## In The Matter Of: DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

August 19, 2020

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# ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION <br> CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL <br> AUGUST 19, 2020 <br> 9:07 a.m. 

APPEARANCES
PANEL MEMBERS:

MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN
DR. NACCAMAN WILLIAMS
MR. PHIL BALDWIN
MS. SONJA WRIGHT-McMURRAY Division of Career \& Technical Education - Associate Director for Career Readiness

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

## MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT <br> DESE Attorney

## ALSO APPEARING:

MS. TRACY WEBB
DESE Coordinator of Monitoring and Systems Support

LOCATION:
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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\#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas
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PROCEEDINGS
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the August 19, 2020 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel. And the meeting is now called to order. Please silence all of your electronic devices.

And let me introduce to you our attendees this morning, our Charter Panel team. I'm Deborah Coffman, Assistant Commissioner here at DESE, and I will be chairing the meeting. To my right is Phillip Baldwin and Sonja Wright-McMurray, and then joining us via Zoom is Dr. Naccaman Williams. So good morning, Panel.

And, Ms. Webb, we're ready to begin with the first item please.

A-1: REQUEST TO RESCIND WAIVERS GRANTED - ACADEMIC CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE (CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT)

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning. Tracy Webb from the Charter Unit.

The first item on the agenda is an amendment request to be rescinded from the Cabot Academic Center for Excellence. They presented this amendment request last month to be able to enroll their students and wanted to be a hundred percent virtual in their charter. Because that could cause
accountability issues for them by moving back and forth, they have found a different path to do that by those students staying enrolled in their original school. And so they would like to rescind their amendment request.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any questions?
I'll accept a motion.
MR. BALDWIN: Motion.
MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Second.
DR. WILLIAMS: So moved.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We have a motion by Mr. Baldwin, a second by Ms. Wright-McMurray to accept their request to rescind their application -- or their amendment request.

MS. WEBB: Yes.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All those in favor?
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: That's -- motion passes.
Do we need to fill out the sheet or --
MS. WEBB: I don't think so.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. All right.
A-2: CONSIDERATION OF DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER AMENDMENT REQUEST: RIVER VALLEY VIRTUAL ACADEMY

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Number 2, please.
MS. WEBB: Number 2 is an amendment request for

River Valley Virtual Academy in the Van Buren School District. I really thought they were going to be onsite but I see at least one of them on the Zoom. Ms. Nancy Robbins is the only one that I see from there.

MS. ROBBINS: We have Nancy Robbins and Jennifer Feeny.

MS. WEBB: Okay, great. So they are asking for an amendment request to increase their enrollment cap and a couple of other -- no, just to increase their enrollment cap from -- this year we're at 275 and they're asking to increase that to 1,000. So I will let Ms. Nancy Robbins present that request.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning, Van Buren -Ms. Robbins. And who is with you?
(BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE)
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Nancy, who's with you?
MS. ROBBINS: Okay. Jennifer Feeny is the River Valley actual administrator.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right.
MS. ROBBINS: So I'm going to let her explain.
I'm here too to answer questions.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. If you will stand and raise your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the
truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY) CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you. You're going to have 20 minutes.

And, Ms. Hyatt, do we have anyone to speak in opposition?

MS. HYATT: No opposition.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. You'll have 20 minutes and then an additional 5 if you need to just kind of finish up. Thank you.

MS. FEENY: Hello. I'm Jennifer Feeny; I'm the Coordinator for the River Valley Virtual Academy. This year our cap as part of our charter agreement is at 275. As part of the Arkansas Ready for Learning model, our school district has opted into -- we are an option for our students in Van Buren to come and do a $100 \%$ virtual model. So with that said, we have a lot of interest and an increased enrollment in our charter. Right now we've taken over 1,000 interested families; right now they have not fully enrolled, but we've had about 1,000 or a little more interested in enrollment. We want to make sure we're prepared if that's what our families what to go ahead and go forward with as part of the Ready for Learning model, and so that's why we have asked for an increase to

1,000.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you. So I was a little unclear in the application. Are you requesting the 1,000 just for the 20-21 school year or for the remainder of your charter?

MS. FEENY: We -- I'm thinking we can probably do it -- we just probably need it for the one year due to the Ready for Learning model. We only have two years total left in our charter agreement; and so either way -- I mean whether we have it for the next two years or for just this year, we can revisit it if we need to and see how life is going at that point. Either way works. You know, we could just revisit next year if we need to keep it at 1,000 .

MS. ROBBINS: We do anticipate that some students may really like this. I don't expect it's going to be the numbers that we have at this point interested. But I do think probably some students are really going to like this, and so I do see an increased enrollment. But I think our projected original enrollment figures for next year would probably cover us. But we haven't -- we're only having about 55 to 60 students in it; it's grown a little every year, but I don't anticipate it jumping all the way to 350 . So $I$ do think that this will be
mainly for this year only.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And just for the record, the Office of Public School Accountability has gone over all of the accountability scenarios and that you are well informed of all of the pros and cons?

MS. FEENY: Yes, ma'am. And we shared that with our superintendent.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.
Other questions? Ms. Sonja? Dr. Williams?
DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. And forgive me if I missed this. Your current enrollment cap is 275?

MS. FEENY: Yes.
DR. WILLIAMS: And you're looking to go to 1,000?

MS. FEENY: Yes.
DR. WILLIAMS: And you were talking about your growth -- a question of rationale, why you need the growth? I was reading through this, and currently my screen is not very clear on what I'm trying to read here.

MS. FEENY: It's okay. So with the Ready for Learning model that the school districts have adopted, with giving students more choices about how they come back to school next week, we've had a large increase. Over 1,000 families right now have showed
interest in enrolling with us.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MS. FEENY: So we want to make sure that we can meet their needs with Covid and that they have an option that they're comfortable with.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay, good deal. So I think this is great and the idea of being able to do this. So you all are -- I guess what I'm trying to figure out, so you think 1,000 is enough? And are you all just kind of limiting your number of students that would come into this or you just believe this is the right size right now?

MS. FEENY: We don't want to limit it, especially with Covid. I mean under normal circumstances we do have a cap and, you know, we're okay with that. But with Covid we don't want to cut anybody out. We're not sure that, you know, 1,000 people will actually follow through and commit, so at this point we think 1,000 could be okay. And I know that Tracy Webb had explained some things too, that if -- down the road if we get into an issue maybe with over 1,000 , due to the accountability that Dr . Coffman talked about, we can probably address it that way.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Okay, that makes sense. I
just know just -- I have a grandson up here in Springdale and visited with some parents. And I know parents are looking at a lot of different options now

MS. FEENY: Yes, they are.
DR. WILLIAMS: -- especially in the case of schools having to close or something, that they're looking for other reasonable options to go to virtually.

MS. FEENY: Yes.
DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. Okay. Thank you.
MS. FEENY: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any other questions?
MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Sorry, I was meaning to ask this earlier and I was trying to get back to the page. I think this is a great idea. I do see there's going to be a need for this going forward. I just wanted to be a little clearer on your budget and just that this -- I'm reading through and it says it's not going to have any impact. But just want to get just some more details on that, just to make sure that I understand exactly what that's going to look like with the increase in enrollment.

MS. FEENY: Okay. So in the past we have used Pearson blended learning teachers, which were quite a
bit more expensive, about $\$ 4500$ a student, and they were the full-service option for Pearson. For this upcoming school year we'll be using our own teachers for Van Buren School District. And so Pearson -- due to the Covid pandemic, Pearson has come out with some other options that other school districts are using as well across Arkansas, and it's their Virtual School in a Box where you can use your teachers and substantially save you some money not using the Pearson teacher. So it gives us a few more options and helps with our budget.

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you. That answered my question.

DR. WILLIAMS: A question to ADE right quick. You know, as this -- in this case, as the enrollment increases there's a -- you know, even if it's virtual will the per-pupil expenditure follow the enrollment numbers?

MS. ROBBINS: Yes, it will follow the enrollment numbers. In fact, most of these 1,000 students are our district's students. You know, in the past we would only enroll students from other districts, you know, if they did the school choice and choiced in. But at this point now, after May 1st this large increase in enrollment are actually our in-district
students. So that frees up teachers that would normally be in the classrooms now that we have that -- do not have classrooms of students, because we have so many that are interested in the virtual school. So basically we're still serving that same group of students with our own teachers; it's just that we're serving them virtually rather than serving them, you know, face-to-face inside the building. So really the funding is a wash because basically it's not us staffing more teachers; we're using our existing teachers because the 1,000 students are our students from our district currently.

DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any additional questions?
All right. I'll accept a motion.
MR. BALDWIN: I'll make the motion to approve the request as presented.

MS. WRIGHT-MCMURRAY: Second.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. We have a motion by Mr. Baldwin and a second by Ms. Wright-McMurray to approve.

Any discussion?
All those in favor?
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes.

MS. ROBBINS: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Congratulations.
A-3: CONSIDERATION OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION - DIAMOND CUT PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. Ms. Webb, number 3 please.

MS. WEBB: Item number 3 is a proposed openenrollment charter application from Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy. They plan to have a school in the Little Rock area and serve 600 students in grades 7-12. Dr. Anthony Bland and his team are on Zoom to present their application.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Bland, if your team will stand and raise their right hand --

DR. BLAND: Yes, ma'am.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And do we have anyone speaking in opposition?

MS. WEBB: No.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. All right. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
(THREE SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I need to hear from everyone,
please.
(ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.
Ms. Hyatt.
MS. HYATT: Before we get started I thought I would go over the hearing procedure for the benefit of those that were not here yesterday. Of course, we'll swear in before we get going. The applicant will then have 20 minutes to give their presentation. No one has signed up in opposition, so you can move straight into the 5 minutes of additional time. Following that, we will address all of the remaining legal issues as well as the waiver issues. Following that, we will address any remaining issues that are financial or any other division within the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. And then there's time for you to ask general questions. Of course, you may engage in discussion and ask questions at any time throughout the presentation and the subsequent pieces.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Bland, your team will have 20 minutes, as Ms. Hyatt has explained, and then there will be an additional 5 for any last remaining points or you can just talk through the whole 25 minutes.

DR. BLAND: Okay. All right. Can I share my screen?

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes. And would you please speak into the microphone and state -- each person will need to state their name for the record.

DR. BLAND: Okay. Anthony Bland.
MS. HUNTER-WHITE: Tacasata Hunter-White.
MS. HEGGIE: Jessica Heggie.
MR. RAJENDRAN: Mazhil --
DR. BLAND: Okay. We can't hear you, Mazhil.
MR. RAJENDRAN: [No sound]
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We can come back to him when he's ready to present, if you're the main presenter, Dr. Bland.

DR. BLAND: Okay. All right. All right. I'm going to show the screen here.

We come today, first of all, due to being in the process of wanting to open up a charter school known as Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy, Little Rock, Arkansas. We'll be creating the foundation of tomorrow's leaders through the performing arts. The sponsoring entity is the Dr. Anthony D. Bland Foundation, a nonprofit organization whose main focus is to support and be a national advocate for the performing arts, literacy, cancer research, and
education.
The foundation has been a source of support for more than 250 nonprofit entities in literacy, performing arts, cancer research, and education. By providing help and support to youth throughout Arkansas in literacy, performing arts, cancer research, and education, many of them have went on to become outstanding citizens and leaders in their various communities. Our pursuit in establishing a performing arts high school will improve academic performance and support academic growth in central Arkansas. It will also be a safe haven for students who normally would not have these opportunities like some of their peers. By educating students through the performing arts, we will substantiate the critical need for this academic institution.

Why Diamond Cuts Performing Arts? According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in the United States was $84.1 \%$ in the 2015-16 school year. While graduation rates have gradually increased since 2011, gaps based upon race persist, as represented by respective rates for White, Hispanic, and African American students. Similarly, graduation rates of economically disadvantaged students fall 6.5 points
below overall average. From the same report, Arkansas posted an overall adjusted cohort graduation rate of $87 \%$, with less pronounced gaps, including White, Hispanic, and African American. At this time, according to the ESSA 2018-2019, none of the high schools in central -- Little Rock/ Central Arkansas have scored above $80 \%$ with the ESSA.

Our mission for Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy is to provide opportunities in the performing arts and rich the lives of students academically and their lifelong ambitions.

The model that we've chosen for the Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy is to achieve a reduction in the dropout rate; provide an annual school improvement plan; maintain a thorough program of effective staff training; maintain a well-defined and effective communications system whereby parents have access to the Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy advisory board; pre-test and post-test students to document achievement and provide information needed to improve the academic system; provide a fundamental education enabling students to go into the higher education or career path of their choice; provide specialized programs, such as ESL or Special Education services, based on student needs; provide
the needed remediation in skill areas of reading, math, writing, literacy, and other basic subjects utilizing the performing arts; motivate students to accept responsibility for their own education and become lifetime learners; employ highly qualified teachers.

In our academic focus, we want to show that we focus on the learning rather than teaching process. Diamond Cut Performing Arts will accomplish this through the performing arts: diagnostics, delivery, and data. Each classroom will have one teacher. All Arkansas state requirements for teacher-to-student ratio will be followed. In every class a form of the performing arts will be utilized to teach students. We will also use two forms of strategy:

Strategy Number 1, Student-Centered: two cocurricular activities, peer mentors, student council watch, privilege systems. Parent-centered -- oh, I'm sorry -- B, Faculty-Centered: faculty advisors, team attendance meetings, good friend advisors, guided study. C, Parent-Centered: parent monitoring, parent communications, three-week progress reports, daily progress reports.

We'll also use Strategy Number 2 which is the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Students" concept,
first documented by Stephen Covey, to train, guide and teach students to lead. So this is going to be one of the major strategies we want to use [audio distortion] to let them know that this is their path, this is their great opportunity for them to use these "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Students" in order to accomplish their goals.

Before I let Ms. White begin, there was a couple of students that wanted to express their thoughts about the school, and so they made this video. It's a couple-of-seconds video.
(A VIDEO WAS SHOWN WITHOUT AUDIO;
It MAY BE VIEWED ON THE ADE WEBSITE)
DR. BLAND: All right. Ms. White.
MS. WHITE: All right. Hello to [sound cuts out]. I am Tacasata Hunter-White, or best known as Coach White. The next few slides that you will see are theater, dance, fine arts, music, and the technical theater departments -- a curriculum map basically for those departments. And I'm a firm believer in the interdisciplinary nature of this academy because it necessitates the utilization of discipline, specific concepts, and the unification of similar concepts across the arts and academic disciplines while integrating cross-curricular --
curriculum.
I've been in performing and creative arts for over 20 years now, and so I have seen a large spectrum from the good to the bad to the ugly. But I think this program is something that is different and is something on the level of the pillar of programs that you see in larger states such as Texas and New York. Performing arts/creative arts is an important part of stimulating creativity. In addition to that, it challenges students to use different perceptions about our world and about themselves. It's an exploration for students. With this particular school, this academy, we plan on expanding and encouraging our students not just through academics but through their creative process -- so, their cognitive thinking. A lot of students when they obtain that -- over the years as I've been in this particular department I've seen that they do not understand the creative processes. So that has been a big deal with not only getting them to understand it through music, through the arts, through performing and fine arts, but also how that correlates with their core classes as well, through geometry and even through science and other foreign languages and so-on.

DCPAA will have a strong foundation within the educational setting that will reflect multifaceted dimensions of the human experience. The establishment of Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy is based on providing a free and adequate education experience and inspire all forms of each student's creativity and creative process through successful academic and arts integration for all children here in Little Rock and Central Arkansas.

In addition to that, this academy also serves as an opportunity for students/children to experience the arts and provide artistic stimulization [sic] and support of growth and development.

DCPAA is an original and innovative academy with specific subjects within arts, music, dance, and drama, each with its own program design that supports its artistic and discipline and aesthetic.

You can go ahead through with the slides, Dr. Bland, because as we're going --

This is just -- the slides here are basically the curriculum map set-up for how the academy would basically initially start the curriculum in the performing arts area. As arts integration goes, if we even just base that off of the definition of "arts integration," it is the instruction in which arts
related concepts and activities art infused with other academic areas. That is our sole goal here, to make sure that our students are receiving an abundance of learning that is engaging; that is accepting not only for them as a student but also for the parents in our community.

Also, in addition to that -- and I just want to add this as well -- that particular video, I had mentioned to a few students about the fact of "how would you feel about having a performing arts academy in Little Rock, Arkansas." And they were overjoyed. They are very intelligent students, they inspire, and they are our future; they're our future success for not only performing arts but academics. I mean this is something that in Central Arkansas -- as a child growing up here in Arkansas, this is something that I would've dreamed of. And a lot of students still have that dream, and I'm hoping to have that opportunity to be able to show the interdisciplinary nature of Diamond Cut Performing Arts.

And that's all I have. If we need more for 20 minutes, I gotcha.

DR. BLAND: All right. Counseling Department -our School Counseling and Student Support Department: students are assigned to a Guidance Counselor based
on the student's grade level and chosen performing arts area of concentration. Guidance counseling for social/emotional development; all required media available to each student; health plans; full continuum of special education services as required by IDEA; Gifted and Talented and alternative education provided through individualized instruction; faculty with ESL or ELL certification; partnership with all surrounding public school districts to support academic growth and provide dyslexia awareness and services.

We're going to have our major focus on -dyslexia and anti-bullying is two major components that we wanted to [audio distortion, other sounds bleeding in]. Those are two major components that we were wanting to focus on as far as our special education program was dealing with dyslexia and antibullying.

All staff of the Foundation and Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy will have a full background check completed prior to employment. A full-time campus director will serve as lead administrator for the Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy and will be held accountable by the executive director/ superintendent of the Diamond Cut Performing Arts

Academy, as well as the Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy Community Advisory Board. Professional development will be provided through the Arkansas Public School Resource Center.

Our stakeholders encompass our parents, our students, our staff, our community leaders; they all play an integral part of the school governance. The executive director, campus director, and assistant campus directors, with support from the Diamond Cut Performing Arts Academy Advisory Board, will develop a Community Advisory Council for the following purposes. It's basically to [inaudible] to help out with the growth of the school.

All right. At this time Jessica will talk to you about Braintree Properties. They will be the one to help set up and talk about [inaudible] construction and [inaudible].

MS. HEGGIE: Good morning. Thank you, Dr.
Bland. My name is Jessica Heggie. I am the Director of Design for Braintree Properties. I am an architect by trade and I help charter schools get into their facilities. So we partner with most charter schools to either help them expand or start up new, and we will take care of all of their facility end of it so that they can focus on what is
important for them -- the academics and the operational end of their school. So we help with procuring all of the finances for them and helping them with capital. We will help them go out to the bond market in the end and get them long-term lowinterest financing to make sure that one of the most important things, their finances, are in line and get them really started on the right track. We have a lot of history in this space and we know that really, really great schools can get into financial trouble, especially on the facility end of it. And so we're here to start them up in the right direction and help them succeed as much as we can at least on the facility end.

You can go to the next slide.
So we have been in discussions with Dr. Bland and his team to procure a facility for them to open in the 2021 school year. We have developed a facility budget process, and how we do that is just to make sure that they -- their lease number is never more than $20 \%$. We like to shoot for much less than that. But we've developed a budget based off of their first year enrollment of 600 students. You can obviously see the breakdown here. But the bottomline is we're looking at purchasing an existing
building, renovating that building, and having them a lease that is $18.6 \%$ of their lease-to-revenue percentage, which is great, especially as they expand that percentage will go down.

The timeline to get them open, which is obviously very important for them to open on time, is to have a MOU signed between our company and Dr. Bland's team in September of this year. Once we do that, we will get started right away with them to do our due-diligence on the existing building, which you will see on the next slide, and we'll get into design and start construction in January. That will give us plenty of time to do all the renovation work and get it prepped for the next school year, as well as have the school move in and get situated before opening in August of 2021.

This is the existing building that Dr . Bland and his team have found for their school at the -- and I'm going to murder the name here -- AnyTime Pizza --

DR. BLAND: PlayTime Pizza.
MS. HEGGIE: There you go, PlayTime Pizza. It's actually really great for a new school. It's got a really nice big volume; it has spaces that are very close to classroom sizes. So we have looked at pictures. Dr. Bland has walked the property and we
have identified it as a very viable option for them to be able to open one year from now.

That is all I have, Dr. Bland, if you want to add some more.

DR. BLAND: Okay. I believe that's it. Thanks again. We really want to thank you all for listening to what we have to propose here and we're open for any questions that anyone may have.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Bland. Ms. Hyatt.

Dr. Bland, through this process Ms. Hyatt will go through any legal issues or waivers. So at the appropriate time she'll pause for your team to make comment.

LEGAL ISSUES/WAIVERS
MS. HYATT: So we have some pretty significant legal issues with this application, the first being originally there was a request for 20 -plus waiver areas and all of the waivers have been rescinded; so the charter applicant is requesting no waivers. Based on the application alone, waivers would be required for school elections, school board composition, term length, meetings, virtual attendance, school board elections, alternative learning environment, superintendent licensure,
principal licensure, teacher licensure, counseling licensure -- and none of those have been requested and no responses were given on the legal review. So I don't know how we move forward from that, because the school cannot operate without the waivers in the way that it is described in the application. And we haven't had an opportunity to negotiate what those waivers are because no responses were given on the legal review.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Bland, can you respond? DR. BLAND: Yes. We were actually going to have an HR Department that will hire individuals that are certified and licensed to operate in those positions. So we didn't desire any waivers because we were going to hire individuals that were certified to hold those positions. We are going to follow every law that is required by the State to have a school. So that's why we did not ask for any waivers, because we wanted to follow every legal aspect of the State.

MS. HAYTT: So in order to operate as a charter school, number one, you would not have an elected school board. So just starting from the beginning, you would have to have waivers related to school board elections. Following that, most charter boards also meet at various times, have people that are
board members that don't necessarily reside in Arkansas, have a different way of training their board members based on their model. So they would likely need waivers in that.

The alternative learning environment would require them to have a separate building. It doesn't sound, based on what they've said, that they plan on having a separate building for that purpose.

Based on what was in the application, the superintendent licensure and principal licensure and teacher licensure was not required in those positions as they exist in the application.

Additionally, they have a really robust performing arts curriculum, which makes me wonder if they would need additional curriculum waivers in order to incorporate all of the performing arts pieces.

There are other things like Teacher Fair Dismissal, TESS and LEADS, things that are typically waived by charter schools so that they can have atwill employment as opposed to teacher contracts.

And originally in the application there were waivers for all of the licensure pieces, business manager qualifications, school elections, the facilities manual, ALE, all of the board of director
pieces, teacher salary, classified salary, personnel policies, grievance procedures, personnel policy committees, duty-free lunch, non-instructional duties, planning time, six-hour instructional day, start date, and attendance, and additional areas also.

So in my mind I am a little concerned that we went from planning to operate with all of those waiver pieces to now planning to operate with no waivers in such a short amount of time. I think it would require a considerable amount of planning to be able to execute that. And I think it's not clear from the application, even in its final submission, that they can operate with no waivers.

MS. WHITE: Well, we have actually been in contact with staff that has been certified through the Department of Education here in Arkansas, as well as a contact through New York who is a director for a particular charter school there as well.

In addition to that, with the building and the ALE, the alternative learning environment -- with that particular building, on that back side there is a smaller detachable building where we would be able to house an alternative learning environment as well.

Inside of the building, how it is set up --
because I've been in the building many times [inaudible] -- but how the building is actually setup, it already has a lot of functionality for a school. So the remodeling process wouldn't be as extensive, but this is just kind of to put out what the initial plan is.

And as far as what -- the performing arts here in Arkansas, I know there's not an actual licensure necessarily for dance, but what they do is a performing arts permit and those are obtained through experience. And we do have other colleagues that are actually ready that do have their license and are experienced in those necessary areas that are -- that we've met.

MS. HYATT: SO I think if we want to continue we're going to have to go through each of the waiver pieces and have the applicant explain how they're going to meet that since that information was not included in the application or is inconsistent with what's in the application. And I'm happy to do that if you want to move forward.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair.
Let me ask -- the way that it's been presented now is if we act upon it and voted to do this, they
would start out in violation of state law because the waivers are not included in the final application. So we obviously can't do that; we shouldn't do that.

MS. HYATT: In order I think to move forward and have a legally compliant charter application there would have to be waivers. Even if it was just for the school board, there would have to be waivers as they're not going to have an elected school board. So what we would need to do now is to walk through each of the waiver pieces to determine whether a waiver is necessary to move forward.

MR. BALDWIN: Yeah.
MS. HYATT: I'm happy to do that, but it is going to be time-consuming.

MR. BALDWIN: The --
DR. WILLIAMS: Can I ask a question please?
MR. BALDWIN: The application I looked at had the original waivers I think in it. The one that we're talking about now is a big change. I would almost prefer they go back and re-look at this and have some time to think through the waivers they need versus ones they don't need and come back with a new application, rather than go -- I mean rather than piecemeal it today.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Williams.

DR. WILLIAMS: I agree with Mr. Baldwin. But also did I see 8.6 for the lease on the property -$18.6 \%$ or something like that? Could you all verify that? Yeah, 18-point -- lease-to-revenue percentage is 18.6. I will tell you that that is high. And so my question as part of that: does this include the fees to the company, to Braintree?

MS. HEGGIE: That is correct. This includes everything. So we would put all the capital up-front and purchase the property for them, lease it back for a few years until their enrollment stabilized. And then they would have -- go out to the bond market for long-term financing. The $18.6 \%$ is just on their first year's student enrollment, and so it would go down considerably as their enrollment grows through the years.

DR. WILLIAMS: What's your projection for yeartwo?

MS. HEGGIE: I believe -- is it an additional 100 students, Dr. Bland? 100 per year.

DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. Because $12 \%$ is kind of what you shoot for, and if you include your maintenance in that you're looking at maybe a total of 15. Any time you get above 15 you're putting yourself at financial risk in doing this. So between
-- so my concern would be on the lease percentage, which means we really would need to look very closely at their budget and their revenue to make sure that the -- from the financial piece, whether this will work or not.

So if I take the concerns there, along with the concerns of the waivers, I think we may need to -they may need to go back and maybe fine-tune this application some. Thank you.

MS. HYATT: And there are some additional legal issues outside of the waivers, which I can move forward and address now, if you'd like me to.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Additional -- in addition to waivers?

MS. HYATT: Yes.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes. Just for the record, I think it would be helpful to the applicant to hear all of that.

MS. HYATT: So I'll start with how it plans to provide dyslexia services, and was happy that they addressed it in the presentation. But a lot in the application they talked about addressing it through the RTI process, which is not consistent with the Arkansas dyslexia law. So I think it would be helpful if they could provide some additional
information on how they plan to make sure they're in compliance with the screening requirements of the Arkansas dyslexia law.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Are those the final ones? MS. HYATT: No, there are several others.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. And it might be just helpful that we present notes to them so that when they -- if the board -- if the Panel decides that we want to send this back for further work that they have those -- that opportunity. And I believe -Ms. Webb, you might want to come and address what type of support has been provided to this applicant.

MS. HYATT: And I'll say from the legal perspective we did -- I did a full legal review and included all of these concerns and waiver feedback on the original waivers and met one-on-one with Dr. Bland and went through what the legal concerns were and what $I$ needed to see for them to be addressed. And then when the application was re-submitted all of the waivers have been rescinded and these other pieces have not been addressed.

MS. WEBB: Tracy Webb, Charter Unit.
So our process for all new applicants is they -first of all, they have to submit a Letter of Intent;
from there we kind of know what kind of training to set up. And so we do do a training that involves all units at $A D E$; there are pieces of curriculum, finance. From that point they -- the applicant develops the application and they submit that. The Internal Review Committee, as well as the legal team reviews those applications. We set up a one-on-one -- in this instance, it was a Zoom meeting -- and we reviewed all of those remaining concerns and questions with the applicant. They then can revise their application and re-submit, and they can also address legal concerns at that time as well.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Webb, did you have any additional concerns as you reviewed the last application?

MS. WEBB: We do have a few from the Internal Review Committee.

The first one is salaries. Their salaries across the board are very high for a school with only 600 students.

The second one was the lease purchase issue of $\$ 840,000$ a year, which is $\$ 70,000$ a month. I know she gave a different quote of 18 , but just looking at foundation funding, because that's what they can spend on that -- everything else is pretty restricted
and cannot be used for facilities, so it's really 20\% of their foundation funding that would go toward the facility.

They also have letters of support from two donors that are willing to pledge $\$ 1.5$ million and $\$ 1$ million if there was a budget shortfall. We would definitely want additional information. Those letters don't -- they don't look formal; there's no heading on them. So we'd want additional information about those donors because that's such a significant amount.

And the last thing, which is pretty significant, we calculated their revenue on 600 students, which is their enrollment cap. That's highly unlikely for any charter their first year. They've also stated in their application that they would be financially -or they would be viable with only 120 students. But with that, that reduces the foundation funding from $\$ 4$ million and some change down to $\$ 813,000$. So it's a significant difference to be able to maintain your facility and your school.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Panel, any other questions, discussion?

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No. Just from hearing comments from Ms. Hyatt and Ms. Webb, and just we
have some things we need to resolve, $I$ just think we just need to give them an opportunity to take this back and do some additional work to address concerns before we have any more discussion.

DR. WILLIAMS: And because -- here's a comment also before we make a motion. My concern is whether they would have enough time. I guess for Ms. Webb, do you all foresee -- and Ms. Hyatt -- do you all foresee being able to work out these details in a reasonable amount of time for them to stay on track to come back to us in a reasonable amount of time? MS. HYATT: My personal opinion -- and Tracy might have a different one -- is that there's significant work that needs to be done in thinking through how they're providing services to kids. Because a lot of the waivers that were initially requested have to do with student services, how they're arranging their master schedule, how they're doing their planning time and things with teachers. That is not just a let's negotiate about waivers; it's more a big picture, how can you provide these services to kids. In addition, combining that conversation with the conversation about what is your funding actually going to look like, what can you afford to provide for kids, you know, becomes a much
more complicated conversation, I think.
And some of the legal concerns I didn't get to deal with -- their governing structure, curriculum, additional budget concerns from the legal side.

So I think -- I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done and I don't know that it can get done in a month, which is the time we gave the previous applicant, the AgSTEM applicant time to come back. Those issues were mostly resolved by the time they had their hearing, so it seemed feasible to give them a month to come back. These are really significant legal issues and budget issues that need to be resolved.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.
The reason $I$ asked the question, $I$ just wanted to get an idea of how realistic it is to even send them back. Because I'm at the point where there are so many things that just -- not even having the basic waivers and so-forth, there are just so many pieces here missing, and the budget is just way out of whack. I just -- would just be up-front, I'm not supportive of sending them back.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Williams.
I think the concept is exciting. The putting it all together needs quite a bit of work, because I
didn't hear enough about the curriculum and the requirements for graduation. That's huge. And I think yesterday Dr. Williams really stated it well, is, you know, I need to hear about the finance and the curriculum. We have a concern about finance and I haven't heard anything about the required curriculum. And what they've laid out is a beautiful plan for performing arts, but at the same time we do have state requirements for graduation requirements and these students would be held to that. So I'm ready to accept a motion. DR. WILLIAMS: I move to deny. MR. BALDWIN: I'll second. CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We have a motion to deny by Dr. Williams and a second by Mr. Baldwin.

All those in favor?
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
DR. WILLIAMS: And just a comment. What -- to me what the denial does now, it gives them another full year to get all these things worked out and to really come back. If we just would've -- what's the word I'm looking for -- tabled it, then that would've put them in a very crunched time to come back to us. And I don't just see there was any way to get all of these things worked out in this period of time. So
this is -- I don't view this as being totally negative; $I$ view this as an opportunity now that they have another year to start working through these things. I think it would be great to have -- I envision a Julliard in Little Rock. So this is the right idea; you just need to get the fundamental stuff.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Bland, the Panel will put some information into our voting sheets and respond to you verbally. And then, if so requested, our team is happy to share any of their notes with you as well.

DR. BLAND: And yet we truly appreciate you all for your consideration and we look forward to receiving those notes and that information to be able to resubmit at a later date.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Bland, I'll go ahead and start and let other panel members complete their statements. But the reason I voted to deny this application is not because we don't see the vision. The vision that you have is exciting. It's the plan that needs to be worked on. And so the details are extremely important in starting up a new school. So the application is not complete; no waivers were requested; the curriculum for required graduation was
not addressed -- and those are in my eyes nonnegotiables for getting started. So we wish the best for you.

MR. BALDWIN: I also voted to deny the application. I think your concept is excellent, and I was excited as you all were talking because I can see that you believe in this and that you know that this will make a difference for kids. I think what needs to happen is make sure that you're financially viable, that you can make it financially; I think there's more work that needs to be done with that. And then also make sure that you're in compliance with state law and that waivers that are needed are requested, and that you are working with ADE to comply with all the rules that they have, that they will enforce.

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: My vote was also against. Again, I do support the idea and the concepts of what you guys have been working on, which is why initially I was leaning towards giving you a little bit more time to be able to address some of those concerns. But then after getting additional information that it would not have been fair to you to ask you to come back in such a short period of time to do those things. I definitely want to see this work and take
place over the next year, working with our agency and other partners to strengthen up your application so that when you come back you'll have a better chance of it being approved.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Williams.
DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you.
The application is not complete. Waivers, curriculum and budget concerns all need additional work is the reason $I$ voted to deny. But I agree with others, I think this would be an excellent school to have in the Little Rock area. There's some renovation work going on at the Arts Center; it could become -- be a major part of an arts culture piece there in the Little Rock area. And I agree with Mr. Baldwin that I can hear your passion when you talk about it.

Just a note: I've been on the Panel for awhile and the State Board in looking at these charter schools. Charter schools fail because of the fundamentals, the financial piece. We have great teachers who start charter schools; in the early years they didn't work. It wasn't because of the teaching; it was because of the business model behind them. So if you get those pieces right, I think you all have the right people to take care of the
performing arts part of it. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Bland. DR. BLAND: Yes.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: A 15-minute recess?
Dr. Bland, if you'll stop sharing your screen that'll be appreciated.

The Panel is going to take a 15 -minute recess and we'll be back.
(BREAK: 10:05-10:24 A.M.)
A-4: CONSIDERATION OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL
APPLICATION - WESTWIND SCHOOL FOR PERFORMING ARTS
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Webb, if you'll introduce the next item please.

MS. WEBB: Yes, ma'am. Westwind School of Performing Arts is a proposed open-enrollment charter school that would be located in North Little Rock, Arkansas. The school plans to serve 150 students in grades 6-8. We have today Ms. Theresa Timmons, Mr. Chris Bell, and Mr. Brent Elliott to present the application. We also have Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin and State Representative Mark Lowery to speak on their behalf.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning. Lieutenant Governor, you are recognized to speak.

LT. GOVERNOR GRIFFIN: Good morning. Thank
y'all for having me. I know this is a different way of doing things and I appreciate all that $y$ 'all are doing to make -- to let the business continue even in these challenging times.

Look, everybody who knows me knows how I feel about charter schools and school choice. I've always been an advocate for giving parents, like myself and many other parents, choice, not only among traditional public schools but beyond traditional public schools. Charter schools -- I'm a big advocate for charter schools, and parents, in my view, know best what their kids need. And this is an opportunity for the Westwind school to teach children 6th through 8th grade in a little different way, with an arts focus. Research has shown that an arts focus in education stimulates and helps the brain develop in different ways than without an arts education. And an arts education particularly is good for encouraging and spawning creativity and teaching creativity. And, you know, there are a lot of parents out there that believe or may find out that an arts education is precisely what their child needs. And by allowing this charter school to stand up you are simply giving more choices to parents and giving more opportunities to students.

The Timmons Art Foundation -- you've got all this in front of you -- has a history of teaching and working with young people and helping them be all that they can be. And I will mention a couple of things in particular: number one, the Timmons Art Foundation historically, I believe, in this particular instance is very concerned with students from all socioeconomic backgrounds -- in particular, those who may be economically disadvantaged. They are seeking those students in particular because they want to be -- they want to provide an education to kids that otherwise may not have access to an arts education, and I think that is critically important. And, you know, there are a lot of parents -- look, I've got three young kids; I've got a 13-year old, I've got a 10-year old, and I've got a 2-year old, believe it or not -- not a grandchild, but my child -- and she's not in school yet. And I practice school choice every single day. I am able to do that; I'm financially able to do that. I have my daughter in private school and a son in public school. Not everybody can do that. I want everybody to have that option. I want everybody's parents to have access to the amazing arts education that this school can provide.

So I just wanted to weigh-in and say this is all up-side; this is -- and the beauty of the charter system is we're not only giving alternatives to other sorts of schools; charters are an alternative to traditional public schools, private schools, homeschools, et cetera. We're not only doing that, but in the charter world there are different sorts of charters with different -- this one may have a focus on STEM and this one on arts. That diversity benefits us all.

And I also want to say the beauty -- and you know all of this -- the beauty of the charter system is you're able to innovate with leaders like Timmons Art Foundation and hold them accountable. And we're able to help these sorts of schools flourish because of the accountability in this system in a way that there isn't with some other public schools.

So put me down as a Yes. I support this, and I hope that $y^{\prime}$ all approve this. Thank $y^{\prime}$ all so much for your time and for dealing with this awkward, weird through-the-home, dogs running in the hall situation. But I appreciate what you do and thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, sir. We appreciate you speaking on behalf of this charter.

LT. GOVERNOR GRIFFIN: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Representative Lowery.
STATE REP. LOWERY: Yes, thank you very much for allowing me to call in. Lieutenant Governor Griffin covered the background of this application very well. But one thing that I would say is that, you know, the Maumelle area, which I represent, has been proud of our tradition of embracing charter schools. So you may know that the very first charter school in the state of Arkansas was the Academics Plus Charter School, which is now known as Maumelle Charter, and they're a straight-A school. And the Timmons family has been very active in our community and been very supportive of that effort, and so we're glad to see that branching out.

And one thing -- let me just tell you about my -- in working with the Timmons family, every time -and this is the Timmons Arts Foundation, this is Timmons who -- of course, I've worked with Theresa Timmons when she received an award from the Governor for the work of the Arts Foundation, but I've also worked with the Timmons who has been a City Council member. She has just -- every time we have needed her in our community to step up, she's done that. And I know that the family will -- and the Arts

Foundation will have the same kind of energy in terms of supporting this endeavor.

You know, $I$ was involved in arts through high school and college and have also seen all the research that the Lieutenant Governor referenced. The main thing is it keeps students engaged, those that have that interest, whether it is performing arts, visual arts; it keeps them engaged in all their other academic areas as well. And the facility that this particular charter school is hoping to go into is an amazing facility in the Crystal Hill area, something that will really trigger a great interest by the students. It started out as a piano gallery performing arts center and has had other occupants there, and so we're really excited about this opportunity. The family has shown great ingenuity and entrepreneurship in terms of just everything that they have engaged in in the community, and we also know their heart for kids.

And I think the issue -- you know, I looked at the -- was looking at the information in the application. I know that they also embrace the ideas that the Lieutenant Governor referenced of being able to give children and their families choice, apparently -- especially their parents. You know,
that is the thing that really invigorates the charter school process. I served on the Education Committee in my four terms in office and I remember one of the conversations that I have had with Charles Armstrong, who used to be on the Education Committee and in the Legislature, and he's also a Little Rock School Board member. And every time there was a discussion about charter schools and about whether charter schools had an unfair advantage over traditional public schools, Charles would always lean in to me and he would say, "The one thing charter schools have an advantage on, and frankly if the public schools could embrace it more, would be parent participation." And that is exactly the essence of any charter school. I think it's especially going to be true with this particular application where parents are going to be engaged, they're going to be encouraged to be engaged, to be there for performances, to be there any time the students maybe have to have extended practice times, you know, beyond the school hour; that the parents are going to be a very active participant in that.

And so I just wholeheartedly endorse this application. I hope that you will give it its full consideration and that you would ultimately vote to allow this charter to move forward. So thank you
very much for allowing me to call in and moving us ahead of your other testimony so that we could participate.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, sir. We appreciate your thoughtful words regarding this charter.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE LOWERY: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Hyatt, if you will come and outline our proceedings today.

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

We will begin by swearing in all of those that anticipate giving testimony today, with the exception of attorneys. Following that, the applicant will have 20 minutes to present. I don't believe anyone has signed up to speak in opposition -- no one has signed up to speak in opposition. So they can either use 25 minutes or 20 and then 5, if they want. Following that, we will move into discussion of the waivers and clearing up any remaining legal issues. Then we'll move into discussing any financial or other issues that have been noted by the Internal Review Committee. We'll end kind of discussing and asking general questions. Of course, as I've said many times, please ask questions as we move forward
any time that you have them of us or of the applicant.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Ms. Hyatt. If all of the persons speaking in favor of this application and anyone speaking in opposition -- I don't believe there is anyone -- but if anyone speaking in favor of this application would stand and raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY) CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you. I've acknowledged all of those.

MS. TIMMONS: Oh, excuse me, we have two other speakers that were on here speaking on behalf of the Foundation as well. Is it possible to --

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes.
MS. TIMMONS: -- allow them some time?
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes. I just didn't -- I
didn't see them. Who are they?
MS. TIMMONS: We had Ms. Janet Perkins with the Arkansas Arts Council; Ms. Adora Curry, who is a parent.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And are they part of your 20 minute presentation?

MS. TIMMONS: They are not. They were listed to be speaking on behalf of the Foundation prior to the Lieutenant Governor and Representative Lowery.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. All right. Let's start with Ms. Perkins, please.

MS. PERKINS: Good morning. My name is Janet Perkins. I'm on the staff of the Arkansas Arts Council; I'm Community Development Program Manager. I was very glad when Theresa called and requested that I be a part of this discussion.

I met the Timmons Arts Foundation two years -- I started the Arts Council in 2011, and they had already been in business for a number of years. But that was one of the first organizations when I started that I had an opportunity to meet and engage and also to be able to witness the work that they're doing with children in this community.

The main thing that $I$ am so impressed with is the exposure that the Timmons Arts Foundation -they're able to give to young people. They provide all kinds of educational opportunities, creative opportunities, whether it's music, fashion design, whether it's learning how to play an instrument. They pull in every aspect of the artistic community to be able to provide the young people in their
organization, those that are participating. I have watched the organization grow over the years that I have been in connection with the Timmons Arts Foundation, and I am always -- always so glad to see just what they're able to do with a large number of young people, giving them those opportunities. And I have never been in one situation where they are -where the young people are performing that you see any discipline problems or you're seeing Theresa and the others that work with her having to take any kind of extreme efforts to make sure that the kids are doing what they need to. I also recognize that there is a level of just joy that $I$ have seen within these kids that they're being able to learn different things and to perform and to be in front of the public doing things.

So I am one-hundred percent for this organization having the performing arts school. I think that we all know -- I don't have to repeat anything that has been said; we all know what arts -what art can do for young people to be able to expand their abilities and their horizons. That kind of exposure you cannot even pay for. So I just commend the Timmons Arts Foundation for all they do and how they are continuously -- continuously expanding that
agenda to make sure that young people get the very best. They don't give them seconds; they give them the very best of what's out there. So I am onehundred percent for this organization. And thank you for the opportunity for me to give my testimony about Timmons Arts Foundation.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Ms. Perkins. Ms. Curry.

MS. CURRY: Good morning. My name is Adora Curry. I reside in Little Rock, Arkansas. My testimony is a little bit more personal, so forgive me if I sound a little emotional. I am obviously an African American, I'm a mom raising two boys, I have two degrees, I have a fulltime job, and I'm very professional. And I start my testimony with that because I'm a single mom -- and because I'm a single mom raising two young black boys, that stigma falls upon my children a lot of times -- well, obviously unfairly -- but also a lot of times without people having the opportunity to get to know them.

And so begins my story with my relationship with the Timmons Arts Foundation and why it is critical and definitely one of the solutions to ending systemic racism that's going on in our nation. They're an example that's already been doing that.

My kids go to -- attend LRSD schools right now; we have Fulbright Elementary School and we were at Pinnacle View. Whenever I went to a parent-teacher conference, the first questions asked were is there a father at home or I would get calls about behavior that were more of a distraction in getting to know my kid as opposed to like an all-out behavior problem; like he wasn't a bad child per se, but it wasn't viewed that way and there was always never any patience. And so the first two years for my son, kindergarten and first grade, you know, dropping him off at school we had that like feeling like we were walking on eggshells and we didn't know if we would get through the day without somebody calling to complain. And I'm sure you can imagine not only as a parent and a single mom trying to do her job but what that does for the self-esteem of a 6-year old and then a 7-year old where he's going to school every day feeling like his teachers don't like him, like his teachers might be talking to other parents and encouraging their children not to play with him.

And then we get the opportunity in the summertime to participate in the Timmons Arts Foundation, and as a mom it made a world of difference for my son because it boosted his self-
esteem; he was somewhere where he was valued, where he was appreciated, where people took the time to recognize his talents and to encourage him. He discovered his love for singing; he's the only person in our family that can sing. He was in a loving and nurturing environment and he was also around people who look like him, both male and female that look like him -- and representation matters. Whenever the camps were over in the summertime we were so sad because we wanted more. We wanted to continue to put him in environments that would fill his cup, and we could not wait from August till June for him to go back to the Timmons Arts Foundation where he could get that extension of love beyond our household. But in those months, those nine months in between, whether it was at the grocery store, whether we were going to a social event or somewhere else, if he ran into an instructor or a volunteer from the Timmons Arts Foundation they always automatically brought him back into the fold. I remember one time my son saw Korto at Wal-Mart and he left the checkout line to go give him a hug. Another time we attended an event downtown in Little Rock, I think a Juneteenth celebration, and Ms. Theresa and some of the other students from the Timmons Arts Foundation were
performing; and they saw my son in the crowd, and even though he wasn't a part of the performance they went and pulled him and brought him to the front row so that he could be a part of the family with them. Every child, especially children of color, deserve to have that, that type of experience, and to feel like they're a part of a family and to feel like they matter and are valued. And this organization has been doing that since day-one. CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Ms. Curry. MS. CURRY: Uh-huh.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much. MS. CURRY: Is that the end of mine? I can stop there, but I just -- it's critical to have an organization that's already established instead of trying to reinvent the wheel or -- you know, they're setting the example and they've been doing that. And I just -- every child deserves that, especially in the times that we're living in right now.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you so much. MS. CURRY: Uh-huh.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Timmons, you have 20 minutes.

MS. TIMMONS: Okay. I'm going to share my screen. Okay. Okay. Good -- I think it's morning.

Good morning, everyone. I am Theresa Timmons, founder of the Timmons Arts Foundation. We are the sponsoring entity for Westwind School for Performing Arts, the proposed open-enrollment charter school.

First, I'd like to thank Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin, State Representative Mark Lowery, Ms. Janet Perkins, and Adora Curry for your kind words. We truly appreciate your support this morning. I'd also like to thank the Charter Authorizing Panel for hearing our application today. I would also like to introduce our team: Ms. Jenn Conner, who currently works for our National Afterschool Network and has been leading the curriculum on development of this application, as well as Chris Bell and Brent Elliott, SBA; they are our financial team.

So a little bit about me -- I was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. I'm a product of the arts. I was a dancer and a flutist; I competed across the state. And I began my higher education at the University of Cincinnati, where I danced. I began dancing for an up-and-coming artist and traveling across the country as her background dancer. I later moved to Little Rock, but in between time $I$ enlisted in the military where I served in Operation Iraqi Freedom as a gun truck commander,
leading over 60 soldiers in war. I also worked as a juvenile probation officer and my personal mission in that job was to redirect our youth through the arts.

In every field that I've worked I've always incorporated the arts in some way. My experiences in the arts include producing shows and events featured on local and national platforms; I've produced shows at New York Fashion Week, LA Fashion Week; I'm a founder and executive producer of Designers' Choice Fashion Preview, Little Rock's largest event, which has been a staple in the community for over 12 years, supporting local designers, local artists, local visual artists, and local entertainers. I'm also the A.P. for Designers' Choice Fashion Preview-Dallas. Through our community partnerships I've had the opportunity to facilitate the Jazz at Lincoln Center's pilot program for the state of Arkansas, which is how I met Jenn. But my mission during this time has -- but my mission began during the mentorship program I participated in while at UALR. It was then that I realized that $I$ wanted students to have the same -- the very same opportunities that $I$ had growing up in the arts.

So, a little bit about the sponsoring entity. The Timmons Arts Foundation, a 501 (c) nonprofit, has
the mission to educate, enrich and empower our children through the arts. I realized that there was a need for the foundation while in college [inaudible] students and select Title 1 schools. After meeting and talking with schools and principals and counselors of these schools I quickly began to understand that the desire to provide arts in education in these schools to students was there, but the budget, time and resources were not. And that's why the Timmons Arts Foundation was started.

Our initial impact in the community began by providing art supplies, musical instruments and funding to Title 1 schools. We were able to do this through partnerships, collaboration, and fundraising events hosted by the Foundation. Next, we began creating an arts program for our youth, specifically for our children from underserved communities. Cultivating the Arts Youth Summer Camp was our first program. It's a four-week arts intensive program that focuses on six components of art: vocal music, visual arts, fashion, dance, instrumental music, drama, and theater. The camp is student driven and student voiced, and they are involved in every area from the creation of a production to their final musical performance which is held at the end of the
program. In 2018, the Timmons Arts Foundation created the Timmons Arts Foundation choir where students perform on large platforms, like the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame. They performed at MLK events. And most recently, through our partnership with the University of Arkansas/Pulaski Technical College, our choir was able to sing at the legendary Mississippi Mass Choir. And because of our partnerships and supporters, like Steve Landers, our students also have the opportunity to appear in a Steve Landers auto group commercial, "That's What Steve Said."

We strongly believe that students cannot be what they do not see. And through our partnerships and relationships our students have been exposed to the local and national performing arts community, singing with legendary choirs, appearing in commercials, having the opportunity to meet and talk with professionals, like, for example, in this picture with Toni Braxton; she's a singer and actress. She actually flew to Arkansas to do a workshop on an inner-community service project with our students. They've also had the opportunities to meet with actors like Morris Chestnut, Larenz Tate, Boris Kodjoe, and so many more performing arts
professionals. Making those connections is a part of the Westwind mission.

The mission is to provide an equitable and engaging educational experience that is enhanced by the arts. We believe that by establishing strong connections between students and the performing arts community students will embrace the belief that learning is a creative and enlightening process.

So why arts infused learning? It's important to us that students have a well-rounded education. Some students simply learn differently, and integrating arts within the core disciplines reaches those students who might not otherwise understand or be engaged in their class-work. Also, studies have shown that infusing arts in students' curriculum develops creative problem-solving skills, helps with motor skills, mathematics, critical thinking, and even their social skills. From our experience it also creates a better student and a better humanbeing.

So, meet Michael. I'm going to protect this young man's name and image; so this is not a true image of the student or his name, but I am going to tell his story. So Michael was a student in the afterschool program. Each -- he was a really sweet
kid but he walked with his head down, showed signs of having low self-esteem. We had concerns with his literacy and comprehension, and his behavior needed to be adjusted. At the end of each school year the kids perform a musical. That particular year Lion King was our musical. It was Michael's favorite production. He came to me and told me that he loved Lion King and specifically he loved the character Rafiki. So I suggested he audition for the musical; he instantly told me no. On audition day, I went and found Michael and I had him audition for Rafiki. He struggled reading his lines and he -- as we anticipated he would. But we casted Michael as Rafiki. During rehearsals Michael would come to me when he had issues reading or comprehending his lines and I would help him out. But after awhile I realized that Michael stopped coming to me for assistance. And then I noticed him in the hallways with his classmates and laughing, talking, he was projecting his voice, head held high, they were laughing -- and later, I would see them all together at tables before $I$ even arrived at the program. So fast-forward to the day of the performance, all of the kids did amazing in the musical. Michael was amazing, the entire cast was amazing. After the
performance Michael came to me crying. He was so excited that this experience -- that he was able to participate in this experience. This was lifechanging for him, I believe. He went from an intimidated young man that walked with his head down to a thespian ready for the next production. Also, his grades improved. Now you can catch Michael at our afterschool program helping others because now he is a student worker.

So you've heard a little bit about the arts, and now you'll meet Miss Jenn Conner who will talk to you about academics and curriculum.

MS. CONNER: Thanks, Theresa.
The power that goes with my video is a bit sketchy; I fear the storm has knocked out the power where we are. So I'm going to try just speaking through my phone.

But as Theresa mentioned, I worked with her on the development of Westwind's curriculum. I am a certified Pennsylvania educator, having had both social studies for high school and middle school and special education. As a teacher, I was a founding staff member of two innovative schools that were designed to bring alternative approaches to high school and to help students who particularly struggle
in more traditional settings. In addition to teaching, I've also worked as a special education supervisor and instructional coach and assistant principal. I currently work for a national nonprofit organization where I am a professional education trainer on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education. I have written curriculum for the Jazz at Lincoln Center's afterschool program and I'm a consultant on curriculum for organizations such as the CS Math Foundation and National Geographic.

And so Theresa's and my background have been a true fusing of our experience, and what our experiences told us really worked well for all students. That fusing has led to five essential elements that are comprised and made up of the Westwind mission.

Some phrases that I'd ask you to keep in mind as I talk through the curriculum pieces are equitable, art-infused, academically rigorous, interconnected, creativity and enlightenment. Every decision we've made around curriculum, scheduled structure is all designed to make sure that we are continuing meeting those essential elements.

The curriculum that we'll be using is going to be culture and curriculum that's already been
approved by the Arkansas State Department of Education, and that's to insure that we are working with the highest quality, most academically rigorous curriculum. We'll be taking this existing curriculum and reconfiguring it in a new and novel way, which I'll talk about in a few moments. In addition to those, we'll also be using some supporting resources from the Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM curriculum, which has curriculum and professional development around taking arts-infused lessons and carrying them across content areas. So you can be working on one art theme in math, science, ELA and history, which is phenomenal because those connections often are observed and pushed in a traditional way.

The second supporting resource is Educurious, which is a project-based learning curriculum that really empowers students to take control over their own learning as well as connecting what they're currently doing to the future, so that students can see what I'm doing today can lead me to a potential career path.

So how will this look in a school day? If we start by thinking about a traditional model, we think that -- or we see that daily lessons tend to happen
in a ladder or stair method; you know, we model something for the students, we guide them, they practice a little bit, and then we expect students to master and demonstrate that. This doesn't happen over a couple of days, but it more typically happens one skill a day and can move pretty quickly. While this does work with some students, especially those with strong working memories, this actually isn't how our brains operate or are designed to learn. So at Westwind we want to do something a little bit different that better matches how students do learn and how their brains come to us ready to engage in learning.

So let's look at our units. Our units are something that we're going to call ACTs. So the ACTs are different in the sense that they'll be spiraled; so this means that you engage students in a concept or skill, then you have them practice it while working together in a group; then they're coming back and they're working independently, and then they're moving again into working in a group and back. So it's several skills and concepts that students continually work with as they move deeper and deeper into the understanding. This allows students to continue to practice and manipulate skills and
content that they may have initially struggled with.
As well as this practice of the spiral, we're also going to be dissecting it into three arts areas. So students will practice -- this is where they will learn and plan; they will then rehearse, which is our group time; and then they'll perform. So in the performance is where we'll take everything they've learned and they have to demonstrate through an artsbased work product a really high-quality item that not only demonstrates how students have mastered the academic content but also that they've mastered an arts product that's connected to the real world. So everything students do every single day can be turned into a portfolio and turned around to use to get into college or start a career.

In addition to how this will work within a class, we're also going to do some spiraling across content areas. So when we think about how the spiraling works, right, we're thinking about hitting one concept and repeating it over and over and over again in a new, unique way that moves the students forward. Oftentimes we do this through project-based learning. But for students, that puts both the skills of the product itself -- so something like a multimedia presentation or an essay -- with the
content. And we expect students to know how to do the product while we're teaching the content. So when they complete a project at the end, [inaudible] doesn't reflect what they've actually mastered because they didn't have the skills necessary to demonstrate their mastery of the academic content. So what we're going to do is we're going to spiral across the classes. So the students will use their art elective classes to learn how to create those art products in a really fun, engaging way. And then the core content teachers will use those same art products to have students demonstrate the mastery of the core content. This means that we're really able to develop a truly, wholly centered child vision that revolves around the arts.

So, on the next slide you're going to see our graphic that sort of represents this idea. We're going to infuse arts in everything, but we're going to make sure that kids are not only getting their core academic information but they're also learning the what and why behind what they're doing so that they can learn how to self-advocate. And we're going to help them develop the skills around executive functioning, social-emotional learning so when we're asking them to collaborate, to work through something
that may feel overwhelming initially they have the resources to rely upon to push them through.

So what will this look like for just a day in the life of a student? So, on the next slide you'll see a series of events that will take place throughout the day. So our day will start with Advisory 1; this is so students will have an opportunity to check in with themselves, think about their emotional status, where they're at, what they need, prep for the day, ask for support or assistance. They'll then move into core content. They'll have lunch, followed by Advisory 2 where we'll explicitly teach those collaboration and executive functioning skills that students need throughout all of their classes. In the afternoon then they'll have their Science of Learning electives; that's that place where we're going to teach students about learning, how do their brains work, and how can they figure out what works best for them, followed by the arts electives, where they really get some amazing hands-on experience in producing artwork.

Theresa and the Timmons Foundation already have a phenomenal network and so for the arts electives we're going to be able to use a combination of
traditional educators and real working artists; so again bringing to the forefront for students that everything they're doing every day is not just because the teacher asked them or told them to, it's because it's setting them up for success and options in life.

And this is all going to happen at an amaing facility, which Theresa will walk you through.

MS. TIMMONS: Thank you, Jenn.
So the proposed school sits on 17 acres of land with a beautiful tree line and pond where students will have access to enjoy; this also provides teachers the opportunity to create outside learning environments for students. And the school itself is 36,000 square feet with a covered entrance. There's a gated courtyard which also provides students a safe space to eat, study, and bond with other students. There are classrooms for our children, for our students. There's a state-of-the-art theater that holds 267 people; it has full access. There's a bistro where students will have breakfast and lunch and also be able to gather during their down-time, as well as a commercial kitchen.

So Student Services -- our transportation, we are committed to provide transportation for students
with pick-up and drop-off points. We've allocated one bus and one bus driver for Year 1 and we'll allocate more as enrollment increases.

For Health Services -- Westwind will staff a fulltime nurse to insure the health and wellbeing of students and will implement the health services program. A waiver has been requested in this area to have the ability to staff a licensed nurse who may not be registered.

Our Guidance Counseling -- Westwind will staff a guidance counselor. We have requested a waiver in this area on employing a certified guidance counselor, but will have the comprehensive student counseling plan set forth in Act 190 of 2019.

So for the Media Center -- the students will have access to Chromebooks, classroom libraries, and weekly visits to the public library.

For Special Ed. -- the school will employ a full-time special education teacher to meet the students' needs.

Dyslexic -- dyslexia, excuse me -- students will also have -- we will have a special education teacher who is certified in this area.

For ELL -- assessments will be completed to determine the appropriate needs. However, we will
staff a part-time ELL teacher.
For Gifted and Talented -- students will be served through the increased academic rigor in their core classes, along with enrichment opportunities in performance and fine arts.

And for our Curriculum -- we request no waivers in this area.

Recruitment -- our team will work with a local multicultural marketing firm to launch a comprehensive communication campaign that targets various communities. The preferred mediums will include what's listed here: social media, digital display ads, direct mail, cable, mobile ads, and direct phone calls. Also through our programming and partnerships the Timmons Arts Foundation reaches over 500 students a year; we will also create a campaign to recruit those students that are already participating in our system's programs. Westwind will also insure that the citizens of Pulaski County and the three districts from which the school will pull have an equal opportunity to learn about and apply to the school through the recruitment --
[TIMER BELL RINGS]
MS. TIMMONS: -- through the full recruitment plan. We've also met with Dr. McNulty, the
superintendent of Pulaski County Special School District, as well as Rob McGill of Maumelle Charter; they both were very receptive of the new charter. Rob McGill said that he has a waitlist of over 500 students and would let the parents know -- the parents on his waitlist know of the availability of our school.

So supporting an effective partnership between our school and the families of our students -- we will implement a resource-based school family and community partnership model. These consist of:

Parenting -- we'll provide workshops;
Through Communicating -- we'll increase the -we'll create a parent and teacher committee that will host meetings which will be open to all family members;

Volunteering -- our family members will have the opportunity to volunteer within the school;

Learning at Home -- Westwind will provide adequate technology to entrust seamless coordination of schoolwork with work at home; fulltime virtual instruction as needed. Westwind will work with the APSRC to provide different at-home learning programs;

Decision-Making -- the parent and teacher committee will allow parents, families, and teachers
to maintain open communication and better understanding or one another;

And Collaborating with Community -- pretty much what we do now, we'll create a series of partnerships in the community to extend and expand our services;

So with Governance and Human Capital -- Westwind will establish a school board that is separate from the sponsoring entity, which is the Timmons Arts Foundation. A full-time director will be hired by the school board and will report directly to the school board. The school will then staff a fulltime principal to report to the executive director. The principal and the executive director will hire staffing, and the staffing will be trained through professional development provided by the APSRC.

So this is just a quick budget for Year 1 and Year 2. Our revenue is $\$ 1.3$, our expenditures are $\$ 1.348$, and our net revenue for the first year is $\$ 21,208$, and for year-two it's \$74,477.

So that concludes our presentation for today. We'd like to thank you all again for taking the time to hear this application.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Ms. Timmons. MS. TIMMONS: You're welcome. CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Hyatt.

MS. HYATT: Some of the things I had written down she actually covered in the presentation, so I'll just note it as we move forward.

The first thing I think it would be helpful to have a little bit more information about is the governing structure. And I know that Theresa just talked about it, but there's been some changes since the original application. So just to clarify, the Timmons Art Foundation will be the governing -sponsoring entity; there will be a local school board; and the executive director will not be related to anyone that's on any of the boards. Is that correct?

MS. TIMMONS: That is correct.
MS. HYATT: Perfect.
The next thing just to kind of address has to do with the building that's going to be leased. So the building -- which was a beautiful building, by the way; I really liked seeing the pictures of it -MS. TIMMONS: Thank you.

MS. HYATT: -- is going to be purchased by Team Summit LLC, and that is someone who is part of the Timmons family. So they would be leasing the building from a family-owned -- a family member owned business. It's not necessarily prohibited, but I
just want to confirm they're aware that they'll have to meet the requirements of 6-24-101 et seq. that requires those contracts to be approved by the Commissioner of Education.

MR. WALTER: Madam Chair, may I speak? CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, Tripp, you're recognized.

MR. WALTER: Thank you. Tripp Walter, Staff Attorney, Arkansas Public School Resource Center. I will confirm on behalf of Westwind that they -- that the applicant is aware of that. And just to let the Panel and Ms. Hyatt be aware, there are plans, if needed, to divide the space so there won't be any overlap between the Timmons Arts Foundation space, the space that's controlled by the program and what will be controlled by the school. And the lease will be entered into by the school board, which is -which has been mentioned as separate from the sponsoring entity board. And the applicant will insure that fair market value is paid for the lease amount.

MS. HYATT: Perfect.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So that's going to -- it will be a single-use facility?

MS. HYATT: I believe the -- and Tripp can
correct me -- I believe the idea is that part of the facility will be used by the Timmons Art Foundation for their programs and part of the facility will be used for the charter school. Is that correct?

MR. WALTER: That's correct from my view. I don't know if Ms. Timmons has anything to add to that.

MS. TIMMONS: No. That is correct.
MS. HYATT: And I think as long as the proper approvals are granted and as long -- I'm glad that the assurance was made that the lease will be between the school board and the entity rather than the sponsoring entity board, because we've run into issues in the past with that. So as long as it's set up how they have confirmed that it's set up, I don't think there should be any issue.

MR. BALDWIN: So let me ask, those approvals really are outside of our decision-making?

MS. HYATT: That's correct. They get submitted through the legal office and we review them to -there are certain criteria laid out in law about how you can enter into essentially a conflict of interest contract; so if a board member, an administrator or employee is related to someone who's benefitting from the contract. So we review them, we look at the
limited circumstances under which we can approve them, and then make a recommendation to Secretary Key who gives final approval.

DR. WILLIAMS: Just to follow-up on that question -- what is the relationship? I know the -we have the Timmons Foundation as the sponsoring entity. So what would be their responsibility to the school, if any? And also, that would lead me to what would be their relationship with the board of the school? Are they appointing any board members? Are the board members elected by the parents? What's the wall between the two organizations from a governance standpoint?

MR. WALTER: I can go ahead and address that. The Timmons Arts Foundation board is separate; it is the sponsoring entity. The only interaction I see, other than just being the sponsoring entity, that it will have with the school and its board is the application indicates that the Timmons Arts Foundation will select the chair of the board, and then the chair of the board will be responsible for selecting the remaining four members of the board. But there is no reporting from the Chair, no supervisory control or authority of the school board by the Timmons Arts Foundation board.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Now repeat the -- I missed the part about the Chair. Are they selecting the chair of the school board?

MR. WALTER: Yes.
DR. WILLIAMS: Hmmm. Okay. And then that Chair is the one that's going to be working to select the other members of the board of the school?

MR. WALTER: The initial board, yes, sir.
DR. WILLIAMS: Um-hmmm. Is it a selfperpetuating board?

MR. WALTER: Yes, sir. It will be selfperpetuating after that. There will be no further involvement between the foundation and the school board, other than what I've just mentioned.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MR. WALTER: Also --
DR. WILLIAMS: And who will select the Chair from that point on if it's self-perpetuating? Will the Timmons -- will the foundation still select a Chair?

MR. WALTER: No, sir.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay, all right. Well, it took us awhile, but we got there. That's why I wanted to find out when is the train is unhooked.

MR. WALTER: Yes, sir. That's when.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.
MS. HYATT: And I'll point out, Dr. Williams, just for clarity, lots of sponsoring entities do place members on the local school board because the sponsoring entity ultimately is responsible for the school. And when the school wraps up and closes, the sponsoring entity is the organization that has all of the duties to maintain records and the financial duties and things like that. So it is common for them to appoint members to the local school board. This is not -- that's not unusual.

DR. WILLIAMS: I totally agree with that. I have seen a case where a sponsoring entity board was doing some things that the school board itself was not aware of and that became an issue.

MS. HYATT: Absolutely.
MR. WALTER: If I may also add --
MR. SCOTT SMITH: Madam Chair, this is Scott Smith. Yeah, if I could just assure the board member -- the panel member the link is broken between the sponsoring entity and the governance of the board after the initial establishment. So I think the point you're looking at [audio distortion] eventually removed once the board is set and put in place and begins to self-advocate.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you, Mr. Smith.

## WAIVERS

## SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

MS. HYATT: The first set of waivers is for the school superintendent. There's -- this is just really common and it's narrow just to the licensure piece. So I'm just going to move past that and move into the licensure for teachers and principals.

TEACHER/PRINCIPAL LICENSURE
MS. HYATT: I think the applicant already provided information about how they're insuring that their teachers meet Arkansas qualified teacher requirements. One legal issue, just to kind of clarify -- I think it was just a typing issue -- the applicant just needs to confirm that it's still seeking waivers that were in its initial application, 6-17-919, 902, 410, 309, 302, and 6-15-1004.

MR. WALTER: On behalf of the applicant I will make that confirmation.

If I may, I'd also like to add two other comments that $I$ think are relevant in this area. First of all, there is a question as to whether Westwind potentially intended to utilize licensed teachers teaching outside of their license areas, and so therefore would need a waiver of Section 7 of the

DESE rules governing Teacher Licensure. And so we agree that we want that waiver.

And also we'll confirm that we're aware that the Special Education licensure requirements cannot be waived.

MS. HYATT: Is there anything else the applicant would like to add about how it will be using the Teacher Licensure waiver?

MR. WALTER: Well, I don't have anything. I don't know if Ms. Timmons would.

MS. TIMMONS: Yeah, I don't have anything at this time.

MS. HYATT: If there aren't any questions, I'll move on. I think in the presentation, again, a lot of this was addressed already.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
MS. HYATT: The next set of waivers has to do with the Guidance Counselor. They have narrowed it just to the licensure piece and they will be complying with all the other requirements under the School Counseling Improvement Act of 2019. The only legal issue is that the rules they have cited have been repealed. The rules governing Public School Student Services, those have been repealed and therefore no waiver is necessary. So I just need
them to confirm they're aware that that has been repealed and no waiver is necessary.

MR. WALTER: We will confirm that. That was an oversight.

## LIBRARY/MEDIA

MS. HYATT: The next set of waivers has to do with their Library/Media program. I think it would be helpful for them to provide some additional information -- I heard about their partnerships with the local libraries and things -- but how they're providing those services onsite.

And then also they've cited something called Licensure Rules which I'm not -- I'm not sure what they're referencing there. So, a little clarity on those.

MR. WALTER: I will address the licensure rules. That should be withdrawn.

And then I believe Ms. Timmons can speak to the remaining piece.

MS. TIMMONS: Okay. Thank you. Yes, we will provide Chromebooks to our students and classroom libraries so that the children will still have access to myON and Lexicon programs. We also will -- we also plan to partner with the Maumelle library and take our students on trips to the library weekly. We
also will partner with the bookstore Barnes and Noble and provide book fairs for the students as well. MS. HYATT: If there aren't any questions on that, I'll move on.

SCHOOL NURSE
MS. HYATT: The next set of waivers has to do with the School Nurse, which they addressed in their presentation. They will have a nurse, just not a RN. If that's correct, then I have no issues there and we can move forward.

MR. WALTER: That is correct.
GIFTED AND TALENTED
MS. HYATT: The next set of waivers is on the Gifted and Talented program. They also addressed that in their presentation. There are no legal issues here. So if there are no questions from the panel members on how they're meeting the needs of those students, I'll move on.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
MS. HYATT: All right. The next set is the Alterative Learning Environment waivers. There are just a couple of housekeeping things here.

First, I'll say they've asked for a waiver -- we ran into this yesterday -- they asked for a waiver of 6-48-101 et seq. It should be 6-48-102 and 103, not
the entire subchapter. Can you confirm that for me, Tripp?

MR. WALTER: I will confirm that.
MS. HYATT: And I wanted to give the applicant an opportunity to provide some additional information on how it plans to meet the needs of students who can't function in a traditional classroom environment or who need additional supports, especially due to a disability or a behavior issue.

MS. CONNER: Sure, I will speak to how we intend to support students. So, in general, for any student who has an identified need for additional support what we'll look at will officially be determined after we can look at their records. So once a student is admitted and enrolled we'll review their records and see what supports are legally required, and then we will work as a team to implement them. Specifically for students who are often referred for alternative education, that is actually my background and what I taught as a teacher. And so what we often saw were students who were referred because they needed support around developmenting [sic] -- or developing executive function skills, having better differentiation to access grade level material, and feel successful in doing so, and then continue
development in social-emotional skills. And so we're looking to [audio distortion] throughout all aspects of the curriculum and the school in order to insure students are supported. And then students that are not supported by our outline, which would fall under our RTI model for our Tier 1, we'll then work to move them through Tier 2, potentially Tier 3, until we can find a support and a system that really works for them.

MS. HYATT: Okay. If there are no questions on that, I'll move on.

TEACHER FAIR DISMISSAL/PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEE FAIR DISMISSAL MS. HYATT: The next set of waivers are for Teacher Fair Dismissal and Public School Employee Fair Dismissal. No legal issues there. And if there aren't questions, I'll skip on to number 9 which is the Personnel Policies.

## PERSONNEL POLICIES

MS. HYATT: I think it would be really helpful here to get some additional information from the applicant about how these policies are going to be created, who's developing them, are they being created by the board; since they're going to have atwill teachers, how are these policies being disseminated to teachers. This is all information
that was not included in the rationale for the waiver request.

MR. WALTER: I can address that. And also I believe, if it meets with Ms. Hyatt's approval, there were some questions about -- outstanding as to waivers, and I can address that in my response, if that would be acceptable to her and the Panel.

MS. HYATT: It's fine with me.
MR. WALTER: Okay. The policies will be drafted -- or reviewed, if they're not drafted in-house -- by the principal and the executive director. The school's board of directors shall approve the policies. All personnel will receive copies of the policies, and the policies will be posted to the school's website. The policies may be changed during the school year, if necessary.

The waiver request for the statute on grievances, Ark. Code Annotated 6-17-208, is being withdrawn. The applicant wishes, based on legal comments received, to amend its request for a waiver of Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-2301 to only 6-172301 (c), and wishes to withdraw its waiver request for 6-17-2302 and 6-17-2306 and based on legal comments received the Minutes request for waivers of Ark. Code Annotated 6-17-2203 and 6-17-2403 to 6-17-

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2201 et seq. and 6-17-2401 et seq.
The applicant confirms they're aware that it must follow all federal and state minimum wage requirements and the requirements of the Federal Labor Standards Act.

It withdraws its waiver request of Section 3-A. 2 of the DESE standard rules and wishes to amend its request to the new rules in that area, specifically 5.01 .4 and 6.01 to the extent that it will not have classified and certified policies per se, and it will not have employees termed classified and certified as it won't have traditional salary schedules. The school will post the policies and salary schedules which cover all employees.

MS. HYATT: Tripp, can you repeat for me the ones you said were rescinded at the beginning? I got 2301 et seq. changed to 2301 (c) and the rescinsion of 3-A.2, 6-17-208, and 6-17-2302. Did I miss --

MR. WALTER: Yeah, 6-17-2306.
MS. HYATT: And they say attorneys are not fun.
I'm going to double-check just on those two sections of the website rules before -- while Tracy is addressing other issues, just to review them. So I'll come back to that.

If there are no questions on that piece, I'll
move on to their --
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I do have a question. So after your banter, are they posting their policies on their website?

MS. HYATT: Yes.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. Thank you.
MS. HYATT: "Banter," that's a nice word for it. SCHOOL BOARD

MS. HYATT: Okay. So the next set of waivers have to do with the School Board. We've talked extensively at this point about their governing structure. I believe that they need some additional waivers to fully effectuate their plan. Those are 6-13-612(c), which has to do with filling a vacancy on the board; 6-13-615 and 616; and a little bit of informa -- oh, sorry; excuse me -- 6-14-101 et seq., which is school elections. Can you confirm that you want to add those?

MR. WALTER: Yes. And also I think there was one other remaining issue as to 6-13-620 and we wish to amend our request on that to only subsection 5A. 2 (b) and that just concerns the form of the employment contract. The duties of the board would not change; it's just that it would not be approving an employment contract that is in standard statutory
form because of the nature of the school.
MS. HYATT: Great.
MR. WALTER: And we do wish to amend the request for waiver 6-14-101 to 6-14-101 et seq.

MS. HYATT: Great.
If there are no other questions on that, I'll move on to the next set which has to do with school start date.

SCHOOL START DATE
MS. HYATT: I was unsure, just based on the information provided in the application, why this waiver was necessary. We talked about this yesterday, but 6-10-106 sets what the start date for every school should be. There is another law that specifically allows for a four-day school week and another law that specifically allows for a 12 -- like a year-round calendar. So if they are not falling under one of those three provisions, my question would be what are they doing.

MR. WALTER: The reason for the request for the -- of 6-10-106 to be waived is to allow Westwind to start its school year prior to mid-August. It will have a traditional 180-day school year and it's not going to do a four-day school week or a yearlong school calendar.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Tripp, could you repeat that please?

MR. WALTER: Sure. The reason for the request of 6-10-106 is to waive the portion that requires a start date no earlier than certain specific dates in mid-August. And it's the desire of the school to start its school year earlier than that. It will be a traditional length school year, five days a week, not four, and not a yearlong calendar or year-round calendar.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: The intent is to start early August? What is the intent?

MR. WALTER: I'll let Ms. Timmons talk more about the school date -- exact dates.

MS. TIMMONS: Yes, we do plan on starting early August. We don't have an exact date as of yet, but we do plan to start approximately a week before -- a week or two before actual school begins -- public school, should I say.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Can you explain why?
MS. TIMMONS: Why we're starting early?
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, why you would start a week early if you're going the same 178-day calendar. MS. TIMMONS: Well, it allows us the opportunity for recruitment purposes. For example, if we weren't
able to pull our numbers that year or when we start, it gives us a little more time before our school begins to recruit more students.

SCHOOL ELECTIONS
MS. HYATT: The next set of waivers has to do with School Elections. I believe that we've -- Tripp and I have clarified this in the previous one. So I'm going to move on past that.

FACILITIES (FLAGS)
MS. HYATT: The next set of waivers has to do with Facilities. I think they intended to request for 6-16-105 and 106, which are displaying the United States and Arkansas flags. They've only requested 6-16-106. So can you confirm that you wish to include the additional waiver?

MR. WALTER: Yes, I will confirm that we wish to request the additional waiver.

MS. HYATT: And just for clarity, in leased building spaces that's a common waiver as them not always able to fly a flag or have something attached to a leased property.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES/PLANNING PERIODS
MS. HYATT: The next set of waivers is for NonInstructional Duties and Planning Periods. My question here was a request to provide some
additional rationale, especially how the applicant will insure that teachers have enough time and are fairly compensated when they've requested a waiver of the minimum teacher salary, planning periods, and non-instructional duties.

MR. WALTER: And we have made some revisions in this area. The applicant is not requesting a waiver of Arkansas Code Annotated 6-17-111 concerning dutyfree lunch periods. I think that's always been the case, but just wanted to clarify. And we wish to withdraw a request for a waiver of 6-17-117 concerning non-instructional duties. The only reason we are seeking a waiver of 6-17-114 which deals with teacher daily planning periods is not to reduce the 200 minutes per week, but just the ability to allot that time in blocks or chunks of less than 40 minutes at a time, as necessary.

MS. HYATT: All right. If there are no questions there, we'll move on to the last legal issue.

## DISCIPLINE

MS. HYATT: The last set of waivers is for Discipline. They've asked for some waivers that have to do with having written discipline policies, what has to be in the discipline policies, but didn't
provide really any rationale for these waivers. I want to make sure that the parent and the student are engaged in those policies, that they're properly notified of those policies. And considering that they're also waiving the ALE provisions of the law, I want to make sure that there's a plan that's well thought-out about how they're going to approach student discipline.

MR. WALTER: After further review, we've decided that we can prepare appropriate discipline policies that meet the statutory guidelines and provide for all the items that Ms. Hyatt mentioned. And so we're going to withdraw our request for waivers of the statutory discipline policies.

MS. HYATT: All right. I'm going to review those two additional provisions from the website rules while Tracy comes and addresses the remaining concerns from the Internal Review Committee.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Go ahead, Ms. WrightMcMurray.

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you. I did have a question $I$ just wanted to go back to really quickly on the ALE.

It sounds like -- and just for my clarity -that there is a good -- or there is a good plan in
place to address students that are coming into the school. But once students are in the school and enrolled and it's been identified that they may need ALE services, is that a part of the overall plan as well, or is that being considered for what Ms. Conner shared? And if I missed that, I apologize. But it sounded like she spoke a lot about what happens when students are admitted, but I didn't hear what happens once they're in the school.

MS. CONNER: So, I'm sorry, if I can just clarify to make sure I understand the question. Is it if we enroll students with documentation saying that they are in need of ALE placement how would we accommodate them? Is that the question you're asking?

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No. So if you have a student that -- maybe that hasn't been identified prior to, but once they get to your school then that's something that comes to light, is that a part of your plan and your process also?

MS. CONNER: Gotcha. Okay, thank you for the clarification.

So we've set out a pretty rigorous RTI process; so we'll be navigating any additional academic or behavior supports for students through that process.

So that Tier 1 we have -- we look to make sure that everything we're doing as a school is making sure that at minimum $80 \%$ of our students are meeting all of their goals and metrics. So then that Tier 2 is what allows us to start to drill down and refine and figure out for students who might need something slightly different, slightly more, slightly less. That is where we start to work through some of those questions. And then on to Tier 3.

And so with each part of those tiers we would have a system that we would follow as an entire school. But we would really be looking at each student individually to assess what's going on, what we might think is the driving factor or the root cause, developing plans to address behaviors or academic needs, and then monitoring the success of those plans. And so that would continue to go throughout the entire process, all the way through Tier 3, and students can start that process for behavior or academics. They can go through it; they can go back and start again. That will sort of allow us the flexibility to make sure that we're meeting the needs of the students while still being compliant with Special Education and otherwise.

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Webb.
REMAINING CONCERNS OF DESE UNITS
MS. WEBB: Remaining concerns from other DESE units are financial. So the first one is the fact that their budget was calculated on just short of their enrollment cap, which is 150 . Their budget -their revenue is created based on 148 students. So within their application, question number 28 , they state that they would need 108 students to be viable. So when you calculate the budget on 108 students that creates a $\$ 273,548$ deficit for the first year. So it is rare that charters have their full enrollment cap their very first year.

In addition, in their current budget, the latest one that was sent this morning, they include revenue from RMAC funds. So they will not receive RMAC funds their first year of operation, and that was $\$ 5,000$. And that can be very -- it can be variable, that number, because it's based on student Medicaid participation and the expenses from those. So that's a variable that could or could not be there even in the second year.

Secondly, we did not see anything listed for an audit expense. So that's usually around $\$ 5,000$ or $\$ 6,000$ for that size of school. So by taking away

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revenue, adding another expense -- even with the current budget submitted, that would leave a balance of around $\$ 15,000$ at the end of the year, which is very, very tight.

That's all I have.
MR. ELLIOTT: Madam Chair, may I speak?
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, sir, Mr. Elliott. If you'll speak into the mic, pretty close, because it's hard to hear you.

MR. ELLIOTT: Okay. Is this a little bit better for everyone? Perfect. Okay.

So if our enrollment was to drop to our minimum of 108 , we would make some staffing changes. A couple would be the executive director and principal would be combined into one position, and then we would be able to remove two teachers and still be compliant with the teacher/student ratio. That would save us around $\$ 175,000$. And for additional expenditures we'd be able to cut around $\$ 75,000$ more through our purchase of services and supplies and still remain intact for our educational program. And so a total of $\$ 250,000$ could be reduced.

For the audit, we would not budget in the first year for audit costs. Those costs would happen in the second physical year because those -- the audit
process wouldn't happen until the second year of operations.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Would those budget cuts still allow you to provide one-to-one devices for your students?

MR. ELLIOTT: Yes, ma'am. Technology would remain intact based off of our allocation, how much it would cost per student to obtain Chromebooks and technology devices. Yes, ma'am.

MS. WEBB: I'm not sure that we saw expenditures in the second year for an audit; however, that's $\$ 5,000$, if you're going to cut staff. And they'd be able to take care of that.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Hyatt, are you ready for your follow-up?

MS. HYATT: Sure. So on the two provisions added from the district website rules, one of the provisions 6.01 is fine; it has to do with personnel policies separated for classified and certified staff. Section 5.01.4 only requires them to post whatever salary schedule you have on your website. So I didn't hear a rationale for that waiver. Maybe they would like to provide some additional information.

MR. WALTER: The thought behind requesting the
waiver of that provision is, again, the salary schedule as the school has a waiver is not going to look the same so-to-speak as a public -- as a school district's would. So that's the only reason for making that request. If it's felt that that type of schedule wouldn't require a waiver, then that's fine. MS. HYATT: So you rescind the request for 5.01.4?

MR. WALTER: Yes.
MS. HYATT: Is that what I heard? Okay.
Then we are all good with the waivers.
PANEL QUESTIONS/COMMENTS
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Williams, would you like to start with your questions?

DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, yes. This is just, first of all, a good application. I've been going through as we've been discussing different things. Mainly, what is your thought process, why grades 6-8?

MS. TIMMONS: Well, 6-8 -- we work with actually K-8 with some of our programming. But 6-8 is a more comprehensive age group that understands and can comprehend the arts and I believe the arts integration model better than an elementary school. We at some point -- we would like to advance to 6-12 at some point, but $6-8$ we want to be sure that we can
start here and be strong and successful in these -with this age groups.

DR. WILLIAMS: Well, I was going to ask you why not grow a grade per year, but I notice you all are going to stick to 6-8 and just grow those grade levels over the five years. So, okay.

MS. TIMMONS: Right.
DR. WILLIAMS: Good answer. Thank you.
MS. TIMMONS: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: Okay, thank you.
Two questions -- and, yes, good application, good presentation.

MS. TIMMONS: Thank you.
MR. BALDWIN: It's very organized, very thoughtful, very sequential. I like that.

The one question $I$ did have though is when $I$ was looking back at your slide, that was the slide that talked about student curriculum, and you had something -- you had a section called Core Content. Could you talk a little bit about what that core content is? And I guess what I'm looking for is reading, writing and arithmetic, the core foundations that we have out there for kids. Is that going to be covered within your structure?

Sharon K. Hill, CCR

MS. CONNER: Yes. So for our core curriculum, for that ELA, that reading, writing, the Wit and Wisdom is a curriculum for English that allows students to practice all aspects of Science of Reading, along with writing, throughout the creation of a project. So we would just modify the existing projects so that it becomes arts-infused. We would follow the same with Eureka math. The Wit and Wisdom and Eureka math is from the same company, so they follow very similar outlines and pathways. And then for science we have Next Generation Storyline that is also similar; it's project-based. We would revise it so that it's arts-based projects at the end. And then social studies, again it's the Arkansas Social Studies Toolkit; so it is looking at and supporting students with learning history through primary and secondary documents. And so that's how we would insure that we were hitting all of the core content. In addition to that, we'll be using something called Pathway Rubrics to help teachers modify and adjust their units to meet student needs. So if you think about standards for Arkansas, any standards anywhere, each standard has a number of skills embedded in that standard. So the pathway would pull out those skills and they show, okay, what does that
skill look like at a 6th grade, a 7th grade, an 8th grade level, so that the teacher moving through the core content they can look at the work product, the student work, and quickly assess whether or not that student is demonstrating mastery. And all of those are lined up to the state standards and they'll be lined up to the annual assessment.

MR. BALDWIN: Okay. All right.
And then my other question was a financial question. The budget that you have does show, I guess, 148 students in year-one. If you don't quite hit that or if you ramp up to that over time during that year, how do you fund your shortfall, if you have a shortfall because of that?

MR. ELLIOTT: I'm sorry; you said if we have a short --

MR. BALDWIN: If your expenses are more than your revenue because your number of students are not at break-even?

MR. BELL: Brent, I may be able to speak to that.

This is Chris Bell, School Business [inaudible] Services, serving as -- on the front-end for Westwind. So, yes, great question. We have been able to demonstrate a viable budget for both the 148
and the 108 level. And so as enrollment -- if enrollment -- initial enrollment was not at that 148 mark, we could make the appropriate adjustments. We will continuously monitor those student levels and the fluctuations therein throughout the year and make adjustments through our expenditures to insure that they align with the projected revenues based on actual student counts. And those adjustments would come through historically what we've seen at times; if there's significant dips in enrollment, as Brent said before, we'll adjust our staff, staffing. But oftentimes there are expenses related to each child that we can adjust along the way.

MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.
MR. RICH: Madam Chair?
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes.
MR. RICH: Ken Rich with APSRC. Can I be recognized?

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, Mr. Rich.
MR. RICH: Ken Rich, APSRC.
Mr . Baldwin, we've worked on several occasions
with Ms. Timmons, Mr. Elliott, and also with Mr.
Bell. And they do have a very aggressive budget with regards to the number of students. But I think Ms. Timmons said it well, in that they already have a lot
of students involved with the Arts Foundation that want to attend this type of school, so they may have maybe a little more read on the number of students that might want to attend. Also, the number of students that are not able to attend the Academics Plus Charter School in Maumelle that will be possibly interested in attending that school. And so I do think based on what I've seen in working with them that they can make adjustments to the budget necessary to be viable.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.
Ms. Sonja, are you ready?
MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I did have a question. I just wanted some more clarification on your plans for offering CTE courses at the school and just wanted to see if you had some information, just an idea of how you chose the courses that you're planning to offer. For example, the keyboarding course that you have listed is a course that we would normally have offered to our lower grades, at the elementary level. And so why did you choose this course over the course that would typically be offered at the middle school level?

MS. CONNER: The courses that we outlined were the courses that we believe to be required in certain
grade levels, according to Department of Education. If we misread or misidentified those courses as we were setting up the core catalog, we can go back and adjust. But the CTE courses were picked because they best aligned with our intent and opportunity to take what the students are learning in their arts electives, their core content, and to really make sure that we're saving space to fuse all of that for students to develop their student career pathway and identifying -- connect with the work that they're doing and potential careers.

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I guess would you guys be willing to look at other courses that could fill that same need, I guess would be my question?

MS. CONNER: Oh, of course, definitely. It was -- one of the things we want to make sure that we're always doing is that we're going back and making sure that we're fully in alignment with the state requirements. If there's something we missed or someone has a better idea, I'm always open to integrate, make some changes, and then -- because we want to also make sure that, in the unfortunate case that the student ever does decide that our integration is not for them and they leave and go to a different school, that everything we're doing
within our alternative model is easy to translate and understandable for any school that they would transition to, so it would be smooth for the family and the student. And so that's part of the trying to figure out the best possible path for those classes. MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: All right. Thank you. CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: One of the topics that we have not talked very much about that $I$ would love to hear you talk about was your plan for engaging parents. And I've never seen it spelled out as well in an application as it is in this one. So would you take just a moment to highlight that? Because I'm really excited to hear your vision for that.

MS. TIMMONS: Okay. Jenn, did you want to take that one, or no?

MS. CONNER: Sure. Like I said, I've lost power today, so we're making it all work.

So our family engagement, we intend to have and offer a variety of opportunities for families to be involved. So, as Theresa spoke, it is really meant to be a true community-based arts-integrated experience so that families would have the opportunity to volunteer and participate in the school day; they would have opportunities to participate in [inaudible]; they would have the
opportunity to engage in leadership roles, helping make some decisions and really helping us set the appropriate and best tone for making sure that communication that we're sending out at the school and systems we're putting in place will make sense for the families that we're serving. And we agree; like we think this is a crucial part of any successful school. So we want to make sure that we are listening from the get-go and integrating ideas, opinions, concerns, so that everyone feels like it's a place that they can come and have a conversation in our bistro.

MS. TIMMONS: And as you've seen through our Foundation now we implement and we encourage and we empower parents and families to be involved, not just with students. So we do that in our programming now and we will continue to do that through the proposed charter.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Timmons, I believe you had one other guest that's online now that may want to speak briefly?

MS. TIMMONS: Korto Momolu, she was on Project Runway -- and, yes, she was -- she's able to join us. So, thank you.

MS. MOMOLU-BRIGGS: [inaudible]
Sharon K. Hill, CCR

MS. TIMMONS: You're on mute, Korto.
MS. MOMOLU-BRIGGS: Thank you for having me. Thank you so much for having me and giving me the time to speak on this.

The arts is the love of my life. It's probably my very first love. It's something that as a child growing up in West Africa, I couldn't think of anything but this growing up. And as a child who was gifted -- and I say "gifted" because it's not something I went to school to learn, it's something that truly was given to me by the powers that be. I remember being in pre-K and just being outside finger-painting and just loving every single moment of it. My parents didn't know what to do with me though. I grew up with African parents that believed in math and science and pretty much everything that [inaudible]. But although I got through those classes, that's not where I excelled. So growing up in Africa, obviously we didn't have the resources to even explore who $I$ was as a child, nor was it even recognized. So once we did move to the U.S. and get exposure to that, there was some parts of my life where I was able to do music lessons because my parents were financially able to take me to those classes. But once our financial situation changed
all of that changed. The only place I could get art was at school and it was just one art class -- and obviously I never wanted to leave that class, but I had to. But outside of that, there was nothing in my community that I could go to and be exposed to it. I just found it any way I could. In the Sunday paper, if you're old enough, that little cartoon that always came and said Draw Me, I was always there drawing that little birdie because that was the only way I could, like, find it and I just wanted to like soak it up every day like a sponge.

So to have something like this in my life as a child would've excited me. I probably wouldn't even have had time to be on the Zoom call today because I'd probably be somewhere just jet-setting. Because I feel like the arts -- when you have artistic children it's like anything else, you have to nurture it; you have to sit there and literally guide it and be into it and find ways for it to be expressed, because it's like something -- like it's a pressurecooker, it's just boiling inside of you and you just want to get it out.

When we do these camps at the Timmons Arts Foundation I am privileged not just to be on the board but to be a part of all of the creativity that
comes with the camp. I think it's like my favorite meetings when we're sitting inside, going "what are we going to do this year." And like I just -- the ideas, like I just throw them out there and just make everybody else like scramble, "Okay, well, how can we make this happen." So it's exciting for me because I become that little kid again and I see what their faces are going to look like.

Like this summer we did it virtually, which I'm so glad we did because everything else was canceled -- school was canceled, Prom was canceled, like it was just a canceled era. And I was like, "We can't do this to these children, they look forward to this." And although we couldn't take all the children we usually can take, the few that we did take -- I mean delivering those bags to their homes and just for them to see -- lay eyes on us, you know, six feet apart and saying, "Hey, we miss you, we can't wait to see you next week" was huge for them. Like they need to see mentors in their community, and that's what I love about the Timmons Art Foundation. It's not like we start this day, we end this day; you know, after that we're still mentors. They see -like Adora said, they see us in Wal-Mart, they see us when they come to my shows -- "I know Ms. Korto."

And it's important for me as an African American woman to show that I'm an artist; this is what I do fulltime. It's not a hobby; this is what my life career is. And it has taken me across this entire planet, and I'm grateful for that, and they need to see that; they need to see that they can touch me. You know, like people say "celebrity;" I'm very grounded to this earth, but I need them to know that, "Hey, I do know a celebrity; I know Ms. Korto and she gives me hugs and she's there to support me if I want to be a designer or a scientist."

And the Arts Foundation has allowed us to reach these children where they are, especially this year virtually. Those kids were on the Zoom before we got on every morning and they enjoyed it. And when we left, they were like, "Can we just stay on and do an after-party?" Like that speaks volumes. When you go to school -- usually when the kids run out and are ready to go home, they're not engaged. If they're ready to go, you never captivated them. When you can grab them and they don't even want to leave you, that's something. And as a child that grew up with the village that really helped me be who I was -- I had strangers who saw my family when we lost everything in Liberia. One woman in particular
looked in my sketchbook at church, and based on what she saw she paid for me to go to design school. That was huge for me. So that act in itself has always allowed me to give back. I'm always paying it forward as a gift I can never repay. But being a part of the Timmons Art Foundation, being on the board, being a teacher, and hopefully in the future being on anything that's involved with this school and giving it back is my life's mission.

I live right here in Maumelle, Arkansas. It's going to be right down the street from me. They're going to have to kick me out to, like, not have me there every day. But we need this. We need this in Arkansas. We need this for this time for our children. We need to embrace more arts and say that art is a valid foundation to make money and to live a life -- and I'm proof of that. And I want there to be a bigger, broader spectrum for children, for adults. You know, we have parents who come in and like, "I wish I could do this." Well, why not? You know, so I think we need to look at it differently and know that when you're learning in school but you're not being pulled in, creating a program where you can put arts in there and make it fun and make it interesting, they're not going to want to leave
again; they're going to get captivated all over again and you're going to reach them; you're going to be able to teach them differently. I was one of those kids and I always felt like I wasn't smart enough, but $I$ just felt like $I$ wasn't taught the right way. So this approach is going to take it to another level, period, because we just -- we need it. It's needed. We needed it yesterday, the year before, and I'm fully onboard with this. I'm in full support of it. I have leant my name to it and I'm lending my time because this foundation that has been sent is not just about Theresa Timmons-Shamburger. It's not just about this school and the foundation. It's about me as an artist standing up for the arts and saying Art Matters. And we're going to make sure that when we are teaching these children we're not just there for the $8 \mathrm{a} . \mathrm{m}$. to $4 \mathrm{p} . \mathrm{m} . ;$ we're there outside of that. We're there when they don't even have the art supplies they need. We're there when they want to sing but they can't make it in the choir. We're there for them and their parents. And when you see these people come on here and give their statements and get tearful it's because we are a family; we are that village, and we have to go back to that. We cannot abandon that thought. I grew up
with that village in Africa, and then came here to America. And now that I'm here in the U.S., in Arkansas, I have never abandoned that village. I have a village that surrounds me. She has produced my shows at Fashion Week and the arts is important to her because she's an artist deep inside as well. Our first love is dance. And although we've gone beyond that in our lives, we know what it's like to want to do something and want to be something and you don't know how you're going to do it. So now to be able to see physically people who are doing it -- Tijuana Campbell Berry, who sings vocals and you see her on commercials -- you know, Korto Momolu who they can see in New York Fashion Week and go on TV and watch on AETN, a documentary -- like, "Oh, my god, that's Ms. Korto." And there in my documentary, that was important to me for them to be there to show that "you're not just the thing that I write on my resume; I love you and you matter to me. And I want you to know that you can be bigger than me, you can be better than me, and you will." So I'm going to make sure that happens.

Thank you so much for allowing me to speak this morning.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Thank you.

MS. MOMOLU-BRIGGS: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Panel, any other questions or are we ready for a motion?

MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I just want to make a quick comment, that I appreciate all the hard work you guys have put into this. And I so appreciate when we have more opportunities for our students to be able to learn about their passion and their mission and their -- and get their voice. And so I think by doing so some of the challenges and issues that we currently see in some of our schools and for students beyond can be addressed if they have that voice and mission and passion established and know what needs to happen for them. So I would just commend you for your work and for your passion, for taking on this opportunity.

MS. TIMMONS: Thank you.
MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So I move approval.
MR. BALDWIN: I second.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So we have a motion by Ms. Wright-McMurray and a second by Mr. Baldwin to approve this application.

Any discussion?
All those in favor?
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Motion passes.
If you'll give us just a moment, there will be a voting sheet.
[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mr. Baldwin, would you like to go first?

MR. BALDWIN: Yes, thank you. I voted for the recommendation to approve the program, your charter school. I thought the -- I thought your design of this is very creative and very thoughtful, and I think it's a good option for educating children.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Wright-McMurray.
MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I voted for, for all the reasons that I've already stated. I think this will be a great opportunity for students in Little Rock, and then definitely for some of the other comments that were made about supporting our students of color that sometimes struggle with those good opportunities to grow and be challenged in an enriched and supported environment.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Dr. Williams.
DR. WILLIAMS: I voted for the motion. This brings another opportunity -- an arts-based opportunity for learning for both the students and their parents.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: (inaudible, mic not on) MS. TIMMONS: Ms. Coffman, we can't hear you. CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: That's because my mute button was on. What a great speech you missed.

I said that I voted for the charter. The application was complete. The passion for the students is evident. The curriculum is a true artsinfused curriculum. And I look forward to learning alongside you with your parent engagement plan. So I'm hoping that that becomes a model for others to look toward.

So congratulations. Your next step is to appear at the State Board meeting in September.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any other comments or questions from our panel members?

I'll accept a motion to adjourn.
MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I move we adjourn.
MR. BALDWIN: And I'll second.
CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. This meeting is adjourned. Thank you, everyone.
(The meeting was concluded at 12:07 p.m.)

C ERTITICATE

| STATE OF ARKANSAS | ) |
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| COUNTY OF SALINE | ) |

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on August 19, 2020, that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

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

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

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: August 30, 2020.

SHARON K. HILL, CCR
Certified Court Reporter Certificate No. 670

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