

In The Matter Of:
*BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION*

December 8, 2016

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

December 8, 2016
10:00 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Mr. Johnny Key	ADE Commissioner/Non-Voting
Ms. Mireya Reith	Chairman
Dr. Jay Barth	Vice Chairman
Ms. Diane Zook	Board Member
Mr. Joe Black	Board Member
Ms. Susan Chambers	Board Member
Ms. Charisse Dean	Board Member
Mr. R. Brett Williamson	Board Member
Ms. Ouida Newton	Board Member
Dr. Fitzgerald Hill	Board Member
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LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE BOARD:

Ms. Lori Freno	ADE General Counsel
Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford	ADE Deputy General Counsel
Ms. Jennifer Davis	ADE Staff Attorney
Mr. Brent Wood	ADE Staff Attorney

LOCATION: ADE Auditorium
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR

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PLSB Case File

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EXHIBIT ONE (1)
PLSB Case File

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P R O C E E D I N G S

A-1: CONSIDERATION OF GRADE INFLATION REPORT

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on then to action agenda A, item number 1, Consideration of Grade -- of the Grade Inflation Report. Mr. Ferren, you're recognized.

MR. FERREN: Thank you. Grade inflation is defined at state code 6-15-419 as the statistical gap between grades assigned at the secondary level and student performance on the college entrance exam. What the grade inflation report shows is the rate at which high school students are given As or Bs, however they scored less than 19 on the ACT reading or math. The grade inflation report is sorted in order of grade inflation, so the schools with the highest grade inflation are listed first and then the lowest inflation is listed last. You'll see there are a lot of RVs on the report. RV stands for Restricted Value. That's when there are less than 10 students in a school that have grade point average greater than or equal to 3 that also have ACT scores. Do you have any questions?

CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes. Ms. Zook.

MS. ZOOK: Do you ever get frustrations expressed, or do the local districts, when a student

1 has been bringing home an A or B and then they don't
2 score well enough to qualify for the lottery
3 scholarship if they choose to go on to college? I
4 mean, is there anything that you're getting feedback
5 from the districts about this type of thing?

6 MR. FERREN: I haven't received any.

7 MS. ZOOK: Okay. But -- so you don't know if
8 the local districts were saying, "Hey, you know, how
9 come they've got a B and they can't" -- you know, I'd
10 be frustrated if I were the parent; all year I go
11 along thinking my student is doing fine and then they
12 take the ACT and don't score high enough to get a
13 lottery scholarship, which many children depend on
14 that because, you know, of a lot of reasons. Ms.
15 Barnes?

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, Ms. Barnes.

17 MS. BARNES: Good morning. Thank you, Mr.
18 Ferren. Mr. Ferren's report is legislated and so we
19 are -- the purpose of his report is to make districts
20 aware, parents aware, legislators aware that there
21 are times when the students' performance on the grade
22 level assessments do not align with whether or not
23 students are scoring pass scores and being proficient
24 enough to enter college and sustain that entry. So
25 the purpose of the report is to make people aware.

1 Do we get those kinds of concerns reported to our
2 office, to our school performance office? Not
3 necessarily. There are times, many times that we as
4 an agency or the equity assistance unit or the
5 standards monitoring unit we will get a concern from
6 a parent that says "my student keeps bringing home
7 good grades but then every time I go to parent
8 conference there are concerns about whether or not
9 he's going to pass; what's going on with that?" In
10 those instances we have personnel who will
11 communicate with the district that there has been a
12 concern expressed. Sometimes it comes in the form of
13 a complaint; sometimes it's even pushed as far as
14 maybe an academic investigation. Part of this is
15 addressed also during standards monitoring when they
16 are asking questions in the district to determine
17 whether or not there is an adequate curriculum
18 establish, what are you doing with respect to this
19 disparity, and these plans also may go into a school
20 improvement plan. So to answer the question, Mr.
21 Ferren's office does not necessarily receive that
22 kind of a complaint. Those concerns are expressed
23 oftentimes and districts are aware that this report
24 will come out and should be already being proactive
25 in addressing that.

1 MS. ZOOK: Is this -- do we know -- do you have
2 counterparts in other states or other regions or
3 other countries that do this kind of report so we can
4 say, you know, is this unique to us or is this pretty
5 well the truth across the country or --

6 MS. BARNES: Are you referring to the grade
7 inflation?

8 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

9 MS. BARNES: Well, we all have counterparts --

10 MS. ZOOK: Right.

11 MS. BARNES: -- in the states. Have we had
12 conversations regarding our specific state law that
13 requires this report? I have not. But I have had
14 conversations with many people, and at times when we
15 may go to the accountability and state reporting
16 collaboratives these types of concerns come up. But
17 specifically, no, and they're individual by state
18 depending upon what is going to be required. Do we
19 see a great disparity sometimes? Yes. What's being
20 done? Everyone is trying, you know, a number of
21 things to -- new strategies to attack it. But it's
22 different -- it's going to be different depending
23 upon the legislation that's driving that particular
24 report or that particular analysis to be done.

25 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you so much.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Zook.

2 Additional questions? Yes, Ms. Newton.

3 MS. NEWTON: I had a couple of questions. First
4 of all, how is it reported to the public? You
5 mentioned that parents would know. How do parents
6 get this information about their school district?

7 MR. FERREN: Well, the grade inflation report
8 will be put online.

9 MS. NEWTON: So if a parent didn't know to go
10 look for it they wouldn't have an idea?

11 MR. FERREN: Probably not.

12 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

13 MR. FERREN: It's in the report card.

14 MS. NEWTON: It is in the school report card?

15 MR. FERREN: Yes.

16 MS. NEWTON: Okay. All right. And the other
17 question, this might be for Dr. Airola because I keep
18 ESSA on the brain quite a bit. Could this grade
19 inflation report somehow or another be used as an
20 indicator of school quality? And could it go down to
21 the lower grades, you know, maybe the 3-8 and do an
22 ACT Aspire comparison to their grades that they're
23 actually getting? Could that be one of our
24 indicators for school quality?

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And if you could kindly

1 state your name for the record please.

2 DR. AIROLA: Sure. Denise Airola with the
3 Office of Innovation for Education. The short answer
4 is yes, it could be. The -- it might be awhile
5 before the data quality of the grades were such that
6 you would be confident that year-to-year variations
7 were due to actual changes in either grades awarded
8 or students achieving better for higher grades just
9 because of the way that grades exist within the
10 system and the fact that they aren't used in an
11 accountability way. My memory of 2003, 2004, 2005,
12 when AYP and the old No Child Left Behind law first
13 came in, the first few years of data quality for
14 something that was new to the system it was -- it
15 took a little while for schools to really get down to
16 the point where they were standardizing some of these
17 -- even though it's standardized to some extent, it's
18 standardized for particular use. When you go to use
19 it in another way oftentimes things crop up. So that
20 connection, having the student grade connecting to
21 the test will do that for -- we've -- well, we do
22 that and have done it in the past for grade inflation
23 and there are sometimes data quality issues. They
24 improve when people are paying attention to that
25 particular calculation that's provided. So it could

1 be done. I've not ever looked at elementary grades.
2 That's where my concern would be in terms of data
3 quality. So I know we've received grades for algebra
4 and geometry before to do grade inflation when it was
5 tied to the EOCs and I remember what those data
6 looked like. And I know we -- the current grade
7 inflation that you're looking at, this report is
8 based on the 12th grade GPA, so it's the sum of all
9 that -- all of their high school. So it's really
10 looking at your GPA, which is what colleges focus a
11 lot of attention on, and then your college entrance
12 exam and how -- do those tell a similar story or at
13 least tell a readiness story that is perceived by a
14 score of a B or a 3.0 or higher.

15 MS. NEWTON: So if you didn't want to move it on
16 down do you think it could be one of our high school
17 indicators?

18 DR. AIROLA: From -- in terms of the criteria
19 that are -- that you have to have for a fifth
20 indicator so-to-speak, it could meet that. It could
21 be statewide and comparable within a grade range.
22 Yes.

23 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. I saw Ms. Zook
25 first and then Dr. Barth.

1 MS. ZOOK: Oh, I was just going to say in some
2 elementaries they don't use A through F grading. So,
3 you know, to her point, because the high schools do
4 and it's a 9 through 12 GPA -- but, you know, I'm not
5 answering but that might be an issue.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Yes, Dr. Barth.

7 DR. BARTH: This is probably for Dr. Airola,
8 although somebody else may have looked at it as well.
9 I know the percentage of schools that have grade
10 inflation at the level -- at the magic level has
11 increased here. Has anyone looked at the correlation
12 year-to-year? I mean, are the same high grade
13 inflation schools on this list as they were last year
14 and the year before? I mean, are we seeing the same
15 pattern across time or is this something that really
16 changes significantly based on the unique aspects of
17 the student population at a given time?

18 DR. AIROLA: So I will say that there was a time
19 when that information was viewed -- looked at from
20 year-to-year, but it's been several years. And part
21 of that is that it did -- the rate itself and how it
22 was calculated changed between 2008 and this year
23 because it was focused on the end-of-course exams
24 from 2008 through last year, and then last year we
25 actually produced two different rates. One was based

1 on end-of-course exam and one was based on the ACT.
2 We haven't looked to see in the two years that we
3 started calculating the ACT rate whether or not the
4 same individuals were always at the top of that list.
5 I did a pretty extensive study back in 2007 of grade
6 inflation in Arkansas, and -- because it was my
7 masters thesis -- and I looked at how grade inflation
8 had been studied in other ways besides how Arkansas
9 was doing it and evidence of grade inflation. The
10 ACT had been studying, SAT had been studying, and
11 both finding different things about grade inflation.
12 But what I had found at the time was that there were
13 definitely regional patterns and that typically some
14 regions in the state were higher than others. Not
15 all high schools were repeaters on the list. Back in
16 that time if you were 50% or more you were kind of
17 singled out and so not every high school hit that
18 high level. And originally this was put into place
19 to try and help the remediation rate in the state
20 because it's based on the ACT, so looking at whether
21 or not kids were getting grades that were
22 commensurate with what would be expected for
23 readiness if they were within this college prep type
24 environment. Mostly back then kids who were taking
25 the ACT were also students who were interested in

1 going to college, so it was very voluntary. It's a
2 different -- it's a little bit different context now
3 but we really haven't looked at the two years --

4 DR. BARTH: Right.

5 DR. AIROLA: -- if anybody is still the same.

6 DR. BARTH: But moving forward, we will have
7 apples-to-apples comparisons --

8 DR. AIROLA: Yes.

9 DR. BARTH: -- to be able to look at those?

10 DR. AIROLA: Yes.

11 DR. BARTH: Because I think that's really the
12 more relevant question here, what are the schools
13 where this is really just a part of the culture,
14 right, rather than a one-year data blip. And I think
15 we need to be real conscious of that, as we are with
16 the three-year average on tests and all those other
17 kinds of things.

18 DR. AIROLA: Right. And the thing about it is
19 this ACT score -- this is -- for any student who took
20 an ACT that has a GPA of 3.0 or higher that remedial
21 score is their highest score. So we literally look
22 back over their entire high school time, if they've
23 taken an ACT at any point in time -- and some kids
24 have taken it six, seven times -- we're pulling their
25 highest score, looking for it to be non-remedial, and

1 if it's not they're counted as inflated, and if it is
2 non-remedial then they don't count as inflated. So
3 it's giving the benefit of the doubt if kids have
4 taken it multiple times.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Before you walk away, Dr.
6 Airola, I did have one other question as tied to this
7 because -- and it's maybe a little less about grade
8 inflation, although tucked in. How are you feeling
9 these days about the ACT being reflective of college
10 readiness? Because I know there was a time and
11 concern where, you know, other socioeconomic factors,
12 right, played into one's achievements and the
13 correlation between sometimes different race and
14 socioeconomic class and one's achievement and ACT
15 versus it actually being a strong indicator of true
16 college readiness. Is there a feeling -- but I know
17 that there's been efforts of the ACT to improve this
18 test. Has it? Have you been following that
19 dialogue? What are the feelings on that being the
20 strongest indicator of college readiness?

21 DR. AIROLA: I'm thinking. I mean, ACT has been
22 a college entrance exam for a long time and it's like
23 any of the other achievement exams; there are
24 achievement gaps. And those achievement gaps are
25 associated with particular groups and those

1 achievement gaps are echoed in all tests really that
2 are taken. And the way that we look at -- I mean,
3 the question about whether or not it's an important
4 college entrance piece, there is a study that's done
5 -- I can't remember how many years it's done -- every
6 so-many years higher education institutes are
7 surveyed about what are the main factors that go into
8 college admission, what do they consider, GPA, course
9 -- you know -- kids transcript, score. And that has
10 consistently come out as they look at the GPA.
11 That's first and foremost. And then they will look
12 at the other scores, college entrance exam scores as
13 a way to situate that GPA, but then they also look at
14 the strength of the transcript. So they look at the
15 courses taken and is this an A from an AP course or
16 is this an A from an elective. So there are -- it's
17 a pretty complex thing that occurs. And we even have
18 colleges now that are looking at tossing out test
19 scores and looking at other ways of using that, but
20 it's clearly a college preparatory -- or a college
21 readiness exam in that that's how it's designed and
22 that's where the standards that it tests are
23 generated from. That's probably a great question for
24 Hope to talk more specifically about that. And, you
25 know, even SAT has changed their test to more closely

1 align to college readiness because it was perceived
2 more as an aptitude test than a readiness test. So
3 I'm not sure if that's what you were asking. I think
4 --

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: It's getting at some of
6 those nuances --

7 DR. AIROLA: Yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- and just seeing kind of
9 where your general feelings are. I know it's not
10 specifically tied to this item but when you all
11 opened the door I wanted to kind of see where your
12 thinking was on that. Thank you. I appreciate that.

13 DR. AIROLA: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And with that, any
15 additional questions? Yes, Dr. Hill.

16 DR. HILL: I would like to refer to Ms. Zook and
17 Ms. Newton for talking about this testing as we're
18 dealing with a standardized testing based on
19 information that we have. And knowing when we look
20 at our schools that are dealing with academic
21 distress and looking at the test scores that we have
22 that in preparation for taking the test -- and I'm
23 just talking from personal experience of going and
24 recruiting and looking at their test scores versus
25 looking at their GPAs, and realizing that the GPA is

1 usually an indicator of persistency, you know,
2 showing up, being involved, being engaged. And
3 oftentimes I've found in the Delta and rural areas
4 that I was recruiting that the test scores were --
5 because of lack of preparation, not having an
6 opportunity to take the test numerous times as other
7 schools will start their students for taking the test
8 in the 9th grade, prepping them for the test, making
9 sure they know how to take the test, knowing that if
10 you have five answers and you don't know to check C,
11 if there's four and you don't know to check B, so you
12 will know strategically how to move through the
13 process and be educated. And then we have the young
14 people dealing with academic distress, they don't
15 know that. And so I think as a board we need to look
16 strategically, because from personal example I've had
17 people who had 3.1 on ACT -- I mean, and a GPA; had a
18 14 on the ACT, but I knew from talking to them that
19 they could learn. They could read comprehensively,
20 they could write effectively, and they could think
21 critically, but they have test anxiety. All right.
22 So what I would do, you know, most times, because
23 they was from these areas of distress, I would go to
24 the churches and ask them to raise money, put them in
25 the Sylvan Learning Center so they could go through a

1 six-month process to take that test to get to a 17 so
2 they could get their scholarship to go. Now I think
3 strategically as a board we have a responsibility for
4 when we're dealing with academic distress to make
5 sure that we're facilitating those type of avenues or
6 venues for those students to have those same things
7 that the people who are learning to take the test and
8 getting all those opportunities to pass the test --
9 because we may be examining or evaluating a person
10 who takes the test one time versus somebody who's
11 taken it 19 times. So I just think strategically as
12 a board we have that responsibility to our students
13 because we're not measuring apples and apples here.
14 We're measuring apples and grapes, and there's a
15 disparity, but we're evaluating the same. Just like
16 the superintendent from Watson Chapel said, you're
17 evaluating my class versus Bentonville. I was just
18 in Bentonville two weeks ago and it looks like
19 another college campus, which that's blessed. But
20 then I was in Pine Bluff two -- three weeks ago and
21 it's different. So we as a board have a complete
22 comprehensive responsibility to make sure we
23 evaluate, that we try to make it as equitable as
24 possible as we evaluate the information that we
25 receive. Thank you. And you all are experts and I

1 refer to you all for that because I'm out in my lane,
2 you know, many times but I know your background and
3 looking for your guidance on that.

4 MS. ZOOK: I agree with you completely because
5 it's so many times we think is it prejudice against
6 socioeconomic level, is it prejudice against certain
7 races and, you know, all that. I guess -- because
8 before we as -- we're K-12 and it doesn't matter to
9 us as far as the kid goes -- what is ACT, but we have
10 to look at it does matter for his future, and that's
11 what we're preparing for. And I appreciate your
12 point of how many times because I know a lot of kids
13 who took it 7th and then 9th, but they came from a
14 family or from a community that paid for it. And if
15 these other kids are just one in and one out then I
16 think that's an excellent point that you made. Thank
17 you.

18 MS. NEWTON: Yes, very true. Very true. I
19 agree.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Thank you, Dr.
21 Hill and Ms. Newton and Ms. Zook. And, you know,
22 with that, I know that this specific report, if I
23 understand correctly, Mr. Ferren, is in relation to
24 legislation and then having to do this measurement.
25 But I think we're all getting at some nuances, right,

1 of wanting to go maybe a level deeper with this and
2 acknowledging that especially for some things that
3 are under our jurisdiction as an academic and
4 distress and otherwise the -- our ESSA work and
5 others that maybe there's some opportunities to look
6 a little bit more deeply. But in terms of what you
7 need from us today is just an approval or not
8 approval of your report. Is that correct, Mr.
9 Ferren?

10 MR. FERREN: Yes, please. We will need to send
11 it to the legislature if you approve it.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Wonderful. With
13 that, Commissioner, were you -- yes.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: Yeah. Madam Chair, I just
15 want to talk to Dr. Hill's -- speak to your remarks
16 there and to let you all know -- probably you know
17 but it helps sometimes to be reminded of some of the
18 things we have been doing over the last few years,
19 and especially in the last year. We have revamped
20 some of the grants that we issue to our higher ed.
21 partners that have ACT prep programs and trying to
22 put more of a focus on results and moving the scores
23 for those students in the parts of the state that
24 need the type of support you're talking about. And
25 also I would just point out that our adoption -- your

1 adoption of ACT Aspire and ACT, now every student in
2 the state of Arkansas has the opportunity to take it
3 free once and then every district in the state of
4 Arkansas has the opportunity through NSLA funds to
5 provide for additional opportunities. So, you know,
6 I think you all have taken the lead with some
7 measures that would help resolve the problem; you
8 know, the more you take it the more comfortable you
9 get. Now it's being taken that one time at the
10 school setting in which the students are comfortable
11 possibly instead of having to go, you know, 30 miles
12 away to a rival. You know, I had to take it in
13 Arkadelphia. We didn't like to go to Arkadelphia,
14 Dr. Hill, when we were from Gurdon. So, you know,
15 those are some things that I think over time we will
16 see some positive improvements in the overall
17 accomplishments of the students with regards to the
18 ACT.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any final
20 questions?

21 Then with that I do believe we have one public
22 comment before we take a final vote on this. Is Ms.
23 Annie Bryant here from the Dollarway School District
24 -- or a parent, better said, of the Dollarway School
25 District?

1 MS. BRYANT: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Bryant, it's so good to
3 see you again. Thank you so much. You're
4 recognized.

5 MS. BRYANT: Good morning. Thank you for
6 allowing me to speak. I'm here because Dollarway
7 matters and our children matter; equity in education
8 matters. I actually had something kind of written
9 down I wanted to speak about but Ms. Newton, she
10 brought out a really good point about grade
11 inflation, and grade inflation is what I had a
12 question about or a comment about. Now when I looked
13 at the agenda item online Dollarway was one of those
14 top people at the top of the list. And one of my
15 questions is: is it -- is the list done by the people
16 with the highest rates --

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Bryant, if you could
18 speak into the mic please.

19 MS. BRYANT: -- like with the highest rates of
20 inflation? Like Dollarway had 86% and someone had
21 lower and someone had lower and someone had lower.
22 So is the list done with the schools with the highest
23 rates on top and then you go down?

24 MR. FERREN: Yes.

25 MS. BRYANT: Okay. Now my -- when Ms. Newton

1 made the remark about -- well, someone made the
2 remark about us looking at this in terms of starting
3 to look at grade inflation at a lower -- at an
4 earlier time, like in elementary school. And I
5 really feel like that's a good point because in
6 Dollarway we have a lot of students who are in the
7 11th and 9th and 10th grade but their grade level
8 that they're on, that they're testing on is in 3rd,
9 4th, 5th. So if we start looking at grade inflation
10 at a lower level then maybe we can catch some of
11 those kids who are making all As and Bs in 1st, 2nd,
12 3rd, 4th grade, but they really weren't making As and
13 Bs because when they get to high school we realize
14 they cannot read. Okay. So I think that's a very,
15 very -- something we really need to look at. I know
16 it's going to take time but we've got time, you know,
17 and these kids they need this.

18 Someone else brought up another point as far as
19 -- the gentleman, Dr. Hill, the comment he made about
20 the testing and how some of our children only get a
21 chance to take the test maybe once or twice or
22 whatever. And I think that's also a very, very good
23 point. And with that being said, it goes back to
24 when you guys were talking about how you need to keep
25 up with it from year to year, I think it's important

1 that we start doing this, we start keeping the list.
2 If we're seeing the same people on the list in the
3 same spot, something is not changing; somebody is not
4 doing something. But you can't monitor that if you
5 don't maintain the list. And you can go back and
6 take a look at that and I think that's important.
7 It's important for the children in Dollarway, I know,
8 because we're at the top of that list. Okay.

9 Also, what I'd like to say is as far as the
10 takeover of Dollarway and everything, I am one of the
11 parents who supported it and I want to tell you that
12 I appreciate what you guys are doing and I really
13 appreciate when I hear good conversation about and
14 you're really looking at those agenda items, because
15 I'm looking too, and I'm asking questions. And we
16 appreciate you in Dollarway and we appreciate our
17 good teachers in Dollarway. And I just want you to
18 know that we don't want business as usual; we want
19 different, and the community does care, parents do
20 care. There needs to be a better way of getting this
21 out. Most of the parents have no idea what grade
22 inflation is.

23 And then the last thing is this does matter, and
24 this is why it matters: first of all, when I graduate
25 from high school and I go to college, if I cannot --

1 if I haven't scored a certain amount on those tests
2 then I'm going to have to take remediated courses.
3 So that means that I already don't qualify for the
4 scholarship, but also I've got to do student loans.
5 So either I'm going to suck up the debt or my parents
6 are going to suck up that debt. Okay. So if I'm
7 trying to break the chains of poverty, if I'm trying
8 to do better, be better, it's making it hard on me.
9 Okay. And so this right here -- and not only is it
10 going to impact the individual, then it reaches out
11 to your community because that means if I can't go to
12 college and finish college, or even get in college,
13 it's going to be harder for me to get a job. Okay.
14 I don't have options and opportunities that other
15 people have. So therefore it's easier for me to
16 maybe try to take that easy road that I see. So it
17 could increase crime in your community, increase
18 unemployment rates. That's why I feel a lot of our
19 communities are dying, from academic distress.
20 They're not getting the education that they need and
21 we really need to do something about it. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Bryant. And
23 we'd appreciate it if every parent was as informed
24 and engaged as you are. I think some of our
25 conversations would look a little differently. So

1 thank you so much, Ms. Bryant.

2 With that, I don't know if there's anything that
3 your team, Ms. Barnes, could respond to, either
4 yourself or Mr. Ferren. I feel strongly when
5 especially parents and community members come in -- I
6 know it's mostly in the form of comments, but
7 responding to especially what she was saying in
8 regards to younger levels, right, and being able to
9 identify grade inflation at that range. I thought
10 that was a very thoughtful comment, and I didn't know
11 if that's something that the Department has
12 considered in any way?

13 MS. BARNES: We do take her comments and we
14 understand that she made them with an intention. And
15 so we are currently working with Dollarway School
16 District, as well as any other school district that
17 is in need of intensive support. We can look at
18 that. Throughout the review there will be various
19 things that will come to the forefront; those will be
20 areas that we will be working with the districts.
21 But we did hear her comments and we recognize the
22 intentional passion that she placed on it. So thank
23 you, and thank you for those comments.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And her comments with
25 regards to identifying grade inflation in the lower

1 levels before high school?

2 MS. BARNES: We heard her comments --

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: All right. Okay.

4 MS. BARNES: -- and we will be very purposeful
5 as we work on that.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I gotcha. Okay. Thank you.
7 With that, any final questions? Otherwise, we will
8 go ahead and entertain a motion.

9 MS. ZOOK: I move that we accept the report as
10 submitted.

11 DR. BARTH: Second.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
13 Zook, seconded by Dr. Barth. All in favor?

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
16 unanimately. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr.
17 Ferren.

18 A-2: CONSIDERATION OF SUSPENSION OF TEACHING LICENSE FOR NON-
19 COMPLETION OF REQUIRED TRAINING PLSB CASE NO. 14-120 - JERI LYN
20 ODOM

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on to action agenda
22 item A-2 --

23 Yes, I was told that the latest -- we could have
24 until like 35, 40. So I figured instead of taking a
25 break it would give us a little cushion; we can take

1 a little longer time and then transition to the cars.
2 So everyone is good for an additional 10, 15 minutes
3 I thought we would get through a few more action
4 agenda items, if that's all right.

5 All right. So with that, action agenda item A-
6 2, Consideration of Suspension of the Teaching
7 License for Non-Completion of Required Training in
8 the case of Mr. Odom [sic]. Mr. -- well, I guess not
9 Mr. James. Okay. Miss.

10 MS. REINHART: Cheryl Reinhart for the
11 Department of Education.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

13 MS. REINHART: And not only am I not Eric James
14 that's on your agenda, if you would indulge me just
15 one moment I wanted to introduce the new PLSB
16 attorney.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Oh, wonderful.

18 MS. REINHART: This is Bilenda Harris-Ritter and
19 we are very fortunate to have her on our staff and I
20 hope that you'll welcome her, and you'll be seeing
21 her in the future for these types of action items.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Welcome.
23 Welcome. You're joining an excellent team. Thank
24 you so much.

25 Yes, Ms. Reinhart, you're recognized.

1 MS. REINHART: All right. In regards to Jeri
2 Lyn Odom, formerly known as Jeri Lyn High -- her name
3 has changed -- the recommendation here from the
4 Department is that the State Board suspend her
5 license for non-completion of these requirements from
6 the previous state order. She was -- her license was
7 on probation but the PLSB had concerns enough to ask
8 that she have a letter stating that she was fit to
9 return to the classroom. So since we've not had
10 that, we've had numerous requests made to her, that
11 is the reason why we're coming before the Board now
12 and asking for suspension of the license until she
13 complies so that she does not go into the classroom
14 until then.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Until she's received
16 training?

17 MS. REINHART: Until she has received the
18 training and produced that letter that she's fit to
19 return to the classroom.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Reinhart.
21 With that, I saw Ms. Newton first.

22 MS. NEWTON: I move to approve the suspension
23 until she produces the required documentation.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

25 MS. ZOOK: Second.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Second. Okay. Ms. Zook.
2 Wonderful. So motion made by Ms. Newton, seconded by
3 Ms. Zook. Any questions? Otherwise, all in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
6 unanimously. Thank you so much, Ms. Reinhart.

7 MS. REINHART: Thank you very much.

8 A-3: CONSIDERATION OF SUSPENSION OF TEACHING LICENSE FOR
9 NONPAYMENT OF FINES - PLSB CASE NO. 15-048 - MARY JILL DAVIS

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on to action agenda
11 item A-3, Consideration of Suspension of the Teaching
12 License for Nonpayment of Fines in the case of Ms.
13 Mary Jill Davis. Ms. Reinhart, I'm assuming you'll
14 also --

15 MS. REINHART: Yes, thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

17 MS. REINHART: And we also recommend that this
18 license be suspended. Mary Jill Davis has been
19 notified numerous times and has not responded to
20 efforts to collect the fine, and so we recommend
21 suspension of the license until the fine is paid.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any questions
23 from the Board? Otherwise, I'll entertain a motion.

24 DR. BARTH: Move approval of the recommendation.

25 DR. HILL: Second.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Dr.
2 Barth, seconded by Dr. Hill. All in favor?

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
5 unanimously.

6 MS. REINHART: Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Ms.
8 Reinhart.

9 A-4: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT
10 CHARTERS: COUNTY LINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on to action agenda
12 item A-4, District Request for Waivers Granted to the
13 Open-Enrollment Charters, the County Line School
14 District.

15 MS. NEWTON: Madam Chair, I'm going to have
16 several questions on this.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

18 MS. NEWTON: I don't know if we're going to be
19 on a time crunch or not.

20 MS. DAVIS: That's just what I was going to ask,
21 is this something -- because the district does get up
22 to 20 minutes to present its application.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

24 MS. DAVIS: So will you have time before lunch?

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you for your guidance.

1 I leave it to the discretion of the Board. If
2 there's no opposition, we do have some other items
3 here that probably are less lengthy if that would
4 make sense for the Board. And we defer this -- my
5 only concern would be to the district itself, if they
6 are all right with waiting until after lunch.

7 SUPT. GATTIS: It's not going to be long on my
8 part. I'm not going to take 20 minutes. I may take
9 two or three; I'll answer your questions. I think it
10 would -- it's going to be pretty quick. I mean, it's
11 not anything dire for me. I mean, I can answer her
12 questions. It's not going to be very long on County
13 Line's part.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: The only reason, I know it's
15 the inconvenience and we are leaving for two hours
16 and then coming back. But at the same time I leave
17 this to the discretion of my colleagues. I look
18 forward to some feedback. I see Ms. Newton's
19 reservations.

20 DR. BARTH: I do have some questions as well.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: As well. Okay.

22 MS. ZOOK: I do too.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. And I apologize. I
24 know you probably planned your day accordingly, but
25 do you have the possibility of staying until after

1 our lunch period?

2 SUPT. GATTIS: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

4 So with that, seeing that that looks to be the
5 will of the Board, we will move action agenda item A-
6 4 until our after-lunch block, beginning at
7 approximately 1:45 p.m., if that allows you to leave
8 for a period, and then acknowledge that we'll take up
9 your issue no sooner than 1:45 p.m., if that's
10 helpful for planning of the afternoon.

11 A-5: APPROVAL OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COURSE

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: With that, we are moving on
13 to action agenda item A-5, Approval of the High
14 School English Language Art Courses. Ms. Smith -- or
15 actually that looks like Mr. Coy.

16 MR. COY: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Mr. Coy, you're recognized.

18 MR. COY: Madam Chair, Commissioner Key, and
19 Members of the Board, thank you very much. As you're
20 well aware, you approved the new English Language
21 Arts standards. Much like we did in mathematics, we
22 brought in an additional committee to write high
23 school courses for English Language Arts and I have
24 Sherri Thorne here if you have specific questions
25 about these courses. One point of clarification I

1 would like to make in the little blurb that you have,
2 it says high school but we have one middle school
3 level course which is your strategic reading course.
4 That's actually at a middle school level. So we
5 didn't mean to lump all those into high school but
6 everything else is a high school course. If you've
7 got specific questions about the courses, we're happy
8 to answer those. If not, we're happy to entertain a
9 motion for you all to approve them.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr. Coy.
11 With that, any questions from the Board? If not, I
12 will entertain a motion.

13 MS. DEAN: I move to approve.

14 MS. ZOOK: Second.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
16 Dean, seconded by Ms. Zook. All in favor?

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
19 unanimously. Congratulations, Mr. Coy.

20 MR. COY: Thank you.

21 A-6: APPROVAL OF HIGH SCHOOL MATH COURSES

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on to action agenda
23 item A-6, Approval of High School Math Courses. And
24 I'm assuming, Mr. Coy, you'll stay there.

25 MR. COY: Yes.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: All right.

2 MR. COY: I'll stay here and this one also -- I
3 told you a story last time when I brought math
4 courses, thinking we were done. We piggybacked off
5 of a school of innovation. Stuttgart had submitted a
6 course for a combination of financial literacy, if
7 you will, and mathematics, and we thought that would
8 be something that was great for all students. So my
9 new colleague, Veronica Hebard, who's our math
10 specialist, took on that initiative and we bring that
11 course to you all. This is a course that can be used
12 for high school credit, whether a student is in core
13 or in Smart Core, so it's a little bit different than
14 what we've seen. But it focuses on financial
15 literacy, personal finance decisions, business
16 finance decisions, things that we're hearing from the
17 field that schools would really find helpful and
18 useful in their communities. So we'd like you to
19 consider approval of this particular course.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr. Coy.
21 With that, questions?

22 MS. NEWTON: I just have a quick comment. At
23 our ESSA steering committee meeting last week one of
24 the things that the students brought forth was they
25 wanted courses and training in real-life math skills,

1 the finance and the taxes and the different things
2 that this course offers. And so the very next day I
3 pulled up the board agenda and there it was. It was
4 what -- exactly what the kids were asking for, so --

5 MS. ZOOK: Quick turnaround.

6 MS. NEWTON: Yeah, really. So we listened
7 really quick, so --

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: You were up all night,
9 right, Mr. Coy?

10 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. So I am very pleased that,
11 you know, something that students ask for -- you know
12 -- this is what students were asking for, so I am
13 just thrilled with this course. And so with that I
14 move to approve.

15 MS. ZOOK: Second.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
17 Newton, seconded by Ms. Zook. All in favor?

18 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
20 unanimously. And I will add there that two years ago
21 at NASBE, the National Association of State Board of
22 Education, they did a special series on financial
23 literacy. States are talking about this across the
24 country. Many are still in the development process.
25 The fact that you have a course and are leading the

1 way, I congratulate you and your team on this. I
2 think that's wonderful. And I see -- I saw the
3 Commissioner first. Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER KEY: No, I just -- Tommy, would
5 you give Veronica a little bit more of an
6 introduction?

7 MR. COY: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER KEY: Because I want this board to
9 know the quality, caliber of folks that we get, and
10 she came straight out of the classroom, so --

11 MR. COY: She is -- Veronica Hebard joins us
12 from the South Conway County School District as our
13 secondary math specialist. So oftentimes I would be
14 before you talking about secondary mathematics and --
15 but Veronica is really leading this work now in our
16 unit. And I would be remiss also if I didn't
17 recognize Sherri Thorne for her excellent work with
18 the ELA group. I am very -- I'm very pleased. I
19 think we've got a phenomenal team working on
20 standards and I'm very pleased that Dr. Barth also
21 recognized that we made some changes that engage our
22 communities better. I think our standards are only
23 going to get better and better because of our great
24 team that we have here and the fact that we're doing
25 more to engage stakeholders through that process.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. Mr.
2 Williamson.

3 MR. WILLIAMSON: I was going to say, I work for
4 the Murphy Foundation in El Dorado; we've been
5 working with Economics Arkansas for decades trying to
6 get this very thing implemented. So I'm glad to
7 really see this finally. I'm a recovering banker and
8 sad to say that my oldest two still don't know how to
9 reconcile their checking account. So I've tried but
10 it just hasn't stuck.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. So I
12 think that was an enthusiastic yes, go forth. And
13 thank you, we appreciate it.

14 A-7: APPROVAL OF HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE STANDARDS

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Moving on to action agenda
16 item A-7, Approval of the High School Science
17 Standards. And I don't know -- Mr. Coy, I don't have
18 you on this list but if you're going to defer to Ms.
19 Smith or Ms. Snyder or handle this as well?

20 MR. COY: Ms. Smith is not in town, so I'm --

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

22 MR. COY: -- here representing her today. But,
23 again this --

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

25 MR. COY: You all have had science standards

1 that have come before you several times, because this
2 rollout is a little different than we have typically
3 done with other standards revisions. But these
4 courses that are before you represent the high school
5 science courses that we hope to implement in 18-19 --
6 or that would have to be implemented in 18-19. If
7 schools are ready to implement earlier, obviously we
8 would try to give them that flexibility. Ms. Snyder
9 and her group of educators and the folks here at ADE,
10 including the science specialists from PD and
11 assessment, have worked tirelessly. But with
12 Michele's leadership -- Ms. Snyder's leadership I'm
13 very pleased to bring these courses to you today.
14 Obviously, Michele is here if there are any questions
15 that you have about the courses. But, again, we
16 would respectfully request that you approve these
17 courses.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes, thank you, Mr. Coy.
19 Commissioner, you're recognized.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Tommy, this is one of those
21 examples that I hope you would -- or maybe Michele
22 could speak to the adjustments that you all made
23 based on feedback. I think it's very important for
24 the Board to hear how this is an example of that at
25 work.

1 MR. COY: Sure.

2 MS. SNYDER: Yes, thank you. Michele Snyder.
3 We really appreciate the comments that we received
4 from teachers, from parents on these community
5 feedback surveys, and we respond to it. One example
6 is we -- part of this process, the title of these
7 science courses, we had no idea the importance of it
8 to many different individuals from, you know,
9 secondary, post-secondary, and beyond. And so in the
10 comments overwhelmingly teachers and parents said,
11 "Why aren't you calling these courses what they
12 really are? They're integrated science courses." So
13 from the ending of that survey to us presenting these
14 courses to you we added that title. And so we feel
15 that that gives integrity to the courses more so than
16 what they were titled in the past. They are
17 different.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much.

19 MS. SNYDER: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: That's exciting. Thank you.
21 Any additional questions, comments? Yes, Dr. Barth.

22 DR. BARTH: I just want to -- when -- early in
23 my time on the board I guess there really wasn't a
24 science person on the board, and I'm a social
25 sciences so I somehow got attached to this work and

1 it's been really enjoyable. And Ms. Snyder is great
2 to work with; she has really done an amazing job, and
3 this has been a five-year -- four-year -- when did
4 you arrive?

5 MS. SNYDER: This is my fifth year anniversary
6 this week actually, so -- and I started day-one with
7 a committee of Arkansans to look at the new standards
8 and look at how we're going to revise science
9 education. So we've got a lot more work to do but
10 this is one big step in that phase of work.

11 DR. BARTH: And that's what -- that was my other
12 big point is that, you know, standards and courses
13 are only as good as the professional development that
14 follows so that teachers have what they need to be
15 successful in the classroom. And this is a big --
16 these are some big changes in how science education
17 is taught and where science education is taught.
18 And, you know, this is, as we've seen with previous
19 actions, moving it down to, you know, the earliest
20 stages of education, so that means those students are
21 going to have -- be very different when they arrive
22 in the class -- high school classrooms than students
23 in the past. So this is very exciting stuff and I
24 think we need to celebrate this and definitely
25 celebrate this big step for Michele and her work.

1 MS. SNYDER: I would like to add that also the
2 comments really show us what we need to add in the
3 professional development. So that really drives our
4 development over time. So that community feedback
5 survey is something very good and it's improved our
6 process.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. And with that,
8 I'll entertain a motion.

9 DR. BARTH: I would move approval of the high
10 school science courses.

11 MS. NEWTON: Second.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Dr.
13 Barth, seconded by Ms. Newton. All in favor?

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
16 unanimously and, again, enthusiastically. Thank you
17 all so much.

18 MS. SNYDER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And with that, I think we
20 will conclude this session and we'll leave action
21 agenda items A-4 and A-8 until after the lunch. I
22 will hit the gavel and then just say that everybody
23 here should have a list in terms of breakup, and I
24 was wondering if the drivers might reveal themselves.
25 I'm thinking they might be our folks here in the

1 back. Is that correct? Are those -- no, different
2 individuals. They'll be outside. So if you all --
3 we'll have about five minutes, five, six minutes or
4 so, but if you could make it to the parking lot by
5 11:45 at the latest we sure would appreciate it.
6 Thank you all so much.

7 (LUNCH BREAK: 11:39 A.M. - 1:45 P.M.)

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Good afternoon. Welcome,
9 everyone, to the second half of the December 8th
10 board meeting of the State Board of Education. For
11 those joining us this afternoon that weren't here
12 this morning, we left two items hanging from our
13 morning agenda: action agenda items A-4 and A-8. So
14 we will be picking up with those items to begin and
15 then we'll resume into our afternoon agenda.

16 A-4: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT
17 CHARTERS - COUNTY LINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So to begin, action item A-
19 4, the District Request for Waivers Granted to Open-
20 Enrollment Charters for the County Line School
21 District. Is Ms. McLaughlin here? Yes, Ms.
22 McLaughlin, you're recognized.

23 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Kelly McLaughlin,
24 ADE Charter Office. Today, we have County Line
25 School District. They are here to request several

1 waivers. The 90-day deadline will fall after your
2 January meeting and they have requested for a period
3 of five years. I will go over the common procedures
4 that you normally use. The school district will have
5 20 minutes to make their presentation. If there is
6 anyone that is signed up for opposition, they will
7 also have 20 minutes and then, of course, the school
8 district will have 5 minutes to address that.
9 Superintendent Gattis is here to provide our
10 presentation and I'm sure you'll probably want to
11 swear him in.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Most definitely. And, Ms.
13 McLaughlin, did anyone sign up to offer opposition?

14 (BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE)

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. McLaughlin, did anyone
16 sign up to offer opposition? Not that we know of?

17 MS. McLAUGHLIN: No, ma'am.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Wonderful. Then Mr.
19 Gattis and anyone planning to offer testimony today
20 who's not an attorney, if you could kindly raise your
21 right hand so that I may swear you in. Do you swear
22 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give
23 shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but
24 the truth?

25 SUPT. GATTIS: Yes.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. And then
2 with that, if you could state your full name and
3 title for the record we would appreciate it.

4 SUPT. GATTIS: Okay. My name is Justin Taylor
5 Gattis; I'm the superintendent of the County Line
6 School District in Branch, Arkansas.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. And then with
8 that, Mr. Gattis, you have 20 minutes.

9 SUPT. GATTIS: Okay. County Line -- I'm just
10 going to give you a little background about County
11 Line. We're a small rural district in western
12 Arkansas. We're in kind of a unique situation.
13 We're a 450-student school district but we sit in the
14 middle of four other larger districts. We have a
15 900-student district about five miles to our west; we
16 have an 1100-student district about 12 miles to our
17 south; we have a 1000-student district about 12 miles
18 to our east; and then we have a 1900-student district
19 about 13 or 14 miles to our north. So we're a rural
20 school but we're not isolated like a lot of rural
21 schools are. There's three districts in our county;
22 we're one of the three. County Line is named because
23 we are on the county line, the Franklin County line.
24 Our elementary school is in Franklin County, high
25 school is in Logan County, and that's where we got

1 the name when they consolidated in 1950. But we are
2 considered a Franklin County school. There are still
3 three school districts in Franklin County. We are
4 very competitive in academics with both of the other
5 schools. You know, we have great teachers; we have a
6 great staff. It's just -- we -- the last two years
7 we have gained enrollment but that's been not the
8 norm for the past several years. We've been losing
9 five, ten, fifteen kids a year for the past several
10 years until the last two years, you know, we gained
11 enrollment. This year we've lost a few students
12 again this year, but hopefully we've curtailed that
13 loss each year.

14 The reason I'm asking for these waivers is to
15 offer students an option other than the traditional
16 school, like the Arkansas Connections Academy has.
17 You know, a lot of our school choice students that
18 choice out are going into the kindergarten class and
19 I contact each family that school-choices out just to
20 try to find out the reasoning why they're school-
21 choicing out of our district. And I've not had one
22 yet to tell me it's not because we don't have a good
23 school; you know, they always say "we hear you've got
24 a great school; you know, we know academically you
25 put out good students; you know, the facilities are

1 nice; you know, everyone brags about County Line
2 schools; it's just it's a convenience factor; you
3 know, we live closer to this district. Even though
4 we live in your school district we actually live
5 closer to one of the other schools," and those are
6 the reasons. So the reason I'm asking for these
7 options -- or these waivers are to give our students
8 some options, convenience, you know, maybe things
9 that these larger districts may offer them that we
10 can be able to offer through another avenue of
11 education. Some of it's to try to attract some of
12 the homeschool students that we have. We have had --
13 for our size district we've had a rather larger
14 homeschool population for a few years. You know, we
15 have 21 students this year that are -- that filed
16 homeschool papers this school year. I have visited
17 with some of them about, you know, if we had these
18 options for them. Some of them were still not
19 interested just because the reason they homeschool is
20 so they do not have any state input or government
21 input on the type of education that they provide
22 their children, and I don't have a problem with that,
23 you know. But there are some homeschool students
24 that I think we can have some more offerings for
25 them, you know, to help them out with the educational

1 opportunity they have. We can offer them curriculum
2 if we have the seat-time waivers, the mandatory
3 attendance waivers, and things of that nature.

4 The 38-unit waiver, I know Ms. McLaughlin told
5 me that there might be concerns about that one. And
6 the only reason I put that one on there is -- was due
7 to the science standards that were coming out and I
8 was able to visit with Ms. Snyder during the lunch
9 break about that and she eased some of my concerns
10 about that. You know, when they first came out with
11 that there was this Principles of Physics and
12 Chemistry class that our understanding was that that
13 was going to be a required course, as well as physics
14 and chemistry. Well, we have two science teachers
15 that teach 7th through 12th grade science and they do
16 not have a whole lot of flexibility in their schedule
17 to teach another course. So the reason I was asking
18 for that flexibility on the 38 units was for that, in
19 general, by itself, was that coursework that may be
20 -- or we heard was going to be required. Because,
21 you know, we want to offer our students the things
22 that they can get at other schools, you know, and
23 we're fortunate, even though we're a small district,
24 all of our AP courses, all the mandatory required
25 courses are offered from teachers at County Line;

1 they're not through Virtual Arkansas. We use Virtual
2 Arkansas but that's for elective courses and things
3 of that nature. So they are able to get all required
4 courses by a teacher at County Line and we pride our-
5 self on that as a small district being able to do
6 that. You know, so when the science standards were
7 coming out we thought, okay, you know, we're going to
8 have trouble being able to offer chemistry, physics,
9 and the Principles of Physics and Chemistry every
10 year. If we could get that waiver to where we could
11 alternate the physics and chemistry, we would be okay
12 with the personnel that we have on staff. And that
13 was the sole reason for asking for the waiver from
14 the 38 units. You know, we'll continue to have
15 school tomorrow without that 38 unit one and we'll do
16 what we can to provide the best education for the
17 students at County Line. But basically that is the
18 reasoning that I'm requesting these waivers for the
19 County Line School District.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Mr. Gattis. Is
21 anyone else here to speak on behalf of your proposal?

22 SUPT. GATTIS: No. We're a pretty small
23 district. I don't have a curriculum coordinator or
24 anything like that. My counselor that works with me
25 on a lot of this stuff, she's testing students today,

1 so I'm here by myself.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Well, I know in our small
3 districts, and pretty much any district, somebody in
4 your role -- every person matters. And so thank you
5 for giving us those additional two hours for our
6 lunch time and now --

7 SUPT. GATTIS: That's fine. I learned a lot
8 during those two hours. I got to talk to some pretty
9 smart people at lunch and after lunch, so it was well
10 worth it.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Well, I'm glad to hear that.
12 Thank you for that.

13 So with that, knowing that there's no
14 opposition, do you have any final statement you want
15 to say? Otherwise, we'll open it up for questions
16 from my colleagues on the board.

17 SUPT. GATTIS: No final statement. I'm open for
18 questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Wonderful. So to
20 that, I saw Ms. Newton first. Ms. Newton, you're
21 recognized.

22 MS. NEWTON: So I guess my first question: are
23 you withdrawing your request for the standard 38
24 units?

25 SUPT. GATTIS: Yes. I will be fine to withdraw

1 that, knowing that they've changed that science
2 standard and she said that they did get -- which I
3 did see in public input back on that survey and, you
4 know, I know that they had read those and they said
5 they have realized that it could be a burden on small
6 districts and they've changed that to chemistry
7 integrated and they're going to work that to where,
8 you know, it won't affect small districts like first
9 initially. And I think there might've been some
10 misconceptions out there, you know, at first from
11 construed information that we had received. So I
12 would be fine for withdrawing that one, knowing that.

13 MS. NEWTON: Okay. That took care of several of
14 my questions is the reason I was asking.

15 SUPT. GATTIS: Yes.

16 MS. NEWTON: The other one that I had was on the
17 class size and teaching load. You're requesting to
18 increase that from 30 students to 35 students and for
19 a teacher from 150 to 180. How will that benefit
20 students?

21 SUPT. GATTIS: Well, it'll benefit students, you
22 know, in the sense that financially it will help the
23 school, and any time financially you can help the
24 school it's going to benefit students that we're able
25 to spend that money in other areas. I was just doing

1 that so we did not have to hire -- you know -- in a
2 sense that we wouldn't have to hire an additional
3 teacher at some point because the teaching load was
4 just one or two students over what was required by
5 the state, and that was the reasoning for requesting
6 that waiver.

7 MS. NEWTON: There's a pretty big jump from 30
8 to 35. I can't -- I'm trying to visualize a 7th and
9 8th grade math class with 35 students. It's just --
10 it's really hard to see how that would benefit
11 student learning and, you know, that's kind of where
12 I come from; how does it help the students.

13 My other question is: have you talked to your
14 staff about that?

15 SUPT. GATTIS: The staff, we have had
16 conversations. I don't say we have an agenda with it
17 but, you know, I eat at the lunch table with the
18 staff every day; you know, I visit with my principals
19 at, you know, morning bus stop duty and things like
20 that. You know, but as far as having an agenda, no.
21 But the staff at County Line is -- which, like most
22 schools are, they're very unique and good staff and
23 they're willing to do some smaller things that they
24 can to help the district as well, you know. And, you
25 know, 35, you know, I don't know; that's a number I

1 had seen one other requests and that's kind of why I
2 picked the 35. You know, could we do it with 33?
3 Probably so, you know, to where those class sizes
4 aren't as large. You know, we could probably do it
5 with that. And I know, you know, depending on the
6 teacher too, you know, a 35 compared to a 30, you
7 know, and those are things that we would have to look
8 at. And knowing our staff, we would know which
9 teachers we would be able to put 31 or 32 in,
10 compared to, you know, some teachers we could put the
11 35 in and that class would be just as fine as a class
12 with 25. You know, but at that set number at 35, you
13 know, no specific reason why 35.

14 MS. NEWTON: But you haven't had a lot of input
15 from your teachers and staff on setting that number
16 higher than you did before?

17 SUPT. GATTIS: No.

18 MS. NEWTON: Okay. What about community? Have
19 you notified community that you're thinking of
20 increasing the class size from 30 to --

21 SUPT. GATTIS: No.

22 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Additional
24 questions? Dr. Barth.

25 DR. BARTH: Well, Ms. Newton pretty much asked

1 my questions, but I just do want to comment. First,
2 thanks for pulling down the 38 units because I think
3 that's a really problematic waiver. You know, having
4 taught for a lot of years there's a big difference --
5 there are these magic points in terms of the size of
6 a class where it just changes to a completely
7 different class, and above 30 is one of those points.
8 And it's a game-changer as a teacher in terms of
9 being able to give any individualized attention to
10 students. So I know it's a number that helps balance
11 some things out but for the teaching and learning
12 experience it's a very big difference. So that's
13 just my input from my perspective.

14 SUPT. GATTIS: I understand. You know -- you
15 know, I was in the classroom for several years and I
16 do understand that. You know, and that one, that's
17 kind of like the 38 units; 38 units I had a specific
18 thing. This one, it's not a game-changer for me. I
19 mean, the ones I'm most interested in would be the
20 seat time waiver, mandatory attendance; those are the
21 ones that I think would benefit my district the most.
22 It's just I went through the Arkansas Connections
23 Academy and picked out some of the ones that I
24 thought would be beneficial to our district. But the
25 seat time and mandatory attendance waivers are the

1 ones that I feel would help my district the most.

2 DR. BARTH: Yeah. The other three are ones that
3 we've approved any number of times. I've supported
4 most all of those and I'm very comfortable with
5 those.

6 SUPT. GATTIS: Yeah.

7 DR. BARTH: But the other two are more
8 fundamental.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Additional
10 questions? Yes, Ms. Zook.

11 MS. ZOOK: I think one of the things that I
12 think about, particularly for those districts who
13 come in and there's a student that's in a charter, is
14 in a virtual charter. And sometimes a virtual -- not
15 sometimes, most every time a virtual charter versus a
16 brick-and-mortar is different in that regard. And I
17 think I, like you -- if you -- there might be one
18 teacher who could handle, you know, this,
19 particularly if most of the students were functioning
20 at the same level, everybody was on level in reading
21 and those kind of things, and then others I might
22 need to have 15 in their classroom because they're
23 inexperienced or for whatever reason. But I think
24 that that's one of the things that I think about.
25 And also often there are waivers that have been given

1 but at this point -- and maybe the charter hasn't
2 been reviewed yet and we don't know whether or not
3 that waiver resulted in an increased student
4 achievement. And that in fact is what we, as
5 obviously you -- you represent your district well and
6 it's like I had a picture of it by the time you got
7 through giving your presentation. But student
8 achievement is where -- it's what it's all about.
9 And with RTI and kids below grade level in reading
10 and all those kind of things we have to think about,
11 I think for a teacher to teach and then have to
12 regroup and re-teach and coordinate it's -- and I
13 grew up in a little school district, so, you know, I
14 sympathize and empathize with your position.

15 Do you have any -- currently any citings or
16 probation issues with accreditation?

17 SUPT. GATTIS: No, ma'am, we don't.

18 MS. ZOOK: Terrific. And you're asking for five
19 years, right?

20 SUPT. GATTIS: Yes.

21 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And I, like the others, I
22 really have no problem with the seat time, the
23 graduation, mandatory -- those are things that we're
24 doing a lot with the conversion charter -- the
25 schools that go in for conversion charter and so far,

1 they seem to be working really well to get kids ready
2 for the workforce and for life. Those are the only
3 questions I had, Ms. Reith.

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Zook. Any
5 additional questions or comments from the Board?
6 Then, as I look to the Board, we can take this one of
7 two ways. Traditionally, we've done it by waiver
8 topic. Based on this conversation I'm assuming
9 there'll be no objections for us proceeding that way
10 as we've traditionally done, unless Ms. Davis would
11 like to offer some guidance.

12 MS. DAVIS: I just wanted to clarify. So were
13 you going to withdraw the class size and teaching
14 load waiver?

15 SUPT. GATTIS: I can. If that was a hold-up, I
16 mean, I can withdraw that.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: What we'll probably do is
18 take it by waiver topic --

19 MS. DAVIS: Okay. I wasn't --

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: so -- instead of vote on the
21 package as a whole.

22 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: It seems that there's some
24 different views on the different issues. So unless
25 there's any problem with how he's framed the topics,

1 I was going to use the topics as per the application.

2 MS. DAVIS: No, that was fine. There was just
3 -- he had kind of indicated that he was going to
4 withdraw it but then he wasn't, so I just wanted to
5 make sure that I was clear. The only one that's been
6 withdrawn is the required 38 units. Correct?

7 SUPT. GATTIS: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. Thank you. So
9 with that, I'll entertain -- unless there's any final
10 clarifying questions or comments, I'll --

11 MS. ZOOK: I wonder -- yes, I'd like to ask were
12 these class size increase -- was that in core
13 subjects, any subject, don't know which subject?

14 SUPT. GATTIS: That was just in general for all
15 subjects, you know, that would've been needed. Yes.

16 MS. ZOOK: And typically are your high school
17 students on level in their reading or --

18 SUPT. GATTIS: Yes, typically, they are.

19 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Because I know different
20 districts that's different, so -- okay. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Ms. Davis, did you have any
22 additional comments?

23 MS. DAVIS: I did.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Yes.

25 MS. DAVIS: Just the standard, just so that way

1 we're leaving this one in. The applicant did confirm
2 prior to today that he understands that that does not
3 apply to special education and that if teachers are
4 teaching more than 150 students then they will be
5 compensated per Arkansas law. So those were already
6 taken care of as well.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Davis. Yes,
8 Dr. Barth.

9 DR. BARTH: I was ready for a motion -- with a
10 motion.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Let me -- just final scan, I
12 don't see any additional questions. Then, yes, if
13 your motion could refer to class size and teaching
14 load.

15 DR. BARTH: I move to deny the waiver on class
16 size and teaching load.

17 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Dr.
19 Barth, seconded by Ms. Chambers. All in favor?

20 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed?

22 MS. ZOOK: Aye.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. May the record note
24 Ms. Zook's opposition. Motion carries.

25 I'll entertain a motion now on the waiver topic

1 of planned instruction day.

2 MS. NEWTON: I move to approve the waiver on
3 planned instruction day.

4 MS. ZOOK: Second.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
6 Newton, seconded by Ms. Zook. All in favor?

7 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
9 unanimously.

10 I'll entertain a motion in regards to clock
11 hours, school day hours.

12 DR. BARTH: I move approval.

13 MS. ZOOK: Second.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Dr.
15 Barth, and I heard Ms. Zook as our second. All in
16 favor?

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
19 unanimously.

20 I'll entertain a motion regards to -- well, may
21 the record show, as already been noted, required 38
22 units has been struck.

23 So I will entertain a motion regards to
24 mandatory attendance.

25 MS. CHAMBERS: Move to approve.

1 DR. BARTH: Second.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
3 Chambers, seconded by Dr. Barth. All in favor?

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
6 unanimously.

7 So thank you, Mr. Gattis. I don't think I
8 missed any waiver topics, did I, there?

9 SUPT. GATTIS: No. Thank y'all. Y'all have a
10 Merry Christmas --

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you.

12 SUPT. GATTIS: -- and next couple of days.

13 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And same to you, as well.
14 And please know how much we appreciate good schools
15 wanting to go that extra mile and to work hard for
16 your children. So thank you for taking the
17 initiative today, and I hope we've sent you home with
18 something to work with. Thank you so much.

19 A-8: CONSIDERATION OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVAL OF
20 ARKANSAS PROFESSIONAL PATHWAY TO EDUCATOR LICENSURE (APPEL)
21 PROGRAM HANDBOOK

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: To finalize our morning
23 agenda, we will now be taking up action agenda item
24 A-8, Consideration of the State Board of Education
25 Approval of Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator

1 Licensure (or the APPEL) Program Handbook. Ms. -- is
2 it Luneau -- Luneau; you are recognized.

3 MS. LUNEAU: Joan Luneau, coordinator of
4 educator preparation. And I'm just here for your
5 consideration of approval of our 2017 APPEL handbook
6 and I'm here to answer any questions you may have.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any questions
8 from the Board? Questions or comments? Otherwise,
9 I'll entertain a motion.

10 MS. NEWTON: I move approval of the handbook.

11 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Ms.
13 Newton, seconded by Ms. Chambers. All in favor?

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
16 unanimously. Thank you so much, Ms. Luneau.

17 MS. LUNEAU: Thank you so much.

18 B-1: APPEAL TO PLSB EVIDENTIARY HEARING DETERMINATION - SHERRY
19 LYNN YOUNG, PLSB CASE NO. 16-004

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now moving on to our action
21 agenda item noted as B for our afternoon agenda, B-1,
22 Appeal -- oh, apologize; B-1 has been pulled.

23 B-2: PROGRESS REPORT RELATED TO ADE PROVIDED RECOMMENDATIONS
24 FOR SCHOOLS CLASSIFIED IN ACADEMIC DISTRESS: HELENA-WEST HELENA
25 SCHOOL DISTRICT

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So we'll proceed to B-2,
2 Progress Report Related to the Arkansas Department of
3 Education Provided Recommendations for Schools
4 Classified in Academic Distress, the Helena-West
5 Helena School District. With that, Dr. Wilde. Dr.
6 Wilde, good afternoon.

7 DR. WILDE: Good afternoon.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: You're recognized.

9 DR. WILDE: Richard Wilde, School Improvement
10 Program administrator. And as we have been doing, we
11 are reviewing schools that were classified in
12 academic distress. We have two high schools here
13 today, two districts. They are both unique in
14 concept, that they have recently elected their local
15 school boards. And so that is a celebration in and
16 of it-self, and so we want to definitely highlight
17 that. But the review is on the recommendations that
18 were made earlier in the year and those will be done
19 in the process that we did last month, which is there
20 will be three questions posed to the principal and
21 then three questions posed to the district. You have
22 a copy of the specific questions. And because
23 there's only one school per district what we will --
24 Helena-West Helena, that what we'll do for Central is
25 Mr. Simpson has the questions so we'll ask him to

1 read the questions and then address the response to
2 the Board. And then Mr. Hoy will come forth for the
3 district to respond to the three district questions.
4 And for the most part that will give you an overview
5 of where they're at in terms of the academic distress
6 recommendations. Now I do want to say Mr. Hoy --
7 okay -- that I am the time-keeper but we all know Mr.
8 Hoy, so I want to disavow any responsibility for him
9 staying on script before we start the process. So,
10 Mr. Simpson, would you please come forth?

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I guess that's what you get
12 for having worked for the Department and then going
13 back to your district. Before proceeding, Dr. Wilde,
14 just as a point of order, I do think I need to swear
15 in everybody, correct, that isn't an attorney and
16 planning to offer testimony on this. So if anyone
17 could rise from the Helena-West Helena district that
18 does plan to offer testimony so that I may swear you
19 in. And, Mr. Hoy, I almost feel like I need to ask
20 you to raise both hands after that comment made. Do
21 you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about
22 to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and
23 nothing but the truth?

24 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. Thank you so

1 much. And if you could kindly state your name and
2 title for our court reporter prior to offering
3 testimony we would appreciate it.

4 MR. SIMPSON: Good afternoon. My name is Ernest
5 Simpson, the Third; I'm the high school principal at
6 Central High School in Helena-West Helena School
7 District. Like Dr. Wilde mentioned earlier, I was
8 presented three questions to respond to and I've
9 submitted a report to answer those questions.

10 Question Number One states: What steps has the
11 leadership team taken to create a clear academic
12 focus that will lead your school to the removal from
13 academic distress? What were your successes and/or
14 challenges, if any, in attaining stakeholder buy-in
15 for this focus?

16 In response to that question, our leadership
17 team has centered our focus around three different
18 areas. Those areas include teacher development,
19 curriculum development, and Response to Intervention.

20 First of all, with teacher development our
21 teachers are participating in ongoing professional
22 development in the areas of student engagement,
23 classroom management, and instructional strategies,
24 and they also try and understand how to engage
25 students in accountable talk. New teachers are

1 provided ongoing support from consultants, consisting
2 of classroom walk-thru's, modeling lessons, and
3 providing instructional feedback. Wednesday has been
4 the day that we designated that each -- well, that
5 all of our teachers participate in collaboration. On
6 first and third Wednesdays our department heads
7 conduct department meetings. On second and fourth
8 Wednesdays our instructional facilitators and our
9 school improvement specialist conduct PLCs. In those
10 PLCs they collaborate on lesson planning, they
11 analyze data, and they discuss different
12 instructional strategies that are helpful in
13 improving student achievement. Teachers have
14 developed their professional growth plans and we all
15 -- teachers are also utilizing the ArkansasIDEAS and
16 BloomBoard as an additional source of professional
17 development. Administrators utilize the Test
18 Evaluation System to conduct the CWTs, as well as the
19 observation. And also our instructional facilitators
20 are conducting daily CWTs and instructional support
21 to teachers.

22 As far as curriculum development, we've had new
23 curriculum documents created by our consultant and --
24 where they're infusing new standards with new
25 resources. A survey was administered to the teachers

1 so that they would have the opportunity to provide
2 input as far as pacing and mapping. Each Thursday
3 after school we hold what we call Curriculum
4 Thursdays where teachers -- and it's not mandatory
5 but it's voluntary and we've had a very good response
6 from our teachers in participating in those
7 Curriculum Thursday where they get the opportunity to
8 collaborate on these new curriculum documents and
9 develop lesson plans and analyze data as well.

10 Finally, our Response to Intervention, when we
11 looked at our data we discovered deficiencies in math
12 and reading. Therefore, it was imperative that we
13 develop our Response to Intervention team. We
14 developed a team and we've identified the students
15 for Tier 2 and Tier 3. Second period, we've -- I've
16 -- in our master schedule we've had a teacher
17 scheduled during our second period of the day to
18 conduct pullouts for Tier 2 interventions. Also,
19 with our Response to Intervention, we've recently
20 started a course study through ArkansasIDEAS on
21 Response to Intervention. It's a 13-hour course
22 study that our teachers are participating in and by
23 mid-February we plan to report out on the different
24 modules of that course. Each teacher will -- each
25 group of teachers will report out on those modules so

1 that we can get a full understanding of what the
2 Response to Intervention process really consists of.

3 As far as challenges, you know, we've had, first
4 of all, successes. We've been very successful in
5 getting teachers to have input in this process,
6 especially with the curriculum development. Teachers
7 are being very receptive to, you know, instructional
8 facilitators providing support to them, consultants
9 providing support to them. But if there is any
10 challenge that I might say is -- I guess it's a
11 challenge to just about anything you do is finding
12 the time to kind of do it all as far as from an
13 administrative standpoint, finding the time to get in
14 the classrooms as much as I need to, and my assistant
15 principal, and especially with a staff that is --
16 well, about half of our instructional staff is
17 considered a novice teacher with three or less years
18 of experience. And so finding time to conduct those
19 many observations that we have to is a bit
20 challenging at times.

21 Question Number Two: What steps has the
22 leadership team taken to improve the culture of the
23 school? What successes and/or challenges have you
24 had in attaining an improved culture?

25 As far as steps to improve the culture, and I'll

1 say the climate as well, we made a number of, you
2 know, steps to do implement several programs that I
3 guess we could consider as improving the culture of
4 the school. First of all, we have a parent
5 representative on our district ACSIP team and this
6 parent is involved in the decision-making in all
7 school improvement activities. We have a parent
8 facilitator as a part of our faculty that partners
9 with and supports the work of the school PTO, the
10 leadership team, and community groups, and parent
11 advisory council. The parent facilitator coordinates
12 all parent events on the campus, and we have several,
13 including our open house, parent/teacher conferences,
14 our literacy night, math night, and our Thankful for
15 Education program. As I mentioned earlier about our
16 PTO, it's very active on campus as a fundraising
17 group and they also have sponsored various activities
18 and projects on campus, including our school yearbook
19 and our Parent Center. The PTO recently, as you all
20 know, as you mentioned earlier, we had recently
21 elected our new school board. Our PTO organized a
22 school board forum for the candidates and it was well
23 received by the public. A number of the candidates
24 are parents, but it was well received by the public
25 and had a good turnout and offered good results and

1 we received a lot of positive feedback from that
2 forum, and it was all conducted by parents and
3 teachers working together in our school.

4 We implemented a few programs, a couple of ideas
5 that we have, and I've been in communication with our
6 law enforcement about Coffee for Cops where we're
7 just going to have sort of a resource center for our
8 law enforcement officials so that they can build
9 rapport with students and provide a sense of security
10 on campus and try to deter any misbehavior that we
11 might experience. And I've been in communication
12 with our law enforcement leadership and several
13 members of our police department and they feel
14 welcome on our campus and they're very excited about
15 that coming up.

16 I'm in the process of setting up a stakeholder's
17 committee and this is something else that's
18 spearheaded by our PTO; a stakeholder committee
19 consisting of business owners, former alumni,
20 parents, and politicians -- we want to invite them as
21 well -- just to sit down and chat with them and let
22 them know what's going on with the school and seek
23 their input on things that will improve the school
24 culture and/or the school reputation, as well as the
25 community's reputation.

1 A couple of things that I'm very proud of on our
2 campus is our student participation in community
3 activities. Our EAST lab has developed several
4 projects that -- our EAST lab students have developed
5 several projects that are community-based, including
6 a drug-free week on campus. They conducted a
7 Veteran's Day program on our campus where they
8 saluted the veterans in our community and presented
9 them with certificates, and our students performed
10 and some of our staff. And one of our teachers, who
11 is an active military personnel, he was our guest
12 speaker at that program, and it was all conducted by
13 our students. They also partnered with the
14 University of Arkansas Medical Science East and --
15 well, just last week, on December 1st. It was
16 HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and they partnered with them
17 to assist with their programs at UAMS East. And
18 upcoming -- and this is another one that I'm excited
19 about -- we have -- and this is a project of a young
20 lady that's a 10th grade student, a women's
21 empowerment program that she's conducting. She's
22 reached out to some women to come in and speak to our
23 girls on campus to discuss issues that affect women
24 as far as dating, domestic violence, and things of
25 that nature, and she's put in a lot of hard work in

1 developing that program. We've got a -- I think
2 she's an artist -- no, an author coming in to speak
3 on those matters. I think she's out of Jonesboro.
4 She's originally from Helena but she now resides in
5 Jonesboro, and she's coming in to speak on those
6 issues that affect women, and we're going to have
7 this conference in our gym and all of the female
8 students will be there and female faculty, as well.

9 Also, our AVID class has been active partners
10 with our Humane Society of the Delta. They
11 occasionally visit the animal shelter there and they,
12 you know, clean the animals and their environment and
13 assist in other ways that they can. And they're
14 raising funds for the shelter by creating arts and
15 crafts and selling them.

16 All right. And the final question was: What
17 steps has the leadership team taken to develop a
18 culture of continuous improvement?

19 I think our continuous improvement has to be
20 data-driven and what we're trying to focus on doing
21 is making sure that we're analyzing data properly and
22 making decisions that -- making decisions based on
23 the data. Each teacher is going to be required to
24 have a data notebook that's going to consist of STAR
25 reading and STAR math data, pre- and post-test data,

1 and ACT Aspire, interim test data per quarter. We're
2 going to analyze the data found in the 45-day plan.
3 The teachers will analyze data along with the school
4 improvement specialist every second and fourth
5 Wednesday to determine the needs of the students and
6 teaching strategies needed to help students meet
7 mastery. And we've developed a data analysis
8 template for teachers to analyze the test data and
9 trends. And, you know, hopefully with these things
10 in place we can soon come out of academic distress.
11 We're working hard. I have a staff that's very
12 energetic and hard-working and they understand what's
13 up against us. And so hopefully we can see good
14 results in our next testing assessment.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr.
16 Simpson.

17 And with that, I believe now is it the district?
18 Is that correct, Dr. Wilde, that will speak?

19 DR. WILDE: Yes. I think our pattern has been
20 to hold the questions until --

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Until the very end.
22 Correct.

23 Welcome back, Mr. Hoy.

24 SUPT. HOY: Thank you. And good afternoon,
25 everyone. I will try to be brief. Yes, I will.

1 Before I start, let me do say this: the school
2 improvement efforts that we're putting in place at
3 Central High School cannot be limited to Central High
4 School. We realized going in that if Central High
5 School had a problem there was probably issued also
6 in the other schools that feed into Central High
7 School. So most of what I talk with you about this
8 morning -- well, this afternoon will be something
9 that you can say times three, because we have three
10 different school systems.

11 So let me start with the first question. The
12 first question is: What are the key actions in the
13 professional development plan for the principal?

14 The principal and I, we sat down and we
15 discussed this first year and then we discussed it
16 more second year. We discussed whether the push
17 would be to go and work on the advanced degrees,
18 whether to go and work on Leadership Academy and go
19 work on Quest. And while there's benefits to each of
20 those, with the limits that he has on his time one of
21 the things he decided is since the Quest meetings
22 would be at the co-op, which is right up the street
23 for us, is that would be the route he would take on
24 it at this particular time. That's not the only
25 piece that we do though. As you know, the State

1 developed a LEADS assessment document. Mr. Simpson
2 and I, we talk about that document in terms of how he
3 goes about the business of trying to get up from --
4 get to higher levels of that particular document.
5 Also what we do is we work on insight reports and
6 that is a little bit more detailed and strategic. In
7 terms of -- the insight reports are new to us; it
8 ties into the Test Evaluation System. That's the
9 evaluation system for teachers. We've adopted that
10 and what we have is we have Dr. Diann Gathright
11 coming into our district on a pretty regular basis to
12 kind of explain what it means, how to read the
13 reports, how to interpret it. We are still working
14 on some nuances with that in terms of how the
15 district can better analyze those results. But in
16 terms of principals' use of it, that I think is an
17 important piece of their professional development.

18 The other thing that we do -- and I don't know,
19 there's no program name for this, but we do it from
20 time to time -- have philosophical discussions on
21 approaches to leadership at a school. And I think I
22 do that more with the high school principal than the
23 other principal because he's been in place a lesser
24 amount of time than the other principals. Their
25 philosophies are well entrenched; they've been --

1 they've thought about what they're trying to achieve.
2 My thinking with the high school principal is to have
3 these discussions. He's a long-term educator; he's
4 been in the business 18, 19 years, but this is just
5 his second year as high school principal. So we do
6 talk about philosophical concepts in terms of what
7 we're trying to accomplish as a school.

8 In terms of the second question: What is the
9 district doing to identify effective teachers and
10 then maintain these teachers?

11 So let me start off with the most controversial
12 thing we're doing in terms of trying to retain
13 teachers. The most controversial thing is the
14 waivers we asked for last year. And I will tell you
15 that's controversial, although my thinking on it is
16 it shouldn't be as controversial as many people
17 think. Here's the reason why: the philosophy is
18 based on the fact that you take high -- not high
19 school -- you take college graduates with degrees and
20 then you look to see if they have a subsequent amount
21 of credit hours in the courses in which you want them
22 to teach. And if they are, then you bring them in,
23 much like Teach for America, and then you offer them
24 professional development, much like Teach for
25 America. I would point out that in the initial

1 beginnings there were many critics of Teach for
2 America, but that program seems to have taken off and
3 done quite well in our state, so -- and it's one of
4 those things we're proud of. We're hoping this
5 waiver process will also be something we're proud of
6 because what we're doing with those teachers -- we
7 didn't just bring them in and put them in the
8 classroom and say, "Go to work." We also ramped up
9 our teacher -- new teacher orientation piece and what
10 we've got is we've gotten an education consultant;
11 Elbow to Elbow is the one we're using. They meet
12 with those teachers in groups on a regular basis.
13 They met with them at the beginning of the year; they
14 meet with them during the year. But also we changed
15 the philosophical approach on how we do our
16 facilitator specialist. At one point our push was
17 content area specialist, a literary specialist, math
18 specialist. But the thinking is at the secondary
19 school most people at the secondary school have a
20 good content knowledge because that's the degree they
21 chose; that's the area they pursued. What we have
22 switched over to is instructional facilitators
23 because we need to work on instruction and therefore,
24 that will impact more than just literacy and math; it
25 will impact all content areas, and we really need to

1 push and help in all content areas.

2 In terms of keeping them, what we've also had is
3 we've had help from ADE. And we understand at some
4 point waivers may go away. Unlike some of the
5 districts that have come before you asking, we put
6 before you that you can review us every year and if
7 we're not doing the right thing we put before you
8 that you have the right to take them away from us
9 every year. We're trying to make certain we do the
10 right thing so you don't exercise that option. But
11 with that said, we've had help from the Arkansas
12 Department of Education. They have been down to
13 Helena-West Helena School District and they have
14 shared with those teachers on waivers how they can go
15 about getting off the waivers and getting their
16 license through other means. Because there are
17 several means available to them and several routes
18 available to them, and those teachers seem to have
19 been given more credibility when they go the
20 alternate routes. We have been working with them for
21 test and insight reports in terms of trying to figure
22 out what the weaknesses and strengths are so we can
23 address those. We also are trying to put in some
24 incentives. We had a couple of things dealing with
25 attendance. We've got to go back and work on those

1 again for this year. But we're looking at and
2 talking with Dr. Wilde; he kind of clued us in on
3 some things we might be able to do to incentivize
4 with NSL dollars. Since we haven't put it in place
5 yet, I don't want to go out on a limb and say it's
6 something we're going to do; I just know it's
7 something we're working on trying to make certain we
8 incentivize teachers.

9 But one of the things I think that will help us
10 to retain teachers -- I'm not sure yet, but the
11 things we've done to change culture. I know Mr.
12 Simpson mentioned a couple. I'll tell you a big
13 piece for me at Central High School and that was
14 moving our alternative learning environment off the
15 high school campus. I know a number of you came to
16 our district some year or so ago and you viewed a lot
17 of the things we had, and one of the things we had
18 was an alternative learning environment on campus.
19 It appeared to me, and I think the community would
20 agree to it, much of the thought of a negative
21 culture on our campus came from the fact that the
22 alternative school students would sometimes leave the
23 alternative school room, either going to the bathroom
24 or whatever, and they would create some things, some
25 culture and order issues that made it -- were a

1 negative reflection on the entire school and
2 therefore, an entire -- a negative reflection on the
3 entire district. So we've moved them off campus.
4 But we haven't just moved them off campus; we've also
5 adopted a philosophy that we're not going to expel
6 them anymore. So at this particular point I will
7 tell you at one point, if you go back and look at the
8 state report cards, you will see that there were a
9 tremendous number of expulsions in our district.
10 This year, we're at zero and holding. So we think
11 improving the culture will also help keep teachers
12 wanting to stay with us for a longer amount of time.
13 We're also thinking in terms of the waivers. If
14 these teachers stay to the point that they become
15 credentialed, most of them are local. Now the
16 wonderful thing about Teach for America is they bring
17 teachers with high levels of skill, already well-
18 trained. The thing that has been perceived as a
19 negative -- and it has not been that negative in
20 Helena-West Helena School District -- is the teachers
21 teach for two or three years and leave because
22 they're from somewhere else, a lot of them. The
23 teachers that were recruited on waivers are mostly
24 local and the hope is that they will stay and they
25 will continue to get good. Because I didn't get good

1 until -- let's see -- third, fourth, fifth -- it took
2 awhile. Before you become a good teacher it takes
3 awhile.

4 Okay. Last question: What actions is the
5 district taking to ensure curriculum is aligned
6 (written, taught, assessed)?

7 I have created more headaches on this one, I
8 think, than most others. Since my arrival in the
9 district I had two overarching important questions
10 that I think would solve the whole academic distress
11 issue. Question number one: are we teaching the
12 right stuff? Question number two: are the kids
13 getting it? That's been my song. That's been my
14 question. And after about a year of chasing down
15 curriculum development and trying -- I said -- and I
16 brought it before this board, "We're going to take a
17 controversial approach and we're going to utilize the
18 textbook as the base." Now we have moved up from
19 that approach. I want you to understand that.

20 Because I want you to understand we don't ever intend
21 for a textbook to be a final curriculum, but I don't
22 think it's right in a small district to ask teachers
23 to take on the additional hats. We are not a large
24 district; we don't have a number of experts in the
25 central office to do certain amounts of things. But

1 we do have instructional materials that we adopt each
2 year. The thinking is teach those instructional
3 materials and then assess what you taught and then
4 adjust the teaching based on your test results.
5 Those are the three big pieces in terms of
6 curriculum: teach it, assess it, adjust it. So
7 that's the role we're taking now. The Thursdays that
8 Mr. Simpson talked about, we discussed it last year
9 in terms of making certain that when we started this
10 path we would set aside a time that we give teachers
11 to just look at what we taught, how the assessment
12 went, did the students get it, were there some areas
13 we missed, do we need to adopt some supplementary
14 materials -- because now when you adopt supplementary
15 materials it's to address what you were teaching and
16 make it better. So eventually the idea is the
17 curriculum becomes your own, but it gives us a
18 starting place.

19 So I will tell you it's been a struggle getting
20 that philosophical approach across, but we have now
21 pushed it for at least a couple of years. The
22 textbooks we adopted last year were science books,
23 and I will tell you our first interim assessment on
24 ACT our science test results seem right now to be
25 ahead of the trend in terms of where we were last

1 year on ACT Aspire. English seems to be trending
2 that way as well. We're hoping for good -- for a
3 good cumulative summative score on ACT when we get
4 it. We're hoping that with the numbers we have in
5 the concordance -- maybe we get that 1% extra point
6 and come out of academic distress this time, but if
7 not we certainly look forward to coming out of it in
8 the very near future.

9 We'll take questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Mr. Hoy. And
11 thank you, Mr. Simpson. Dr. Wilde, I don't know if
12 you have some additional comments before opening it
13 up to the Board?

14 DR. WILDE: Yes. It's clear that the efforts of
15 the district leadership and the Office of Intensive
16 Support have substantially improved the fiscal
17 stability of the district. I think we all celebrate
18 the return of the district to local control and I
19 don't really want to distract from that today. I do
20 want to make note that the district receives state
21 resources specifically to educate students to state
22 proficiency levels. And now that the district
23 clearly has adequate fiscal management systems in
24 place the attention should and is turning to a focus
25 on student outcomes. One of the documents in your

1 packet shows the percent of ready students by grade
2 level, by math and ELA. As you can see, Central High
3 School has a substantial decline from 8th grade to
4 9th and 10th and they consistently struggle with ELA.
5 They have several challenges that need highly refined
6 systems to address their challenges so that they can
7 make a meaningful difference.

8 In the report submitted by the School
9 Improvement Unit, we noted a number of areas that ADE
10 could assist with refinement of the systems. To this
11 end, the Commissioner has authorized a review of the
12 school improvement practices as related to the
13 recommendations that were adopted by the State Board.
14 The charge of the Commissioner is that the new local
15 board be briefed on the recommendations, the
16 challenges, the current state of implementation of
17 the systems needed for school improvement,
18 suggestions where the school board might want to
19 assist the district leadership in focusing, as well
20 as the role of the school board in supporting school
21 improvement.

22 With this in mind, the School Improvement Unit
23 recommends that Central High School be scheduled to
24 give a progress report to the standing committee for
25 academic distress in June. That would give the local

1 board time to study the challenges and to have a plan
2 of action with the district leadership going into
3 next school year.

4 So that would conclude my remarks. And we have
5 the district personnel here and we have the specific
6 school improvement specialists that work with the
7 district here, so if there are any questions.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Dr.
9 Wilde.

10 With that, we'll now open it up to the Board for
11 questions or comments. Yes, Ms. Zook.

12 MS. ZOOK: Okay. With regard -- let's start
13 with Mr. Hoy. I appreciate both you and Mr. Simpson
14 and how well and concise that you did your
15 presentation.

16 SUPT. HOY: Thank you.

17 MS. ZOOK: I loved visiting your school.

18 SUPT. HOY: Thank you.

19 MS. ZOOK: Met lots of exciting and excited
20 students and staff members. I applaud the efforts
21 you made in moving the ALE because, you know, it just
22 takes some little ripple among students that age. I
23 think one of the things that I'm concerned about, and
24 I know you are as well, is the student attendance,
25 because you can't learn if you're not there, and then

1 the teacher feels responsible for re-teaching to
2 those students, which, you know, it just becomes a
3 vicious cycle. And I think, based on what Mr.
4 Simpson said, getting more and more parents involved
5 -- you had a very good participation in your vote for
6 school board, so more and more of the community is
7 involved, so hopefully that will improve that.

8 I think my main concern is the students who are
9 at the high school level who come to you three grade
10 levels behind and then we test them on their 9th and
11 10th grade algebra and biology and geometry or the
12 integrated approach to that. And those subjects are
13 -- can be difficult enough if you can read on grade
14 level. So I wonder if within the waivers that you
15 were given by the Board, this State Board, if there
16 is opportunity there to really zero in on reading and
17 really zero in on the math calculation skills needed
18 before you take the math test. You know, I don't
19 know if it would depend on the individual student,
20 which subject, which elective, which whatever, but we
21 all know that without that ability to read on level
22 that their chances are greatly diminished beyond you.
23 So one thing I'd like for you to look at as a
24 district -- and I know you were saying you understand
25 this is not a high school problem; this is a K-

1 through problem. So thinking in terms of, you know,
2 can we do reading with a 4th and 5th grade social
3 studies book, can we do -- find out what they're
4 interested in, if it's automotive, if it's athletics
5 or whatever, find something that those -- I find that
6 when I worked with teaching adults, like older
7 adults, how to read that if I'd find out what their
8 real passion and interest was then their ability to
9 learn to read was sort of speeded up along with the
10 basics of that. So I don't recall the specifics,
11 because I know you got a blanket approval on waivers,
12 but if any of those fit in there and you all feel
13 that that is appropriate for your students then I
14 would encourage you to noodle that around in your
15 meetings with your parents, your new board, with your
16 administrators and teachers, and maybe even a couple
17 of student representatives, because that I think will
18 singularly help you get that one or two or three
19 points so you can come out of academic distress as
20 measured on those tests. So maybe that was not a
21 question but just a conversation between the two of
22 us. But I think based on everything I looked at --
23 and it was a good report and well presented, but that
24 thing about getting the students there and then
25 helping them -- if I was constantly going to a place

1 every day where I was frustrated and it seemed like
2 everybody knew how to ride a pony and I couldn't even
3 get on the saddle, then I think that that would not
4 encourage me to want to go there every day. So if we
5 can focus on that reading part and the math
6 calculation then I think that would be helpful. And
7 you're grinning, so you probably already have this
8 figured out; right?

9 SUPT. HOY: I'm ready to respond.

10 MS. ZOOK: All right.

11 SUPT. HOY: Okay. So I don't know if there was
12 a question; there were several things you touched
13 upon and I was prepared to touch them. The first
14 thing you touched on was student attendance. Now I
15 agree that's an area of concern. When I looked at
16 the report cards three years ago, and the report card
17 data that's already out there, we were at 94.0%,
18 which was only 1% behind the state average. In the
19 most recent data, we were around 91% and the state
20 has maintained the same. So we have gone down while
21 the state -- we've gone down; the state has
22 maintained the stability. What I understood in
23 talking -- listening to some of the parents, when we
24 have conversations about their children that have
25 missed a number of days, is, "I didn't know." And

1 see, that's a problem for us because we have students
2 that change telephone numbers, change addresses,
3 things like that. One of the things I noted when I
4 lived here in the Little Rock area is that a number
5 of the schools have these calling systems that every
6 time a child is missing, a telephone call is made.
7 We didn't have that. I sent the order off about a
8 week ago. And the reason I sent the order off is
9 because -- a week ago is I'm really hesitant to bring
10 new things in because every time you bring in a new
11 piece somebody has got to learn how to work with it.
12 Now this particular vendor has told me, "Mr. Hoy, all
13 you do is load it up, sync it, and it will do the
14 rest of that stuff automatically." Now I don't know
15 if it was a money-back guarantee but it didn't cost
16 much. So my thinking is we'll have that in place
17 probably around January and it will eliminate that "I
18 didn't know" thing. We want parents to know every
19 time a child is absent from class; we want to
20 eliminate that excuse.

21 Now in terms of students arriving behind and
22 being behind, let me address that one, especially in
23 the area of reading. And I will say this because I'm
24 omitting math, and I will tell you why. In a
25 presentation I did before the Rotary Club a couple of

1 weeks ago, one of the things I did is I took those
2 ACT sample questions that's on the website and I took
3 the 3rd, 4th, 5th grade level questions and I passed
4 them out to them, and I said -- not all of them; I
5 just took volunteers and about five of them
6 volunteered -- to look at the questions. And one
7 thing I wanted them to note is that the math problems
8 on that ACT interim assessment -- and I didn't tell
9 them what grade level -- is not two numbers you add
10 together. There were problems that would require
11 reading, though, analysis, and then structure in
12 terms of how you defend your answer. I wanted them
13 to see that. Now with that being said, let me talk
14 about reading, because reading is how you get there.
15 One of the things that we have done in recent times
16 is we've adopted the dyslexia program that the State
17 -- the law came out and pushed. I'm really hesitant
18 with the laws tell us how to fix things; however, I
19 will note that after a year of studying that program
20 -- we started late. We started late; we started the
21 second semester. But at the end of the second
22 semester, when we looked at the pre- and post- in
23 terms of grade level equivalents, as a district we
24 went up 1.17 grade level equivalents in one semester.
25 At Central High School we went up more than three

1 grade level equivalents in one semester. The
2 thinking is that that program has really been
3 effective for us. I'm looking forward to how we do
4 this year, at the end of the year, once we implement
5 it for a full year. So I think we addressed the
6 reading; we addressed the math, science, social
7 studies, the whole gamut. I'm a math person, so it's
8 hard for me to say that.

9 In terms of waivers, I will tell you what I have
10 said to the advisory board and what I will continue
11 to say is it is my intention to use them only where
12 we need them. Right now, we've got programs in place
13 to address the academic needs of students. We have
14 to get -- we have to get a -- more of a change in
15 philosophy on our students' behalf. When Mark White
16 was here he sent out an email once that said -- that
17 talked about education of students, and one of the
18 things it talks about is not just intelligence but
19 also virtue as being a mandate for public education.
20 With that being said, I think we focus so much on the
21 intelligence end we have not gone to the virtue end
22 in terms of hard work, commitment, doing the right
23 thing, and we've got to figure out how to get that
24 instilled in our students. And that's our next big
25 push, I think, at least I would like for it to be.

1 The board is going to be new. On Monday we've got
2 three new members. But the ones we have, they
3 understood that concept and they understood it when
4 we put our mission in place two years ago. So in
5 terms of utilizing waivers, we will utilize them when
6 we need them based on study. I don't like jumping on
7 bandwagons because people are saying, "Here goes the
8 next big thing." I like to take the time to study
9 it, think about it, put it in front of our district
10 improvement team, which, by the way, does have a
11 student on it and has had a student on it since its
12 inception when we started two-and-a-half years ago,
13 and we'll continue to have one on there. So the
14 student input is there. At the last school
15 improvement meeting, district improvement meeting, I
16 encouraged her to go back and talk with the other
17 students because I want her opinion on things that
18 matter to them. So I include them, Mr. Simpson
19 includes them in terms of the thought, and also in
20 terms of just every day walking around.

21 I don't know if I missed anything on that in
22 terms of responding to your queries, but the thing is
23 it's not just about "we've got a waiver, use it;"
24 it's about what do we need to do to impact student
25 learning so there's no excuse for them not learning.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Mr. Hoy. Ms.
2 Newton.

3 MS. NEWTON: I just had one question. In your
4 high school I saw that you had a lot of turnover in
5 your high school teachers this past year. How many
6 of them were in the core areas of ELA and math? Were
7 there a lot of those or were they from other places
8 or --

9 SUPT. HOY: Okay. So I'm going to let Mr.
10 Simpson address that --

11 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

12 SUPT. HOY: -- specific to the high school --

13 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

14 SUPT. HOY: -- because he may have those
15 numbers. But let me say this to you: the turnover
16 issue has been a problem in our district since I've
17 been there. There may have been a problem before I
18 arrived; I don't know. But one of the things I'm
19 hoping for with the waivers is this: local people
20 with degrees that we can recruit to help us; we give
21 them the skills in terms of professional development.
22 They're understanding that they're not going to get
23 good in year one or year two; usually, it's year
24 three and four where you start to say, "I got it."
25 With that being said, I'm hoping that we start to

1 stabilize that because I will tell you we didn't even
2 want to use that waiver. What happened to us was
3 this: "Okay, Ms. English," -- our HR person -- "what
4 we're going to do is we're going to look for fully
5 credentialed, fully certified teachers and that's
6 what we're going to look for. And if we get to a
7 point at this particular date where we don't have
8 them, then we will start to look for teachers on the
9 waiver. She obeyed. She was obedient. Ms. English
10 is doing a great job for me. The problem is, is
11 while we were waiting till that date other schools
12 around us that had the waivers were hiring those
13 teachers and then we were struggling just to find
14 those on the waivers, and still didn't get all the
15 positions filled. I think we're short an art person
16 right now.

17 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. The reason I ask, I had went
18 to a conference a week or so back and one of the
19 ladies that was there was in a successful turnaround
20 school and she said where they got the most bang for
21 their buck was focusing on people, not programs. And
22 so --

23 SUPT. HOY: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. NEWTON: And that's what you've been saying.
25 You know, just make sure if you're getting that high

1 turnover in those ELA and math that, you know, you
2 give them whatever support that they need, whether
3 it's how to teach or is it needing materials for --
4 or resources; you know, whatever it is that those
5 teachers are coming in those core areas make sure
6 they are supported. Because, you know, that was one
7 thing she said; you know, that's where her biggest
8 bang for her buck came from is focusing on those
9 people.

10 SUPT. HOY: Okay. So Mr. Simpson may be able to
11 give you the numbers. But what I generally say to my
12 principals, and used to say to teachers when I wasn't
13 a superintendent, "What do you need so that you can
14 guarantee absolute success of every student, every
15 student making an A, every student having grade
16 content knowledge, every student having a
17 scholarship? What do you need so there's no excuse
18 and let's figure out how to try to get it." The
19 answers that I got were interesting. But, Mr.
20 Simpson, you may have the numbers in terms of the
21 content area teachers.

22 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

23 MR. SIMPSON: Specifically, you asked for
24 English and math?

25 MS. NEWTON: Uh-huh.

1 MR. SIMPSON: In the English department we lost
2 four teachers last year and we were able to replace
3 them with three teachers, and one of those teachers
4 being on a waiver. In the math department we lost
5 four teachers as well and we were able to replace
6 them with three teachers, one being on a waiver.

7 MS. NEWTON: I just encourage you to make sure
8 you support those, you know, instructional needs,
9 content needs, whatever they might need, you know, to
10 -- because the more they're supported the better your
11 students are going to be.

12 MR. SIMPSON: Yes, ma'am. And on a daily basis
13 we provide support to those teachers, especially the
14 ones on waivers. Again, as I mentioned earlier, the
15 instructional facilitators, the school improvement
16 specialist, they're making daily walk-thru's.
17 Instructional facilitators are modeling lessons, and,
18 you know, we're providing the support that they need
19 as far as resources or -- you know -- and making time
20 to plan lessons with them, making time to analyze the
21 data with them so that they can understand what's
22 needed for them to be productive in the classroom.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Thank you. Thank
24 you. Yes, Mr. Black.

25 MR. BLACK: I'm glad that everything is going

1 well for you guys and you're making progress. I'm a
2 little curious about your school board. In the past
3 the Helena School District has focused on trying to
4 run the school district versus managing the people in
5 the school district. And I just -- where are you
6 headed with that?

7 SUPT. HOY: We have one of the newly-elected
8 school board members here that was also on the
9 advisory board. I will let him speak to that.
10 Before I do, I want to offer this disclaimer: we did
11 not say everything was going well, Mr. Black.

12 MR. BAGLEY: Well, Mr. Black, it's always good
13 to be given the chance to answer tough questions and
14 it seems like I've gotten the toughest one of all
15 today. Four members of the advisory board, which I
16 think from a legal standpoint stays in effect until
17 we go through the training on Saturday, were elected
18 to the school board. So a majority of the school
19 board that will be taking office and banging the
20 gavel in on Monday have been here for a good period
21 of time, two of us for three-and-a-half years as
22 original appointees, and have gone through all the
23 training. The rest of -- all but one member of the
24 elected board is down the street at the ASBA
25 conference getting training as we speak. We are

1 determined, as I think you could tell from the
2 articles in the Democrat-Gazette, to move forward in
3 a way that I think that -- they liked that comment I
4 have about "we're not going to allow the Scarlet F of
5 fiscal distress to be affixed upon our forehead ever
6 again." But we mean it. I think you're going to see
7 -- since the majority of the advisory board was
8 elected, you're going to see some stability; you're
9 not going to see some of the things that you were
10 accustomed to seeing in the past; and I think y'all
11 are going to be very proud of the work that we've
12 done. We are focused on making the Helena-West
13 Helena School District not just off the distress list
14 but great. We want to win at everything. Every time
15 we lose at something we get frustrated. But I think
16 -- and, of course, you've spent a lot of time in
17 Helena as well. You're going to be very pleased at
18 the way things are going moving forward. And I'll
19 entertain any questions on that front that you have,
20 other than I would like not to have to discuss a
21 personnel matter in public.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Okay. That was
23 Mr. Black's question. Additional questions or
24 comments from the Board? No? Then, otherwise, thank
25 you so much to the district.

1 MR. BAGLEY: Yeah. And I just would like to add
2 that we're very pleased with the hard work that Mr.
3 Hoy and Mr. Simpson have been doing. I've been there
4 and I've seen a major culture change at that high
5 school. Mr. Simpson has only been here -- this is
6 his second year, but I can tell you it's been a 180
7 in terms of environment down at the high school. And
8 they're all working very hard. And he mentioned the
9 novice teachers as one of our weaknesses. I would
10 also like to say it's one of our greatest strengths.
11 We've brought in some new energy; we've got some
12 young people that are excited about the work that
13 they are doing. And those waivers have been a god-
14 send because that allowed us to bring in some of
15 those young people and we needed that infusion of new
16 blood and new energy, and they're doing some really
17 great things down there. So we can't say enough
18 about the good work that we're doing and we look
19 forward to working with Mr. Hoy going forward.

20 MS. ZOOK: Madam Chairman, I move that we accept
21 the report as presented.

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And if I could add just one
23 addendum there, Dr. Wilde, would it be helpful for us
24 to make reference -- I know in past motions to these
25 -- about when they'll go to the standing committee?

1 I know you made a recommendation to that regard.

2 DR. WILDE: I did. And it has been typical of
3 us to establish a date before the meeting was over.

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Fantastic. So I apologize
5 for the interruption, Ms. Zook.

6 MS. ZOOK: That's fine.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: If you might be able to --
8 since it is both your committee and your motion, if
9 you might be able to kind of make a reference to that
10 we sure would appreciate it.

11 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I move that we accept the item
12 as presented and that we ask them to come back in
13 June? And hopefully we'll have some test results by
14 then, but it won't be their fault if we don't. Also,
15 if they'll let us know if there's -- if ADE is being
16 helpful or what more help they need.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Ms. Zook.

18 MR. BLACK: I second.

19 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. So motion made by Ms.
20 Zook, seconded by Mr. Black. All in favor?

21 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
23 unanimously.

24 And so to the Helena-West Helena School
25 District, once again, congratulations on return to

1 local control. And thank you so much for everything
2 that you've done to get to this point but obviously
3 for both what you've shared today and your vision
4 moving forward. We look forward to hearing from you
5 in June. And we do hope that you take seriously Dr.
6 Wilde's recommendations and also offer of assistance,
7 especially in regards to the slow progress on
8 academics. We hope to see that progress quicker, and
9 it sounds like y'all have some really good plans and
10 visions to get there. We wish you the best of luck
11 with that, but know that that was something we'll be
12 looking carefully at in June when we see you again.

13 With that, safe travels back to the Delta and
14 thank you so much for your time this afternoon.

15 SUPT. HOY: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: We are going to take a
17 break. Yes, I saw the time-out and I promised my
18 colleagues -- I was very cognizant. So we will take
19 a 10-minute break now and return at 3:05.

20 (BREAK: 2:57 - 3:05 P.M.)

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: It does look like -- I see a
22 few folks finishing conversations. I apologize, but
23 out of respect, I know to the school districts and
24 individuals remaining on the list and some of our
25 presenters for the afternoon are here already. So we

1 will go ahead and reconvene.

2 B-3: PROGRESS REPORT RELATED TO ADE PROVIDED RECOMMENDATIONS
3 FOR SCHOOLS CLASSIFIED IN ACADEMIC DISTRESS: PULASKI COUNTY
4 SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Proceeding now to action
6 agenda item B-3, the Progress Report from the Pulaski
7 County Special School District. Dr. Wilde, once
8 again you are recognized.

9 DR. WILDE: We will do the same process with
10 Pulaski County Special School District, Mills High
11 School. We have Mr. Clayton here from the high
12 school; he's the high school principal. And Dr.
13 Guess is here in support. Dr. Tackett, who is the
14 assistant superintendent for secondary, will actually
15 be the one answering the questions; he's the one
16 that's drank the Kool-Aid of school improvement, and
17 so he'll be responding. With that said, it will be
18 the same process, and I'm assuming you want to swear
19 in --

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Swear in. I'm sorry; I've
21 been swearing in. So no comments about Dr. Guess
22 going over and speaking too much? No? That's unique
23 to Dr. Hoy. Okay, sounds good.

24 DR. GUESS: They told me I couldn't even stand
25 up.

1 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So with that, anyone from
2 the Pulaski County Special School District wishing to
3 offer testimony, if you could please stand and raise
4 your right hands. Do you swear or affirm that the
5 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,
6 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

7 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. Thank you so
9 much. And if you could kindly again state your name
10 and title for the record, for our court reporter, we
11 would appreciate it, prior to your comments.

12 MR. CLAYTON: Yes. Good afternoon. My name is
13 Duane Clayton, principal at Mills High School.

14 First Question: What steps has the leadership
15 team taken to create a clear academic focus that will
16 lead your school to removal from Academic Distress?
17 What were your successes or challenges, if any, in
18 attaining stakeholder buy-in for this focus?

19 Well, the first thing that our leadership team
20 has done is we had to really address our current
21 reality. In times past, we really didn't take
22 ownership of where our school was as a whole. We
23 looked at our current reality. In the first few
24 meetings we had to really discern whether or not do
25 we have the right people on our leadership team. So

1 we went through an application process and we had
2 questions relative to "can you provide PD to our
3 staff; are you willing to work this tedious process
4 of school improvement." So after interviewing all
5 the members of the leadership team we began to move
6 forward. Our first focus -- and we narrowed our
7 focus a great deal from the previous two years. The
8 previous two years we were looking at the indicators
9 from Indistar. The Indistar indicators were just
10 like driving everything we're doing. They still help
11 us narrow our focus, but we were trying to click and
12 check boxes for compliance. And what we did, we
13 narrowed our focus this year to teacher leader
14 practices and in that what we've done is in every
15 leadership team meeting we bring in data from
16 classroom walk-thru's; we bring in data from student
17 achievement; we even bring in data relative to the D
18 and F list in every teacher's class; we bring in
19 behavioral data from disciplinary referrals; we bring
20 in attendance data of our teachers, how often are the
21 tested area teachers missing school. So we're taking
22 a closer look at that data. And we're not just
23 glorifying the problems. We're not glorifying the
24 problems; we're looking for solutions. So relative
25 to Indistar we're creating tasks, implementing those

1 tasks so that we'll see better results.

2 Another thing that we did as a leadership team
3 after we were trying to make sure we had the right
4 people on the team this year, we began to crosswalk
5 all of our actions and tasks. Because, you know, any
6 time you're dealing with teachers they want to know,
7 "Is this just extra work or are we just doing this to
8 click a box or check a box." So we began to
9 crosswalk our tasks and the Indistar indicators,
10 looking at wise ways to see how these things are
11 relative to the work that we're doing for school
12 improvement.

13 The other thing that relates to the school
14 improvement process and teacher leader practice, the
15 leadership team is comprised of all department heads.
16 So from every department we have a representative on
17 our leadership team. So what we've decided to do as
18 a leadership team, every teacher in the building has
19 a professional growth plan of demonstrated knowledge
20 of their students. And what we mean by that is that
21 every teacher needs to know where their students
22 scored on the ACT Aspire; are any students in need of
23 support, were they close, were they ready, were they
24 exceeding.

25 Also with the teacher leadership practice what

1 we've done, not only the classroom walk-thru data
2 based on the Marzano's High Yield Strategies, we had
3 368 classroom visits in the first quarter. We used
4 this in a Google doc form where the teachers are able
5 to get that feedback immediately before we leave the
6 classroom, so we email it right to the teacher. It
7 also informs discussion between administrators and
8 teachers afterwards.

9 So the leadership team decides, okay, that's
10 good but while we're using classroom walk-thru data
11 that's related to Marzano's and we're being observed
12 on a test rubric, Charlotte Danielson framework, so
13 second quarter we devised a walk-thru data that has
14 those strands or those domains from the Charlotte
15 Danielson framework and we share that data each time
16 the leadership team meets. What this does for us as
17 the leadership team, it helps us to identify what the
18 professional development needs are for our staff, and
19 that's been very key. So the leadership team has
20 also helped us understand, hey, faculty meetings as
21 they were in the past, managerial, we're shifting
22 from that and the faculty meeting as become PD
23 sessions.

24 Another piece related to the changing teacher
25 leader practice, you know, in times past we have as a

1 leadership team -- we have these phases we refer to
2 as "storming, norming and performing." The first two
3 years we were storming and trying to norm. And right
4 now, instead of saying, "Hey, the students should
5 have learned this years ago," we're taking ownership
6 of where our students are and we're asking those
7 essential questions: what do we want students to
8 learn, what are we going to do if they don't learn
9 it.

10 And on the action and task that we create by
11 department, each department has created smart goals.
12 This was prompted by our leadership team. Each smart
13 goal is specific to what the students' needs are, and
14 I think this has been a key piece for our leadership
15 team. Also, we decided that within those smart goals
16 English Language Arts and math, they create an
17 intervention plan -- or have created intervention
18 plans for those students who are in need of support
19 and are close so that we can make sure we can move
20 them from close to ready or from in need of support
21 to close. We're trying to move them up to a
22 different category.

23 The other key piece from our leadership team is
24 that we now have feeder patterns within our Mills
25 feeder. We meet with the middle school and the three

1 elementary schools and we do a similar work. So we
2 have those feeder pattern meetings. We're looking at
3 data from each school. We're looking at classroom
4 walk-thru data where all the principals from these
5 various schools have gone in and observed teacher
6 practices in the classroom.

7 And let's see here. What has been our successes
8 or challenges? Our successes would be that we are
9 down 200-plus disciplinary referrals this first two
10 quarters. We're down 200-plus disciplinary
11 referrals. The challenges have been that we have
12 hired an entirely new English department, except for
13 our department chair. We have four teachers that are
14 new to the department. Another challenge is we have
15 three new math teachers to the department. But I
16 will say that the successes far outshine the
17 challenges. Students are happier. Students are --
18 you know -- when students are not getting the
19 disciplinary referrals, that means they're in class
20 getting the instruction, so that's been a key piece
21 for us.

22 Number Two, it says: What steps has the
23 leadership team taken to improve the culture of the
24 school? What successes or challenges have you had in
25 attaining improved culture?

1 One of the things that I will say is that the
2 leadership team has taken a clear focus on and taken
3 some action is we had a book that we did a book study
4 on; it's called School Culture Rewired. And we
5 talked about some of the things in that book. The
6 other piece that we have as improving our culture is
7 that every student who scored ready or exceeded on
8 the ACT Aspire, those students were celebrated and
9 they get into every home ballgame at no cost the
10 entire year. And we said, "Well, we're leaving out
11 our current seniors; they took the ACT, what can we
12 do for them?" If they scored 18 or better on the
13 ACT, they also get the same benefits. Then we began
14 to think about and collaborate as a leadership team,
15 "But what about students who didn't do so well on the
16 exam?" So what we're doing every quarter is if
17 students have a 3. or better they get discounted
18 admission into the ballgames. So if you have a 3. or
19 -- if you have up to a 3. GPA, you get \$1.00 off of
20 your admission to ballgames. If you have a 3.5 or
21 better, you get \$2.00 off. And to a lot of people
22 that may not be much, but that \$2.00 can go towards
23 popcorn or a soda. And we're just trying to let our
24 students know that we do have a high expectation for
25 achievement in our schools. Another thing that we

1 like to say to continue this improvement effort is
2 that at the end of each quarter we're going to have
3 an assembly to where we acknowledge those students
4 for their GPAs in front of their peers and bring them
5 up on stage, give them certificates and those cards
6 in which they will utilize to get into those home
7 ballgames at that discounted rate or free of charge.

8 Question Number 3, it says: What steps has the
9 leadership team taken to develop a continuous -- a
10 culture of continuous improvement?

11 I think in that area, you know, for our
12 leadership team and the school to be effective we
13 have to always stay on top of what's going on in the
14 building. And like I stated already, we've gone from
15 coming in and having those storming-and-norming
16 meetings to everybody knows we're going to look at
17 data, some form of data every meeting. And then, you
18 know, as we look at wise ways we try to monitor
19 ourselves and assess where are we: are we fully
20 implemented, are we partially implemented, or is
21 there no implementation. And looking at wise ways
22 that has helped us to see, you know, yes, we're
23 looking at data, but what are we doing after we look
24 at the data? Are we implementing tasks? So that was
25 a key piece, an eye-opener for us this year to really

1 look and say, "Hey, what are the actions that we're
2 going to do? What decisions are we going to make
3 based on the data?" And that's the PD. The PD that
4 we have had thus far this year, we've had Dr. Carr
5 come in -- I'm sorry -- Dr. Cleveland and Ms. Carr
6 come in and give specific PD to our secondary math
7 teachers within our feeder pattern. We have had
8 EdTech come in and try to help the teachers with
9 technology and how they can infuse technology into
10 the curriculum and try to increase their engagement
11 in those areas. Also what they're doing, EdTech,
12 they're coming in and not only giving the PD but
13 they're doing follow-up to see how that action looks
14 within the classroom. So that's been consistent
15 throughout this entire first semester.

16 The support in mathematics has been provided
17 with the math consultant where not only are we just
18 implementing these plans of support for those
19 students who are in need of support but the math
20 consultant is coming in to see where are you in this
21 progress of monitoring those interventions. And with
22 that, that becomes a point in time in PLCs as
23 teachers report out how are the students doing, what
24 does that achievement look like in your classroom.
25 So it's a little bit more of accountability on the

1 teacher as well.

2 Also with the continuous improvement, I have had
3 the opportunity to go out and see what's working in
4 some exemplary schools. I had an opportunity to go
5 to northwest Arkansas to a school of innovation not
6 long ago, just getting back from Salt Lake City Early
7 College High School school of innovation. So that's
8 definitely given me a different perspective on what's
9 being done in those areas.

10 Also, just the continuous improvement is just
11 that we're continuing to stay steadfast, encouraging
12 one another that, you know, don't allow us to get
13 weary in doing well. We're going to continue with
14 the efforts of setting clear and compelling
15 direction, shaping the culture for learning, leading
16 and managing change, transforming teaching and
17 learning through the professional development,
18 managing accountability systems. Now what all this
19 really boils down to is implementing TESS but
20 fidelity. You know, it's one thing to go in and
21 observe teachers as they're teaching and give
22 feedback, but I think when they're not where we want
23 them to be the key piece is to give them that support
24 to get them where they should be. I think that's
25 been very instrumental. A lot of people talk about

1 the time it takes but, you know, we have to do
2 whatever it takes to get the teachers where they need
3 to be for our students. So I think that's one of the
4 key pieces, TESS -- and not only TESS but LEADS. Dr.
5 Tackett and I, we meet relative to my professional
6 growth goals so that I'm providing the right amount
7 of professional development for the staff and also
8 that I'm leading and managing change within the
9 building. So the LEADS is just as key as the TESS
10 support.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Is that the end
12 of your presentation?

13 MR. CLAYTON: Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. So with
15 that, I believe, Dr. Wilde, you said Dr. Tackett
16 would be speaking on behalf of the district?

17 DR. WILDE: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Wonderful. So, thank you so
19 much, Mr. Clayton, and we'll ask questions after both
20 presentations have been concluded. With that, Dr.
21 Tackett, if you could state your full name and title
22 for the record we would appreciate it, and you are
23 recognized.

24 DR. TACKETT: I'm John Tackett; I'm director of
25 Secondary Education and interim assistant

1 superintendent for the Pulaski County Special School
2 District. Thank you for the opportunity to be here
3 today and to answer these questions.

4 The first question says: What are the key
5 actions in the professional development plan for the
6 principal?

7 And so I'd almost kind of like to piggyback on
8 what Mr. Clayton finished with and say one of the
9 things that we have tried to do is look at what
10 effective schools are doing. And so we have looked
11 at some of the readings; in fact, Mr. Clayton and I
12 looked together and gave him some readings from the
13 Office of Innovation for Education and the Center for
14 Secondary School Redesign. And we had about five or
15 six different articles that we poured over and he
16 actually perused himself and then presented to our
17 district leadership team on the things that he saw in
18 those articles that were things that we were not
19 doing and things that he saw that perhaps he could do
20 and had a vision for at Mills. He also, as a sidebar
21 to that, has presented -- in fact, presented
22 yesterday to the rest of our principals and used some
23 of that research to present to the rest of our
24 principals. And so we kind of like to start with
25 what other effective schools are doing to get a

1 context for where we need to go. In addition to
2 that, we have been able to attend the Innovation
3 Summit here in Little Rock. We also went to the
4 regional meeting; Mr. Clayton and I and a district
5 team have been to both of those meetings, along with
6 a couple of school visits that he mentioned, one to
7 the Don Tyson School of Innovation in Springdale, as
8 well as Innovations Early College High School in Salt
9 Lake City, Utah, both of which have given us a real
10 big context for the sorts of things that are going on
11 with effective schools and things that we can start
12 looking at to do differently, not just working harder
13 at what we're currently doing but to look at other
14 things, personalizing learning more for the students
15 and giving them things and opportunities that they
16 don't currently have. And so we have done those
17 things, the redesign initiative as well as school
18 visits, to try to look at personalizing student
19 learning.

20 The other thing that we have done is we have
21 developed some PD with a strategic instruction model.
22 We saw that -- some of that PD at the school
23 improvement conference this past summer, and so we
24 started to work with UCA Mashburn Center and were
25 able to get them to come to our school and not only

1 provide professional development for Mr. Clayton and
2 some selected teachers from his building, but also
3 from a feeder elementary school, as well as Fuller
4 Middle School which also feeds Mills, so that all of
5 those schools can start practicing the routines that
6 are embedded in the strategic instruction model.
7 That is ongoing; we've already had our first Saturday
8 session for three hours and will have a follow-up
9 coming up in January. And so we're enjoying that and
10 looking forward to what that will produce for us.
11 Mr. Clayton has had the collaboration training. We
12 continue to get TESS collaboration training. We had
13 the last one from Jim Johnson on November 2nd, to
14 insure that Mr. Clayton is accurately rating -- in
15 fact, all of our principals are accurately rating
16 classroom observations and that we give teachers
17 accurate feedback based on the Danielson model and
18 the test framework. In addition to that, we have
19 hired a consultant who is also a Danielson trainer to
20 serve as executive coach for Mr. Clayton. She has
21 been in his building, started in October, to actually
22 do classroom observations with him, to then have
23 debriefing sessions with him and make recommendations
24 for feedback to the teachers. So we're trying to
25 provide the opportunity for him to learn from experts

1 on the TESS rubric and on the framework to make sure
2 that the information teachers get back helps them
3 improve and give them the support that they need.

4 The second question says: What is the district
5 doing to identify effective teachers and then
6 maintain these teachers?

7 Our district has an annual recruitment fair, job
8 fair, in the spring of every year. And so in March
9 -- I think it's around in March, February or March,
10 we have a job fair/recruitment fair where Mr. Clayton
11 and/or his representatives come and set up a table
12 and are able to talk to all of the prospective
13 teachers and those who might want to get into
14 education. In addition to that, I'll say this: we
15 start scheduling early to identify our priorities for
16 staffing and so we've actually already started that
17 process. We started in December, and then in January
18 we'll start in full swing when we come back; we'll
19 start looking at the hiring priorities, particularly
20 for the high-needs areas, which goes into my next
21 point.

22 We also have an incentive program whereby we try
23 to encourage effective teachers who -- current
24 effective teachers to get dual licensure or
25 certification. We already have one teacher that we

1 are helping get a special ed. licensure who's
2 currently an effective teacher in his building. And
3 we also plan to do the same or use the same process
4 for teachers who might want to teach concurrent
5 enrollment courses because we're going to start
6 offering concurrent enrollment for the students and
7 we want to incentivize those teachers who may not
8 currently be ready to teach a concurrent enrollment
9 course but who possibly we can help to get what they
10 need to do so.

11 The third question: What steps or actions is the
12 district taking to ensure alignment that is of the
13 written and taught curriculum and make sure that the
14 assessments reflect the same?

15 We hired consultants in the area of ELA and math
16 to actually come in and look at the curriculum and to
17 physically themselves align the curriculum that we
18 had with the Arkansas state standards. Those same
19 consultants go into Mills and actually do classroom
20 walk-thru's in the building. And Mr. Clayton gets
21 feedback from them, particularly in math gets
22 feedback from them, on whether or not the curriculum
23 is aligned or, rather, what's being taught reflects
24 the curriculum. And so those consultants have not
25 only written the curriculum but they're going in the

1 classrooms. In addition to that, I go into the
2 classrooms with the district feeder, so I've been in
3 the classrooms. We do walk-thru's together,
4 principals from the other schools -- that is Fuller
5 as well as Bates Elementary, for example -- and we go
6 into Mills and do walk-thru's in the classrooms to
7 insure that what's being taught is actually aligned
8 with the curriculum and reflects the needs of the
9 students as demonstrated on the Aspire. Just to kind
10 of add an additional piece to that, we use STAR
11 assessments and those assessments help us -- first of
12 all, we use Mrs. Screener [ps] three times a year to
13 identify students who may have deficits in specific
14 skill areas. We also use it as a diagnostic tool, so
15 if we know that there are specific students who have
16 deficits in certain areas then those teachers print
17 the diagnostic reports and it instructs them as to
18 the specific priorities that they should be focusing
19 on in the classroom. And so with the walk-thru's,
20 the consultants, first of all, who have developed
21 pacing guides for English as well as math, in
22 addition to the STAR assessments that we used and
23 then the walk-thru's that not only Mr. Clayton does
24 -- and you've heard he does several of them each
25 quarter -- but also district walk-thru's and walk-

1 thru's from the consultants is how we actually insure
2 that the written curriculum is what's being taught in
3 the classroom.

4 Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Mr.
6 Tackett.

7 DR. TACKETT: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And so with that, Dr. Wilde,
9 if you'll offer us your recommendations and closing
10 remarks.

11 DR. WILDE: I'd like to start with saying that
12 Mr. Clayton is maturing into a quality principal.
13 The district leadership has made notable effort to
14 support the principal and the school and I would not
15 have complemented the district a year ago. As a
16 matter of fact, I am probably guilty of pairing Dr.
17 Tackett with bad words. So that said, our perception
18 is that the school improvement processes have been
19 embraced and that's been in spite of or despite
20 reductions in district staffing. Dr. Tackett and Dr.
21 Warren have both embraced the concept of feeder
22 pattern alignment and that is something that I think
23 you might want to ask a little bit about, and
24 especially in the sense of high schools that are in
25 academic distress and how a district would work with

1 the entire feeder pattern together.

2 In truth, we may be seeing the development of a
3 model or at least the beginning of a model for high
4 schools in academic distress.

5 As you review the school's 45-day progress
6 report, you can identify that there is considerable
7 refinement still needed. But the district and the
8 school are working on their processes and I think
9 that's notable from hearing Dr. Tackett and Mr.
10 Clayton.

11 Their locally hired school improvement
12 specialist is also Ms. Goff and she's here today
13 also. She is on our school improvement unit's
14 advisory, so we bring in a group of specialists from
15 the field to review our practices, our processes.
16 And we would like to make note that not only is Mr.
17 Clayton getting a lot of external support, he is also
18 getting support directly within the school and the
19 district itself.

20 If you review the math performance, you can note
21 that last year's ACT 10th grade Aspire scores are
22 similar to schools not classified in priority or
23 academic distress status. So if we're looking at the
24 sort of rank ordering sheets that we've given you,
25 you can look at their 10th grade scores in math and

1 see that they're not in the same grouping as some of
2 the other schools that have been classified.

3 In our report, we have identified additional
4 assistance that we will seek to provide as we move
5 forward in collaboration with Dr. Tackett and Dr.
6 Warren. And so we are not recommending that they
7 come back before the standing committee this year,
8 but we would recommend that they come early into next
9 school year to identify what gains have been made and
10 what their plan is for the year.

11 I would also like to take a moment and make note
12 of a discussion that Dr. Tackett and I had and how I
13 know he really has drank the Kool-Aid. It is that in
14 talking about the school improvement and the movement
15 of a school from academic distress to achieving --
16 I'm paraphrasing this poorly, but his statement was,
17 "The only way to move a school from academic distress
18 to achieving is through innovation. It is not by
19 doing the work -- traditional work harder." So that
20 is a real positive insight on his part, and you might
21 want to ask him about that too.

22 That concludes my remarks.

23 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Dr. Wilde,
24 before you sit down though, if you could clarify
25 "early next year?"

1 DR. WILDE: We're thinking potentially if the
2 standing committee meets in August, but we don't have
3 a schedule for next year, so --

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. But in the
5 August/September time range?

6 DR. WILDE: August/September time range.

7 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Thank you for that
8 clarification.

9 So with that, Dr. Tackett, if we could have you
10 come up once again; I think there's been a couple of
11 openings here for you to elaborate. And before we
12 turn to questions from the Board I did want to allow
13 you a chance to respond, since you've been cued up on
14 the Kool-Aid and then also, more importantly, the
15 feeder pattern alignment. If you could speak to both
16 of those points as referenced by Dr. Wilde?

17 DR. TACKETT: Absolutely. Thank you. And thank
18 you, Dr. Wilde, for -- truly for -- the support that
19 we have gotten from the Department has been
20 phenomenal and we do appreciate everything that he
21 has done and School Improvement has done to help us.
22 The first thing I will say is that we have seen some
23 really phenomenal things, and what we have seen leads
24 us to believe that given the right circumstances and
25 given the right support kids can succeed and excel.

1 We have seen students in other schools in some of
2 these high-performing schools that we've seen who
3 have been students that don't have opportunities that
4 others do. They come from very difficult
5 environments and yet, they grow up very quickly and
6 end up loving school. And I'll just mention one of
7 the things that Mr. Clayton and I have talked about
8 -- and in fact, he spoke to the principals yesterday
9 and emphasized this point emphatically; he said this,
10 that the way that we create a context or framework
11 for kids to learn is to mentor them and for them to
12 enjoy coming to school because they love the people
13 they're around, not just for the contents sake. And
14 we have seen instances where students have such a
15 close rapport -- and I mean professionally, in the
16 right way -- with the educators that they want to
17 come to school and they learn and the teachers
18 mentor. One of the places we went to -- and he said
19 this to the other principals -- they mentor up to 30
20 to 40 students, each teacher will, and they speak
21 with those students every week and they develop the
22 students' schedules. So I guess the light has come
23 on for us, not giving up hope on students who don't
24 learn in a traditional way. It doesn't mean they
25 can't get it; it means we've got to change what we're

1 doing because it's not working. And so we'll
2 probably at some point want to come back to the Board
3 and ask for your assistance in some things that we
4 have seen because it's starting to make sense to us.

5 The other thing I want to say about the feeder
6 that has worked for us, when we started this school
7 year we took the Aspire results and we took three key
8 reports and Aspire -- three key things that the
9 Aspire provides. One is called Improvement Ideas;
10 the other one is the Performance Level Descriptors;
11 and the other one is the Skills Proficiency Report.
12 We went to every school in the Mills feeder pattern.
13 We started at elementary schools and we took their
14 skills proficiency report to them -- that is, their
15 instructional facilitators and their principals --
16 and sat down and had them identify the skill deficit
17 areas of the students in the elementary schools.
18 Because what we're finding out is if we don't touch
19 the kids at transition points we can't try to recover
20 everything at one school; we're going to have to go
21 backwards. And that's where Dr. Warren and I have a
22 very good collaborative relationship because we both
23 understand that it's got to work all in tandem and it
24 can't be separate pieces. And so what we're doing is
25 we're going to the elementary schools, all the way up

1 to the high school, and we're having meetings about
2 deficiencies and required skills, what the school is
3 doing to address them, whether or not it's working,
4 whether or not the programs are working, and then
5 trying to see if we can at transition points see kids
6 getting better. Because we already know that kids
7 are coming to Mills with severe deficits and so we're
8 going backwards. But so the feeder pattern has
9 worked for us and, once again, we're just so excited
10 about what other people are doing. We want to do the
11 same thing; we think it will make a difference.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much, Dr.
13 Tackett.

14 DR. TACKETT: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So with that, I will open it
16 up to questions and comments from the Board. Ms.
17 Zook.

18 MS. ZOOK: Yes. And this may be a question for
19 the check-writer, Mr. Guess.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: He didn't want to get up.

21 MS. ZOOK: Were you here this morning when Dr.
22 Hill was giving the idea that maybe the reason some
23 of the students are not scoring 19 or more might be
24 because some students have the means to take the test
25 multiple times before "the day." And I wondered if

1 that's something that you all would entertain as far
2 as either getting community sponsors to do that, NSLA
3 money to do that, whatever, but finding -- if maybe
4 these students -- and you're talking about your
5 feeder patterns -- maybe like 8th and 10th grade or a
6 couple of times, so -- and I know Khan Academy
7 provides SAT prep free; I don't know if they provide
8 ACT prep for free. But I don't know if you had heard
9 him this morning or not, but it might be something,
10 as long as y'all are being innovative and creative,
11 that -- because it had never crossed my mind that
12 maybe the reason some students didn't score well had
13 more to do with how many times they had taken the
14 test before the 11th grade as opposed to other
15 reasons.

16 SUPT. GUESS: I think you're right, Ms. Zook. I
17 have a young man that's in school -- I'm too old to
18 have a kid that's 20, but I do have one -- and he
19 took the ACT four or five times. He was in the Duke
20 Talent Search program in the 7th grade and Duke gives
21 those kids in that program then an ACT that's part of
22 the program, part of the effort on the part of Duke
23 University. So he did that, he took the test then.
24 He took it multiple times. He did several ACT
25 improvement or remediation workshops. We do use some

1 of those and we do encourage our kids to do those
2 things. And if it's well done -- and the ACT prep
3 program here in Arkansas was originally developed by
4 the State Department and facilitated through co-op
5 grants and districts worked with that improvement
6 effort, and it's very reliable. A student that takes
7 that will usually increase by two or three points.
8 So I agree with you, the more they take it and the
9 more they take some of the improvement workshops the
10 better off they are. And we're encouraging kids to
11 do that. I've said the same things to my folks, that
12 kids don't need to take the ACT for the first time
13 when they're about to go to college.

14 MS. ZOOK: Right. And he was even mentioning
15 earlier -- I'm stealing all your ideas, Dr. Hill --
16 that even an intensive program may be a partnership
17 with the Hunger Reliance -- Alliance where you give
18 them breakfast, teach the course, give them lunch,
19 and let them go home and work. Some of the students,
20 of course, have jobs in the summer --

21 SUPT. GUESS: Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. ZOOK: -- and we'd have to work with that.
23 But I think another thing too is I want to commend
24 Mr. Clayton -- and I should've said earlier, when Mr.
25 Simpson was here, these young people having such good

1 role models and maybe getting excited about coming to
2 school and maybe they'll decide to go into teaching;
3 you know, this would be great. But so many of our
4 young people don't have good role models outside of
5 school --

6 SUPT. GUESS: That's right.

7 MS. ZOOK: -- and I'm thrilled to see this
8 quality of person in your schools.

9 SUPT. GUESS: Yes, ma'am. I appreciate that
10 very much. In fact, he whispered over my shoulder
11 what I hadn't said. Thank you. He's helping me all
12 the time. One of the things that we've done in our
13 effort to demonstrate our commitment to the
14 principals on our desegregation responsibility is to
15 partner with UALR and Philander Smith and the Charles
16 W. Donaldson program. So we're giving -- we have now
17 -- by this time we have given \$10,000,000 to the UALR
18 Foundation for the purpose of helping students,
19 particularly those who are considering -- who are
20 probably going to be first-time college students in
21 their family, to help them prepare, to give them
22 insight into what being on a college campus is about.
23 They actually go to UALR and stay in a dorm as an
24 exposure to what college life is about. And the
25 Donaldson folks are also helping kids with ACT prep

1 and they take an ACT practice test and are supported
2 in the ACT program. So that's another thing that --
3 a very dramatic thing that I think we have done, and
4 I appreciate Mr. Clayton reminding me, to help
5 students, particularly those who have not been
6 exposed, as you've suggested, that should be.

7 MS. ZOOK: Thank you.

8 SUPT. GUESS: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you so much. Ms.
10 Newton.

11 MS. NEWTON: You guys should be on cloud nine
12 right now. I mean, the things that you're doing are
13 awesome. The compliment from Dr. Wilde -- I mean,
14 you know, that was pretty awesome, and y'all --

15 SUPT. GUESS: If you know Dr. Wilde very well,
16 he doesn't just say things for the heck of it.

17 MS. NEWTON: I know, that's what I'm saying.

18 SUPT. GUESS: He's pretty blunt, pretty precise,
19 and I appreciate it.

20 MS. NEWTON: So y'all are doing fantastic and I
21 am so impressed with you and Mr. Tackett and -- Dr.
22 Tackett and Mr. Clayton. You're just doing fantastic
23 and I'm very impressed.

24 Only one thing I heard whenever you were doing
25 your presentation: you were talking about teachers --

1 you were talking about how that you recruited
2 teachers and you've already started the process. And
3 the only thing I did not hear was what are you doing
4 to maintain those teachers or keep them from leaving?
5 You know, because you talked about, I think, your
6 math department and your English department you had
7 quite a bit of turnover. Well, if you have to start
8 over every year it's hard to make progress, so you
9 want to keep those teachers in that job. So what are
10 you doing to try to keep them there, I guess is my
11 question.

12 SUPT. GUESS: Ms. Newton, you know, we've -- I
13 think one of the most -- you know -- I think the
14 evidence proves that teachers do not teach because
15 it's the most way to retire -- it's the best way to
16 retire a millionaire; they teach because of a love of
17 their subjects and a love of kids. I can tell you
18 that we are doing the best we can to provide quality
19 PD to put them in an environment where they're
20 supported and we provide assistance to them to help
21 them achieve that good feeling at the end of the day
22 when they go home that they have really worked to the
23 best benefit of some students. So we're doing
24 everything we can to support that. But let me tell
25 you -- and I hope all of you -- it's been a tough

1 time in PCSSD. The districts here in central
2 Arkansas have gone through some really tough times in
3 the last few years -- PCSSD because of fiscal
4 distress and the changes that had to be made. The
5 Jacksonville detachment was a very favorable thing
6 for us to do. It satisfied Jacksonville's desire to
7 have its own school district and I think it's going
8 to be better for PCSSD, and the dust is settling. We
9 still have some dust that needs to come down, but
10 it's a very positive thing for PCSSD but it caused
11 great consternation in the district. We had to
12 reduce staff; we had to reduce expenses. Certainly,
13 with the loss of Jacksonville a lot of the expenses
14 went with that detachment, but then there had to be
15 changes made at the district office and in the whole
16 -- in all district operations. Dr. Barth asked me
17 who had replaced Laura Bednar, Dr. Bednar. We didn't
18 replace Dr. Bednar. When she left Dr. Tackett and
19 Dr. Warren stepped up and assumed additional
20 responsibilities and it's been tough on the district.
21 I can say it has. It has been a challenge to remind
22 teachers that we do appreciate them and we do value
23 what they do. And now we're facing a third
24 significant challenge: in a little over six months
25 the last dollar of operational deseg money will be

1 gone and that's \$20.7 million. And we're making --
2 we have prepared for that and I can tell you that,
3 you know, we didn't wait till the day to decide that
4 was going to happen. But, nevertheless, there are
5 going to be some very difficult times between now and
6 the end of the year. I would have to tell you that
7 those people in PCSSD are fighters. The teachers and
8 the administrators are people who have continued
9 their commitment to the kids in the district out of
10 commitment to their profession. I'm proud of them.
11 I am proud of the quality of work that I see. Mr.
12 Clayton is an example of a school leader. Dr. Warren
13 and Dr. Tackett are examples of extraordinary leaders
14 at the district level. So we're fortunate.

15 MS. NEWTON: Congratulations.

16 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Newton. Dr.
17 Barth.

18 DR. BARTH: This is probably for Mr. Clayton --
19 I know it is for Mr. Clayton. On the -- you talked
20 about some of your new strategies on discipline and
21 transitions there. And we've obviously on this board
22 been talking a lot about discipline issues across the
23 state, and so we, I think, need to learn some lessons
24 from your experience about that transition to a more
25 restorative form of discipline. And could you talk a

1 bit more about that process and what the obstacles to
2 change have been in that area?

3 MR. CLAYTON: Well, one of the things has been
4 that I share my assistant principals and teachers --
5 I say one of the things about me is I'm going to be
6 intentional every day. And with that, being an old
7 coach is I'm going to pat students on the backs, I'm
8 going to always strike up a conversation whenever the
9 opportunity presents itself. I share with the
10 teachers this: if we look at discipline as punitive,
11 then that's what we're going to get. But discipline
12 has to be seen as an opportunity to teach. So
13 starting out the year this year we covered our
14 handbook, we covered our expectations. But also
15 whenever students are not doing the things that we
16 want them to do, that's an opportunity to teach.
17 Also what we've done is we have done a purposeful
18 living project with students the past few years.
19 Also, we've had some conscious discipline training
20 through Dr. Mack T. Hines who is coming to our
21 district as well. But one of the things that our
22 administrative team has done, we just said we're
23 going to hold more intervention type conferences; you
24 know, if you just suspend, suspend, suspend, you
25 know, you're only going to frustrate ourselves and

1 the students. So we just made an effort to say, hey,
2 we're going to have more behavior conferences and
3 implement some interventions in between.

4 DR. BARTH: And what have -- have there been
5 obstacles to change in that regard? I mean, have
6 there been folks who've just, because they've gotten
7 used to doing it this way or a very different way,
8 had difficulty making that transition?

9 MR. CLAYTON: Yes, sir. One of the things that
10 we have done to try to really close the gap in
11 disparity of discipline of black male students in our
12 district amongst any other ethnic group in our
13 district, we have what we call a "discipline
14 management plan." And what we do with that is we
15 have Level 1 classroom rules. We're not going to
16 send students out for a Level 1 classroom rule;
17 that's rituals and routines that teachers have in
18 place. So, and the difficulty with that is that at
19 times on the front-end teachers feel like they're not
20 being supported. But we just have to continue on
21 agendas, if it's PLC agendas or faculty meetings or
22 professional developing meetings, to continue to
23 visit that; "Hey, this is a classroom rule; we're not
24 going to send a student out for this." You know, so
25 what we do with that discipline management plan at

1 the end of class let Johnny know he's going to stay
2 after 30 seconds, so you can let him know, "Hey,
3 what's going on today?" You know, and then you
4 follow-up with a parent phone call. So I think some
5 of those things, if implemented with fidelity, has
6 helped us with the results of 200-plus fewer
7 disciplinary referrals just this year.

8 DR. BARTH: Great. Thank you very much.

9 MR. CLAYTON: Yes, sir.

10 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Mr. Black.

11 MR. BLACK: How are you doing? I hope that this
12 is not out of line, but I just want you to consider
13 it.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Mr. Black, if you could turn
15 on your mic please.

16 MR. BLACK: Hello, hello.

17 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Or if you could kindly get
18 closer. Thank you.

19 MR. BLACK: Basically, have y'all ever
20 communicated with other schools in your region that
21 are in academic distress?

22 MR. CLAYTON: No, sir.

23 MR. BLACK: What I believe would happen if you
24 all would consider it, you guys would identify shared
25 programs that could be implemented in each school

1 district. You all could identify what's not working.
2 I happen to believe there are a lot of opportunities
3 through partnering with other academically distressed
4 school districts.

5 MR. CLAYTON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Any additional
7 questions or comments from the Board?

8 And then I'll just -- I'll make one that should
9 be for Mr. Clayton, and then, Dr. Guess, we'll give
10 you the final word.

11 I had the opportunity to meet some of your new
12 teachers at a recent conference, about a month ago,
13 many of which are taking the nontraditional route to
14 licensure and excited to be in your district. And I
15 will say this -- and, again, not as a critique; I
16 know there's a lot of things moving right now and it
17 sounds like an amazing vision and direction is in
18 place. But just to say that I did hear from a couple
19 of them similar comments around as nontraditional
20 teachers feeling like they needed some additional
21 mentorship and professional development together.
22 And I think it gets to the point of Ms. Newton's,
23 right, of retaining teachers. Again, not unique;
24 something I think we hear statewide, hearing so many
25 great things about the programs; excited to hear,

1 just like with everyone else, about the programs that
2 are in place. I just offer that as an additional --
3 because I do share Ms. Newton's observation and
4 concern and opportunity, right, in terms of
5 retention. And especially I know, as you all have
6 looked and done this very intentional effort of
7 looking even outside of those that are in the
8 traditional licensure track and going outside of
9 that, that there may be some opportunities there as
10 well for some additional professional development and
11 support. So -- but impressive, impressive women, and
12 so I think that also speaks highly of your hires and
13 what you're doing. And I just wanted to offer and
14 lift up that voice, given this opportunity.

15 But with that, Dr. Guess, I did promise you the
16 last words. And thank you so much, Mr. Clayton.

17 SUPT. GUESS: You know, some months ago you all
18 removed us from the files of fiscal distress and we
19 had two issues to meet to return to local control.
20 We've elected a board and they will have their first
21 meeting next Tuesday night. The other is board
22 training. That will be done Saturday. Ms. Coffman
23 has confided in me that Saturday night she's having a
24 huge party at her house, not that she's all -- it's
25 all about getting rid of us, but I think she's so

1 happy that I'm not going to be trooping -- see -- I'm
2 not going to be trooping to her office and bothering
3 Mr. Key. So I just wanted to tell you that she's
4 sponsoring a huge hoedown and everyone is invited, is
5 what she told me. It's a celebration of freedom.
6 Mr. Key, we -- I had --

7 MS. ZOOK: She's going to cook it all.

8 SUPT. GUESS: She is. She told me there were
9 vast and wonderful plans, so I'm sure it'll be a
10 great event. We appreciate you, Mr. Key.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Thank you so
12 much.

13 SUPT. GUESS: Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And, Ms. Coffman, we look
15 forward to that email invitation.

16 So with that --

17 MS. COFFMAN: (inaudible)

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: I gotcha, I gotcha. So with
19 that, I will entertain a motion. And, again, whoever
20 does make a motion if you'd kindly make reference to
21 return to the standing committee, report to the
22 standing committee I would appreciate it. So with
23 that --

24 DR. BARTH: I move to accept the report, with a
25 return visit to the standing committee on academic

1 distress early in the 2017-18 academic year.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you. Do I have a
3 second?

4 MS. NEWTON: Second.

5 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Dr.
6 Barth, seconded by Ms. Newton. All in favor?

7 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
9 unanimously. And, again, congratulations, Pulaski
10 County Special School District. I feel like
11 Commissioner Key wants to respond to you, Dr. Guess,
12 before you leave. He's shaking his head; I'd be
13 worried.

14 COMMISSIONER KEY: No. Godspeed to you and your
15 team.

16 SUPT. GUESS: Thank you, sir. We appreciate all
17 your help.

18 COMMISSIONER KEY: One last thing that I wanted
19 to mention about the conversation on ACT that I
20 thought about later, when we meet with the folks from
21 ACT they always remind us how Arkansas is under-
22 utilizing fee waivers. Those are the waivers from
23 the ACT fees for students of low-income. So I would
24 just encourage you all and any district that -- to
25 look into taking advantage of that because ACT says,

1 "Please let us know; we want to make this more
2 available to your students." So --

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Commissioner.
4 And thank you again. Happy Holidays to all.

5 B-4: ADOPTION OF STATE BOARD MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2017

6 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So with that, we do have one
7 final item on the action agenda, action agenda B-4,
8 Adoption of the State Board Meeting Calendar for
9 2017. Ms. Freno, you're recognized.

10 MS. FRENO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Lori Freno,
11 Arkansas Department of Education. State law requires
12 that every December this board set the upcoming
13 year's calendar meeting schedule, but that's required
14 to be done in December. You might recall that you
15 already approved a tentative schedule back during
16 your August meeting, but because of the law we need
17 to -- you either need to give a final approval to
18 that schedule today or you need to set a different
19 schedule.

20 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Thank you, Ms. Freno. With
21 that, any questions or comments in regards to next
22 year's schedule? From what I can discern it's still
23 the second Thursday and Friday of every month?

24 MS. FRENO: That is correct. Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any concerns or proposals?

1 I know past boards, we've taken up restructuring our
2 two-day calendar, but that has not emerged as of yet
3 in our work sessions and conversations. This would
4 be the time to present that if someone did want to
5 propose an alternative. Otherwise, I will entertain
6 a motion.

7 MR. BLACK: So moved.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: To accept the calendar as
9 presented. And do I have a second?

10 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

11 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. Motion made by Mr.
12 Black, seconded by Ms. Chambers. All in favor?

13 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Any opposed? Motion carries
15 unanimously. Thank you, Ms. Freno.

16 MS. FRENO: Thank you.

17 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

18 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Now before you sit down, I
19 did have three here for public comment but I no
20 longer see them in the audience. Do we know if
21 they're outside or not?

22 MS. FRENO: I can check to see if they're
23 outside. They did ask earlier how long would it be,
24 and I told -- I notified them that there is live-
25 streaming so they could keep their eye on live-

1 streaming to come back in time. But I will just
2 check.

3 CHAIRPERSON REITH: If you could kindly do so.
4 I know it takes -- before closing the action agenda
5 we would need a vote, correct, to hear the public
6 comment. And so --

7 MS. FRENO: That would be correct.

8 CHAIRPERSON REITH: -- if we could have just a
9 few seconds to verify.

10 MS. ZOOK: I move that if they're still here
11 that we accept public comment.

12 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay. They're not here.

13 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON REITH: And so in which case if they
15 return later -- no, nobody is there. So then the
16 other option if they wanted to return another time
17 would be tomorrow or the reporting session? Is there
18 a public comment option?

19 MS. FRENO: I don't think we generally have
20 public comments --

21 CHAIRPERSON REITH: Okay.

22 MS. FRENO: -- during the reporting. No, we do
23 not.

24 CHAIRPERSON REITH: The action agenda, okay. I
25 just wanted to do due-diligence.

1 MS. FRENO: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So I thank you for that.

3 ACTION AGENDA ADJOURNMENT

4 CHAIRPERSON REITH: So with that, I will
5 entertain a motion to adjourn the action agenda. And
6 then we do have some reports. But, so the purpose
7 for our court reporter to retreat I would entertain a
8 motion regards to --

9 MS. COFFMAN: You don't have to.

10 CHAIRMAN REITH: Oh, I don't have to, just to
11 move into the --

12 MS. ZOOK: Can we take a break?

13 CHAIRMAN REITH: Okay. So action agenda
14 adjourned.

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17 (The action agenda was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.)

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A-2: JERI LYN ODOM

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-3: MARY JILL DAVIS

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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