

In The Matter Of:

*DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL*

December 17, 2019

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

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ARKANSAS DIVISION OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

DECEMBER 17, 2019

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

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

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT DESE Attorney

ALSO APPEARING:

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

LOCATION:

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

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

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A-3: MOUNTAIN HOME HS CAREER ACADEMIES

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

EXHIBIT TWO (2)
MHPS Pathways Crosswalk Handout

B-2: ACADEMICS PLUS CHARTER SCHOOLS

EXHIBIT ONE (1)
Letters of Support

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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

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

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

22 CONSENT AGENDA

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we'll go ahead and begin
24 this morning with our Consent Agenda. And we have
25 our meeting minutes and also the meeting schedule on

1 the Consent Agenda. So if you've had time to review
2 that, and if we're ready for a motion, I'll entertain
3 a motion.

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

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

9 DR. KREMERS: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And a second.

11 All those in favor?

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

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

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

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

22 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Good morning. Kelly
23 McLaughlin, Charter Office.

24 We have Siloam Springs High School. They are a
25 district conversion charter that was initially

1 authorized on November 19, 2014. The charter is
2 approved to serve students in grades 9-12 with a
3 maximum enrollment of 1600.

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

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

24 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So please state your

1 name for the record as you speak, and you're
2 recognized and we'll go ahead and get started. You
3 have 20 minutes.

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

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

23 MS. PRICE: Good morning. I'm Jerrie Price. I
24 am the assistant principal at Siloam Springs and I'll
25 be doing the majority of our presentation this

1 morning. I do want to thank you for the opportunity
2 to tell our story, and that is what we feel that this
3 is; it really is an opportunity for us to tell a
4 little bit about who we are and kind of what our
5 goals are and what we hope to do in the future.

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

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

1 we developed all of our programs.

2 And I'm going to start with our Industrial
3 Maintenance program, which is kind of a Keystone
4 program for us at Siloam Springs. Our Industrial
5 Maintenance program, as Mr. Wiggins said, started
6 when our industries came to us and just asked for
7 help. They were really having a difficult time
8 getting skilled labor within the different plants and
9 industries in our region in the areas of maintenance
10 in particular; so we began the process of researching
11 and trying to develop a program that could meet that
12 need. In 2015, when we started this program 69% of
13 the industries in northwest Arkansas reported that
14 they were having trouble finding skilled labor to
15 fill the needs that they had in their different
16 industries, and in particular in the industrialized
17 plants that we have in northwest Arkansas. We
18 started our program as a -- in a desire to not only
19 give our kids opportunities but to meet that need.
20 In 2017, that need had gone from 69% not being able
21 to find skilled labor down to 50 -- sorry -- down to
22 57 -- or, sorry, 46% not being able to find skilled
23 labor; so we made a reduction of 23% in northwest
24 Arkansas. Now while our program is not the only
25 program that has filled that gap, we feel like that

1 this partnership between high schools, technical
2 schools, and the industries has been what has led to
3 filling that gap. And then our program -- we were
4 the first of its kind in Arkansas, probably one of
5 the first in the nation to have an Industrial
6 Maintenance program in a high school. And what we've
7 done is really just come together as a team with our
8 industry partners, built a curriculum that works to
9 meet their needs, and then also exposes our students
10 to everything that they need to be successful in the
11 realm of industrial maintenance.

12 The next program that we tackled after
13 Industrial Maintenance in our CASS program is our
14 Registered Medical Assistant program. So, typically
15 Registered Medical Assistant programs are found in
16 technical schools in junior colleges. We were the
17 first in the state of Arkansas to house one in our
18 high school. And so with Registered Medical
19 Assistant our goal was simply to meet the need for
20 shortage in nurses. Now while our students don't
21 leave as nurses, what it does do is that our -- we
22 found that our local clinics and our hospitals were
23 starting to use Registered Medical Assistants in
24 their shortage of nurses to fill that gap. So we
25 felt like if we offered something different -- this

1 is above CNA, it's different than CNA, and it allows
2 our students to go in and actually fill a very
3 specific need that hospitals and clinics need. And
4 so in our Registered Medical Assistant program it is
5 kind of a capstone where they end all of their
6 medical professions classes with a class called
7 Medical Specialization. They receive over 200 hours
8 of classroom training leading up to that year, and
9 then 100 hours of clinical training. So they
10 actually go into the hospitals, into the medical
11 clinics and learn what nurses do. We thought this
12 did two things: it gave them a leg-up in their
13 opportunities, not only for jobs right out of high
14 school but also in nursing school. Those that want
15 to go on to be nurses have something kind of in their
16 hands that they can say "hey, I have this and I have
17 this experience and that allows me a little bit
18 better opportunity in nursing school." It's very
19 competitive with the shortage that's happening, and
20 so we kind of married those two things together.

21 One that I want to visit about as well is
22 Panther Creative. Every school -- not every school,
23 but lots of schools have a Small Business Operations
24 class, and so they run things like a school store or
25 something similar to that. In Siloam Springs we

1 developed a marketing firm. So what we did was we
2 took our Small Business Operations students, those
3 business minded kids; we got them to go into the
4 community and connect with our small businesses to
5 see what their needs were. And what we found was
6 that the need was really for marketing materials, for
7 training videos, marketing videos, paper goods that
8 they could send out in marketing. So we developed a
9 marketing firm. Our students that are the business
10 students connect with the small businesses; they
11 bring that need back, they connect with the creative
12 team; the creative team fills the need, whether
13 that's promotional videos, training materials,
14 marketing materials that are paper; and then they
15 send that back to the small businesses for them to
16 use in their areas. This allows small businesses an
17 opportunity to have high-quality marketing materials
18 at a very affordable cost to them and it allows our
19 students to do really -- like real-life projects that
20 we feel are just so important. It fills the need for
21 our community and, secondly, it gives our kids needed
22 skills and internship hours.

23 Our other program that I don't have listed here
24 is a Bilingual Customer Service program where our
25 upper-level Spanish students, our AP Spanish students

1 participate in a class where they learn customer
2 service and then they go fill a need for translation
3 services in our small businesses. So in our
4 community we're about 35% Hispanic, and that allows
5 those small businesses that really don't have a
6 Hispanic person working for them an opportunity to
7 have translation services; it gives our kids good
8 internship hours and very practical experience, and
9 then meets the needs in our community.

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

16 I'd like to highlight a few of our CTE programs
17 of study. Of course, we have kind of just the normal
18 things. I think some of the newer things that have
19 come in since we were here last is our drones course.
20 So we have an FAA certified drone pilot as one of our
21 teachers and she teaches that course, and we're going
22 to work on expanding that as well. The other
23 expansions that we're bringing onboard, hopefully
24 coming up in the next cycle of our charter, are cyber
25 security; we're going to re -- kind of add back in

1 that EMT program to go with our medical
2 specialization; and then the CASE curriculum, which
3 is a very rigorous agriculture curriculum that
4 focuses on the sciences.

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

22 In Siloam Springs last year our students earned
23 624 total industry certifications. Most of those
24 were in Microsoft, and so our kids leave well-versed
25 with a tremendous amount of computer skills. But we

1 also have some very specialized certifications, like
2 childcare. We offer a parapro for students that
3 might want to go on and even maybe work as a parapro
4 and work their way through college to become a
5 teacher. We have several others that you can see on
6 our list up there.

7 One of the things that we really pride ourselves
8 in Siloam Springs with is our connection. As you can
9 tell, our connection between our students and our
10 industry -- we start in the 8th grade with a hands-on
11 career fair; we have our industry representatives
12 come in and they have something for the kids to do.
13 For example, La-Z-Boy brings a chair, a part -- all
14 the parts of a chair and the students go through and
15 they put together a La-Z-Boy recliner. So that's a
16 hands-on career fair; that starts in the 8th grade.
17 In high school we do industry tours to give our kids
18 exposure to all of the different things that are
19 available in northwest Arkansas. We do those in
20 Siloam Springs; we do those in all of northwest
21 Arkansas. And then we have representatives from
22 industry come in, and sometimes our students go to
23 their places on a tour and then they provide lunch
24 for the students and HR directors go through all of
25 the things that they do in that business.

1 And then, finally, we have a reverse career
2 fair. This is a capstone project for our students in
3 our CTE program, and what they do is the students
4 prepare a visual portfolio. And so we have them all
5 set up in our -- in the concourse of our gym and our
6 industry representatives come in and do informal
7 interviews with the students. And after those
8 interviews they give them feedback on their
9 communication skills, their professionalism, their
10 presentation, and it just really gives the
11 opportunity for our kids to kind of have a little bit
12 of practice in those soft skills that are so needed.

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

22 So the only other things that's really new that
23 I didn't present here is more of an academic course.
24 We've developed a personalized learning program in
25 Siloam Springs, and that program is a flexibly-paced,

1 mastery-based, project-based program of learning. We
2 have about 300 students that participate in that
3 program now, with about 200 of those students
4 completing all of their core courses in a
5 personalized learning environment, similar to an
6 online environment or a virtual environment except
7 that we have the teachers right there in the
8 classroom, we utilize a digital curriculum, and we
9 allow the students to flexibly pace their way through
10 those programs. And I can answer questions about
11 that when we finish up if you have more questions
12 there.

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

18 So our first goal was that 70% of our graduating
19 seniors would meet the four ACT college readiness
20 benchmarks. This is one of the goals that we did not
21 meet. And while we're performing above the state
22 average on the ACT, these readiness benchmarks have
23 been very difficult for us to master. As you can
24 see, those percentages are quite low. And so we've
25 put some things in place over the last few years, and

1 I'm going to talk about several things that are
2 actually working towards this goal, along with our
3 goals for ACT Aspire. But in the -- just for this
4 part I'm going to talk about how we have developed
5 kind of a focused, very systemic growth plan for our
6 school. And so I know everybody has a SLIP plan,
7 they have their school level improvement plan. Ours
8 really revolves around these readiness benchmarks and
9 around literacy skills. And so what we've done, last
10 year we actually implemented professional learning
11 communities across the board. So we had professional
12 learning communities in our core classes before last
13 year, but last year was the first year that we had
14 across-the-board school-wide professional learning
15 communities. This year we also added common planning
16 time for all PLC teams, and that's electives and
17 core. And then we also initiated our intervention
18 program. So every Wednesday we have a 40-minute
19 intervention period that our students participate in
20 and those interventions are designed revolving around
21 the way students perform in their class, but
22 primarily around literacy skills and ACT benchmark
23 readiness skills. Okay. That's pretty much that.

24 We also -- well, we'll go on. I'll talk about
25 our literacy plan as we kind of move forward.

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

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

20 Our fourth goal -- and this is where we're kind
21 of going to camp; we're going to kind of sit awhile
22 here because this is where we found that we need the
23 most improvement at Siloam Springs High School. So
24 our goal was to meet or exceed the state average on
25 English Language Arts for -- originally it was the

1 PARCC assessment, of course now it's the ACT Aspire.
2 As you look at this chart, you can see that we really
3 only met this goal one year of the four that we're in
4 in our charter so far and we really struggled with
5 our literacy overall. And as we really broke down
6 our literacy scores, particularly last year and this
7 year, we really just came to the conclusion that a
8 lot of our problem is a systemic problem. It's not
9 necessarily our English teachers' problem; it's that
10 we have honestly just not done a good job of teaching
11 the literacy skills across the curriculum in every
12 area. As we break down those literacy skills that
13 are tested on the ACT Aspire, we've really just taken
14 the approach that everybody in our school is becoming
15 a literacy teacher. So this year what we've done is
16 we've developed a school-wide literacy plan. So we
17 have our school level improvement plan, but we have a
18 literacy plan that is school-wide just for these sets
19 of skills. And kind of the approach that we took, we
20 broke down the ACT Aspire scores; we looked at the
21 actual test questions that were being missed and
22 broke that into central literacy skills; we put
23 together a team, and then that team we gave the
24 charge of producing a series of professional
25 development courses for our teachers. So every other

1 week, on Wednesday afternoons, for about an hour-and-
2 a-half our teachers meet with specialized teachers --
3 English teachers, literacy coaches, those kinds of
4 folks that we have in our building and in our
5 district. They meet with them and they do breakout
6 sessions for literacy skills that they are learning
7 to -- learning in order to create activities for our
8 kids. And so every other week they do a break -- we
9 do breakout sessions and they choose which ones work
10 best for them. In the PLCs our literacy coach is
11 supporting our PLC teams with this process as well;
12 so as they go into their breakout sessions they learn
13 a specific activity or strategy, then our literacy
14 coach supports them in the PLC meetings. We then
15 develop common formative assessments that revolve
16 around those literacy strategies, come together, talk
17 about that the way our kids perform, how they did,
18 and then make that -- build that part into
19 interventions for those students.

20 Starting in January, we will also be doing --
21 all juniors will -- for our intervention program, all
22 juniors will be doing ACT type prep, and so we're
23 developing those courses as well. So students will
24 have breakout sessions that they can choose from
25 based on their needs, based on their ACT Aspire

1 scores, and we'll kind of direct those students on
2 where we feel is the greatest need for them.

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

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

20 [TIMER BELL RINGS]

21 MS. PRICE: Our next goal was that 90% of our
22 graduating seniors would attend college or technical
23 school or enter the workforce at an entry-level
24 position that pays more than minimum wage. This is
25 one that we found very difficult to measure. Those

1 kids are hard to track down once they graduate. And
2 so we do -- of the kids that have answered our
3 surveys between 75% and 90% of our students have met
4 this goal.

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

7 MS. PRICE: Okay.

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

11 MS. PRICE: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And there is nobody here to

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

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So you go ahead --

15 MS. PRICE: Okay. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and continue on.

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

19 So this takes us to our next five years, kind of
20 what do we see in our future. With this charter the
21 main focus of our charter has really been -- and I'm
22 going to go through -- all of the actual performance
23 goals are really just incremental increases; so I'm
24 going to go through this fairly quickly. But it's
25 just incremental increases in our ACT composite

1 score, our literacy scores and our math scores for
2 our next series -- the next five years, and so you
3 can see those. We also want to increase our
4 participation with the ACT, increase annually by 3%
5 for math in ACT Aspire, the same for literacy except
6 it's at -- we're increasing by .2. Our goal is to
7 increase -- sorry -- for ACT -- my clicker -- sorry,
8 it's clicking the same things over; my bad. Okay.
9 So we're going to -- our goal is to increase the
10 percentage of students being identified as ready for
11 ELA, so English Language Arts, and that's 3% annually
12 is our goal; increase the percentage of students
13 being identified as ready in regards to science --
14 that is also 3% annually is our goal; graduation rate
15 of 90% annually -- something is -- there we go.

16 Our next steps as far as program changes, in the
17 next two to four years we would like to develop a
18 virtual school program for our students at Siloam
19 Springs High School. We -- obviously we see the need
20 for the virtual program; it's very common in
21 northwest Arkansas, as it is becoming extremely
22 common within the nation. Our next year will be a
23 planning year, is our desire, and then we will start
24 to work through the process of just building that
25 program. All the new waivers that you see within our

1 request really lend themselves to the virtual
2 environment. For example, food services, the Moment
3 of Silence, and then the school nurse -- those are
4 the new ones. Our kids will still have opportunity
5 for food services and school nurse, even if they're
6 virtual students, as long as they come to our campus.
7 We just felt those waivers were necessary for those
8 students that stay at home, you know, all the time as
9 we have a full online program developed.

10 Rob, did you want to add anything?

11 MR. LINDLEY: Well said. Very good.

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

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

22 Before we do start with individual member
23 questions though I was going to check with Legal, and
24 it may be helpful if we go ahead and look at any of
25 the legal reviews if there's any remaining issues.

1 So, Ms. Hyatt, I think we had -- that is one of
2 our documents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 MS. HYATT: So in the virtual context if they're
22 going to operate any grade between K-5 they might
23 need the recess provision. So I'm not sure the
24 grades for your virtual program, what the intention
25 is, or if they're planning on as they roll-out the

1 virtual program coming back with an amendment request
2 as they see the need for additional waivers.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we certainly
11 appreciate that.

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

16 MS. PRICE: So we are rescinding that waiver.
17 We will always keep a superintendent that follows --

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: It's on the record.

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

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

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

24 On Teacher Licensure we just need to clear up
25 exactly what they're asking for. So my understanding

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

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

13 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Rogers arrived at
14 9:37 a.m.)

15 MS. PRICE: Now he went through the process to
16 get his licensure, but we did hire someone that was
17 an industry professional to teach that course. And
18 we could in the foreseeable future also hire non-
19 licensed professionals to teach industry
20 certification type courses. That could be true of
21 medical professions; that could be true of any of our
22 CTE programs. So we actually do need the waiver for
23 the licensure for that reason. There are occasions
24 where we have licensed teachers teaching outside of
25 their area, and in the past we've done the ALP

1 process for that. But we've also used the waiver --
2 for example, our yearbook class, that certification
3 really doesn't require that anybody have any of the
4 desktop publishing or media specialization. So we
5 use a business teacher to teach our yearbook class
6 because now yearbook is all digital. And so the
7 skill-set has actually shifted even though the
8 licensure has not. So that's a situation where we
9 have a licensed teacher teaching outside of her
10 licensure area. So, we need both.

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

14 MS. PRICE: Yes, you stated them correctly.

15 MS. HYATT: Perfect. Thank you.

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

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

25 MS. HYATT: That's all.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, we will open it
2 up for questions.

3 Mr. Baldwin.

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

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

25 MR. BALDWIN: Are the children that graduate,

1 are they -- is the retention with the industry good
2 or do they move on after --

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

13 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

15 MS. PRICE: As far as future programs, what we
16 do with our programming is we work with the Northwest
17 Arkansas Council and they put out a job forecast
18 every year that has all of the northwest Arkansas
19 region and the forecast for those jobs. That's
20 actually where we found the idea of doing Registered
21 Medical Assistant as opposed to CNA. And so as we
22 move forward with any programming changes, that's
23 kind of our first stop to try to find, you know,
24 what's going to be the most needed coming up. And in
25 the future, teaching is actually almost -- it's

1 almost to the level of number one. Interestingly
2 enough, plumbing is going to be a huge need coming up
3 in the next few years; and so the plumbing is
4 actually covered with our Industrial Maintenance
5 Technician. That program is kind of an umbrella
6 program that gives them the opportunity to go into
7 various, you know, areas; they can do plumbing, they
8 can do HVAC, they can do electrical work, and then
9 right now we're working more on the electronic side
10 as far as the electrical technician type things. But
11 as we move forward with programming that's where we
12 find our information and we really try to work with
13 them closely, and the same is true for translating
14 with our Bilingual Customer Service. The actual
15 Small Business Operations that came just from Siloam
16 Springs, not from the northwest Arkansas region, as
17 far as the need for those promotional videos and
18 things like that. So that was just working with our
19 community, so as we move forward that's where we'll
20 look for those changes. Right now, we've really
21 spent this past year and this year working on
22 implementing all of the -- kind of the newer things
23 for computer science and all of that; so that's kind
24 of where we've concentrated our effort. We're also
25 increasing our AP offerings. We've increased -- we

1 added three new AP courses this past year. And so
2 we've had some other things that are not CTE related
3 that we've really been working on and that -- we'll
4 swing back around to that, and when we do we'll go to
5 that Northwest Arkansas Council for our advice on
6 what we do next.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

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

22 MS. PRICE: Right.

23 DR. KREMERS: -- with Chemistry of Foods. So,
24 continuing to kind of integrate those that are a
25 little bit higher levels so that maybe the

1 achievement numbers may change.

2 But with the programs of study are you using the
3 CTE state programs of study, those core sequences,
4 especially considering Perkins Five and the changes
5 --

6 MS. PRICE: Yes.

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

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

11 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

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

24 DR. KREMERS: That's great. And working with a
25 CTE coordinator, they'll -- that -- I'm glad you guys

1 have that good relationship, because they'll make
2 sure your programs of study are still current and
3 that that helps you have the opportunity --

4 MS. PRICE: Right.

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

11 MS. PRICE: Right.

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

15 MS. PRICE: Exactly.

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

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

25 Jody, were you on the team that wrote that

1 particular part of it?

2 SUPT. WIGGINS: Yes.

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

18 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

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

21 DR. KREMERS: I saw that.

22 MS. PRICE: But that's our four-year goal of
23 90%. Our five-year rate is a little bit closer to
24 95%.

25 DR. KREMERS: That's great. Because we do --

1 typically we see especially in Arkansas, and other
2 states, that CTE students graduate at a higher rate
3 than the average population just because of the
4 hands-on and the engagement piece of it.

5 The only other question I had was on the
6 industry professionals and the licensure waiver.
7 Many of the options are already there for permitting.

8 MS. PRICE: Right.

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

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

25 We are very by-the-book in Siloam Springs. We

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

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

15 MS. PRICE: Okay.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I would -- so are you
17 asking them to reconsider the waiver they've asked
18 for? Is that something -- or -- because I do think
19 that there are cases where the flexibility, even out
20 of a CTE course, depending on -- like they talked
21 about with -- well, you were talking about a business
22 teacher teaching and some of those. But, you know,
23 not to have any flexibility with the types of
24 programs that they do that might be difficult in the
25 constant running back-and-forth and checking for

1 things. So, you know, I think that may be a
2 conversation they want to have before they just
3 automatically say no, they don't need it.

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

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And we do have the capability
22 within the licensure system and Standards for
23 Accreditation to look at the number of teachers in a
24 district who are teaching a course for which they are
25 not licensed. And I would say that it would be

1 incumbent upon us to do reviews regularly, and, you
2 know, both agencies are able to look at that and dig
3 into that data. And if we notice a marked increase
4 from one year to the next I think then it would be
5 time to go back and look at that, rather than
6 limiting on the front-end.

7 DR. KREMERS: That sounds good.

8 MS. PRICE: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson, do you
10 have any questions?

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

17 MS. PRICE: So American Allied Health is one of
18 the three major testing companies in the United
19 States for medical professions, and so American
20 Allied Health does the testing for us. We're a
21 testing site for that company. And so they actually
22 certify all of our medical students in the areas that
23 they get certified in. Primarily, it is Registered
24 Medical Assistant and phlebotomy and we have just a
25 couple of others that have gone and kind of reached

1 down and done some other certifications. But that's
2 the primary use of that company. They're a testing
3 company.

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

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

10 MR. WILSON: Yeah.

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

24 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do we have any other

1 questions from the Panel?

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

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

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

9 DR. KREMERS: I move to approve.

10 MR. WILSON: Second.

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

13 All those in favor say aye.

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

16 Okay. Congratulations. Your application has
17 been approved.

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

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And if you'll wait
25 just a minute we are going to fill out our online

1 voting sheets and each Panel Member can give some
2 specific feedback. So if you want to wait for just a
3 second, we always like to do that publicly.

4 [A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

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

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

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

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

19 Mr. Wilson.

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

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Thank you.
25 Have a safe trip, and congratulations.

1 A-2: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
2 RENEWAL APPLICATION - FOUNTAIN LAKE CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We're going to go
4 ahead and continue on with our second agenda item.
5 And, Ms. McLaughlin, will you go ahead and present
6 that for us?

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

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

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So will all
22 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in
23 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.
24 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are
25 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth,

1 and nothing but the truth?

2 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

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

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

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

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

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

24 MR. BAXLEY: If you'd just give me a second,
25 I'll pull it up.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Sure. Yeah.

2 Can everyone get to the presentation? Okay.

3 And if we need to, I can print you a copy.

4 It'll just take a few minutes.

5 MR. BAXLEY: That might be helpful.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: She's going to bring you the
7 computer right here.

8 MR. BAXLEY: Okay. So I don't guess I need you
9 to do that.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I don't guess so. Okay.

11 MR. BAXLEY: Okay. I'm sorry.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You're okay.

13 MR. BAXLEY: Our mission statement is Supporting
14 Every Student, Every Day for Success. Our goal is
15 every student graduates, every student prepared.
16 This is something that we believe in as a staff, our
17 administration believes in it, and our students
18 solely believe in it.

19 A little bit about our school, Fountain Lake
20 Charter High School -- we are located in Garland
21 County, nestled in the Ouachita Mountains. We're
22 approximately seven miles northeast of Hot Springs
23 and we're about 20 miles south of one of the world's
24 largest gated communities, Hot Springs Village. Our
25 district serves an area of 186 square miles, to

1 include parts of Garland and Saline Counties. We
2 have approximately 454 students in grades 9 through
3 12. The economics of the area revolve around
4 tourism, retirement communities, the timber industry,
5 healthcare, and retail. Because of the national
6 forest and lakes around us, and retail, the Corp of
7 Engineers, park services, and timber companies --
8 they both play a vital role in our economy. Fountain
9 Lake Charter High School serves a student population
10 which is about 48% free-and-reduced. Our ethnicity
11 -- we are 84% white/Caucasian, 7.6% Hispanic and
12 Latino, and 6.1% two or more races.

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

24 Our credentials -- National Park is one of them
25 that we utilize and this is industry certifications

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

22 So what makes Fountain Lake also unique? Our
23 work-based learning internships. Our first goal was
24 to increase by 3% yearly. In 2018-2019 to the 2019-
25 20 school year our internship program has grown by

1 53%, which is huge. We've got a lot more kids
2 waiting to get in that internship and go to work.
3 Since the initial charter our internship program has
4 grown by 350%. Here, students learn employability
5 skills such as soft transferrable skills; they do
6 resume' and letter building, job interview skills,
7 community service, and college prep. Here they fill
8 out FAFSAs, applications for acceptance, scholarship
9 applications, and interviews.

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

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

22 Employability skills -- we have this through a
23 foundations class. All 9th grade students are
24 required to take this class and here they go over
25 interview skills, they go over professional dress,

1 they go over teamwork, time management, and verbal
2 and nonverbal communication.

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

16 Student of the Month -- This goes by academic
17 performance, if a student is working to their fullest
18 potential -- not necessarily making good grades, but
19 just to their fullest potential and trying. And
20 that's one of the requirements for Student of the
21 Month; also, responsibility and work ethic,
22 citizenship and character, then leadership. We have
23 a senior shout-out wall for college. Student
24 pictures are displayed on the wall with their
25 acceptance to a college of their choice. We also

1 have a 30-plus ACT club. Student pictures are
2 displayed on the wall of who makes a 30-plus on their
3 ACT.

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

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

25 ACT Aspire data on grade 10, we are weak in this

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

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

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

18 We need the flexibility to expose our kids to
19 careers at an early age. We need the flexibility
20 permission to teach our kids better life skills and
21 educational skills. I think one of the most
22 important things is we want to have that ability to
23 hire professionals in their field and bring them into
24 our school and give our kids the best education that
25 they deserve. And one of that is we have a guy named

1 Mr. Delindy [ps] who leads our tech and video class.
2 He is a non-licensed teacher, but he is doing a
3 phenomenal job and that department is growing
4 substantially.

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

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

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

20 And then Class Size and Teaching Load.

21 In our Special Education we have a transition
22 class. This is developed within the student's IEP --
23 resume writing, customer service, budgeting and
24 working with money -- and I'll get into that here in
25 a little bit with our coffee business -- soft skills,

1 learning about different jobs, time management,
2 setting goals, and working with others. We also do
3 co-teaching, which is English and mathematics. Our
4 resource time teaches mathematics and English.

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

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

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

25 Here is our SPED department, our coffee

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

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

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

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

21 International Production Technologies -- this is
22 a partnership through Siemens Corporation. Siemens
23 has bought into our charter; they provide the
24 training, they pay for the training, they pay for the
25 equipment so that we can fulfill this.

1 This is our automated bottle filling system.
2 Our kids have to sketch this out on paper and then
3 they enter all this into a mathematical equation.
4 They build the product you see here, and then they
5 enter all kinds of mathematical equations into this
6 CAD system. This is an automated bottle filling
7 system. There's a lever that picks up a bottle, puts
8 it on the conveyer belt; the conveyer belt moves to
9 an eye where the eye catches this bottle; it stops
10 the bottle and automatically fills the bottle with
11 water. Pretty neat little thing going on, and our
12 kids love it and our teacher is a fantastic teacher.

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

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

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

1 proud to have that.

2 On the next one is a door latch. They have to
3 design this on paper, then they enter it into the
4 computer, all the specs and stuff like that. And
5 then when they're finished with it, this is the final
6 printout. They put it into a 3D model, and then the
7 3D model prints exactly what they designed.

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

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

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

25 On the next slide we've got a COBRA update. And

1 if you will play that, just a minute or two of it,
2 just to give you an idea of what it -- what the
3 finished product is.

4 1st VIDEO:

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

1 anybody here in the office.

2 END OF 1st VIDEO

3 2nd VIDEO:

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

8 BREAK IN VIDEO:

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

12 VIDEO RESUMES:

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

17 END OF 2ND VIDEO

18 MR. BAXLEY: I think you get the idea of what
19 our Film and Broadcast is. That's plenty. Thank you
20 very much.

21 Sometimes they can be comical and it's -- they
22 make it fun.

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt, is there

1 anyone else that signed up to speak?

2 MS. HYATT: No, ma'am.

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

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

10 A couple of things that I would echo is --
11 taking on the position and role, now serving in my
12 fourth year and inheriting the initial charter, and
13 seeing the facilitation of the resources being
14 allocated, the outcomes of that was specifically
15 helping in the element of training and equipment --
16 our goal has been to sustain this model of learning.
17 And I would want to echo and identify that in Garland
18 County we have seven school districts, and within the
19 confines of that what I have observed and what we've
20 been able to do is very inherently, intentionally as
21 a culture, build a culture of true partnerships --
22 our partnerships with the local Chamber of Commerce
23 and the integration of superintendents attending CTE
24 centers around the state -- thinking about how we
25 continue to model and provide our students an

1 opportunity for the National Park Promise, which is a
2 scholarship-driven program to where when we place
3 them in a field of study in a consortium model that
4 they can receive the post-secondary education free of
5 charge. And so that's something that we're very
6 proud of in our consortium model. And we send
7 roughly 70 of our juniors and seniors and have one of
8 the higher percentages of participation rates in the
9 county because of our commitment to industry and
10 trade skill development. We also provide
11 opportunities for students on campus where we partner
12 with industry and industry comes to us. And with
13 that we open up our doors and allow our students to
14 tour and see a wide range of career pathways, have
15 interactions in that regard. And we've been able to
16 do that for the last three years with very positive
17 outcomes that have strengthened our overall
18 percentage of increase in internships. Internships
19 within industry are developed through relationships;
20 relationships are developed through opportunities of
21 dialogue, trying to address each other's immediate
22 needs. And so the outcome of the culture in that
23 regard has really facilitated very strong
24 partnerships, and the charter flexibility and waivers
25 are giving us latitude to place students in the

1 workplace within the school day. And that we are
2 very thankful for and I think our parents and our
3 community are seeing evidence of that with our job
4 placement.

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

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

24 And I'll refrain and see what questions that you
25 might have for our team.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Well, we
2 will go ahead and get started with questions. And
3 we'll start with Mr. Wilson.

4 MR. WILSON: I have no questions.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

6 MR. WILSON: Good presentation.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Mr. Rogers.

8 MR. ROGERS: Thank you.

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

22 SUPT. MURPHY: I will address that question in
23 the context that reading is something that is
24 holistic in nature. And so as a school district
25 we've integrated a training model, not only

1 coinciding with the Science of Reading but going
2 above and beyond with our partnership with Columbia
3 College to train staff members in the delivery of
4 fidelity of reading. And hopefully that's going to
5 have positive outcomes for our senior high level.
6 Some of this area of instability has been centered
7 around instructors in these core areas -- and that's
8 not to make an excuse, but a part of our shortfalls
9 is in core area instruction. We're getting -- we're
10 having to replace teachers with a higher degree of
11 frequency. So we're going back to training and a
12 guaranteed viable curriculum. We've integrated a
13 consistent curriculum with the English program, and
14 that's just been implemented now in its first year
15 because we saw that same evidence and we felt like we
16 needed to provide a more consistent framework. So we
17 studied other schools of similar size with success
18 and used our staff to make selections around English.

19 And I believe your next approach is looking at
20 mathematics?

21 MR. BAXTER: Mathematics.

22 SUPT. MURPHY: -- as the core areas to see if
23 supporting a more guaranteed and viable curriculum
24 could support a shift in the overall outcomes
25 academically.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

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

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

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

25 MR. BAXLEY: We've got -- we're bringing in --

1 we've got Animal Science now.

2 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

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

5 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

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

8 DR. KREMERS: Great. Okay.

9 MR. BAXLEY: Yes, ma'am.

10 DR. KREMERS: That will help. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

12 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

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

22 SUPT. MURPHY: Of what in the future?

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

25 SUPT. MURPHY: Sure. I would indicate to you

1 that, you know, there's two elements that establish
2 turnover: it's the ability to be marketable to move
3 forward and how do we sustain that culture to maybe
4 draw people to stick with us long-term. A couple of
5 strategies that we've deployed in our selection
6 process is really trying to seek out individuals that
7 are vested in our community, that maybe were former
8 graduates of our community, so that -- sometimes as
9 you bring individuals in they're a stop for you and
10 you train them up and let them go, and it's a three
11 to five to seven-year model. And so, part of our
12 strategies in the recruitment phase is really looking
13 at individuals vested in our community that would
14 like to remain with us long-term. You know, salary
15 schedule wise we're in the median average of the
16 middle of the seven school districts in Garland
17 County. And within that proximity everything is a
18 very close commute, so we still have challenges, as
19 we've articulated to our community, to support a very
20 competitive salary schedule. Because when you're
21 seeking this degree of innovation it does create that
22 marketability, and we've had employees leave us and
23 earn \$15,000 more in the rate of pay -- and we have
24 encouraged them to take advantage of those
25 opportunities; they've earned them. So, you know, I

1 think recruiting locally also gives a reflection of
2 our students. You know, it helps us to meet the
3 needs, the shortfalls in the educational field.

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

14 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you.

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

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

25 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Ms. Hyatt pulls the

1 microphone down.)

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

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

11 So in 2017, the Legislature passed Act 872 which
12 allowed schools more flexibility in awarding high
13 school credit. Previously, you could only award high
14 school credit if the course met 120 clock hours; now
15 the Legislature and the Department have set up a
16 process by which you can give competency-based
17 credit. So they submit a plan to the Department to
18 award units of credit based on a demonstration of
19 subject matter competency, instead of or in
20 combination with the 120 clock hours. The law
21 requires that in order to award that subject matter
22 competency they have to have an approved plan. Some
23 schools have instead sought to seek a waiver. It's
24 not prohibited to award a waiver of this provision,
25 and some schools do have it. It's my understanding

1 that most of the schools have it because during the
2 Standards of Accreditation kind of transfer from the
3 old standards to the new, which I'm sure you guys
4 remember our process internally for approving these
5 competency-based plans was not set up. It's my
6 understanding that it is now set up.

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. I think

1 that helps.

2 So then the only other question that I had still
3 along the curriculum lines -- and I know it's not
4 exactly as part of the charter that you've described,
5 you know, because you're looking at more of the
6 career focus within the work of your charter. But
7 given that the reading scores do prompt an issue,
8 then you were talking about the intervention. I
9 think you were talking about your intervention
10 program. And is that intervention program based on
11 the Science of Reading and aligned to what you're
12 doing in your elementary grades? Because as you've
13 said, the reading is a systemic issue. So if 9th and
14 10th graders are struggling with reading it's not
15 that something is happening in 9th and 10th grade;
16 it's, you know, something that happened earlier.

17 MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, ma'am.

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

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

1 StudySync program?

2 MR. BAXLEY: Uh-huh.

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

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

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

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

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

21 MR. BAXLEY: Yes.

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

24 MR. BAXLEY: Sure.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- if you're not consistent

1 all the way through -- and I think those are things
2 that you really do need to consider --

3 MR. BAXLEY: Thank you. We will.

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

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: The only other question then

1 that I had was -- you know, you talked about -- a
2 whole lot about what you've done, but I didn't really
3 hear what's next. So, you know, based on what you've
4 learned and what you've done I'm not sure that -- you
5 know, I think in some ways what you've done you could
6 continue to do without a charter. So really to
7 continue the charter for another five years it's
8 helpful to hear "so what's next" --

9 MR. BAXLEY: Well, one of the --

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- to kind of really justify
11 --

12 MR. BAXLEY: Yes, ma'am.

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

15 MR. BAXLEY: Well, one of the -- if we lost the
16 charter we would lose Mr. Delindy; that's first.
17 He's a non-licensed teacher. And we would lose our
18 video and that segment of our CTE program. If we
19 lost the charter Siemens may back out. Our
20 partnerships, they're sold into this internship
21 program that we provide them -- and our IPT program,
22 they fund that. One of the things that we've moved
23 away from was our flex schedule. The flex schedule,
24 I think it didn't provide our students enough time to
25 learn the curriculum, learn what they need to do to

1 be successful. So we've moved to a -- just a
2 traditional eight-period day and that allows us to
3 double-block some of the stuff for our students, such
4 as welding and IPT and other things; it gives them
5 additional time in the classroom. It also gives our
6 teachers more time to prepare for their lessons.

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

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

11 DR. MURPHY: I would -- a couple other things to
12 kind of echo that, in the leadership transitions we
13 were kind of married to the flex scheduling model
14 which targeted a great deal of flexibility among the
15 students with really the opportunity to balance time
16 management within a week and components of time that
17 varied. We did that for a period of two years. And
18 some of the outcomes of that -- I think a negative
19 outcome of that was for freshmen and sophomores
20 coming into the educational system at the secondary
21 level; they really struggled with those incremental
22 time components. And so the outcome we gained
23 possibly enhanced our college readiness and ACT, but
24 where we felt like it was failing us was with our
25 bridge program of our freshmen coming into the school

1 setting. And so we are trying to figure out how to
2 blend and meet both ends in a more traditional
3 schedule with some double-blocks and really keep that
4 freshmen opportunity of what their school day looks
5 like, minimize the confusion, minimize the chaos, and
6 get the core instruction. And I do believe that in
7 the experimentation there's always a certain degree
8 of risk that you take in the implementation of the
9 scheduling process. And when we listened to staff
10 and students and community, they had some concerns
11 around that degree of flexibility. And so we have
12 modified, and so now we're in our first year of going
13 back to a traditional scheduling model and with that
14 integration we're seeking outcomes.

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

25 So our programs are not only internal, but

1 you're going to see a continuation of the extension
2 externally into our community, because it's the adage
3 of utilizing all resources available at our disposal
4 to strengthen the overall -- it starts with a
5 guaranteed and viable curriculum.

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

8 No other questions. Okay.

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

11 MR. WILSON: I move approval of the request.

12 MR. ROGERS: Second.

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

15 All those in favor say "aye."

16 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

18 Okay. Congratulations.

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

21 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

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

24 Mr. Baldwin.

25 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I vote to approve the

1 renewal. And I would encourage you guys -- and I
2 know you all are looking at that closely, but the
3 reading/literacy component I would stay right on top
4 of that as you move forward.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

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

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

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

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

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

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we do recognize
23 and appreciate the partnerships that you have with
24 the businesses in your community, and that's
25 particularly a strength of your charter.

1 So thank you for being here and we look forward
2 to seeing how all this goes in the future.

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Yes, ma'am. Mountain Home High
19 School Career Academies is a district conversion
20 charter that was initially authorized on February 10,
21 2003. The charter is approved to serve students in
22 grades 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 1600.

23 Representatives from the Mountain Home School
24 District are appearing before the Charter Authorizing
25 Panel to request a renewal of their charter for five

1 years. We have Dr. Jake Long, superintendent; Dr.
2 Dana Brown, CTE Coordinator and Federal Programs
3 Director; Brent Bogy, High School Principal; and Kyle
4 McCarn, the Junior High Principal. You'll want to
5 swear those in.

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

12 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

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

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

21 Mountain Home High School Career Academies
22 charter renewal -- as Ms. McLaughlin said, we have
23 been a conversion charter since 2003. And so I
24 really enjoyed the background information that she
25 put together for you guys on the presentation today

1 because it shows the progression of our charter
2 throughout the -- you know, throughout the years -- I
3 mean really over a decade.

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

11 So our core value is -- core values are
12 communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and
13 creativity. This was a process that we went through
14 in a re-visioning process that began October of 2018.
15 And so we put together a committee and we basically
16 -- and we sent out surveys and we asked our
17 community, "What would you like to see every graduate
18 of Mountain Home Public Schools to have? What are
19 the key skills that they want to have?" And nearly
20 all the answers and responses that we got surrounded
21 around basically the four C's, which is a known
22 skill-set in the world of education. But the most
23 one that was mentioned was communication. And so we
24 continued to hear that and so we began the re-
25 visioning process and developing those four core

1 focus areas, and then we started a pathway of
2 development and -- which I'll talk about here in just
3 a second.

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

18 So some relevant history and commentary
19 regarding Mountain Home Career Academies and our
20 charter -- as we mentioned, going back to 2003, our
21 conversion charter status, we would not -- without it
22 we would not have been able to support the wall-to-
23 wall career academy structure in which we've
24 maintained over that time. That career academy
25 structure allows us to have a common planning time on

1 a late-start Wednesday, and that time is called WINN;
2 it's our intervention time. It's What I Need Now.
3 One of the academies covers the interventions while
4 the other one -- while the other two not only plan
5 their academy days, but they also support those
6 students with their interventions that they need at
7 that time.

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

14 Through -- during this time under -- within our
15 late-start Wednesdays we develop a watch list and we
16 also have called it over the years -- we called it
17 Red Flagging Students. But that's a way of
18 monitoring students that are struggling or that are
19 also in need of remediation. This gives us also an
20 opportunity to bring in a variety of different
21 business partners. We have a lot of business
22 partners that are really the backbone to our career
23 academies. And any time that we host visits from
24 other schools -- and which we recently had a school
25 from Nebraska come in and visit us -- we always have

1 our business community that comes out, and it's
2 always a key point to see how invested they are in
3 our career academies and in our charter process.

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

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

21 The Flexible Scheduling also allows seniors the
22 opportunity -- not just seniors, but seniors and
23 juniors to attend ASU-Mountain Home. That has become
24 a backbone of many of the things that we do, not just
25 with concurrent credit but also in the secondary

1 center and the technical center offerings that they
2 have.

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

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

1 really creates a lot of flexibility in our kids'
2 schedules.

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

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

25 But I won't go through this entire thing because

1 of time. But I would encourage you guys to look
2 through those and see just all the different
3 offerings that we're able to do, and that's largely
4 in part because of our charter.

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

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

25 Continue to increase student participation in

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

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

22 Increased parent and community involvement in
23 raising student achievement through specific
24 participation in classes -- we do this through a
25 variety of different community engagements. I talked

1 about the mentoring program. Many of those folks
2 that come into our schools and mentor are also
3 parents as well.

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

11 To target -- I mentioned that one.

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

22 Increase the number of credit recovery
23 opportunities -- we have one of the -- I'd say a
24 model ALE program in the state. And so they're just
25 tremendous in being able to insure not just students

1 that are placed there under the ALE guidelines but
2 also students that, you know, need just a leg-up
3 there.

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

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

23 So our new performance goals that I'm presenting
24 to you today -- we kind of struggled, honestly, in
25 knowing exactly what to do with our performance goals

1 because as a district we're really trying to align
2 ourselves K-12, and we have SLIPS goals, which is our
3 federal programs, essentials; we have our building
4 improvement goals, and then we have our charter
5 goals. And so we really wanted to just align all of
6 those and had a great conversation with the ladies
7 back here in the back prior to our meeting. But I
8 think that there -- we can -- I think we are on track
9 to provide a model of performance goals for the
10 charters and then also K-12 instruction.

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

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

1 well.

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

15 And then in addition to that, a new application
16 of a current waiver in regards to Flexible
17 Scheduling. I can't think of the law that was
18 passed, but it allows us some lottery money to go to
19 high school students for concurrent credit -- has
20 created -- for us to maximize that we have got to
21 align our student schedule at our high school and at
22 our career academies with that of ASU-Mountain Home.
23 And we feel like the only way to do that is -- we
24 can't do it, you know, for the eight, nine hours a
25 day that ASU-Mountain Home aligns -- you know, offers

1 courses. But we do feel like that we can in the AM
2 through -- because we are a block schedule. And they
3 run a Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/Thursday class, and
4 then on Fridays, you know, we will most likely run a
5 fast-class, Every Kid, Every Day, on Fridays. But we
6 will need some flexible scheduling to be able to
7 perfectly align our kids and be able to maximize that
8 opportunity with ASU -- and not just expect them to
9 do it, you know, virtually -- where they can actually
10 go and sit on those campuses. So that would be a new
11 application of the Flexible Schedule waivering.

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

21 [TIMER BELL RINGS]

22 SUPT. LONG: Is anybody in opposition?

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If there's --

24 MS. HAYTT: (Shaking head from side to side.)

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: There's not; so, yeah, go

1 ahead and continue.

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

17 So with that --

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ready for questions.
19 Okay.

20 MR. BALDWIN: No questions.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No questions. Okay.

22 Dr. Kremers.

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

25 I have to compliment you on your Pathways and

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

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

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

11 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

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

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

25 MR. McCARN: Kyle McCarn, Junior High Principal.

1 One initial thought that I would have there
2 would be like a pre-engineering or a foundational
3 engineering class. Looking in the future I could see
4 a place for that. So that would be something I would
5 really like to see put in place in the 8th grade
6 before they can start taking those engineering
7 classes 9-12. So that would be an application I can
8 see later down the road.

9 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

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

19 DR. KREMERS: Some of it would be the
20 foundational academics that go with it. So then if
21 you start getting into K-SAG [ps] you may not even
22 have all the academics to prepare them, you know,
23 until they get to that point. So I think there are
24 some we can explore down the road, but I think we
25 need to make sure we're taking time and look at

1 those, until we can -- look at them kind of a case-
2 by-case. But there's, you know, many examples where
3 there's a lot of foundational knowledge before it
4 gets pushed down to a lower grade. And it may be a
5 fit for like the Algebra, for example, at the 8th
6 grade level; not all students may succeed with that.
7 So I think just kind of looking at that in the larger
8 picture.

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

11 DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh.

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

14 DR. KREMERS: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

16 DR. KREMERS: Yeah.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do you have another
18 question?

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

21 SUPT. LONG: Thank you.

22 DR. KREMERS: -- and how well thought-out it is.
23 I know Dr. Brown is fabulous and she works really
24 well with the State staff. So I know they're in good
25 hands with Dr. Brown as well.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Questions?

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

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

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

22 I tried to address that particular point through
23 our goals. You know, if you look at simply our
24 charter goals -- beforehand, you saw several
25 different things that apply to the Pathways

1 Crosswalk, you know, more kids in Keystone, more
2 community involvement, more of this -- really, you
3 know, through these goals and through our admin's
4 leadership and then the initiatives that we have put
5 in place, you know, our focus is on improving
6 academics through the ESSA -- through ESSA and that
7 accountability system. And we've done that through
8 our district-wide PLCs. We have a strong, strong
9 foundation in the Science of Reading, all the way K
10 -- we're supporting our kids through the Science of
11 Reading K through 5 through every teacher being RISE
12 trained. We've also inputted -- I pulled two -- I
13 have three literacy, you know, specialized teachers
14 that are on -- teachers on special assignment that
15 now are supporting our teachers really K-12. We
16 started out focusing on K-5, but I feel like our kids
17 -- our teachers are getting a better grasp for year-
18 two of our TOSA [ps] program and our teachers are
19 stronger at the lower grades. But now several times
20 this past semester Mr. Bogy, our high school
21 principal, has had those TOSA's up at our mid -- at
22 our junior high and high school levels to support our
23 teachers. And I commend the time in which we're
24 pulling out of the day for our teachers to look at
25 data. We brought in NWEA as an interim assessment

1 piece, in which the growth that we have already seen
2 from -- and this is the first year we did NWEA. We
3 didn't feel like that we got the -- really we weren't
4 able to drive instruction through the ACT Aspire
5 formative assessments that we really wanted. So we
6 brought in NWEA at the 8th through 12th grade level
7 and assessed at the beginning of the year and then
8 we've recently taken our middle-of-the-year
9 assessments with that. And the growth that we're
10 seeing there is double-digits, and it's just really
11 because of the support that Mr. McCarn, Mr. Bogy --
12 and the time that they're giving their teachers to
13 allow them to talk about kids, to talk about
14 academics. This is great, guys. I mean I'm so proud
15 of everything that we offer our kids. But I do
16 commend these guys for their focus on academics and
17 recognizing exactly what you recognized there and
18 knowing that, hey, we've got to make sure our kids
19 have those core academics taken care of. So --

20 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

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

24 And as you address that, we might also just make
25 sure that the amendment requests -- that everything

1 is good there. I didn't know if that was going to
2 have any kind of an LEA change or anything like that,
3 so --

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

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

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

19 So if you could just confirm that you don't need
20 6-18-210 and that you don't need 6-16-102(a)(5) for
21 the record?

22 SUPT. LONG: Jake Long, Superintendent.

23 I do not need the previous stated --

24 MS. HYATT: Perfect.

25 SUPT. LONG: Yes. I'm sorry.

1 MS. HYATT: That works.

2 And still on Flexible Scheduling, the Standards
3 for Accreditation that were listed were actually from
4 the previous version of the standards. We're all
5 still trying to find our feet I think with the new
6 standards. But I think what you need -- and you'll
7 have to verify this -- is 1(a)(5)(2) in the new
8 standards, which is the six hours a day, 30 hours a
9 week average for student-teacher interaction time,
10 rather than the standards that you've asked for. And
11 you might need 1(a)(5)(1), which is the minimum of
12 178 days of student-teacher interaction time; usually
13 those go hand-in-hand. So if you'll just tell the
14 Panel which ones you need, that would be great.

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

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

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

23 SUPT. LONG: I do need it district-wide. I do
24 know that I will need it district-wide, but this only
25 applies to 8-12. So my conversations with some of

1 the folks before was to come back for I guess a 1240
2 waiver to get -- to be able to align that so that I
3 can run a similar schedule throughout the entire
4 district.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

6 MS. HYATT: And Dr. Long is right, that's the --
7 this will only apply to the district conversion,
8 which is just Mountain Home High School; so they will
9 have to utilize 1240 in order to make it district-
10 wide. But they can, you know, have some flexibility
11 with the high school until they get the 1240 or they
12 don't have to utilize the waiver until they get the
13 1240 -- up to them.

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

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

22 MS. HYATT: Perfect. Thank you.

23 On Teacher Licensure, I just need them to
24 confirm that they only need a waiver of Section 7 of
25 the ADE rules governing Educator Licensure.

1 SUPT. LONG: Yes. We only need Section 7 of ADE
2 rules considering licensure.

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

9 SUPT. LONG: Yes. We rescind that.

10 MS. HYATT: That's it.

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

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

18 SUPT. LONG: Well --

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

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

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

24 SUPT. LONG: And then we will no longer have the
25 8th grade LEA -- the current 8th grade LEA number.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So they've already
2 talked to you, so that's good.

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

5 Any discussion or --

6 MR. ROGERS: I have one.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

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

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

13 SUPT. LONG: Yes, sir.

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

18 DR. KREMERS: So moved.

19 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All those in favor say aye?

21 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Congratulations.

23 SUPT. LONG: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And if you will give us a few
25 minutes we will add in feedback.

1 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

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

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

14 Okay. Dr. Kremers.

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

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you all very

1 much for being here, and safe travels, and look
2 forward to your future work.

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

7 Just a moment here.

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

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. McLaughlin.

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

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

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If you will stand to
25 receive the oath, anyone speaking. Do you swear or

1 affirm that the testimony -- I'm sorry. Do you swear
2 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give
3 shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but
4 the truth?

5 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

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

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

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Good morning.

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

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

23 I want to first -- before I begin, I'm going to
24 go back a slide. I want to talk a little bit about
25 why STEM is important to Osceola just in general.

1 It's very important to our school district, as well
2 as important to our community. We're in the Delta
3 area and we are very industrial; so a lot of our high
4 school kids that are coming out of high school
5 graduating they're looking to go straight into the
6 workforce. So since I'm the feeder school for the
7 high school one of the things -- and we'll talk a
8 little bit more about that. Our innovative part is
9 we try to prepare our kids not only for high school
10 but we pre-requisition what a high school has to
11 offer. So it's very important that once the
12 elementary school feed to me that I prepare these
13 students for high school. So I wanted to share that.

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

22 So I kind of want to start with reading first
23 and I want to talk about teacher retention. I don't
24 know if you're familiar with Osceola School District,
25 but we did a teacher retention -- or recruitment for

1 teachers because it was hard for us to find teachers.
2 So we did a program where if a teacher applied in
3 Osceola and they stayed there for four years they got
4 up to \$10,000. It started off really well; we had a
5 lot of -- at that time, like when I came before my
6 staff was fully certified. After year-one -- I want
7 to kind of just take you through our three years --
8 okay -- I lost quite a few of staff. So at that
9 point even though we had the waiver -- thank God that
10 we had the waiver through the charter -- and again,
11 you know, of course, Act 1240 came into effect too --
12 and I was able to hire some waiver teachers. But
13 what I had to do was, because the core class is vital
14 to these students I had to move some teachers around
15 to make sure that they would get adequate
16 instruction. So what I did was I took some teachers
17 not only out of their certification area but out of
18 their grade range; like I took a 6th grade literacy
19 very effective teacher and put her in an 8th grade
20 classroom. We did that. We also decided that what
21 we were going to do was focus on reading fundamental
22 skills. My feeder school was sending me -- and this
23 is not to make any excuses, but I kind of want to
24 tell our story a little bit. Our feeder school --
25 when my kids came in in 5th grade we had a lot of

1 kids in need of support. So what I found was even
2 with hiring some of the certified teachers they just
3 was not equipped to be able to teach reading
4 fundamental skills. So we reached out to the co-op;
5 I lost half that staff the next year. We reached out
6 to the co-op; we had a really hard time finding
7 teachers. So we utilized Act 1240; we went with a
8 lot of home-grown teachers, trying to get
9 sustainability within the building, as well as we
10 offered them an opportunity if we gave them a
11 teaching job to get into these teaching programs
12 where they could get some professional development,
13 not only from the teaching programs but as well from
14 our district. Last year, thank -- last year's staff
15 I was able to retain for the first time since I've
16 been at the district. I only lost two teachers, so I
17 retained 92%. And then one of my literacy teachers I
18 moved into the assistant principal position. So we
19 were able to, for the first time in multiple years --
20 I would say three, but longer than that -- start off
21 the year with focusing and rebuilding on something
22 we'd already started, as opposed to trying to focus
23 on just training teachers on how to be good teachers
24 on instructional strategies as well as classroom
25 management.

1 So looking at year-three we have retained 92% of
2 our teachers, as well as we went and looked at data.
3 And what we found was -- we used NWEA for our growth.
4 We found that our students not only were not reading
5 at grade level but they weren't really being able to
6 decode words; they had comprehension issues. We had
7 a large, large group -- a large group of students
8 that were not SPED students that needed phonics.
9 They were struggling with phonics, phonemic
10 awareness, and we were trying to see how do we push
11 that in. So we reached out to the co-op and what we
12 did was we went ahead and we started a reading
13 period, and in this reading period we took the kids
14 and made it skill specific. So everybody in the
15 building, regardless of where their reading level
16 was, at the beginning of the day for an entire hour
17 what we did was, according to their skill
18 development, they all had reading intervention. For
19 our kids that were reading at grade level, close or
20 above grade level we did morphology with them. The
21 kids or the students that were reading below grade
22 level and they had skill deficiency we did the RISE
23 component; so we did a lot of phonics, did a lot of
24 phonemic awareness. We even went into multi-Slavic.
25 And we partnered with the co-op; they trained us once

1 a month as well, all the staff, and they also
2 provided us resources. If you look at our data over
3 the three years you don't see a huge increase. But
4 then when we looked back and we looked at our data,
5 even though they weren't meeting projected on our
6 NWEA, they were growing at least a half-a-year to a
7 year-and-a-half a year. So we did see growth but we
8 did not see what we anticipated to see, even though
9 we're still building on that.

10 This is how we addressed our reading
11 deficiencies, like I talked about before. The second
12 year we did audio portal; we did the first three
13 modules of the Science of Reading. We did that for
14 all our 7th through 8th grade teachers. We increased
15 time on texts. We made sure that the complexity of
16 the text was at grade level. One of the things that
17 we modified in our curriculum that we had at that
18 time was we were finding out -- we started asking
19 kids those text dependent questions; they were not
20 able to answer them. They would pretty much tell you
21 what the story was about. So we went and trained
22 teachers on how to pull the skills out of the models.
23 We felt that was vital because when they take the ACT
24 Aspire they're not going to get a whole story;
25 they're going to get a short passage and they're

1 going to ask some text dependent questions in
2 relation to the standard. We did that last year, as
3 well as we implemented that reading block. Then we
4 made sure that we trained all our staff. So we were
5 able to bring back the same staff and we're excited
6 about that; so we get to expand on that.

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

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

22 These are some things that we've currently put
23 in place to improve our ELA academic achievement. We
24 have continued to increase time on task with skill
25 specific focus. Like we said, we wanted to make sure

1 that the novel was aligned with the standard, as well
2 as when kids are reading they know the objective of
3 why -- the purpose of what they're reading as opposed
4 to you asking those questions, "why did Molly go to
5 the store." If it has nothing to do with the
6 standard, it just didn't make sense. So we had to
7 train teachers how to pull that out.

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

19 What we did that we are excited about, in our
20 second year after asking for this charter we started
21 to meet building-to-building; so we had that vertical
22 meeting every month. So we would show -- elementary
23 would show me what they're doing with their 3rd and
24 4th, I would show what we're doing in 5th and 6th,
25 and then high school would come in. And also we met

1 once a month. We brought sample work, we talked
2 about teaching strategies. But one of the things
3 that -- like I said before, teachers were struggling
4 with teaching reading fundamentals. Once again, we
5 had a lot of non-traditional teachers that had not
6 even been in the program; so we had a lot of PD for
7 that. So we decided as a district we needed to go
8 away from the curriculum that we had and we needed to
9 vertically align K-8. We vertically aligned K-8 with
10 Wonders this year -- this is the first year we've
11 done Wonders -- and we did StudySync for 7th and 8th
12 grade.

13 One of the things that I looked at in my data
14 was -- because I serve 5th through 8th grade -- we
15 would have low numbers of kids in need of support,
16 but once they got to 7th and 8th grade it increased,
17 doubled. So we started looked at the instruction,
18 looking at the curriculum; you know, so we've been
19 looking at that. We were trying to identify the core
20 root of the problem, and like I said before, we found
21 out that kids really, really struggled with finding
22 out the meaning of words. So what I did was, myself,
23 I went through the RISE assessor training as a
24 principal, made sure I got that, and then also the
25 elementary principal went through that. So we both

1 had the same alignment. What we did with the co-op,
2 they also did it with 1st through 4th grade; so we
3 also had an alignment piece with our PD.

4 Our math scores -- one of the things that we
5 noticed was the kids that struggled in reading also
6 struggled in math and science. So we started looking
7 at -- like I said, the kids are struggling with being
8 able to de-code words, find out the meaning of words.
9 So we found out that it wasn't so much -- because
10 what -- math is conceptual thinking, it's processing;
11 we thought at one point it might be some test
12 empathy. But then actually when we started looking
13 at skill-to-skill we see huge gaps, and this is where
14 we also made sure we made the alignment. We went to
15 a new math curriculum and we made sure -- the math
16 curriculum, once again, is K-8 -- well, actually,
17 it's K-12 at this point; so we changed our
18 curriculum. We mandated that they do intervention
19 time-spans through the math period. We made sure
20 when they gave growth conversations -- because we
21 thought that was huge for the kids -- they needed to
22 know where they are and what -- you know, what they
23 need to work on, that the components of it spoke the
24 language of the skill-learning standard. We
25 integrated more collaborative planning across all our

1 content with our STEM focus; that means we partnered
2 science and math together. We provided best
3 practices on both instruction and engagement. One of
4 the things I found out with engagement and
5 instruction was when students started to display gaps
6 in skills or standards teachers would freeze up; they
7 didn't know how to instruct that. So we had to do
8 some PD on scaffolding without watering down the
9 standard. We aligned our STEM curriculum projects
10 with math and science standards; so we really did
11 that in our Discovery Zone.

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

17 Our STEM is offered to every kid; so every kid
18 that comes through there -- if you come on my campus,
19 you'll see they're the most hands-on -- they love
20 doing things, projects, but they still struggle. One
21 of the things we heard from the industries in the
22 past probably five to seven years I would say is
23 they're saying our kids are coming out of high school
24 with reading deficiencies, they can't understand;
25 they can't keep a job. So one of the things that I

1 have really been expressing to teachers is not about
2 reading a book; they should understand the purpose
3 because reading is a life-skill.

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

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

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

16 And I was a part of the charter even in the
17 application process to begin with, and I do want to
18 say that the Osceola STEM Academy was a product of
19 business and industry urging us to look at something
20 like this. And at the time we had several LEAs, and
21 we combined our two middle schools to create this one
22 charter school because it was important for us that
23 all of our students have this opportunity in our
24 district to feed into the high school. Because of
25 the opportunities that the charter has provided for

1 our students we do have that added benefit of
2 innovation. Okay. And we wanted to -- when we were
3 first writing the charter we wanted to make sure that
4 we took a whole-child approach. You know, we have
5 our courses in Silos; students take a math class,
6 students take a reading class, students take a CTE
7 class -- but we wanted to just take that whole-child
8 approach so that we could help our students to
9 instill a love for learning, okay, and even our
10 parents have that love for learning.

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

22 First of all, with our career and technical
23 student organizations, we have -- at the mid-level we
24 have a pre-engineering program and we have a business
25 program, like most middle schools have. We're

1 fortunate that our business teacher transitioned from
2 our pre-engineering program, so she is well-versed in
3 both programs; so it makes a good collaboration
4 between those two for our students. All of our 5th,
5 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students have access and do
6 attend a pre-engineering course -- and, again, that
7 was business and industry pushing for that. And so I
8 think it's unique that we can say every one of our
9 5th graders, every one of our 6th graders, every one
10 of our 7th graders, and every one of our 8th graders
11 attend a pre-engineering class. And so we're new to
12 TSA, but Ms. Smith and I had an opportunity -- our
13 instructor was at a previous -- he was being trained
14 with Project Lead the Way, so Ms. -- we found out our
15 middle school students were eligible for national
16 competition in Washington, D.C.; so of course we
17 said, "We'll take them. We'll be glad to take them
18 to Washington, D.C." And so let me give you a
19 personal story. An 8th grade young man, clearly
20 dyslexic, had the signs of dyslexia and was -- you
21 know, we were always working with him. But he had a
22 dragster and he had to have a metric drawing and his
23 was -- his drawing was in inches. Within minutes he
24 had converted this to a beautiful metric diagram.
25 The young man had to have his badge to be able to

1 spell Osceola STEM Academy, but we were able to take
2 him to Washington, D.C. and he raced his dragster
3 with thousands of other students. So that's one of
4 the advantages of things that our students have
5 access to. They actually -- just last week we
6 attended -- Osceola STEM Academy won the award for
7 the best middle school in TSA, and so we were proud
8 of that.

9 Let me go into our supplemental opportunities
10 with our community partners. We cannot say enough
11 about our community partners. We are so fortunate in
12 Mississippi County to have so many business and
13 industry people there to support us. And one way we
14 do this is by -- you know, we don't try to
15 micromanage; we go out to our business and industry
16 and we say, "You know what, you show up -- you send
17 your engineers, you sign in in the office, and you're
18 welcome in our classroom." And it is not uncommon --
19 it's a weekly thing going on that you go into a
20 classroom and you see engineers sitting in the floor
21 building robots with children, and that's important.
22 Just a couple of months ago, we had a -- look at my
23 time -- we had a business and industry advisory
24 meeting, and because of that success we turned that
25 into a county-wide advisory meeting. And so we had

1 schools from all across the county there and up to
2 about 20 business and industry people there to
3 support us. We were able -- just a couple of weeks
4 ago, DENSO Manufacturing had an essay contest; we had
5 five winners. And our 8th graders were able to go to
6 DENSO, tour the company, have lunch with the plant
7 manager and engineers, and let me tell you, walking
8 through they wanted to know "how does this robot do
9 this, how does this robot do that; we need to know
10 this." And we left and they said, "We've had
11 seniors, we've had grad students come through here
12 that did not have the questions that your 8th graders
13 had for us." So that's another thing that we're very
14 proud of. We walked away with the master robotics
15 team award for our 7th and 8th graders. We have
16 business and industry -- we have 5th graders with
17 drones and you go into a gym and you have about 20
18 5th graders in there flying drones with business and
19 industry engineers with them -- and, again, that's
20 something to see.

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

24 [TIMER BELL RINGS]

25 MS. RAPER: Still have five minutes?

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: (Nodding head up and down.)

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

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

22 Just to close, I just want to say that we're
23 committed to continuing this charter because the
24 charter provides this flexibility to provide this
25 innovation. I've always said when we first wrote

1 this charter we just want to use these waivers to
2 pave an opportunity for our principals to be able to
3 look at our students' needs and say, "What can we do
4 to make things just a little bit different," so we
5 can look at each individual student as they come
6 through and provide these opportunities to help them
7 learn, because, you know, there's no doubt we do
8 struggle. But with that, when we have these waivers
9 it gives us a chance to sit down and say, "Okay, you
10 know, what can we do? What can we tweak? What can
11 -- if this is not working in this math classroom
12 right here, can we -- what can we do?" Well, what we
13 now -- do now, we can take them to the Discovery Zone
14 and do some hands-on activities that sometimes time
15 does not allow in a regular classroom.

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

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

21 Mr. Baldwin.

22 MR. BALDWIN: Thank you --

23 MS. RAPER: You're welcome.

24 MR. BALDWIN: -- for your presentation. So we
25 read about the new steel mill in your area. How has

1 that affected the school system? And is it a
2 positive effect for you?

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

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

17 MS. RAPER: Yeah. Big River Steel, Mark
18 Skinner, the HR director, he is in our classroom
19 every single week. And to the point that the plant
20 -- and actually what I told -- when he was talking to
21 us -- we are stockholders by the way, so we get the
22 royal treatment. We were able to take our teachers
23 through a tour of Big River Steel because we wanted
24 our teachers to see what those jobs look like so our
25 teachers can transition that instruction to what they

1 need. So, again, there's not a business and industry
2 in our town that if we don't -- if we reach out to
3 them, they're there to support us.

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

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

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

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

1 put it that way; I'll say that.

2 SUPT. HOGAN: Let me say something about that.

3 MS. SMITH: Go ahead.

4 SUPT. HOGAN: Thank you for bringing that up.

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

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

24 DR. KREMERS: The other thing I wanted to know
25 was I think because of the STEM approach -- you can

1 see the STEM academic achievement is really low but
2 -- the growth is pretty -- showing a good trend in
3 the growth in science, but I don't see that on the
4 reading and literacy side -- but I wasn't sure if it
5 was just how I'm looking at this. But are you doing
6 -- you know, the STEM Academy helps give the hands-on
7 in making connections. What are you doing on the
8 literacy side?

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

1 focus on data and the core problem and I thought the
2 first thing is to fix the core instruction.

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

25 So we do have a large percent of SPED kids; we

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

4 DR. KREMERS: Thank you.

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

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

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

18 MS. SMITH: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Absolutely, as it should be.
20 I just -- I'm really having a hard time understanding
21 the continuation of the charter and the flexibility
22 within the charter because, as Ms. Raper describes
23 the actions around the STEM approach, I don't know
24 that you have to have a charter to do anything that
25 you're doing with the STEM focus.

1 And I think you hit on a really important point,
2 Dr. Kremers, that, you know, the hands-on approach,
3 the things that -- the Discovery Zone and robotics
4 and things you're doing for STEM can be beneficial.
5 But I don't know that it's something for which you
6 need a conversion charter to continue, and especially
7 with the waivers that you're requesting, and I just
8 -- I worry that continued flexibility for your school
9 is not the right path to go down. So I don't know
10 that I have a question, but that's --

11 MS. SMITH: Can I respond to that?

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You can respond though,
13 please.

14 MS. SMITH: Okay. And I appreciate the comment;
15 I really was trying to listen and let it sink in my
16 head. Because a lot of things we do do you can do in
17 a traditional school. But to know our story -- my
18 background, I've been there since 06-07. To know the
19 dark cloud that hangs in that community -- I'm not
20 from that community -- to know that the reason we
21 went to a STEM school -- because sometimes that's the
22 only way you can sell kids to come into that building
23 or parents to feel like their kids are about
24 something, about a school that is not only adequate.
25 I want to say this and don't sound negative, because

1 we're not using the name of STEM, because we truly do
2 do some. We collaborate with the math and science
3 together. But I want to say it is very, very
4 important that we keep the STEM components in there
5 because, once again, we are teaching them life skills
6 through STEM. I'm not saying that we don't promote
7 or ask for kids to go to college, but I'm going to be
8 realistic: the majority of our kids are going out
9 into the workforce. Do we get some flexibility?
10 Yes. We have high teacher turnover. I'll just be
11 honest with you, Act 1240 -- you know, right now I
12 don't know how long that will last. You know, with
13 us having the STEM school and giving us a little
14 flexibility for me to move teachers that are strong
15 in a content area that they might not be certified
16 in, I just think that it's adequate. I don't know,
17 Dr. Ivy, if I answered that but --

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, and I would say you can
19 keep a STEM focus.

20 MS. SMITH: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I don't think there's
22 anything that would prevent that. I think it's more
23 about though is a district conversion charter really
24 the route. And when you think about it, you've got
25 your charter situated in the middle; so how are you

1 setting yourself up for success feeding into that?
2 And then, what are the results going beyond? And
3 when you look at the high school and the performance
4 at the high school I don't know that -- I'm not sure
5 that as a district keeping the focus just in your
6 middle school -- I don't know that that's setting you
7 up for success, and it's obviously not translating
8 over into the high school.

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

12 MR. ROGERS: I don't know if I have a question.
13 I think that my thoughts are similar to Dr. Pfeffer.
14 I appreciate the focus on the reading when you
15 started out with that. And that's really good
16 because we have -- we were low and it is trending --
17 trying to get up there, but you're still struggling.
18 And what I was wondering -- well, before we started
19 asking questions -- is what would this school look
20 like if it wasn't a conversion charter? What would
21 be different, I mean because with 1240 waivers would
22 there be more collaboration with the high school?
23 Because, as Dr. Pfeffer said, you get -- there seems
24 to be something that's happening, that's lost,
25 because when they get to the high school it doesn't

1 seem that you're maintaining that momentum. And so
2 having them right here in the middle, is that really
3 what's best for this district right now?

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

9 Let me go back several years ago when a young --
10 I was in the district; I was a charter teacher when
11 it was Academic Center of Excellence. And I want to
12 tell you -- let me just -- I hear what you're saying.
13 But it was September of -- it was right at the
14 beginning of that school year when that charter was
15 pulled from us and it was detrimental to our district
16 because we did not have School Choice at that time.
17 I stood on the parking lot as an 8th grade teacher
18 telling parents that were about to move their
19 children, you know, three weeks into the school year,
20 because we had lost that charter, saying, "We're
21 still going to treat your children the same way
22 tomorrow as we did the day before, even though we do
23 not have this charter." Osceola School District
24 cannot survive losing students. We just can't
25 because of School Choice. And whether it's academics

1 -- and just to be honest, whether it's social issues
2 -- I mean those things are there. But losing the
3 charter for our -- and just our community in general
4 -- because taking on what I said with this charter,
5 this was business and industry coming and our Chamber
6 of Commerce coming to our school board, saying, "We
7 want this charter. We need this charter to help
8 entice people to come to work for our companies."
9 And so I respect what you're saying.

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

24 MS. RAPER: It is absolutely --

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But I can't understand why

1 the community wouldn't say "this needs to be larger
2 and broader."

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

18 SUPT. HOGAN: And the ANC Community College.

19 MS. RAPER: And our -- yeah, and he's correct,
20 in our ANC. These -- we do not have to have all of
21 the teachers that we have at the high school, and you
22 have a little bit more of a flexibility with that
23 schedule at the high school that we do not have at
24 the middle school program. But our students have --
25 you know, they have the agri, they have the business,

1 they have the industrial technology. And we still --
2 even though we were well above -- well above what we
3 had to provide for CTE we added a pre-engineering
4 program because our middle school fed into that and
5 our students and our business and industry demanded
6 it. So we've never been stymied at the high school
7 level to need these waivers because with that
8 flexibility of schedule and with our operating budget
9 we're able to get those teachers in there. But,
10 again, yes, you're right; I mean it is a perception
11 issue.

12 SUPT. HOGAN: Yes, it is.

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

23 SUPT. HOGAN: Of your system.

24 MS. RAPER: -- that's heartbreaking. And so,
25 yeah, we do; we reach for and we grab any opportunity

1 we can to keep our students and have those
2 opportunities. But those waivers do help. We use
3 those, but we don't abuse them. We try not to abuse
4 our waivers.

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

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Did you have an additional
22 question?

23 MR. ROGERS: And I hear what you're saying, I
24 do, but -- and I guess that's where I'm just -- I'm
25 still struggling there because I understand what

1 you're trying to do. But then looking at the data
2 we're still not there on the reading and science,
3 where we need to be on that. And then when those
4 kids are going into your high school that performance
5 isn't staying. So that's where I'm struggling is
6 because -- I understand the perception; I get what
7 you're -- but how -- perceptually how -- what does
8 it look like when we're doing better here, but then
9 when we go to high school we're not doing so good?
10 So how do -- is this the model that we need to be at
11 the 5-8 STEM charter that we're trying to get? Is
12 that what we -- what it needs to be? What moving
13 forward -- because I know there's a lot of challenge
14 there. And so going forward is this how it needs to
15 look? And that's where I'm struggling. And I do
16 appreciate you spending the most time talking about
17 the reading because that is ultimately important and
18 we have to be there. But then that's where I was
19 kind of going, "Well, that is important," and then,
20 "where is the science, all that coming in, if we're
21 having to spend" -- which we should on that reading;
22 I don't want to de-emphasize that at all.

23 MS. SMITH: It gives us some diversity. I truly
24 feel like -- and like I tell people, we are a low-
25 performing school. But in terms of providing

1 opportunity for our kids, you know -- when I look at
2 it as -- if you walk in my building and what the
3 culture is like and, slash, looking at test scores,
4 you wouldn't think it's the same school. But I don't
5 have the answer for that besides that I can keep on
6 providing adequate instruction and trying to lead by
7 the instruction leader as well as continue to insure
8 the community that we're doing everything we can to
9 raise test scores. But I do truly understand what
10 you're saying, so --

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any questions?

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

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

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

19 The first issue, on their Teacher Licensure
20 waivers they'd only requested one law. I suggested
21 that they review 6-15-1004, 6-17-401, 6-17-902, and
22 6-17-919 in order to fully effectuate their waiver.
23 They did and have since asked to include those
24 statutes as part of their waiver. So I'll need them
25 to confirm that, as well as that they need a waiver

1 of Section 7 of the ADE rules governing Educator
2 Licensure.

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

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

8 MS. RAPER: Yes, we rescind that waiver.

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

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

20 MS. HYATT: That's all.

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

24 MR. BALDWIN: Let me ask what are our options?
25 It sounds like we have two options that are far away

1 from each other. Is there a middle ground option or
2 is there a shorter-term option to request
3 performance? And, you know, I don't know.

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

7 MS. HYATT: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

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

21 DR. KREMERS: I think I have kind of the same
22 thoughts on the purpose/reason for a charter, and
23 there are so many more CTE courses available at the
24 middle level, including those in STEM, that can occur
25 with or without the charter component. So I feel

1 like it's not taking anything away from the kids, the
2 students, because they still would have the same
3 course options and opportunities and there's the
4 support. And Ms. Raper does a fabulous job working
5 with State staff implementing the CTE components, so
6 I know that technical assistance and collaboration
7 would continue for support of those programs. So I
8 think I'm -- you know, as far as the academic
9 component, you know, I'm kind of where you guys are
10 in your thoughts, you know, about the reason that a
11 charter would still be necessary.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any thoughts or discussion?

13 MR. ROGERS: I understand and I get where you're
14 coming from. At this point right now I would be
15 uncomfortable with going out to five years. I
16 probably could -- in my mind I was probably thinking
17 more of three. And then at the halfway point of that
18 I'd like to have them come back and do a presentation
19 to see where they are at that time to see how we are
20 working on that collaboration with the high school,
21 to see what the success is going on in there.
22 Because I understand that you are going with the
23 Science of Reading, you're trying to get your teacher
24 turnover -- and so I understand those obstacles have
25 been there and you're overcoming those and there's

1 still a long way to go. I'm still struggling with
2 being a STEM, and I'm just -- personally I am; I'm
3 still stuck there with it. But given that it's a big
4 hill that you've had to climb I'm not saying that I
5 would revoke right now, but I just -- I'm
6 uncomfortable with it right now. But I think three
7 years with the -- after that first halfway point if
8 you could come back with some kind of plan of
9 collaboration with the high school to see the success
10 with our junior high students -- middle school/junior
11 high at that time is.

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

22 And then what I would be looking for and what I
23 will ask you when you come back would be as it
24 relates to the steel mill that's in town is are they
25 hiring your students. And one of the things that I

1 hear all the time from executives at the steel mills
2 in the Delta is "we don't hire the students because
3 they can't read and they can't do math, and we have
4 to go to Tennessee to get our workforce." And so I
5 think you have an opportunity to cure that and it
6 sounds like they're willing to work with you, but I
7 think you've got to really see are they hiring your
8 students, because that ultimately is their stamp-of-
9 approval on your program.

10 MS. SMITH: Yes, thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. And I think you both
12 make excellent points. You know, Mr. Hogan, I think
13 that Ms. Smith is having to work way too hard on
14 reading and I think that's a result of the support
15 not happening at your elementary. So I think as a
16 district -- I think what we're saying is as a
17 district if we're being asked to continue the
18 waivers, the designation of a charter, beyond what
19 has happened so far, I think what we need to see is
20 that as a district you're supporting this endeavor.
21 So that means shoring up that K-3 or the early grades
22 through 4, grade 4 -- 1-4 so that grades 5-8 can
23 really get into that STEM work and really explore
24 that. And then we do need to see though where is
25 this going because, as Mr. Baldwin said, you know, if

1 students then aren't getting into high school and
2 really jumping into those opportunities to have
3 internships and STEM-focused career experiences in
4 high school then really this is a waste of time. So
5 I think when you-all do come back those are the
6 things that we need to see that as a district this is
7 being supported. And I think if that's kind of the
8 lines we're thinking I can feel much more comfortable
9 with moving forward on maybe a shorter timeframe.

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

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

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

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

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

22 MS. SMITH: Yeah. This is our first year using
23 ACT Aspire interims. Prior to us doing this last
24 year we did training on the performance level
25 descriptors to make sure that teachers knew what the

1 kids would have to know, you know, in relation to
2 this test. Fifth grade was very -- our first interim
3 was very low. Actually, we have an exceptional 8th
4 grade. I do agree with you guys, we went off -- our
5 highest group for reading was 8th grade last year and
6 we're, you know, hoping they can maintain. She also
7 has the highest right now on the interim; so 8th and
8 6th grade, which are two very, very strong teachers.
9 I made a change six weeks into school; a 7th grade
10 teacher that I hired through the waiver I just felt
11 like didn't know the content, as well as classroom
12 management was a huge issue. We made a change with a
13 teacher that social studies was stronger than
14 literacy, from Springdale, and this was his second
15 year; he embraced it and he's doing magnificent. So
16 we're looking forward to January when we do our
17 second interim to see if we -- to see how it goes.
18 But, yes, so --

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

21 We focused so much of this presentation on our
22 middle level school. But, you know, to answer your
23 question about the high school, I'm confident that we
24 can come back even in a year-and-a-half with an
25 update, because had we had this amount of time to

1 talk about the successes of the high school -- our
2 JAG program, we were able to pull a teacher in that
3 was from American Greetings HR and said, "I want to
4 come teach." He's our JAG teacher. And his first
5 year, we had 100 percent placement in business and
6 industry. That next year, 98 percent of those
7 children were still our students at that point --
8 young people were still employed. And so Big River
9 Steel was there to hire a young lady that we were
10 really afraid was not going to take her basketball
11 scholarship because of the amount of money that Big
12 River Steel offered her as an internship that year.

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

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

23 MR. ROGERS: I make the motion that we approve
24 the conversion charter for three years, with them to
25 come back for us in a year-and-a-half to show the

1 progress that they're making towards collaboration
2 with the high school, towards progress with their
3 students they're having in the 5th through 8th grade.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion.

5 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Motion and a second.

7 All those in favor say aye.

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

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

13 MS. SMITH: Thank you so much.

14 [A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Baldwin.

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

21 DR. KREMERS: And my comments are the same.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I think where I
23 really see it is that the motion gives time for the
24 District to shore up supports at the elementary level
25 to provide an opportunity for success at the middle.

1 It will give time for two additional years of data
2 with coming back in a year-and-a-half. So I think
3 that gives us a much better picture of your progress.

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

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

16 MS. SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we'll take a break until
18 1:00. We have lunch and we can take a break and
19 we'll reconvene at 1:00.

20 (LUNCH BREAK: 12:31 - 1:08 P.M.)

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

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We will get started

1 back with our afternoon agenda. We have a couple of
2 items to hear this afternoon. And the first is the
3 renewal application for Southside High School. Ms.
4 Webb.

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

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

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

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

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

1 okay.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: That is perfectly fine.

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

9 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

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

15 SUPT. RICH: Okay. I'm Roger Rich,
16 superintendent, Southside School District.

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

21 This we call our Future Story. We refer to it
22 as Project Future Story. We started this process
23 about seven years ago, and it was a conversation with
24 our administrative staff back-and-forth about what we
25 can do for kids to not only help them be successful

1 while they're with us but successful after they leave
2 us. And we started the process talking back-and-
3 forth; we involved our community college, the
4 University of Arkansas Community College at
5 Batesville, and then with the leadership team at
6 APSRC. They guided us to come before you five years
7 ago and we had a successful application, and we hope
8 to be able to prove to you today that we need to
9 continue to go forward with that. It's not only
10 changed the way that education is delivered within
11 our district, it's changed the way education has been
12 delivered through Independence County. And it's been
13 exciting to watch the phenomenal opportunity for kids
14 and we hope to continue moving forward with that.

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

25 I think I can best answer this question for you,

1 did the conversion charter make an impact -- and I
2 think I can do that best by telling you some stories
3 about kids.

4 The first young lady is a young lady named
5 Kerri. Kerri's future story was to become a teacher.
6 She graduated in 2017 with a value-added diploma and
7 46 concurrent credit hours. She went ahead that
8 summer and picked up an additional 10 hours and
9 started at ASU in the fall with 56 concurrent credit
10 hours. She wanted to be a teacher, but she caused a
11 little bit of problem for Arkansas State University
12 at that time; in their Teacher Ed. program they
13 weren't used to someone being prepared to be in the
14 program in their first semester of their freshman
15 year. So we went with Kerri, we sat down with their
16 administrative team, and the teacher of the education
17 department tried to work through some of those
18 barriers and obstacles that were there to not only
19 help her but to help future students as well. She
20 did a fantastic job; she graduated in two years with
21 her Bachelors of Education degree, before her 20th
22 birthday. Being 20 years old and still having some
23 lottery scholarship money available, she took
24 advantage of that and she's at Harding University
25 now, going to graduate with her Master's degree in

1 Reading in 2020. And we're going to do our best to
2 recruit her back home, to come back and work for us.
3 That's just one story.

4 Another story is Cory. Cory was a young man
5 that didn't want to further his education, didn't
6 want to go on to college, but he knew that he wanted
7 to go into the workforce and our goal was to make
8 sure that he had a family sustaining wage of some
9 kind. So he went through our mock interview process
10 and he really fell in love with an industry in our
11 community called Flowers Bakery. But when he
12 graduated he wasn't 18 years old yet; he had to be 18
13 to be able to go to work at Flowers. So they said,
14 "Remember, when you turn 18 come back and apply," and
15 we told him we would help him. So he turned 18 in
16 the middle of the summer; he came back and worked
17 with our high school counselor and she helped him
18 through the process. It's all computerized, fairly
19 difficult to maneuver through. She helped him
20 through that process, helped him set up a voicemail
21 that he'd never set up on his phone before in case he
22 got a call for an interview and wasn't able to take
23 it -- helped him through all those adult things that
24 he needed to do. Now he's working at Flowers Bakery;
25 he got that job. He's been able to work his way up

1 the ladder into recruiting some of the younger
2 students to come and join him, because it's a great
3 place to work and have a family sustaining wage if
4 you choose not to go on to college.

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

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

20 So what impact did it have on students and
21 families? Over 50% of our students have chosen to
22 participate in this program -- and those that don't,
23 they might want that traditional high school diploma
24 and high school experience, and that's okay if that's
25 what they choose to have. But we want those that

1 want more to definitely have that opportunity and we
2 want to be able to provide that for them.

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

15 So the impact it's had on education -- we've
16 been very fortunate to be in a growing area. Our
17 school district has grown steadily over the last
18 several years. We were actually just recently named
19 the number four high-growth school district in the
20 state of Arkansas. We were the number one school
21 district that had enrollment of 500 students or more,
22 and we're very proud of that. The growth at the
23 community college I think has had an impact on what
24 the local school districts within our county are
25 doing. The growth at UACCB has grown about 12% over

1 the last four to five years, where two-year colleges
2 traditionally across the state of Arkansas have all
3 dropped. So we think that that's had a huge impact
4 on that.

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

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

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

21 And just sharing a little information from our
22 Joint Leadership Team -- and that's how we refer to
23 ourselves -- bimonthly -- the leadership of Southside
24 Charter High School and the leadership of UACCB, we
25 meet twice a month. As Mr. Rich explained, that's

1 going to once a month. We meet with seven area high
2 schools and both colleges, but we still meet together
3 once a month just the two institutions. And what
4 we've really noticed over the last five years is we
5 have students prepared for their future stories;
6 they're ready to have strong conversations. Lisa
7 Rich, our counselor, asked students from the very
8 beginning to begin with the end in mind, "What is
9 your future story? And let's map it backwards." And
10 so, "If your future story is a four-year college or a
11 two-year college, what's your degree plan?" Our
12 students know how to use the Arkansas College -- or
13 Credit Transfer System; they know how to look at
14 those degree plans and decide what can I take locally
15 that will go with me to Harding; what can I take
16 locally that will go with me to Arkansas State; what
17 can I take locally that will transfer to Lyon for
18 that four-year degree that I want. And so they
19 really understand the process of college at a higher
20 level, so we're not wasting concurrent hours. Every
21 hour we're taking is leading towards our next step,
22 and so we really find kids are strong in that
23 process. They've learned when they need help and
24 support to succeed and they've learned to know where
25 to go to get that help and support. They're better

1 able to self-advocate for that need.

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

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

1 locally, at Southside, but across our county.

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

18 And another challenge that's really been taken
19 away through this process is the decrease of stigma
20 of community college in our community. Kids really
21 see the overall benefit of those concurrent hours and
22 families see the cost savings of those hours that
23 they take with us. You know, we start out with a
24 cost-sharing program and now through other things,
25 like the Independence County Promise and Act 456 that

1 Ms. Johnson will talk about, we're really able to
2 save families even more money. So kids have really
3 bought into this investment of their time in their
4 senior year, their junior year, and how it will pay-
5 off in that long-term future story.

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

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

19 The willingness to support the Independence
20 County Promise, as she mentioned, was a cost-sharing
21 model for our kids to be able to take concurrent
22 credit, and now -- it's now Act 456 where all
23 students across the state of Arkansas can take care
24 of it. They give not only financially but they give
25 of their time to be guest speakers, to job shadow,

1 allow internships, all those type things. And the
2 new secondary career center is really just taking
3 that to another level.

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

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

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

20 The difference in school districts who I believe
21 have these partnerships and those who don't are the
22 willingness to allow partners to come onto campus,
23 boots on the ground, working together to face
24 challenges of the school district, and then working
25 together to find solutions -- solutions from the

1 community to build the school district. So we have
2 that partnership which I'm very proud of and very
3 proud to be here.

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

10 So we were invited to learn about their program,
11 Project Future Story, which is a program built to
12 build up our kids and give them every -- as Mr. Rich
13 says, every unfair advantage that we possibly can to
14 insure that they are successful in life and that
15 they're a contributing member to our workforce, which
16 is very important to economic development in Chambers
17 of Commerce. So we saw this model; we knew
18 immediately that this was just too good not to share
19 with the state. So by working together Southside
20 School District actually shared that model with our
21 other districts in Independence County, which says a
22 lot about their generosity and how much they care
23 about kids, because we're not unique in the fact that
24 there's school choice competition. But Southside was
25 willing to share that program with, first, our other

1 school districts in Independence County; then by
2 working together with our legislators we were able to
3 scale that program statewide, now called the Arkansas
4 Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program. As Mr.
5 Rich said earlier, due to this program the University
6 of Arkansas Community College in Batesville has seen
7 phenomenal growth. I expect to see that growth
8 throughout the state now that the program is
9 officially launched. This is just one example of how
10 good things happen for our kids when we work
11 together, real-world examples of making a difference
12 in the lives of our kids and improving the economic
13 success in the state of Arkansas.

14 Another example of working together with our
15 school district is through our community strategic
16 plan that we call "Impact." That's a grassroots plan
17 that our community developed. We are dedicated --
18 our community has told us that they want collectively
19 to be dedicated to innovation in education, economic
20 prosperity, tourism, and then healthy living and
21 well-being. But you know all of those things go
22 hand-in-hand. I think it's pretty unique that a
23 community in rural Arkansas would have a vision to be
24 -- establish our school districts as leader in
25 education. I think that's very unique. I think

1 that's very powerful that we have community support,
2 able to -- it's because of programs like that that
3 Project Future Story can be so successful because of
4 the community model and the community support that we
5 have.

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

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

19 SUPT. RICH: So what future impact do we hope --
20 we definitely want to sustain the partnerships that
21 we have, cultivate those, and continue to grow
22 additional partnerships as well. We want to maintain
23 and increase the number of students completing
24 college courses and technical training. We want to
25 add additional pathways -- and we have, thanks to Dr.

1 Kremers. She's helped us. We've had two different
2 pathways, with cyber security being one, and we are
3 starting an additional pathway in banking and hope to
4 have a functioning bank within our school district
5 and our high school starting next fall. So we're
6 excited about that. And we want to advocate for
7 students and families with future legislation, just
8 like we were able to work on Act 456; if there's
9 something that we can do locally, we definitely want
10 to do that -- or something that would help statewide,
11 we're always going to be looking forward to that to
12 helping kids all over the state of Arkansas.

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

24 But I have a great leadership team with me
25 today, if you have any questions for them. But we

1 thank you for the opportunity to come and share our
2 story and hopefully we can continue doing great
3 things for kids.

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

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

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

22 And what really stands out to me is their
23 ability to pinpoint a student's weakness and then
24 through the flexibility they have in their scheduling
25 to take that student and work very hard on those

1 weaknesses; but at the same time they're still able
2 to nurture their strengths and interests in providing
3 them an overall and well-rounded education at the
4 school. At the same time they also are able to
5 relieve frustrations that as an educator you would
6 see so many times in a student who just tried over
7 and over again to try to learn, and for whatever
8 reason not being able to, finally give up and become
9 frustrated, fall through the cracks, and just very --
10 a waste of a resource. And they work very, very hard
11 to make sure that this doesn't happen. That
12 impresses me as well.

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

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

21 SENATOR JAMES STURCH: Afternoon. James Sturch,
22 State Senator, District 19.

23 Five years ago, I had just started my career in
24 the Legislature and came before this Panel to ask for
25 the original grant -- I guess the waivers and the

1 flexibility for this school. Now Mr. Rich has
2 already let the cat out of the bag, so not only are
3 they my constituents but this is my home school.

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

22 We talk about data all the time and the need to
23 see data and how it has worked. I think you can see
24 it. I think you can find it by looking at this
25 school. One thing I love about it is how

1 individualized it is. They are really trying to re-
2 define what success means as far as the high school
3 and as far as what a future story might be. For so
4 long we had just one tunnel vision of success, that
5 you had to go on to a four-year degree, you had to
6 get a white collar job in order to be successful --
7 and that's not true. And these students are finding
8 out that they have so many pathways in order to find
9 success.

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

24 But I'm telling you success is not the same for
25 everybody. Future Story basically brings that idea

1 into a reality that success is what you make of it.
2 They are willing to go the extra mile to help
3 students find out their goals, to find out their
4 needs, and to work with them to meet it. They're not
5 leaving students on their own to figure it out -- or
6 "navigate," as Ms. Novella said. They go that extra
7 mile.

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

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

13 Okay. Are we ready for questions?

14 We'll start down here with Mr. Baldwin.

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

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

22 Superintendent Rich, let me ask you -- we're
23 going to act on the renewal of your charter today.
24 Beyond that, what is the most critical aspect of the
25 ongoing sustainability of your program when you sit

1 back and look at it and look out 25 years?

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

15 So I hope that answers your question.

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

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

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

25 SUPT. RICH: Anything else that you might add?

1 MS. HUMPHREY: I think from the curriculum and
2 staffing standpoint that flexibility uses the staff
3 of UACCB and Lyon. We're able to take advantage of
4 their resources in our community and provide our
5 students training that might not have been possible,
6 because that professor was not a high school
7 certified teacher. And so it's really been nice to
8 be able to tap into all their resources that are
9 local and bring those into the classroom with our
10 students.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Questions?

1 MR. ROGERS: No.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson?

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

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

20 MS. HUMPHREY: You're so gracious every time we
21 call with a challenge, with a problem seeking
22 solutions; your staff is always on point, ready to
23 help us, and I think just to continue that
24 relationship, just to continue that partnership.
25 We're not afraid to ask questions and we just

1 appreciate that you're not afraid to find hard
2 answers for us. Sometimes it's the answer we want;
3 sometimes it's not the answer we want. But I
4 appreciate that relationship and that honesty and
5 that trust and I hope that we can continue that.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

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

1 jumpstart that?

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

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

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

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

21 No, there's not. And I just wanted to make sure
22 and get up and tell the Panel how much I appreciated
23 working with them, because typically I have to do
24 three or maybe four legal reviews and am getting
25 information about waivers all the way until the day

1 of the hearing. I only had to do one for Southside.
2 And that kind of echoes -- in August, you heard their
3 application for the new district conversion; it was
4 the same thing. And they have even agreed to be a
5 resource at my urging for those that are going
6 through the process and help navigate the legal
7 sections so that -- I think that's kind of an area of
8 weakness in initial applications. So I just wanted
9 to say thank you and to let the Panel know really how
10 wonderful they did on this part of the application.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Thank you.

12 Okay. Any questions or discussions? And if
13 not, I'm ready for a motion.

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

16 MR. WILSON: Second.

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

19 All those in favor say aye.

20 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

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

24 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

1 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I approved the motion. I
2 think the program is outstanding for the students of
3 Independence County.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

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

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

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

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

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

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

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We're going to go

1 ahead and move on to the final item on our action
2 agenda for today, which is a renewal application for
3 Academics Plus. Ms. Webb, will you update us please?

4 MS. WEBB: Academics Plus is an open-enrollment
5 charter that was initially authorized on May 14,
6 2001. The charter is approved to serve students in
7 grades K-12 and has an enrollment of 2275. They are
8 requesting renewal of their charter through June 30,
9 2033.

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

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

21 MAYOR NORRIS: Sure, that's fine.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

1 that.

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

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

25 And so I just wanted to wholeheartedly give my

1 support to the charter renewal and to the increase in
2 the students. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And thank you for being here.

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

9 REPRESENTATIVE MARK LOWERY: Thank you very much
10 and I appreciate the opportunity to come and speak in
11 support of a great community member. I mean they are
12 the heart of our community. I certainly learned that
13 very quickly in my first election campaign in 2012 of
14 how critical they are to the city of Maumelle. They
15 have not let any of us down in all of those years.
16 They've been a straight-A report card school for
17 several years, since the report cards have come out.
18 There's so much support. Matter of fact, I guess one
19 funny story, I found out in my last election cycle --
20 my opponent got up and started speaking critically of
21 charter schools, and I thought, okay, well, I'm in
22 because most of the audience were there -- they were
23 supporters of what Academics Plus has meant -- what
24 the Maumelle charter school has meant to our
25 community, and they continue to be that. And, you

1 know, all ships rise. I think one of the things that
2 we've seen -- I know that Pulaski County School
3 District, with Maumelle High School and Maumelle
4 Middle -- I'm not saying that they feel that the
5 charter schools are breathing down their neck, but it
6 certainly has that impact of letting you know that
7 you have to raise your game, because there is an
8 excellent educational program in the school -- in the
9 city.

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

1 been able to step up their efforts. I think that
2 they've probably seen the impact of that.

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

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

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

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

19 I don't have a whole lot to add to what the
20 Mayor and Representative Lowery said. This is one of
21 the jewels of not just Maumelle, but of northwest
22 Pulaski County. I've been thrilled every time I go
23 over to some kind of a meeting and the graduation and
24 things, you know, at Maumelle Charter School. I just
25 -- you just get that good feeling both from the

1 faculty and the kids. It's just -- this is a well-
2 oiled machine and, you know, the proof is in the
3 pudding; their grades are where they should be, and
4 it's just a jewel. And I think that Representative
5 Lowery alluded to the fact that, you know, we believe
6 that competition improves the breed and you have a --
7 we have people in that part of the county who have
8 beautiful choices; we have excellent, you know,
9 Maumelle public schools. Maumelle High School and
10 Maumelle Middle School are excellent, and the grade
11 schools. And over -- a little more into Marche' we
12 have a Catholic school which is one of the better
13 schools in the state in the area. So I'm happy for
14 my constituents that they have choices in anything
15 that expands those choices and rewards those that
16 have done a wonderful job -- and clearly, you know,
17 Academics Plus has done that.

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

24 And I hope that all of y'all will recognize how
25 much effort has been made to serve these specific

1 communities that this school serves. And I want to
2 thank you all, not just the ones that work for ADE
3 but those of you -- and Mr. Wilson, a former
4 legislator, I appreciate you coming back and
5 continuing to give back to our state; and Mr.
6 Baldwin, Dr. Kremers. And, Greg, I'm not going to
7 forget you; I appreciate you all the time too. I'm
8 sorry Dr. Williams, my friend, is not here as well.
9 But we appreciate the efforts you put into this and I
10 just can give my wholehearted support to Mr. McGill
11 and the staff and the board at Academics Plus. So
12 thank you all so much. I'm so happy to be here and
13 be able to stand with them. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

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

20 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you very much.

22 And I don't know how many of you are doing the
23 presentation. You're welcome to come be on the front
24 row. And as you come to the microphone to speak, if
25 you'll state your name and title for the record

1 you're recognized. We'll start with your 20 minutes,
2 and then there would be an additional 5 minutes of
3 time if you need that. So --

4 SUPT. MCGILL: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right.

6 MR. MCGILL: Thank you. Rob McGill, CEO,
7 Academics Plus Charter Schools, Incorporated.

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

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

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

25 Our vision -- it is to be the highest performing

1 college preparatory education institution in America.
2 We are making strides towards that; we're not there
3 yet. Once we get there we'll set a different vision;
4 but right now, that is our vision and we're making
5 strides to that and continue to go forward.

6 Our enrollment at this point is 1550 students.
7 We have 250 in Scott, and then the other 1300 is in
8 Maumelle. In Maumelle, we have over 560 on the
9 waiting list. I checked that today and it's actually
10 574, so it's gone up since this report was done from
11 October 1st data.

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

25 Our current campus in Maumelle, we're

1 landlocked. We have two buildings. We have an
2 elementary school, we have a high school; both are
3 new. And we have a 10-year building program and we
4 have completed that, and we are able to put the 1300
5 students onto the campus and basically that's all we
6 can do at this point.

7 Scott, we have a four-phase plan for facilities.
8 This is very important because we did purchase the
9 Scott elementary school from Pulaski County Special
10 School District. It's got good academic classrooms
11 for about 400 students; that's what we can
12 accommodate at this point. We did just complete our
13 300 seating capacity gym. Being out in the rural
14 area there's not communities and this kind of thing
15 that we can use to help us, like we had in Maumelle.
16 So we needed a gym for the extracurricular activities
17 for our students; so that is being completed this
18 past year. And our next thing is once we hit 400
19 students -- right now we're at 250. When we receive
20 400 students we will be looking to build a new
21 elementary school that will house 550 students; and
22 then when we have 800 students we'll build a new high
23 school and then a larger gym also.

24 Unique aspects of Academics Plus -- we have
25 several things that we do that's a little different.

1 I think one of the things, as hit on by the
2 Representative and Senator, is our bussing program.
3 We have one bus in Maumelle; that bus -- five years
4 ago, we had 11 kids riding the bus; now we have 61
5 kids, and that is to go into lower income areas of
6 the outskirts of Maumelle, in Oak Grove and Palarm
7 areas. And there's -- not all charter schools have
8 that and I think that makes us unique as far as
9 charter schools.

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

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

1 when they -- when those AP scores come in.

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

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

24 Our goals -- we're proud to say that we have met
25 each of our goals, as you've seen in your packet. We

1 worked hard on that and we're proud of our students
2 and our faculty for obtaining the goals.

3 Amendment request -- I want to be clear on
4 exactly what we're requesting. We're really
5 requesting two things. One is to increase our cap to
6 -- from 1300 in Maumelle to 2000 over the next seven
7 years, by increasing 100 students per year. And our
8 -- really our -- it's really served us well. Our
9 growth pattern for the last six has been exactly
10 this. So we'll say this year we graduate 41 seniors
11 but then we put 120 or 140 kindergartners in; so
12 we're growing at the bottom and going -- and have
13 those students for the 12, 13 years, and that's the
14 way we've done it for the last six. That's why you
15 see on our report we've got 120 kindergartners, but
16 we have 41 seniors. And we want to do that again and
17 go up to 2000. And in doing that, we can't do it
18 without a new building or a building of some sort.
19 So we're requesting to be able to build or refurbish,
20 or however we find the way to do that, a school in
21 the northwest part of Pulaski County, in the Maumelle
22 area -- not necessarily in the Maumelle city limits,
23 but it could be Maumelle city limits, could be North
24 Little Rock. If you know that area, the Counts
25 Massie Road -- and you may not know that the Wal-Mart

1 of Maumelle is actually North Little Rock city
2 limits. So there's -- or it could be in Pulaski
3 County; it just depends on where we can find property
4 that's affordable and that we can successfully make
5 into a school.

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

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

14 I'm going to introduce Mr. Brown first. He's a
15 first-year principal and he's first-year at Scott.
16 And his task has been to go into Scott where we are
17 "the" school -- is to go into Scott and bring that
18 grade up to a "C", then a "B." Our goal is to be at
19 a "B" in two years -- no, I'm sorry -- a "C" in two
20 years, but I'm banking on him to be able to beat that
21 out -- but a "B" within five. I think this goal is
22 attainable from what I've seen from the last six
23 months of his actions at Scott. He has created a
24 culture of high expectations of both the students and
25 staff. He's created order that's also decreased the

1 discipline issues at Scott. And his actions have
2 definitely increased the quality of instruction and
3 learning at Scott.

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

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

9 Good afternoon. How are y'all doing?

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

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

19 My first goal as a new principal at Scott
20 Charter was to change the learning environment in
21 which our students feel safe. I believe an effective
22 structure and procedures will enhance the learning
23 environment for our students and teachers. I
24 conducted a survey which informed me that our
25 students did not feel safe. I implemented a positive

1 behavior intervention and support system known as
2 Champs. Champs is a proactive and positive approach
3 to building classroom management. It is important to
4 provide an environment for students to receive
5 quality instruction. An effective classroom
6 management plan prevents misbehavior and is
7 continually refined to help students become
8 increasingly respectful, motivated, and highly
9 engaged in instructional activities.

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

21 Maumelle Charter Elementary and High School have
22 had success with summer learning in Eureka Math. Our
23 goal within the district is to align the curriculum
24 across the district creating an equitable and
25 learning teaching -- I mean learning and teaching

1 experience. Our goal at Scott Charter is to mirror
2 the success of our counterparts within the district.

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

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

17 We have also implemented professional learning
18 communities that have focused on improving Tier 1
19 instruction. We're currently in the process -- we're
20 not in the process, we have implemented Mustang Time.
21 Mustang Time is a school-wide intervention that
22 focuses on the deficiencies of individual students'
23 dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills.
24 Each teacher within our building has recognized the
25 areas of concern to improve students' phonemic

1 awareness. All teachers at the primary level are
2 conducting effective interventions to insure the
3 progress of our students. Teachers will also
4 progress monitor students to insure that deficiencies
5 are met.

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

8 MS. WILLIS: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

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

12 As you can see here, we have our performance
13 goals. Our current performance grade is an "A." The
14 5% increase in our performance goals are based on our
15 ambition to be the top 10 -- in the top 10 percent of
16 schools in Arkansas. Positive movement of students
17 from lower achievement levels to higher helps us to
18 meet our ultimate goal, which is, of course, to grow
19 all students. How we plan on doing this is through
20 our actions for improvement.

21 Our first action of improvement, Science of
22 Reading -- we identify students at risk for reading
23 deficiencies and provide systematic, comprehensive,
24 and evidence-based reading interventions to reduce
25 the number of students reading below grade level and

1 proficiency levels. These interventions and
2 remediations target developing phonemic awareness,
3 phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading
4 comprehension skills.

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

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

19 Last but not least, our last action is our
20 remediation and activities schedule. Our primary
21 focus here is to move students first out of the Need
22 of Support to the next performance level by providing
23 the research-based interventions twice a week during
24 our activity schedule. In addition, we provide
25 extensions in small groups, both in class and after

1 school, to insure that the students receive
2 additional time and support for all levels of student
3 learning.

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

6 MS. NEWTON: Thank you, Ms. Willis.

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

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

20 Another goal we are working towards this year is
21 increasing our school value-added growth from 84.1 to
22 88.1. With 80 showing the expected growth of our
23 students, we want to see more or all of our students
24 growing. We want all of our students reading on
25 grade level and our goal is to increase our

1 percentage of students reading on grade level this
2 school year from 68.1% to 80%. This would increase
3 our school quality or school success percentage
4 number to at least 78.1.

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

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

24 MR. MCGILL: I thought it was important for you
25 to hear, you know, we're doing a lot of the same

1 things, both at Scott and at Maumelle. But there are
2 also differences at each school because each
3 community is different and also the students at each
4 school are different.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 The first is on Board of Directors. They've
22 actually added two additional waivers since the
23 document that you have that they need, which is 6-13-
24 619(a)(1)(b) through (c) and 6-13-619(a)(2). And the
25 rationale provided is that any trustee in their

1 bylaws may call a board meeting. This has to do with
2 how they can call a board meeting and their own
3 bylaws dictate that. Lots of charters, since they
4 don't have a traditional school board, hold these
5 waivers. I don't have any legal issue with it; I
6 just wanted for them to confirm that they would like
7 those waivers for the record and then allow you guys
8 to ask any questions if you have them.

9 MR. MCGILL: Rob McGill, CEO, Academics Plus.
10 Yes, we would like to add those waivers.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

22 And they have asked for a waiver at my
23 suggestion of Section 5.01 of our rules governing
24 School District Requirements for Personnel Policies,
25 Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents

1 Posted onto the Website. So if you could just verify
2 that for the record?

3 MR. MCGILL: Yes, agree to that waiver.

4 MS. HYATT: The next one is not as much a legal
5 issue as I just wanted to bring it to your attention.
6 Academics Plus is the only non-virtual charter school
7 holding a waiver of 6-21-303(b)(1), which is the
8 provision in law about providing funding -- funds to
9 teachers to purchase school supplies. So the law
10 specifically requires that in their case, K through
11 6, they would have to provide the greater of \$20 per
12 student who is in a teacher's classroom more than 50%
13 of time or \$500 to the teacher each year so that they
14 can purchase school supplies. Obviously, in a
15 virtual context that waiver makes a lot of sense.
16 They did provide a pretty robust response to my
17 question about this, but I just wanted to give
18 Academics Plus an opportunity to explain to the Panel
19 how they're using it so that you know why they hold
20 it since they're the only one.

21 MR. MCGILL: Rob McGill, Academics Plus Charter
22 School.

23 Yes, this is a waiver we've had, before my time
24 at least, and I was in the charter school since 2010.
25 But we do provide for our teachers for sure; we

1 provide for their needs. But one of the programs at
2 Maumelle is that the PTO -- if parents give to the
3 PTO, they can -- part of their money is earmarked for
4 the classroom. So we actually have teachers, some of
5 them with \$1500 to spend on their classes. So that
6 was the purpose of the PTO doing this is to save the
7 district money on this side and -- but at the same
8 time providing for the teachers. And then we also
9 provide the principals -- we have to provide every
10 teacher K-12 \$100 just for whatever they need, but
11 this is in addition to that. And then also
12 principals have a budget, so anything that the
13 teachers need they can also come to the principals.
14 And I don't know -- when I was a principal, okay,
15 elementary principal, we had teachers who had like
16 15, 20 years, like \$500; sometimes I had to beg them
17 to spend their money, you know, and I don't want to
18 get into that. We need to spend money on what's
19 important and if they need something we're going to
20 provide it for them. But I don't -- I'm not into
21 spending money just to be spending money because
22 you've got it, you know; that's kind of where that
23 came from in the beginning.

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

1 school?

2 MR. MCGILL: We have a booster club.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Booster club. Okay.

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

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

11 MR. MCGILL: They also get the \$100 upfront too.

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

15 MS. HYATT: Okay. Just two more.

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

1 high school graduation requirement or a high school
2 unit of credit, on what basis are you using to
3 measure that?

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

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

1 MS. HYATT: Right.

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

5 MS. HYATT: So we do. What happened was when
6 the new Standards for Accreditation went into place
7 we didn't yet have a system internally set up for
8 getting competency-based approval. So when Alexandra
9 Boyd, the Charter director at the time, and I did
10 that standards transition, people that had held a
11 waiver under the previous version of the 120 clock
12 hours maintained that waiver because we didn't have
13 the process to incorporate the subject matter
14 competency approval yet. That process has been
15 developed at this point. So, an ongoing need for the
16 -- because that competency-based approval was
17 something that the legislature added to the law in
18 2017. In terms of distance and digital learning, you
19 know, we did have this conversation a little bit
20 earlier, so I had some time to look at those rules.
21 And any course that's offered under the distance and
22 digital learning rules either has to be approved by
23 us or meet certain requirements, which would meet the
24 requirements of the standard, because it's not a
25 seat-time requirement that the student must sit in

1 the seat for 120 clock hours; it's more about the
2 programmatic offerings of the course. So, it just
3 kind of -- and Stacy Smith is here too, if you want a
4 more robust explanation. But I did speak with her.

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

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

18 So definitely we probably need to get some more
19 clarity around this with -- this is a constant change
20 and a constant conversation. We have always allowed
21 independent study courses which provide for
22 acceleration, all right, for kids finishing a course
23 before the semester is over. That's not new. We
24 haven't really talked about it a lot, but you've had
25 independent study course codes for a long time. So

1 your example of a specific student finishing a
2 digital course earlier and being able to get credit
3 for that is something that has already been done. I
4 will say when we talk about competency-based
5 education and you're comparing it to standards and
6 time we have to give more clarity around that. I
7 don't think you're necessarily talking about
8 competency; you're saying the student has finished
9 the course and the school district has basically
10 certified that it meets the 120 hours of content.
11 Most students typically would take 120 hours to
12 complete that course in a semester or the time period
13 given for it. So you're not asking to waive that
14 time; you're just asking for an individual student.
15 So I don't think he needs the waiver for individual
16 kids who finish the course early. Their 120 hours on
17 Standards for Accreditation is that they're
18 committing to this amount of content. Does that
19 help?

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

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

25 MS. SMITH: Yes. The courses are approved.

1 MR. MCGILL: I just want to make -- I just want
2 to be clear.

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

5 MR. MCGILL: Yeah.

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

9 MR. MCGILL: I'm okay as long --

10 MS. HYATT: Okay.

11 MR. MCGILL: -- from what I hear today.

12 MS. HYATT: Okay. Perfect.

13 MR. MCGILL: I approve not having the waiver.

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

20 MS. HYATT: And I hope that in the new version
21 of the Standards for Accreditation that's kind of
22 going through the promulgation process now that we
23 can add some clarity to that language so that we can
24 all make sure it meshes with what the legislature
25 passed in 2017 and in our current practice.

1 The very last one is not a legal issue; I just
2 need him to confirm. So they provided some
3 additional rationale. Under School Safety they asked
4 for waivers of 6(a)(1) and 6(a)(2), and I had some
5 additional questions on why they needed a waiver of
6 6(a)(2). They have since provided that rationale,
7 mostly being that they are doing all of those things,
8 just not necessarily in the way that CAP staff says
9 they have to do them. And that's common I think for
10 charter schools that don't have the same types of
11 facilities that a traditional public school has. So
12 I just need them to -- actually, I don't need them to
13 do anything. I just need to say my concern was
14 resolved and that they're fine moving forward with
15 6(a)(1) and 6(a)(2).

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

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

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

21 MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.

22 So 13 years is a long time, and I guess I'm
23 interested in you-all talking about your processes
24 that you go through to add a school. So you moved
25 from Maumelle to Scott, which is an interesting move,

1 and I'm sure you have other plans during this 13-year
2 period. So how do you make a decision of where to go
3 to?

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

13 Then Scott, we saw an opportunity and we see the
14 need. I was Pulaski County Special School District
15 -- I was with them for 18 years as principal, and
16 then my last 16 months as acting superintendent. And
17 it has always been talked about Scott closing down,
18 for about 10 years before it actually closed. My
19 argument when I was the superintendent, I said, "If
20 you look -- if you drive out there, houses are coming
21 up; houses are being built in that area." It's a
22 rural community, but there's growth. And so the area
23 is growing and the community wanted it. Because they
24 were actually coming to us at the same time and we
25 just happened to mention it -- I mean we had

1 community members coming to us, representatives
2 coming to us to see what we could do. And with the
3 help of Mr. Key -- because at that time they were
4 under state control, he was the school board -- we
5 were able to work a deal with PCSSD and purchase the
6 property. So, that's kind of where that came from.
7 It just kind of -- in my mind, it kind of fell in our
8 lap, and at the same time I think the community was
9 very happy to see it. There's a need and then we
10 were filling that need.

11 And then -- and now at this point in time, with
12 over 670 on the waiting list, there's a need still in
13 Maumelle to grow. And if we don't -- if we stay at
14 1300 our waiting list is going to -- it will get
15 bigger and bigger and bigger. When we were doing 100
16 students at a time, our waiting list was growing
17 about 50 to 100 students a year. So if we stop
18 growing and stay at 1300, our waiting list is going
19 to continue to grow and we're going to not be
20 fulfilling the needs of some parents and students.
21 So that's why we're looking to grow in the Maumelle
22 area.

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

25 MR. MCGILL: We have discussed not necessarily

1 statewide, but maybe other locations in central to
2 outskirts of central Arkansas. That's something that
3 we would consider. But right now our priority is
4 two-fold: meet the needs of the students at Scott,
5 because as the principal talked to you -- I mean
6 we've got some problems out there that we're trying
7 to fix, and we're going to academically fix that; and
8 the other is to grow in the area that we are
9 currently in. And right now the human capital that
10 we have, myself included, that's two tasks that we
11 need to focus on. Now in a year or two, when we can
12 get those things going, then we can definitely look
13 at the other options.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

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

24 So I guess some of it is just kind of logistical
25 questions. If Scott didn't improve, or decreased,

1 and we approve for 13 years, we could still have a
2 special call-back on that? I don't know what happens
3 in that instance if they were --

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

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

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.

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

17 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We can call back. Yeah.

1 MR. MCGILL: And so that's -- you know, I'd love
2 -- I've always come for 20. I'm the kind I want to
3 get the max. But I guess I've digressed a little
4 bit, because you did -- you have given a charter
5 school 13 in the past; so I said, "Well, if they've
6 given one, maybe we can get that one too." So that's
7 kind of where 13 comes from too.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Do you have a question?

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

11 MR. MCGILL: Uh-oh. I'll hush.

12 MR. ROGERS: Well, you started talking --

13 MR. MCGILL: Never-mind.

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

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

23 MR. ROGERS: And I was --

24 MR. MCGILL: -- for \$27,000,000.

25 MR. ROGERS: And Secretary Key approved those?

1 MR. MCGILL: Yes. Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, all
2 that's been done. That's all the done things. Now
3 we're looking to do a different one, a new one. Yes,
4 sir.

5 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

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

8 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

9 MR. MCGILL: -- Mr. Wood, Mr. Woods.

10 MR. ROGERS: So it goes back that far?

11 MR. MCGILL: We got Commissioner's approval.

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

14 MR. MCGILL: Yes, sir. All of them do.

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

17 MR. MCGILL: Oh, yes.

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

1 coming from.

2 MR. MCGILL: It's a D-plus school.

3 MR. ROGERS: D-plus school.

4 MR. MCGILL: We're that close. That close to a
5 "C."

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

18 MR. MCGILL: It's all good, I promise.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

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

23 MR. MCGILL: Yes, they are completely separate.
24 Right now I think we have about three students at
25 Scott on the waitlist and that's because basically

1 our classes are full at a certain grade level. So we
2 may have 25 kids in 3rd grade; but now we have two
3 kids that show up that want to be in, but we don't
4 have a teacher for them.

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

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

12 MR. WILSON: Yeah.

13 MR. MCGILL: That community -- I mean, but I'll
14 be honest with you, Scott has much better than what
15 Maumelle ever had until about six years ago. The
16 school -- the Scott Elementary School is in much
17 better condition and a much better facility than
18 Maumelle had until they built the first school in
19 2011; so for 10 years they were in trailers and in
20 strip malls that were worse than the trailers. But
21 so, you know, you can't hardly mess up brick and
22 block and that's what the Scott Elementary School is
23 built of.

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

1 there --

2 MR. MCGILL: Yes, sir.

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

7 MR. MCGILL: They can.

8 MR. WILSON: I know they can.

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

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

25 MR. BROWN: Right. We've had a little bit of

1 turnover as I came in this year.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

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

12 MR. BROWN: Yes.

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

19 MR. BROWN: Yes. One of the biggest things that
20 we've done this year, we wanted to make sure our
21 staff feels supported, and that's one of the major
22 tasks that we've had in our school. We have
23 observations every single day and provide feedback
24 for our teachers. And like I said, we have those
25 trainers on campus, on staff. Ms. Willis and Ms.

1 Newton, they're doing an awesome job of collaborating
2 with us, as well as Mr. Jones, making sure that we
3 are aligned in every aspect within our buildings to
4 insure that growth at Scott.

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

8 MS. NEWTON: Right.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

10 MS. NEWTON: Can I speak on that?

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Sure.

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

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

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

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

19 MR. MCGILL: Rob McGill.

20 Two things that he mentioned in his was Eureka
21 Math -- well, Eureka Math's first year in Scott this
22 year. Last year was a trial year we did at Maumelle
23 Charter Elementary School, saw the success there; so
24 then we're implementing that and had the training at
25 Scott. Also, Summit Learning was a two-year

1 implementation for Maumelle Charter High School for
2 the 6th and 7th graders. And after -- the first
3 year, honestly, was to impress basically because of
4 the staff that we had doing it. And that changed
5 last year where Ms. Willis got her staff -- instead
6 of one or two teachers doing it, then there were six
7 teachers doing it and they were feeding off of --
8 they were able to talk with North Little Rock. North
9 Little Rock was talking to us because they were
10 implementing Summit Learning at the same time, and it
11 really took off and the scores were better at the
12 high school. So that's one of the things we're
13 implementing now, this year, at Scott also is 6th and
14 7th grade Summit Learning and seen good training and
15 good reward from that so far.

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

18 Okay. Any discussion by the Panel?

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

24 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MR. ROGERS: I knew the other two --

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

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

14 MR. MCGILL: Can we compromise at 10?

15 MR. ROGERS: Do what?

16 MR. MCGILL: How about 10?

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

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

21 MR. ROGERS: I could go along with the 10. I
22 just feel like if we can just have a little -- just a
23 little something that just -- I just want to make
24 sure that we're doing everything we need to be
25 successful at Scott. That's -- and to keep going.

1 MR. WILSON: I see it, and raise him three.

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

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion.

7 DR. KREMERS: Second.

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

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

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

14 MR. BALDWIN: Aye.

15 DR. KREMERS: Aye.

16 MR. ROGERS: Aye.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Opposed?

18 MR. WILSON: No.

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

22 And we will record our votes and have additional
23 feedback.

24 MR. WILSON: My vote -- oh --

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah, give them just a

1 minute.

2 MR. WILSON: Yeah. Sorry.

3 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Mr. Baldwin.

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

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

10 DR. KREMERS: I approve the motion to renew for
11 10 years. The charter plan in this school is well
12 thought-out and supports student success.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

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

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

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

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, we appreciate
23 you being here. Hopefully feedback is helpful. We
24 do look forward to seeing the success at Scott and
25 continued success at the other schools. So thank you

1 for your time today. Thank you to our other guests
2 who are here; we appreciate your time as well.

3 MR. MCGILL: Thank you.

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

6 MS. WEBB: No.

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

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

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Tomorrow? Let me look.

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

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

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

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

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

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MR. WILSON: Two what?

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

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

6 MS. McLAUGHLIN: No.

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

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

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

12 MS. McLAUGHLIN: All four.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, okay.

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

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

21 MS. McLAUGHLIN: And lunch is ordered for
22 tomorrow.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.

24 MR. WILSON: Nine o'clock?

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Nine o'clock.

1 And if there's nothing else, then I'll accept a
2 motion to adjourn.

3 MR. WILSON: So moved.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

5 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

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

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10 (The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.)
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A-3: MOUNTAIN HOME HS CAREER ACADEMIES

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-3: MOUNTAIN HOME HS CAREER ACADEMIES

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

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B-2: ACADEMICS PLUS CHARTER SCHOOLS

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on December 17, 2019, that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

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

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

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: January 3, 2020.

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

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