

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

NOVEMBER 17, 2020
9:00 a.m.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN	Chairperson/DESE Asst. Commissioner - Public School Accountability
MS. TOYCE NEWTON	Former State Board of Ed. Member
DR. NACCAMAN WILLIAMS	Former State Board of Ed. Member
MR. PHIL BALDWIN	CEO, Citizens Bank
MS. ANN CLEMMER	Division of Higher Learning - Senior Associate Director, Government Relations/Special Projects
MS. SONJA WRIGHT-McMURRAY	Division of Career & Technical Education - Associate Director for Career Readiness

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT	DESE Attorney
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ALSO APPEARING:

MS. TRACY WEBB	DESE Coordinator of Monitoring and Systems Support
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LOCATION:

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

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Good morning, all Panel Members. Happy to see you.

The November 17, 2020 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is called to order. I'd like to welcome everyone.

The Charter Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision, and revocation of charters. And today we have a very unique agenda and very short agenda; so we will get right to that agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So the first item is the Consent Agenda for the minutes from October 13th. I'll give you a moment to review those and then accept any revisions or a motion.

[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

DR. WILLIAMS: I move to accept the minutes as presented.

MR. BALDWIN: I'll second.

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So a motion by Dr. Williams, a second by Mr. Baldwin to accept the minutes.

Any discussion?

All of those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any opposed?

1 The minutes are approved.

2 **ACTION AGENDA**

3 **1. REVIEW OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOLS**

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Our agenda item Number 1 is a
5 Review of Open-Enrollment Charters.

6 Ms. Webb, if you'll introduce that and tell us
7 what we have as an attachment?

8 MS. WEBB: Good morning. Tracy Webb, Charter
9 Unit.

10 So the first item on the agenda is the Review of
11 the Open-Enrollment Charters. And so on the
12 attachment you have a list of each charter, their
13 authorizing date and expiration date of the charter,
14 and current enrollment cap. Then you have enrollment
15 data from 2016-17, all the way through 2021. And the
16 2021 number is the October 1 enrollment; all the
17 others are three-quarter ADM. You have each campus
18 listed for each charter, the grades served, and
19 letter grades for the previous three years that they
20 were provided; so 16-17, 17-18, and 18-19 are the
21 most current that we have. You also have a column of
22 students In Need of Support in reading that was from
23 2019 -- 18-19, and then graduation rate 2019. They
24 are -- they just got finished with graduation
25 corrections, and so the new rates won't be out until

1 a couple more weeks.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Oh, yeah, at least.

3 MS. WEBB: And so we won't really have updated
4 information beyond this until probably January or
5 February.

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And then, in addition to that
7 the data for accountability won't be calculated until
8 October of '21. And the ESSA Steering Committee
9 meets tomorrow to decide that.

10 So, Panel Members, in looking over this list our
11 intent today is to decide if there are any open-
12 enrollment charter schools that need to come before
13 the Panel for review, and then any questions that you
14 might have for Ms. Webb or anything that you would
15 like the Charter Office to investigate or research or
16 get to you.

17 So I'll give you a moment to look over those.

18 MS. WEBB: I don't know if you need to know that
19 last year you chose to review Pine Bluff Lighthouse
20 Charter, as well as Southeast Arkansas Prep Academy.
21 The second one is now closed.

22 MS. CLEMMER: (inaudible)

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Clemmer?

24 MS. CLEMMER: When I was looking this over I --
25 and I -- I'm sorry, let me -- I'm going to reduce my

1 screen; I clicked the wrong one. I'm looking at KIPP
2 Delta and the students in need -- I mean the D -- so
3 they have Cs -- a couple of Cs and the rest Ds, and
4 the next students in need of reading support. I'm
5 wondering how that compares with the public schools
6 in that area, how these numbers compare to the non-
7 charter in that area. Could somebody look at that or
8 find that out? Or you may know it, but --

9 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, we can -- I'll give Ms.
10 Webb a minute. She may be able to pull it up pretty
11 quickly in My School Info, how do scores compare to
12 traditional schools in the --

13 MS. CLEMMER: Right. I mean kind of -- are they
14 doing a better job with what they -- in the area
15 they're serving?

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. Great question.

17 MR. BALDWIN: Let me ask a question. In looking
18 at the school letter grades, is there precedence or
19 guidance as to what would trigger a review or is it a
20 subjective decision on our part?

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Mary Claire.

22 MS. HYATT: Good morning. Mary Claire Hyatt
23 with the Department.

24 Mr. Baldwin, in the past we've been doing this
25 -- I think this is the third year we've done this

1 review in November. It has kind of just been
2 subjective. The panel members have looked at the
3 letter grades, the literacy scores, the ESSA School
4 Index scores, and then any feedback from the
5 Department if we were having issues with particular
6 schools in terms of timeliness in turning in reports
7 or finance issues. I don't think the Division has
8 any school that's necessarily been having issues that
9 we know of in terms of finance or turning in reports
10 late. And I think last year Southeast Arkansas Prep
11 they reviewed because there were all kinds of issues
12 with reporting, finances, and the letter grade. Pine
13 Bluff Lighthouse was reviewed because they had for
14 several years had an F and a low ESSA School Index
15 score as well as low literacy scores. So it just
16 kind of is all of those things combined, at the
17 board's pleasure.

18 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: And, Mr. Baldwin, one of the
19 things about the timeline, as in November, is
20 normally at this time of the year we would have new
21 ESSA Index scores, new letter grades. But because of
22 Covid-19 the State did not assess in the spring, and
23 therefore we have a waiver of federal accountability.
24 And with no accountability index there's certainly no
25 way to identify letter grades for 2020. So this year

1 we're looking back at last year's -- the 2019 data
2 instead of the most recent.

3 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I have a question.

4 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Wright-McMurray.

6 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So schools like Capital
7 City Lighthouse --

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Is your microphone on?

9 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: I thought -- is it on?
10 Can you hear me?

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yeah.

12 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay, sorry.

13 Like Capital City Lighthouse Lower Academy that
14 has a D and two Fs -- that's just an example -- so
15 are any of these schools that have scores or grades
16 that are that low -- is there anything that we need
17 to be aware of that would explain that, that maybe
18 there's something that's out of the ordinary?
19 Because just looking at it, my thought would be the
20 ones that have Ds and Fs would be the ones that I
21 would want to say, okay -- I'd want to talk to those,
22 unless there's something that we're not aware of of
23 why that would be the case -- am I making sense or --
24 that you guys could share or is it just that they
25 have a D and two Fs?

1 MS. NEWTON: One of the things that goes along
2 with both of those questions is my concern about
3 whether or not -- say for instance with KIPP and the
4 decline in scores and performance there, is there a
5 process where we can track that -- well, I know you
6 can track it but -- if there's some intervention when
7 you see a decrease, you know, to be a result of a
8 change in students or leadership or a multiple other
9 factors? But to -- back in the day when I was on the
10 State Board I know that was one of the schools that
11 we lifted up, the KIPP School, as an example of how
12 well charters did -- and there's been just a lack of
13 that type of progress over a period of years. So is
14 there any way to get an idea of what's done in the
15 interim?

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Webb?

17 MS. WEBB: So KIPP has had some change in
18 leadership; they have a new superintendent this year,
19 and maybe some administrators as well. I think the
20 superintendent started July 1, so probably this data
21 would not be reflective. We have not --

22 MS. NEWTON: Yeah, but before then -- you know,
23 that's right here, right now, and so he has to take
24 what -- or she has to take what -- the present. But
25 like I said, over a period of time we see -- we could

1 -- you know, surely there was a notice of decline in
2 scores and maybe graduation rates or college entrance
3 rates; you know, they touted that as -- in their big
4 thrust. So I'm just wondering -- and I see Naccaman
5 nodding his head. I think about the intense infusion
6 of funds that came from the Walton Foundation and
7 another foundation; I don't know what the status of
8 that is. But that was one thing that was noted,
9 great contributions and fundraising was up. And not
10 just them, but those that are making progress either
11 way to be able to know and to highlight interventions
12 or attention or whatever it is. But it just seems
13 like just daylight and darkness in terms of what KIPP
14 has done.

15 MS. WEBB: So last year when Pine Bluff
16 Lighthouse Academy came that's what they reported on
17 were the interventions and things they were doing to
18 help student achievement. And we did visit the -- we
19 did a monitoring at the Jacksonville Lighthouse and
20 they did have lots of good things in place; the staff
21 was aware of all the interventions, all their
22 resources for students. And so I think any of them
23 could definitely come in and report on what they're
24 doing. We visited KIPP last year but it was for a
25 Standards for Accreditation; so we didn't really have

1 anyone that went in to see what was going on, what
2 they were doing as far as interventions and that type
3 of thing. So we can certainly do that again.

4 MS. NEWTON: Well, that's not exactly what I'm
5 talking about. I'm talking about the other end of
6 the spectrum, not them reporting but having a way to
7 monitor and to correct and readjust and to, you know,
8 take whatever -- or to at least define what the
9 difference is between then and now. That's my -- you
10 know, because nationally the KIPP model -- and I
11 don't know that we hear a lot, but I know locally
12 that was -- I was a part of a group of philanthropic
13 funders for rural -- rural philanthropic funders that
14 actually went there to look at it as a model. So I
15 would imagine if that group came around today -- and
16 I think Phil was involved -- they wouldn't go to KIPP
17 as the star, you know. And so that was my question.
18 And maybe there isn't, but I think there should be a
19 way to make the readjustment -- or at least if we're
20 going to use the charters as innovative models or
21 continue to use them as innovative models for
22 districts, then I think we need to have a way to
23 redirect or correct when we see a decline in whatever
24 is going on.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely. I'm a little slow

1 out of the gate -- I couldn't get off mute here -- to
2 make a comment or two.

3 Ms. Newton, you're right on point there. They
4 have -- I've had the opportunity to meet the new
5 superintendent virtually when he came onboard and
6 he's going to bring a lot of experience.

7 But kind of a big picture and to narrow it down,
8 you know, the schools with Ds, we need to hear from
9 them; we need to find out what's going on. If they
10 already have a plan in place, it's okay for us to
11 hear about the plan that they have in place, if
12 they're on the upswing. What we want to make sure is
13 that they're not on the downswing. I know a little
14 bit of history behind -- when I met the
15 superintendent I asked him some questions, and the
16 key piece was, you know, what happened or what's gone
17 wrong. And I also asked the same thing of Scott
18 Shirey -- and most of us know Scott was the founder
19 of KIPP in the delta and so-forth. They over-
20 extended themselves; you know, they went into Forrest
21 City for awhile, and after a while, if I could liken
22 it to the -- I have a military background -- it's
23 kind of like over-extending your supply lines. No
24 matter how good you are, no unit can outrun their
25 supply line. And they reached a point where they

1 could not provide the type of education that they
2 typically do, the extended day and those type of
3 models, the extra time with the kids, and things
4 really took a downturn. But you all don't need to
5 hear that from me. We need to have someone from
6 KIPP, along with ADE, to come before us -- and ADE
7 should have the data that this is where they were and
8 this is where they are now, and KIPP needs to be able
9 to explain to us what happened very succinctly. And
10 then they need to come back and during the same
11 presentation say what are we going to be doing
12 differently, and ADE needs to be able to validate
13 what they're doing differently to bring those scores
14 up.

15 And just to kind of sum this up a little bit, I
16 was looking at this list here; we've got a couple of
17 them that have a couple of Ds in a row. Those that
18 have straight Ds, which I see KIPP is in that
19 category, and those that have -- I would start off
20 with the ones that have three Ds. If they have an F,
21 lord help them, they should definitely be before us.
22 Or if they have two Ds in a row -- three Ds in a row,
23 they definitely should be coming to us. If they have
24 two Ds in a row, depending on the number -- or three
25 Ds -- the two Ds need to be coming to us. We want to

1 catch them before they get too far down the road, if
2 we can. And I would like to get Ms. Webb's, you
3 know, just take on that.

4 Does that make sense or should we look at
5 something different?

6 MS. WEBB: Absolutely. No, it does make perfect
7 sense.

8 MS. CLEMMER: I'm trying to find the "raise my
9 hand" button, but --

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: That's all right. Go ahead,
11 Ms. Clemmer.

12 MS. CLEMMER: I also had a question about --
13 I've got to click back over to my pdf -- about
14 Graduate Arkansas. I gather that we don't have --
15 not sure -- I'm not sure why we don't have a letter
16 grade there -- and y'all can explain that to me, as
17 I'm still a new board member. But this graduation
18 rate for a school called Graduate Arkansas at 23.9 --
19 I don't know the history of them, so I don't know if
20 anybody can just tell me what that means. But I mean
21 that's --

22 MS. WEBB: So Graduate Arkansas is a credit
23 recovery or an ALE environment, and so they don't get
24 a letter grade.

25 MS. CLEMMER: Okay.

1 MS. WEBB: They do get a graduation rate. But
2 they're serving those students that maybe dropped out
3 somewhere else and came to their school to hopefully
4 try to finish.

5 MS. CLEMMER: Okay. Where are they located?

6 MS. WEBB: They're located in Little Rock.

7 MS. CLEMMER: Is that -- that's not the one at
8 the Goodwill; that's Excel, isn't it?

9 MS. WEBB: Correct.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: No, but they're on the
11 highway on the way to Goodwill, if you were driving
12 down -- what is that, 40?

13 MS. CLEMMER: Yeah, 30.

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: 30. Then you would pass
15 Graduate Arkansas before you got to the Goodwill --

16 MS. CLEMMER: Okay.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- Excel Center.

18 MS. CLEMMER: So, okay, these are people though
19 that have really -- they dropped off the grid before
20 this almost and now we're trying to help them get
21 back on. Okay.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: I would say totally off the grid.
23 I mean those -- these are kind of the last chance for
24 a lot of these students. And there have been days --
25 I know the principal out there; like myself and Mr.

1 Key, she's from Gurdon originally. There's a lot of
2 good things come out of Gurdon other than the Gurdon
3 light now.

4 MS. CLEMMER: Well, my daughter teaches ALE, so
5 I know it's a very difficult environment.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, absolutely. And usually
7 what -- when they've been coming before us, a lot of
8 their students are just -- it's either this or
9 nothing, pretty much. So, but that was a great
10 question. Yeah, uh-huh.

11 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Wright-McMurray, did you
12 have another comment?

13 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: No, I just thought that
14 that helped clear up for me, because that's where my
15 mind was kind of going that they have these Fs and
16 was there something that's really explainable of why
17 that is.

18 MS. WEBB: Sure.

19 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Then my thought would be
20 those are those -- those are the ones that I would
21 want to have conversations with. So, thank you.

22 MS. WEBB: So I do have a little bit of the data
23 that Ms. Clemmer asked for on the reading scores for
24 the schools around KIPP. So in Osceola, they had
25 55.67% of their students In Need of Support in

1 reading; Blytheville was 60.53; and Helena was 55.96.

2 MS. CLEMMER: So their -- and which one of these
3 is -- which one of these KIPP schools is in Osceola?

4 DR. WILLIAMS: I think the closest one would
5 probably be Blytheville.

6 MS. CLEMMER: Okay. I thought there was -- I
7 thought because we used Osceola -- so what is -- did
8 we hear Blytheville? I'm sorry.

9 MS. WEBB: Blytheville is 60.53 needed support
10 --

11 MS. CLEMMER: Okay.

12 MS. WEBB: -- in reading.

13 MS. CLEMMER: Okay. So they're 10% better, I
14 guess you could look at it that way.

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Go ahead.

16 MR. BALDWIN: I think it's [audio distortion]
17 the schools that we want to speak with. And I like
18 Dr. Williams' ideas about the two Ds in a row and the
19 F. I think those are the schools that we need to
20 talk to as well. [audio distortion] public schools
21 in those areas, besides KIPP, to have a comparative
22 -- a comparison. So [audio distortion]. But to have
23 that also so we can see what the environment is in
24 each of the communities.

25 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Webb, do you -- can you

1 access the data? I know that every charter school
2 has data on the students that are enrolled to see
3 which traditional public schools they primarily came
4 from, and maybe we could run the data on those
5 schools to build the comparison.

6 MS. WEBB: (Nodding head up and down)

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. And, Ms. Wright-
8 McMurray, you had another --

9 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: That was part of my
10 question, because I'm looking at -- so for KIPP Delta
11 it says that the In Need of Support is 52.7. But
12 what is the specific percentage for that individual
13 school?

14 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So the law that places those
15 districts In Need of Support is done by district, and
16 that's why --

17 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So KIPP Delta is
18 considered a whole district?

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: District, yes.

20 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: So we can't really see
21 what Blytheville KIPP Delta is doing in comparison to
22 --

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We can.

24 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- Blytheville High
25 School?

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We can go into their ESSA
2 School Index and pull out their percentage of kids
3 that were reading on grade level.

4 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So we can pull that out of
6 the ESSA School Index --

7 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- and get that as well. But
9 the law that identifies schools In Need of Support is
10 by district.

11 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: Okay. Thank you.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Here's something I just noticed
13 that's interesting to me is that the Blytheville
14 conversion school has a D and two Fs, and you also
15 have a KIPP school in Blytheville also. So that just
16 kind of raises a red flag to me. What's kind of
17 going on in education in general if we have both KIPP
18 Delta -- KIPP there and the conversion charter school
19 there too, and they're both struggling?

20 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So, Panel, what I've heard
21 you say is let's prioritize any of our open-
22 enrollment charters that have an F, most recently if
23 they have three Ds in a row, and then two Ds in a
24 row; if we use that prioritization and put together
25 the data that you've requested, and then ask those

1 charter schools to come back and answer the question
2 as to what happened to get them to that situation and
3 do they have a plan in place to have a different
4 outcome for the future. Is that correct?

5 Okay. Anything else you'd like to add to that?

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Are we going to the conversions
7 next or --

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, we'll do that one next.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Hyatt.

11 MS. HYATT: So you're welcome to do this at the
12 end or you can do it now for open-enrollments and
13 then for district conversions. But if you're wanting
14 to bring them in for a review to answer questions and
15 present their plan we'll need a motion to do that,
16 and then we'll give proper notice and work with them
17 to make sure they have all the information you've
18 requested. So you'll need to state the schools and
19 make a motion. And you can do them all together, if
20 you want -- all in one motion, instead of each
21 individual school.

22 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Webb, it'll take a little
23 bit of time to run all of the data and put all of
24 that together for our packet, and I'm wondering if --
25 I know we have a long agenda, two days, in December

1 to review renewals. And then, what does the calendar
2 look like for January and February?

3 MS. WEBB: It's open.

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Open. So let me ask the
5 Panel this: would you prefer to have the data
6 prepared for you in January and we can narrow down
7 the districts you want to bring in? Or do you want
8 to bring in -- sorry -- charters -- or do you want to
9 bring in the charters that meet this criteria and we
10 can schedule some for January and some for February?

11 DR. WILLIAMS: That's a good question. Here's
12 just a thought for me, and I'm open to -- obviously
13 to the will of the board. As long as we're taking a
14 look at it, I think that's the most important thing.
15 So I would rather have the -- I would suggest having
16 the data available, if we could look at the data, and
17 the data showing the up-trend, then if there are --
18 so if there's quite a few of them, then those may be
19 the ones that we can eliminate from bringing them in,
20 if we have the real data in front of us, to take a
21 look at. You know, you can have a D and you might
22 just be -- you might have a couple of Ds in a row,
23 but if your scores are higher but you just hadn't
24 crossed that threshold, then they may not necessarily
25 have to be a priority if we could see based on the

1 data that they're moving in the right direction.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: We could also ask the
3 charters to give us a written answer to those two
4 questions, what happened previously and what will be
5 different or what is their plan in place for the
6 future. We could have those to review as well,
7 without having to bring them away from their
8 classrooms, that we could put into that data. Does
9 that sound acceptable?

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

11 MR. BALDWIN: Yes.

12 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: But I --

13 MR. BALDWIN: I like both of those ideas.

14 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: But for me, if they have
15 two Fs that's -- I don't know. I need some -- if
16 they have -- if they have a D and two Fs
17 consistently, that's just something I think that I
18 would want to see. But --

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. So --

20 MS. WRIGHT-McMURRAY: -- I'm in.

21 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: -- let us pull all of this --
22 all the data together, if that's agreeable by the
23 Panel, and let us get everything together for you and
24 have that ready for us to review in January.

25 Does that sound good, Ms. Webb, or do you have

1 some other suggestions?

2 MS. WEBB: We can have it ready by the December
3 meeting; so I could get it to you at that point, if
4 you want to decide who to bring in -- who you would
5 like to bring in in January. You could decide that
6 in December, if you wanted to. We can get that data
7 to you. Whichever way is fine.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: That'll work great. So then
9 we can bring in the open-enrollment charters in
10 January that we identify?

11 MS. WEBB: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Perfect. So, Ms. Webb, then
13 we can notify the open-enrollment charters that we're
14 going to discuss that during the December meeting.
15 So it'll be quite a bit of data for you to look at
16 ahead of time, so that each one of us can kind of
17 have our list of who we -- kind of have our notes of
18 which one we'll feel like we may want to discuss, to
19 bring in.

20 Ms. Clemmer?

21 MS. CLEMMER: Well, what it looked like to me --
22 I'm obviously missing something -- we didn't have
23 that many that had three Ds. I mean if this is not
24 the comprehensive list are we going to be looking at
25 -- who else is -- I mean don't we know right now who

1 has the Ds? Do you see what I'm asking? Am I being
2 clear enough?

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes. Let me make a quick
4 scan here.

5 MS. CLEMMER: I guess I'm thinking it's not that
6 many schools, unless there's a big list that I don't
7 know about.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So I'm seeing one with two
9 Fs, which would be Pine Bluff Lighthouse Elementary,
10 and then on the three -- and Capital City Lighthouse
11 Lower Academy. And then on the three-D list is
12 Arkansas Virtual Academy Elementary, Exalt Academy,
13 KIPP Elementary Academy --

14 MS. CLEMMER: Okay. I was not getting -- I
15 didn't -- I hadn't scrolled down to see the bottom of
16 my page. That's what I had not done.

17 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yeah. Blytheville College
18 Prep. And then when you start the two-D list, Scott
19 Elementary and Academics Plus.

20 MS. CLEMMER: So we're still -- we still have
21 quite a few there. That is going to be -- I'm sorry;
22 I just -- I wasn't -- my view was not expanding
23 adequately.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, it's quite a lengthy
25 list of schools.

1 So let's -- if we're agreeable, we'll let Ms.
2 Webb contact them and put together the packets of
3 information. That will give us time to review and
4 then we can narrow down which ones we want to have
5 log on with us in January. Is that agreeable by
6 everyone?

7 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. What are we probably
8 looking at? Probably about a 35 -- 30- or 45-minute
9 presentation from each school -- at least 30 minutes?

10 MS. HYATT: If we end up doing a full review, it
11 would at least be 30 minutes just anecdotally. In
12 the past it's kind of depended on the presentation.
13 I know that when we did the Pine Bluff Lighthouse
14 Charter last year it was a rather lengthy -- you
15 remember, Dr. Williams. It was pretty lengthy
16 because we had to go over a lot of stuff. So it just
17 kind of depends on what the issues are. Once we have
18 a little bit more information and you guys know
19 exactly what you're looking for, we'll have a better
20 idea about how long those things will take.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. That's where that data can
22 help us kind of hone down a little bit on which
23 schools and prioritize them.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes, sir. Data-driven
25 decision-making -- we love it.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, yes.

2 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: All right. At this time, Ms.
3 Hyatt, we don't need a motion; is that correct?
4 We've just built our criteria. All right.

5 **2: REVIEW OF DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOLS**

6 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Let's move then to the Review
7 of District Conversion Charter Schools.

8 In keeping with the similar criteria, you would
9 have one that has Fs, and that would be Blytheville
10 High School, a New Tech School.

11 And, Ms. Webb, they're not renewing their
12 charter, is what they have communicated with our
13 office. And then three Ds would be Hot Springs
14 Junior Academy, Hot Springs World Class High School,
15 Osceola STEM Academy; and two Ds would be Academies
16 of West Memphis, Harrisburg College and Career Prep,
17 and Warren Middle School.

18 Ms. Hyatt.

19 MS. HYATT: One of those schools, Hot Springs
20 World Class High School, they're up for renewal; so
21 you'll actually have a full review of them in
22 December.

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Hot Springs World Class High
24 School?

25 MS. HYATT: Yes.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: And so in looking at Blytheville,
2 I know they're not up for renewal. I am of the mind,
3 and really interested in feedback, to still hear from
4 the District on exactly what they're going to be
5 doing different just to -- you're basically closing
6 down a conversion school that was not successful, a
7 conversion charter, and so now what are you going to
8 do differently with the -- with your regular high
9 school. Uh-huh.

10 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. So, Dr. Williams, are
11 you asking us to bring them in or to inquire that and
12 see if we can get a response?

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Just inquire and get a response
14 for now. That's -- this is a nice little enrollment
15 and so-forth, and between this conversion charter
16 school and the KIPP school in Blytheville -- that's
17 two out of three when you look at the traditional
18 public school. So I think it'll be helpful just for
19 you all to look into the traditional public school,
20 which is the conversion, and see what's going on and
21 what are their plans when they bring those students
22 back in; if they're struggling over there, you know,
23 what are they going to be doing differently.

24 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: If you'll notice on
25 Blytheville High School that they have had a

1 declining enrollment, a quite substantial decline.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, that's really
3 interesting in the sense that -- where is Big River
4 Steel? Where is NuCor, the steel plant, located at?
5 Anyone have any idea?

6 MS. CLEMMER: NuCor is in Blytheville, Big River
7 Steel is in Osceola.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

9 MS. CLEMMER: Or NuCor is [audio distortion],
10 but the Blytheville area.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Blytheville, okay. So I wonder
12 where the kids are going to school at, for those that
13 work in the steel mill. That's just a question to
14 follow-up with them when we have a conversation with
15 them.

16 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Ms. Clemmer, I'd just say go for
18 it.

19 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Ms. Clemmer.

20 MS. CLEMMER: Well, I've got to -- I've got to
21 reform that question. Remind me, when we're looking
22 at Blytheville Conversion is that -- does that mean
23 all of Blytheville High became a conversion or did
24 they create a separate entity? That's what I wasn't
25 clear about.

1 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: It was one school and they
2 went to --

3 MS. CLEMMER: So all --

4 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Yes. They went to a New Tech
5 model --

6 MS. CLEMMER: The whole [audio distortion] did?

7 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: The whole high school, yes.

8 If we've seen this -- and it may be, I'm just
9 guessing -- I'm looking at Ms. Webb -- we've seen
10 before when we've had district conversions that moved
11 to a New Tech High model and then when their contract
12 for New Tech wears out or runs out it's not
13 necessarily a sustainable model unless a lot of
14 resources have been put in place to prepare for that
15 sustainability. Is that -- Ms. Webb --

16 MS. WEBB: Yes. If you contract with the like
17 New Tech network, that's quite an expensive endeavor.
18 And so I think several years ago the State gave
19 grants for that, which kind of covered that fee to
20 work with the organization. And since that's gone,
21 that's usually a big hindrance for them continuing
22 New Tech. And with a New Tech school teachers have
23 to be trained and students have to be trained to
24 sometimes work independently and in groups, and
25 sometimes that may be a struggle. If you have

1 struggling students to begin with that's maybe not
2 always the best approach.

3 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Any other things that you're
4 noticing on this data?

5 One of the things that I'm quite interested in,
6 and we'll need to have some time to study this, will
7 be our virtual academies. If you notice, they've had
8 -- they came to us and asked for an increase in
9 enrollment and sometimes they've tripled their
10 numbers. So that's not something they can come in
11 and report on probably in January, but it's something
12 that I think as a state we'll want to watch and study
13 and talk to these superintendents about what they did
14 well, what they learned, and how we can apply that
15 for other future virtual schools or virtual programs.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Well, another thought here also,
17 when you were saying that you -- you brought
18 something else to mind about the -- when we look at
19 the change in enrollment we just need to think about
20 how we're going to handle this year from a Covid
21 standpoint, with all the various impacts that's
22 happening to the schools. I don't know exactly how
23 to interpret that to say exactly what that means
24 right now, but it's just something that, you know --
25 talking about the elephant sitting on the couch in

1 the living room -- that's just something that we've
2 just got to think about, you know, whatever decisions
3 we make. It'll be interesting to hear from these
4 schools exactly how they're doing things. So anyway,
5 that was just a thought; so when ADE -- when you all
6 have conversations with them the Covid question is
7 kind of front-and-center. And I don't know how much
8 they can pivot to do anything different at least
9 during this year. But anyway, that's just something
10 to put out there.

11 MS. CLEMMER: But I think we don't need that in
12 a vacuum. I mean we need to know if they're dropping
13 because of Covid, then we need it in relation to the
14 other -- the face-to-face schools who are also doing
15 virtual too -- some virtual.

16 MS. NEWTON: You know, I think so, Naccaman,
17 that really highlights something you've been talking
18 about -- I was on the national call yesterday around
19 workforce and all the things that we've tried to do
20 relative to getting them ready for employment and
21 getting them into training. And the Covid looms
22 large overall. I think probably not giving the Board
23 anything -- I mean the staff anything extra to do,
24 but we've seen here in the -- in our five counties,
25 (inaudible) judicial district, five times the cases

1 that we've had before going to Juvenile Court because
2 of some people not being virtually active. And so
3 that impacts -- you know, if they were two Fs or
4 three Ds or whatever it might be Fs across the board
5 and we've got to look at that holistically as it
6 relates to the charters and as it relates to the
7 regular public school systems, is what impact --
8 because as I say, they have a docket, two or three
9 pages of young people that schools have filed
10 petitions about not participating in Covid [sic] and
11 you have a variety of different ways -- he won't get
12 out of bed, our computer doesn't work, or whatever.
13 But in light of Covid, you know, it's almost like,
14 okay, we're going to lose this data but we've got to
15 use the (inaudible) of Covid to say, okay, you're an
16 F but you would've been a C or, you know, not -- it's
17 not that simplistic. But just to say everything is
18 (inaudible) and if you -- and maybe -- if you think
19 it's like the elephant that Naccaman was talking
20 about -- if you think it looks bad now, then given
21 the other factors -- the poverty, lack of
22 transportation, lack of access to broadband, and some
23 things that are outside the district's control in
24 some instances -- it's going to be a totally
25 different thing. So how -- you know, comparing

1 apples to apples -- and Naccaman, that's one of his
2 phrases -- you know, how do we compare that given
3 this most unusual set of circumstances. And so what
4 is a measurement and what's not a measurement and
5 what we should do compared to what we can't, given
6 our inability -- I was saying yesterday, one of the
7 things that we had was an advantage of being able to
8 be one-on-one with our client. So we can throw
9 something -- an obstacle in their way before --
10 that's a benefit, rather than have them trip -- or
11 remove an obstacle. We could do that as we saw it
12 come along. But now our kids are tripping and
13 falling, and falling in crevices and then falling in
14 canyons, and we are not there -- you know, you can't
15 call my agency or a school social worker or just drop
16 by. You know, so I think that's going to be
17 something we're going to look at in a few months when
18 we look at data to show it's just -- you know what
19 I'm talking about. It's just -- it's not going to be
20 indicative of -- it's not going to be real, but it is
21 going to be surreal, I think, in terms of what -- and
22 what does it mean, who will know what it means.

23 MR. BALDWIN: Toyce, I like what you were
24 saying, because what you were saying is we need --
25 some of this process that we're going through we need

1 -- we don't just need to look at these numbers that
2 are -- or these grades that are a year or two old
3 now, but we need to look forward as best we can. So
4 maybe that's a third question to put to these schools
5 is to ask them what are their current challenges that
6 they're facing with Covid -- because they know what
7 they are and where are the big holes there, and, you
8 know, how can we potentially help. Because you're
9 right, if we had the current grades they may all be
10 before us over the next couple of years because of
11 what's happening.

12 Let me ask, is the grading system this year just
13 going to be skipped or will there be grades given at
14 some point in time for this current year?

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So the letter grades is part
16 of the state accountability system. And, of course,
17 we have a legislative session coming up and those
18 issues, I'm sure, will be discussed during this
19 session. Right now we are in the process -- and
20 tomorrow during our ESSA Steering Committee we will
21 have probably a three-hour conversation about this;
22 but the plan right now is to assess according to our
23 assessment schedule. I think what you've just
24 highlighted over and over is the need for data -- we
25 really need to know the impact of Covid-19 -- and we

1 are going to have additional components that we can
2 look at our data through the lens of the student
3 instructional options that have been selected. So we
4 are working very diligently tomorrow to talk through
5 the calculation of the ESSA School Index; we need
6 that information. But our schools really need to
7 know if there is a learning loss, how much of a
8 learning loss, and which students may have been most
9 affected. We're also looking to see, you know, how
10 did these instructional options impact kids and what
11 perceptions do we as the public have regarding these
12 different instructional options, who do we think was
13 most likely to do -- select an all-virtual model, and
14 in reality who really did. And so that's the data
15 that we've -- we're running and we will continue to
16 run and model throughout this school year. We'll
17 have a lot of lessons to learn, but we are going to
18 need data to know what we've learned. So we will be
19 discussing that tomorrow.

20 Okay. So if your criteria is the same, that we
21 will put together data regarding prioritizing Fs,
22 three Ds, and then two Ds, put that data together and
23 really looking at what has happened, and then your
24 third question you added in what are your current
25 challenges and how are you addressing those

1 challenges -- so what's going to be different in the
2 future and do you have a plan in place to accomplish
3 the change that you're desiring. And I think your
4 point is well taken, until we know the true impact of
5 Covid-19 there may be some big barriers for the
6 entire state that we all have to look at and develop
7 a plan to overcome in the future.

8 Any other comments or questions regarding
9 district conversion -- regarding the district
10 conversion charter schools?

11 So, Ms. Webb, can we -- will you have time to
12 put together the data on those as well and have those
13 in the December packet?

14 MS. WEBB: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Okay. She said yes.

16 All right. Any other comments or questions from
17 today?

18 Any feedback on how we could do this better or
19 anything that would be helpful to you as a panel
20 member?

21 DR. WILLIAMS: No. I think y'all are doing a
22 great job. Uh-huh.

23 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: I thought Ms. Webb's document
24 here was concise but really started the conversations
25 in the directions that we all needed to go.

1 So kudos to you, Ms. Webb.

2 All right. Any other business before the Panel
3 today?

4 Seeing/hearing none, I'll accept a motion to
5 adjourn.

6 MS. CLEMMER: So moved.

7 DR. WILLIAMS: So moved. I'll second then.

8 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: So by Ms. Clemmer, second by
9 Dr. Williams.

10 All those in favor?

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRMAN COFFMAN: Meeting is adjourned.

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16 (The meeting was concluded at 9:48 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) ss.
 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, via Livestream, on November 17, 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: November 27, 2020.



Sharon K. Hill

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

