacher. So this year what we've done is we've developed a school-wide literacy plan. So we have our school level improvement plan, but we have a literacy plan that is school-wide just for these sets of skills. And kind of the approach that we took, we broke down the ACT Aspire scores; we looked at the actual test questions that were being missed and broke that into central literacy skills; we put together a team, and then that team we gave the charge of producing a series of professional development courses for our teachers. So every other
week, on Wednesday afternoons, for about an hour-and-a-half our teachers meet with specialized teachers -- English teachers, literacy coaches, those kinds of folks that we have in our building and in our district. They meet with them and they do breakout sessions for literacy skills that they are learning to -- learning in order to create activities for our kids. And so every other week they do a break -- we do breakout sessions and they choose which ones work best for them. In the PLCs our literacy coach is supporting our PLC teams with this process as well; so as they go into their breakout sessions they learn a specific activity or strategy, then our literacy coach supports them in the PLC meetings. We then develop common formative assessments that revolve around those literacy strategies, come together, talk about that the way our kids perform, how they did, and then make that -- build that part into interventions for those students.

Starting in January, we will also be doing -- all juniors will -- for our intervention program, all juniors will be doing ACT type prep, and so we're developing those courses as well. So students will have breakout sessions that they can choose from based on their needs, based on their ACT Aspire
scores, and we'll kind of direct those students on
where we feel is the greatest need for them.

Our sixth goal was that 90% of our students
completing the program -- and when it said "the
program" that meant the Industrial Maintenance
program -- would participate in job shadowing,
industry tours, and internships. This one we do
across the board. Every CTE program does job
shadowing, internships; we have that opportunity for
every completer program. And then we do a lot of
industry tours every year. So we've met this goal
with a hundred-percent participation.

Goal number seven was that 90% of our students
completing our CASS program would obtain at least
three hours of college credit or at least one
industry certification before graduation. A hundred-
percent of our students that complete our CTE
programs get at least one industry certification so
far; so we've really done well with this.

[TIMER BELL RINGS]

MS. PRICE: Our next goal was that 90% of our
graduating seniors would attend college or technical
school or enter the workforce at an entry-level
position that pays more than minimum wage. This is
one that we found very difficult to measure. Those
kids are hard to track down once they graduate. And so we do -- of the kids that have answered our surveys between 75% and 90% of our students have met this goal.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we're at the 20 minutes.

MS. PRICE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If there's not anybody here to speak in opposition, you have an additional 5 minutes and so we'll just let you keep going.

MS. PRICE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And there is nobody here to

MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So you go ahead --

MS. PRICE: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and continue on.

MS. PRICE: Graduation rate of 90%, we've met that goal.

So this takes us to our next five years, kind of what do we see in our future. With this charter the main focus of our charter has really been -- and I'm going to go through -- all of the actual performance goals are really just incremental increases; so I'm going to go through this fairly quickly. But it's just incremental increases in our ACT composite
score, our literacy scores and our math scores for our next series -- the next five years, and so you can see those. We also want to increase our participation with the ACT, increase annually by 3% for math in ACT Aspire, the same for literacy except it's at -- we're increasing by .2. Our goal is to increase -- sorry -- for ACT -- my clicker -- sorry, it's clicking the same things over; my bad. Okay. So we're going to -- our goal is to increase the percentage of students being identified as ready for ELA, so English Language Arts, and that's 3% annually is our goal; increase the percentage of students being identified as ready in regards to science -- that is also 3% annually is our goal; graduation rate of 90% annually -- something is -- there we go.

Our next steps as far as program changes, in the next two to four years we would like to develop a virtual school program for our students at Siloam Springs High School. We -- obviously we see the need for the virtual program; it's very common in northwest Arkansas, as it is becoming extremely common within the nation. Our next year will be a planning year, is our desire, and then we will start to work through the process of just building that program. All the new waivers that you see within our
request really lend themselves to the virtual environment. For example, food services, the Moment of Silence, and then the school nurse -- those are the new ones. Our kids will still have opportunity for food services and school nurse, even if they're virtual students, as long as they come to our campus.

We just felt those waivers were necessary for those students that stay at home, you know, all the time as we have a full online program developed.

Rob, did you want to add anything?

MR. LINDLEY: Well said. Very good.

MS. PRICE: So at this point we just -- you know, if you have any questions we would like to field those at this time.

CHAIRMAN PFEPFER: Okay. Thank you very much. And I do want to compliment you on a very well-organized presentation and I really appreciate how you walked us through your goals of, you know, what you -- for the past goals and the future. So that's very helpful, I think, for us in thinking about our questions.

Before we do start with individual member questions though I was going to check with Legal, and it may be helpful if we go ahead and look at any of the legal reviews if there's any remaining issues.
So, Ms. Hyatt, I think we had -- that is one of our documents.

MS. HYATT: Yes, ma'am. Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division.

So there are a couple of things I think we have worked out as of this morning, but I would like them to just note for the record that we've done that. So I'm going to go through some of those.

On Flexible Scheduling my question was did they intend to rescind the request for the entire waiver of 6-16-102 or just the recess provision. Their response was yes.

So can you just verify, is it the entire law or just that one section?

MS. PRICE: Yes. It's our understanding that based on the law changes that we don't need that waiver anymore of that. So we are asking to rescind that request completely.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And, Ms. Hyatt, so for the virtual option that would not be necessary then?

MS. HYATT: So in the virtual context if they're going to operate any grade between K-5 they might need the recess provision. So I'm not sure the grades for your virtual program, what the intention is, or if they're planning on as they roll-out the
virtual program coming back with an amendment request
as they see the need for additional waivers.

   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

   SUPT. WIGGINS: We would be looking at starting
in the upper grades and then rolling down. And I
don't know if that's going to happen within --

   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

   SUPT. WIGGINS: -- five years. So if we need to
we can come back.

   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we certainly
appreciate that.

   MS. HYATT: So similar on the second one for the
Superintendent, I believe they intended to rescind
the request for the entire waiver. And I just need
them to verify that for the record.

   MS. PRICE: So we are rescinding that waiver.

   We will always keep a superintendent that follows --

   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: It's on the record.

   MS. HYATT: They tried to pull a fast one on you
there.

   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

   MS. HYATT: Okay. So there are just two
additional ones.

   On Teacher Licensure we just need to clear up
exactly what they're asking for. So my understanding
is that they're asking for a waiver of Section 7 of
the ADE rules governing Educator Licensure, which
would be if you had a licensed teacher teaching
outside of your licensure area and 6-17-401 -- no,
sorry -- 4-0 -- yeah, 409, not 401; excuse me. And I
just want to make sure I have it right because we've
had a lot of back-and-forth. So if I've
misunderstood something --

MS. PRICE: So the need for the Teacher Licensure waiver, we have in our CASS program in the past hired industry professionals -- an industry professional that was not yet licensed.

(COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Rogers arrived at 9:37 a.m.)

MS. PRICE: Now he went through the process to get his licensure, but we did hire someone that was an industry professional to teach that course. And we could in the foreseeable future also hire non-licensed professionals to teach industry certification type courses. That could be true of medical professions; that could be true of any of our CTE programs. So we actually do need the waiver for the licensure for that reason. There are occasions where we have licensed teachers teaching outside of their area, and in the past we've done the ALP
process for that. But we've also used the waiver --
for example, our yearbook class, that certification
really doesn't require that anybody have any of the
desktop publishing or media specialization. So we
use a business teacher to teach our yearbook class
because now yearbook is all digital. And so the
skill-set has actually shifted even though the
licensure has not. So that's a situation where we
have a licensed teacher teaching outside of her
licensure area. So, we need both.

MS. HYATT: Okay. I just want to make sure that
I stated the waivers you're asking for correctly. So
can you just verify that for me?

MS. PRICE: Yes, you stated them correctly.

MS. HYATT: Perfect. Thank you.

And then the very last thing is just they have
requested a waiver of Food Services. We've granted
that waiver before and their rationale makes complete
sense. The only thing I just need them to verify for
the record is that they're aware they still have to
meet all federal requirements about food service and
that this panel can't waive any federal requirement.

MS. PRICE: Thank you, Mary Claire. We are
aware that we have to meet all federal guidelines.

MS. HYATT: That's all.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, we will open it up for questions.

Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes, thank you. So I really enjoyed the presentation in the Career and Technical Education program of study; it was really strong. I just -- one question I had in hearing you talk about that -- and I know you all started because of the need of the industry in the area. So let me ask, is the industry satisfied? Is there anything else that they are asking you to do in the future beyond this program of study?

SUPT. WIGGINS: I would say with the original issue with Industrial Maintenance I'm not sure that we have given the numbers -- provided the numbers that they were hoping for. We have been graduating anywhere from 18 to 25 a year, and I think they were hoping for more than that. But our kids coming out of that two-year program have been very successful in finding jobs in the industries that -- and in the field that we are providing the skills in. So I think there has been satisfaction with the product; I think they would like us to be able to churn out a few more.

MR. BALDWIN: Are the children that graduate,
are they -- is the retention with the industry good
or do they move on after --

SUPT. WIGGINS: That's hard to track. We have
connections with our -- our Simmons Foods is
headquartered there; we have good connections there,
and the ones who have gone to work there stay. One
year, out of 24 I think we placed 11 with Tyson and I
know, six months in, 10 of the 11 were still with
them. And the feedback I have gotten was that was a
much better retention rate at that point in their
careers than they were getting from their headhunters
that they were paying big dollars to.

MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

MS. PRICE: As far as future programs, what we
do with our programming is we work with the Northwest
Arkansas Council and they put out a job forecast
every year that has all of the northwest Arkansas
region and the forecast for those jobs. That's
actually where we found the idea of doing Registered
Medical Assistant as opposed to CNA. And so as we
move forward with any programming changes, that's
kind of our first stop to try to find, you know,
what's going to be the most needed coming up. And in
the future, teaching is actually almost -- it's
almost to the level of number one. Interestingly enough, plumbing is going to be a huge need coming up in the next few years; and so the plumbing is actually covered with our Industrial Maintenance Technician. That program is kind of an umbrella program that gives them the opportunity to go into various, you know, areas; they can do plumbing, they can do HVAC, they can do electrical work, and then right now we're working more on the electronic side as far as the electrical technician type things. But as we move forward with programming that's where we find our information and we really try to work with them closely, and the same is true for translating with our Bilingual Customer Service. The actual Small Business Operations that came just from Siloam Springs, not from the northwest Arkansas region, as far as the need for those promotional videos and things like that. So that was just working with our community, so as we move forward that's where we'll look for those changes. Right now, we've really spent this past year and this year working on implementing all of the -- kind of the newer things for computer science and all of that; so that's kind of where we've concentrated our effort. We're also increasing our AP offerings. We've increased -- we
added three new AP courses this past year. And so
we've had some other things that are not CTE related
that we've really been working on and that -- we'll
swing back around to that, and when we do we'll go to
that Northwest Arkansas Council for our advice on
what we do next.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: Just a couple of questions on
programs of study. And I love the layout of all the
options that students have. I love that you've got
CASE Ag added as the goal because it is that enriched
curriculum with the science, which should help some
of the achievement. Because I can see from all your
data you've got growth happening, but not as much on
the achievement side; so to move that needle will be
the literacy getting into the science, math. So, you
know, since it is CTE related, you know, even the
Family and Consumer Sciences, if you would consider
like Chemistry of Foods where it's a little bit
higher science, and that also they can get credit
towards that science credit --

MS. PRICE: Right.

DR. KREMERS: -- with Chemistry of Foods. So,
continuing to kind of integrate those that are a
little bit higher levels so that maybe the
achievement numbers may change.

But with the programs of study are you using the CTE state programs of study, those core sequences, especially considering Perkins Five and the changes --

MS. PRICE: Yes.

DR. KREMERS: -- in the program of study for that?

MS. PRICE: Yes. And our CTE coordinator, Ross White, couldn't be here today.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.

MS. PRICE: But he is very -- I mean he is very up-to-date in all of that, and so, yes, we are looking at those core sequences. We're really just -- at this point we're kind of in a holding pattern until all the new stuff comes out, which classes are for sure going away and what's coming out. And so we still have some questions on, you know, where we're going even just next year for that. But he's definitely up-to-date on that and we're working toward that. And that's great advice from you. I appreciate that on like the food chemistry and those kinds of things. I'll take that back to him.

DR. KREMERS: That's great. And working with a CTE coordinator, they'll -- that -- I'm glad you guys
have that good relationship, because they'll make
sure your programs of study are still current and
that that helps you have the opportunity --

MS. PRICE: Right.

DR. KREMERS: -- for the federal funding,
especially to take the certification exams. And
there are a lot of new certifications available. So
I would also work with him on all of the additional
-- all of the new programs of study have additional
certifications that are very specific to each course.

MS. PRICE: Right.

DR. KREMERS: So they can begin to staff them --
and, of course, the goal of Perkins Five is that
every student earns an industry credential.

MS. PRICE: Exactly.

DR. KREMERS: And then one question I had about
the graduation rate, your goal for the next five
years, you have it at 90% and I see in your data that
you already have exceeded that. And so is it
maintenance? Because you've -- there's a variance
for some reason that you're saying 90 when you've had
like 93 and 94?

MS. PRICE: No. And actually -- I actually
think that --

Jody, were you on the team that wrote that
particular part of it?

SUPT. WIGGINS: Yes.

MS. PRICE: So, originally, we had wavered between 89 and 90 percent. And so I would just have to answer that yes, that is a maintenance. The one thing that -- as they changed over the last few years, the way that they calculated the graduation requirements, it gave us a little bit of instability in our numbers, and so we did keep it a little bit low. Obviously, we want all of our kids to graduate. I mean there's no -- we work really, really hard, especially in partnership with our alternative learning environment to get our kids through. And so while we would hope to be at least at 95% we did want to leave a little bit of variance in there just for those changes that did come along that dropped our numbers.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.

MS. PRICE: Our five-year rate is actually much higher than our four-year rate.

DR. KREMERS: I saw that.

MS. PRICE: But that's our four-year goal of 90%. Our five-year rate is a little bit closer to 95%.

DR. KREMERS: That's great. Because we do --
typically we see especially in Arkansas, and other states, that CTE students graduate at a higher rate than the average population just because of the hands-on and the engagement piece of it.

The only other question I had was on the industry professionals and the licensure waiver.

Many of the options are already there for permitting.

MS. PRICE: Right.

DR. KREMERS: So would you need a waiver when you have already the permit option?

MS. PRICE: I don't think we would, I mean, but I can't imagine -- you know, in our current climate in the state of Arkansas. But in northwest Arkansas, in particular, I could see a specialized need developing in a way that we could develop maybe one class that would require an industry professional to teach that. Now we could do the permit, and that's what we've done with our nurse that teaches medical professions. That's what we've done with the teacher that I talked about that we hired that was not licensed. But he was a late hire in filling a late departure, and so for a while there we had a teacher that wasn't licensed. And so it just kind of covers us and gives us a little bit of flexibility.

We are very by-the-book in Siloam Springs. We
are very transparent. We want to do things the right way one-hundred percent, and so I don't ever see a place where we would have a full-time teacher that didn't qualify for the technical permit or a full licensure. But I could see the potential for a very specialized -- even one class where an industry professional comes in and teaches a single class and then goes back to their industry job. That is an area where we could visualize that happening.

DR. KREMERS: And our office -- I don't -- you may not be aware, but we can still work with you in that instance. And so, you know, that just may be -- you know, maybe consider that waiver again, either way. But we can work with you on even that instance.

MS. PRICE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I would -- so are you asking them to reconsider the waiver they've asked for? Is that something -- or -- because I do think that there are cases where the flexibility, even out of a CTE course, depending on -- like they talked about with -- well, you were talking about a business teacher teaching and some of those. But, you know, not to have any flexibility with the types of programs that they do that might be difficult in the constant running back-and-forth and checking for
things. So, you know, I think that may be a conversation they want to have before they just automatically say no, they don't need it.

MS. PRICE: I mean to be completely honest you never know what we're going to come up with.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MS. PRICE: I mean that's just how we are. I mean if there's a need in our community that we could meet with a singleton class that was taught by a specialized person, I mean that's something we would do. And so I mean at this time it would be my preference for us to hold and to keep that request as it is. Definitely, we never use anything as a crutch in Siloam Springs and so we want -- like I said, we want to do it the right way and we want highly qualified people and we will only hire highly qualified people. But there are instances -- in the foreseeable future there are instances where I feel like it is possible that we would need that type of waiver.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And we do have the capability within the licensure system and Standards for Accreditation to look at the number of teachers in a district who are teaching a course for which they are not licensed. And I would say that it would be
incumbent upon us to do reviews regularly, and, you know, both agencies are able to look at that and dig into that data. And if we notice a marked increase from one year to the next I think then it would be time to go back and look at that, rather than limiting on the front-end.

DR. KREMERS: That sounds good.

MS. PRICE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFIEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson, do you have any questions?

MR. WILSON: Only one, briefly. In the Registered Medical Assistant program you mentioned that it appears to be a cooperative program with something called American Allied Health. I mean what is that and how does your program fit with those folks?

MS. PRICE: So American Allied Health is one of the three major testing companies in the United States for medical professions, and so American Allied Health does the testing for us. We're a testing site for that company. And so they actually certify all of our medical students in the areas that they get certified in. Primarily, it is Registered Medical Assistant and phlebotomy and we have just a couple of others that have gone and kind of reached
down and done some other certifications. But that's the primary use of that company. They're a testing company.

MR. WILSON: Yeah. They don't have a teaching program?

MS. PRICE: No, sir. They did -- they do provide some of the materials as far as review materials for the tests. But we've developed the entire curriculum.

MR. WILSON: Yeah.

MS. PRICE: Now the partnership -- really, the partnership is between us, our local hospital, and about nine clinics in Siloam Springs. And then the Gravette Hospital, I think we've had one student go there. So we've really just developed that partnership with those. That's where the -- really the innovative partnerships have been developed. Not a lot of places have students from medical programs in their facilities with hands-on. Some have them and they shadow, but our kids don't just shadow; they're taking blood pressure and temperatures and, you know, getting patients prepped for their next medical professional. So --

MR. WILSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do we have any other
questions from the Panel?

Okay. If there aren't any questions or
discussion, we can entertain -- or are there any
other issues, Legal, anything that's come up?

MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I think at this
time we can entertain a motion for the Siloam Springs
district conversion charter school.

DR. KREMERs: I move to approve.

MR. WILSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and a
second to approve.

All those in favor say aye.

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

Okay. Congratulations. Your application has
been approved.

MS. PRICE: Thank you. And, Dr. Pfeffer and the
rest of the staff, I just really want to tell you how
much we appreciate your time and your effort and your
energy on this. It really means a lot to us, and
it's been a really great experience. Thank you so
much.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And if you'll wait
just a minute we are going to fill out our online
voting sheets and each Panel Member can give some specific feedback. So if you want to wait for just a second, we always like to do that publicly.

[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I want to just commend you. Your charter program is obviously a high-quality program. I'm proud to vote to approve.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the renewal application. The students are showing growth and the plan is well thought-out. A school-wide literacy plan is in place to assist with academic achievement. Congratulations.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I also voted in favor of the motion. You've provided very clear evidence of progress and opportunities for students that's aligned to needs of your community.

Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I think that you all have produced an excellent track record over the first several years and that should be continued and confirmed.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Thank you. Have a safe trip, and congratulations.
A-2: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION - FOUNTAIN LAKE CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We're going to go ahead and continue on with our second agenda item.

And, Ms. McLaughlin, will you go ahead and present that for us?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Fountain Lake Charter High School is a district conversion charter that was initially authorized on November 20, 2014. The charter is approved to serve students in grades 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 800.

We do have representatives from Fountain Lake School District today appearing before the Charter Panel to request renewal of the current charter through June 30, 2025; so they are requesting for five years. We have Todd Baxley, high school principal; Dr. Michael Murphy, superintendent; Steve Campbell, curriculum director; and Danton Robertson, the assistant high school principal, that you will want to swear in.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So will all representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth,
and nothing but the truth?

(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And you can go ahead and come on up to the podium or the front here. Y'all have 20 minutes for your presentation. If you take a part in the presentation, if you'll just state your name and title for the record you're recognized.

MR. BAXLEY: Okay. Good morning. My name is Todd Baxley; I'm the high school principal at Fountain Lake Charter High School. I would like to take this time to thank each of you members for allowing me to stand before you and discuss our charter. I consider it a privilege and an honor.

(COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Baxley waits a moment for the PowerPoint to appear on the overhead screen.)

MR. DAN DAVIS: It was sent in as a pdf to me, so it's -- you're going to have to click a few times, like it's not done as a PowerPoint.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We have access to it. If you have something you can look at, we can look on our screens here.

MR. BAXLEY: If you'd just give me a second, I'll pull it up.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Sure. Yeah.
Can everyone get to the presentation? Okay.
And if we need to, I can print you a copy.
It'll just take a few minutes.
MR. BAXLEY: That might be helpful.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: She's going to bring you the
computer right here.
MR. BAXLEY: Okay. So I don't guess I need you
to do that.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I don't guess so. Okay.
MR. BAXLEY: Okay. I'm sorry.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You're okay.
MR. BAXLEY: Our mission statement is Supporting
Every Student, Every Day for Success. Our goal is
every student graduates, every student prepared.
This is something that we believe in as a staff, our
administration believes in it, and our students
solely believe in it.
A little bit about our school, Fountain Lake
Charter High School -- we are located in Garland
County, nestled in the Ouachita Mountains. We're
approximately seven miles northeast of Hot Springs
and we're about 20 miles south of one of the world's
largest gated communities, Hot Springs Village. Our
district serves an area of 186 square miles, to
include parts of Garland and Saline Counties. We have approximately 454 students in grades 9 through 12. The economics of the area revolve around tourism, retirement communities, the timber industry, healthcare, and retail. Because of the national forest and lakes around us, and retail, the Corp of Engineers, park services, and timber companies -- they both play a vital role in our economy. Fountain Lake Charter High School serves a student population which is about 48% free-and-reduced. Our ethnicity -- we are 84% white/Caucasian, 7.6% Hispanic and Latino, and 6.1% two or more races.

So what makes Fountain Lake Charter High School unique? Our personalized success plan. This is -- this starts in the 5th grade in our Digital COBRA Academy and is carried through the 9th grade, and then their four-year high school plan, plus an additional two years post-graduation that we keep up with where our students are going and what they're doing and their success. We transition this into Kuder Navigation or Navigator, which is a comprehensive career readiness program to help students establish a career path.

Our credentials -- National Park is one of them that we utilize and this is industry certifications
and certificate of completions from the two-year tech center. There are several things that they can do at the tech center but the four most used is our med pro, criminal justice, furniture manufacturing, and automotive. And once they get the completers in that, at graduation we give them completer cords so that they can wear and show off their certificates. We also have a welding certificate. We are the only one in Garland County that offers this. This is the first year that we have utilized this program in our agri department. We've got several students who are already in that program; we've got several students waiting to get in the program. Because we funded the welding equipment our-self, and so we've got 15 kids in that program and there's more waiting. Once completed, they get an OSHA certificate in TIG and stig welding -- stick welding, which is huge to our partnerships with Express Boats. Express Boats, we've already got a partnership with them. We send kids out there on our internship and they're waiting for these kids to get their completers in welding.

So what makes Fountain Lake also unique? Our work-based learning internships. Our first goal was to increase by 3% yearly. In 2018-2019 to the 2019-20 school year our internship program has grown by
53%, which is huge. We've got a lot more kids waiting to get in that internship and go to work. Since the initial charter our internship program has grown by 350%. Here, students learn employability skills such as soft transferrable skills; they do resume' and letter building, job interview skills, community service, and college prep. Here they fill out FAFSAs, applications for acceptance, scholarship applications, and interviews.

Places in internships -- there is a huge list there that we send our kids out to. Every one of these places of internship are partnerships that have really bought into our charter, that allows our kids to go off-campus during school hours and work their internships.

Programs of study -- we're required to offer three; however, we require a lot more than that. Audio and Video Tech and Film is a huge success at Fountain Lake; our FACS program; IPT, which is Integrated Production Technologies; plant sciences, agriculture, metals, and small business operations.

Employability skills -- we have this through a foundations class. All 9th grade students are required to take this class and here they go over interview skills, they go over professional dress,
they go over teamwork, time management, and verbal
and nonverbal communication.

Character building -- We meet for advisory. We
meet on Wednesdays. Here we identify goals, their
personal and professional goals. Students engage in
teacher-generated lessons targeting student needs.
Next year we are going to start an advisory every
day. We feel like we need more RTI. We do RTI in
the classroom but our advisory time next year will be
RTI; we're going to do our Response to Intervention
in our advisory time. We have PLC's weekly. Within
our PLC's we meet weekly and here we identify and
target the students who are in need of support and
then we will place those students in the proper
advisory classes who can give that intervention.

Student of the Month -- This goes by academic
performance, if a student is working to their fullest
potential -- not necessarily making good grades, but
just to their fullest potential and trying. And
that's one of the requirements for Student of the
Month; also, responsibility and work ethic,
citizenship and character, then leadership. We have
a senior shout-out wall for college. Student
pictures are displayed on the wall with their
acceptance to a college of their choice. We also
have a 30-plus ACT club. Student pictures are displayed on the wall of who makes a 30-plus on their ACT.

Changes in leadership and department since our initial charter -- We've had two superintendents, four principals, and three assistant principals, and that's the changes in leadership. However, three of our -- two of our assistant principals have moved on to their own buildings; they've accepted employment leading their own building. Other principals have moved on to other employment, who've just got more to bring to the table. In our departments, we've got a new math department this year alone; that's four teachers. They have also moved on to other schools -- half our science department and half our English department.

On our ACT Aspire data in grade 9, you can see the red column is the 16-17 school year; the orange column is 17-18 school year; the pink one or purple one is 18-19; and the green is the state -- 18 and 19 state average. You can see here that in grade 9 we've increased our score throughout and we are above the state average, and that's one of our goals is to do that.

ACT Aspire data on grade 10, we are weak in this
area; we know we are. We are coming up with a plan
to increase this and help our kids. And I think
through the Response to Intervention that we're going
to be implementing in our advisory classes next year
will help this. We've also offered tutoring in the
morning. Teachers are there at 7:00 and they are
helping students who need that help, all the way
through the 8:00 hour.

Here's our ACT -- ACT composite score on a five-
year trend. 2015, 18.4; 2016, 19; '17 was 18.7; '18
was 18.8; and this year is a 19.7. So you can see
that trend there in our ACT composite score. For the
last three years we have grown and we've increased
our score, while the state remained average,
consistent.

So why do we want to continue our -- to make our
school better under the charter?

We need the flexibility to expose our kids to
careers at an early age. We need the flexibility
permission to teach our kids better life skills and
educational skills. I think one of the most
important things is we want to have that ability to
hire professionals in their field and bring them into
our school and give our kids the best education that
they deserve. And one of that is we have a guy named
Mr. Delindy [ps] who leads our tech and video class. He is a non-licensed teacher, but he is doing a phenomenal job and that department is growing substantially.

Another main reason is we want to stay committed to our charter. By staying committed to our charter it teaches our kids that if we're committed they need to be committed to their education, and they have bought into that.

So waivers needed for flexibility -- the Fountain Lake School District has requested waivers to embed keyboarding, career orientation, health and safety, and fine arts. The Fountain Lake School District has requested a waiver for teacher certification as it relates to the courses we desire to embed.

Serve and identify GT students within the structure of the charter -- we do this through AP and pre-AP classes.

And then Class Size and Teaching Load.

In our Special Education we have a transition class. This is developed within the student's IEP -- resume writing, customer service, budgeting and working with money -- and I'll get into that here in a little bit with our coffee business -- soft skills,
learning about different jobs, time management, setting goals, and working with others. We also do co-teaching, which is English and mathematics. Our resource time teaches mathematics and English.

Coffee business -- our SPED department is over this. Our SPED kids are loving it. They send out a Google form to our teachers to decide what coffee they want. They enter what coffee they want, with the amount of sugar, amount of cream, and that goes back to our SPED department and from there they order -- or they fill the orders. They do time management because the teachers put on there what time they want their coffee; so they have to fulfill that order and get it to the teacher at the approximate time.

Organizational skills -- students working off-campus in our SPED department is Subway, Hot Springs Information Center, Rings and Things, and a resale clothes store. They're also open to all the other partnerships that we have available, like Express Boats.

We've got kids in our welding department that are getting their completions of welding. We also bring in guest speakers, sometimes twice a month. So some exciting things going on in our programs.

Here is our SPED department, our coffee
business. You can see here in Picture 1 that they are -- they've got an assembly line; they get the order, they fill those orders, and then they deliver to the classroom. And in the picture to the left they've got all their t-shirts, their coffee business t-shirts, and they go out and deliver that coffee.

Our SPED department mail service -- this young man's name is Tyler. He takes the mail basket and he goes down to the admin office; he collects all the mail, along with his helpers, and then they distribute that mail throughout the school system.

In our welding department -- this picture here is a young lady in our welding department. She is welding and working on her certificate, and hopefully she can go on maybe to Express Boats and be a welder out there. She's loving it and she's -- she will finish it.

In our metal working, we've got a couple of guys here that are cutting metal and then grinding it in preparation to be welded.

International Production Technologies -- this is a partnership through Siemens Corporation. Siemens has bought into our charter; they provide the training, they pay for the training, they pay for the equipment so that we can fulfill this.
This is our automated bottle filling system. Our kids have to sketch this out on paper and then they enter all this into a mathematical equation. They build the product you see here, and then they enter all kinds of mathematical equations into this CAD system. This is an automated bottle filling system. There's a lever that picks up a bottle, puts it on the conveyer belt; the conveyer belt moves to an eye where the eye catches this bottle; it stops the bottle and automatically fills the bottle with water. Pretty neat little thing going on, and our kids love it and our teacher is a fantastic teacher.

This is a vending machine. They build this from scratch. They go in and push a button, depending on what item you want in the vending machine, and it drops it down into the little tray there for you to get.

These are -- this IPT program is fantastic for engineering. It trains our guys and girls up to a point to where they could carry it on to the next level.

This is a sorting system here. These are just some of the examples that our kids do in IPT and the engineering program. And also this IPT program is the only one in the state of Arkansas, and we're
proud to have that.

On the next one is a door latch. They have to design this on paper, then they enter it into the computer, all the specs and stuff like that. And then when they're finished with it, this is the final printout. They put it into a 3D model, and then the 3D model prints exactly what they designed.

Our FACS Food and Nutrition -- this is a couple of young ladies here who are preparing food. This was for our Veterans' Day program.

On the next slide, this is Parent Guidance. Our kids participate in babies. These babies are automated where they cry, they pee, they do all kinds of stuff; they let them know when they need to take care of them. It gives them good parenting skills, but also gives them the ability to think before they act.

Film and Broadcast -- this picture here is our film and broadcast that Mr. Delindy does. He's interviewing -- these kids are interviewing our sheriff for Garland County. And then they go to this green screen and from this green screen -- it's just like Channel 16 or Channel 4 news station. It's a pretty neat deal.

On the next slide we've got a COBRA update. And
if you will play that, just a minute or two of it,
just to give you an idea of what it -- what the
finished product is.

1st VIDEO:

MRS. WATTS: My name is Lisa Watts and I'm the
high school receptionist here at Fountain Lake High
School. I just started this past year; it's my first
year here at Fountain Lake. I previously was a
substitute teacher for the District for over two
years. I have an associate's degree in Early
Education. And my background basically is I've been
a para for a few years in special education; I have
been a kindergarten enrichment teacher, and a
preschool teacher. I have two grown children and I
have five grandchildren. I'm married; I've been
married for three years. And my hobbies are
engraving picture frames, engraving glasses. And my
job is to basically make sure students get in here
safely and I answer phone calls from parents; I deal
with tardies, absentee paperwork that comes in,
anything that needs to be copied for teachers. I
enjoy what I do up here. It's very multi-tasking,
but I do enjoy it up here. And any time parents need
to come in and talk to the assistant principal/
principal, or if students need to come in and talk to
anybody here in the office.

END OF 1st VIDEO

2nd VIDEO:

FEMALE STUDENT: Last month, on November 15th, Fountain Lake senior Emory Martin signed her letter of intent with the support of her family, friends, and classmates to play volleyball --

BREAK IN VIDEO:

MR. BAXLEY: Here, she's talking and the green screen is actually behind her and they digitalized this.

VIDEO RESUMES:

FEMALE STUDENT: -- at Central Baptist College in Conway. This One Minute Wonder is brought to you by Record Studios, featuring Shondor Hampo's [ps] music.

END OF 2ND VIDEO

MR. BAXLEY: I think you get the idea of what our Film and Broadcast is. That's plenty. Thank you very much. Sometimes they can be comical and it's -- they make it fun.

But that's all I've got, and we're open to questions.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt, is there
anyone else that signed up to speak?

MS. HYATT: No, ma’am.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So you do have an additional five minutes if anyone else wants to share anything before we start questions.

SUPT. MURPHY: Good morning. My name is Dr. Michael Murphy. I have the privilege of speaking to you on behalf of the Fountain Lake School District here today.

A couple of things that I would echo is -- taking on the position and role, now serving in my fourth year and inheriting the initial charter, and seeing the facilitation of the resources being allocated, the outcomes of that was specifically helping in the element of training and equipment -- our goal has been to sustain this model of learning. And I would want to echo and identify that in Garland County we have seven school districts, and within the confines of that what I have observed and what we've been able to do is very inherently, intentionally as a culture, build a culture of true partnerships -- our partnerships with the local Chamber of Commerce and the integration of superintendents attending CTE centers around the state -- thinking about how we continue to model and provide our students an...
opportunity for the National Park Promise, which is a scholarship-driven program to where when we place them in a field of study in a consortium model that they can receive the post-secondary education free of charge. And so that's something that we're very proud of in our consortium model. And we send roughly 70 of our juniors and seniors and have one of the higher percentages of participation rates in the county because of our commitment to industry and trade skill development. We also provide opportunities for students on campus where we partner with industry and industry comes to us. And with that we open up our doors and allow our students to tour and see a wide range of career pathways, have interactions in that regard. And we've been able to do that for the last three years with very positive outcomes that have strengthened our overall percentage of increase in internships. Internships within industry are developed through relationships; relationships are developed through opportunities of dialogue, trying to address each other's immediate needs. And so the outcome of the culture in that regard has really facilitated very strong partnerships, and the charter flexibility and waivers are giving us latitude to place students in the
workplace within the school day. And that we are very thankful for and I think our parents and our community are seeing evidence of that with our job placement.

What's unforeseen -- I would tell you the unforeseen elements of the implementation of this degree of innovation has truly been us rebuilding a team. You know, one of our principals was hired by the State Department to help guide innovative practices. And so we've had to seek to replace employees because our employees become very marketable because of the skill-sets that they have to offer to school districts throughout our region. And us being a very small rural school, that strong partnership with business and industry allows for them to have relationships throughout the county. And so those are some things that are kind of unforeseen.

As an end result, I think the work that we're doing is supporting educational programming not only in our school district but throughout our county and hopefully strengthening that philosophy throughout the state.

And I'll refrain and see what questions that you might have for our team.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Well, we will go ahead and get started with questions. And we'll start with Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: I have no questions.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MR. WILSON: Good presentation.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Mr. Rogers.

MR. ROGERS: Thank you.

Everything sounds great and I like what you're doing with the intern and everything. But when I'm looking at the ESSA score indexes and I'm looking at your reading and your science and your math achievements, those are really low. Your reading is at 36%, your science achievement is at 39%, but your one-time credits are at 90%. So if you could -- I mean I like all the different programs you're doing, Ms. Thompson and all the interns. But what are you doing to help get those core classes up to what your students -- they might not be in all the other interns that you're doing -- to help graduate on that as well?

SUPT. MURPHY: I will address that question in the context that reading is something that is holistic in nature. And so as a school district we've integrated a training model, not only
coinciding with the Science of Reading but going above and beyond with our partnership with Columbia College to train staff members in the delivery of fidelity of reading. And hopefully that's going to have positive outcomes for our senior high level. Some of this area of instability has been centered around instructors in these core areas -- and that's not to make an excuse, but a part of our shortfalls is in core area instruction. We're getting -- we're having to replace teachers with a higher degree of frequency. So we're going back to training and a guaranteed viable curriculum. We've integrated a consistent curriculum with the English program, and that's just been implemented now in its first year because we saw that same evidence and we felt like we needed to provide a more consistent framework. So we studied other schools of similar size with success and used our staff to make selections around English.

And I believe your next approach is looking at mathematics?

MR. BAXTER: Mathematics.

SUPT. MURPHY: -- as the core areas to see if supporting a more guaranteed and viable curriculum could support a shift in the overall outcomes academically.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: I've been -- I've visited the school in the past, and there's a lot of good things happening and I think there's a lot of areas of success in the programming and the innovation. I saw that. And I met the teacher that you were speaking of earlier -- very creative and innovative -- and I can understand why you want to embed some of those skills, because they're already implementing it at a very early age within the school.

And I would just, you know, kind of reiterate what Greg mentioned, just the academic pieces and the focus on that because of the other successes, and they're graduating; but just making sure they're set for all options in their career and being able to take multiple steps in and out of that system of where they may go next in their pathway for the future. So I'm glad to hear you're talking about, you know, teacher trainings and coming in from the outside, and then implementing as well Science of Reading. And I know RISE and other things the school is doing, that you're working towards that.

You don't really have any agriculture -- is that correct -- options?

MR. BAXLEY: We've got -- we're bringing in --
we've got Animal Science now.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.

MR. BAXLEY: The same IPT teacher is teaching this year.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.

MR. BAXLEY: But next year we're bringing in CASE Animal Science.

DR. KREMERS: Great. Okay.

MR. BAXLEY: Yes, ma'am.

DR. KREMERS: That will help. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

So you all raised as one of your challenges the turnover issue with professional staff, which is always a challenge. And I guess my question would be: can you unpack that a little bit for us and explain some of the details of that? And then comment on how you're -- and I know you've already somewhat addressed that, but comment on how you're addressing it in the future so you get more continuity of professional teachers.

SUPT. MURPHY: Of what in the future?

MR. BALDWIN: How you're addressing the turnover issue.

SUPT. MURPHY: Sure. I would indicate to you
that, you know, there's two elements that establish turnover: it's the ability to be marketable to move forward and how do we sustain that culture to maybe draw people to stick with us long-term. A couple of strategies that we've deployed in our selection process is really trying to seek out individuals that are vested in our community, that maybe were former graduates of our community, so that -- sometimes as you bring individuals in they're a stop for you and you train them up and let them go, and it's a three to five to seven-year model. And so, part of our strategies in the recruitment phase is really looking at individuals vested in our community that would like to remain with us long-term. You know, salary schedule wise we're in the median average of the middle of the seven school districts in Garland County. And within that proximity everything is a very close commute, so we still have challenges, as we've articulated to our community, to support a very competitive salary schedule. Because when you're seeking this degree of innovation it does create that marketability, and we've had employees leave us and earn $15,000 more in the rate of pay -- and we have encouraged them to take advantage of those opportunities; they've earned them. So, you know, I
think recruiting locally also gives a reflection of our students. You know, it helps us to meet the needs, the shortfalls in the educational field.

As a state, it is no secret -- we have a shortage of quality educators, and how do we fulfill that on a statewide basis. And so I think growing your own locally and really strengthening our programs for our cadet teaching programs -- we've expanded that as an element. We didn't go there today, but that's another area that we've created a direct focus in. And engaging our students as a component of that model I think provides a long-term solution.

MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So my question goes to one of the waivers you requested. And I'd intended for us to look at the legal review before we started and I forgot; so I'll go ahead and kind of integrate my question with that. But it has to do with around the waiver of Standards for Curriculum. So if Ms. Hyatt can talk to us a little bit about that, because I know it was something in the legal review as well.

MS. HYATT: Sure. Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division.

(COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Ms. Hyatt pulls the
microphone down.)

Sorry, I'm a lot shorter than everybody else.

So that is the only remaining legal issue on the legal review -- it's a new waiver they've requested, so they haven't had it before -- is of 1(a)(2) of the Standards, which is that a unit -- a high school unit of credit shall be awarded for a course that either meets the minimum of 120 clock hours or is a competency-based credit awarded in accordance with the law.

So in 2017, the Legislature passed Act 872 which allowed schools more flexibility in awarding high school credit. Previously, you could only award high school credit if the course met 120 clock hours; now the Legislature and the Department have set up a process by which you can give competency-based credit. So they submit a plan to the Department to award units of credit based on a demonstration of subject matter competency, instead of or in combination with the 120 clock hours. The law requires that in order to award that subject matter competency they have to have an approved plan. Some schools have instead sought to seek a waiver. It's not prohibited to award a waiver of this provision, and some schools do have it. It's my understanding
that most of the schools have it because during the Standards of Accreditation kind of transfer from the old standards to the new, which I'm sure you guys remember our process internally for approving these competency-based plans was not set up. It's my understanding that it is now set up.

So my concern is if they are not going to get a plan approved for awarding the competency-based credit and they're not meeting the 120 clock hour provision, what exactly are they doing in order to award high school credit. And since we can't waive graduation requirements we need to be very careful that whatever high school units of credit they're awarding actually meet those graduation requirements.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Please state your name and position for the record.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, ma'am. Steven Campbell. I'm the director of Instructional Services and Federal Programs.

And we will be happy to submit a plan rather than request the waiver for that particular standard.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So you're going to rescind this waiver request?

MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, ma'am. That will be fine.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. I think
that helps.

So then the only other question that I had still along the curriculum lines -- and I know it's not exactly as part of the charter that you've described, you know, because you're looking at more of the career focus within the work of your charter. But given that the reading scores do prompt an issue, then you were talking about the intervention. I think you were talking about your intervention program. And is that intervention program based on the Science of Reading and aligned to what you're doing in your elementary grades? Because as you've said, the reading is a systemic issue. So if 9th and 10th graders are struggling with reading it's not that something is happening in 9th and 10th grade; it's, you know, something that happened earlier.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So can you talk to us about all that?

MR. CAMPBELL: And we're in the process of getting all of our folks on the proficiency side and then on the awareness side. And so as we go through that piece of it we're just at the point of introducing Science of Reading at the secondary level. So what we've done is adopted a program --
StudySync program?

MR. BAXLEY: Uh-huh.

MR. CAMPBELL: The StudySync program is what we're using as our -- for our English classes at this time to focus on the specific needs of the children. Additionally, you know, we do the NWEA testing, and so we have those RTI scores that we're able to group kids together in their bands and address their needs in that perspective.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. But your high school program does address Science of Reading, or is it more based on a whole language approach? Because I'm not familiar with the program that you're talking about.

MR. CAMPBELL: Yeah. And I don't know the answer to that.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MR. BAXLEY: It's a whole language program.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: It's a whole language based program?

MR. BAXLEY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So in thinking about elementary and the Science of Reading --

MR. BAXLEY: Sure.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- if you're not consistent
all the way through -- and I think those are things
that you really do need to consider --

MR. BAXLEY: Thank you. We will.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- in terms of making sure
that the interventions are going to really have
benefit. So I guess that's not exactly aligned to
the charter, but it does address, you know, some of
the concerns that other Panel Members are looking at.

MR. BAXLEY: The StudySync program that we've
purchased has an RTI component to it that we're going
to implement as well. I think some of the main
reasons our scores hadn't been to where they need, we
haven't -- I feel like the high school hasn't given
the teachers the support that they need and the
curriculum that they need to insure student success,
and then we're on the track for that now; we've done
that. It's $60,000, I believe, that we've spent on
this StudySync program for the English department and
that has a reading component and an English component
on it. Next year we're going to do mathematics and
then the science. So we're going to give our
teachers the support they need -- and I promise you,
by the time we come back next time for our charter
erenewal, if we're granted it, it will be much better.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: The only other question then
that I had was -- you know, you talked about -- a whole lot about what you've done, but I didn't really hear what's next. So, you know, based on what you've learned and what you've done I'm not sure that -- you know, I think in some ways what you've done you could continue to do without a charter. So really to continue the charter for another five years it's helpful to hear "so what's next" --

MR. BAXLEY: Well, one of the --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- to kind of really justify --

MR. BAXLEY: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- the need to continue as a charter.

MR. BAXLEY: Well, one of the -- if we lost the charter we would lose Mr. Delindiy; that's first. He's a non-licensed teacher. And we would lose our video and that segment of our CTE program. If we lost the charter Siemens may back out. Our partnerships, they're sold into this internship program that we provide them -- and our IPT program, they fund that. One of the things that we've moved away from was our flex schedule. The flex schedule, I think it didn't provide our students enough time to learn the curriculum, learn what they need to do to
be successful. So we've moved to a -- just a
traditional eight-period day and that allows us to
double-block some of the stuff for our students, such
as welding and IPT and other things; it gives them
additional time in the classroom. It also gives our
teachers more time to prepare for their lessons.

So that's some of the things that we've learned
in the past that we're moving away from and some of
the things that we're shooting for in the future.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

DR. MURPHY: I would -- a couple other things to
kind of echo that, in the leadership transitions we
were kind of married to the flex scheduling model
which targeted a great deal of flexibility among the
students with really the opportunity to balance time
management within a week and components of time that
varied. We did that for a period of two years. And
some of the outcomes of that -- I think a negative
outcome of that was for freshmen and sophomores
coming into the educational system at the secondary
level; they really struggled with those incremental
time components. And so the outcome we gained
possibly enhanced our college readiness and ACT, but
where we felt like it was failing us was with our
bridge program of our freshmen coming into the school
setting. And so we are trying to figure out how to blend and meet both ends in a more traditional schedule with some double-blocks and really keep that freshmen opportunity of what their school day looks like, minimize the confusion, minimize the chaos, and get the core instruction. And I do believe that in the experimentation there's always a certain degree of risk that you take in the implementation of the scheduling process. And when we listened to staff and students and community, they had some concerns around that degree of flexibility. And so we have modified, and so now we're in our first year of going back to a traditional scheduling model and with that integration we're seeking outcomes.

I would tell you as another component we're building a truer culture of literacy K-12. We had our first literacy carnival where we really had an outstanding response K-8. We're going to grow that into K-12. And really it's not just about the element of science and reading, it's the importance of building a culture of reading. And we've integrated a partnership with The Village to bring in additional volunteers in that regard, answering the call in north Garland County.

So our programs are not only internal, but
you're going to see a continuation of the extension externally into our community, because it's the adage of utilizing all resources available at our disposal to strengthen the overall -- it starts with a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Are there other questions by Panel Members?

No other questions. Okay.

Any discussion? Or if not, we're ready for a motion.

MR. WILSON: I move approval of the request.

MR. ROGERS: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and second to approve the request.

All those in favor say "aye."

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

Okay. Congratulations.

If you'll wait just a minute we will add specific feedback and present that to you.

(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. I think we're finishing up here.

Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I vote to approve the
renewal. And I would encourage you guys -- and I
know you all are looking at that closely, but the
reading/literacy component I would stay right on top
of that as you move forward.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the motion to
renew the district charter. They've stated their
commitment to academic improvement. The charter does
a good job of offering students innovative career-
focused opportunities.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

MR. ROGERS: I seconded the motion to approve
the renewal based off the internships and
opportunities that your students are having. I'm
still concerned about the math and reading and look
forward to seeing that achievement go up.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I think
their track record speaks for itself; it's good. And
with the assurances that Mr. Baldwin asked for I
think you're on the right track.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we do recognize
and appreciate the partnerships that you have with
the businesses in your community, and that's
particularly a strength of your charter.
So thank you for being here and we look forward to seeing how all this goes in the future.

All right. Okay. Can we do a five-minute break before we move to the next item on the agenda? Is everybody good?

Okay. We'll come back at -- let's do 10:50 and we'll take up Item 3.

(BREAK: 10:42 - 10:54 a.m.)

(COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Wilson left the meeting during the break.)

A-3: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION – MOUNTAIN HOME HIGH SCHOOL CAREER ACADEMIES

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We're going to reconvene and continue on with our morning action agenda item. And, Ms. McLaughlin, if you will introduce that for us?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Yes, ma'am. Mountain Home High School Career Academies is a district conversion charter that was initially authorized on February 10, 2003. The charter is approved to serve students in grades 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 1600. Representatives from the Mountain Home School District are appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel to request a renewal of their charter for five
years. We have Dr. Jake Long, superintendent; Dr. Dana Brown, CTE Coordinator and Federal Programs Director; Brent Bogy, High School Principal; and Kyle McCarn, the Junior High Principal. You'll want to swear those in.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If you'll go ahead -- okay. Let's go ahead and get you sworn in; anyone who's going to speak go ahead and stand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And we will let you get started. Just as you come to the microphone please state your name and title for the record. You have 20 minutes.

SUPT. LONG: Thank you. My name is Jake Long, the superintendent of Mountain Home Public Schools. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you guys this morning.

Mountain Home High School Career Academies charter renewal -- as Ms. McLaughlin said, we have been a conversion charter since 2003. And so I really enjoyed the background information that she put together for you guys on the presentation today
because it shows the progression of our charter
throughout the -- you know, throughout the years -- I
mean really over a decade.

Our school mission and vision -- our district-
wide mission is Committed to Excellence in Education.
Our district-wide vision is Every Student - Every
Time. And so if at this point -- we added some
additional materials for you guys; so if you would
pull out this particular sheet and I'll talk about it
at this time.

So our core value is -- core values are
communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and
creativity. This was a process that we went through
in a re-visioning process that began October of 2018.
And so we put together a committee and we basically
-- and we sent out surveys and we asked our
community, "What would you like to see every graduate
of Mountain Home Public Schools to have? What are
the key skills that they want to have?" And nearly
all the answers and responses that we got surrounded
around basically the four C's, which is a known
skill-set in the world of education. But the most
one that was mentioned was communication. And so we
continued to hear that and so we began the re-
visioning process and developing those four core
focus areas, and then we started a pathway of
development and -- which I'll talk about here in just
a second.

The career and life readiness definition was
also developed under the re-visioning process and
this was done by our student ambassadors at Mountain
Home High School Career Academies. And the career
and life definition -- the points of it that I'm most
proud of is whenever our students brought in what it
means for them to finish high school and they brought
in the term "grit," they brought in, you know, the
knowledge, the perseverance. And whenever our
students are identifying these types of attributes I
think it speaks highly about what they see and the
work that our staff have done in educating them on
what it takes to be successful in our current
workplace.

So some relevant history and commentary
regarding Mountain Home Career Academies and our
charter -- as we mentioned, going back to 2003, our
conversion charter status, we would not -- without it
we would not have been able to support the wall-to-
wall career academy structure in which we've
maintained over that time. That career academy
structure allows us to have a common planning time on
a late-start Wednesday, and that time is called WINN; it's our intervention time. It's What I Need Now. One of the academies covers the interventions while the other one -- while the other two not only plan their academy days, but they also support those students with their interventions that they need at that time.

We also work with integrated project development over a theme for the year, and so that's always a fun project to see our academies do. Our teachers identify learning expectations from what is now ACT Aspire and then also they're utilizing NWEA as our interim assessments to drive our instruction.

Through -- during this time under -- within our late-start Wednesdays we develop a watch list and we also have called it over the years -- we called it Red Flagging Students. But that's a way of monitoring students that are struggling or that are also in need of remediation. This gives us also an opportunity to bring in a variety of different business partners. We have a lot of business partners that are really the backbone to our career academies. And any time that we host visits from other schools -- and which we recently had a school from Nebraska come in and visit us -- we always have
our business community that comes out, and it's always a key point to see how invested they are in our career academies and in our charter process.

The application -- our current application in our charter, it allows us for some flexible scheduling; this includes plus and zero hour. And so this is an opportunity for us to either extend the day before school or after school based on students, if there are some credit recovery needs that exists or it might just be tutoring type options.

Also, in 2016 we added a flex path program through a charter amendment and this allowed an additional choice for both parents and students through a virtual -- some virtual components. We utilize a variety of curriculum -- Virtual Arkansas, APEX Learning. We also are really engaged in our grow-our-own approach through utilizing our staff, technology, such as what we have here that record the lessons and then we're able to post it within Google Classroom.

The Flexible Scheduling also allows seniors the opportunity -- not just seniors, but seniors and juniors to attend ASU-Mountain Home. That has become a backbone of many of the things that we do, not just with concurrent credit but also in the secondary
center and the technical center offerings that they have.

Our academic advisory period is also a reason for our charter because it allows us to build in time within every single day that allows our teachers to build those relationships with our students. It also allows the coordination of Academy Celebration Days. This is also where we have a very, very successful mentoring program in which we -- every -- the first Wednesday of every month we bring over 100 business and community partners into our schools. They spend an hour with our kids and go through the mentoring process.

We have a variety of alternate credit options for our kids, and we're very thankful for having this because it allows our students to have success in meeting some of the graduation requirements. Just a few of those -- I won't be able to name them all -- are food science, plant science, animal science. A lot of those are done through what's previously been mentioned already through the CASE Curriculum. We're very thankful for having that type of opportunity. We also have some things that are embedded; that includes oral comm., English 1, P.E. with band and civics, P.E. also with ROTC. And so that's a -- it
really creates a lot of flexibility in our kids' schedules.

Our students have been approved to offer -- have been approved to take a survey of business, Algebra I, geometry, plant science, family and consumer science in the 8th grade, which definitely gets our kids off to a great start.

So I'm now bringing up the Career Academy Pathways. And so if you'll pull out your other application you can see that the point -- the main points behind our re-visioning process was since we've had so much that has morphed and changed over time, since 2003, we felt like we needed to go through basically an organizational process to re-vision our career academies, to refocus on what we were doing. And so we put together this Pathways Crosswalk that you guys can flip through and you can start seeing how all of our different programs of studies or pathways align all the way down to really essentially kindergarten; and then it also extends to post-secondary opportunities which include either, you know, college or also a degree and certification offerings that are specifically provided for at ASU-Mountain Home.

But I won't go through this entire thing because
of time. But I would encourage you guys to look through those and see just all the different offerings that we're able to do, and that's largely in part because of our charter.

Goals of our current charter -- I'll just -- I'm going to run through these real quick and then not to take up too much of your time -- but to continue to increase our students' performance. Of course, we've had to change the language of these over the course of time. And so, specifically, we have met this goal. We saw an increase of our 11th grade ACT score this past year of about -- a composite of nearly a point to 19.7, and that's all 11th graders taking that; and so very proud of that. And that was after a couple years of a decline, and then also that's with the state average kind of maintaining stagnant across the board. So proud of our teachers and our staff and the work that they did to meet that goal.

To continue to refine 8th through 12th grade students' six-year post-secondary plans -- we felt like we met that goal because of the number of students entering those two- and four-year programs. And then if you look at the application we have those numbers provided to you as well.

Continue to increase student participation in
extracurricular activities -- we understand that students that are invested into their education and that have something to be involved with are going to work harder, not just in whatever those involved activities are, but also in their academics as well. We do have a club day that's embedded into our AAP, and so at any point in time if we don't offer it through an approved Triple-A sanctioned event we try to do different things through clubs. And that's a great time in which our kids are able to stay involved as well.

Next goal, to provide stronger transition and support systems through the first year -- I'm going to talk more about this and something that we're going to be requesting under our current waiver. But we felt like we met that goal because of Keystone. Every 9th grader takes Keystone. We also bring forward a Tools for Success class, which every 8th grader takes, and which we began calling it a pre-Keystone course. And so we feel like that that provides great transitions.

Increased parent and community involvement in raising student achievement through specific participation in classes -- we do this through a variety of different community engagements. I talked
about the mentoring program. Many of those folks that come into our schools and mentor are also parents as well.

To target our economically disadvantaged students 9 through 12, which is our largest subpopulation -- and I feel like that we've done -- we've met that goal based on Teen Girls Go to College. We have a student-run thrift store that also helps support those social and emotional parts of -- needs of our kids.

To target -- I mentioned that one.

To increase the number of students in the completers -- definitely career and technical education at Mountain Home -- in Mountain Home Public Schools it's the backbone of everything that we do. If you look through the Pathways Crosswalk and you see all the different pathways and opportunities that our kids -- we pride ourselves on that. We understand it's not the most cost-effective delivery system, but we also understand the value of our kids having those real-life experiences.

Increase the number of credit recovery opportunities -- we have one of the -- I'd say a model ALE program in the state. And so they're just tremendous in being able to insure not just students
that are placed there under the ALE guidelines but also students that, you know, need just a leg-up there.

To explore new avenues in expanding college and career readiness options and community-based internships -- our internships are really -- they're a key point in everything we do within our career academy model. A new part that I would say pivot off of the internships is our implementation of apprenticeships. We've -- we have several business partners that are onboard with us through our apprenticeship program in which we're placing kids, seniors, in with industry and in with different business partners, in which they're not necessarily headed off to college but they want to stay there locally and then have a job beyond their high school graduation.

Student participation through curriculum options and flexible scheduling -- we've seen enrollments increase. And then current Keystone curriculum offering in the charter waivers to assist, and we've seen that enrollment increase as well.

So our new performance goals that I'm presenting to you today -- we kind of struggled, honestly, in knowing exactly what to do with our performance goals
because as a district we're really trying to align ourselves K-12, and we have SLIPS goals, which is our federal programs, essentials; we have our building improvement goals, and then we have our charter goals. And so we really wanted to just align all of those and had a great conversation with the ladies back here in the back prior to our meeting. But I think that there -- we can -- I think we are on track to provide a model of performance goals for the charters and then also K-12 instruction.

So basically what we're saying is we're looking at a 3% growth in ACT Aspire -- and that's a 3 percentile through the ESSA Index; same thing with our students with special -- with our special needs. We were asked why we pulled the subpopulation out. We have not seen the growth that I felt like that we wanted to see in the particular -- at the mid-level; it doesn't affect the charter that we're requesting here, but we're making that a focus K-12 in insuring that -- you know, our expectation is that all kids can learn and that that same expectation is put on all kids. And so that 1% is once again a percentile within the ESSA Index there.

And so those are our -- and then, finally, our four-year graduation rate index will increase 1% as
well.

There's our current waivers in which we're utilizing and still plan to use. Some of the new waiver requests that -- it's really a new application of the current waivers that we have. One of them is in regards to Teacher Licensure. And so this request is obviously in response to the shortage of teachers out there. And I've seen a model that other districts have used that made a lot of sense to me is that if we have the opportunity to get a teacher intern into the classroom under the direct supervision of a master teacher then that's what we're asking for under this application of this waiver.

And then in addition to that, a new application of a current waiver in regards to Flexible Scheduling. I can't think of the law that was passed, but it allows us some lottery money to go to high school students for concurrent credit -- has created -- for us to maximize that we have got to align our student schedule at our high school and at our career academies with that of ASU-Mountain Home. And we feel like the only way to do that is -- we can't do it, you know, for the eight, nine hours a day that ASU-Mountain Home aligns -- you know, offers
courses. But we do feel like that we can in the AM through -- because we are a block schedule. And they run a Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/Thursday class, and then on Fridays, you know, we will most likely run a fast-class, Every Kid, Every Day, on Fridays. But we will need some flexible scheduling to be able to perfectly align our kids and be able to maximize that opportunity with ASU -- and not just expect them to do it, you know, virtually -- where they can actually go and sit on those campuses. So that would be a new application of the Flexible Schedule waiving.

In order to maximize our operational personnel efficiencies and course offerings, our current structure is we have a kindergarten center, which is its own LEA; we have a 1st and 2nd grade building, which is its own LEA; we have a 3rd through 5th building, which is its own LEA; and then we have a middle school, 6 and 7, which is its own; and then we have an 8th grade that is also housed with our 9th grade. But our junior high campus --

[TIMER BELL RINGS]

SUPT. LONG: Is anybody in opposition?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If there's --
MS. HAYTT: (Shaking head from side to side.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: There's not; so, yeah, go
ahead and continue.

SUPT. LONG: So real quickly, our junior high campus is composed of 8th and 9th grade, so basically that building has two separate LEA's. Our 9th grade falls under our current charter. So what we're asking is that we are able to include our 8th grade within our current 9-12, our conversion charter, so that we are now able to create schedules without having to make some of those adjustments that our 9th grade may have in the same building, utilizing some of the same teachers -- and our 8th grade is not able to do that. So that's our -- that's one of our amendment -- requested amendments there as well. I think it'll create some additional offerings and allow us to maximize our staff usage throughout that time.

So with that --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ready for questions.

Okay.

MR. BALDWIN: No questions.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No questions. Okay.

Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: If we add 8th grade in there for the programs of study, this --

I have to compliment you on your Pathways and
programs of study, especially because you start at
the lower grades and you go all the way through to
your post-secondary partners. So we don't often see
this, and so I think this is very well-done.

If it moves to the 8th grade level -- many of
the current courses are set grades 9 through 12; so
what will you be offering them at the 8th grade
level?

SUPT. LONG: So we will continue to offer the
same courses --

DR. KREMER: Okay.

SUPT. LONG: -- that we have. But I do feel
like that -- you know, in looking down the road I
feel like there's going to be additional
opportunities for our 8th grade kids, much like what
they have for Algebra I in the 8th grade. And I do
think that there is -- we want to be careful in that
there is some risk of, you know, pushing -- you know,
I've seen some situations in which I feel like you
push too far down -- and by all means, that's not at
all what I'm suggesting. But we will maintain the
current 8th grade standards and regulations there.

Junior High Principal, anything to add with that
particular question?

MR. McCARN: Kyle McCarn, Junior High Principal.
One initial thought that I would have there would be like a pre-engineering or a foundational engineering class. Looking in the future I could see a place for that. So that would be something I would really like to see put in place in the 8th grade before they can start taking those engineering classes 9-12. So that would be an application I can see later down the road.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So can I -- this would help me better understand. What would be the concern if in a model like this -- obviously, in a district that has these very well-aligned pathways, would there be concern though if the district did say, you know, "hey, we do want to have quite a few of our 8th graders be able to start with some of these courses?" Is there -- what -- I guess what would be the concern with that?

DR. KREMERS: Some of it would be the foundational academics that go with it. So then if you start getting into K-SAG [ps] you may not even have all the academics to prepare them, you know, until they get to that point. So I think there are some we can explore down the road, but I think we need to make sure we're taking time and look at
those, until we can -- look at them kind of a case-by-case. But there's, you know, many examples where there's a lot of foundational knowledge before it gets pushed down to a lower grade. And it may be a fit for like the Algebra, for example, at the 8th grade level; not all students may succeed with that. So I think just kind of looking at that in the larger picture.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So is that something maybe where just providing technical assistance --

DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- to them -- is that something -- that may be the way to approach it?

DR. KREMERS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

DR. KREMERS: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do you have another question?

DR. KREMERS: That's it. Just I commend you, again, on the plan --

SUPT. LONG: Thank you.

DR. KREMERS: -- and how well thought-out it is. I know Dr. Brown is fabulous and she works really well with the State staff. So I know they're in good hands with Dr. Brown as well.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Questions?

MR. ROGERS: Just the same thing I asked the last one. Looking at their reading scores -- I mean they're trending -- going, since 2017, the wrong way. So I mean in 2017 your Hispanic/Latino population was low, then it kind of went up, then we dropped way back down again this year -- or in 2019, as well as the scores for the white economically disadvantaged -- everything on the ESSA scores.

So given the same question that I gave the last one, how are -- I mean -- and I agree with the pathway. What you're doing with your kids on the pathways and internships is really cool and I like that. But what are we doing to address the core credits also, as well?

SUPT. LONG: Yeah. And, Mr. Rogers, I really appreciate, you know, your focus both, you know, for us and the last presentation on that. Because I mean that is the core of what we are -- you know, what we're doing. If a child can't read or if he can't, you know, know the basics of mathematics --

I tried to address that particular point through our goals. You know, if you look at simply our charter goals -- beforehand, you saw several different things that apply to the Pathways
Crosswalk, you know, more kids in Keystone, more community involvement, more of this -- really, you know, through these goals and through our admin's leadership and then the initiatives that we have put in place, you know, our focus is on improving academics through the ESSA -- through ESSA and that accountability system. And we've done that through our district-wide PLCs. We have a strong, strong foundation in the Science of Reading, all the way K -- we're supporting our kids through the Science of Reading K through 5 through every teacher being RISE trained. We've also inputted -- I pulled two -- I have three literacy, you know, specialized teachers that are on -- teachers on special assignment that now are supporting our teachers really K-12. We started out focusing on K-5, but I feel like our kids -- our teachers are getting a better grasp for year-two of our TOSA [ps] program and our teachers are stronger at the lower grades. But now several times this past semester Mr. Bogy, our high school principal, has had those TOSA's up at our mid -- at our junior high and high school levels to support our teachers. And I commend the time in which we're pulling out of the day for our teachers to look at data. We brought in NWEA as an interim assessment
piece, in which the growth that we have already seen from -- and this is the first year we did NWEA. We didn't feel like that we got the -- really we weren't able to drive instruction through the ACT Aspire formative assessments that we really wanted. So we brought in NWEA at the 8th through 12th grade level and assessed at the beginning of the year and then we've recently taken our middle-of-the-year assessments with that. And the growth that we're seeing there is double-digits, and it's just really because of the support that Mr. McCarn, Mr. Bogey -- and the time that they're giving their teachers to allow them to talk about kids, to talk about academics. This is great, guys. I mean I'm so proud of everything that we offer our kids. But I do commend these guys for their focus on academics and recognizing exactly what you recognized there and knowing that, hey, we've got to make sure our kids have those core academics taken care of. So --

MR. ROGERS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt, there are a few things on the legal review it looks like we need to clean up.

And as you address that, we might also just make sure that the amendment requests -- that everything
is good there. I didn't know if that was going to
have any kind of an LEA change or anything like that,
so --

MS. HYATT: Okay. On the legal review, there
are a couple of issues. Most of them -- Dr. Long
submitted some additional information after this was
done, so most of it is just confirming for the
record.

But there was on the Flexible Scheduling -- so
they asked for three laws, one of which has been
repealed; 6-18-210 has been repealed, so there
wouldn't be a necessary waiver of that.

And then they asked for 6-16-102, which is the
law where the new recess legislation is codified. So
I would ask that you exempt 6-16-102(a)(5) from your
request because that's where the recess legislation
is, unless you need the recess -- which I don't think
you do.

So if you could just confirm that you don't need
6-18-210 and that you don't need 6-16-102(a)(5) for
the record?

SUPT. LONG: Jake Long, Superintendent.

I do not need the previous stated --

MS. HYATT: Perfect.

SUPT. LONG: Yes. I'm sorry.
MS. HYATT: That works.

And still on Flexible Scheduling, the Standards for Accreditation that were listed were actually from the previous version of the standards. We're all still trying to find our feet I think with the new standards. But I think what you need -- and you'll have to verify this -- is 1(a)(5)(2) in the new standards, which is the six hours a day, 30 hours a week average for student-teacher interaction time, rather than the standards that you've asked for. And you might need 1(a)(5)(1), which is the minimum of 178 days of student-teacher interaction time; usually those go hand-in-hand. So if you'll just tell the Panel which ones you need, that would be great.

SUPT. LONG: So I do need the previous stated waivers in which Ms. Claire stated.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MS. HYATT: Okay. That should clear that up.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So is that applicable district-wide or for just the conversion charter in terms of, you know, just thinking about the 178 days of interaction, how far --

SUPT. LONG: I do need it district-wide. I do know that I will need it district-wide, but this only applies to 8-12. So my conversations with some of
the folks before was to come back for I guess a 1240 waiver to get -- to be able to align that so that I can run a similar schedule throughout the entire district.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MS. HYATT: And Dr. Long is right, that's the -- this will only apply to the district conversion, which is just Mountain Home High School; so they will have to utilize 1240 in order to make it district-wide. But they can, you know, have some flexibility with the high school until they get the 1240 or they don't have to utilize the waiver until they get the 1240 -- up to them.

Okay. Just moving forward, Mountain Home had also asked for 1(a)(2), which is what we talked about on the last one, the 120 clock hours versus the competency-based. I believe they have rescinded that, in the information I received this morning, and I just need them to verify that for me.

SUPT. LONG: Yes. Mountain Home does not need the 1(a)(2).

MS. HYATT: Perfect. Thank you.

On Teacher Licensure, I just need them to confirm that they only need a waiver of Section 7 of the ADE rules governing Educator Licensure.
SUPT. LONG: Yes. We only need Section 7 of ADE rules considering licensure.

MS. HYATT: And the last one, Mandatory Attendance, the ADE rules governing Mandatory Attendance 6-18-210 and 6-18-211, they were all repealed in 2017; so there's not a need for a waiver of those provisions. And I just need them to confirm that you've rescinded it.

SUPT. LONG: Yes. We rescind that.

MS. HYATT: That's it.

And if you'll give me a minute I'll go look at your question about the amendment request, if you want to ask --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, and someone from Public School Accountability might -- just in the amendment request -- so your 8th grade, will anything change as far as your -- the LEA or anything like that?

SUPT. LONG: Well --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: It's just -- or will it change, and then can we address that?

SUPT. LONG: Yes, we'll have to submit an LEA change form, I believe is what Ms. Dailey told us.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

SUPT. LONG: And then we will no longer have the 8th grade LEA -- the current 8th grade LEA number.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So they've already talked to you, so that's good.

Okay. All right. I don't think I have any other questions.

Any discussion or --

MR. ROGERS: I have one.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MR. ROGERS: On this amendment request you're asking for a cap increase also?

SUPT. LONG: Yes. We are increasing just because we're adding the 8th grade.

MR. ROGERS: Okay. Sorry; I missed that.

SUPT. LONG: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. If there are no questions, then I will entertain a motion for the approval of Mountain Home High School Career Academies.

DR. KREMERS: So moved.

MR. BALDWIN: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All those in favor say aye?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Congratulations.

SUPT. LONG: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And if you will give us a few minutes we will add in feedback.
(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion. I appreciate the Pathways Crosswalks; I think that's encouraging. And I don't have any other concerns.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I also voted to approve. One of the things I really liked is the fact in your goals you had the parent engagement component to that. And I don't remember that being in very many of our applications in the goals. So I think that's a great addition as well. And I also like how you're looking to the future and great opportunities for kids.

Okay. Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: I approve the motion. The district charter has a well thought-out plan as connecting with post-secondary partners and business and industry. They've identified their academic weaknesses and they have a plan to improve with the trends already looking positive.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: I vote to approve the motion. The Pathways program that you all have, the course of study contained with that is really outstanding.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you all very
much for being here, and safe travels, and look forward to your future work.

All right. We have, I think, one more item that was on our morning agenda. So, if everybody is good to continue, we will go ahead and proceed with that, and then we’ll have a break.

Just a moment here.

A-4: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION – OSCEOLA STEM CHARTER

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. McLaughlin.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. Osceola STEM Academy is a district conversion middle school that was initially authorized on January 9, 2012. The charter is approved to serve students in grades 5-8 with a maximum enrollment of 450 students.

Representatives from the Osceola School District are appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel today to request a renewal of their current charter for five years. And we do have Mr. Alfred Hogan, Superintendent; Dr. Toriano Green -- he couldn't make it; Ms. Shantele Raper, Federal Funds Coordinator; and Ms. Christel Smith, the STEM Academy Principal. They all need to be sworn in.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If you will stand to receive the oath, anyone speaking. Do you swear or
affirm that the testimony -- I'm sorry. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but
the truth?

(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If -- as you come to
the microphone, if you'll state your name and
position for the record you are recognized.

MS. SMITH: Okay. Thank you. Good morning.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Good morning.

MS. SMITH: I'm Christel Smith and I'm the
principal at Osceola STEM Academy. And I'm just
delighted to be here and I want to thank the Panel
for allowing me this opportunity to come and present
on behalf of the Osceola School District.

We have a conversion charter school. We have
about 311 students. We're grades 5 though 8. I'm
the principal. I had the honor also of getting a new
assistant principal that I moved out of the
classroom, which was a strong classroom teacher. As
well as the superintendent Mr. Alfred Hogan is here
with us today.

I want to first -- before I begin, I'm going to
go back a slide. I want to talk a little bit about
why STEM is important to Osceola just in general.
It's very important to our school district, as well as important to our community. We're in the Delta area and we are very industrial; so a lot of our high school kids that are coming out of high school graduating they're looking to go straight into the workforce. So since I'm the feeder school for the high school one of the things -- and we'll talk a little bit more about that. Our innovative part is we try to prepare our kids not only for high school but we pre-requisition what a high school has to offer. So it's very important that once the elementary school feed to me that I prepare these students for high school. So I wanted to share that.

The last time we came here, which was three years ago, I stood before the Panel and they asked me a lot of questions about our reading scores; so I chose to start there today. Because I went back and I was trying to really look at transforming teaching and learning, but also I wanted to look at our adult learners because we have a very, very high turnover of teachers. So I wanted to share that.

So I kind of want to start with reading first and I want to talk about teacher retention. I don't know if you're familiar with Osceola School District, but we did a teacher retention -- or recruitment for
teachers because it was hard for us to find teachers. So we did a program where if a teacher applied in Osceola and they stayed there for four years they got up to $10,000. It started off really well; we had a lot of -- at that time, like when I came before my staff was fully certified. After year-one -- I want to kind of just take you through our three years -- okay -- I lost quite a few of staff. So at that point even though we had the waiver -- thank God that we had the waiver through the charter -- and again, you know, of course, Act 1240 came into effect too -- and I was able to hire some waiver teachers. But what I had to do was, because the core class is vital to these students I had to move some teachers around to make sure that they would get adequate instruction. So what I did was I took some teachers not only out of their certification area but out of their grade range; like I took a 6th grade literacy very effective teacher and put her in an 8th grade classroom. We did that. We also decided that what we were going to do was focus on reading fundamental skills. My feeder school was sending me -- and this is not to make any excuses, but I kind of want to tell our story a little bit. Our feeder school -- when my kids came in in 5th grade we had a lot of
kids in need of support. So what I found was even
with hiring some of the certified teachers they just
was not equipped to be able to teach reading
fundamental skills. So we reached out to the co-op;
I lost half that staff the next year. We reached out
to the co-op; we had a really hard time finding
teachers. So we utilized Act 1240; we went with a
lot of home-grown teachers, trying to get
sustainability within the building, as well as we
offered them an opportunity if we gave them a
teaching job to get into these teaching programs
where they could get some professional development,
not only from the teaching programs but as well from
our district. Last year, thank -- last year's staff
I was able to retain for the first time since I've
been at the district. I only lost two teachers, so I
retained 92%. And then one of my literacy teachers I
moved into the assistant principal position. So we
were able to, for the first time in multiple years --
I would say three, but longer than that -- start off
the year with focusing and rebuilding on something
we'd already started, as opposed to trying to focus
on just training teachers on how to be good teachers
on instructional strategies as well as classroom
management.
So looking at year-three we have retained 92% of our teachers, as well as we went and looked at data. And what we found was -- we used NWEA for our growth. We found that our students not only were not reading at grade level but they weren't really being able to decode words; they had comprehension issues. We had a large, large group -- a large group of students that were not SPED students that needed phonics. They were struggling with phonics, phonemic awareness, and we were trying to see how do we push that in. So we reached out to the co-op and what we did was we went ahead and we started a reading period, and in this reading period we took the kids and made it skill specific. So everybody in the building, regardless of where their reading level was, at the beginning of the day for an entire hour what we did was, according to their skill development, they all had reading intervention. For our kids that were reading at grade level, close or above grade level we did morphology with them. The kids or the students that were reading below grade level and they had skill deficiency we did the RISE component; so we did a lot of phonics, did a lot of phonemic awareness. We even went into multi-Slavic. And we partnered with the co-op; they trained us once
a month as well, all the staff, and they also
provided us resources. If you look at our data over
the three years you don't see a huge increase. But
then when we looked back and we looked at our data,
even though they weren't meeting projected on our
NWEA, they were growing at least a half-a-year to a
year-and-a-half a year. So we did see growth but we
did not see what we anticipated to see, even though
we're still building on that.

This is how we addressed our reading
deficiencies, like I talked about before. The second
year we did audio portal; we did the first three
modules of the Science of Reading. We did that for
all our 7th through 8th grade teachers. We increased
time on texts. We made sure that the complexity of
the text was at grade level. One of the things that
we modified in our curriculum that we had at that
time was we were finding out -- we started asking
kids those text dependent questions; they were not
able to answer them. They would pretty much tell you
what the story was about. So we went and trained
teachers on how to pull the skills out of the models.
We felt that was vital because when they take the ACT
Aspire they're not going to get a whole story;
they're going to get a short passage and they're
going to ask some text dependent questions in relation to the standard. We did that last year, as well as we implemented that reading block. Then we made sure that we trained all our staff. So we were able to bring back the same staff and we're excited about that; so we get to expand on that.

What we did for Science of Reading, which is still in process, even though they had that pathway for the next year we're trying to move our teachers a lot faster in completing those modules so they're able to instill some of those practices this school year.

When you look at our ELA data for the last three years, if you'll notice the 17-18, we declined -- and I apologize for that grammatical error; it should say ready instead of reading. If you'll look at it, we started to lose kids that year. That year was the year that we lost 67% of our staff. But you'll see we were able to move some kids as well. The ELA weighted achievement, that is not only reading but that is grammar as well, and writing, language.

These are some things that we've currently put in place to improve our ELA academic achievement. We have continued to increase time on task with skill specific focus. Like we said, we wanted to make sure
that the novel was aligned with the standard, as well as when kids are reading they know the objective of why -- the purpose of what they're reading as opposed to you asking those questions, "why did Molly go to the store." If it has nothing to do with the standard, it just didn't make sense. So we had to train teachers how to pull that out.

We're continuing to implement RISE in our 5th and 6th grade classes and also Science of Reading strategies in all of our classrooms, not only in our social studies -- in social studies classes they teach literacy standards through the social studies context, but -- content; I'm sorry. But what we did was we have our Discovery Zone; you'll hear about that later on -- but also in our PE classes. Because all those teachers was trained through the co-op we're trying to work on some of those things and strategies how to teach our kids.

What we did that we are excited about, in our second year after asking for this charter we started to meet building-to-building; so we had that vertical meeting every month. So we would show -- elementary would show me what they're doing with their 3rd and 4th, I would show what we're doing in 5th and 6th, and then high school would come in. And also we met
once a month. We brought sample work, we talked about teaching strategies. But one of the things that -- like I said before, teachers were struggling with teaching reading fundamentals. Once again, we had a lot of non-traditional teachers that had not even been in the program; so we had a lot of PD for that. So we decided as a district we needed to go away from the curriculum that we had and we needed to vertically align K-8. We vertically aligned K-8 with Wonders this year -- this is the first year we've done Wonders -- and we did StudySync for 7th and 8th grade.

One of the things that I looked at in my data was -- because I serve 5th through 8th grade -- we would have low numbers of kids in need of support, but once they got to 7th and 8th grade it increased, doubled. So we started looked at the instruction, looking at the curriculum; you know, so we've been looking at that. We were trying to identify the core root of the problem, and like I said before, we found out that kids really, really struggled with finding out the meaning of words. So what I did was, myself, I went through the RISE assessor training as a principal, made sure I got that, and then also the elementary principal went through that. So we both
had the same alignment. What we did with the co-op, they also did it with 1st through 4th grade; so we also had an alignment piece with our PD.

Our math scores -- one of the things that we noticed was the kids that struggled in reading also struggled in math and science. So we started looking at -- like I said, the kids are struggling with being able to de-code words, find out the meaning of words. So we found out that it wasn't so much -- because what -- math is conceptual thinking, it's processing; we thought at one point it might be some test empathy. But then actually when we started looking at skill-to-skill we see huge gaps, and this is where we also made sure we made the alignment. We went to a new math curriculum and we made sure -- the math curriculum, once again, is K-8 -- well, actually, it's K-12 at this point; so we changed our curriculum. We mandated that they do intervention time-spans through the math period. We made sure when they gave growth conversations -- because we thought that was huge for the kids -- they needed to know where they are and what -- you know, what they need to work on, that the components of it spoke the language of the skill-learning standard. We integrated more collaborative planning across all our
content with our STEM focus; that means we partnered science and math together. We provided best practices on both instruction and engagement. One of the things I found out with engagement and instruction was when students started to display gaps in skills or standards teachers would freeze up; they didn't know how to instruct that. So we had to do some PD on scaffolding without watering down the standard. We aligned our STEM curriculum projects with math and science standards; so we really did that in our Discovery Zone.

And before I hand it over to Ms. Raper, which is going to talk about even though we are a low-performing school how do we remain innovative through our STEM, I want to say a little bit more about our STEM.

Our STEM is offered to every kid; so every kid that comes through there -- if you come on my campus, you'll see they're the most hands-on -- they love doing things, projects, but they still struggle. One of the things we heard from the industries in the past probably five to seven years I would say is they're saying our kids are coming out of high school with reading deficiencies, they can't understand; they can't keep a job. So one of the things that I
have really been expressing to teachers is not about reading a book; they should understand the purpose because reading is a life-skill.

So we're not where we need to be. We are a work in process. Like I said, when you look at the reading growth going from 16% to 21% -- we were anticipating a lot more growth than that, but we are building on what we have started. So I just kind of wanted to tell you where we were, some of the things we've put in place since we left here.

And I'm going to hand it over and I will be available for questions.

MS. RAPER: Hi. I'm Shantele Raper, and I serve as the director of Federal Programs and Special Projects with Osceola School District.

And I was a part of the charter even in the application process to begin with, and I do want to say that the Osceola STEM Academy was a product of business and industry urging us to look at something like this. And at the time we had several LEAs, and we combined our two middle schools to create this one charter school because it was important for us that all of our students have this opportunity in our district to feed into the high school. Because of the opportunities that the charter has provided for
our students we do have that added benefit of
innovation. Okay. And we wanted to -- when we were
first writing the charter we wanted to make sure that
we took a whole-child approach. You know, we have
our courses in Silos; students take a math class,
students take a reading class, students take a CTE
class -- but we wanted to just take that whole-child
approach so that we could help our students to
instill a love for learning, okay, and even our
parents have that love for learning.

And so with that I want to talk about three
things in particular. Our career and technical
student organizations, which all schools have but
we're particularly proud of some of the things that
we do at Osceola STEM Academy. Our Discovery Zone --
if you ever get a chance to visit our Discovery Zone
-- I say we were STEM before STEM was cool; you know,
we -- a lot -- at that time a lot of people did not
know what STEM was. And so we wanted to embed that
in our Discovery Zone. And then, our supplemental
opportunities with our community partners.

First of all, with our career and technical
student organizations, we have -- at the mid-level we
have a pre-engineering program and we have a business
program, like most middle schools have. We're
fortunate that our business teacher transitioned from our pre-engineering program, so she is well-versed in both programs; so it makes a good collaboration between those two for our students. All of our 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students have access and do attend a pre-engineering course — and, again, that was business and industry pushing for that. And so I think it's unique that we can say every one of our 5th graders, every one of our 6th graders, every one of our 7th graders, and every one of our 8th graders attend a pre-engineering class. And so we're new to TSA, but Ms. Smith and I had an opportunity — our instructor was at a previous — he was being trained with Project Lead the Way, so Ms. — we found out our middle school students were eligible for national competition in Washington, D.C.; so of course we said, "We'll take them. We'll be glad to take them to Washington, D.C." And so let me give you a personal story. An 8th grade young man, clearly dyslexic, had the signs of dyslexia and was — you know, we were always working with him. But he had a dragster and he had to have a metric drawing and his was — his drawing was in inches. Within minutes he had converted this to a beautiful metric diagram. The young man had to have his badge to be able to
spell Osceola STEM Academy, but we were able to take
him to Washington, D.C. and he raced his dragster
with thousands of other students. So that's one of
the advantages of things that our students have
access to. They actually -- just last week we
attended -- Osceola STEM Academy won the award for
the best middle school in TSA, and so we were proud
of that.

Let me go into our supplemental opportunities
with our community partners. We cannot say enough
about our community partners. We are so fortunate in
Mississippi County to have so many business and
industry people there to support us. And one way we
do this is by -- you know, we don't try to
micromanage; we go out to our business and industry
and we say, "You know what, you show up -- you send
your engineers, you sign in in the office, and you're
welcome in our classroom." And it is not uncommon --
it's a weekly thing going on that you go into a
classroom and you see engineers sitting in the floor
building robots with children, and that's important.
Just a couple of months ago, we had a -- look at my
time -- we had a business and industry advisory
meeting, and because of that success we turned that
into a county-wide advisory meeting. And so we had
schools from all across the county there and up to about 20 business and industry people there to support us. We were able -- just a couple of weeks ago, DENSO Manufacturing had an essay contest; we had five winners. And our 8th graders were able to go to DENSO, tour the company, have lunch with the plant manager and engineers, and let me tell you, walking through they wanted to know "how does this robot do this, how does this robot do that; we need to know this." And we left and they said, "We've had seniors, we've had grad students come through here that did not have the questions that your 8th graders had for us." So that's another thing that we're very proud of. We walked away with the master robotics team award for our 7th and 8th graders. We have business and industry -- we have 5th graders with drones and you go into a gym and you have about 20 5th graders in there flying drones with business and industry engineers with them -- and, again, that's something to see.

The pride of the Osceola STEM Academy is our Discovery Zone and that's really the hub of our innovation.

[TIMER BELL RINGS]

MS. RAPER: Still have five minutes?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: (Nodding head up and down.)

MS. HYATT: (Nodding head up and down.)

MS. RAPER: Okay. That is really the hub of our innovation. This is where we integrate our math and science and our art. Mr. Hogan, our superintendent, pursued an opportunity with Arkansas Northeastern College for us to work with a Discovery network, and I accompanied the Discovery Zone teacher to these meetings where we're on the STEM pathway -- what they call the STEM pathway journey. And you will see -- if you go into the Discovery Zone, you're going to see a life-size -- a giant chess board where algebraic equations are being taught with chess; you're going to see Wei stations set up -- and we call that We Learn with Wei -- and I'm going to tell you you can slip some math and science in when you give a student a Wei game system. This is where you're going to see escape rooms that are aligned to the thematic lessons in our science and social study classes. But that is really the hub of everything that we have going on.

Just to close, I just want to say that we're committed to continuing this charter because the charter provides this flexibility to provide this innovation. I've always said when we first wrote
this charter we just want to use these waivers to
pave an opportunity for our principals to be able to
look at our students' needs and say, "What can we do
to make things just a little bit different," so we
can look at each individual student as they come
through and provide these opportunities to help them
learn, because, you know, there's no doubt we do
struggle. But with that, when we have these waivers
it gives us a chance to sit down and say, "Okay, you
know, what can we do? What can we tweak? What can
-- if this is not working in this math classroom
right here, can we -- what can we do?" Well, what we
now -- do now, we can take them to the Discovery Zone
and do some hands-on activities that sometimes time
does not allow in a regular classroom.

So we just encourage you to look at our charter,
help us to continue what we've been doing and help us
just be better.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I'll start with any
questions that Panel Members might have.

Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Thank you --

MS. RAPER: You're welcome.

MR. BALDWIN: -- for your presentation. So we
read about the new steel mill in your area. How has
that affected the school system? And is it a
positive effect for you?

MS. RAPER: Yeah, we can talk -- yes, the steel
mill -- for example, our trip to Washington, D.C.,
Mr. Hogan did support us but we -- he sponsored us.
But to reach out to Nucor, to American Greetings, to
Big River Steel, they're there -- and DENSO --
they're there to help us. And so they are constantly
saying, "What can we do to help you." And we have
very good relationships to be able to go in with Dave
Stickler [ps], with very busy people and just sit
across a conference table from them and they say,
"What do you need," and they're there to do that for
us.

SUPT. HOGAN: And a little bit about Jake and
the presence that (inaudible, not at the microphone).

MS. RAPER: Yeah. Big River Steel, Mark
Skinner, the HR director, he is in our classroom
every single week. And to the point that the plant
-- and actually what I told -- when he was talking to
us -- we are stockholders by the way, so we get the
royal treatment. We were able to take our teachers
through a tour of Big River Steel because we wanted
our teachers to see what those jobs look like so our
teachers can transition that instruction to what they
need. So, again, there's not a business and industry in our town that if we don't -- if we reach out to them, they're there to support us.

MS. SMITH: I also want to add to that, because what she described too is with the high school. We have reached out to them as part of STEM. DENSO is always -- engineering has partnered with us; they come in weekly and help us with problem-solving and they have guaranteed us that they will also partner. So we can give them some collaboration as well.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: Just one interesting thing that stood out was the Hispanic population. And it looks like there's a lot of absenteeism specific to the Hispanic group of students, but I see that there's also growth. So just -- I'm just curious if you could just kind of share a little bit about that?

MS. SMITH: Yes. Our population has increased with the Hispanic. What we're finding is though a lot of them have moved in because of either Big River Steel or these industries. And a lot of them, English is their second language and that's been, you know, a barrier. And a lot of them too has come from places where I don't think school has really kept -- yeah, kind of hasn't been "they need to attend," I'll
put it that way; I'll say that.

SUPT. HOGAN: Let me say something about that.

MS. SMITH: Go ahead.

SUPT. HOGAN: Thank you for bringing that up.

The numbers that are in the community with the
immigrants and things, they felt that they were being
targeted to a certain degree. So we did some special
fliers and websites to post for them to feel welcome
and that we would waive certain things to
accommodate them to get their kids in school and to
show them some of the amenities that we had to offer
for their social-economic deficiencies, as far as
free-and-reduced -- well, free lunch; nobody pays
lunch. And then transportation and the technology
and with the computers that federal programs and
other programs -- with the funding we get can take --
give them opportunity to use some of the technology.

MS. SMITH: And most of them are related. We
actually had two families on my campus that the
parents were taken, so they were separated. So we
went through a spurt where we actually had to go into
homes and say they can come; they were afraid to send
their kids.

DR. KREMERS: The other thing I wanted to know
was I think because of the STEM approach -- you can
see the STEM academic achievement is really low but -- the growth is pretty -- showing a good trend in the growth in science, but I don't see that on the reading and literacy side -- but I wasn't sure if it was just how I'm looking at this. But are you doing -- you know, the STEM Academy helps give the hands-on in making connections. What are you doing on the literacy side?

MS. SMITH: Okay. What we're trying to sell to our kids is, like I said, the purpose of reading, that reading is important. There are some factors when you -- for mid-level students in terms of motivation. But what we are doing is trying to -- like I said before, with our adults. I think a lot of that was instruction. Like I said, even with the kids they would skim through and the adults was not pulling out standards and skills and also emphasizing the importance of reading -- because if they're not good readers they're going to struggle throughout life. So it took us a while to change the mindset of our adults in the building, which I think will trickle down with our students. But we have a lot of things in place. Just like I share with teachers, we can't do so much because then we won't be good at anything; so that's the reason why I was trying to
focus on data and the core problem and I thought the first thing is to fix the core instruction.

Now I will tell you one of the things we are doing for reading is -- I was blessed, like I said, to move a very strong teacher as my assistant principal, so she kind of knows what good instruction should look like -- she is a licensed principal -- as well as I have -- my literacy coach and math coach are very, very competent, strong teachers. We're doing some ourself Tier 3 intervention, that time that teachers don't have to do the phonics and phonemic awareness. We are actually pulling together as an instruction team and pulling kids out, not of core classes but pulling them out, trying to get some of that intervention in. You know, because one of the things that I learned at assessor training was -- for RISE and Science of Reading was they told us if you have a big chunk -- and we have a big chunk, we're a Level 4 district -- a big chunk of kids that are reading below -- real low then don't think to start at the bottom, which is phonics and think you're going to make it up to the top; start with comprehension, start teaching strategy, start teaching morphology, you know, and strategies.

So we do have a large percent of SPED kids; we
have 16% on our campus. We hope those numbers drop. A lot of times we don't get to test them. I just inherited a large number of SPED, so --

DR. KREMERS: Thank you.

MS. SMITH: I don't know if I answered that, but I tried.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

So for the past five years with your charter you've had flexibility in staffing, you've had flexibility in several different things. And when I look at your data and where you are now and with what you've talked about -- I mean the large numbers of staff turnover, low reading, results for your students -- and, Ms. Smith, as you talked about -- I mean through your -- through the whole part of your presentation your focus right now is on reading, as it should be.

MS. SMITH: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Absolutely, as it should be. I just -- I'm really having a hard time understanding the continuation of the charter and the flexibility within the charter because, as Ms. Raper describes the actions around the STEM approach, I don't know that you have to have a charter to do anything that you're doing with the STEM focus.
And I think you hit on a really important point, Dr. Kremers, that, you know, the hands-on approach, the things that -- the Discovery Zone and robotics and things you're doing for STEM can be beneficial. But I don't know that it's something for which you need a conversion charter to continue, and especially with the waivers that you're requesting, and I just -- I worry that continued flexibility for your school is not the right path to go down. So I don't know that I have a question, but that's --

MS. SMITH: Can I respond to that?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You can respond though, please.

MS. SMITH: Okay. And I appreciate the comment; I really was trying to listen and let it sink in my head. Because a lot of things we do do you can do in a traditional school. But to know our story -- my background, I've been there since 06-07. To know the dark cloud that hangs in that community -- I'm not from that community -- to know that the reason we went to a STEM school -- because sometimes that's the only way you can sell kids to come into that building or parents to feel like their kids are about something, about a school that is not only adequate. I want to say this and don't sound negative, because
we're not using the name of STEM, because we truly do
do some. We collaborate with the math and science
together. But I want to say it is very, very
important that we keep the STEM components in there
because, once again, we are teaching them life skills
through STEM. I'm not saying that we don't promote
or ask for kids to go to college, but I'm going to be
realistic: the majority of our kids are going out
into the workforce. Do we get some flexibility?
Yes. We have high teacher turnover. I'll just be
honest with you, Act 1240 -- you know, right now I
don't know how long that will last. You know, with
us having the STEM school and giving us a little
flexibility for me to move teachers that are strong
in a content area that they might not be certified
in, I just think that it's adequate. I don't know,
Dr. Ivy, if I answered that but --
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, and I would say you can
keep a STEM focus.

MS. SMITH: Okay.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I don't think there's
anything that would prevent that. I think it's more
about though is a district conversion charter really
the route. And when you think about it, you've got
your charter situated in the middle; so how are you
setting yourself up for success feeding into that? And then, what are the results going beyond? And when you look at the high school and the performance at the high school I don't know that -- I'm not sure that as a district keeping the focus just in your middle school -- I don't know that that's setting you up for success, and it's obviously not translating over into the high school.

So those are my thoughts as I've looked at this. But I'm going to go ahead and let Mr. Rogers ask a question.

MR. ROGERS: I don't know if I have a question. I think that my thoughts are similar to Dr. Pfeffer. I appreciate the focus on the reading when you started out with that. And that's really good because we have -- we were low and it is trending -- trying to get up there, but you're still struggling. And what I was wondering -- well, before we started asking questions -- is what would this school look like if it wasn't a conversion charter? What would be different, I mean because with 1240 waivers would there be more collaboration with the high school? Because, as Dr. Pfeffer said, you get -- there seems to be something that's happening, that's lost, because when they get to the high school it doesn't
seem that you're maintaining that momentum. And so having them right here in the middle, is that really what's best for this district right now?

MS. RAPER: And one thing that the waivers do for us and that is with our waiver for our Fine Arts; that's where we find time to fit in that pre-engineering and that Discovery Zone and embed those fine arts into those courses.

Let me go back several years ago when a young -- I was in the district; I was a charter teacher when it was Academic Center of Excellence. And I want to tell you -- let me just -- I hear what you're saying. But it was September of -- it was right at the beginning of that school year when that charter was pulled from us and it was detrimental to our district because we did not have School Choice at that time. I stood on the parking lot as an 8th grade teacher telling parents that were about to move their children, you know, three weeks into the school year, because we had lost that charter, saying, "We're still going to treat your children the same way tomorrow as we did the day before, even though we do not have this charter." Osceola School District cannot survive losing students. We just can't because of School Choice. And whether it's academics
-- and just to be honest, whether it's social issues
-- I mean those things are there. But losing the
charter for our -- and just our community in general
-- because taking on what I said with this charter,
this was business and industry coming and our Chamber
of Commerce coming to our school board, saying, "We
want this charter. We need this charter to help
entice people to come to work for our companies."
And so I respect what you're saying.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So I guess where I don't
understand -- and this has been going on for a long
time within the district -- if it is a -- if it is
that important to business and industry, why are you
continuing just to focus on this in middle school?
Why isn't it more of a comprehensive look at middle
school to high school and what's going on in the
elementary school? I just -- and I understand those
elements and the difficulty, but it just -- it's hard
for us to look at the data and say that it makes
sense for us to continue to approve something that --
you know, I don't know that it's really helping your
district and your students, other than a perception
maybe.

MS. RAPER: It is absolutely --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But I can't understand why
the community wouldn't say "this needs to be larger and broader."

MS. RAPER: They do. And that word is exactly right, it is a perception issue. I will tell you this: with our pre-engineering program -- and I did brag on a hundred-percent of our students going into that pre-engineering program. What happened with that is I had 60 -- and, Dr. Kremers, you heard this -- I had 60 8th graders saying, "We want to go into this program in 9th grade," which we did not have that program in place. So that was a good problem to have. So we were able to add those programs at the high school. The reason we've not gone any further with it at the high school and that is because with like our career and technical programs we have -- Mr. Hogan -- and we talk about this often -- we have good CTE teachers at the high school --

SUPT. HOGAN: And the ANC Community College.

MS. RAPER: And our -- yeah, and he's correct, in our ANC. These -- we do not have to have all of the teachers that we have at the high school, and you have a little bit more of a flexibility with that schedule at the high school that we do not have at the middle school program. But our students have -- you know, they have the agri, they have the business,
they have the industrial technology. And we still --
even though we were well above -- well above what we
had to provide for CTE we added a pre-engineering
program because our middle school fed into that and
our students and our business and industry demanded
it. So we've never been stymied at the high school
level to need these waivers because with that
flexibility of schedule and with our operating budget
we're able to get those teachers in there. But,
again, yes, you're right; I mean it is a perception
issue.

SUPT. HOGAN: Yes, it is.

MS. RAPER: But for me and, you know, the three
of us -- I was the teacher that was there when that
charter was pulled and I can tell you within a week
our classrooms just -- and I'll be honest, it was --
we had a lot of -- it was white-flight at that time
and that was without School Choice. And so when you
live in a community and you live in my neighborhood
and you look around and your students that are your
-- children that are your neighbors are not a part of
your school --

SUPT. HOGAN: Of your system.

MS. RAPER: -- that's heartbreaking. And so,
yeah, we do; we reach for and we grab any opportunity
we can to keep our students and have those
opportunities. But those waivers do help. We use
those, but we don't abuse them. We try not to abuse
our waivers.

MS. SMITH: But also as the leader -- the
instructional leader of that school, I wish I had a
student here. I wish a student could stand before
you and say what a STEM does for them. I think they
would speak the language of a STEM-focused
curriculum. Do I think they would speak the language
of -- because I believe if you would've asked them,
you know, "why do you have to have a STEM school" I
think they would tell you it's preparing them for the
workforce; "it's giving me those life skills that I
need." If you was to say, "Well, you don't have to
have STEM to do that," then I would say -- they would
probably say, "Yes, I do," because most of my kids --
like now we've been a STEM school long enough that's
all they know 5th through 8th grade and we do speak
that language daily.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Did you have an additional
question?

MR. ROGERS: And I hear what you're saying, I
do, but -- and I guess that's where I'm just -- I'm
still struggling there because I understand what
you're trying to do. But then looking at the data
we're still not there on the reading and science,
where we need to be on that. And then when those
kids are going into your high school that performance
isn't staying. So that's where I'm struggling is
because -- I understand the perception; I get what
you're -- but how -- perceptionally how -- what does
it look like when we're doing better here, but then
when we go to high school we're not doing so good?
So how do -- is this the model that we need to be at
the 5-8 STEM charter that we're trying to get? Is
that what we -- what it needs to be? What moving
forward -- because I know there's a lot of challenge
there. And so going forward is this how it needs to
look? And that's where I'm struggling. And I do
appreciate you spending the most time talking about
the reading because that is ultimately important and
we have to be there. But then that's where I was
kind of going, "Well, that is important," and then,
"where is the science, all that coming in, if we're
having to spend" -- which we should on that reading;
I don't want to de-emphasize that at all.

MS. SMITH: It gives us some diversity. I truly
feel like -- and like I tell people, we are a low-
performing school. But in terms of providing
opportunity for our kids, you know -- when I look at it as -- if you walk in my building and what the culture is like and, slash, looking at test scores, you wouldn't think it's the same school. But I don't have the answer for that besides that I can keep on providing adequate instruction and trying to lead by the instruction leader as well as continue to insure the community that we're doing everything we can to raise test scores. But I do truly understand what you're saying, so --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any questions?

Okay. Ms. Hyatt, there were some things on the legal review, I believe.

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division.

And, again, they submitted additional information yesterday, so some of the stuff on the legal review I'll just need them to confirm for the record.

The first issue, on their Teacher Licensure waivers they'd only requested one law. I suggested that they review 6-15-1004, 6-17-401, 6-17-902, and 6-17-919 in order to fully effectuate their waiver. They did and have since asked to include those statutes as part of their waiver. So I'll need them to confirm that, as well as that they need a waiver
of Section 7 of the ADE rules governing Educator Licensure.

MS. RAPER: Yes, we confirm we need those waivers.

MS. HYATT: Okay. The second, Library Media, I believe they have agreed to rescind the request for Standard 2(d)(1).

MS. RAPER: Yes, we rescind that waiver.

MS. HYATT: And the last one is Gifted and Talented. There are two additional waivers that they'll need to effectuate the waiver of 2(g)(1); that would be 6-20-2208(c)(6), which has to do with spending adequate funding on your Gifted and Talented program, and 6-42-109, which they've I believe now asked for in the information I got yesterday, and the ADE rules governing Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards.

MS. RAPER: And, yes, we would like to request those.

MS. HYATT: That's all.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So, Panel, we can go ahead and proceed with a decision or is there any discussion?

MR. BALDWIN: Let me ask what are our options? It sounds like we have two options that are far away
from each other. Is there a middle ground option or is there a shorter-term option to request performance? And, you know, I don't know.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I do believe -- Ms. Hyatt can verify. I do believe that we can -- the request is for a five-year renewal; correct?

MS. HYATT: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MS. HYATT: I just had to check with Tracy.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

MS. HYATT: So in terms of your options you can approve it as written; you can approve it for a shorter amount of time; you can also place any other type of reporting or probationary restrictions you'd like to place; you can ask them to come back next month with additional information if you're not ready to make a decision today. Just be mindful that if you push back that deadline it pushes back for them when they will know whether they will continue with the charter. And then you can revoke their charter.

DR. KREMERS: I think I have kind of the same thoughts on the purpose/reason for a charter, and there are so many more CTE courses available at the middle level, including those in STEM, that can occur with or without the charter component. So I feel
like it's not taking anything away from the kids, the students, because they still would have the same course options and opportunities and there's the support. And Ms. Raper does a fabulous job working with State staff implementing the CTE components, so I know that technical assistance and collaboration would continue for support of those programs. So I think I'm -- you know, as far as the academic component, you know, I'm kind of where you guys are in your thoughts, you know, about the reason that a charter would still be necessary.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any thoughts or discussion?

MR. ROGERS: I understand and I get where you're coming from. At this point right now I would be uncomfortable with going out to five years. I probably could -- in my mind I was probably thinking more of three. And then at the halfway point of that I'd like to have them come back and do a presentation to see where they are at that time to see how we are working on that collaboration with the high school, to see what the success is going on in there. Because I understand that you are going with the Science of Reading, you're trying to get your teacher turnover -- and so I understand those obstacles have been there and you're overcoming those and there's
still a long way to go. I'm still struggling with being a STEM, and I'm just -- personally I am; I'm still stuck there with it. But given that it's a big hill that you've had to climb I'm not saying that I would revoke right now, but I just -- I'm uncomfortable with it right now. But I think three years with the -- after that first halfway point if you could come back with some kind of plan of collaboration with the high school to see the success with our junior high students -- middle school/junior high at that time is.

MR. BALDWIN: I like that. I like the three-year timeframe because that gives you guys a shorter period, but it also expresses the concern of the Panel. And I think that what I would do in that period of time, especially coming back in a year-and-a-half, would be to have a plan, you know, to watch and see how your performance is and to have a plan to go forward as a charter school -- but also have a plan not to, because it sounds like that could be the decision of the Panel at that point in time.

And then what I would be looking for and what I will ask you when you come back would be is that relates to the steel mill that's in town is are they hiring your students. And one of the things that I
hear all the time from executives at the steel mills in the Delta is "we don't hire the students because they can't read and they can't do math, and we have to go to Tennessee to get our workforce." And so I think you have an opportunity to cure that and it sounds like they're willing to work with you, but I think you've got to really see are they hiring your students, because that ultimately is their stamp-of-
approval on your program.

   MS. SMITH: Yes, thank you.

   CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. And I think you both make excellent points. You know, Mr. Hogan, I think that Ms. Smith is having to work way too hard on reading and I think that's a result of the support not happening at your elementary. So I think as a district -- I think what we're saying is as a district if we're being asked to continue the waivers, the designation of a charter, beyond what has happened so far, I think what we need to see is that as a district you're supporting this endeavor. So that means shoring up that K-3 or the early grades through 4, grade 4 -- 1-4 so that grades 5-8 can really get into that STEM work and really explore that. And then we do need to see though where is this going because, as Mr. Baldwin said, you know, if
students then aren't getting into high school and really jumping into those opportunities to have internships and STEM-focused career experiences in high school then really this is a waste of time. So I think when you—all do come back those are the things that we need to see that as a district this is being supported. And I think if that's kind of the lines we're thinking I can feel much more comfortable with moving forward on maybe a shorter timeframe.

DR. KREMERS: Does the district use the interim reports, like others have been mentioned?

MS. SMITH: Yeah, this is our first year. We just started.

DR. KREMERS: Do you have your report or trends right now?

MS. SMITH: No, but I can tell you some data. I mean I can vocalize it. I can provide it.

DR. KREMERS: I think the important thing is just if you're using that so you know what you're doing, if it's working. So, you know, that's really helpful as well.

MS. SMITH: Yeah. This is our first year using ACT Aspire interims. Prior to us doing this last year we did training on the performance level descriptors to make sure that teachers knew what the
kids would have to know, you know, in relation to this test. Fifth grade was very -- our first interim was very low. Actually, we have an exceptional 8th grade. I do agree with you guys, we went off -- our highest group for reading was 8th grade last year and we're, you know, hoping they can maintain. She also has the highest right now on the interim; so 8th and 6th grade, which are two very, very strong teachers. I made a change six weeks into school; a 7th grade teacher that I hired through the waiver I just felt like didn't know the content, as well as classroom management was a huge issue. We made a change with a teacher that social studies was stronger than literacy, from Springdale, and this was his second year; he embraced it and he's doing magnificent. So we're looking forward to January when we do our second interim to see if we -- to see how it goes. But, yes, so --

MS. RAPER: May I make a comment, just one brief comment?

We focused so much of this presentation on our middle level school. But, you know, to answer your question about the high school, I'm confident that we can come back even in a year-and-a-half with an update, because had we had this amount of time to
talk about the successes of the high school -- our JAG program, we were able to pull a teacher in that was from American Greetings HR and said, "I want to come teach." He's our JAG teacher. And his first year, we had 100 percent placement in business and industry. That next year, 98 percent of those children were still our students at that point -- young people were still employed. And so Big River Steel was there to hire a young lady that we were really afraid was not going to take her basketball scholarship because of the amount of money that Big River Steel offered her as an internship that year.

So the things that are happening at STEM are trickling into the high school. We just -- like I said, we took this opportunity to highlight the high school [sic]. So we appreciate you giving us the opportunity and I feel like if we came back we could let you know the impact that that is having with our high school.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So do we -- are we ready to go forward with a decision, if someone would like to make a motion?

MR. ROGERS: I make the motion that we approve the conversion charter for three years, with them to come back for us in a year-and-a-half to show the
progress that they're making towards collaboration with the high school, towards progress with their students they're having in the 5th through 8th grade.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion.

MR. BALDWIN: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Motion and a second.

All those in favor say aye.

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

Okay. All right. So we'll record our votes and some feedback, and that way that'll help you with your next steps.

MS. SMITH: Thank you so much.

[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I approved the three-year renewal, with a one-and-one-half year status report. I do believe that if you all come back in that year-and-a-half and the results are similar that probably another structure would be warranted at that time.

DR. KREMERS: And my comments are the same.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I think where I really see it is that the motion gives time for the District to shore up supports at the elementary level to provide an opportunity for success at the middle.
It will give time for two additional years of data with coming back in a year-and-a-half. So I think that gives us a much better picture of your progress.

MR. ROGERS: I made the motion given that I understand the reading and understand where you were talking about where you all have been focusing on that and, as Dr. Pfeffer said, hoping that the elementary school is allowed -- that we can get that up to where -- allow you to do what you're wanting to on the STEM, as well as collaboration on the high school to maintain -- to keep that momentum of student success going.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you very much for your time today. Be safe going home. And thank you for working with us. We'll stay in touch.

MS. SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we'll take a break until 1:00. We have lunch and we can take a break and we'll reconvene at 1:00.

(LUNCH BREAK: 12:31 – 1:08 P.M.)

(COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Wilson returned to the meeting during the break.)

B-1: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION – SOUTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We will get started
back with our afternoon agenda. We have a couple of items to hear this afternoon. And the first is the renewal application for Southside High School. Ms. Webb.

MS. WEBB: Southside High School is a district conversion charter that was initially authorized on November 19, 2014. The charter is approved to serve students in grades 9 through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 1200. Representatives from the Southside School District are appearing before the Charter Panel to request a renewal of the current charter through June 30, 2026.

Representatives from the Southside High School include Roger Rich, superintendent; Crystal Johnson, CEO of Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce; Novella Humphrey, director of Curriculum and Federal Programs; Roger Reid, high school principal; and Dion Stevens, assistant superintendent.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We want to welcome everyone here this afternoon.

We have some of our elected representatives here as well; so we are very happy to have you. Before the District gets started would you all like to say anything on behalf of the District?

SENATOR STURCH: We'll defer to them, if that's
okay.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: That is perfectly fine.

Okay. So will the representatives of the charter please stand to receive the oath? If you'll be speaking on the charter, we'll go ahead and get you sworn in. Okay. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So you will have 20 minutes for your presentation. And you're welcome just to come to the microphone as you're ready to present and if you'll just state your name and title for the record, you're recognized.


Good afternoon, Madam Chair, Panel. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today with our renewal application for our charter for our high school.

This we call our Future Story. We refer to it as Project Future Story. We started this process about seven years ago, and it was a conversation with our administrative staff back-and-forth about what we can do for kids to not only help them be successful
while they're with us but successful after they leave us. And we started the process talking back-and-forth; we involved our community college, the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville, and then with the leadership team at APSRC. They guided us to come before you five years ago and we had a successful application, and we hope to be able to prove to you today that we need to continue to go forward with that. It's not only changed the way that education is delivered within our district, it's changed the way education has been delivered through Independence County. And it's been exciting to watch the phenomenal opportunity for kids and we hope to continue moving forward with that.

So our mission -- the mission of Southside High School is to equip each student to meet the individualized challenges of his or her future story. We hope to do that with every student that attends our school district to go straight to work after graduation, whether they attend some kind of institution of higher learning, whether it be a two-year school, a technical school, or four-year school. And we hope to use those personalized plans to make them college and career ready.

I think I can best answer this question for you,
did the conversion charter make an impact -- and I think I can do that best by telling you some stories about kids.

The first young lady is a young lady named Kerri. Kerri's future story was to become a teacher. She graduated in 2017 with a value-added diploma and 46 concurrent credit hours. She went ahead that summer and picked up an additional 10 hours and started at ASU in the fall with 56 concurrent credit hours. She wanted to be a teacher, but she caused a little bit of problem for Arkansas State University at that time; in their Teacher Ed. program they weren't used to someone being prepared to be in the program in their first semester of their freshman year. So we went with Kerri, we sat down with their administrative team, and the teacher of the education department tried to work through some of those barriers and obstacles that were there to not only help her but to help future students as well. She did a fantastic job; she graduated in two years with her Bachelors of Education degree, before her 20th birthday. Being 20 years old and still having some lottery scholarship money available, she took advantage of that and she's at Harding University now, going to graduate with her Master's degree in
Reading in 2020. And we're going to do our best to recruit her back home, to come back and work for us. That's just one story.

Another story is Cory. Cory was a young man that didn't want to further his education, didn't want to go on to college, but he knew that he wanted to go into the workforce and our goal was to make sure that he had a family sustaining wage of some kind. So he went through our mock interview process and he really fell in love with an industry in our community called Flowers Bakery. But when he graduated he wasn't 18 years old yet; he had to be 18 to be able to go to work at Flowers. So they said, "Remember, when you turn 18 come back and apply," and we told him we would help him. So he turned 18 in the middle of the summer; he came back and worked with our high school counselor and she helped him through the process. It's all computerized, fairly difficult to maneuver through. She helped him through that process, helped him set up a voicemail that he'd never set up on his phone before in case he got a call for an interview and wasn't able to take it -- helped him through all those adult things that he needed to do. Now he's working at Flowers Bakery; he got that job. He's been able to work his way up
the ladder into recruiting some of the younger students to come and join him, because it's a great place to work and have a family sustaining wage if you choose not to go on to college.

So our third young lady is Taylor. Taylor graduated in 2017 with 63 concurrent credit hours at Southside High School. She graduated on a Sunday afternoon, graduated from high school; Monday evening she graduated from UACCB with her associate's degree; then on Tuesday she was a junior at Lyon College. To be able to help her along the way -- she wanted to be a dentist; that's her future story. She just recently told us last week or the week before that she had five different offers from five different dental schools.

All three of these individuals had the opportunity to have choice because of the opportunity that was afforded them with this process and with our charter.

So what impact did it have on students and families? Over 50% of our students have chosen to participate in this program -- and those that don't, they might want that traditional high school diploma and high school experience, and that's okay if that's what they choose to have. But we want those that
want more to definitely have that opportunity and we
want to be able to provide that for them.

Our past graduates have accumulated 3,586 hours
of college credit. We've had 59 certificates of
proficiency, technical certificates, and associate's
degrees. Over half the students that had close to a
year's worth of college courses before they left us
have graduated with their Bachelor's in three years
or less. And what's most important to us is we're
saving that money, that time to degree, and we saved
our families tuition of about $275,000. That's life-
changing; that's life-altering; that's making a
difference for families and lives in the workforce in
Independence County.

So the impact it's had on education -- we've
been very fortunate to be in a growing area. Our
school district has grown steadily over the last
several years. We were actually just recently named
the number four high-growth school district in the
state of Arkansas. We were the number one school
district that had enrollment of 500 students or more,
and we're very proud of that. The growth at the
community college I think has had an impact on what
the local school districts within our county are
doing. The growth at UACCB has grown about 12% over
the last four to five years, where two-year colleges traditionally across the state of Arkansas have all dropped. So we think that that's had a huge impact on that.

The joint meetings that we've had with not only our community college started off with just monthly meetings between our community college and our school district. Now we have seven school districts that meet monthly, along with UACCB and with Lyon College. You've got a public two-year university and you've got a private four-year university, and those things just don't happen that often. But the collaboration has been unreal to make those things happen and change the landscape throughout Independence County.

So we have prepared students, and we have Ms. Novella Humphrey going to come and share that with us.

MS. HUMPHREY: I'm Novella Humphrey; I'm the director of Curriculum and Federal Programs at Southside.

And just sharing a little information from our Joint Leadership Team -- and that's how we refer to ourselves -- bimonthly -- the leadership of Southside Charter High School and the leadership of UACCB, we meet twice a month. As Mr. Rich explained, that's
going to once a month. We meet with seven area high
schools and both colleges, but we still meet together
once a month just the two institutions. And what
we've really noticed over the last five years is we
have students prepared for their future stories;
they're ready to have strong conversations. Lisa
Rich, our counselor, asked students from the very
beginning to begin with the end in mind, "What is
your future story? And let's map it backwards." And
so, "If your future story is a four-year college or a
two-year college, what's your degree plan?" Our
students know how to use the Arkansas College -- or
Credit Transfer System; they know how to look at
those degree plans and decide what can I take locally
that will go with me to Harding; what can I take
locally that will go with me to Arkansas State; what
can I take locally that will transfer to Lyon for
that four-year degree that I want. And so they
really understand the process of college at a higher
level, so we're not wasting concurrent hours. Every
hour we're taking is leading towards our next step,
and so we really find kids are strong in that
process. They've learned when they need help and
support to succeed and they've learned to know where
to go to get that help and support. They're better
able to self-advocate for that need.

We have a young lady that she walked in for her college advising appointment in her first year as a full-time student with three color-coded degree plans. She was ready to tell the advisor what class she needed because she knew where she was in their degree plan -- "And if I change my mind, this is the other degree I want and these are the steps I've already completed." So students are really prepared to take that next step.

And so when we talk about our monthly meetings we start every single time with successes and challenges. We celebrate things that are working really well and students that are succeeding, but we also look at what are the challenges, what barriers are standing in the way for students, and how do we work to remove those. And during those bimonthly meetings, either jointly or just UACCB and Southside, we try each time to problem-solve and to always do what's right for students. We look at things that stand in the way. For example, sometimes it's the purchase of a book for a student or extra materials they're taking [sic] because they're taking above and beyond what we offer at school, and we problem-solve how we can meet those needs for students, not only
locally, at Southside, but across our county.

We saw some difficulties in the admissions process in the beginning and no full-time staff member at UACCB was assigned to concurrent program; it was kind of shifted between multiple offices and multiple departments. And so now with the growth and the continued dedication to this program there's a full-time staff person at UACCB who's a liaison between the high schools and the college and they work solely in concurrent credit. They're also that staff person that goes between high school and college instructors. So if the retention alert -- if attendance is poor, grades are not where they should be, then we're getting those retention alerts so we can continue to work with our students and make sure they're going to be successful in those college classes.

And another challenge that's really been taken away through this process is the decrease of stigma of community college in our community. Kids really see the overall benefit of those concurrent hours and families see the cost savings of those hours that they take with us. You know, we start out with a cost-sharing program and now through other things, like the Independence County Promise and Act 456 that
Ms. Johnson will talk about, we're really able to
save families even more money. So kids have really
bought into this investment of their time in their
senior year, their junior year, and how it will pay-
off in that long-term future story.

SUPT. RICH: So impact to our local workforce --
we had mock interviews and we just recently did these
this last Thursday. We had about 70 partners that
came to us, right at 70 that did mock interviews for
our seniors. And to get that many people to give up
their time to come and help us with a real-world
experience we're extremely grateful for that.

We have an HR group of all the business and
industry partners that meet once a month, and now
they include local school districts in with that. So
we will know what technical pathways they need for
employees of their different respective organizations
so we're all on the same line as well.

The willingness to support the Independence
County Promise, as she mentioned, was a cost-sharing
model for our kids to be able to take concurrent
credit, and now -- it's now Act 456 where all
students across the state of Arkansas can take care
of it. They give not only financially but they give
of their time to be guest speakers, to job shadow,
allow internships, all those type things. And the
new secondary career center is really just taking
that to another level.

We have Ms. Crystal Johnson; she's the CEO of
the Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce and a great
supporter of our school district to share the next
slide with us.

MS. JOHNSON: Hi. Crystal Johnson, president
and CEO of the Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce.

I'm here today on behalf of not only the Chamber
but our business and industry partners and then our
community in Independence County at large. I'm so
proud to be here to be an advocate for the Southside
School District. The partnership that we have I
believe is very unique. The types of partnerships --
these are the types of partnerships that are needed
for strong local communities, but I believe they're
also important for the future and economic success of
the state of Arkansas.

The difference in school districts who I believe
have these partnerships and those who don't are the
willingness to allow partners to come onto campus,
boots on the ground, working together to face
challenges of the school district, and then working
together to find solutions -- solutions from the
community to build the school district. So we have that partnership which I'm very proud of and very proud to be here.

You know, it might sound odd that a Chamber of Commerce would spend -- some of our staff members spend about 20 hours of their workweek in our school districts. That might sound odd, so let me tell you just a little bit about our partnership with Southside and how that came to be.

So we were invited to learn about their program, Project Future Story, which is a program built to build up our kids and give them every -- as Mr. Rich says, every unfair advantage that we possibly can to insure that they are successful in life and that they're a contributing member to our workforce, which is very important to economic development in Chambers of Commerce. So we saw this model; we knew immediately that this was just too good not to share with the state. So by working together Southside School District actually shared that model with our other districts in Independence County, which says a lot about their generosity and how much they care about kids, because we're not unique in the fact that there's school choice competition. But Southside was willing to share that program with, first, our other
school districts in Independence County; then by working together with our legislators we were able to scale that program statewide, now called the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program. As Mr. Rich said earlier, due to this program the University of Arkansas Community College in Batesville has seen phenomenal growth. I expect to see that growth throughout the state now that the program is officially launched. This is just one example of how good things happen for our kids when we work together, real-world examples of making a difference in the lives of our kids and improving the economic success in the state of Arkansas.

Another example of working together with our school district is through our community strategic plan that we call "Impact." That's a grassroots plan that our community developed. We are dedicated -- our community has told us that they want collectively to be dedicated to innovation in education, economic prosperity, tourism, and then healthy living and well-being. But you know all of those things go hand-in-hand. I think it's pretty unique that a community in rural Arkansas would have a vision to be -- establish our school districts as leader in education. I think that's very unique. I think
that's very powerful that we have community support, able to -- it's because of programs like that that Project Future Story can be so successful because of the community model and the community support that we have.

So just a couple of examples of education successes -- as we mentioned, the Independence Promise First, that was then the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program, we were able to establish the UACCB Secondary Career Center, state-of-the-art Workforce Development Center, just to name a few. You will see Southside School District and this team at the forefront of our projects in education being very successful, being leaders. I couldn't be more proud to be a partner and advocate for Southside School District.

And thank you for letting me speak on behalf of them. Thank you.

SUPT. RICH: So what future impact do we hope -- we definitely want to sustain the partnerships that we have, cultivate those, and continue to grow additional partnerships as well. We want to maintain and increase the number of students completing college courses and technical training. We want to add additional pathways -- and we have, thanks to Dr.
Kremers. She's helped us. We've had two different pathways, with cyber security being one, and we are starting an additional pathway in banking and hope to have a functioning bank within our school district and our high school starting next fall. So we're excited about that. And we want to advocate for students and families with future legislation, just like we were able to work on Act 456; if there's something that we can do locally, we definitely want to do that -- or something that would help statewide, we're always going to be looking forward to that to helping kids all over the state of Arkansas.

So with that, I just want to say thank you for the opportunity for letting us come before you today. We hope we have the opportunity to continue this. We have two other additional partners with us today that hopefully they can share their stories: Senator James Sturch is a product of our school district and I think exemplifies everything that we talk about with this program; we're extremely proud of him. And then Representative Stu Smith, who is, you know, a career educator who has been extremely supportive and helpful to us during his time as well.

But I have a great leadership team with me today, if you have any questions for them. But we
thank you for the opportunity to come and share our story and hopefully we can continue doing great things for kids.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. You -- we still have a little bit of time in that original 20 minutes, and then we do have an additional 5 minutes too, if any of your other leadership team wants to add anything. Or if not, we can go ahead and hear from guests if you'd like to.

REPRESENTATIVE STU SMITH: Good afternoon. Thanks for letting me talk today. My name is Stu Smith and I am the State Representative, District 63, which encompasses parts of Independence County.

First of all, I'd like to say that what a fantastic school that Southside is. As I've become a State Representative and been able to visit this school and see the things that they're doing for the students, very, very impressive. And they're becoming a leader not just in our area, but I think in the future of education in the state of Arkansas as well.

And what really stands out to me is their ability to pinpoint a student's weakness and then through the flexibility they have in their scheduling to take that student and work very hard on those
weaknesses; but at the same time they're still able to nurture their strengths and interests in providing them an overall and well-rounded education at the school. At the same time they also are able to relieve frustrations that as an educator you would see so many times in a student who just tried over and over again to try to learn, and for whatever reason not being able to, finally give up and become frustrated, fall through the cracks, and just very -- a waste of a resource. And they work very, very hard to make sure that this doesn't happen. That impresses me as well.

Also, they prepare students for the future. They stay with that student and make sure they stay on track for future success. I'm just very impressed overall with the school, with the people that work there, how they work with the community, and they make us all very Independence proud in our area.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.


Five years ago, I had just started my career in the Legislature and came before this Panel to ask for the original grant -- I guess the waivers and the
flexibility for this school. Now Mr. Rich has already let the cat out of the bag, so not only are they my constituents but this is my home school.

So as I said five years ago -- I'll say it again -- I'm very much biased towards this school. But I can tell you that they didn't have this 10 years ago when I graduated high school. And in the last five years that I've been in the Legislature I've got to see firsthand how it has made an impact on our county -- and not just our county but, as Representative Smith said, the whole state of Arkansas. Now when I'm on the Education Committee or I'm visiting with other people across the state they know where Southside School is -- and it's not in Fort Smith and it's not at Bee Branch; it's Southside in Batesville. And they know which Southside I'm talking about and I think it's because of this program and its success, that they've seen the numbers. And I love the slide that they put in about how much growth they've experienced, how much money they've been able to save families.

We talk about data all the time and the need to see data and how it has worked. I think you can see it. I think you can find it by looking at this school. One thing I love about it is how
individualized it is. They are really trying to re-
define what success means as far as the high school
and as far as what a future story might be. For so
long we had just one tunnel vision of success, that
you had to go on to a four-year degree, you had to
get a white collar job in order to be successful --
and that's not true. And these students are finding
out that they have so many pathways in order to find
success.

I can tell you the story of two brothers: one is
Roger, one is Larry. Roger went on to college, got
two degrees, started teaching, worked his way up to
be a superintendent, the highest paid individual in
his school district. Larry went on to college,
didn't like it, started working at Wal-Mart in order
to make ends meet, and became manager of the Wal-Mart
in a town of no bigger than 7,000 people. Guess
which one makes more money, the superintendent or the
manager at Wal-Mart. And it's not the one you think.
The manager at Wal-Mart's bonus this year will be
more than Roger Rich ever has made in his life.
That's his brother, and he's manager of Truman,
Arkansas's Wal-Mart.

But I'm telling you success is not the same for
everybody. Future Story basically brings that idea
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into a reality that success is what you make of it. They are willing to go the extra mile to help students find out their goals, to find out their needs, and to work with them to meet it. They're not leaving students on their own to figure it out -- or "navigate," as Ms. Novella said. They go that extra mile.

I can't be more proud of how this project has worked, and I'm very supportive of having it renewed for another five years. So thank you very much for having me.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

Okay. Are we ready for questions?

We'll start down here with Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes, thank you. So just a statement and a question.

It is apparent by reading through your document that you guys believe in children and you spent a lot of time talking about kids -- really more time talking about the kids than you did talking about your program. So that's impressive.

Superintendent Rich, let me ask you -- we're going to act on the renewal of your charter today. Beyond that, what is the most critical aspect of the ongoing sustainability of your program when you sit
back and look at it and look out 25 years?

SUPT. RICH: That's a tough question. We hope
to continue to have the flexibility that we have.
And we continue to grow; we have learned so much.
When we first came we just had a plan on paper; we
didn't have a clue how it was going to work and how
it would continue to evolve. It's just gotten better
and better each year. The more that we learn, the
more partnerships that we have, we just have more
knowledge to pass on to our students. So having the
flexibility with our junior high charter that we
graciously received just a few months back will allow
us to push that down even further and to get even
better with our students as we move along.

So I hope that answers your question.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: To piggyback off of that,
when you say "the flexibility," is there one thing in
particular that is -- has really made the difference?
Can you talk a little bit more about that?

SUPT. RICH: I believe it's just the combination
of everything. I can't put my finger or thumb on one
thing. But all those together have been just a great
combination for us.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

SUPT. RICH: Anything else that you might add?
MS. HUMPHREY: I think from the curriculum and staffing standpoint that flexibility uses the staff of UACCB and Lyon. We're able to take advantage of their resources in our community and provide our students training that might not have been possible, because that professor was not a high school certified teacher. And so it's really been nice to be able to tap into all their resources that are local and bring those into the classroom with our students.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: No question, just a comment -- just a compliment on the community support and the business and industry partnerships. You know, the model is so much around career readiness, college and career readiness, and the pieces that you guys have done in advance and being forward-thinking has really -- it is definitely a model program as far as all of those components. And I know there's probably going to be more questions on the literacy and math. But on the components of CTE and all, just -- it's a great, great example and a tremendous amount of work to make that happen with the business partnerships that you have as well.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Questions?
MR. ROGERS: No.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson?

MR. WILSON: To follow-up on Dr. Kremers' comment about the community support, about a year ago I had occasion to go to Batesville to spend most of the day with the mayor and the county judge and the Admiral. And I learned a lot about the strength and support of the Main Street folks, the business people there for the school system. Without exception, they pointed out to me and some other folks with me that they considered the school system there to be the star of the crown and it made a big impression on me. So, and your presentation has been very interesting from that respect too.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So my question would be what are some things -- are there some things outside of today with the charter approval that the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education could do to help you or help your students?

MS. HUMPHREY: You're so gracious every time we call with a challenge, with a problem seeking solutions; your staff is always on point, ready to help us, and I think just to continue that relationship, just to continue that partnership. We're not afraid to ask questions and we just
appreciate that you're not afraid to find hard
answers for us. Sometimes it's the answer we want;
sometimes it's not the answer we want. But I
appreciate that relationship and that honesty and
that trust and I hope that we can continue that.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

SUPT. RICH: That's something we do not take for
granted and we don't want to lose. So we definitely
want to -- so when we call you or tell you something
we want you to know that's the way that it is and
that need is there. So we do appreciate the
partnership back and forth.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And this might be for
the two of you or for somebody else. You -- I think
it was mentioned that you're sharing what you're
doing with the other schools in the area. But even
outside of the area, if you could really say "if
you'll do this one thing, this can really put you on
a path to transform the experience for your students"
-- is there something that you can kind of point to?
Because, you know, again, we realize you're sharing;
we realize the whole community is benefitting, but we
don't -- we're still not seeing a whole lot of
Batesville Southsides. And I'm just curious as to
how do we really -- how do we get others to really
jumpstart that?

SUPT. RICH: I think, first of all, it starts with culture and relationships with people. And I think if you don't get those two things right you're not going to get anything else right. But then you have to have a business community that you go to and that you ask, and they're going to welcome you with open arms. I said before that I'm embarrassed that we didn't ask a lot quicker than we did and they opened their arms to us, they welcomed us, and they want to have that partnership. So develop that partnership with your business and community and you need to have a partner with some kind of institution of higher learning, have that partnership with them as well.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Any other questions?

So, Ms. Hyatt, are there some things we need to look at on legal issues?

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division.

No, there's not. And I just wanted to make sure and get up and tell the Panel how much I appreciated working with them, because typically I have to do three or maybe four legal reviews and am getting information about waivers all the way until the day
of the hearing. I only had to do one for Southside. And that kind of echoes -- in August, you heard their application for the new district conversion; it was the same thing. And they have even agreed to be a resource at my urging for those that are going through the process and help navigate the legal sections so that -- I think that's kind of an area of weakness in initial applications. So I just wanted to say thank you and to let the Panel know really how wonderful they did on this part of the application.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Thank you. Okay. Any questions or discussions? And if not, I'm ready for a motion.

MR. BALDWIN: I'll make the motion to approve the renewal request.

MR. WILSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and a second to approve.

All those in favor say aye.

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

All right. Thank you very much. And we will record responses and give you specific feedback.

(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I approved the motion. I think the program is outstanding for the students of Independence County.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: I approved the motion to renew. They are a model program and fully invested with their business and community partnerships so that students have great opportunities for success.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

MR. ROGERS: I approved the motion. It was a good proposal and I don't have any objections to this timeframe.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I think their application is excellent and the community support in that area in Independence County is just great.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, we thank you for all your work. And I guess going forward we'll not only get the opportunity to hear more about your high school but also your middle school as well. So good luck with that and thank you all for being here.

B-2: HEARING FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL APPLICATION - ACADEMICS PLUS CHARTER SCHOOLS

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We're going to go
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ahead and move on to the final item on our action agenda for today, which is a renewal application for Academics Plus. Ms. Webb, will you update us please?

MS. WEBB: Academics Plus is an open-enrollment charter that was initially authorized on May 14, 2001. The charter is approved to serve students in grades K-12 and has an enrollment of 2275. They are requesting renewal of their charter through June 30, 2033.

Representatives here today for Academics Plus include Rob McGill, Chief Executive Officer; Jeremy Brown, Principal of Scott Charter; Kimberly Willis, Principal of Maumelle Charter; Paula Newton, Principal of Maumelle Charter; Kyron Jones, Chief Operating Officer; Kelly Turney, Curriculum Specialist; and currently Maumelle Mayor Caleb Norris.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mayor Norris, would you like to begin before the District? Or we can do it after, it's up to you.

MAYOR NORRIS: Sure, that's fine.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MAYOR NORRIS: Thank y'all for the job that you're doing and thank you for hearing me. I'll be short, which everyone who knows me will thank me for
that.

Last night the Maumelle City Council adopted a resolution supporting Academics Plus, and also last night we adopted our annual budget. So it was so nice to have something like the charter school that was unanimously accepted and approved, as opposed to everything else that we seemed to argue and bicker about -- which is the Council's job and my job. But the reason I point that out is this is one of the things that unites everyone on the Council. I have a crazy schedule today, but I knew that the community would probably impeach me if I didn't come speak on behalf of Academics Plus -- and so would my wife, as my five-year old is on the waiting list to hopefully get in there next school year.

But the charter school is a huge benefit to the community and the city, but it's not just the city. I recently had a meeting with some folks in unincorporated Pulaski County as they were advocating for the opening of a road that was recently closed and in that conversation it seemed like more of the talk kept going to the charter school and how much it served that area, which is the unincorporated county -- Oak Grove, Marche' area.

And so I just wanted to wholeheartedly give my
support to the charter renewal and to the increase in the students. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And thank you for being here.

We also want to welcome Representative Lowery and Senator Johnson. We appreciate you being here and taking time to come. Would you all like to speak on behalf of the charter? You can do that now, if you would like to. Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE MARK LOWERY: Thank you very much and I appreciate the opportunity to come and speak in support of a great community member. I mean they are the heart of our community. I certainly learned that very quickly in my first election campaign in 2012 of how critical they are to the city of Maumelle. They have not let any of us down in all of those years. They've been a straight-A report card school for several years, since the report cards have come out. There's so much support. Matter of fact, I guess one funny story, I found out in my last election cycle -- my opponent got up and started speaking critically of charter schools, and I thought, okay, well, I'm in because most of the audience were there -- they were supporters of what Academics Plus has meant -- what the Maumelle charter school has meant to our community, and they continue to be that. And, you
know, all ships rise. I think one of the things that
we've seen -- I know that Pulaski County School
District, with Maumelle High School and Maumelle
Middle -- I'm not saying that they feel that the
charter schools are breathing down their neck, but it
certainly has that impact of letting you know that
you have to raise your game, because there is an
excellent educational program in the school -- in the
city.

I know one of the things that they have stepped
up over the last several years -- I think there was
an issue several years ago of questioning the
diversity of the school, and so the issue came up
that how can you -- how can you exceed the diversity
of the city itself unless you have the ability to go
outside the incorporated areas into Palarm, Marche',
Morgan. And so at that time Senator Sanders, Senator
English, and I all provided GIF money so that they
could purchase a bus specifically to do that and to
get the message out into those communities where
probably a lot of parents were not even applying to
be on the waiting list because they thought, well,
even if we get accepted how are we going to be able
to get the students to the school. And so the
charter school was able to purchase that bus; they've
been able to step up their efforts. I think that they've probably seen the impact of that.

And I know Mayor Norris just referenced the fact that some of the people have felt like this cut-off access on the road -- one of the things that's come up is their access to be able to easily get into Maumelle to the charter school. So there's a lot of excitement outside of the city of Maumelle to the unincorporated areas because, again, I think the charter school is an excellent magnet for our school -- for our city and for our community.

And we would appreciate your thoughtful support of their -- the extension of their charter. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

SENATOR MARK JOHNSON: Thank you, Dr. Pfeffer and Members of the Committee -- I guess y'all are Committee or Council, Board.

I don't have a whole lot to add to what the Mayor and Representative Lowery said. This is one of the jewels of not just Maumelle, but of northwest Pulaski County. I've been thrilled every time I go over to some kind of a meeting and the graduation and things, you know, at Maumelle Charter School. I just -- you just get that good feeling both from the
faculty and the kids. It's just -- this is a well-oiled machine and, you know, the proof is in the pudding; their grades are where they should be, and it's just a jewel. And I think that Representative Lowery alluded to the fact that, you know, we believe that competition improves the breed and you have a -- we have people in that part of the county who have beautiful choices; we have excellent, you know, Maumelle public schools. Maumelle High School and Maumelle Middle School are excellent, and the grade schools. And over -- a little more into Marche' we have a Catholic school which is one of the better schools in the state in the area. So I'm happy for my constituents that they have choices in anything that expands those choices and rewards those that have done a wonderful job -- and clearly, you know, Academics Plus has done that.

I have not had the privilege to actually visit the Scott campus, but I've been told a lot of wonderful things about that. And that was an area of the county that we -- a lot of people worried about it being underserved and this has just been an additional thing.

And I hope that all of y'all will recognize how much effort has been made to serve these specific
communities that this school serves. And I want to thank you all, not just the ones that work for ADE but those of you -- and Mr. Wilson, a former legislator, I appreciate you coming back and continuing to give back to our state; and Mr. Baldwin, Dr. Kremers. And, Greg, I'm not going to forget you; I appreciate you all the time too. I'm sorry Dr. Williams, my friend, is not here as well. But we appreciate the efforts you put into this and I just can give my wholehearted support to Mr. McGill and the staff and the board at Academics Plus. So thank you all so much. I'm so happy to be here and be able to stand with them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

Okay. So at this time if the representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in opposition please stand to receive the oath. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you very much.

And I don't know how many of you are doing the presentation. You're welcome to come be on the front row. And as you come to the microphone to speak, if you'll state your name and title for the record
you're recognized. We'll start with your 20 minutes, and then there would be an additional 5 minutes of time if you need that. So --

SUPT. McGILL: Okay.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right.


Thank you for having me here today, and hopefully we will give you some good information that will assure you that we are capable of handling an additional renewal.

First, the presentation purpose is to give you some information about Academics Plus and our schools. We have Maumelle Charter Elementary School, Maumelle Charter High School, and also Scott Charter School. And during this presentation I want the three principals of each to address you because there are specific needs at each school that they're addressing in order to meet those needs.

Our mission statement is the same as it's been since 2001. Basically it is to be a college preparatory school and that is our mission and continues to be, whether we're in Scott or in Maumelle.

Our vision -- it is to be the highest performing
college preparatory education institution in America. We are making strides towards that; we're not there yet. Once we get there we'll set a different vision; but right now, that is our vision and we're making strides to that and continue to go forward.

Our enrollment at this point is 1550 students. We have 250 in Scott, and then the other 1300 is in Maumelle. In Maumelle, we have over 560 on the waiting list. I checked that today and it's actually 574, so it's gone up since this report was done from October 1st data.

And also financials -- it's important for numbers and financials for our request -- for our amendment request. I think it's very important that you know this: this past year we ended with 1.9 million dollars in our operating fund, with about a million dollars in the building fund; and then we're projected at 2.6 by the end of this year. So that shows not only do we have -- will we have the funds if we get students, but we have the funds at this point to start a new building. So that's the reason I wanted to share that with you so you'd hopefully feel comfortable that we would be able to afford a new campus.

Our current campus in Maumelle, we're
landlocked. We have two buildings. We have an elementary school, we have a high school; both are new. And we have a 10-year building program and we have completed that, and we are able to put the 1300 students onto the campus and basically that's all we can do at this point.

Scott, we have a four-phase plan for facilities. This is very important because we did purchase the Scott elementary school from Pulaski County Special School District. It's got good academic classrooms for about 400 students; that's what we can accommodate at this point. We did just complete our 300 seating capacity gym. Being out in the rural area there's not communities and this kind of thing that we can use to help us, like we had in Maumelle. So we needed a gym for the extracurricular activities for our students; so that is being completed this past year. And our next thing is once we hit 400 students -- right now we're at 250. When we receive 400 students we will be looking to build a new elementary school that will house 550 students; and then when we have 800 students we'll build a new high school and then a larger gym also.

Unique aspects of Academics Plus -- we have several things that we do that's a little different.
I think one of the things, as hit on by the Representative and Senator, is our bussing program. We have one bus in Maumelle; that bus -- five years ago, we had 11 kids riding the bus; now we have 61 kids, and that is to go into lower income areas of the outskirts of Maumelle, in Oak Grove and Palarm areas. And there's -- not all charter schools have that and I think that makes us unique as far as charter schools.

Also unique is our -- in Scott, we don't have a bussing program but we have aftercare. We have aftercare until 6:00 every day, every school day. In a lot of ways that's better than transportation, in my opinion, because we don't have latchkey kids. We have people -- we have parents picking up their kids, and we have them and we know they're safe until 6:00. It gives the parents who work till 5:00 time to get to Scott to pick their kids up. And then also we have an academic program that they participate in to help them in that area also.

And then we also have merit pay for teachers and we also have -- we pay our students and teachers for their AP score and we have a big pep rally and present those. And it's a very exciting time when the kids get two, three, four, five hundred dollars
when they -- when those AP scores come in.

Other requirements that we require of our students that makes us different is 25 community service hours for each student. We started this this past year; this is our second year of doing that. We've always had 10 hours, but we upped it at the high school level for 9 through 12 to 25. And then in 8th grade our -- we've got different paths. And our expected path for graduation is for our students to begin high school courses in 8th grade -- because if they're not, they're going to be behind when they go to college; because we want those kids getting concurrent credit and AP courses out of the way before they leave our campus. And in saying that, in graduation requirements we do require each student to have two concurrent credits or advanced placement credits, unless there's an IEP or 504 that we say would override that.

Instead of three science credits, we require four. And then we also require a computer science credit and two foreign language credits. We believe that this absolutely goes along with our college preparedness track.

Our goals -- we're proud to say that we have met each of our goals, as you've seen in your packet. We
worked hard on that and we're proud of our students and our faculty for obtaining the goals.

Amendment request -- I want to be clear on exactly what we're requesting. We're really requesting two things. One is to increase our cap to -- from 1300 in Maumelle to 2000 over the next seven years, by increasing 100 students per year. And our -- really our -- it's really served us well. Our growth pattern for the last six has been exactly this. So we'll say this year we graduate 41 seniors but then we put 120 or 140 kindergartners in; so we're growing at the bottom and going -- and have those students for the 12, 13 years, and that's the way we've done it for the last six. That's why you see on our report we've got 120 kindergartners, but we have 41 seniors. And we want to do that again and go up to 2000. And in doing that, we can't do it without a new building or a building of some sort.

So we're requesting to be able to build or refurbish, or however we find the way to do that, a school in the northwest part of Pulaski County, in the Maumelle area -- not necessarily in the Maumelle city limits, but it could be Maumelle city limits, could be North Little Rock. If you know that area, the Counts Massie Road -- and you may not know that the Wal-Mart
of Maumelle is actually North Little Rock city limits. So there's -- or it could be in Pulaski County; it just depends on where we can find property that's affordable and that we can successfully make into a school.

So those are our two amendment requests: a cap increase and also the permission to build a school.

At this time I'll start with the principals. Definitely we believe that strong leadership is vital to the success of the school. And we're fortunate at Academics Plus to have three excellent principals, two of which have already been with us for several years at Maumelle, and then also Mr. Brown.

I'm going to introduce Mr. Brown first. He's a first-year principal and he's first-year at Scott. And his task has been to go into Scott where we are "the" school -- is to go into Scott and bring that grade up to a "C", then a "B." Our goal is to be at a "B" in two years -- no, I'm sorry -- a "C" in two years, but I'm banking on him to be able to beat that out -- but a "B" within five. I think this goal is attainable from what I've seen from the last six months of his actions at Scott. He has created a culture of high expectations of both the students and staff. He's created order that's also decreased the
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1 discipline issues at Scott. And his actions have
definitely increased the quality of instruction and
learning at Scott.

4 So at this time I'd like to introduce Mr. Jeremy
5 Brown to go over some of the specific things that
6 he's doing to increase student achievement.

7 MR. BROWN: Jeremy Brown, principal at Scott
8 Charter School.

9 Good afternoon. How are y'all doing?

10 As Mr. McGill stated, my name is Jeremy Brown,
the principal at Scott Charter School.

12 The current letter grade at Scott is a "D" and
we understand that that is unacceptable. Our goals
are to increase our weighted achievement, reading
proficiency, and growth score at Scott Charter
School. Our plan within the next five years is to
improve our letter grade to a "B" by focusing on our
actions of improvement.

19 My first goal as a new principal at Scott
Charter was to change the learning environment in
which our students feel safe. I believe an effective
structure and procedures will enhance the learning
environment for our students and teachers. I
conducted a survey which informed me that our
students did not feel safe. I implemented a positive
behavior intervention and support system known as Champs. Champs is a proactive and positive approach to building classroom management. It is important to provide an environment for students to receive quality instruction. An effective classroom management plan prevents misbehavior and is continually refined to help students become increasingly respectful, motivated, and highly engaged in instructional activities.

Scott Charter is also incorporating and utilizing RISE components within the daily schedule to increase the focus of reading instruction. Our teachers and administration staff are currently receiving or have completed RISE training to insure that RISE is implemented with fidelity. We currently have a RISE trainer grades 3-6 on campus; we also have a RISE trainer grades K-2 within our district. We're also collaborating with the literacy and math specialists from Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative.

Maumelle Charter Elementary and High School have had success with summer learning in Eureka Math. Our goal within the district is to align the curriculum across the district creating an equitable and learning teaching -- I mean learning and teaching
experience. Our goal at Scott Charter is to mirror
the success of our counterparts within the district.

Our afterschool program is open to all Scott
Charter students. Students are provided snacks and
tutoring sessions that are student focused. Our
afterschool program will focus on students'
deficiencies in reading and math. Students will
receive tutoring on Tuesdays and Wednesdays on grade
level standards based on the NWEA results.

We also have an agricultural science program.
Our agricultural science program -- I mean our
agricultural science program is offered to our
primary and secondary students with emphasis on plant
and animal science. We're currently in the process
of building a $210,000 greenhouse to support our
plant science pathway.

We have also implemented professional learning
communities that have focused on improving Tier 1
instruction. We're currently in the process -- we're
not in the process, we have implemented Mustang Time.
Mustang Time is a school-wide intervention that
focuses on the deficiencies of individual students'
dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills.
Each teacher within our building has recognized the
areas of concern to improve students' phonemic
awareness. All teachers at the primary level are conducting effective interventions to insure the progress of our students. Teachers will also progress monitor students to insure that deficiencies are met.

At this time I would like to introduce Kimberly Willis, Maumelle Charter High School Principal.

MS. WILLIS: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

As Mr. Brown stated, my name is Kimberly Willis, Maumelle Charter High School Principal. Good afternoon.

As you can see here, we have our performance goals. Our current performance grade is an "A." The 5% increase in our performance goals are based on our ambition to be the top 10 -- in the top 10 percent of schools in Arkansas. Positive movement of students from lower achievement levels to higher helps us to meet our ultimate goal, which is, of course, to grow all students. How we plan on doing this is through our actions for improvement.

Our first action of improvement, Science of Reading -- we identify students at risk for reading deficiencies and provide systematic, comprehensive, and evidence-based reading interventions to reduce the number of students reading below grade level and
proficiency levels. These interventions and remediations target developing phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension skills.

Our next action is through our Summit Learning curriculum. Summit is an online learning platform that students focus on developing a strong grasp of the class material and effective application of the content through projects, mastery of cognitive skills, and their focus area. Summit Learning platform does this while giving parents an unprecedented window of transparency into the student's education.

Our next action is our professional learning communities. Our PLC teams are gathering evidence on levels of student learning through multiple datasets, developing and implementing strategies to not only build on strengths but to also address deficits.

Last but not least, our last action is our remediation and activities schedule. Our primary focus here is to move students first out of the Need of Support to the next performance level by providing the research-based interventions twice a week during our activity schedule. In addition, we provide extensions in small groups, both in class and after
school, to insure that the students receive additional time and support for all levels of student learning.

At this time you will hear from Paula Newton, our Elementary Principal.

MS. NEWTON: Thank you, Ms. Willis.

Good afternoon. I am Paula Newton, Principal of Maumelle Charter Elementary.

Our ESSA performance score for the 2018-19 school year is 83.7 and we received an "A" rating. We are in the top 10 percent for student performance in the state as a reward school. We received this same score of 83.7 for the 2017-18 school year and we were in the top 5 percent for student performance. We want to be back in the top 5 percent, so our goal is to raise our weighted achievement score to at least 90 this school year. This will require us moving a large number of our students who scored In Need of Support to close or ready in reading.

Another goal we are working towards this year is increasing our school value-added growth from 84.1 to 88.1. With 80 showing the expected growth of our students, we want to see more or all of our students growing. We want all of our students reading on grade level and our goal is to increase our
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percentage of students reading on grade level this
school year from 68.1% to 80%. This would increase
our school quality or school success percentage
number to at least 78.1.

We have and are implementing some different
strategies to help us reach these goals. We are
providing interventions for our students who scored
In Need of Support in reading during the school day.
We target the specific skills and standards they need
the most help with. Most of our teachers have
completed Phase 1 of the Science of Reading and will
complete Phase 2 by the summer of 2020. We also
implemented Eureka Math last year. We saw very good
results, so we are continuing with this as our math
curriculum. We are in year-two of implementing PLC's
and we use these meetings to make decisions on what
our students should learn and the strategies for when
they do not learn. Data from our NWEA and ACT Aspire
interims is analyzed in our weekly PLC grade level
meetings to know which students have met their
standards and need interventions or extension.

At this time I'll turn it back over to Mr. McGill.

MR. McGILL: I thought it was important for you
to hear, you know, we're doing a lot of the same
things, both at Scott and at Maumelle. But there are also differences at each school because each community is different and also the students at each school are different.

At this point our request is a 13-year renewal. And subject to your questions we'll try to answer them.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Ms. Hyatt, was there anyone here to speak in opposition?

MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I need to turn this off. There we go.

All right. So before we start with questions, Ms. Hyatt, do we need to go over any remaining legal review items?

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division.

Yes, ma'am, there are a couple. Again, new information was presented since the second legal review, which you have; so some of this is just verifying for the record.

The first is on Board of Directors. They've actually added two additional waivers since the document that you have that they need, which is 6-13-619(a)(1)(b) through (c) and 6-13-619(a)(2). And the rationale provided is that any trustee in their
bylaws may call a board meeting. This has to do with how they can call a board meeting and their own bylaws dictate that. Lots of charters, since they don't have a traditional school board, hold these waivers. I don't have any legal issue with it; I just wanted for them to confirm that they would like those waivers for the record and then allow you guys to ask any questions if you have them.

MR. McGILL: Rob McGill, CEO, Academics Plus.

Yes, we would like to add those waivers.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MS. HYATT: Okay. The second is on the Personnel Policy section. They provided some additional rationale in response to some of my comments about how they were using 6-17-208 and 210 concerning Employee Discipline. And they do have a policy; it just doesn't follow the policy outlined in law, which was my question is do they need the waiver because they didn't have a policy or is it because their policy was different? So they've satisfied that question for me.

And they have asked for a waiver at my suggestion of Section 5.01 of our rules governing School District Requirements for Personnel Policies, Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents.
Posted onto the Website. So if you could just verify that for the record?

  MR. McGILL: Yes, agree to that waiver.
  
  MS. HYATT: The next one is not as much a legal issue as I just wanted to bring it to your attention. Academics Plus is the only non-virtual charter school holding a waiver of 6-21-303(b)(1), which is the provision in law about providing funding -- funds to teachers to purchase school supplies. So the law specifically requires that in their case, K through 6, they would have to provide the greater of $20 per student who is in a teacher's classroom more than 50% of time or $500 to the teacher each year so that they can purchase school supplies. Obviously, in a virtual context that waiver makes a lot of sense. They did provide a pretty robust response to my question about this, but I just wanted to give Academics Plus an opportunity to explain to the Panel how they're using it so that you know why they hold it since they're the only one.


  Yes, this is a waiver we've had, before my time at least, and I was in the charter school since 2010. But we do provide for our teachers for sure; we
provide for their needs. But one of the programs at Maumelle is that the PTO -- if parents give to the PTO, they can -- part of their money is earmarked for the classroom. So we actually have teachers, some of them with $1500 to spend on their classes. So that was the purpose of the PTO doing this is to save the district money on this side and -- but at the same time providing for the teachers. And then we also provide the principals -- we have to provide every teacher K-12 $100 just for whatever they need, but this is in addition to that. And then also principals have a budget, so anything that the teachers need they can also come to the principals. And I don't know -- when I was a principal, okay, elementary principal, we had teachers who had like 15, 20 years, like $500; sometimes I had to beg them to spend their money, you know, and I don't want to get into that. We need to spend money on what's important and if they need something we're going to provide it for them. But I don't -- I'm not into spending money just to be spending money because you've got it, you know; that's kind of where that came from in the beginning.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You mentioned the PTO in Maumelle. Do you also have a PTO for the Scott
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school?

MR. McGILL: We have a booster club.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Booster club. Okay.

MR. McGILL: They're not athletic; they're just a booster club. They call themselves "booster club" instead of a PTO. But, yes, they do things for the teachers also. Now I'll be honest, they don't do as -- they are not able to do as much, but the principal's budget takes care of that.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MR. McGILL: They also get the $100 upfront too.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And Mr. Brown is behind you, nodding; so I'm taking that as -- he's feeling okay on that. All right. Thank you.

MS. HYATT: Okay. Just two more.

Okay. So, again, with the curriculum waiver, the 1(a)(2), which is what we talked about -- we've talked about it a couple of times today, the standard that says you can either provide for a high school unit of credit 120 hours or an approved subject matter competency plan. My question to every charter -- and, again, I'll ask it to Academics Plus -- is if you are not providing the 120 clock hours and you are not providing the instruction through an approved subject matter competency plan, and we are awarding a
high school graduation requirement or a high school unit of credit, on what basis are you using to measure that?

MR. McGILL: The reason we have this waiver in the first place is because of distance learning and that's what I want to make sure we're still covered on. If we have a course in distance learning and a student finishes it in a semester's time, I don't want him to have to -- let's say he takes Algebra I; can he not move on in January to geometry? So that's my whole premise for this waiver is to make sure we have that covered in distance learning. We checked with I think Thomas Coy about the mastery and I don't think he thought that this was the appropriate way to go through the mastery program. We're not giving -- we're still giving grades, A, B, C, D; we're not giving 1, 2, 3 -- you know, performance based grading. So I just want to make sure we're covered on distance learning.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I understand that. So this one has caught my attention this time too, and I think just so I'm clear -- what's changed is with the update of our Standards for Accreditation and now having a process in place for the competency-based awarding of credit.
MS. HYATT: Right.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: This is different because we don't have districts right now with a waiver from this particular --

MS. HYATT: So we do. What happened was when the new Standards for Accreditation went into place we didn't yet have a system internally set up for getting competency-based approval. So when Alexandra Boyd, the Charter director at the time, and I did that standards transition, people that had held a waiver under the previous version of the 120 clock hours maintained that waiver because we didn't have the process to incorporate the subject matter competency approval yet. That process has been developed at this point. So, an ongoing need for the -- because that competency-based approval was something that the legislature added to the law in 2017. In terms of distance and digital learning, you know, we did have this conversation a little bit earlier, so I had some time to look at those rules. And any course that's offered under the distance and digital learning rules either has to be approved by us or meet certain requirements, which would meet the requirements of the standard, because it's not a seat-time requirement that the student must sit in
the seat for 120 clock hours; it's more about the programmatic offerings of the course. So, it just kind of -- and Stacy Smith is here too, if you want a more robust explanation. But I did speak with her.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And so I guess I'm trying to think through -- like we have been -- I mean this process has been in place in the past. Because like with our ALE students, through ALE, you know, they are progressing sometimes at an accelerated rate. So I guess what I want to make sure is I don't want to do anything that's going to create a problem for accelerating learning opportunities for students, but I also just -- since this is showing up now I want to make sure that we're doing the right thing or answering your questions in the right way. So --

MS. SMITH: Yeah. And -- Stacy Smith, Learning Services.

So definitely we probably need to get some more clarity around this with -- this is a constant change and a constant conversation. We have always allowed independent study courses which provide for acceleration, all right, for kids finishing a course before the semester is over. That's not new. We haven't really talked about it a lot, but you've had independent study course codes for a long time. So
your example of a specific student finishing a
digital course earlier and being able to get credit
for that is something that has already been done. I
will say when we talk about competency-based
education and you're comparing it to standards and
time we have to give more clarity around that. I
don't think you're necessarily talking about
competency; you're saying the student has finished
the course and the school district has basically
certified that it meets the 120 hours of content.
Most students typically would take 120 hours to
complete that course in a semester or the time period
given for it. So you're not asking to waive that
time; you're just asking for an individual student.
So I don't think he needs the waiver for individual
kids who finish the course early. Their 120 hours on
Standards for Accreditation is that they're
committing to this amount of content. Does that
help?

  MR. McGILL: We're also only giving -- we're
only -- of course, the courses are approved by ADE
before we give them.

  CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

  MR. McGILL: So if that covers us, I'm okay.

  MS. SMITH: Yes. The courses are approved.
MR. McGILL: I just want to make -- I just want to be clear.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. No, I'm glad you're doing that; so I'm feeling much better.

MR. McGILL: Yeah.

MS. HYATT: So just need some clarification on whether or not you intend to move forward with the request for that particular waiver.

MR. McGILL: I'm okay as long --

MS. HYATT: Okay.

MR. McGILL: -- from what I hear today.

MS. HYATT: Okay. Perfect.

MR. McGILL: I approve not having the waiver.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. And I will say this, should there come a situation where you feel like you need it, I don't want to tell you, you know, that you shouldn't have it. So if the situation does present, then I'm publicly saying if it's needed then it's something we would need to consider. Okay.

MS. HYATT: And I hope that in the new version of the Standards for Accreditation that's kind of going through the promulgation process now that we can add some clarity to that language so that we can all make sure it meshes with what the legislature passed in 2017 and in our current practice.
The very last one is not a legal issue; I just need him to confirm. So they provided some additional rationale. Under School Safety they asked for waivers of 6(a)(1) and 6(a)(2), and I had some additional questions on why they needed a waiver of 6(a)(2). They have since provided that rationale, mostly being that they are doing all of those things, just not necessarily in the way that CAP staff says they have to do them. And that's common I think for charter schools that don't have the same types of facilities that a traditional public school has. So I just need them to -- actually, I don't need them to do anything. I just need to say my concern was resolved and that they're fine moving forward with 6(a)(1) and 6(a)(2).

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Hyatt.

All right. So we will go ahead -- Members, were there any other questions on that?

Okay. I'll go ahead and start with Mr. Baldwin to see if you have questions.

MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

So 13 years is a long time, and I guess I'm interested in you—all talking about your processes that you go through to add a school. So you moved from Maumelle to Scott, which is an interesting move,
and I'm sure you have other plans during this 13-year period. So how do you make a decision of where to go to?

MR. McGILL: Well, interesting -- Maumelle started because of a need for the city to have its own school, and Pulaski County Special School District did not do that until after the charter school was there, and then the middle school began about six or seven years after that. So that's the reason Maumelle exists from the very beginning. It's actually the first charter school in the state that was approved.

Then Scott, we saw an opportunity and we see the need. I was Pulaski County Special School District -- I was with them for 18 years as principal, and then my last 16 months as acting superintendent. And it has always been talked about Scott closing down, for about 10 years before it actually closed. My argument when I was the superintendent, I said, "If you look -- if you drive out there, houses are coming up; houses are being built in that area." It's a rural community, but there's growth. And so the area is growing and the community wanted it. Because they were actually coming to us at the same time and we just happened to mention it -- I mean we had
community members coming to us, representatives
coming to us to see what we could do. And with the
help of Mr. Key -- because at that time they were
under state control, he was the school board -- we
were able to work a deal with PCSSD and purchase the
property. So, that's kind of where that came from.
It just kind of -- in my mind, it kind of fell in our
lap, and at the same time I think the community was
very happy to see it. There's a need and then we
were filling that need.

And then -- and now at this point in time, with
over 670 on the waiting list, there's a need still in
Maumelle to grow. And if we don't -- if we stay at
1300 our waiting list is going to -- it will get
bigger and bigger and bigger. When we were doing 100
students at a time, our waiting list was growing
about 50 to 100 students a year. So if we stop
growing and stay at 1300, our waiting list is going
to continue to grow and we're going to not be
fulfilling the needs of some parents and students.
So that's why we're looking to grow in the Maumelle
area.

MR. BALDWIN: Do you see yourselves potentially
becoming a statewide system?

MR. McGILL: We have discussed not necessarily
statewide, but maybe other locations in central to outskirts of central Arkansas. That's something that we would consider. But right now our priority is two-fold: meet the needs of the students at Scott, because as the principal talked to you -- I mean we've got some problems out there that we're trying to fix, and we're going to academically fix that; and the other is to grow in the area that we are currently in. And right now the human capital that we have, myself included, that's two tasks that we need to focus on. Now in a year or two, when we can get those things going, then we can definitely look at the other options.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: I kind of have the same thought about the 13 years as well. You have a lot of successes happening, which is really exciting. And I think, you know, the plan to go forward is so well thought-out and the culture you're developing there, the academic components -- and I especially love the collaborations you're already doing with the co-ops and the work. I think that's all wonderful to see that as well.

So I guess some of it is just kind of logistical questions. If Scott didn't improve, or decreased,
and we approve for 13 years, we could still have a special call-back on that? I don't know what happens in that instance if they were --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I mean a charter could be called back at any time. Usually when the 13 years -- you're thinking about a span of a student through their --

MR. McGILL: Yes. It's an original. I mean it's a one-time thing because --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

MR. McGILL: -- it only works really for one student and that's the ones coming in this next year. But the student that's a four-year old, about to turn five right now, that parent and student knows that they can stay with Academics Plus for the full 13 years.

DR. KREMER: Okay.

MR. McGILL: And, you know, we're signing commitments for 25 years when we sign these million dollar loans. So our bond-holders would definitely feel better about a longer term than a three-year or five-year. And at the same time, I'd be glad to come back in at any point in time and you have the -- as far as I know, you have the authority to do that.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We can call back. Yeah.
MR. McGILL: And so that's -- you know, I'd love -- I've always come for 20. I'm the kind I want to get the max. But I guess I've digressed a little bit, because you did -- you have given a charter school 13 in the past; so I said, "Well, if they've given one, maybe we can get that one too." So that's kind of where 13 comes from too.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Do you have a question?

MR. ROGERS: I didn't until something you said right then.

MR. McGILL: Uh-oh. I'll hush.

MR. ROGERS: Well, you started talking --

MR. McGILL: Never-mind.

MR. ROGERS: Well, you started talking about your commitments and it sounded like you had gotten loans or you'd gotten commitments from -- and so then I was wondering -- because I don't know --

MR. McGILL: The new -- well, we've got them now because we've got buildings. Yes. We've got a $3,000,000 gym at Scott; we've got a 15-year to 20-year note -- 15 locked and up to 20. And then we've got 25-year bonds at Maumelle --

MR. ROGERS: And I was --

MR. McGILL: -- for $27,000,000.

MR. ROGERS: And Secretary Key approved those?
MR. McGILL: Yes. Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, all that's been done. That's all the done things. Now we're looking to do a different one, a new one. Yes, sir.

MR. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. McGILL: Secretary -- well, it was -- Tom Kimbrell approved the first one, and then --

MR. ROGERS: Okay.

MR. McGILL: -- Mr. Wood, Mr. Woods.

MR. ROGERS: So it goes back that far?

MR. McGILL: We got Commissioner's approval.

MR. ROGERS: Okay. So it does have Commissioner's approval on it?

MR. McGILL: Yes, sir. All of them do.

MR. ROGERS: Okay. That's -- when you said that, that's what --

MR. McGILL: Oh, yes.

MR. ROGERS: And going along the same lines with them, with the 13 years, I understand what you were saying on there. But I'm looking for consistency, how the Charter Panel has been going, and most of them end on five years. And not to pick on Scott, because I -- you had me fired up; I really believe you're going to get that. But that is a "D" school, and so at least for me -- and I get where you're
coming from.

MR. McGILL: It's a D-plus school.

MR. ROGERS: D-plus school.

MR. McGILL: We're that close. That close to a "C."

MR. ROGERS: I don't know. I would probably feel more comfortable -- and given that Maumelle is doing such a good job -- and I was looking at -- more probably like an 8-year is where I was landing in my head, just not because of anything but just to stay consistent with however -- because the other ones have been getting five years when they were D's and C's. And plus, I want him to come back and tell us how good he's doing. So I mean really -- that's really -- that's what I -- so that's where I was looking at. So that's really the only comment I had until you said something about loans and --

MR. McGILL: It's all good, I promise.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Mr. McGill, do you keep a separate waitlist for the Scott school, as opposed to the Maumelle?

MR. McGILL: Yes, they are completely separate. Right now I think we have about three students at Scott on the waitlist and that's because basically
our classes are full at a certain grade level. So we may have 25 kids in 3rd grade; but now we have two kids that show up that want to be in, but we don't have a teacher for them.

MR. WILSON: Well, I'm familiar with growth around the Scott area and I would expect that sooner rather than later you're going to be faced with a new elementary building there.

MR. McGILL: I'm hoping we grow about 50 students a year. And when we get up to about 375, then we're talking about building the school.

MR. WILSON: Yeah.

MR. McGILL: That community -- I mean, but I'll be honest with you, Scott has much better than what Maumelle ever had until about six years ago. The school -- the Scott Elementary School is in much better condition and a much better facility than Maumelle had until they built the first school in 2011; so for 10 years they were in trailers and in strip malls that were worse than the trailers. But so, you know, you can't hardly mess up brick and block and that's what the Scott Elementary School is built of.

MR. WILSON: I've known those folks in the Scott area for years have wanted their own school system
there --

MR. McGILL: Yes, sir.

MR. WILSON: -- and I'm gratified that it's there. And I'm impressed that you understand -- you all understand the need to get those grades up, and those kids can do it.

MR. McGILL: They can.

MR. WILSON: I know they can.

MR. McGILL: That's right. That's right. There is no -- there's no -- we're not making an excuse that the school is where it's at, other than they're not where they're supposed to be. And we acknowledge that and we're not going to say for any reason that we're happy with where it is.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think my question will be for Mr. Brown. In looking -- it looks like from 2018 to 2019 you had a pretty significant rate of turnover in staff at the elementary school. And so I was wondering between last year and this year did that stabilize? Did you -- or did you have additional turnover that was needed? And maybe you just talk to us a little bit about your staffing, because we know that's a key factor in how well kids are going to perform academically.

MR. BROWN: Right. We've had a little bit of
turnover as I came in this year.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MR. BROWN: I know one of the biggest things that we're wanting to build on is our culture there at Scott to retain those teachers and give those teachers the right resources to stay at Scott, to continue to help build our students academically.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, and it's a heavy investment with the Science of Reading and them gaining the proficiency. So you definitely as you're investing in them want to keep them there, so --

MR. BROWN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But you feel good about the staff you have or even, you know, I'm thinking, you know, staff in Maumelle who are very well-trained, if needed is there conversation of we're going to do what we need to to get the right people in the right seat with regards to staffing?

MR. BROWN: Yes. One of the biggest things that we've done this year, we wanted to make sure our staff feels supported, and that's one of the major tasks that we've had in our school. We have observations every single day and provide feedback for our teachers. And like I said, we have those trainers on campus, on staff. Ms. Willis and Ms.
Newton, they're doing an awesome job of collaborating with us, as well as Mr. Jones, making sure that we are aligned in every aspect within our buildings to insure that growth at Scott.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And, Ms. Newton, you have a successful school, so I would say resources that your teachers can provide could be critical.

MS. NEWTON: Right.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MS. NEWTON: Can I speak on that?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Sure.

MS. NEWTON: Then we have his teachers have actually come over to our building and met with our PLCs, so we collaborate with them. So, big collaboration between the buildings in the PLCs.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MR. McGILL: Can I expound on that a little bit?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

MR. McGILL: Rob McGill.

Two things that he mentioned in his was Eureka Math -- well, Eureka Math's first year in Scott this year. Last year was a trial year we did at Maumelle Charter Elementary School, saw the success there; so then we're implementing that and had the training at Scott. Also, Summit Learning was a two-year
implementation for Maumelle Charter High School for
the 6th and 7th graders. And after -- the first
year, honestly, was to impress basically because of
the staff that we had doing it. And that changed
last year where Ms. Willis got her staff -- instead
of one or two teachers doing it, then there were six
teachers doing it and they were feeding off of --
they were able to talk with North Little Rock. North
Little Rock was talking to us because they were
implementing Summit Learning at the same time, and it
really took off and the scores were better at the
high school. So that's one of the things we're
implementing now, this year, at Scott also is 6th and
7th grade Summit Learning and seen good training and
good reward from that so far.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Additional
questions? None over here?

Okay. Any discussion by the Panel?

I did ask the staff to look at other schools
that had gotten a renewal for more than what we
typically see. It looks like eSTEM, Lisa, and KIPP
have had a 13-year -- is that correct -- or more? Is
it 13 years?

MS. McLGUGLIN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MR. ROGERS: I knew the other two --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah, we've had at least two
that have had a similar request for a renewal for
that length of time.

MR. ROGERS: Okay. I still -- I'm just -- and
it's totally not that I don't believe that you're
going to get it done, because I totally do. It just
-- I think that it needs to -- we need to be sure
that we are going the right way and I would just feel
better if we didn't extend it out to 13 years. Now I
may lose up here, but that's just how I feel about
it. But I don't want that to be any reflection on
anything that you --

MR. McGILL: Can we compromise at 10?

MR. ROGERS: Do what?

MR. McGILL: How about 10?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay, so we've had discussion
and bargaining.

Any -- do we have other discussion questions or
are we ready for a motion?

MR. ROGERS: I could go along with the 10. I
just feel like if we can just have a little -- just a
little something that just -- I just want to make
sure that we're doing everything we need to be
successful at Scott. That's -- and to keep going.
MR. WILSON: I see it, and raise him three.

MR. ROGERS: So if you're ready -- I mean I'll make the motion that we approve the charter application, with the exception of renewal of 10 years instead of the 13.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion.

DR. KREMER: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I have a motion and a second to approve the renewal for 10 years. Is that correct? Is that the correct motion?

MR. ROGERS: (Nodding head up and down.)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All those in favor say "aye."

MR. BALDWIN: Aye.

DR. KREMER: Aye.

MR. ROGERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Opposed?

MR. WILSON: No.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The motion carries. So the motion is -- or, excuse me -- the motion carries, so the charter is renewed for 10 years.

And we will record our votes and have additional feedback.

MR. WILSON: My vote -- oh --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah, give them just a
minute.

MR. WILSON: Yeah. Sorry.

(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. Thank you. I approved the motion to renew for 10 years. I think you guys run an excellent program and I think the extended approval period is appropriate.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: I approve the motion to renew for 10 years. The charter plan in this school is well thought-out and supports student success.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

MR. ROGERS: I approve the motion to renew the charter for 10 years.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON: I voted against the motion. I would've voted for 13 years. Then I've been informed by my betters here that it probably doesn't make much difference in borrowing money anyway -- but still, that was the reason for my vote.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, we appreciate you being here. Hopefully feedback is helpful. We do look forward to seeing the success at Scott and continued success at the other schools. So thank you.
for your time today. Thank you to our other guests who are here; we appreciate your time as well.

MR. McGILL: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And that is the last item on our action agenda today. Do we have anything else?

MS. WEBB: No.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. We will then be here tomorrow for our second day.

MR. WILSON: What does our day look like tomorrow? Do you have a feel for it?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Tomorrow? Let me look.

Ms. McLaughlin, our agenda for tomorrow -- can you come give us just an update before we adjourn?

MR. WILSON: I'm trying to get an idea of how long we might be here tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. Yeah. Sorry. We're going to get an update for tomorrow and we'll let you all go ahead and head out. Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, everyone. We appreciate you.

(COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: The people for Academics Plus Charter School exited the room.)

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Tomorrow we will hear -- we have two renewal applications and we will have two full reviews.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MR. WILSON: Two what?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Two full reviews for the two schools that you voted to hear this month.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And is the day divided into morning and afternoon or --

MS. McLAUGHLIN: No.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- do we have it all scheduled -- so we're going to see what --

MS. McLAUGHLIN: We just have it all on the morning agenda.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: All four.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, okay.

MR. WILSON: Can we do that -- do you have them scheduled for the morning, both of them?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We do. We didn't break it up like a morning and afternoon agenda. But I guess it'll depend on how quickly we proceed in the morning. So we may have to bump one of them to the afternoon. Okay.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: And lunch is ordered for tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.

MR. WILSON: Nine o'clock?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Nine o'clock.
And if there's nothing else, then I'll accept a motion to adjourn.

MR. WILSON: So moved.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MR. BALDWIN: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. We're adjourned till tomorrow.

(The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.)
- December 17, 2019

A-3: MOUNTAIN HOME HS CAREER ACADEMIES

EXHIBIT TWO (2)
CERTIFICATE

STATE OF ARKANSAS )
COUNTY OF SALINE )

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on December 17, 2019, that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have no contract with any parties within this action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial agency, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties to the action.


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accepted (3)
50:9;181:6;183:23
access (5)
44:21;120:5;121:5;184:5.6
accommodate (2)
127:10;189:12
accompanied (1)
123:8
accountability (2)
98:7;103:15
Accreditation (7)
38:23;69:2;101:3;206:23;207:6;209:17;210:21
accumulated (1)
157:3
achievement (14)
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December 17, 2019
DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

Sharon K. Hill, CCR (501) 680-0888

(1) $10,000 - advocate
### DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

#### CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

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