

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

November 8, 2018

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

NOVEMBER 8, 2018
10:00 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD MEMBERS:

MR. JOHNNY KEY	Commissioner (Non-Voting)
DR. JAY BARTH	Chairman
MS. CHARISSE DEAN	Vice Chairman
MS. DIANE ZOOK	Board Member
MS. SUSAN CHAMBERS	Board Member
MR. R. BRETT WILLIAMSON	Board Member
MS. OUIDA NEWTON	Board Member
DR. FITZGERALD HILL	Board Member
DR. SARAH MOORE	Board Member
MS. KATHY McFETRIDGE	Board Member

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. LORI FRENO	ADE General Counsel
MS. COURTNEY SALAS-FORD	ADE Deputy General Counsel
MS. JENNIFER DEDMAN	ADE Attorney Supervisor
MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT	ADE Attorney

LOCATION:

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
#1 Capitol Mall - Auditorium
Little Rock, AR

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P R O C E E D I N G S

A-1: RECOGNITION: 2018 JAFFARIAN AWARD - KELLY KLOBER

CHAIRMAN BARTH: We're now down to the Action Agenda. We start with some recognitions. And first up -- I'm going to turn things over to Ms. -- to -- who's coming up? Ms. Smith, are you the presenter, or -- Ms. Bennett [sic]. Yeah, a combo. Okay. Great.

Good morning.

MS. BARNETT: Good morning. I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to share some really great news. I'm pleased to present you to Kelly Klober and her --

[APPLAUSE]

MS. BARNETT: -- and her principal, Nancy Barrick, and her superintendent, Gregg Grant. And it's my pleasure today to announce that Kelly, who is the school librarian at Danville Public Schools, has been presented with the 2018 American Library Association's Sara Jaffarian Award. And this award is presented annually to recognize and promote excellence in humanities programming in school libraries, specifically elementary and middle school. So along with that recognition and this beautiful award comes a \$5,000 prize; so I know she's going to

1 put good use to that. Her winning program, which is
2 Tales of the Crypt: Danville's Living History, is an
3 extremely creative and highly successful way to
4 engage students in critical thinking, looking at
5 their local history, and doing some great research.
6 And so not only has this been a great learning
7 experience for her students but has also pulled the
8 whole community in. So we have the mayor and a bunch
9 of other people from that community who participate
10 in this project. Her program is also going to be
11 highlighted in the American Association of School
12 Librarians official journal, Knowledge Quest, in the
13 spring. So I'll make sure you all get a copy of
14 that.

15 So at this time I'd like to give Kelly just an
16 opportunity to speak to you a little bit about her
17 program and the impact that it's had on her students
18 and her community.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Welcome, Ms. Klober.

20 MS. KLOBER: Good morning. Thank you. I am
21 Kelly Klober and I'm the librarian at our Danville
22 S.E. Tucker Elementary and Danville Middle School
23 library. We were awarded this and we're very
24 thankful and appreciative of this award. This --
25 through our Living History program -- it started as

1 one of our afterschool programs, so I think that's a
2 big plus for our afterschool program, and now it's
3 led into what it is. And I think this is really --
4 these type of programs is what's helped us become the
5 "A" school that we were awarded this year. We have
6 lots of support from our administration. Our
7 principal, Mrs. Barrick, that's here, and our
8 superintendent, Mr. Gregg Grant, they are also
9 members of this Living History program. So they not
10 only support but they're actors and actresses in it
11 also. But what we do is we have our students portray
12 someone in our cemetery -- and it's local history and
13 it's our local cemetery -- and they research and just
14 bring that person's story to life. And then one
15 night every year we have groups that will come to our
16 cemetery and they hear each person's story, depending
17 on where they go to. So we bring honor to those
18 people and then our students learn the history of our
19 town. And it's a program that can be replicated;
20 other places can do that as well.

21 We have had donations donated, around \$15,000,
22 to help renovate the cemetery, and it's definitely a
23 program that's tied -- made great connections between
24 our school and our community. Because like Cassandra
25 was saying that this is a program that definitely

1 involves our community, from ex-librarians -- retired
2 librarians, I should say -- retired teachers, our
3 public school librarians -- just all areas of our
4 community.

5 So it's been a great program for our community.
6 And we'd like to thank Cassandra for recognizing that
7 and supporting that in all that she does in keeping
8 our libraries the hub of our school. So, thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Fantastic. Congratulations.

10 [APPLAUSE]

11 MS. BARNETT: I don't want to forget the award.

12 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Ms. Barnett presents
13 the award to Ms. Klober.)

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And I want to just note that,
15 you know, the role of school librarians has changed
16 significantly, probably during your --

17 MS. KLOBER: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- your time in the position,
19 and the way in which I think we see again and again
20 that school librarians are really playing these
21 crucial roles in specific engagement connecting
22 students with the community. And we see this in a
23 number of ways, and this is a fantastic example in
24 the Danville District.

25 So congratulations for your work --

1 MS. KLOBER: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- as a librarian, but also in
3 this broader role of connecting students to their
4 communities. Fantastic.

5 MS. KLOBER: Thank you.

6 MS. BARNETT: Thank you.

7 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: A photograph of Ms.
8 Klobber with others was taken.)

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Thank you so much.
10 Thanks for being here. Congratulations.

11 A-2: RESOLUTIONS

12 a) COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION WEEK

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Next up we have
14 several resolutions, and we start with the Computer
15 Science Education Week. And I will turn it over to
16 Anthony Owen.

17 MR. OWEN: Thank you, Dr. Barth.

18 Anthony Owen, Arkansas Department of Education.
19 And thank you, State Board.

20 First, as the husband of a K-5 elementary
21 librarian I want to say thank you for the recognition
22 of the work that the librarians in our state do.
23 They work tirelessly for our teachers and students.
24 And on a personal level, I appreciate that
25 recognition to that field and craft.

1 To the point of being in front of y'all today,
2 you have a resolution in front of you. At your
3 request I will read it or -- okay.

4 So, Arkansas State Board of Education
5 Resolution:

6 WHEREAS, The Arkansas State Board of Education
7 believes that every student in Arkansas deserves a
8 premier computer science education that is suitable
9 for his or her needs and can support his or her
10 college and/or career aspirations; and

11 WHEREAS, The Arkansas State Board of Education
12 supports the state in its efforts to become and
13 remain a national leader in computer technology
14 careers through the implementation of a vertically
15 articulated and comprehensive computer science
16 education designed to support appropriate
17 technological growth in all Arkansas students; and

18 WHEREAS, The Arkansas State Board of Education
19 believes that Arkansas must provide its students with
20 an education that will facilitate the advance of
21 useful technological skills and promote their role as
22 digital natives; and

23 WHEREAS, December 3-9, 2018, has been declared
24 as national Computer Science Education Week by
25 Code.org, the Computer Science for All Initiative,

1 and other nationally recognized entities;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

3 We, the members of the Arkansas State Board of
4 Education, recognize the week of December 3-9, 2018,
5 as Arkansas Computer Science Education Week.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Y'all have heard the
8 resolution. I would invite a motion to approve the
9 resolution.

10 MS. CHAMBERS: Move to approve.

11 MS. DEAN: Second.

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Our computer
14 scientist moves -- Ms. Chambers -- and Ms. Dean
15 seconds.

16 All those in favor say "aye."

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

19 And do you have any comments?

20 MR. OWEN: Thank you, Dr. Barth. And with your
21 leave I would just like a couple of minutes, if
22 possible.

23 At your table -- and I'm sorry this is not part
24 of the Board agenda. But obviously the Governor
25 times the release of these numbers, and he released

1 these numbers yesterday, but I wanted to get y'all an
2 early copy of them.

3 (WHEREUPON, A-2 Exhibit One (1), Computer
4 Science Enrollment Report for School Year 2018-2019,
5 was marked for identification and appended.)

6 MR. OWEN: I will be happy to come back in
7 December to provide the Board with a full report on
8 these numbers and answer any questions and also a
9 full report.

10 I will say for CS Education Week this year we
11 are planning on a system, very similar to that that
12 we had last year, where we make a major announcement
13 every day of CS Education Week of how we're
14 supporting this initiative with our state and our
15 students. And I will say that we receive a lot of
16 national attention and accolades and had a lot of
17 positive results from doing that last year, and I
18 think it just -- it shows the commitment.

19 I will also state that this year's proclamation
20 -- not stealing any thunder from the Governor -- will
21 include a special Arkansas tie to the Arkansas
22 Computer Science Education Week that I think that,
23 when I bring it back to y'all, we can all be very
24 proud of.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: That's great.

1 MR. OWEN: So I'll answer any questions if
2 anybody has any.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any questions?

4 MR. OWEN: Just in short, the numbers were
5 phenomenal this year. So unless I've done something
6 else, I guess I can stick around for one more year.

7 Thank y'all.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And just for folks that -- the
9 packet up here does include all that data, but I
10 think we'll hear it in more detail in December. All
11 right.

12 MR. OWEN: Awesome.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

14 MR. OWEN: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Board.

15 b) ARKANSAS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION MONTH

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Next up, we have
17 Dr. Prothro here and the School Board Member
18 Recognition Month is before us.

19 DR. PROTHRO: Yes. Thank you for having us here
20 today.

21 I don't know if Commissioner Key -- do you want
22 to read this?

23 COMMISSIONER KEY: I'll be glad to.

24 DR. PROTHRO: Okay. Sure.

25 COMMISSIONER KEY: I'll be happy to. Do you

1 want to intro it or you just want me to go right into
2 it?

3 DR. PROTHRO: For many, many years, the unpaid
4 servant leaders, in the form of school board members,
5 who care much and devote much of their time and
6 resources to their communities, January has been that
7 month. We do send-outs to our school districts and
8 our board members, encouraging everyone in the month
9 of January to recognize those board members for the
10 hours and the resources that they expend to serve
11 their communities and their kids.

12 COMMISSIONER KEY: The resolution --

13 WHEREAS, More than 479,000 students attend
14 public and charter schools in Arkansas; and

15 WHEREAS, The Arkansas State Board of Education
16 acknowledges the importance of public education and
17 its impact on our communities today and in the
18 future; and

19 WHEREAS, The Arkansas State Board of Education
20 recognizes the vital role of more than 1,500 elected
21 local school board members who establish the mission
22 and direction for their local districts and approve
23 policies to guide their school systems; and

24 WHEREAS, School board members contribute
25 countless hours of their time fulfilling their state-

1 mandated roles and responsibilities; and

2 WHEREAS, School board members must make key
3 decisions regarding the curriculum, instruction,
4 finance and facilities of our public schools; and

5 WHEREAS, School board members employ and
6 evaluate the superintendent, who has the daily
7 responsibility for the operation of the school
8 district; and

9 WHEREAS, School board members must participate
10 in professional development every year in order to
11 enhance their knowledge and skills related to their
12 responsibilities;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

14 The Arkansas State Board of Education recognizes
15 and salutes the members of local school -- local
16 boards of education by proclaiming the month of
17 January, 2019, as Arkansas School Board Member
18 Recognition Month.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I'll look to Ms. McFetridge for
20 the motion.

21 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'd love to make that motion.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is there a second?

23 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

24 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms.

1 McFetridge, second by Ms. Chambers.

2 All those in favor say "aye."

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

5 Thank you, Dr. Prothro, for all your work.

6 DR. PROTHRO: Thank you so much.

7 And, once again, you're all invited to our

8 annual awards luncheon on December 6th, if your

9 schedule permits. We always look forward to having

10 you there and a table reserved for you to see our

11 board members as they are recognized for their

12 accomplishments.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Great.

14 Ms. Zook.

15 MS. ZOOK: Yes. Sorry; go ahead, Commissioner.

16 COMMISSIONER KEY: No. I was just going to say

17 we -- over the last few weeks teams from the

18 Department have been going -- participating in the

19 regional ASBA meetings. This is the first time we've

20 done that, at least since -- in my tenure. They were

21 gracious to invite us to be part of that, to help

22 educate board members on ESSA and some of the tools

23 that we have. And I just want to say that that has

24 been a great opportunity for us; thank you for

25 helping -- or allowing us to be part of that. The

1 feedback has been tremendous.

2 And just so you know, we've also been able to
3 convey, Dr. Hill, one important thing from our
4 discipline work, which is addressing out-of-school
5 suspension for truancy. And I'll have to say that
6 every time we brought that up you could hear laughter
7 from around the -- because, you know, they do
8 understand that, you know, there's some things that
9 need to change there. And as we have -- I'll give
10 you one story: at Bearden last week, Skipper Ward,
11 the superintendent at Magnolia, he thought I was
12 calling him out specifically, because he said I
13 looked right at him when I got to that slide. And
14 after it was over, he said, "I admit it. I'm sorry.
15 We won't do it again" -- and actually he said it was
16 a coding error. And so we did find out that some of
17 the data that we had were due to coding errors that
18 they -- now they know better on how they need to
19 address those situations.

20 So -- but, overall, it's been a very great
21 experience for our team to be a part of that. And
22 thank you for allowing that.

23 DR. PROTHRO: Thank you for participating. Good
24 information for our board members. And hopefully
25 they will take that information to their communities,

1 because the information is there through ESSA,
2 through the website. Being able to look at overall
3 student performance has been invaluable.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook.

5 MS. ZOOK: Yes. The idea that came to mind as I
6 was going over the board meeting is, you know, the --
7 they have -- we have the Take Your Legislator to Work
8 Month or Week; I can't remember which it is. I
9 wonder if your superintendents -- like if you worked
10 with Mr. Abernathy and who all -- could encourage
11 your -- during the month of January, if possible --
12 for some of your board members to actually come maybe
13 address the students, because you never know when a
14 student will pick somebody as their mentor. And we
15 always want good people who are interested in
16 education to become board members.

17 So just noodle that thought around, and if you
18 think it will work -- because in ESSA we are
19 elevating the board to show them the important role
20 that they play within the overall work of our
21 schools. So if you think that's a good idea, go for
22 it.

23 DR. PROTHRO: I think it's a great idea. A lot
24 of schools are already doing that during that time.
25 We give them suggestions. But we'll make sure that's

1 included.

2 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any additional questions?

4 Thank you, Dr. Prothro. And, again, Ms. Windle,
5 do you have info on the luncheon, the School Boards
6 Association luncheon?

7 MS. WINDLE: I can get that.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay, if you could get that out
9 to board members. And I know as many of us as can be
10 there will be there. So, thank you.

11 c) AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And then our final resolution
13 of the It Takes a Village Day of Education, seeing
14 all the folks who are involved in making public
15 education work here in Arkansas, is the resolution
16 for Arkansas Education Week. Ms. Koehler had a
17 conflict that popped up and cannot be here this
18 morning, so -- but we still do have the resolution
19 that the Commissioner is going to read for us.

20 COMMISSIONER KEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 The resolution --

22 WHEREAS, The National Education Association
23 designated November 12-16, 2018, as American
24 Education Week in an effort to celebrate public
25 education and honor individuals who are making a

1 difference to ensure that every child receives a
2 quality education; and

3 WHEREAS, Education is a pillar of democracy and
4 cornerstone of American opportunity that gives our
5 children the foundation they need to understand and
6 appreciate our nation's values of freedom, civility
7 and equality, and

8 WHEREAS, Arkansas public schools have high
9 expectations for every child and are committed to
10 providing a climate of respect that provides students
11 access to opportunities to ensure academic success;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Arkansas public schools bring together
14 adults and children, teachers, education support
15 professionals, volunteers, business and civic
16 leaders, and elected officials who all have a stake
17 in public education and play an important role in
18 inspiring children to learn inside and outside the
19 classroom; and

20 WHEREAS, Arkansas public schools provide our
21 children with outstanding opportunities in academics,
22 fine arts, athletics, extracurricular activities, and
23 vocational training to equip them with the skills and
24 knowledge needed to grow, thrive and succeed in our
25 global society; and

1 WHEREAS, All education employees -- all Arkansas
2 education employees, including teachers, education
3 support professionals, principals and administrators
4 deserve our gratitude, respect and support for their
5 utmost professionalism and commitment to our schools;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Arkansas parents are an integral part
8 of the educational process, providing a nurturing
9 home learning environment, and serving as their
10 child's first teachers and advocates, and are
11 important partners with the school system; and

12 WHEREAS, Arkansas community involvement in our
13 schools provides vital support and opportunities for
14 students to participate in community learning and
15 outreach activities;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

17 We, the members of the Arkansas State Board of
18 Education, recognize the observance of November 12-
19 16, 2018, as American Education Week.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Indeed. And I'll look to Ms.
21 Newton, our former Teacher of the Year, for that
22 motion.

23 MS. NEWTON: So moved.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Is there a second?

25 MS. ZOOK: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms.
2 Newton, second by Ms. Zook.

3 All those in favor say "aye."

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

6 MS. ZOOK: And I will mention, like I did last
7 year, that I appreciate the fact that this is for all
8 educators, whether you're an AEA member or ASTA
9 member or administrator. Regardless of what you do,
10 you are working.

11 And I know when I was teaching, I was single and
12 working on my master's, so I didn't have the money to
13 join. But Mr. Ford, who was the Commissioner at the
14 time, always assured us that we were important and
15 valued as well.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. All right.

17 Thank you, all.

18 C-5: PLSB CASE - DAVID WILSON

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Now we are down to our action
20 items and we do have this remaining issue from the
21 Consent Agenda issue, case 5, the PLSB case. I will
22 turn it over --

23 They're not back yet. Okay. So we'll delay on
24 this until I get word that they are back. I'm sorry;
25 I didn't see that they weren't back.

1 DISCUSSION/VOTE ON ALLOWING PUBLIC COMMENTS

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: We -- first off, I wanted to
3 make one comment. I know some folks here have
4 expressed an interest in public comment and we will
5 -- that is not related to an item that is on our
6 agenda today. The Board will consider whether to
7 take public comment. That's typically the case.
8 That would be for three minutes. It would be at the
9 end of our action agenda, is our normal spot for
10 public comment.

11 So I just want to let folks know that, you know,
12 please sign up and we will take public comment, upon
13 a vote of the Board, at the end of the action agenda.

14 MS. ZOOK: Do we want to go ahead and make that
15 motion now so that they will know?

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes. I would invite that
17 motion that we will take public comment when that
18 time comes.

19 MS. ZOOK: I move that we take public comment at
20 the end of our action agenda.

21 MS. NEWTON: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms. Zook,
23 second by Ms. Newton.

24 All in favor say "aye."

25 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

2 And so our typical practice is three minutes,
3 unless the list is so long that we need to do a
4 little shortening. But our typical practice would be
5 a three-minute public comment period for each
6 individual who is signed up.

7 C-5: CONSIDERATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL
8 LICENSURE STANDARDS BOARD FOR CASE #18-108 - DAVID WILSON

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. I see Ms. Blagg has come
10 in. Thank you. We delayed successfully. So we are
11 back to consent item 5, and if you'll just kind of
12 let us know what our options are.

13 MS. BLAGG: You guys do -- Simone Blagg,
14 attorney for Licensure and PLSB. State Board does
15 have the right to request a review. The Educator did
16 not have an evidentiary hearing because he agreed to
17 this, so this is coming straight from the
18 subcommittee level to this full review. If he -- he
19 has the option to reply and request the specific
20 types of options for a full review or oral arguments.
21 And if he does nothing, then we will go forward and
22 present evidence as though he's not here, just with
23 -- as with the licensure action that you're familiar
24 with.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Questions about the rules?

1 Ms. Newton.

2 MS. NEWTON: Not about the rules. I just -- I
3 guess I felt uncomfortable, with the amount of
4 knowledge that I have, revoking someone's license.
5 Does that make sense?

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

7 MS. ZOOK: I wonder if we could do it this way:
8 if we pull it, recommend that we have the hearing.
9 If the Educator still does not object to what the
10 PLSB recommendation was and does not choose to be
11 represented or represent himself, can you then not
12 have the hearing?

13 MS. BLAGG: So what that would look like is us
14 going through the notice, setting it -- it looks like
15 it would be a January hearing date. If he does not
16 choose to attend, we can just simply put forth our
17 same exact case that we did, like just -- I can just
18 reference today's meeting and you guys can go from
19 there.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I think that's an appropriate
21 step, so that we would know that we should move
22 forward on it. And we typically do do these very
23 truncated hearings, even though -- in cases like
24 this. Does that sound appropriate?

25 Okay. I think we do -- do we need a motion to

1 delay this or do we -- can we just --

2 MS. BLAGG: We can just pull it.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So it is pulled for this
4 meeting, likely to return in January.

5 MS. BLAGG: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you, guys. And thanks
7 for working through the new rules as we all learn
8 from this.

9 A-3: CONSIDERATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL: ADE RULES GOVERNING THE
10 CALCULATION METHODS FOR DECLINING ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT GROWTH
11 FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. We are back
13 to -- we have several issues related to rules, just
14 in time for the next legislative session. We
15 finished the rules from the previous legislative
16 session. And we have Final Approval of the ADE Rules
17 Governing the Calculation Methods for Declining
18 Enrollment and Student Growth Funding, and I'll turn
19 it over to Ms. Hyatt.

20 MS. HYATT: Good morning. Mary Claire Hyatt,
21 Arkansas Department of Education.

22 We are asking for final approval of the ADE
23 Rules Governing the Calculation Methods for Declining
24 Enrollment and Student Growth Funding for Public
25 School Districts. Changes were made to these rules

1 to incorporate provisions of Act 741 of 2017. They
2 were released for public comment in September.
3 Public comment was held -- a public comment hearing
4 was held. No substantive changes were made as a
5 result of the public comment period, which expired on
6 October 22nd.

7 So we respectfully request final approval.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Are there any
9 questions on this side about these rules?

10 We've seen them before.

11 Anyone over here?

12 Okay. I would entertain a motion for final
13 approval of these rules.

14 MS. DEAN: I move to approve.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Is there a second?

16 MS. NEWTON: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Second by Ms. Newton.

18 Okay. A motion by Ms. Dean, second by Ms.
19 Newton.

20 All those in favor say "aye."

21 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

23 Great. Thank you.

24 MS. HYATT: Thank you.

25 B-4: CONSIDERATION FOR RELEASE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: ADE RULES

1 FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA
2 INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND RULES GOVERNING ADVANCED PLACEMENT
3 COURSES IN THE FOUR CORE AREAS IN ARKANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS WITH
4 GUIDELINES FOR ENDORSED CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT COURSES

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And then next up we have Ms.
6 Dedman, and these are for release for public comment.
7 These are the advanced placement and international
8 baccalaureate rules.

9 MS. DEDMAN: Good morning. Jennifer Dedman,
10 attorney for the Department.

11 As Dr. Barth said, these are the advanced
12 placement and international baccalaureate rules.
13 Changes were made to these rules to implement the
14 changes of Act 745 and 1118 of 2017. And the
15 Department respectfully requests that these be
16 approved for public comment release.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any questions?

18 MS. McFETRIDGE: May I make a motion?

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: You may, unless --

20 Any questions over here?

21 Ms. McFetridge.

22 MS. McFETRIDGE: I make a motion to release the
23 rules for public comment.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Is there a second?

25 DR. HILL: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms.
2 McFetridge, second by Dr. Hill.

3 All in favor say "aye."

4 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

6 I would encourage my board members to make any
7 comments to Ms. Dedman that they would like to see
8 considered upon review.

9 MS. DEDMAN: Yes, sir.

10 A-5: CONSIDERATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL: ADE RULES GOVERNING
11 CONSOLIDATION AND ANNEXATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. And then next up we
13 are -- have a final approval of ADE Rules Governing
14 Consolidation and Annexation, and Ms. Salas-Ford.

15 MS. SALAS-FORD: Good morning. Courtney Salas-
16 Ford for the Department.

17 The ADE Rules Governing Consolidation and
18 Annexation were approved for public comment by the
19 Board on September 14th. A public comment hearing
20 was held on September 26th. Written public comments
21 were received, but no substantive changes made. And
22 so we are asking for final approval of these rules.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Any questions on
24 this side of the --

25 Any questions over here?

1 Okay. I will entertain a motion on the final
2 approval of these rules.

3 MS. ZOOK: So moved.

4 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Ms. Zook, second by
6 Mr. Williamson.

7 All in favor say "aye."

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

10 All right.

11 MS. SALAS-FORD: Thank you.

12 COMMENTS BY SENATOR JOYCE ELLIOTT

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And I do want to
14 acknowledge Senator Elliott for being here. And we
15 do typically grant -- if you would like to make a
16 public comment at any time, if your schedule means
17 that you cannot stay till this -- till the end of the
18 meeting, just let me know if you would like to do
19 that.

20 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Well, actually the one I
21 wanted to comment on I think you've already done, the
22 report from Little Rock School District on the
23 waivers. But I came anyway, and so -- I wanted to be
24 here but I couldn't get here in time for that --

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

1 SENATOR ELLIOTT: -- so I missed it.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And we actually -- that
3 was pulled from the agenda, so it was not --

4 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Well, I want to talk about Act
5 1240.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: The Act 1240 case?

7 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Yeah.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I apologize.

9 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Act 1240.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: If you -- do you want to make
11 any comment on that?

12 SENATOR ELLIOTT: I would love to. Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Please come forward.

14 SENATOR ELLIOTT: Good morning, Board. It's
15 been too long. I'm sure y'all have missed me. But
16 what I wanted to say about the waiver is just a few
17 things.

18 One, the waiver that we have in Little Rock
19 School District for The Excel Program is one that I
20 think makes sense, because I was -- I am foursquare
21 against what Act 1240 does just as a wholesale thing.
22 And that's why I think we need to use it very, very
23 judiciously, because with that program we actually
24 must interact with people who are not certified
25 educators to make the program work, and that makes

1 sense. And I wanted to highlight that as something
2 that's opposite of what I want to ask the Board to
3 use your big voices for, because I think we have gone
4 amok with 1240.

5 The thing I want us to think about is if 1240 is
6 addressing a problem -- and I think it is, without a
7 doubt -- if it's addressing a problem, I want the
8 Board to think about getting to the root of the
9 problem. What's the problem that's causing us I
10 think in so many ways to devalue the education that
11 our kids deserve? What is the problem? If we can't
12 get teachers, how do you use your bully pulpit to
13 help us get teachers? If we can't get people to move
14 to a place, how do you use your bully pulpit to solve
15 -- help solve that problem?

16 When I was a kid growing up I was really, really
17 I think in a way very lucky, but I was pretty
18 fearless -- not because of anything that I had done
19 myself, I just always thought I could do stuff. And
20 we had a catalpa tree -- a catalpa tree in our yard.
21 You know, they had these fearsome looking worms on
22 them. I was the only kid in my family of five girls
23 who could climb the tree, get the worms and sell them
24 to the people at the store across the road from us
25 for people who were going fishing. So I was my own

1 entrepreneur. But I believed it made sense if I had
2 a plan about how I was going to do it, so I had a
3 plan about that -- and that's kind of what I'm
4 thinking about here.

5 When I was a teacher in El Dorado, Brett, for
6 about nine or ten years, you know, I had an
7 opportunity to teach at a time when teachers were
8 these valued people, that when you went to the
9 principal and said, "I am well prepared" -- and I got
10 lucky, I think, in a lot of ways. I was well
11 prepared at what is now Southern Arkansas University
12 to be a teacher. I didn't feel as if I couldn't do
13 stuff. I didn't have laws that devalued what I could
14 do. So when I was this young teacher, like about 27,
15 I went to the principal and I said, "Our literature
16 -- what we're teaching our kids is devoid of any
17 literature for the most part of people of color in
18 this country. Would it be okay if I developed my own
19 course, and we can get it okayed by you, the school
20 board and everybody else?" Because I was prepared to
21 do this. So I developed this course where we would
22 concentrate on -- because I couldn't do everybody and
23 somebody was going to say, "You left me out" -- so I
24 developed this course where we had the literature of
25 African Americans, Jewish Americans and Native

1 Americans on my own because I could do it. And we
2 are not valuing teachers to get those kind of things
3 done anymore, where the people right there on the
4 spot know what they're doing, what they're talking
5 about. And that was -- that course was a raving
6 success, not just because I get it -- I still have
7 kids talking to me about it; because I -- but because
8 I knew how to do it. I knew how to read the need and
9 I knew how to respond to the need. And I even had
10 one teacher take that course.

11 So when it comes to the 1240 waivers, I don't
12 want us to think about -- for example, anybody
13 couldn't just do the job that Diane Zook did as a
14 special education teacher, because we're talking
15 about kids. People just couldn't do the job of
16 teaching math like Ouida did when she was -- when she
17 was teaching. People can't just do the math of being
18 a mechanical engineer or do -- just be one because we
19 say "we have a problem, let's just pass a law and say
20 'anybody can do it.'"

21 So as we are talking about being really serious
22 about how great education can be, I think this is a
23 seminal, an existential problem that we have if we
24 don't start thinking about who we put in the
25 classroom and how we prepare them.

1 So if you think teachers are not being prepared
2 well, let's attack that problem. But I just want to
3 ask you in the kids' language, and when I grew up in
4 my culture, just can we pull up a little bit and
5 think about this and think about -- there is a
6 problem, there are some problems. But my appeal to
7 you is that we need your bully pulpit to not just
8 pass a law and say "we're going to do this," because
9 our kids deserve better. Because the other countries
10 with whom our kids have to compete would never dream
11 -- never dream of the waivers that we are putting in
12 place now in our schools. And the fact -- and I'm
13 about to wrap up here -- I haven't seen you in a long
14 time. And the fact that we do it because charter
15 schools do it is just -- to me that's such a
16 conundrum, because if I see -- for example, if I see
17 Sarah doing something and it's not great, and I go
18 like, "Okay, well, I'm going to do that too because I
19 don't want to be great, I want to be like Sarah
20 because she's not great," that's kind of what we're
21 doing when we use the excuse "we can do it because of
22 charter schools." And I'm not saying it to be down
23 on charter schools but that's not a good model,
24 that's not a good reason for us to do it because we
25 don't have any evidence that this is the way to go.

1 Decision, and I think -- Dr. Boyd, are you going to
2 take the lead today?

3 DR. BOYD: Good morning. Alexandra Boyd, Public
4 School Accountability.

5 The first set of Charter Authorizing Panel
6 decisions you have before you are about the standards
7 transition. And, remember, with all of these items
8 -- charter items today your decision -- your
9 motion/decision should be to review or not to review.

10 So you have before you a number of approvals of
11 transitions to the new standards for some district
12 conversion charters and some open-enrollment
13 charters. No one has requested a review of this
14 decision.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And these -- as we did
16 -- have done in the past, we can take these as -- in
17 bulk?

18 DR. BOYD: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Are there any questions about
20 the overall process that we're undertaking here or
21 any of these individual cases?

22 DR. MOORE: I do have a question.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes, Dr. Moore.

24 DR. MOORE: Are these the same as we did last
25 month?

1 DR. BOYD: Yes, they're just different charters.

2 DR. MOORE: Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So we're kind of going -- is
4 this the last batch or will there be another --

5 DR. BOYD: There will be one more batch, because
6 we are -- as we're going through the Standards for
7 Accreditation process we're finding some things that
8 we missed in the first batch. So we're going to have
9 to -- I assume -- hopefully just one more clean-up,
10 but possibly two.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Great.

12 I'd enter -- you've heard the -- the proper
13 motion is either to review these, which would mean
14 they come back as an action item next month, or not
15 to review them based on the decision of the Charter
16 Authorizing Panel.

17 MS. DEAN: I move to not review.

18 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms. Dean,
20 second by Mr. Williamson.

21 All those in favor say "aye."

22 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

24 All right.

25 DR. BOYD: All right.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. That gets us down to --
2 so we did -- yeah, we did all of that item.

3 A-7: CONSIDERATION OF CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL DECISIONS -
4 SUMMARY INFORMATION

5 a) KIPP DELTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So that gets us down to Item 7.

7 DR. BOYD: Right. So these decisions that are
8 coming up are amendment request decisions. The first
9 one was an amendment request made by KIPP Delta
10 Public Schools. The Panel approved the request with
11 a unanimous vote and no one has requested a review of
12 that decision.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And just to let y'all
14 know that Mr. Shirey is available via phone if there
15 are any questions related to this issue.

16 MS. ZOOK: I don't know if he wants to answer
17 this or not --

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, let's be positive we have
19 him before we get too far into this.

20 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Mr. Shirey?

21 (MOMENT OF SILENCE)

22 MS. ZOOK: I think I can go ahead. It's not so
23 much a question as just a concern that I have.

24 What KIPP is asking for is to be able to use
25 part of the funding that typically you would not use

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MS. McLAUGHLIN: I don't know what's going on.

CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. That's fine.

MS. ZOOK: What he's asking to do -- or what the school is asking to do is to use funds that ordinarily would not be able to be used to pay people who are not necessarily licensed or certified in the area that they are overseeing or working with the teachers. My concern is that over the past several years the KIPP letter grades have declined, and you always -- back to what the Senator was saying, you always look to see is there a reason, is there a cause. And because of that I will vote to -- if the motion is to not review, I will vote against it. If the motion is to review, I will support it.

CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Are there other questions or comments related to this item?

Okay.

1 MS. ZOOK: In particular, their African American
2 group, their low income group, their special ed.
3 group are all below the state average for -- judging
4 just against their population and just against their
5 income level. And that is of concern to me because
6 you may have a special ed. teacher or teachers who
7 are on a waiver being supervised or encouraged or
8 mentored by another person who is also not licensed
9 or certified in that area.

10 So I would like for the Board to have an
11 opportunity, if they haven't already heard what the
12 Charter Panel heard, to explore this with me. And
13 for that reason I will make a motion -- and it may or
14 may not get seconded -- but I will make a motion to
15 review this amendment request.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: There's a motion. Is there a
17 second?

18 MS. NEWTON: Second.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms. Zook,
20 second by Ms. Newton.

21 Maybe a quick roll-call on this, Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. Ms. Zook.

23 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Hill.

25 DR. HILL: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: Mr. Williamson.

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Chambers.

4 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

6 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Moore.

8 DR. MOORE: No.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Newton.

10 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER KEY: Ms. Dean.

12 MS. DEAN: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER KEY: Seven yeas, one nay.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Okay. So that will
15 return to us as an action agenda item in December.

16 Correct, Ms. Boyd -- Dr. Boyd?

17 DR. BOYD: That's correct.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

19 b) THE EXCEL CENTER

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So next up we have The Excel
21 Center, and we do have -- I believe a couple of folks
22 from Excel are here.

23 Welcome. Thank y'all so much, Ms. Garner and
24 Ms. Davis. Correct? All right. Thank y'all.

25 So if you do have questions on this item they

1 are here.

2 DR. BOYD: So the Panel approved this request
3 unanimately and there have been no requests for
4 review made.

5 MS. NEWTON: I have a question.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton.

7 MS. NEWTON: If we vote to not review, this
8 would still have that they tabled part of their
9 request; that still would not be in this part that
10 we're not reviewing. Is that right?

11 DR. BOYD: That's correct. And that's a great
12 question just for clarification. On the voting sheet
13 it did note that there was a particular piece of the
14 request that was tabled. The Excel Center has since
15 withdrawn that part of the request, so it is no
16 longer an issue at all.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you. Thanks for
18 that clarification.

19 Any additional questions on this side?

20 Questions or comments on this side?

21 DR. MOORE: I'll make the comment -- I saw that
22 The Excel Center has their first graduating class, so
23 that's good news that adults in the state are able to
24 receive their high school diploma.

25 DR. BOYD: That's correct. I believe they have

1 six that will be graduating this December, and I
2 believe you're all invited to attend that ceremony if
3 you would like.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Okay.

5 I'll entertain a motion either to review this or
6 not to review this amendment request from Excel.

7 MS. CHAMBERS: I move to not review.

8 DR. MOORE: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Ms. Chambers, second
10 by Dr. Moore.

11 All those in favor say "aye."

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed?

14 All right. Thank you. Thank you for y'all's
15 work and for being here.

16 c) NORTHWEST ARKANSAS CLASSICAL ACADEMY

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And then next up is the
18 Northwest Classical Academy.

19 DR. BOYD: Thank you, Dr. Barth. Northwest
20 Arkansas Classical Academy posed this request to the
21 Panel. They approved it by a unanimous vote. And no
22 one has requested a review of the decision.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And do we have folks here from

24 --

25 DR. BOYD: Yes, we do.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

2 DR. BOYD: Curtis Shack, regional director, and
3 then Rhonda Bradford, the principal.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank y'all for being
5 here.

6 So they are here if there are questions.

7 I do have a question -- but go ahead, Ms. Zook.

8 MS. ZOOK: Do we have an address yet or will
9 that come back before the Panel when they finally
10 have an address?

11 DR. BOYD: Right. So they currently do have an
12 address of an existing campus. From the way I
13 understand it, they won't be looking to expand into
14 an additional space for another two years. So we're
15 a little ways away from having that address.

16 MS. ZOOK: Well, and we don't want to interfere
17 with property negotiations, but I just wondered if
18 they had come up with a place.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So, Ms. Boyd, so this is
20 different than one I can remember seeing in terms of
21 an existing -- so existing charter going away, second
22 existing charter expanding. Correct?

23 DR. BOYD: Right. So the request is -- so
24 Responsive Ed. has -- operates three different
25 charters in the state. Two of those are at Northwest

1 Arkansas Classical Academy, and then Quest Academy,
2 which is in West Little Rock. What they would like
3 to do is to combine the two charters under the
4 classical academy model and charter. So what's
5 happening is the Quest/West Little Rock campus will
6 now belong to the Northwest Arkansas Classical
7 Academy charter, and in that process they will also
8 like to transition from the Quest model to the
9 classical model over time.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I think my concern here is --
11 and I was obviously around for the first conversation
12 about this West Little Rock location, and that --
13 when that was put forward it was very much about
14 location. I was just concerned that there wasn't a
15 lot of -- there was not enough that was not about the
16 location; it was not -- in my view, not quite as
17 distinctive. The classical model, I've always been
18 very supportive of it because it is distinctive.

19 The problem is it does feel like because of the
20 disconnect geographically between these two that they
21 really are in two different markets, two different --
22 I understand the model similarities, but I don't know
23 that -- do we have another example of -- and I guess
24 KIPP would be the only other example of a charter
25 that we've approved that has this kind of

1 geographical breadth to it?

2 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh. At the current time that is
3 correct.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And this would open up
5 another charter spot. Correct?

6 DR. BOYD: That's correct as well.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Do we think that that --
8 does Quest have -- has Quest expressed interest in
9 adding another charter that is separate from this?

10 DR. BOYD: So they were recently approved for an
11 additional charter of an additional premier campus in
12 North Little Rock.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And that was --

14 DR. BOYD: Is that what you're asking?

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, that one -- that was --
16 and so that's odd, because I had the -- that one was
17 approved not as an amendment but was an entire
18 separate charter?

19 DR. BOYD: Yeah. I think --

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So that's what's always
21 confused me about --

22 DR. BOYD: Right.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- these situations. Where
24 KIPP has always made sense to me --

25 DR. BOYD: Right.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- because it has -- it's in
2 multiple locations but it's with -- but Quest, it
3 seems to be a mishmash of --

4 DR. BOYD: Right.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- models and locations.

6 DR. BOYD: I think I can help -- and Mr. Shack
7 and Ms. Bradford are definitely welcome to speak. So
8 one thing is is that the premier model is a dropout
9 recovery model. And so when it comes to making
10 expansion requests on a dropout recovery model it
11 becomes tenuous because the performance is not --
12 does not necessarily meet what the laws and the rules
13 say they need to have in order to request an
14 expansion. So I think that's why they requested a
15 separate charter instead of an expansion.

16 As you know, with Responsive Ed. here in
17 Arkansas their most successful model is the classical
18 model.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Uh-huh.

20 DR. BOYD: And so I believe that's why they're
21 wanting to roll that down into Quest/West Little Rock
22 and expand that there, because it is their most
23 successful model.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

25 Okay. Any other comments?

1 Ms. Newton? Just -- okay.

2 MS. NEWTON: Just thinking.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. So we do
4 have folks here from Responsive Ed. or from the --

5 DR. BOYD: And I just want to -- I'm just
6 double-checking. It looks like there are two other
7 charter holders that have a bit of geographic
8 distance. It's not as large as this one would be,
9 but that would be the Lighthouse schools -- they
10 operate in three different localities -- and then
11 also Academics Plus -- they're all in the same
12 county, but it's Pulaski County, so they're pretty
13 far apart.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Right. Right.

15 But with Lisa, those are separate charters.
16 Correct?

17 DR. BOYD: They started out as separate
18 charters. Lisa and eStem both, they started off as
19 separate charters and then once they realized that
20 their model was working they combined them under one
21 umbrella.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

23 DR. BOYD: The same thing with Haas Hall.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

25 MS. ZOOK: I move to not review.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Motion by Ms. Zook.

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Second by Mr. Williamson.

4 All those in favor of not reviewing say "aye."

5 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Those opposed?

7 Okay. Thank y'all for driving down for this.

8 Okay. That moves us through the charter issues.

9 A-8: DISTRICT REQUEST FOR WAIVERS GRANTED TO OPEN-ENROLLMENT
10 CHARTERS

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And we get to the Act 1240
12 requests. And as you remember, we had one that was
13 published on the agenda, the request from Horatio,
14 and then we have the second one that was added this
15 morning from Jackson County.

16 And so, everybody good to go, keep going?

17 a) HORATIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Then, Ms. McLaughlin, I'll let
19 you walk us through Act 1240.

20 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Good morning. Kelly
21 McLaughlin, Charter School Office.

22 For Action Item 8(a) today we have
23 representatives from Horatio School District. Just
24 as a reminder, the school district will have their 20
25 minutes to make their presentation and if they have

1 any -- for 20 minutes. If there's not any
2 opposition, they'll have an additional 5 minutes.

3 Just as a reminder to everyone, Act 1240 of 2015
4 allows a school district to petition the State Board
5 for any waivers that a school -- an open-enrollment
6 public charter school who serves students that reside
7 in their particular school district. And we do have
8 representatives from the Horatio School District
9 appearing before you today seeking waivers for
10 Teacher Licensure waivers. Their 90 days will expire
11 on January 15, 2019. They are requesting for three
12 years, so their waivers will end on November 9, 2021.

13 You will want to swear everyone in. They have a
14 team of folks here today: Lee Smith, superintendent;
15 Steve McJunkins, University of Arkansas - Cossatot
16 Skill and Technical Division Chair; Stacy Southerland
17 is with the DeQueen-Mena Educational Service
18 Cooperative Career and Technical Education
19 Coordinator; and Elizabeth Walker is the Horatio
20 School Board president.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McLaughlin, quick -- one
22 quick question. In their proposal, what are their
23 reporting requirements that they have articulated in
24 their proposal? Are there any annual reporting
25 requirements that they have agreed to in the

1 proposal?

2 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Not in the proposal.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

4 MS. McLAUGHLIN: But it is my policy to reach
5 out to school districts afterwards.

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

7 So if everybody from Horatio will stand and
8 raise your right hand. Welcome. Do you swear or
9 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
10 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
11 truth?

12 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. And as you've heard,
14 you've got up to 20 minutes to lay out your proposal.

15 Welcome. And please do identify yourself for
16 the record.

17 SUPT. SMITH: Lee Smith, Horatio School
18 Superintendent.

19 I thank -- there we go.

20 Thank you all for hearing us today. I'll try
21 not to use my entire 20 minutes. But I stand before
22 you today representing six juniors and seniors from
23 Horatio High School who are part of the Lockesburg
24 Industrial Maintenance Program. It's in its
25 inaugural year, just got off the ground. I'd like to

1 give you a little history about it and how it came to
2 be, and then go into the justifications for our
3 waiver request.

4 Lockesburg Industrial Maintenance Institute, or
5 LIMI, is a collaboration among K-12 schools in the
6 DeQueen Co-op area, K-12 high schools -- I'm sorry,
7 not K-12 high schools, but the high schools in these
8 districts -- juniors and seniors from Horatio,
9 DeQueen, Nashville, Ashdown, Foreman, and Dierks, U
10 of A-Cossatot (formerly Cossatot Community College),
11 the DeQueen-Mena Co-op. We have industry partners --
12 Tyson Foods, Domtar (which is the paper mill in
13 Ashdown), AEP SWEPCO, Ash Grove Cement, and
14 Weyerhaeuser -- and agencies here in Little Rock, at
15 the capital, such as Natural and Cultural Resource
16 Council, Arkansas Department of Career Ed., and
17 Arkansas Department of Higher Ed.

18 What LIMI is is a way for students to learn job
19 skills worth a high living wage that are learned and
20 applied relatively close to home without amassing
21 huge debt. And as I put it, this is a way for us to
22 provide them with a ticket to a great career just
23 right out of high school. So we're really excited
24 about that, and I'll tell you more about it as I move
25 through this presentation. It's designed to create

1 more practical applied entry into STEAM careers
2 because it has a pathway on to post-secondary, if
3 students choose to do so. It's designed to solve
4 some historic human capital challenges that industry
5 is facing. I was talking with Ms. Walker, our board
6 president, who was a chemical engineer at Domtar, the
7 paper mill. She's a stay-at-home mother and farmer
8 now serving as our board president. She explained
9 that the mill was built in 1963 and many of the
10 skilled maintenance operators there in the mill now
11 are reaching retirement age. And there's a real
12 struggle finding skilled technicians to come in and
13 operate and maintain the advanced technology that
14 exists in the mill now that did not exist at the time
15 that it was built. The Lockesburg Industrial
16 Maintenance Institute houses all of the equipment
17 that needs to be maintained in those mills -- and not
18 only the paper mill in Ashdown but the cement plant
19 in Foreman, the chicken plants in Grannis, Arkansas,
20 and Broken Bow, Oklahoma, and in Nashville, Arkansas,
21 and in DeQueen, Arkansas -- a lot of industry. And
22 Lockesburg was chosen because it's central to all of
23 those plants, and we hope that it will revive a
24 stagnant economy in our area by injecting more
25 revenue from these high-paying jobs. And, of course,

1 we want it to accomplish our vision of Every Learner,
2 Every Dream, Every Day. As I mentioned, we have six
3 students -- juniors and seniors -- that sacrificed
4 half the day and made difficult choices in their
5 schedule in order to take advantage of this
6 opportunity, and we want to provide this same
7 opportunity for more of our students. And, again,
8 that's why I'm here in front of you today.

9 So how does it work? As I mentioned, it's an
10 industrial maintenance program. Our juniors and
11 seniors have three-hour blocks of time in either the
12 morning or the afternoon that they spend learning to
13 use specific equipment housed in these industrial
14 centers. They are taught by skilled professionals
15 who have at least 20 years or more years of
16 experience with the machinery. By high school
17 graduation they -- and completion of the program they
18 will be employed immediately in some of the
19 industries in the area, while others do require more
20 experience before entering into the field or entering
21 into their plant or mill. They have allowed this
22 program to count for so-many years of actual work
23 experience. That's how much they value the content
24 of the material. The content is actually driven by
25 NCCER curriculum -- that stands for National Center

1 for Construction Education and Research -- and there
2 are multiple or stacked industry credentials that are
3 also awarded to students who complete this program.
4 A lot of applied learning is taking place in the
5 NCCER curriculum.

6 So we looked at the content of the curriculum,
7 or at least some professionals at the DeQueen-Mena
8 Co-op -- Ms. Southerland, who is here, and Ms. Andrea
9 Miller, who is the math specialist who could not
10 attend because she's conducting a training today. So
11 I had her make a statement to include to you as
12 evidence of what kind of applied mathematics is
13 actually being taught in this curriculum, and I'll
14 read it to you. It says, "Based on my understanding
15 of the modules that will be presented in the
16 Industrial Maintenance Mechanic program, as outlined
17 in the NCCER curriculum, I do think that there is
18 enough applied math content in this curriculum to be
19 considered as math credit. The following modules
20 include real world application of math that cannot be
21 taught in a traditional classroom setting: core
22 related mathematics, construction drawings, advanced
23 trade math, precision measuring tools, advanced
24 blueprint reading, and reverse alignment. Students
25 pursuing this pathway will be exposed to over 132

1 hours of mathematical concepts, including but not
2 limited to ratios, proportional reasoning, basic
3 algebra and geometry, trigonometry, and its use in
4 the trade, and mathematical techniques for alignment
5 of equipment." She went on to provide a personal
6 anecdote. I hope you read it -- and I'll paraphrase
7 it a little bit for you for sake of time. But she
8 went on to explain that her own son struggled with
9 mathematical concepts but he is in an electrical
10 apprenticeship program now and, all of a sudden, the
11 mathematics is making sense because he's using it in
12 an applied way. And that's the way that the
13 mathematics in the NCCER curriculum is used with the
14 students, in an applied way. So we see the potential
15 of it actually being a better way for students to be
16 prepared for the workforce using the mathematics that
17 they learn outside of an academic setting in an
18 applied setting.

19 So why we're asking for the waiver -- well, one
20 thing, to help with the scheduling. As I mentioned,
21 these students are giving up half the day and they
22 made difficult choices because they wanted to be a
23 part of this. So scheduling is a hurdle. We are a
24 small high school. We only have three math teachers
25 -- and one of those math teachers is also teaching

1 computer science, so that takes another block or
2 another section out of the day for students to choose
3 from. So if the section of math that they need is
4 not offered for -- the one that they need for
5 graduation is not offered, then they have to forgo
6 this opportunity at LIMI in order to meet graduation
7 requirements. We feel there is enough math embedded
8 within the content that that shouldn't be -- the
9 students shouldn't have to face that decision. They
10 could be -- they should be given a credit for
11 mathematics while going through this program.

12 Corresponding math codes have been identified by
13 Ms. Miller and Ms. Southerland and I did come to find
14 out, visiting with Thomas Coy here at the Department,
15 that the course code we were given is actually math
16 elective. But he did say that if we requested that
17 this not -- if you do grant the waiver, that it not
18 go into effect until next fall that will give him
19 time to go through and create the course codes that
20 we would need in order for it to satisfy the coding
21 system.

22 As I mentioned prior, the instructors at LIMI
23 have more than 20 years of industry experience. So I
24 leverage what Senator Elliott pointed out in saying
25 that these gentlemen, these instructors in this

1 program, they have the efficacy required to deliver
2 the mathematics at a high level of ability. They
3 know what they are doing. They are using -- it's all
4 -- as I explained to Ms. Walker on the way up here,
5 it's all adding, subtracting, multiplying and
6 dividing; they're just using it in a different
7 context and knowing when to apply it. And these
8 instructors know how to do that and know how to do it
9 well.

10 The only thing is they do not possess the
11 required math licensure in order for us to meet
12 standards for that math credit to be given, and that
13 is the nature of our request. That is why we request
14 the waiver, because they do not have the licensure.

15 We already have seat time waivers via School of
16 Innovation, which we are on our second year. And, of
17 course, seat time is not really an issue anymore as
18 it has been in the past. So we are adept with
19 stacking or awarding dual credit, so that's why we
20 see this as our only obstacle is the licensure issue.

21 So in short, or in closing, waiving math
22 licensure requirements will create opportunity for
23 more students at Horatio High School to be in the
24 LIMI program by providing them with the math credit
25 required for high school graduation. So please give

1 them this opportunity. We'll entertain any questions
2 that you might have.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Let's see if -- first
4 off, if there are any -- is there any opposition, Ms.
5 McLaughlin? I'm sorry.

6 DR. BOYD: No.

7 MS. FRENO: There's no opposition.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Just a second.

9 MS. ZOOK: Ms. Freno was saying that there is
10 not.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

12 MS. FRENO: There is no opposition.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

14 So you do have five more minutes, if you wish.
15 If not, we can move straight to questions.

16 SUPT. SMITH: Well, just one more statement from
17 our curriculum coordinator. Our high school
18 principal wanted to be here but she's in the Master
19 Principal program. So the high school curriculum
20 coordinator was going to accompany me and she texted
21 last night she's had a medical issue with her
22 husband, and so -- but she really wanted to be here.
23 She's a math major herself and a math teacher, and
24 she reiterated some of the points that I've already
25 made. But I would just say on behalf of her and her

1 knowledge, she has more than 30 years experience in
2 mathematics and literacy instruction. So I would
3 just say on her behalf that she also requests this
4 waiver as well. As a staunch academic, however, she
5 sees the applied nature of this math would help
6 students conceptualize the numbers so much better
7 than what they may get in the academic classroom.
8 And if the students -- having to stay in school to
9 take a fourth math credit interferes with them going
10 and learning applicable skills for a high-paying job,
11 that really is a problem that we need to address.

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. And this is a three-
13 year request?

14 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And I just asked Ms. McLaughlin
16 earlier, there's no -- there's nothing in -- written
17 in requiring an annual report. We cannot tell you
18 what to do; we can only reject or approve.

19 SUPT. SMITH: Uh-huh.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: But I would ask --

21 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- if you would like to add
23 that to your --

24 SUPT. SMITH: We will.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- proposal.

1 All right. Thank you. So the annual report is
2 part of the proposal.

3 Ms. McLaughlin.

4 MS. McLAUGHLIN: I did want to make sure that
5 everyone knew that these waivers would go into effect
6 as of tomorrow. Okay.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

8 Okay. All right. Questions over here?

9 Dr. Moore.

10 DR. MOORE: I do have questions. I noticed
11 there's a number of high schools listed. So do you
12 have students coming from other high schools right
13 now to participate or is that a future endeavor?

14 SUPT. SMITH: Yes, there are 30 students there
15 right now. We -- the school only had room for 60.
16 Only 30 this first year are in it, and it was due to
17 scheduling for the high schoolers; they couldn't find
18 the time in their schedule to be there. Actually, it
19 was a good thing because they are getting a slower
20 start, so having 30 actually worked out better, but
21 they would like it to grow to 60. But we -- and we
22 assigned slots according to enrollment in the high
23 schools. So the larger high schools in our co-op
24 area, they have more slots than we do. But -- and I
25 don't speak on their behalf for this waiver, just our

1 own because we would like to get more -- we also had
2 an agreement -- I'm rambling a little bit. But we
3 also had an agreement that if there were slots that
4 weren't filled by the larger schools then the smaller
5 ones could take those positions. So if this waiver
6 is granted and we don't have to worry about an extra
7 math credit, then that might create some more
8 opportunity for some of our students to take those
9 empty seats.

10 DR. MOORE: And this is a Department question
11 then. So this waiver is just for students coming
12 from Horatio High School, not the other ones?

13 SUPT. SMITH: (Nodding head up and down.)

14 DR. MOORE: Okay.

15 SUPT. SMITH: Yes. They can ask for their own.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson, anything?

17 MR. WILLIAMSON: No.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Zook.

19 MS. ZOOK: I guess that was my question, is if
20 all of them are going to participate then will each
21 of you have to come and ask for a waiver? So if they
22 have some there now, will they, like, be on our
23 agenda next month or --

24 SUPT. SMITH: I haven't spoken with any of them
25 directly about that. I would assume that they would.

1 MS. ZOOK: Okay. Because sometimes we do stuff
2 for a co-op --

3 SUPT. SMITH: Sure.

4 MS. ZOOK: -- and so that's -- that prompted my
5 question. It sounds like a great idea.

6 SUPT. SMITH: (Nodding head up and down.)

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So I'll go ahead -- before
8 moving on I'll go ahead and ask a couple of
9 questions. These are the types of Act -- back to
10 Senator Elliott's comments earlier, these are the
11 type of Act 1240 waivers that I've -- fairly narrow
12 that I've been comfortable with. You have a logic
13 here. I do have a couple of questions, maybe
14 worries.

15 You know, I applaud your thoughtfulness about
16 connecting your students with careers and I also
17 appreciate your thoughtfulness about connecting the
18 classroom to their careers. My worry oftentimes is
19 two-fold. First off, is there the type or kind of
20 vision here about connecting students to careers akin
21 to this, or is it connecting it to a job in this one
22 setting? Do you see the difference?

23 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Because sometimes I see that
25 kind of preparing students for careers like this is

1 not always there. It's kind of getting folks into a
2 particular set of jobs in that community.

3 SUPT. SMITH: It being too narrow?

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Being too narrow.

5 SUPT. SMITH: I'd like for Mr. McJunkins to
6 speak to this. I did briefly mention the pathway to
7 other STEM areas.

8 So, Steve, would you like to address that?

9 MR. McJUNKINS: Yes. I'm Steve McJunkins. I'm
10 division chair for Skilled and Technical Science at
11 UA-Cossatot. And in this program I helped develop
12 all the curriculum, I did all the scheduling for it,
13 so I'm quite familiar with the program. But I'm also
14 -- I was an instructor before I became division chair
15 and I taught carpentry.

16 And I just wanted to add this before I get to
17 the career choices in this: I taught the math -- in
18 the NCCER curriculum they have what's called core
19 curriculum. Before you can get credit for any of the
20 rest of the NCCER curriculum you have to take the
21 core curriculum. In the core curriculum there is a
22 specific math module in there and in that module it
23 teaches addition, subtraction, multiplication,
24 decimal percentages, everything that might be
25 associated with these programs. And as an

1 instructor, everybody that's ever taught, we love
2 that moment when you see that light come on for these
3 students. A large percentage of the students that
4 I've got coming through my carpentry class they
5 didn't really have a clue about percentages or
6 decimals or anything. They just could not relate --
7 and especially fractions. But when I taught them
8 fractions using applied math, and when that light
9 would come on, you know, you'd see it. All these
10 years all they knew, you know, was what they'd been
11 taught in the classroom -- theory and all the things
12 that go on in the classroom. But when they see the
13 applied math and how it relates they had such a
14 better comprehension of what was -- what it was
15 really about.

16 Now to answer the question, we have -- these
17 classes that we have are secondary career center
18 classes. All of our instructors are approved through
19 Arkansas Career Education, so they have those
20 qualifications, and, you know, those are pretty
21 stringent. But all of our instructors also teach not
22 only secondary but post-secondary, which is good
23 because these secondary classes lead into post-
24 secondary. But these students will have the option
25 once they graduate, if they come in as juniors, they

1 will have covered 16 different modules. So that's 16
2 different subjects that they would've covered, all of
3 which contain a lot of math. But before they can
4 take any of those they have to have the core
5 curriculum. We'll offer that every-other-semester so
6 that we make sure that everybody gets that subject.
7 And I think it's important that you get that because
8 it is specific to -- that one module is specific to
9 math. But there's not a subject that we teach that
10 leads to either the electrical pathway or the
11 mechanical pathway, and we're adding instrumentation
12 as a third pathway for post-secondary students. All
13 of those require a lot of math, every subject --
14 hydraulics, pneumatics -- we do all the way to PLCs,
15 programmable logic controls. Electricity is -- if
16 you're familiar with that at all you know it's full
17 of math. These instructors have been -- they've
18 proven themselves. They've worked in the field for
19 at least 10 years, and if they were successful in the
20 field then they knew the math or they would not have
21 been successful. And so I think it's a great
22 opportunity for these students to learn this math
23 through these instructors that have actually
24 experienced it on the job.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, I think you're speaking

1 probably well to the embedding of math and this
2 experience. What I'm not hearing yet is the kind of
3 preparation of students for careers like this and the
4 thought about vocational discernment in careers like
5 this, rather than using math skills in this job
6 setting, which is a great thing in and of itself --

7 MR. McJUNKINS: Right.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: -- because it does I think -- I
9 think -- but so one question I have, is there any
10 reflective work written into this proposal where
11 students are really thinking about what might they
12 want their futures to look like in terms of what
13 skills and talents are they finding in themselves
14 that they may want to use in settings like this, not
15 necessarily in this one setting but kind of getting
16 their eyes opened kind of beyond this one
17 opportunity?

18 MR. McJUNKINS: I had an instructor, a post-
19 secondary instructor and he teaches the electrical
20 side of this. And when he first started he was
21 getting a little bit frustrated because he was
22 thinking, okay, you know, I'm teaching electrical and
23 I've got some students in this class that I don't
24 think they're going to pursue that pathway. But then
25 when he finally realized, hey, they can use this in

1 any engineering or in any other field, well, that
2 turned him around and it made him a better teacher
3 when he realized that everybody in there wasn't going
4 to be just that, whether it was electricity or
5 mechanical devices. So I truly believe that what
6 they learn here can be applied anywhere.

7 SUPT. SMITH: And these credentials --

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Smith, would you walk to
9 the microphone please?

10 SUPT. SMITH: These credentials do have legs
11 too. They're nationally recognized, and so they
12 could go into any industry. It won't confine them to
13 southwest Arkansas. It won't imprison them in any
14 way once they realize the pathways that they can
15 take.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And on my question of is there
17 kind of either written or other forms of reflection
18 where students are really thinking about their
19 vocational discernment, they're finding their path?

20 SUPT. SMITH: We don't have anything really hard
21 and substantial right now, but, you know, student
22 success plans are in the works. And so that
23 reflective piece for the students -- and I think --
24 and plus, this being a new program, I think as it
25 grows and expands and more enter into it and some get

1 into the career field and advance into, you know,
2 into a management supervision from there, I think the
3 pathway will make itself evident, the different
4 directions they can go.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well, I appreciate that. And,
6 you know, somebody who does engage learning like
7 this, which is applying the theory of the classroom
8 to the world beyond, it really only clicks for
9 students if there is that reflective element.

10 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And so I would really urge
12 y'all to put some attention into helping students
13 kind of do that reflection and bring -- you know,
14 honing the skills of instructors so that they can
15 help students really reflect thoughtfully about what
16 they're doing.

17 SUPT. SMITH: Well, another piece to this that
18 is taking shape now and something that has been
19 mentioned is the career development. Career
20 development is social as much as anything and there's
21 plenty of social science to back that statement up.
22 And these students will be interactive with
23 professionals in the industry. We already have
24 several trips organized, working on internships. And
25 so when these relationships get established, when

1 these students have relationships, working
2 relationships with the engineers in the plants, then
3 their communication is going to create the social
4 network that they would begin to understand -- and
5 that is what I think you're referring to. They're
6 going to see more for themselves beyond just going to
7 the plant and starting the work.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah, so -- but it's not just
9 doing but it's thinking about doing.

10 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And that's a great example. Do
12 they find that they work really well in teams or do
13 they work in more solo settings, to the degree that's
14 even possible in a 21st century world. But thinking
15 about those and helping students get guided in that
16 thinking is exactly, I think, what programs like this
17 need to do.

18 SUPT. SMITH: As part of our yearly report we'll
19 make sure that that is emphasized.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Excellent. Awesome. Thank
21 you.

22 Ms. Chambers.

23 MS. CHAMBERS: Just a question. I think you
24 referred to this earlier as currently an elective.
25 But will the core curriculum -- and I don't know if

1 I'm using the terminology the same way you are -- but
2 will the core curriculum for the math component
3 satisfy the general math requirement, not just as an
4 elective?

5 SUPT. SMITH: Yes. And that's what -- yes. And
6 the math course that they've used to crosswalk was
7 the new quantitative analysis -- or quantitative
8 literacy. And they found out to meet the math
9 content of NCCER substantially meets the content of
10 the standards of that course. Yes.

11 MS. CHAMBERS: Okay. I just -- the spirit of my
12 question is in line with what Dr. Barth was talking
13 about, to insure that this was broader; it has
14 definite practical application, but the basis is
15 broader than just to a specific career.

16 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill, anything?

18 DR. HILL: No.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton?

20 MS. NEWTON: I have several questions. One of
21 them is, you've got juniors and seniors enrolled in
22 this; correct?

23 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

24 MS. NEWTON: And it's a three-hour block for the
25 entire year?

1 SUPT. SMITH: (Nodding head up and down.)

2 MS. NEWTON: So what portion of that two years,
3 three hours a day are you saying a student has to
4 complete in order to get credit? Is it the full two
5 years? Is it -- what are you going to have to --

6 SUPT. SMITH: Yes. The way I see it now -- we
7 are still at the drawing board. But the way that I
8 see it now to encourage completion is till they
9 complete the entire program to get the credit. Yes.

10 MS. NEWTON: Okay. And so what if a student
11 goes his junior year but then doesn't go back? So
12 what is going to happen?

13 SUPT. SMITH: We've talked about that. We'll
14 have to enroll them in what they need, and we have --
15 we can use Virtual Arkansas to satisfy any -- to make
16 sure that they get the required credits.

17 MS. NEWTON: So they would not get any credit at
18 all?

19 SUPT. SMITH: Yes, they would still get elective
20 credit.

21 MS. NEWTON: Well, I'm talking about they would
22 not get any math credit unless they completed the
23 entire two years?

24 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

25 MS. NEWTON: Okay. The other question that I

1 had was on the mathematics itself. You know, over
2 the years when you teach math, every math teacher in
3 the world has gotten this question, "How am I ever
4 going to use this?" Okay. We've all gotten that
5 question. And I could see that -- you know, where it
6 would get -- some students that I've had just had
7 math ability but they never could get really excited
8 about it. I can see where this could get some kids
9 excited about it. But I didn't want to see it get so
10 tied to a specific -- I'm not sure if I'm saying this
11 correctly -- but a specific industry or specific
12 piece of machinery that they couldn't use it in a
13 broader sense. And I think that's what that fourth
14 math credit does; it gives them a bigger view of the
15 world.

16 And so maybe, Mr. Coy, could you help me out a
17 little bit? Have you looked at the math there to see
18 if we are getting a full math curriculum in over the
19 two years?

20 MR. COY: Thomas Coy, Department of Education
21 Learning Services. Veronica Hebard and I have
22 reviewed the content -- and, of course, Veronica, of
23 course, is our secondary math specialist under Mr.
24 Owens' supervision now. But we had both had
25 opportunity to look at the course and we agree with

1 Ms. Miller that in terms of the content over the two-
2 year period it meets most, if not all of the
3 standards. It could touch many of the things that
4 are included in our quantitative literacy course.
5 And, again, what -- you know, what I would think is
6 the strength over the two-year time period is
7 continued work, engaging in those standards in a more
8 contextualized way than just sitting and getting. So
9 in terms of the content, we were pleased over the
10 two-year timeframe --

11 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

12 MR. COY: -- that it did have enough mathematics
13 --

14 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

15 MR. COY: -- to merit the credit.

16 MS. NEWTON: So you're okay with the amount of
17 content then?

18 MR. COY: Yes, with the math.

19 MS. NEWTON: Okay. Because I kept hearing add,
20 subtract, multiply, and divide, and I wasn't hearing
21 a whole lot more than that.

22 MR. COY: Right. But it still includes things
23 like trigonometry; it includes some of our --

24 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

25 MR. COY: -- higher level concepts, but also the

1 real application of them. So you and I speak the
2 same math language oftentimes, but the idea of
3 modeling -- taking the problem and being able to
4 apply the mathematics through a modeling process.

5 MS. NEWTON: Okay. Good. All right. Thank
6 you. That makes me feel much better.

7 One other question -- what was your thought
8 process behind asking for a three-year waiver?

9 SUPT. SMITH: I think that would give us enough
10 time to see if anything is detrimental. I think
11 after one year -- I mean, word is just barely getting
12 around among the students. I think it will take some
13 time before the students that are there now start to
14 talk to their friends that are lower classmen. And,
15 you know, even after two years that may still be the
16 case, but once we see a cohort come through -- and
17 some still won't be able to complete the whole
18 program in two years, again, because of scheduling.

19 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

20 SUPT. SMITH: So I think three years is a fair
21 amount of time to actually let some students complete
22 and for us to determine if there's anything
23 detrimental that's happened because of this.

24 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. That was a -- you brought up
25 a point that I'd thought about, that as you have kids

1 go through this and they start seeing, hey, I really
2 am using this math, they're going to go back to
3 school and tell their -- hopefully their peers that,
4 you know, this math does -- there is worth in
5 learning it. So hopefully that will be a benefit.

6 My last question had to do with the waiver
7 starts tomorrow, but you're not going to really get
8 any credit for students until the next school year.
9 Is that correct?

10 SUPT. SMITH: I would like to work closely with
11 Mr. Coy to make sure that -- and when we spoke on the
12 phone he said that would give us plenty of time; if
13 we didn't enact it right away we would have plenty of
14 time to get the course coding correct so we didn't
15 have any errors.

16 MS. NEWTON: So no students would get credit for
17 the course until the 19-20 school year?

18 SUPT. SMITH: Unless we can expedite this in
19 some way to make it happen. I mean, that would be
20 lovely; however, they won't have two years in yet.

21 MS. NEWTON: Right.

22 SUPT. SMITH: So --

23 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

24 SUPT. SMITH: -- I just don't -- I see us really
25 enacting it next year, maybe being retroactive for

1 this year's students.

2 MS. NEWTON: This is the first year for the
3 program; correct?

4 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

5 MS. NEWTON: So in order to get the two years it
6 would have to be next year.

7 SUPT. SMITH: Uh-huh. Yes.

8 MS. NEWTON: Correct?

9 SUPT. SMITH: Yes.

10 MS. NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you very
11 much.

12 SUPT. SMITH: You bet.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McFetridge?

14 MS. McFETRIDGE: I think I'd like to hear a
15 little bit more about these instructors that you've
16 selected. I think my concern -- it's a three-year
17 waiver. Are any of them committed to going ahead and
18 getting their license, teaching license to work with
19 these students?

20 SUPT. SMITH: That would be a question for Steve
21 also.

22 MR. McJUNKINS: I'm sure that you're probably
23 aware of how Arkansas Career Education, the
24 requirements for their instructors goes. But --

25 MS. McFETRIDGE: Can you speak into the

1 microphone?

2 MR. McJUNKINS: Yes. For Arkansas Career
3 Education instructors, if -- currently if they are
4 instructing at a post-secondary level they do not
5 have to get the teacher licensing. But if it became
6 necessary, we could do that. We'd be more than happy
7 to work with schools. There would be no problem for
8 any of our instructors to do that. It's just not
9 currently a requirement for them to do that, but
10 we'll do whatever we need to do to make this work.
11 We're very committed to this program. We're very
12 excited about it. It's the most buy-in we've had
13 from our business and industry partners in a long
14 time. They're seeing the need for these workers, for
15 the skill-sets that we'll be teaching now. So we'll
16 do whatever we need to do. We're committed, so
17 that's what we're trying to do; we're helping the
18 people of the community.

19 MS. McFETRIDGE: I guess --

20 MR. McJUNKINS: So anything we need to do.

21 MS. McFETRIDGE: I like to hear that. You know,
22 I just -- are they used to, you know, working with
23 this age group and are they trained to work with this
24 age group of students? So that's a concern that I
25 have -- without the training that our teachers go

1 through to understand these students at this age, the
2 different issues that come to them. So --

3 MR. McJUNKINS: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I see Dr. Pfeffer wanting to
5 comment as well.

6 DR. PFEFFER: Good morning. Ivy Pfeffer,
7 Department of Education. And something that we can
8 explore is whether or not these instructors would be
9 eligible for a technical permit through Career
10 Education. And technical permits function as a
11 standard license, so it really may be an opportunity
12 for the community college folks to have that as a
13 licensing method. So we'll work with them on that
14 and then we always can provide support to the
15 district in terms of professional development and
16 things like that.

17 MS. McFETRIDGE: That's great.

18 DR. PFEFFER: So, yeah. I think we can have
19 some options.

20 MS. McFETRIDGE: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Anything else?

22 SUPT. SMITH: I would add that I was formerly
23 career and technical education coordinator at the
24 DeQueen-Mena Co-op before I became superintendent.
25 And we provide pedagogy training for the secondary

1 center instructors, and so that's -- that is also
2 available to the college as well through the co-op.

3 MS. McFETRIDGE: Right.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Any additional
5 questions over here?

6 Any questions over here?

7 Okay. So --

8 SUPT. SMITH: Can I make one more statement?

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Of course.

10 SUPT. SMITH: To Ms. Zook and the question about
11 the other schools -- and I made it kind of -- I made
12 it sound like I was up here just all -- just for
13 myself. I want to go back and make things clear.
14 There was such a good flow to how all this came
15 together with the superintendents, Dr. Cole at the
16 college, business and industry, and I don't want it
17 to appear that there's any of us out just for
18 ourselves. So I just don't know the structure of
19 this format today, and order; but otherwise, I'd be
20 up here asking for us all, I would, because we're all
21 good friends and we came together on this together
22 and really worked out some logistical details. I
23 really want to say thanks to the high school
24 counselors and principals who adjusted their -- they
25 moved a lot of people's cheese to make this happen.

1 So I don't want it to sound like I'm up here just --
2 you know, just for Horatio.

3 MS. ZOOK: And I didn't take it that way at all.

4 SUPT. SMITH: Okay. Good.

5 MS. ZOOK: Your reputation precedes you.

6 SUPT. SMITH: Thank you.

7 MS. NEWTON: Dr. Barth, can I make one more
8 comment?

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes, ma'am.

10 MS. NEWTON: After I got to thinking I thought
11 that, well, maybe I came across a little bit negative
12 on this. I'm excited about this. And I want to
13 applaud you for doing what we want all districts to
14 do -- get out in the community, see what's going on
15 in the community, see what the needs are in the
16 community, and you've done an excellent job of that.
17 And I can't wait to come and see what's actually
18 going on. So thank you for the hard work, because I
19 know this wasn't just something that happened
20 overnight; there were many, many hours that went into
21 getting this developed and getting the funding for it
22 and working out curriculum and instructors. And so I
23 want to applaud your efforts.

24 SUPT. SMITH: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Thank y'all very

1 much.

2 So I will entertain a motion. Again, the
3 request is for a three-year waiver with annual
4 reports -- and annual reports speaking to some of the
5 issues that have come up in this conversation.

6 Is there a motion?

7 MS. CHAMBERS: I move to approve a three-year
8 waiver with annual reports.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right.

10 MS. NEWTON: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms.
12 Chambers, second by Ms. Newton.

13 All those in favor say "aye."

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

16 Okay. Thank y'all so much for traveling, and
17 congratulations and good luck and we look forward to
18 hearing your reports along the way.

19 A-7(a): KIPP DELTA

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I think Dr. Boyd needs
21 something from us -- and I may get her to tell us and
22 then we -- if you have a few minutes, we may wait and
23 come back with that because it's going to be a little
24 fresh. But come on up and tell us what we need to
25 do, back on the KIPP item, that we failed to do.

1 DR. BOYD: Thank you, Dr. Barth. I apologize.
2 I forgot to ask you if you needed any additional
3 information in your review of the KIPP Delta request.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Can we hear the next
5 item and then come back to you?

6 DR. BOYD: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So that gives members just a
8 little bit more time to think about it, so we can be
9 sure we get it all done.

10 DR. BOYD: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Because I know sometimes in the
12 past there's been people think about something later
13 on and that's a little messier.

14 DR. BOYD: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So why don't we come back and
16 answer this question after we hear this next item. I
17 just wanted to give a preview for folks up here, if
18 you're good with that.

19 DR. BOYD: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

21 b) JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. We did add an
23 additional action item. This is the Jackson County
24 School District item. Ms. McLaughlin again. I think
25 everybody -- the paper on this everybody should have

1 in front of them on this waiver request from Jackson
2 County.

3 (WHEREUPON, A-8(b) Exhibit One (1), regarding
4 the Jackson County School District waiver request,
5 was marked for identification and appended.)

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: And so I will let you introduce
7 it.

8 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Today we have Jackson
9 County School District before you seeking Teacher
10 Licensure waivers. If approved, the waivers will go
11 into effect on November 9, 2018. And they are
12 requesting for five years, which they would end on
13 November 9, 2023. Their 90 days expires on December
14 10, 2018.

15 Now the request states -- one of the statutes
16 that they requested was 6-15-1004(a) and they are
17 actually going to need to request the entire statute.
18 So I wanted to make that clarification. And they
19 will have 20 minutes for their presentation, and you
20 will want to swear in the speakers for this
21 presentation. You won't have to swear in Tripp
22 Walter for APSRC, but Mr. Chester Shannon,
23 superintendent, and Pharis Smith, elementary
24 principal.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Great. So if the

1 non-attorneys will please stand and raise your right
2 hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony
3 you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole
4 truth, and nothing but the truth?

5 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Great.

7 Then y'all have up to 20 minutes for your
8 initial presentation, and we'll take it from there.

9 SUPT. SHANNON: Chester Shannon -- excuse me --
10 superintendent, Jackson County School District. I
11 just wanted to give you a little information about
12 our district, because I know you see a lot of these
13 waiver requests that have come before you. We are in
14 northeast Arkansas. We are an agricultural
15 community, but we are a community that our school
16 district has been very high achieving. We're about
17 67% free and reduced. Our grades in our schools this
18 year were B, A, and B -- and both of the B's were
19 half a point from being A's. Last year we were the
20 same. So our school district is one that has been
21 high achieving.

22 Hiring teachers has been a priority for us.
23 It's a priority that we really scrutinize in the
24 process of interviews and recommendations from the
25 principals to me, and my-self to the board. It's

1 also a process our board has allowed us and have
2 followed our recommendations, and I think that's
3 really why our staff is so strong.

4 With that being said, over the past five years
5 I've had five or six absolutely wonderful teachers
6 retire that were local. And so as I heard about
7 teacher shortages I never really felt that until I
8 started trying to replace an upper level science
9 teacher, an upper level math teacher, a music
10 teacher, an elementary art, and so it came home to
11 us. We had those folks -- because they could've been
12 anywhere and been extremely successful and been paid
13 more money, but they just happened to be from
14 Tuckerman or Swifton or Grubbs and so they wanted to
15 be there. So as we've approached this we've kind of
16 come to the conclusion that we're going to have to
17 grow our own. We are going to have to -- but in that
18 process it gets extremely hard, especially, for
19 example, with a three-year ALP. Advertised for
20 counselors, couldn't find a counselor. Approached a
21 lady that was not employed who happened to be an LEA,
22 and I said, "Hey, I could use you as a middle school
23 counselor with 200 students and also be my district
24 LEA." Well, she had to go back and get a counseling
25 degree and -- which I paid for, by the way, and

1 really was glad to do it. The district -- I said I
2 did; the district did. And -- but none of that is
3 online. That degree is three years at Harding
4 University. And in the course of that three years
5 she was blessed with a child. So now she's got a
6 three-year ALP that's got to be completed and -- in
7 counseling and she has to be on campus, and so it
8 became extremely stressful. And so when we look at
9 these, I just want you to understand that we put a
10 tremendous amount of thought -- but when you lose
11 maybe one of the best math teachers around to
12 retirement, then you realize, wow, there's no math
13 teachers out here. I mean, so we want the
14 opportunity for this waiver to kind of grow our own,
15 especially in situations that are maybe not as
16 stressful as "I've got to complete this" or "I have
17 to pass this in this timeframe" -- and we're
18 certainly open to review, you know, at any time.
19 Because, you know, there's been a lot of waivers
20 granted before we got here and if it wasn't something
21 that I absolutely thought we've got to do something
22 to give ourselves an advantage with everybody else,
23 then I certainly wouldn't be here.

24 And at this time I would like to turn it over to
25 Tripp.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. I'm going to just
2 take a -- we're going to stop your clock for a
3 second.

4 SUPT. SHANNON: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: For board members, page 2 we
6 know is not in your packet right now; so we are
7 working to get that second page up here.

8 Ms. McLaughlin, is -- did you hear that? The
9 second page is missing from what we got this morning
10 from -- in the request. We only got page 1 and then
11 it skips to page 3. So if it was -- if it's possible
12 for somebody to get us page 2 of that --

13 MS. ZOOK: It is in the material --

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: It is. It was emailed to us.
15 But if any board members need it this morning I just
16 want to be sure that we have it before us. Okay.

17 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Sorry about that. I just
19 wanted -- and we'll let y'all go ahead and proceed,
20 but I just wanted to let her know that we did need
21 that before we probably take action here. Great.

22 Thank you, Mr. Walter.

23 MR. WALTER: My name is Tripp Walter. I'm a
24 staff attorney with the Arkansas Public School
25 Resource Center. I'm happy to be here in front of

1 you, and thank you very much for allowing us to be on
2 the agenda this morning. We greatly appreciate it.
3 I'd also like to take the opportunity on behalf of
4 the district to thank Ms. McLaughlin for all her work
5 -- hard work in helping facilitate this, and Ms.
6 Melissa Jacks, the coordinator for Educator
7 Licensure.

8 I'll try not to duplicate a lot of what
9 Superintendent Shannon said about the district
10 itself, but try to highlight the need and highlight
11 how we believe what we are presenting to you this
12 morning is a thoughtful and well-reasoned plan for
13 asking and attaining these waivers.

14 This is a district that, as Superintendent
15 Shannon said, is very high performing. It has
16 overcome and overcomes on a regular basis a lot of
17 challenge to that. This is a district that has high
18 standards, attains high standards, and welcomes
19 accountability and scrutiny. This is also a district
20 that prides itself on its relationships with the ADE.
21 Matter of fact, I will introduce now, if I may, the
22 remaining member of our group this morning. Seated
23 to Superintendent Shannon's right is Pharis Smith,
24 who is a longtime employee of the district and is the
25 elementary principal at Tuckerman Elementary. And I

1 will just point out too that Mr. Smith has a long
2 positive history with Ms. Jacks in getting teachers
3 licensed. And during the time that he has been with
4 the district there has never been a teacher who has
5 been on an ALP who has failed to complete the ALP.
6 So I wanted to give you that bit of background is
7 that this district understands what it's asking for,
8 it understands the need for this waiver, but also is
9 pledging to you, as we will see here in a moment in
10 the presentation, that it has a plan -- the teachers
11 that it does hire under this waiver that they will
12 become fully licensed.

13 And with that I will move into the text
14 beginning there, and I won't dwell on this too much
15 but leave it to your reading.

16 The location -- I think Superintendent Shannon
17 may have summarized that a little bit. This is a
18 district that is the result of two separate
19 annexations over time, starting back in 1993 when
20 Tuckerman and Grubbs came together to form the
21 original Jackson County School District and then was
22 augmented during Act 60, in 2003, when the community
23 of Swifton was added.

24 Just a real brief geography piece, if you will,
25 the district is located contiguous to Jonesboro

1 Westside Consolidated to the east, Lawrence County,
2 which is the combination of Walnut Ridge and Black
3 Rock, to the north, and Newport to the south. So it
4 has seen and dealt with the effect of declining
5 population and declining teacher base in desire of
6 teachers to come to that area and attain jobs at the
7 district. However, as Superintendent Shannon can
8 point out further, if needed, this is a district that
9 has -- and I will use the words he used to me
10 recently -- an elite teacher base. They work hard to
11 attract and attain and retain quality teachers, and
12 for the most part they are able to do that. They do
13 have the struggles that he mentioned in trying to
14 fill vacancies because of the lack of population
15 growth and the lack of ability to draw a sufficient
16 pool into the area.

17 I want to emphasize especially also the first
18 sentence of the third paragraph. Jackson County
19 School District recognizes that the teacher in the
20 classroom is the single most important factor that
21 influences learning. The rest of that indicates how
22 they have proven that to you by their high
23 performance, and we'll talk about that more in a
24 minute.

25 So I also want to point out two other things at

1 the beginning to hopefully give the State Board a
2 level of comfortability with this request. First of
3 all, we will voluntarily agree to annual reports or
4 reports at what other intervals the Board may deem
5 appropriate. We certainly want to make sure that
6 we're keeping the ADE and the SBE involved as to how
7 this waiver would be used, if granted. Secondly,
8 this is not something where the district is planning
9 to make a wholesale change of its teacher population
10 from certified to noncertified. As I might explain
11 more in a moment when we get to the appropriate
12 slide, this will just be one other piece to add to
13 their ability to attain and retain high quality
14 teachers in the classroom.

15 Okay. To address what Ms. McLaughlin said, to
16 clear up a technical point in number two there, I
17 would ask the Board's permission to amend our request
18 from just 6-15-1004(a) to the entire statute.

19 Okay. We talked -- it was mentioned, I believe,
20 at the outset this request is for five years, and I
21 will let Superintendent Shannon and Principal Smith
22 address this further, if needed. But there was a
23 plan and a design for the five years -- and that is a
24 given that the district is going to be working with
25 any teachers that it hires under this waiver to get

1 them fully licensed, but this is to allow an
2 appropriate time period for that to happen.

3 And here in our Adequacy Assurances and
4 Safeguard sections, I want to specifically hit on the
5 bottom two.

6 Training -- Jackson County already has a program
7 in place, which would continue under this waiver, is
8 to pair all of its novice teachers with an
9 experienced educator. So rest assured, if you see
10 fit to grant this waiver, that there will not be
11 teachers that are brought in under this waiver who
12 will not be prepared, who will not get appropriate
13 development, and will not be properly fit to do their
14 duties in the classroom. And there's more about the
15 bonus and the additional time requirement there.

16 To reiterate, in conjunction with its co-op, the
17 Northeast Co-op, any hires made under this waiver
18 will be -- they will work with the teachers and also
19 with the assistance of the co-op to insure that these
20 teachers attain licensure.

21 Okay. We realize that AQT remains, and
22 certainly nothing in this waiver is an attempt to
23 avoid the requirements of AQT.

24 Understanding the underlying reasons for the
25 waiver of Licensure -- I won't take up a lot of time

1 on this; I think I've talked a little bit about it
2 before -- but, again, this is a rural area in a
3 county and a geographic area in general that has
4 experienced population decline. And the result of
5 that -- one of the outcroppings of that is the
6 difficulty in being able to find qualified licensed
7 teacher candidates to fill all the positions they
8 have in the district -- a little bit more in detail
9 there, I'll skip by that and, again, leave that to
10 your reading on the population.

11 Here are the specifics as to the population loss
12 in Jackson County itself.

13 Here are the following openings that the
14 district has and its particular impact right now as
15 we speak and the issue it has ahead of it in trying
16 to fill those openings with quality teachers. We
17 thought it very important that the Board knew of the
18 actions that the district has taken and is currently
19 taking to rectify this situation without having to
20 come before you for an Act 1240 waiver.

21 And here we've listed on the slide -- I won't
22 read off everything to you. One thing I would like
23 to emphasize, the middle point on the -- the way I'm
24 looking at it -- right-hand side, current staff being
25 asked by administration to go back to college and

1 gain additional certifications. As mentioned,
2 Superintendent Shannon has an exceptional staff that
3 is very, very student oriented and focused. And he
4 has relied in some instances on going to those staff
5 members and asking them to go and obtain additional
6 certifications so they can move out of positions that
7 they are already teaching and doing a good job in --
8 but move to another area just so it would be positive
9 for the district and allow high student achievement
10 to occur -- certainly a laudable thing. I think it's
11 commendable what's going on there.

12 Here are the outcomes or potential outcomes for
13 the district if the waiver is not granted. And,
14 again, this is a district that despite the challenges
15 we've mentioned has performed well and pledges or
16 reassures this Board and the Department again this
17 morning that it will continue to do so. It was
18 recognized in an OEP report that came out last --
19 pardon me -- that came out in June of this year
20 rather, based on 2017 ACT Aspire math growth scores.
21 Tuckerman Elementary was recognized as one of the top
22 10 high-poverty elementary schools in Arkansas, based
23 on ACT Aspire math growth from last year, with a free
24 and reduced lunch percentage of 72% of its -- of that
25 school's student body. As Superintendent Shannon

1 said, the recently released letter grades show that
2 of the three campuses within the Jackson County
3 School District, Swifton Middle attained an A, while
4 Tuckerman High School and Tuckerman Elementary
5 received a B, each just missing an A grade. And here
6 is that illustrated from information pulled off the
7 ADE's My School Info website.

8 Okay. We have tried to present to you this
9 morning a complete and thoughtful and reasoned plan
10 for allowing these waivers. Again, requesting these
11 waivers is not something that the district took
12 lightly. If it was going to come before you, it
13 wanted to make sure that it did so with a
14 comprehensive plan and showing you that it is a
15 district of quality and responsibility and that we'll
16 be a careful shepherd of the use of these waivers
17 should you so decide to grant them to them.

18 And at this time I'll close the presentation.
19 Thank you so much for your attention.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Thank you, Mr.
21 Walter.

22 Do we have any formal opposition to this?

23 MS. FRENO: No.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

25 So the district has up to 5 minutes to close

1 before we'll open it up to questions.

2 SUPT. SHANNON: The section of the slide that
3 said -- showed the openings, those are the openings
4 that we have dealt with over the last three or four
5 years. That is not of the openings that the district
6 has as of today. But it's one that brought to light
7 we've got an issue here in, you know, how we're going
8 to fill these. And it's countless the options that
9 -- we have sat down at the table and pulled every
10 teacher in the district's teaching certificate,
11 saying, "Is anybody certified in art" -- you know,
12 because we've lost an art teacher, and they're just
13 not there. And so that has been our first option to
14 go that route to see if somebody would be agreeable
15 to moving -- or to pay somebody to go back, like I
16 did my ALE supervisor, and pay for it; you know, "The
17 district will pay for this if you'll do it." And so
18 it's gotten challenging. It's gotten challenging to
19 the point -- and I'll let Mr. Smith tell you about a
20 teacher that we lost last year that we were --

21 MR. SMITH: A 4th grade teacher that was -- had
22 4-8 middle school licensure and she was certified in
23 math and she taught 4th grade math. But this year I
24 was going to have -- in my departmentalization, she
25 was going to teach math and science. She wasn't

1 certified in that, so she moved to a neighboring
2 district after scoring 79% in my math scores -- and
3 she goes to a neighboring district that has the
4 waivers. And it becomes challenging for those that
5 can't pass the Praxis, and it just gives us some more
6 flexibility. Because student achievement is our goal
7 and we've been very high achieving in the last 10
8 years, even before benchmark and PARCC, and now with
9 ACT Aspire, and that's something that we don't take
10 lightly. We want the best teachers and the best
11 situations for them to succeed.

12 And then that mentor slide, we pair first-year
13 teachers with a mentor and they meet regularly,
14 weekly, so that they do get best practices; they do
15 get best instructional practices, how to deal with
16 parents, how to become responsive teachers. So
17 that's something that we will still implement with
18 these new teachers if we're given this waiver.

19 SUPT. SHANNON: And that is on top of them going
20 through the traditional mentoring program through the
21 co-ops. You know, the mentoring program used to be
22 through the schools and now it's through the co-ops.
23 Well, we just thought it was best that -- if we take
24 our best math teachers and put them with the new math
25 teacher in our district. Because we started thinking

1 about this a couple of years ago; we were getting a
2 lot of requests from our teachers to go and visit
3 other school districts and say, "Hey, what are you
4 doing? How are you achieving these scores and this."
5 And so when I met with the principals I thought, you
6 know, we're not taking advantage of the great staff
7 that we have within our district. So we said, okay,
8 hey, we're going to pay these teachers, not only the
9 mentor teacher but the teacher that is being mentored
10 -- and for any afterschool hours or any loss of a
11 prep that I went and watched you teach and those type
12 of things. And so -- because we knew it was
13 important. And so we -- but I wanted you to know
14 that's how important it is to us to do that over --
15 above and beyond what the Department of Ed. requires
16 in the mentoring.

17 MR. SMITH: I would just say this, that I had an
18 excellent 3rd grade teacher that went back and took
19 the art Praxis and I lost her in the classroom, to
20 fill standards, to teach art. So like Mr. Shannon
21 said, we try to fill the holes in staff. And, you
22 know, 10 years ago I would have quality applicants in
23 P4 but -- and I'd have 10 to 12. Now I'm getting
24 down to 1 or 2, and it's just getting more difficult
25 every year. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. I'll start over
2 here and see -- Ms. McFetridge, do you have any
3 questions?

4 MS. McFETRIDGE: You've touched on neighboring
5 districts. I was just wondering do you work with
6 neighboring districts in maybe sharing a teacher? Is
7 that even a possibility? I'm not -- I don't know
8 your area and how big it is, so I'm not sure how
9 close other --

10 SUPT. SHANNON: I don't think so, not with our
11 size. We're a district of about 900. Our
12 neighboring districts are -- to the north is 1200.
13 Now we used to do that through the co-op for like an
14 LEA supervisor, but now we need to send people back
15 to get certified in that.

16 MR. SMITH: And we do share on campus. Between
17 our middle school and the elementary, we do share
18 teachers on that campus. We have half-teachers that
19 teach in the elementary or the high school and then
20 middle school for a half-day also.

21 MS. McFETRIDGE: And then how many openings did
22 you have this year? You said that slide wasn't
23 correct?

24 MR. SMITH: Right now we have a Spanish teacher
25 that just resigned to take care of her husband, and

1 that's going to be a tough one to fill because she's
2 taught 31 years in our district and she's from our
3 district. Our agri teacher -- you might want to talk
4 about that.

5 SUPT. SHANNON: We brought an agri teacher out
6 of retirement -- excuse me -- who had been retired
7 for seven years to fill in a gap that we had in our
8 agri department. You saw on there 7th and 8th grade
9 Literacy/Language Arts. That used to be -- I taught
10 7th grade Language Arts and I taught 7th grade
11 Reading. But the way our district is configured,
12 when we had that opening, and trying to find someone
13 suitable to put in that 8th grade literacy class, we
14 did away with the 7th grade reading so that the 7th
15 grade teacher, who's a wonderful teacher, could teach
16 three sections of 7th grade, three sections of 8th
17 grade. So we've -- you know, we've been --

18 MR. SMITH: We've paid teachers for their prep.

19 SUPT. SHANNON: I don't know if we can pay
20 teachers on their prep, you know, to cover, you know,
21 things that had to be covered, that they were
22 agreeable to do. So we've kind of moved it around as
23 much as we can within our staff. But I just brought
24 in a girl that -- for our Spanish. My teacher went
25 home October 1 and so we went through Virtual

1 Arkansas. Well, Spanish I and II in Virtual Arkansas
2 for someone who has not been in Virtual Arkansas is
3 tough and you have to have both those classes to be
4 an honor graduate at Tuckerman High School. And so
5 we went out and found a student who had not finished
6 at ASU, that was proficient in Spanish, and I brought
7 her in and pay her well above the classified to be
8 the facilitator in the Spanish I and II classes and
9 pay her to stay after school and tutor so that those
10 students, you know, can make that adjustment to an
11 online class.

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: I know that the Department is
13 doing quite a bit to help with the teacher shortage
14 issue. I'm a little nervous about a five-year
15 waiver, to be honest with you. That seems like an
16 awfully long time.

17 SUPT. SHANNON: Well, the reason we asked for
18 five is this, is the districts around us have a five-
19 year waiver. The math teacher that we lost, we
20 could've got a one-year emergency waiver -- one year.
21 Okay. And so she has two small ones. She's teaching
22 4th grade math. She has great scores -- great
23 scores. Wonderful teacher. And she took the option
24 of, "You know what, I've got two little ones at home
25 and I don't have the pressure that I have got to get

1 through this in one year and be able to know that I
2 have my job."

3 And so that kind of puts us on a level playing
4 field. Our scores are higher than any of those
5 districts around us, consistently, you know, for a
6 long time. So the five-year waiver is to put us --
7 if I have a teacher that has an issue in a certain
8 area that they have to get through, and they're
9 talking to me or a neighboring district -- hey, I've
10 got four years to get through this at this
11 neighboring district or you've got one year. And a
12 lot of my teachers -- and to their credit -- and I
13 love hiring this teacher -- is the one who has gone
14 back with a family. It seems like they make
15 wonderful teachers and they're really dedicated in
16 what they do. But that also makes -- puts them in a
17 stressful situation, like getting through this
18 counseling in three years. I can get through it over
19 here in five years or I can get through it here in
20 three years -- and if anything happens in my life,
21 I've got problems because I'm not going to finish
22 this ALP. So that was our reasoning behind that, to
23 kind of be on a level playing field, you know, with
24 our neighbors.

25 MS. MCFETRIDGE: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Ms. Newton?

2 MS. NEWTON: So from what I'm hearing is that
3 all the teachers that you hire on this waiver will be
4 hired with the understanding that they still go
5 through whatever they have to do to get certified in
6 that particular --

7 SUPT. SHANNON: In that longer timeframe. Now I
8 think in the areas, like the non-core areas -- for
9 example, in our agri, if I do find a certified
10 teacher in that, I really need him to be able to
11 teach a couple of classes in Introductory. So under
12 this waiver I could bring in a certified welder to
13 teach two periods of welding, which would be
14 wonderful, to free him up so that all of a sudden my
15 8th graders or 9th graders can have more than one
16 opportunity. The way it is now -- I want my sons to
17 be involved in agri. They're in pre-AP math; you
18 know, they're not available. So when they do become
19 available, who wants to be a junior or a senior and
20 go back and take beginning agri with a bunch of 8th
21 graders? You know, it just doesn't happen. But now
22 if I could bring in a certified welder under this and
23 let him teach two periods of welding, then I have
24 freed that teacher up, if I find him, that he can do
25 maybe two classes of Introductory to Agri. So under

1 that, that is an option available under those
2 waivers. In the core classes, in our certification,
3 we definitely plan to get everybody certified.

4 MS. NEWTON: How many teachers do you have on
5 staff currently that this waiver would affect?

6 MR. SMITH: Zero.

7 SUPT. SHANNON: Zero.

8 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

9 MR. SMITH: Unless the Spanish teacher -- the
10 Spanish teacher, she lacks her student teaching and
11 passing the Praxis.

12 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

13 SUPT. SHANNON: But now she is hired as a
14 facilitator now. I've not even had the conversation
15 with her that I'm approaching to get this waiver. I
16 think she's three hours short, which she could
17 probably take in the -- I will be in Virtual
18 Arkansas, with Spanish, I anticipate all year long.
19 But if she took that three-hour course and was able,
20 with ASU's signing off, to forgo her student
21 teaching, then she would have a Spanish degree and
22 then I could hire her as a teacher and let her go
23 through, you know, the Praxis and everything she
24 needs. And she's proficient in Spanish. She's
25 wonderful. But, you know, it's -- and she may not --

1 she may say, "Hey, I don't even want to come back
2 next year." You know, I don't know that.

3 MS. NEWTON: So, but this is primarily for the
4 future is what you're looking at?

5 SUPT. SHANNON: This is for the future.

6 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

7 SUPT. SHANNON: We're not covering up anything
8 we've done.

9 MS. NEWTON: Okay. Have you talked to your
10 teachers on staff that you're coming to get this
11 waiver? Have you talked to them about it?

12 SUPT. SHANNON: Yes. And we've talked to our
13 board, and the board has signed off on a resolution.
14 And it's just -- what everybody has felt is just now
15 getting with us, you know, because in our area it's
16 -- you know, people like to teach there. I'd get a
17 lot of teachers when I'd get an opening at one time
18 from other places, but that has -- that's not
19 happening much.

20 MS. NEWTON: Okay. All right. Thank you.

21 SUPT. SHANNON: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill? Ms. Dean?

23 MS. DEAN: You touched on a question that I had.
24 I noticed that when you were searching for teachers
25 that you went out into the community and searched

1 that way, and I heard you say that you spoke with
2 your teachers, it's been approved by your board. But
3 my question is have you had input from your
4 community, business leaders, stakeholders, parents?
5 Are they aware of this and have they been included in
6 the process?

7 SUPT. SHANNON: Yeah. I'm telling you, it's --
8 if we do not find good solutions for shortage areas,
9 we hear about it. And so we work hard within our
10 community that -- graduates, you know, anybody that
11 -- but it's really hard to bring back a graduate that
12 say has lived in Jonesboro for 10 years and is in
13 that school system, you know. We're small rural, and
14 once you make those moves -- hey, I'm going to drive
15 the 45 minutes back -- but we always try to stay in
16 touch with our graduates or anybody else that, you
17 know --

18 MR. SMITH: And our community is aware of how we
19 rank academically and they won't let that falter
20 either.

21 MS. DEAN: So they've been included in the
22 process?

23 SUPT. SHANNON: Yeah.

24 MS. DEAN: Okay.

25 MR. SMITH: Yeah.

1 MS. DEAN: All right. Thank you.

2 MR. SMITH: They're very in-tune.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Zook?

4 MS. ZOOK: Yes. You answered my mentoring
5 question and I appreciate that. Appreciate the fact
6 that both of you obviously are instructional leaders
7 and you analyze every problem from every angle. What
8 I'd like to encourage you to do is what I try to do
9 from this position, is talk to your higher ed. people
10 about those students that are getting out of school
11 with good grades but they can't pass the Praxis. And
12 also drill down on is it one or two of certain
13 institutions. Because I know the Department tries to
14 work with those Deans, but they're not always
15 receptive. But I think if they heard from the
16 Department and from the schools -- because they
17 shouldn't be going through a higher ed. program with
18 a B average or better and then not be able to pass
19 the Praxis.

20 SUPT. SHANNON: Yes, ma'am.

21 MS. ZOOK: So if you'll help me talk with them,
22 I sure would appreciate it.

23 SUPT. SHANNON: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. ZOOK: And I think it's a good proposal.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

1 DR. MOORE: I do have a couple of questions.
2 It's good to hear from y'all today. Do you all have
3 the teacher cadet program at your high school,
4 thinking about the long-term solution to finding more
5 teachers?

6 MR. SMITH: No, ma'am, we don't.

7 DR. MOORE: That might be something y'all might
8 look into.

9 In addition, I haven't heard anything about
10 teacher salary. How does yours compare to your
11 surrounding districts? And is that an avenue y'all
12 have also looked at?

13 SUPT. SHANNON: The surrounding districts -- of
14 course, it's hard to compete with one of our
15 neighbors because they have a power plant in their
16 district. So we're above the state minimum. I will
17 say this, I have given my teachers I think a minimum
18 of a \$1,000 bonus for about the last 12 years. Now
19 in that 12-year bonus, it hasn't always been easy.
20 We've had fluctuations in enrollment. And right now
21 -- the last two years we've backed up a little bit,
22 but we've gone from the low eights to bumping 900.
23 And like I say, the last two years that's kind of
24 backed off that a little bit. But I always try to
25 budget. And the safe side of that is if we show up

1 next year and we're down 50 students, you know, you
2 know, I can give a bonus. Like I say, we stay above
3 that. And -- but, no, we're not \$2,000 or \$3,000
4 above it. But I hear we're getting a raise, \$1,000 a
5 year, so I'm excited about that. Thank you,
6 Commissioner.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Ms. Dean.

8 MS. DEAN: I do -- I want to go back to my
9 point. I just want to know how did you -- how was
10 the community's voice heard? How did you hear the
11 parents' and community members' input? How was that
12 done?

13 MR. SMITH: On asking for the waivers?

14 MS. DEAN: Yeah.

15 MR. SMITH: To that directly, they know that
16 we're going to hire the best teachers. They know
17 that our hiring process -- not directly with waivers
18 but even with waivers we would hire the best
19 candidate that would fulfill their role in that.

20 MS. DEAN: Okay. So they weren't actually --

21 MR. SMITH: Polled or anything, no.

22 MS. DEAN: Right. Okay. I do want to make a
23 point on that and -- for further -- for future
24 reference, for other schools as well, that I think
25 it's going to be important for you to make sure that

1 you include -- not just make them aware of what's
2 happening but to actually include them --

3 MR. SMITH: Yes, ma'am.

4 MS. DEAN: -- include parents, include family
5 members, business, community members -- include all
6 of your stakeholders and that possibly could help
7 further the progress as well. But I just want to
8 make a point.

9 SUPT. SHANNON: We're going through our advanced
10 ed. re-certification this year. And we'll bring
11 those parents in, because they're on various
12 committees in that, and we will share that with them
13 and, you know, and make them aware of that. And like
14 I said, it's really just an extension of what's in
15 place already.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill, you're good?

17 DR. HILL: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Any other comments over
19 here?

20 All right. Thank y'all very much.

21 SUPT. SHANNON: Thank you.

22 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN BARTH: I'll just -- you know, I've got
24 -- I'm not going to be beating up on y'all, but I do
25 have just kind of deep concerns about these broad

1 waivers that are as lengthy as Ms. McFetridge says,
2 five years, really covering all teaching subjects. I
3 have been sympathetic to waivers that are much more
4 narrow for specific issues, but I just am not
5 convinced that this -- these types of waivers that I
6 think do in some ways, not intentionally, but I think
7 subtly denigrate the teaching -- the importance of
8 teacher preparation for teaching jobs. I don't think
9 it's the right way to go to solve our long-term
10 issues with teaching. I think we have some much more
11 structural issues related to getting more teachers
12 into the classroom, and it's really about elevating
13 the profession and everything we can do to elevate
14 the profession is where we need to go. I think this
15 is not the right way to go in this very broad way.
16 And so I do have deep concerns with this. It's not
17 -- I've had deep concerns with a lot of districts
18 that have come here for that reason. So I just
19 wanted to state that once again.

20 So I will entertain a motion now on this five-
21 year waiver for the Jackson County District.

22 MS. ZOOK: I move to approve, because I feel
23 like that the presentation they made, the depth they
24 went into, the analysis they've done convinced me
25 that this will not be misused but used for the

1 benefit of children.

2 MS. NEWTON: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Motion by Ms. Zook,
4 second by Ms. Newton.

5 All those in favor say "aye."

6 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any opposed?

8 Please record me as a no.

9 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. All right. Thank
11 y'all. Good luck and use this wisely.

12 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Thank you.

14 A-7(a): KIPP DELTA

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Okay. We are now
16 back to the KIPP review. And we need to see what
17 data or evidence folks need. So should we just start
18 -- are you ready to go?

19 DR. BOYD: Yes.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So, Dr. Moore, is there
21 anything you would like as we do this review in a
22 month?

23 DR. MOORE: No.

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Mr. Williamson? Ms. Zook?

25 MS. ZOOK: Yes. I'd like to know specifically

1 the kind of training, certification, licensure,
2 whatever, that the people he's talking about -- and
3 the scores in the particular areas over the last, I
4 guess, three years relative to those subgroups -- I
5 hate referring to them as subgroups, but anyway
6 that's the way we refer to them -- the subgroups, and
7 -- yeah, I'd like some justification data-wise for
8 why this is or is not working.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Somewhat related, I would like
10 any empirical evidence that's available that the use
11 of specialists and coaches is linked to closing the
12 achievement gap through the growth, at the lowest
13 achieving students generally.

14 Secondly, which schools, if any, have waivers
15 like this one. And in those schools that do have the
16 waivers what evidence is there -- empirical evidence
17 is there, if any, that these -- this use of funds
18 actually is effective in closing the achievement gap.
19 If it's not available, it's not available. But if it
20 is available, that would be great.

21 DR. BOYD: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Dean?

23 All right. Dr. Hill? Ms. Newton?

24 MS. NEWTON: The way I understood it, they were
25 already doing this and this was kind of a back

1 amendment to get them in compliance. Is that
2 correct?

3 DR. BOYD: So they were previously doing this
4 when the rules did not say that they could not do it.
5 So they're not currently doing it but that's because
6 the NSLA funding rules have recently changed to
7 prohibit them from doing it. And so they would like
8 to continue with their previous practice and that's
9 why they want a waiver from this, so they can
10 continue with what they had been previously doing
11 prior to the new rules prohibiting it.

12 MS. NEWTON: Okay. So I guess what my question
13 then would be, what potential -- and it may go along
14 with what they've already asked, but what potential
15 staff members do they have that would be under this
16 and what would their duties be and what interactions
17 with students would they have? And then also in the
18 past, when they've done it in the past, if we could
19 get some data on how that performance has been in
20 relationship to student performance.

21 DR. BOYD: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McFetridge?

23 All right. Anything else?

24 All right. Thank you.

25 DR. BOYD: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: We'll be ready next month.

2 COMMISSIONER KEY: Dr. Barth, briefly, before
3 she leaves the podium we want to make sure everyone
4 is introduced to our new Charter Director. And
5 Reginald Ballard has joined us and has been with us
6 -- three weeks?

7 MR. BALLARD: Well, about two-and-a-half, yeah.
8 Getting close, getting close to three weeks. Yeah.
9 So I'm excited to be here. Thank you, guys, for all
10 the work that you do. I look forward to serving to
11 increase student outcomes and really being an
12 advocate for student-driven success.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. Thank you very much.

14 And, Ms. Boyd, just to kind of -- so in terms of
15 charter work in the next few months, kind of preview
16 us a little bit in terms of what will -- we will have
17 a flurry of activity, I guess, over the next few
18 months?

19 DR. BOYD: Right. So we spoke earlier there
20 will be a couple of clean-ups with the standards.
21 And in its November meeting the Charter Authorizing
22 Panel is going to do an academic review of all the
23 charters since all of the new achievement data came
24 out last month, in October. So they'll be doing that
25 next week. And they will address any concerns they

1 have possibly in a formal action, maybe, maybe not.
2 In December there are renewal hearings, so you'll
3 definitely have items to review in January for the
4 schools that are up for renewal. I believe there are
5 seven of them. And so that's what you-all have to
6 look forward to.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Okay.

8 It is -- our lunch is here.

9 Thank you.

10 DR. BOYD: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you very much.

12 Our lunch is here, in the 3rd floor conference
13 room. Let's return at 1:05 -- 1:10. Let's return at
14 1:10 and we'll pick up with the Pine Bluff issue, any
15 public comment that we have, and then we will move on
16 to reports after that.

17 Thank y'all.

18 (LUNCH BREAK: 12:27 - 1:15 p.m.)

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: We're going to go ahead and get
20 restarted. We're -- I think Dr. Hill -- hopefully
21 he's coming back. He had to sneak out for a few
22 minutes. And I would just remind everybody, please
23 speak into your microphone. We've got a couple of
24 soft folks up here, softly -- and then we've got some
25 loud folks. So everybody just kind of speak evenly

1 into your microphone. That was -- Ms. Zook, that
2 was not directed to you.

3 MS. ZOOK: I've always been a loudmouth.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So everybody just kind of speak
5 into your microphone because our wonderful tech guy
6 is having to play with the microphones a little bit,
7 which occasionally creates some feedback in the
8 speakers. So everybody just kind of be steady.

9 Okay. Again, I want to remind folks we are down
10 to the afternoon part of the agenda. I do want to
11 remind everyone that may not have been here this
12 morning that the item 2, which is the consideration
13 of the waiver in Little Rock, that is not on the
14 agenda for the afternoon. That said, we did already
15 agree earlier in the day that we will accept public
16 comment for items not on the agenda as part of this
17 afternoon as well. And I do have some names here.
18 And so I just want to be clear that everybody knows
19 that that item is not on the agenda for today.

20 B-1: CONSIDERATION OF PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT AS IN NEED OF
21 LEVEL 5 - INTENSIVE SUPPORT

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: But we do have one item before
23 that, and this is Consideration of Pine Bluff School
24 District as in Need of Level 5 Support. And I'm
25 going to turn it over to Dr. Hernandez to get us

1 started here.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: Good afternoon. You should have
3 a packet handout that -- on your desk that has the
4 colorful systems wheel on it. Basically what this is
5 is this is a recommendation that we have in front of
6 you to classify the Pine Bluff School District in
7 need of Level 5 support. As you know, we already
8 have brought them under state authority by
9 classifying them in fiscal distress. As part of that
10 fiscal distress work we've gone through and started
11 to do a preliminary systems analysis as one of the
12 things that's listed within Act 930, and part of that
13 language was the classification of Level 5, in need
14 of Level 5 support. And so what I thought would be
15 appropriate for this is to give you some context.

16 We put together some notes relating to each
17 system and some of the problem areas that we
18 identified, as Dr. Owoh and I have been working with
19 the district -- more so Dr. Owoh, and he's here to
20 answer questions after this -- and kind of just give
21 you a feeling for how things are going. This isn't
22 meant to be comprehensive but it just gives you an
23 idea of some of the things we've come across at each
24 system.

25 So if you would, look at the first one related

1 to Academics. We're in the process of doing a
2 curriculum audit. We have a team that's scheduled to
3 go in and do kind of a thorough analysis of all the
4 curriculum within the district and see what's in
5 place, what's missing, and develop a plan of action
6 for Dr. Owoh's team to carry out in terms of insuring
7 that there's quality curriculum in place in the Pine
8 Bluff School District. So we thought it would be
9 appropriate to kind of look school-by-school over a
10 two-year period to be able to see what's been going
11 on, both in the '17 ESSA School Index and the new
12 ESSA School Index that just came out, related to each
13 school that is currently in operation.

14 And so if you'll turn to the second page you can
15 see within Pine Bluff School District. So in the '17
16 column versus the '18 column you can kind of see in
17 regards to ESSA School Index, weighted achievement,
18 growth, graduation rate, and SQS -- SQSS. In most
19 all categories from '17 to '18 we've seen a decrease
20 in performance in those areas. When you go down to
21 the middle school you can see that letter grade
22 remained the same, but you can see those decreases,
23 with the exception of growth, how that's been
24 decreasing from '17 over to '18. The next one,
25 Broadmoor Elementary, you can see the letter grades

1 of both F's, both years. The ESSA School Index,
2 weighted achievement, growth, and SQSS, we've seen a
3 decrease in terms of those also.

4 Flipping over to the third page, with Southwood
5 Elementary there was a difference in configuration of
6 how it had mostly pre-k, I believe, in the previous
7 year. That's why there weren't scores for '17. But
8 with the '18 scores you can see where they're scoring
9 there as well and they are also with a letter grade
10 of F. Thirty-Fourth Street, you can see their ESSA
11 School Index, weighted achievement, growth, and SQSS;
12 also some declines in most areas in terms of how they
13 performed there. And then, finally, with WT Cheney
14 you can see a similar thing. So obviously that is of
15 some concern to say that the programs are in place
16 and how that's affecting overall. It seems to be
17 problematic.

18 Turning over to the next page you'll see that
19 currently, based on this last ESSA School Index, five
20 out of the six schools are performing in the bottom
21 5% of schools for their grade spans, so -- which is
22 also of great, great concern.

23 We also thought it would be important, because
24 we also have a heavy emphasis on reading, to look at
25 those reading levels. And so on that fourth page,

1 right above Human Capital you'll see a chart there
2 that -- when you look at that you can see reading
3 levels in the schools that we're discussing have
4 decreased. And so what we're seeing to the tune of
5 percentage of students reading on grade level are
6 very low, and so that also from an academic system
7 component does raise some concerns.

8 Over to the Human Capital part -- and if you
9 have any questions during any of this, just stop me,
10 or if you want to wait till the end, that's fine.

11 MS. ZOOK: I do have one question --

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yes, ma'am.

13 MS. ZOOK: -- on the reading level. Do we have
14 a number as to the teachers who have been trained or
15 re-trained in teaching reading?

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: So as far as the RISE training,
17 I know that's something that hasn't been --

18 Dr. Owoh, if you want to come up and try to
19 answer that one now --

20 But I know from what I understand we're in the
21 process, not necessarily have we fully done what
22 we've -- the district hasn't done what they're
23 supposed to yet.

24 DR. OWOH: Good afternoon. Jeremy Owoh,
25 Superintendent, Pine Bluff School District.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Welcome back.

2 DR. OWOH: That's correct. We're in the process
3 of providing the RISE training. So we have our
4 executive director who oversees Learning Services
5 coordinating those trainings with our co-op to insure
6 that our teachers --

7 MS. ZOOK: And do you have a feel for the -- how
8 receptive the teachers are to this or are they
9 reluctant participants or enthusiastic, or is it
10 varied?

11 DR. OWOH: It varies. For the most part the
12 educators that I've been in contact with have been
13 positive about the training. The principals have
14 been excited about the opportunity of providing that
15 support. Because, as Dr. Hernandez has shown you or
16 provided you, the reading/literacy definitely needs
17 support. Those students need that support in those
18 areas -- and not just at the elementary level but of
19 course K-12 throughout the district. And so they're
20 excited and we're really looking forward to providing
21 that support.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I know this probably doesn't
23 sound like a great answer, but I think with the
24 experience that we've had in trying -- in these
25 midyear takeovers, it's hard to go back and say,

1 okay, all the things that should have taken place
2 during the summer we weren't able to. So in a lot of
3 our planning we're thinking about, you know, we
4 obviously want to provide support -- but to do it
5 right, you know, a lot of our plans are moving
6 forward into next year. So a lot of the changes we
7 won't see come about until the summer and those
8 things.

9 Human Capital -- one of the first things we did
10 in terms of -- because the district is in fiscal
11 distress, was to do a staffing audit to see -- you
12 know, make sure that everybody was -- had the proper
13 contracts, everybody had the proper staffing list,
14 and then as far as how they were paid within the
15 eFinance system, all that was correct. And so based
16 on our initial audit we found that there were 79
17 staff members that were on staffing lists within the
18 buildings but did not have contracts on file. Then
19 also, in addition to that, we had 50 contracts that
20 we found that weren't on any staffing list. So we
21 had signed contracts that we didn't know where they
22 worked or all that. So we worked really hard to kind
23 of make sure that, along with the great hire that Dr.
24 Owoh made in the human resources and Chief Financial
25 Officer role, that they've really taken that and

1 worked towards making sure that the contract matches
2 where they're placed in the buildings and that
3 matches within the eFinance system and that they're
4 being paid out of the proper fund when you think
5 about Title 1 and all those different things. So
6 that's been a monumental task just to get that right.
7 Obviously the implications on the budget, which we'll
8 talk a little bit in the fiscal system, that was also
9 -- what we have seen, we've had part of our staff in,
10 looking at how the Pine Bluff School District is
11 utilizing the TESS and LEADS process, and it's been
12 very hit or miss. We've done a lot of training with
13 them to try to get them up-to-date, but we've had
14 things like various people not be in the system. And
15 so obviously they're not doing the work and doing the
16 appropriate things as prescribed by us in terms of
17 evaluation and support and those types of things, and
18 so we are -- that was an issue that we did find.

19 When we did take over, we found that there were
20 10 active litigation cases with the district from
21 various employees and things like that, and so that
22 was something of concern to us. And then also, in
23 addition to that, there were seven grievances that
24 were pending that we also had to try to work through.
25 So we haven't worked through all the grievances yet,

1 but we're in the process of trying to do that just
2 because it was something that was just out there and
3 lapsed. A lot of it was due to either how people
4 were placed when they tried to do a reduction-in-
5 force or not being paid on the appropriate salary
6 schedule. And so we are trying to work to deal with
7 all those.

8 And a lot of the things is in regards to
9 transfer. Obviously you've heard that they're
10 getting the people to sit on the right seat on the
11 bus and all those types of things, make sure they're
12 appropriate for what they're working on. That's been
13 the biggest thing, biggest hurdle, I think, with us
14 is that there's been so much movement within the
15 district that a lot of people are in positions that
16 they don't want to be in or they, you know, aren't
17 trained for. And so that's caused some -- a lot of
18 the issues in terms of how the schools function and
19 also the district.

20 All right. Student support -- one thing that we
21 found in trying to do just a little bit of looking at
22 all the different programs that were offered in terms
23 of behavior interventions, personnel-wise, anything
24 that was afterschool related and all those things,
25 that there was a lot of things going on -- there's a

1 lot of money being spent but there's not a real
2 organization and measurement for effectiveness; so
3 we're doing this because it sounds good and not
4 necessarily because it's the right thing to do for
5 kids to support them -- and it's ongoing, in addition
6 to things like their special ed. program, health
7 services, and all that. And so one thing that we
8 started looking at to make some considerations is
9 obviously you want things in place for student
10 support that will help you with things like student
11 engagement or chronic absenteeism, making sure kids
12 are coming to school and what impact is that having
13 on discipline.

14 And so if you'll go to the page that looks like
15 this -- it has a few blue lines on it -- that's just
16 kind of a quick look at our ESSA School Index number
17 that we used for student engagement, or what we refer
18 to as chronic absenteeism. And so you can see from
19 16-17 to 17-18 those numbers have gone down, so the
20 programs and supports that they have in place
21 definitely don't seem to be impacting student
22 engagement in a positive way.

23 With the discipline numbers, the number of
24 infractions there, in some places they've gone up and
25 some places they've gone down. But overall, when you

1 look at two years worth of infractions there seems to
2 be a lot of discipline-type infractions that are
3 occurring in the district that are of concern that we
4 want to make sure that we have programs and things in
5 place to help that.

6 Okay. Stakeholder Communication/Family and
7 Community Engagement -- the one thing that was kind
8 of a note there, there is a -- there's kind of the
9 traditional sense of, you know, they have
10 parent/teacher conferences and they have a plan
11 that's on paper as far as being in compliance with
12 law, but there's not -- doesn't seem to be a lot of
13 active community engagement. They do have a few
14 individuals with very high salaries that are paid to
15 do things like parental involvement or parental
16 engagement, but that doesn't seem to be moving the
17 needle as far as how that should be set up. So
18 that's something that is of concern and we want to
19 try to work more towards, you know, how do we
20 actually get a lot more engagement within the
21 community. I know Dr. Owoh and his group has been
22 working; they've been having meetings with community
23 members, having meetings with the public, and trying
24 to get that working. But that's something that --
25 when we got there, that's something that was of

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concern.

District Operations and Fiscal Governance -- as you know, we took them over for fiscal distress -- the State took them over for fiscal distress. The budget numbers that we had at the time were that the district should end this year with around \$600,000, which is deficit, but there are some things that are concerning. As we've had to try to move staff around and get them into appropriate places, as we're dealing with these litigation cases and the grievances, we're constantly trying to update those numbers, and hopefully in December we'll have it a little bit more updated where we're at. We've tried to cut some spending. Dr. Owoh has done a lot of things in trying to even get some cost savings in some different areas, and so that could help us. But overall that's still something that, you know, we're trying to work to make sure we're ending this year in the black. But a lot of things that we are working on will be plans to help with that fiscal problem for next year.

Still in that system -- and this chart, I'll kind of explain it a little bit. There's a chart there that says Student Enrollment/ADM Chart. It has a little bit of yellow highlight on it. I should've

1 numbered the pages; I apologize. Some of the things
2 that impact -- what kind of got this on our radar is
3 last year the school district as far as ADM, or
4 average daily membership, had lost 334 students. So
5 this year they're funded on 334 students less, which
6 is a problem in that the district did not make the
7 cuts. They were already deficit spending and they
8 didn't make the cuts, even with the loss of students;
9 and so we waited until these preliminary numbers of
10 October 1st came out to see where they were at. And
11 so the chart you're looking at just kind of, if you
12 go across the top, has the ADM for year over year,
13 and then underneath that is October 1st. So whatever
14 that October 1st number is, that loss of students --
15 when you go from October 1st to October 1st typically
16 seems to be very similar in terms of what that ADM
17 number is going to be. And right now the preliminary
18 numbers as of October 1st show the student -- show it
19 being around 450 students as far as additional loss.
20 So obviously that's a big concern in terms of finance
21 and programmatic offerings and all those types of
22 things. So that's something that we're keeping our
23 eye on and also thinking about in our planning for
24 stabilizing the district financial as to how we're
25 also going to deal with it. So, 334 students and the

1 450 that are not there this year.

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Talk about, Dr. Hernandez, on
3 the student loss, is that fairly even across grades
4 or does it seem to be concentrated at certain grade
5 spans?

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I should've -- I actually
7 had all three on here and I took them off. But if
8 you look at enrollment by grade level, down in the
9 Facilities and Transportation section, it pretty much
10 is across. There are some numbers around
11 kindergarten that seem to be less kindergarten
12 showing up. So that is obviously a concern, because
13 if that trend stays, that's going to drop that number
14 --

15 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Right.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- number above. But it's --
17 there's not really a -- they're missing out of the
18 high school; they're missing out of the middle school
19 or the elementaries.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. CHAMBERS: On that same line, do we know yet
22 where those children have gone?

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: So we've looked, you know, at
24 the countywide as a whole. We do know that there's
25 been some student loss at Watson Chapel. There

1 hasn't been that much of an increase in White Hall.
2 And then Dollarway has remained relatively -- they've
3 got a few students that they lost, but last year they
4 lost around 100 students, and so this year it's a lot
5 better. But countywide, when you look at Jefferson
6 County as a whole, the loss of students, it's been
7 around 200 some-odd students. So it's not that
8 they're all transferring to different schools; some
9 of them are just leaving the county. Right.

10 Okay. So the final section here within our
11 systems is the Facilities and Transportation. And so
12 as you know, as we move to this we try to think about
13 everything in the grand context of all of it, instead
14 of just focusing on finance. And so when we look at
15 our facilities that -- obviously with the loss of
16 enrollment there are some facilities that are in
17 pretty good shape. One of the biggest problems is
18 that there are a lot of unused or under-utilized
19 facilities within the district that aren't open. And
20 so when you look at the enrollment by grade level and
21 start to think about, well, our standards say we can
22 have this many kids in a classroom and all those
23 types of things, based on our calculations for just
24 -- without some of the extra curriculums, we're
25 thinking there should be around 57 classrooms for K-5

1 students, and right now there are over 160 that are
2 available, that are currently in use. And so
3 obviously when you think about that, there's a lot of
4 over-abundance, and that's not including the schools
5 that are closed. And so on that last page you'll
6 kind of see a spreadsheet that lists several -- and
7 the reasons that they're highlighted is that the ones
8 that are yellow are ones that are in use currently,
9 but they're not utilized to capacity. And then the
10 ones that are green are buildings that are open but
11 they're probably heavily under-utilized. So, for
12 example, within the middle school right now it
13 currently operates an ALE program in a certain wing,
14 but the rest of the building as a whole is not used.

15 That's right, correct?

16 DR. OWOH: Yes.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: And then when we look at the
18 administration building, you know, there's a --
19 anybody that's been downtown in Pine Bluff, there's a
20 six-story structure with a basement. Right now the
21 basement is being somewhat utilized, the first floor
22 is being somewhat utilized, and the second floor is
23 being utilized. But floors three through six there's
24 nothing, no activity. And so those are some things
25 that are of concern about what do we do long-term.

1 And so we've been working on some plans and some
2 ideas to try to address the facilities to make sure
3 we're utilizing what we can most effectively.

4 And then the final note there, just something
5 related to facilities, is that the district recently
6 had outsourced their custodial staff and then they
7 went back right before State authority and wanted to
8 go back to using local folks. And that was one of
9 the big issues between board members, and as a result
10 of that it wasn't very well planned out. And so we
11 have a lot of places where we might not have the
12 adequate amount of coverage, but in order to get the
13 adequate amount of coverage the cost can be
14 problematic. And so there are a lot of places where
15 they've had to hire subs and things like that to not
16 really get a cohesive plan of how we're going to
17 clean buildings. And so obviously when you're
18 cleaning lots of buildings that you really don't need
19 that's problematic, and so we're going to be looking
20 at ways to try to -- you know, how to make that
21 operation more efficient.

22 And so with all of those things there, you know,
23 we started looking at the systems and thinking about,
24 you know, in terms of academics how all these things
25 play a role in that, that we felt it was appropriate

1 to ask for classification within Level 5 support.
2 There is an ability for the school district to ask
3 for a hearing. In your board packet you have a
4 letter from Dr. Owoh waiving that right to request a
5 hearing. And so with that, any questions for myself
6 or Dr. Owoh we'd be happy to answer.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. I'm going to start with
8 Dr. Moore. Do you have any questions?

9 DR. MOORE: Okay.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Zook, any questions?

11 MS. ZOOK: I just wondered with --

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Microphone.

13 MS. ZOOK: Thank you. With the gradual increase
14 of the minimum wage, how will that affect your
15 classified and your substitute pay in a district that
16 has a declining -- have you had time to look at that?

17 DR. OWOH: No, we haven't had time to really
18 look at that. But what we have started to really
19 work on is making sure that we have the workforce
20 that aligns and that's conducive to our student
21 enrollment. And so we know that when we have a
22 lesser number of classified staff who would fit in
23 that category, then we would be able to make sure
24 that we have a comparable or competitive salary
25 schedule for them. So, but we haven't looked at how

1 the increase in the minimum wage would impact that.

2 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And is it possible, if you're
3 familiar enough with the way you do your bookkeeping,
4 in your quarterly reports to also give us the
5 information with regard to teacher absenteeism for PD
6 and for non-PD? In the past that kind of information
7 was helpful to us as a board.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Dean?

9 MS. DEAN: I don't have a question so much as
10 just a comment. I looked at the community and family
11 engagement as well, and that's something as we are
12 finishing up working on the frameworks and the
13 toolkit I look forward to working with you
14 individually and coming to Pine Bluff and making sure
15 that we get that community and family engagement up
16 to where it needs to be. Because that's going to be
17 a pivotal part of getting Pine Bluff where -- back up
18 to where it needs to be. So I look forward to
19 working with you on that.

20 DR. OWOH: We look forward to that partnership
21 as well.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Ms. Chambers?

23 MS. CHAMBERS: I don't have a question for Dr.
24 Owoh. Just thank you for being there and what I
25 think it's going to mean to the schools and the

1 community.

2 I have a process question. So if a school is
3 not in any form of level of support, are they
4 required to notify the Department of Education if
5 there's pending litigation? I'm just trying to think
6 how do we see some of these things earlier and that
7 we understand if there's a pattern or -- and try to
8 moderate some of these before it gets to this point?

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: So I don't know that there is a
10 mechanism for districts that -- for us to be able to
11 know which districts have pending litigation unless
12 they try to apply for some of our -- what is that --
13 I don't remember what that fund is called. There's a
14 --

15 COMMISSIONER KEY: Educator Defense --

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: I'm looking at Greg to give
18 me a yes or no. So Educator Defense Fund I think is
19 what it's called, something similar to that.

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: So there's not really a way for
21 us to know. There's no requirement for districts to
22 report that to us; so there's not a place where, I
23 guess, we can look for that unless there was --

24 COMMISSIONER KEY: Unless they are a district in
25 -- under State supervision there's -- I'm not aware

1 of any reporting mechanism or anything else like
2 that. If we know it, it's just because we've seen
3 it. And I know the legal team does a relatively good
4 job of keeping an eye on the news when there are
5 litigation issues out there. But we're not going to
6 know, for instance, if it's -- unless it's a high-
7 profile case, like going on in Northwest Arkansas
8 right now or places like that. We typically are not
9 going to know details of local litigation.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I will say they're all kind
11 of created equal. Most districts have some kind of
12 insurance where there's coverage on these things.
13 But one of the unique -- one of the unique things
14 about Pine Bluff, that probably they don't want to be
15 unique about, is their deductibles on their
16 insurance. Typically some, you know, can be
17 negotiated down to where the deductible might be
18 \$2500. But because of their history in dealing with
19 litigation they're up to a \$25,000 deductible every
20 time there's an issue. So that's why all of these
21 are concerning is that if we, you know, are having to
22 deal with these it's not just a small bite that we
23 would have to deal with in those cases.

24 MS. CHAMBERS: Well, and two points: so in
25 addition to thinking through kind of the insurance

1 and the financial implications, sometimes that's an
2 early indicator of other things that might be best
3 served earlier if we could help, I realize not from a
4 compliance standpoint. Our relationship has changed
5 relative to the districts. Just trying to think how
6 we help support earlier than maybe today we are
7 notified or able to.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Dr. Hill.

9 DR. HILL: Yeah. I'm just wondering, did you --
10 and I know it may be early, but did you -- were you
11 able to see any trends towards barriers to attendance
12 -- school attendance, transportation? I mean, was
13 there anything -- what I just see here talks about,
14 you know, being so many kids absent. Are there any
15 things that just jumped out at you? I know
16 transportation in Little Rock is an issue, you know,
17 for participation, and I didn't know if there was
18 just anything right now on the top that just --

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: Dr. Owoh may be able to speak.
20 I can say from a transportation perspective, why you
21 don't see that on the list is -- you know, in looking
22 at theirs, we've had our transportation team from the
23 Department that's gone down and analyzed. And they
24 really have -- what was said to me and what I've
25 observed is probably one of the better operations in

1 the state in terms of how they maintain and do their
2 fleets. And so I feel pretty confident that that's a
3 good strong point for them. But as far as other
4 barriers --

5 DR. OWOH: Dr. Hill, I've had the opportunity to
6 have student focus groups as well as the other groups
7 that Dr. Hernandez has mentioned. And the students,
8 both at the middle school and high school, have
9 shared that, one, there's just no motivation.
10 They're not interested in the instruction. The
11 educators on high school level feel that the size of
12 the campus is unmanageable with security, because the
13 high school is located in a neighborhood. And so not
14 only do you have students being able to move around
15 the campus unsupervised at times, but you also have
16 individuals from the neighborhoods coming on. And so
17 it's just a safety issue that both the student groups
18 and the educator groups have mentioned is the lack of
19 interest in the class, the motivation -- lack of
20 motivation as well.

21 Students -- in fact, juniors and seniors shared
22 that they're just -- they don't feel like they're
23 being prepared, for one, for the next phase after
24 high school and so they don't really see a point in
25 attending school on a regular basis. On the

1 elementary level it's the fact that we have some
2 parents who are not interested in having their
3 elementary students on time. And so we see students
4 arriving 30 minutes to an hour after the start of
5 school. And then on the back-end they're checking
6 out their students as well.

7 So transportation hasn't been an issue; it's
8 just the fact that we have individuals who have not
9 followed the policies, nor the procedures that have
10 been established.

11 DR. HILL: And since you said it, one other
12 thing, when I visited down there two years ago, is
13 when you -- you're talking about the community
14 walking around. There's a lot of boarded-up homes
15 around the high school that kills motivation, you
16 know, and just -- is that still there? That was a
17 couple of years ago. I don't know.

18 DR. OWOH: Yes, sir. And not just the boarded
19 up homes; it's the activity that takes place in those
20 boarded -- that students have conveyed to me that
21 they just feel unsafe because of that, the activity
22 -- just you name it, that type of activity is taking
23 place.

24 DR. HILL: Right by the school.

25 DR. OWOH: A block, a street, right across the

1 street. Yeah. Yes, sir. In fact, the first five
2 weeks that I was there we had break-ins in the gym.
3 Well, that was taking place because of people who
4 live next to the high school. They were coming and
5 breaking into the gymnasium, so --

6 DR. HILL: Appreciate what you're doing. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. Newton.

9 MS. NEWTON: I don't know if I have questions or
10 comments, but this just makes me want to cry because
11 this is somebody's babies that we're talking about.
12 And I appreciate you two getting in there and being
13 willing to do what it takes to give these kids a
14 better shot, and so thank you for what you're doing.

15 I guess I do have one question. I know one of
16 the biggest expenses that a district has is teacher
17 salaries. And it sounds like to me this district is
18 not just a little bit over-staffed, it's tremendously
19 over-staffed. And so what -- I know you've probably
20 given it some thought. What are you -- have you kind
21 of thought about to try to get it back in line to
22 what it needs to be?

23 DR. OWOH: Ms. Newton, I'll tell you, it's just
24 not the teachers who are in the classroom; we're
25 overly staffed in almost all areas. That includes

1 the district staff. For a 3200 student enrollment
2 school district we have a lot of personnel at the
3 district level. And so one of the things we wanted
4 to make sure is we streamline the district personnel,
5 as well as look at the essential or the key personnel
6 members who we need for support in the schools, as
7 well as the teaching staff. We have classes K-12
8 with three students, five students, nine students,
9 and there are more of them than classes that have 20,
10 25 students. And so we're right now looking at the
11 vacancies that we have throughout the district, if we
12 can utilize personnel who already have contracts to
13 fill those vacancies based on their license. And so
14 we've been able to shift some staff members just this
15 week by doing that. But in the months to come we're
16 looking at to really, one, condense the number of
17 schools, which will also condense the number of staff
18 members, but also condense the number of personnel
19 members we have, outside the schools as well.

20 Because, like I said, it's just not over-staffed in
21 teachers but in other personnel areas as well. And
22 then once we look at the buildings that are not being
23 operated that will also assist us with funds as well.

24 MS. NEWTON: Some savings there.

25 DR. OWOH: Savings.

1 MS. NEWTON: Okay. Thank you.

2 DR. OWOH: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Ms. McFetridge?

4 MS. McFETRIDGE: No.

5 CHAIRMAN BARTH: No, okay.

6 Any additional comments or questions over here?

7 All right. Thank y'all.

8 Yeah, Dr. Hernandez.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: I just wanted to say one more --
10 I know we really sounded like for the most part that
11 things weren't going great. But I can tell you I've
12 been working closely with Dr. Owoh and just, you
13 know, really proud of him and how hard he's been
14 working in trying to motivate people to go to work
15 and those things. I would be remiss if I didn't
16 mention -- as we're looking at all these systems, our
17 intention is to develop a plan that's going to -- I
18 won't say it's going to solve everything, but we're
19 going to take every element into account. So when we
20 -- instead of just trying to write the budget, you
21 know, we're going to make sure that we've got a long-
22 term plan for things like facilities. We want to
23 make sure that we have -- if we're buying technology
24 in the classroom for curriculum purposes, we're going
25 to make sure we have a rotation schedule and things

1 are -- be able to afford all those things. And so
2 it's going to be comprehensive. It's not going to be
3 -- we hope in the long-term it'll be well received.
4 It may not be well received upfront, but we are going
5 to take some very in-depth measures. And the reason
6 for asking for this recommendation or this
7 classification is to be able to do things in a timely
8 manner, and maybe even quicker, if needed.

9 DR. OWOH: If I can say one last thing?

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes.

11 DR. OWOH: Like Dr. Hernandez said, I didn't
12 want to appear to be so doom-and-gloom as well,
13 because I will tell you we do have some bright spots.
14 We have some outstanding students who are not
15 recognized, and that's one of the things that we
16 wanted to change. I told the staff members at the
17 district that we have to write our own narrative, and
18 that's highlighting the good work that our students
19 are doing K-12 and even in our pre-K center. And we
20 have some great educators. But we focus on
21 correcting the misbehavior and the areas of concern
22 and not really focusing and highlighting on the
23 positive -- and that's one of the things that we're
24 definitely focusing on, to make sure that we're
25 really highlighting and not forgetting the students.

1 My Student Council senior class president
2 stated, you know, she -- her main concern was that
3 being left behind and not being recognized; the
4 students who are doing what's right not being
5 recognized and being showcased. And so we want to
6 make sure that we definitely highlight them.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Great. All right.

8 Okay. So the request is from the Department for
9 this classification.

10 Ms. Freno, any -- do you want to give us any
11 other kind of marching orders here in terms of --

12 MS. FRENO: Lori Freno, Department of Education.

13 No, Dr. Barth, not unless you have any
14 questions. The recommendation of the Department is
15 that the Pine Bluff School District be classified in
16 Level 5, in Need of Intensive Support, and that is
17 what the initial vote will be.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

19 MS. ZOOK: So moved.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Ms. Zook -- that's
21 a motion from Ms. Zook that the Pine Bluff School
22 District be placed in Level 5, Intensive Support.

23 Is there a second?

24 MS. DEAN: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So motion by Ms. Zook, a

1 second by Ms. Dean.

2 Is there any further discussion?

3 Okay. Voice vote okay?

4 Okay. All those in favor say "aye."

5 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Any opposed?

7 Okay. All right. So that work is done.

8 MS. ZOOK: I'll make a second motion.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

10 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I move that this board assume
11 authority over the Pine Bluff School District and
12 that we direct the Commissioner of Education to
13 assume authority of the Pine Bluff School District's
14 board of directors, as may be necessary to operate
15 the school district.

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER KEY: That motion may need
18 clarification from Ms. Freno.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah. How is this motion
20 different from what has previously been done?

21 MS. FRENO: In the fiscal distress realm that
22 was a different law, and authorities and powers of
23 the Commissioner and board are different under the
24 two different laws. This one deals with academics;
25 the fiscal distress law dealt with just the fiscal

1 components. And if there is an assumption of
2 authority by the board, as Ms. Zook has moved, then
3 there will be, I guess, basically a double assumption
4 of authority, but it would be recognizing both
5 assumption of authority for fiscal and assumption of
6 authority for academic.

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. And as was said earlier,
8 there was an opportunity for a hearing on this issue,
9 but it was waived. Correct?

10 MS. FRENO: That is correct, Dr. Barth.

11 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. I just
12 wanted to be clear on that.

13 And in brief, just for everybody's info of what
14 we're doing here, the powers, they are different, and
15 in some ways broader -- in some areas broader, in
16 other ways just -- it's not applicable because it's
17 not fiscal stuff under this motion, if it were to
18 pass. Right?

19 MS. FRENO: That's correct, Dr. Barth. Yes.

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

21 So you've heard that motion. Is there a second
22 to that motion?

23 MS. NEWTON: Second.

24 MR. WILLIAMSON: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. So a motion by Ms. Zook,

1 second by Ms. Newton.

2 All those -- any further discussion there, or
3 questions?

4 All in favor say "aye."

5 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

6 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Opposed, same sign.

7 All right. Okay.

8 MS. ZOOK: And I have a further question,
9 probably for Ms. Freno.

10 Do we need to go further with regard to the
11 acting board and the superintendent to be able for
12 them to also look at administration, central office,
13 principals when they are looking at right-sizing the
14 district for the students they're serving?

15 MS. FRENO: Well, at this point, Ms. Zook, I
16 mean, you could, but the Board doesn't have to. I
17 mean, the Board -- you know, Dr. Hernandez and Dr.
18 Owoh are currently doing the systems analysis and
19 they're looking at all these components. The State
20 Board can come back at any time and they can -- and
21 it can order any of the items that are under 6-15-
22 2916. So it's not like you have to do something
23 today, but certainly that is up to the Board, if the
24 Board wants to do something more today.

25 MS. ZOOK: I think I would like to make that so

1 that they can just start out and do what needs to be
2 done rather than having to wait to see how we're
3 going to vote each time. If they need to use it,
4 it's there; if they don't need to use it, then it's
5 not. But I feel that -- or I believe that that is
6 one of the things that might have moved the Little
7 Rock School District along quicker, and Pine Bluff
8 and West Helena, others, and Dollarway, if we had
9 made sure from the very beginning that their hands
10 were not tied with any regard. So that in fact would
11 be another motion I'd like to make.

12 MS. FRENO: And I would just clarify on that
13 motion is, you know, the -- your authorities are set
14 forth in 6-15-2916.

15 MS. ZOOK: Right.

16 MS. FRENO: And I think we would need to focus
17 more on precisely, you know, what the Board would be
18 interested in authorizing --

19 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

20 MS. FRENO: -- the school district to do.

21 MS. ZOOK: I think it's 6-15-2916(2)(ii) and 6-
22 15-2916(f). And please double-check me to be sure
23 I'm making reference to the correct ones.

24 MS. FRENO: Okay. 2(b)?

25 MS. ZOOK: No. 2 and then the little I's.

1 MS. FRENO: Oh, okay. 2 and then (a)? There's
2 an (a) and a (b).

3 MS. ZOOK: I forget what it was. Let me pull it
4 open.

5 MS. FRENO: I mean, we are under (a). We
6 already -- there is the component about the
7 superintendent, removing the superintendent,
8 reassigning or suspending him or her on a temporary
9 basis. That's already -- yeah, that's already been
10 done.

11 MS. ZOOK: And then the --

12 MS. FRENO: Oh, and then the 2(a)(2) is
13 authorize the individual to remove, replace, reassign
14 or suspend public school district personnel in
15 accordance with state law.

16 MS. ZOOK: Yes.

17 MS. FRENO: Is that the one you're referring to?

18 MS. ZOOK: Yes. That, and then also (f) which
19 is require reassignment of some or all of the
20 administrative, instructional or support staff of the
21 public school. And I don't know if that needs to be
22 two different motions or whether one will suffice
23 because they are so closely related.

24 MS. FRENO: It just depends upon how the Chair
25 would want to handle it. I mean, if everyone was in

1 agreement with both that would be fine. But you
2 might want to go one at a time, if that's what you
3 choose.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So my question for Ms. Freno
5 is, obviously the -- through the previous -- the
6 second motion, the Commissioner's powers are quite
7 broad.

8 MS. FRENO: Correct.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: In what ways does this alter --
10 in what ways does this vote enhance any powers that
11 the Commissioner already has?

12 MS. FRENO: I don't think it necessarily does,
13 for not only the Commissioner but also Dr. Owoh, I
14 mean, because there already -- there already is an
15 authority to take several of those steps. But, you
16 know, recognizing this must -- these must be taken in
17 accordance with state law, which is what those
18 components read. So, you know, Dr. Owoh has, you
19 know, certain -- and the Commissioner has certain
20 powers at this point to do that.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yeah. I think that's my
22 question is why is -- because of the breadth of
23 authority that was already granted under the second
24 motion I guess I'm unclear of why this would be
25 necessary to --

1 MS. ZOOK: I guess it's just based on my
2 experience that before, when we would do something
3 like this, then it seemed like it always just focused
4 on say teachers or the footprint of the district, but
5 it didn't get into making sure we had quality
6 instructional leaders in every building, making sure
7 that we downsized the central office staff that may
8 not be needed. It may have been there but I have not
9 observed us doing it.

10 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Well --

11 MS. ZOOK: I guess I was just trying to
12 communicate as a member of the Board that I want them
13 to use any and all of the things at their disposal to
14 make sure the students in the Pine Bluff School
15 District get what in fact it is their right to have,
16 which is good quality instruction. And we don't know
17 what people will be doing in 15 years, but we know
18 probably they'll have to read in order to do it.

19 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Uh-huh.

20 MS. ZOOK: And, you know, I just don't want to
21 make them feel like they have to come back to us or
22 we didn't intend that or whatever. When we
23 intervened in the Little Rock School District we
24 didn't specifically mention this, even though I think
25 those of us who voted for it presumed it would be

1 done. But because it hasn't been done to any level
2 of -- or any degree, then I just don't want to make
3 the same mistake again in the Pine Bluff School
4 District.

5 MS. FRENO: Yes, I understand, Ms. Zook. And I
6 see Dr. Hernandez is here and I was also going to
7 point to Dr. Owoh and just -- you know, it sounds
8 like what they are doing is that already.

9 MS. ZOOK: All right.

10 MS. FRENO: But I'll leave it to them to
11 explain.

12 MS. ZOOK: Okay.

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I think that's -- I think
14 what you're trying to convey is what we definitely
15 understand and what we want to do. We want to be
16 able to utilize all powers. I think probably most
17 appropriate would be that when we do our quarterly
18 report in December, next month, that we'll kind of
19 talk about some of those things that we are using or
20 utilizing. But then if there are additional steps
21 that we need to specifically ask for that we would
22 like to be able to come back and ask for them at that
23 time as we start to further our plans -- because I
24 can think of a few things that we might need to come
25 back and specifically ask for.

1 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. I guess I just wanted to be
2 sure that you're on the ground and sometimes you
3 might need to make a decision at the moment and not
4 have to wait till the next State Board meeting to
5 say, "What do y'all think." You know, I want
6 everybody to feel free to go forward -- I do -- I'm
7 not speaking for the Board.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: I understand.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: But I do think that, you know,
10 it's my understanding, Ms. Freno, that there are
11 certain things that would still be -- have to be
12 asked for by the Board because of the limitations
13 under state law, right, of -- that are still in
14 place. Even in the section that you were attempting
15 to add as a third motion, there would still be a need
16 to come back to the Board for request for waivers and
17 other things if it was something that was
18 extraordinary power under -- through a waiver or some
19 other action. Correct?

20 MS. FRENO: Yes. Yes, that is correct. Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So that's what I'm -- I think I
22 was confused about because there would still need to
23 be action by this board if it was something that was
24 -- that could not be waived under state law at
25 present. Is this correct?

1 COMMISSIONER KEY: (Nodding head up and down.)

2 CHAIRMAN BARTH: So that's why I don't think
3 this is going to be -- my interpretation, but I'm not
4 a lawyer, is that this is not -- this is really just
5 kind of a redundancy to the last motion, rather than
6 anything that is --

7 MS. ZOOK: Well, I know like under state law
8 there is a certain amount of notification or
9 demonstration that you've worked with people, and
10 then not renew their contract by May 1. And, you
11 know, he's new on the ground and everybody he's
12 helping is going to get all this extra support. But
13 I don't want to let that come and go and then we have
14 another year where maybe we don't have a person who's
15 out there that's doing what they need to for students
16 on a day-to-day basis. So if the second motion took
17 care of that, I'm good with it. If it didn't, I'd
18 like to press forward.

19 COMMISSIONER KEY: You know, I would just -- I
20 would say that the reassignment is -- you know, the
21 (f) that you read -- and what was the other one, Ms.
22 Zook, that you --

23 MS. FRENO: 1(a)(ii), authorize individual --

24 MS. ZOOK: One was to authorize, remove, replace
25 or reassess the district personnel and/or reassign

1 administrator, principal, staff, you know, if that
2 were more appropriate. That's the (f).

3 COMMISSIONER KEY: Okay. So I think it may be
4 premature, because in our discussions we actually
5 anticipated -- we needed to get the Level 5
6 designation first and then completing the systems
7 analysis that has been underway. So, you know, and
8 we may need more than this; you know, I don't -- we
9 don't know at this point. We -- and anything we do
10 -- I mean, I guess you can reassign someone under the
11 law under the current year, but you cannot reduce
12 their salary, you can't change the terms of their
13 contract. If their contract actually states, you
14 know, their work assignment you can't even change
15 that, you know, because it's a contract. So there's
16 nothing there that I think we could do midyear. Now
17 the only thing that could be done is following a RIF
18 procedure if it was determined that a RIF is
19 necessary or something like that because of, you
20 know, the need to address -- but that's back on the
21 fiscal aspect of things, which we already had the
22 authority to do that under your previous action.

23 So I think -- I appreciate the willingness and
24 forethought. I think at this point it may be more
25 prudent if we identify exactly what may be needed and

1 bring that back.

2 MS. ZOOK: Okay. And on the Level 5 support
3 does that include they can request, say, an audit of
4 their special ed. department and an audit of their
5 dyslexia program, those kind of audits, in addition
6 to the ones we needed for academics -- I mean, for
7 fiscal? Sorry.

8 MS. FRENO: "They" being the school district or
9 the ADE?

10 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. Can they -- the district, Dr.
11 Owoh, and Dr. Hernandez -- say to the Department "one
12 of the places we would like support is to get a full
13 audit of --

14 MS. FRENO: Yes.

15 MS. ZOOK: "-- these departments to see what we
16 need to do?" Because, you know, if they're having to
17 look at facilities and fiscal and academic and
18 everything else to get that kind of support from
19 people that adjust that focus, then I would feel -- I
20 would like for them to be able to do that.

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right. So, and I probably -- I
22 didn't mention this in the report; it's something we
23 were going to mention in December. But what we did
24 and the great work that Deb Coffman's group did in
25 re-doing the Standards for Accreditation, it listed a

1 lot of those things. And so what we've been doing --
2 the district in partnership with the Agency has been
3 going through that monitoring tool. And as we've
4 come across things, like special ed., we had -- the
5 Special Ed. Department has been actively engaged in
6 there in providing reports and working on key issues;
7 ESL, which there's not a lot of -- a large population
8 there at all. We've also been looking at part of the
9 standards with dyslexia. So we've been working with
10 the Department to say, "Hey, look at our stuff. Is
11 it good? Is it not good? What do we need to
12 improve?" Recently, we've even been working with
13 Department of Career Ed. to come in and do a study to
14 see if things are -- and we found in some cases
15 things weren't done right. And so we're working to
16 mitigate that, and sometimes that has to do with how
17 we might deal with staff members that aren't doing
18 things appropriately.

19 So a lot of those things were kind of the first
20 part of that systems analysis. So we have gone
21 through and started looking at all those things and
22 then thinking about how we're going to make
23 improvements.

24 MS. ZOOK: Okay. I just don't want you all to
25 feel your hands are tied in any way, because you're

1 taking care of precious little products in there and
2 I want those children to have the very best that we
3 can give them.

4 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. So are you
5 withdrawing the motion?

6 MS. ZOOK: Yeah. I will withdraw my motion --

7 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Okay.

8 MS. ZOOK: -- because it's unnecessary.

9 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. Thank you.

10 All right. Any further discussion? Any further
11 action?

12 So we are complete with this item. And thank
13 y'all. And, Dr. Owoh, continue your good work and we
14 look forward to seeing you soon. Thank y'all.

15 NEW BUSINESS

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. We -- next up -- I
17 apologize -- New Business. So, and new business
18 obviously is anything that is not on the agenda that
19 we need to bring forward.

20 Any new business on this side?

21 Okay. Any new business over here?

22 MS. ZOOK: I don't know at what point -- I'd
23 probably work with Legal because -- talking about the
24 special ed., dyslexia, those kind of audits of other
25 districts that are under Level 5.

1 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

2 MS. ZOOK: And we may want to prioritize that
3 for them just because they can't do -- you know,
4 they're limited in staff and how many that can go
5 where. But we have several Level 5 for various
6 reasons and the feedback I get is that one big part
7 of the problem is in the special ed. and dyslexia
8 arena in the curriculum alignment. So, you know, I
9 don't know if that's new business, gets added later,
10 or I need to talk with Legal about getting it on the
11 agenda, so --

12 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay.

13 MS. ZOOK: -- I can get input for that.

14 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right.

15 PUBLIC COMMENT

16 CHAIRMAN BARTH: We're next down, if there's no
17 additional new business, down to public comment. I
18 do have -- Ms. Freno, can you check and see if
19 anybody else signed up for -- I have one list here.

20 MS. FRENO: I just did, Dr. Barth. There is no
21 sign-up except for what's on your list.

22 CHAIRMAN BARTH: You're one step ahead of me.
23 Thank you, as always.

24 And so we do have folks. I know, Acadia Roher,
25 you've been here since this morning and we appreciate

1 lax charter school laws -- a race to the bottom.

2 The issues with our schools are at much higher
3 levels than the so-called bad teachers. Pointing at
4 scapegoats and tanking our standards at a time like
5 this is like throwing out the baby, the bathwater,
6 the tub, and then burning the house down. It's
7 ineffective at addressing the real issues and likely
8 to cause -- to make things harder in the long-run. I
9 know we all have those one or two teachers who
10 probably would've been better suited in a different
11 line of work.

12 Commissioner, you said that only one teacher in
13 the recent past has utilized the process laid out in
14 the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act, and they ended up
15 being terminated. So it seems to me like even in
16 your version of how these things should go the
17 process is working.

18 We all know the current LRSD grievance process
19 does not cover teacher and staff firings -- and if it
20 were changed to apply, it would not offer the same
21 protections that -- of the laws that we're discussing
22 right now.

23 Under State control you've already used your
24 power to forcibly reconstitute LRSD schools several
25 times and teachers at those schools already had to

1 make their case for why they should keep their jobs.
2 So why this, and why now? If this was an attempt to
3 needle the LREA to make them seem unreasonable, the
4 tactic has backfired. And I was at a community
5 meeting a couple of weeks ago where there were over
6 1,000 people from all parts of the community pledging
7 their enthusiastic support for the teachers. There
8 are dozens of new meetings and actions planned that
9 are in motion right now by parents and community
10 members ready to stand in solidarity.

11 This year, two bright young friends of mine who
12 got their advanced education degrees and chose to
13 teach in struggling schools left to teach at private
14 schools after years of begging their administration
15 for tangible resources, emotional support, improved
16 workplace culture, and a host of other essential
17 needs. I was really disappointed, but I couldn't
18 fault them. And those veteran teachers that I've
19 seen on the picket lines this week also want those
20 things. They've soldiered on through pay freezes and
21 school consolidations and budget cuts. But the
22 stress and lack of support, even in some of the A and
23 B schools, has taken its toll on their health and
24 their students. Instead of punishing and continuing
25 to create a culture of fear in the LRSD, particularly

1 in the D and F schools, I challenge you --

2 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Chairman Barth's 3-
3 minute timer rings.)

4 MS. ROHER: -- to instead find ways to support
5 people who spend more time with our community's
6 children than most anyone else in their lives.
7 Instead of siphoning more resources out of our
8 schools, increasing instability in the district,
9 please put a new pause on charter -- a pause on new
10 charter schools in the district and redirect that
11 freed-up time and money to insuring that school
12 environments are abundant and nurturing places for
13 everyone in every building. Blaming the teachers
14 here will only lead to more failure. Your legacy
15 will be the failure of education in the largest
16 district in the state. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you for your engagement,
18 Ms. Roher.

19 Is Chris Keck here still?

20 Okay. I know Vincent Tolliver left -- was here
21 earlier, but left.

22 Ginger Nix.

23 GINGER NIX

24 MS. NIX: Good afternoon.

25 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Good afternoon, Ms. Nix. You

1 have up to three minutes.

2 MS. NIX: Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you.

4 MS. NIX: Hopefully it'll be shorter than that.

5 Good afternoon, Commissioner Key and Board
6 Members. I am a parent of two children, one recently
7 graduated and one just starting at Parkview. I'm
8 also a product of Little Rock School District and a
9 taxpayer.

10 So I'm here because I'm concerned. I'm
11 obviously not a public speaker; I usually leave that
12 to my child. But I'm extremely concerned about what
13 is happening in Little Rock School District
14 surrounding the contract negotiations and what
15 protections our teachers will be given. I know these
16 negotiations are between the LREA and the Education
17 Commissioner, but we have no locally elected school
18 board or forum for me to appeal to. So with no local
19 control you must be our voice.

20 We the parents and families of Little Rock
21 School District students need you to take our
22 concerns into consideration when the final agreement
23 comes before you. So I'm here to ask that you do not
24 support a waiver of the Fair Dismissal laws at D and
25 F rated LRSD schools and that you do not support

1 contracts that include a provision that would allow
2 the cancellation of the negotiating agreement at any
3 time.

4 I've often said to my children that it is my job
5 as their mother to see around corners for them, to
6 advise and guide them based on life experiences and
7 knowledge that I possess, and to think of
8 consequences and outcomes that they may not have
9 considered. I stand here today peering around this
10 particular corner and these are my concerns:

11 Waiver of the Fair Dismissal laws will create a
12 two-tiered system of protections for our teachers
13 district-wide;

14 The waiver will seriously hamper the ability
15 of the entire district, including the A and B
16 schools, of which my children attend, to attract
17 qualified teachers. Also, there's nothing to stop
18 these teachers from being moved to under-performing
19 schools, which is -- it's not a good look. If you
20 try to move them to a failing school that obviously
21 offers no protection from that point forward, they're
22 not going to go and they're going to go elsewhere;

23 Waiver of Fair Dismissal laws will ultimately
24 lead to more LRSD school shutdowns and consolidations
25 which result in classroom overcrowding;

1 This waiver going into effect would exacerbate
2 our current teacher shortage crisis by forcing a mass
3 exit of teachers and students from the district and
4 tax dollars that go with them. The loss of tax
5 dollars district-wide will then filter up to A and B
6 school, affecting special education service and
7 programs that my family benefits from, including GT
8 and the arts, AP classes. My children have enjoyed
9 these benefits from the programs offered by LRSD. My
10 oldest recently began her first semester at UCA with
11 21 credit hours when she walked in the door. That's
12 incredible, and that's thanks to programs offered
13 since elementary school. She started at Rockefeller
14 and then went to Booker, and then went to Horace
15 Mann, and then went to Parkview. So thanks for
16 programs like --

17 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Chairman Barth's 3-
18 minute timer rings.)

19 Gifted and Talented, arts -- I'm almost
20 finished, I promise -- concurrent credit courses and
21 AP courses, she will be a sophomore by the time she
22 comes home for Christmas. She -- my youngest has
23 been cast in her first semester at Parkview, she's
24 been cast in four productions in the arts program.
25 She also participates in Junior ROTC. She's a 4.0

1 student and participated with great enthusiasm in the
2 robotics program at Horace Mann last year. These are
3 all programs that if these tax dollars are lost
4 eventually that budget is going to filter up and
5 these will be at risk and these are the programs that
6 have built my children's foundation, literally.

7 So I really appreciate your time and I urge you
8 to look closely around this corner and strongly
9 consider the effects these negotiations will have,
10 not just on my family but on every child in Little
11 Rock and around the state. And please remember us
12 when you're asking to review the waiver. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Nix.
14 Thank you for being here.

15 Angela Alexander?

16 DR. FRENO: Dr. Barth, Ms. Alexander is no
17 longer here.

18 CHAIRMAN BARTH: No longer here, okay.

19 DR. FRENO: And there's no other --

20 CHAIRMAN BARTH: All right. Okay. And I want
21 to thank y'all both for being here and for speaking
22 up this afternoon.

23 MS. ZOOK: May I add --

24 CHAIRMAN BARTH: Yes.

25 MS. ZOOK: May I add something? I'm sure you're

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aware because you all are obviously well informed.
But you know we have a community advisory board and
there's a person for each zone that you and they deal
with student and staff decisions. So please utilize
them and feel like until the time comes when you vote
for and elect a board that you can use these people.
Because it was deliberately picked one from each zone
so the community would have a voice when it came to
students and staffing.

CHAIRMAN BARTH: Okay. All right. With that,
we have no other business on the action agenda. And
so let's take about a 5-minute break. I know Sharon
needs to collect her things. Let's take a 5-minute
break and then we'll return for the report section of
our meeting. Thank y'all.

(THE ACTION AGENDA WAS CONCLUDED AT 2:18 P.M.)

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A-2(a): COMPUTER SCIENCE

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-8(b): JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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B-1: PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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