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

## October 15, 2019

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ARKANSAS DIVISION OF<br>ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION<br>CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL<br>OCTOBER 15, 2019<br>8:30 A.M.- 4:38 P.M.<br>APPEARANCES

PANEL MEMBERS :

DR. IVY PFEFFER MR. GREG ROGERS

MR. MIKE WILSON
MS. TOYCE NEWTON
DR. NACCAMAN WILLIAMS
MR. PHIL BALDWIN
DR. ANGELA KREMERS

Chairperson/DESE Deputy Commissioner DESE Asst. Commissioner -

Fiscal and Admin. Services Attorney \& Education Advocate Past State Board of Ed. Member Past State Board of Ed. Member CEO, Citizens Bank Deputy Director CTE/Ark. Dept. of Career Ed.

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:
MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT
DESE Attorney Specialist

## ALSO APPEARING:

MS. TRACY WEBB
MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN
MR. FREDDIE SCOTT

DESE Coordinator of Monitoring and Systems Support
DESE Public School Program Advisor DESE Operations Manager

LOCATION:
ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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\#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas
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PROCEEDINGS
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Good morning, everyone. Good to see everyone here. You all just got so silent, I looked up, it was 8:30 on the dot. And so I think we're all ready to go.

So at this time I will call to order the October 15, 2019 Charter Authorizing Panel. And we want to welcome all of our guests here to the ADE auditorium.

Panel Members, good to see you. It's been a little while since we've been together; so I appreciate all of you being here.

And before we get started I thought I'd just let each one of the panel members this morning introduce themselves. And if you have any updates on things you've done over the last couple of months and you want to give the audience an update, we've got time to do that. We'll start with Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: I am Phil Baldwin.
DR. KREMERS: Hi. Angela Kremers.
DR. WILLIAMS: Naccaman Williams.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ivy Pfeffer, Chair of the Charter Authorizing Panel.

MR. ROGERS: Greg Rogers.
MS. NEWTON: Toyce Newton.
MR. WILSON: Mike Wilson.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So I guess we're ready to get started and we will begin this morning with our Consent Agenda. I'll accept a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

MR. ROGERS: Motion.
DR. WILLIAMS: Second.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I have a motion to approve and a second. All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Unanimously approved.
HEARING PROCEDURES
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we'll move on to get ready for the Action Agenda. Before we start that, Ms. Hyatt, do you want to come up and just talk to us about the procedures today?

MS. HYATT: Good morning, everyone. Mary Claire Hyatt, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

For the morning part of the agenda you're going to be hearing four amendment requests. The procedure for the amendment requests is that, first, anyone that's going to be giving testimony before the Panel needs to be sworn in, except for attorneys. The applicant will have 20 minutes to give their
presentation about their amendment request. Any parties in opposition will then have 20 minutes to respond to the presentation. I don't believe we have anyone signed up in opposition -- but of course I'll check before we get there. And then if anyone -- the applicant will have an additional 5 minutes at the end to respond. Then you can engage in discussion, ask questions; of course, you can always ask questions during the presentations as well, and then decide what you'd like to do with the amendment request.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Thank you, Ms. Hyatt.

A-1: HEARING FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT REQUEST: ARKANSAS CONNECTIONS ACADEMY

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. So the first item on our action agenda is the open-enrollment public charter school amendment request for Connections Academy. Ms. McLaughlin, will you give us some information please?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Kelly McLaughlin, ADE Charter School Office.

Our action item $A-1$, we will be hearing from Arkansas Connections Academy. The Charter Authorizing Panel approved this open-enrollment on

October 15, 2014, and today they are here for an amendment request to seek waivers for School Boards. Today you have -- Bryce Adams should be calling in; we have Micah Lipscomb, the director of Student Services; and Nicole Stevens, High School Assistant Principal; Jeremy Hoback, Manager of School Counseling; and Darla Gardner, School Leader. So you will want to have them all sworn in.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes. Ms. McLaughlin, before we get started, you said that they were approved in 2014. When is -- when would they be up for renewal? MS. McLAUGHLIN: They are in the renewal process this year.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So, but this is just an amendment to their currently approved --

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Oh. Yes. It's just the current.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Thank you. Okay. So do we have anyone here to speak on this action item?

Okay. If all those who wish to speak, if you'll raise your right hand we need to swear you in. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you will give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And if you will please state your name and title for the record, you are recognized.

MS. GARDNER: My name is Darla Gardner and I'm the School Leader at Arkansas Connections Academy. Thank you.

First, thank you for the opportunity to be here this morning. We are a public statewide online school charter. And I wanted to briefly start off by telling you -- just giving you an update on where we are so far in our charter.

On the next slide you'll see that we've been -we have had a C letter grade for the last two years. Currently, we have 1511 students. This is our first year for students in grades -- 12th grade.

Oh, is that how you do it? [indicating the PowerPoint remote control].

Okay. We have 57\% free and reduced lunch. 18\% of our students are on IEP 504.

We're very excited to share because we just had our back-to-school bash in Little Rock. There's a little photo of us at Professor Bowl. We had over 450 attendees there. We currently have 51 school events planned for this school year all over the
state, and we're really excited about our first graduation that is taking place in May here in Little Rock. Also, we had our first prom this past May and we're looking forward to our second prom next year.

So during the application process we requested a waiver for our school board members to be able to call in on the public conference line just so that we could insure state representation on our board statewide, since our students all -- are all over the state, and we received that waiver. Since the application time, the new law has gone into effect and we're asking to extend that original waiver to also include executive session. That's the only piece of this that we're requesting.

It is a challenge for our school board members since they do live all over the state to be in-person for executive session. Here's some of the challenges that they face:

Our current school board members -- and we currently have five, and they are in northwest Arkansas and in central Arkansas. And sometimes executive sessions may involve sensitive issues that we need everyone to be in-person quickly, and that isn't always an option. For example, currently, right now, our board treasurer, Virginia Walden Ford,

|  |  |
| :---: | :---: |
| 1 | is traveling the United States because her movie |
| 2 | premier, Miss Virginia, is occurring, which we're |
| 3 | very excited for her. But we -- she would not be |
| 4 | able to be represented if we needed to have an |
| 5 | executive session right now. Our parent member has |
| 6 | three small children enrolled at ARCA and it wouldn't |
| 7 | be an option for her to travel to attend an executive |
| 8 | session. |
| 9 | And that is our request. |
| 10 | CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Is there anyone else |
| 11 | that wishes to speak? Anyone signed up for public |
| 12 | comment? |
| 13 | MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.) |
| 14 | CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, are you ready |
| 15 | for questions then? |
| 16 | MS. GARDNER: I'm ready for questions. |
| 17 | CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Great. So we'll -- |
| 18 | I'll start with Mr. Wilson. Do you have any |
| 19 | questions? |
| 20 | MR. WILSON: No. |
| 21 | CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. |
| 22 | MR. WILSON: No questions. Thank you. |
| 23 | CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Newton? |
| 24 | MS. NEWTON: No. |
| 25 | CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams? |

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Are you all looking -- is the waiver just for phone calls or is other electronic -- for example, I've served on boards where we do consent agendas which can be done electronically, in which everyone can sign off and agree to something in writing and then fax or email it back. Or, is this strictly for telephone?

MS. GARDNER: Strictly telephone.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: It says that they can do three times in the calendar year remotely. That's if they follow this and then you didn't have the waiver. So if you were granted the waiver, so then it could be up to three times remote. Is there also -- do you have it in bylaws how many times at minimum a board member can miss a meeting? So if it's remote three times, what about the other times if they're not present and not able to come in person, if that's a challenge?

MS. GARDNER: I do believe we do. And can I refer to Bryce on the phone?

Bryce, can you assist with that question?
MR. ADAMS: Yes. Hi, good morning, everyone.
Bryce Adams, Connections Education.

So right now they already have the waiver from the portion with the three allowances. So the waiver that they already have allows each of the meetings -each of the 12 annual meetings to be telephonic. It's really just for the executive sessions that they need the waiver to be able to actually do those as well.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I'm not sure how well everyone was able to hear that.

Panel Members, were you able to?
Okay. I'm sorry.
And, Bryce, we probably need to swear you in. I don't know that we actually knew that that was happening. So let me do that, and then we're going to see if you would repeat your answer. Okay?

MR. ADAMS: Okay. I was at home and raised my hand and said yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Well, let's go ahead and do it officially. If you'll raise your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the testimony that you shall give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MR. ADAMS: I do.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So if you could do that response one more time I think that would help
us.
MR. ADAMS: Yes. So the referenced piece of code with three allowances calling in for telephonic meetings, they already have a waiver from that section which allows them to have all 12 of their annual meetings telephonically. It's really just the executive sessions that are in new law, additional subsections that have been passed into law. So this is a cleanup amendment to allow those as well.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.
Dr. Kremers, does that help?
DR. KREMERS: It does. Yes. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Question?
MR. BALDWIN: How many pre-established executive sessions do you have? Are there such things?

MS. GARDNER: We have two pre-established. But of course, as we know, anything could come up at any time with complainant issues or --

MR. BALDWIN: How many nonrecurring executive sessions do you generally have in a year?

MS. GARDNER: Non-reoccurring?
MR. BALDWIN: Yeah, kind of special purpose executive sessions, how often would those happen?

MS. GARDNER: We typically don't. We have our monthly board meeting and there's two times a year
that we go into executive sessions. Very rarely do we have to call a special board meeting. So really it's anything planned that's reoccurring for that. DR. WILLIAMS: And you all do have a procedure to -- when you go into executive session to make sure those -- only those that's on the call are on the call?

MS. GARDNER: Yes. And all of our -- you know, our board meetings -- with the new recording law, we're following all of those as well.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any other questions from Panel Members?

Okay. Ms. Hyatt, are there any legal issues that we would need to be aware of? MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.) CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. All right. So if there are no other questions, if someone is ready to make a motion or if we need to have discussion I'll entertain a motion.

MR. WILSON: Move the approval of the request.
DR. WILLIAMS: Second.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and a second.

Any discussion?

All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?
Okay. Congratulations.
MS. GARDNER: Thank you very much .
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Your motion has been approved.

And, Panel Members, if you will record your vote -- I think we have a link. We'll give everybody a minute to pull that link up.
[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Since we had a unanimous vote, unless Panel Members object, I won't have you all read out your reasons for your vote in terms of feedback.

The Panel Members did not have concerns or questions and recognized that your board members are coming from a wide range of locations and this will allow the executive sessions to be conducted in the same manner that a board meeting would.

MS . GARDNER: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you.
A-2: HEARING FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
AMENDMENT REQUEST: RIVER VALLEY VIRTUAL ACADEMY
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we will go ahead
and move on to action agenda item Number 2. Ms. McLaughlin, will you present that to us?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Action agenda item 2 is for River Valley Virtual Academy. They were granted authorization on October 20, 2016. Their charter will expire on June 30, 2022.

Today, they are here for a -- requesting an amendment request for waivers on the Unstructured Social Time and Elementary Recess. And on the phone we have Jennifer Feeny, Director of the Virtual Academy, and Nancy Robbins, the Curriculum Director.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So our presenters are on the phone then; they're not here?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Yes, ma'am.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Hello?
MS. FEENY: Hi. How are you?
MS. ROBBINS: Good morning.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Good morning. I'm going to ask both of you to be sworn in at this time.

MS. FEENY: Okay.
MS. ROBBINS: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MS. ROBBINS: Yes.

MS. FEENY: Yes, I do.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So hearing both of you, your responses -- Ms. Feeny, will you be going first in the presentation?

MS. FEENY: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We will go ahead and let you get started, and you'll have 20 minutes.

MS. FEENY: Okay. Thank you-guys for letting us come over the phone. That is very helpful from a distance.

The reason we are here this morning is to request the waiver for the Unstructured Social Time, or recess time. As a virtual school, our students work from home with the support of their parents. While we do believe extra recess and unstructured social time is very beneficial to our students, the virtual setting makes it difficult to insure the 40 minutes a day is met. Our students participate in P.E. and our encouraged to participate in youth sports through our local Boys and Girls Club. And, in addition, our school district has invested in area walking trails and outdoor exercise equipment that are open to our students and families. We continue to emphasize the importance of physical activity and social interaction through our youth sports, local
elementary schools, walking trails, the Center for Art Education, the Huckabee Nature Center, and our field trips. Our trips include activities such as the city park cleanup, serving food at the local homeless shelter, and packing food for local students in need of additional food over the weekend.

With the approval of the recess waiver, we will continue to work with our students and families to insure that the additional time is spent in unstructured social time settings. But the waiver would give us that opportunity to be a little more flexible.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Robbins, did you have anything to add?

MS. ROBBINS: No, that pretty well sums it up. There's just no way that we can insure absolutely that they're having that time every day.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Are you all ready for questions?

MS. FEENY: Yes, ma'am.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. I'll start with Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: No questions.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No questions?
DR. KREMERS: No questions.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams?
DR. WILLIAMS: How do you all -- do y'all have any documentation process for families, something that they can report on -- report back to you on what they're doing?

MS. FEENY: Yes, we have a process. We use Google forms a lot. And they submit information to us -- you know, how long did it take, what did you do, what days, things like that. So we do try to document all those things.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.
MS. FEENY: You're welcome.
MR. ROGERS: No.
MS. NEWTON: No questions.
MR. WILSON: No questions.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a question.
You mentioned that you had invested in walking trails and some, I think, playground equipment. And you have that at your physical site; is that correct?

MS. FEENY: Our school district has it throughout the -- all of the sites. Like at our location there is a walking trail outside, and then the elementaries are continuing to add walking trails and outdoor equipment. It's throughout our school district.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So what type of participation do you have from your students? Do you have a way to gauge that?

MS. FEENY: We don't. That is something that we could look at trying to collect data on.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Panel Members, any other questions?

Ms. Hyatt, would you like to -- can you update us on any legal considerations with this request?

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt.
I just wanted to let you know that this would -this is the first time that this recess waiver would be granted, if you do approve it. The new recess legislation does specifically allow for a waiver if the school is operating as a virtual school. There are two ways to get it, and that's one of the ways. But I just -- because you like to know when it's the first time you're granting a waiver, I just wanted to let you know that.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Panel Members, any questions or discussion about this?

Okay. Hearing none, if -- at this time if someone has a motion?

MR. WILSON: I move the approval of the request.
DR. KREMERS: Second.

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

All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Anyone opposed?
All right. Your request has been approved. The Panel Members will record their votes. And if you'll stay on the line with us, we will go through and provide any details on their responses.

MS. FEENY: Thank you.
[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So since we do have people on the phone I will let each Panel Member go through and provide the feedback.

Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: I think it is a reasonable request. I'm in favor of that.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: I support the motion for the waiver, with the online format. I don't have any concerns.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.
DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion. No concerns given that students are encouraged to participate in activities.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.
MR. ROGERS: I approve the motion. For being a virtual school the waiver of the recess is appropriate.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.
MS. NEWTON: I vote in favor. No concerns.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.
MR. WILSON: I have no concerns. I think it's good for flexibility for them to be able to have the waiver.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

A-3: HEARING FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT REQUEST: THE EXCEL CENTER

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And we will move on with our next item on the agenda, which is for The Excel Center. Ms. McLaughlin, will you present that to us?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Action Item 3 is The Excel Center. They were approved -- let me get there. Their charter is going to be expiring on June 30, 2022. And if you'll bear with me for a few minutes, I'm juggling a couple of tasks today.
[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]
MS. McLAUGHLIN: Okay. And they were approved on October 19, 2016. They are here today to ask for
a request for an increased enrollment cap, and also for employee sick leave, and the School Counseling Improvement Act, just a portion of that. And you do have Tomeko Davis, principal, and Brian Marsh, president of -- the CEO of Goodwill present today for their presentation.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So will those who are going to be speaking on this agenda item please stand? Okay. If you will raise your right hand -do you swear or affirm that the testimony you give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY) CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If you'll come forward, state your name and title for the record, you'll be recognized and we'll begin with the 20 minutes -- up to 20 minutes to present. MS. DAVIS: Okay. I'm Tomeko Davis, School Director/Principal of The Excel Center. MR. MARSH: Brian Marsh, President/CEO of Goodwill Industries of Arkansas. First, I'd like to thank -CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We need to make sure that you pull that microphone up, and it's for our viewing audience as well as our audience here. Thank you.

MR. MARSH: Thank you very much, one, for allowing us to operate in the State of Arkansas and have the impact that we're having. We do appreciate the opportunity to serve the people of Arkansas. Also appreciate the opportunity to speak with the Board -- with the Panel.

Financially, we're in a very sound state in the State of Arkansas here with Goodwill Industries of Arkansas. We have the board that is very supportive of The Excel Center. Our mission is "Changing Lives Through Education Training and Employment." The basis for that is education. We feel this is the opportunity for us to have the greatest impact on the Citizens of Arkansas, and the people of need. So we are in support of Tomeko and to answer any questions.

MS. DAVIS: Okay. So with the request for the increase in the enrollment cap -- if you look at our statistics over the course of 2017, that school year, we had about 102 students on the enrollment cap of 125, on our official enrollment cap. But since that time we've served over 217 students. So those are individuals in the State of Arkansas who are at least 19 years of age or older who have not -- who do not have a high school diploma. We had our first graduation in December of last year; we had six
students to graduate. And then we had our second graduation in June of this year, with an additional 18 students. So now we have 24 additional Arkansans who are adults who have children within the traditional public schools who now have parents that have a high school diploma and have now changed their priority when it comes to education.

So the increase in the enrollment cap request is so that we can service more students. So if you're looking at it and you're thinking, "Well, you haven't reached your enrollment cap with that 102 and you're currently approved for 125," we've been strategic in our approach to marketing our school. What we don't want to do is disenfranchise individuals who are already dealing with things and have been disenfranchised in the past by saying, "Okay, we have this wonderful opportunity for you to come, complete your education. But -- oh, wait a minute -- we don't have a seat available." So if we were granted this waiver we would -- I mean this enrollment increase we would then ramp up our marketing efforts to pull in the seats -- the students that could fill those seats.

MR. MARSH: Our board supports this in -- both in professional and monetary support. They have
agreed to invest $\$ 2.3$ million in the expansion for the facilities. They will be located on our Scott Hamilton campus, which is the campus that -- the building that the current school is operating in. We would build out roughly 26,000 square feet for the operation of the school in that location. We have a bus stop that actually stops at our building, so we do have transportation. As the Panel is aware, we do have a drop-in center for children, for child care, while the parents are on-site. So we're trying to do everything we can to remove these barriers.

MS. DAVIS: So in addition to that enrollment cap we're also seeking the waivers for the sick leave policy for our staff. As with all states now, the employees should be granted at least one sick day per month. What we do for our employees is at the beginning of the calendar year we grant them 64 personal time-off hours. So that time can be utilized for emergencies, for illnesses, and things of that nature, at their discretion. The time that the school is closed for holidays and the school breaks that is considered the vacation time for our staff. We have identified that, with our student body, engagement and relationship building is essential; and so the best way to do that is to
insure that our staff is constantly there, engaged, and available. So if we were granted additional time off to staff, then we may have students that are coming into our school who are looking for those connections to feel like, "Okay, I can talk to this person." As you guys know, we have the life coaching model. Each one of our students is assigned a life coach -- and again, that's a big part of what we do with our students in garnering that connection and getting them to feel like, "Okay, I can be successful; I have the support that I need, if I don't have the family support outside of school." So our staff -- usually, even with the 64 hours that they're granted they don't use them; they're so engaged for our students and we have such a high retention rate. If you look at the students that were enrolled, our average daily attendance is in the 90th percentile. From term to term, our retention rate for our students is in the 70 th percentile. When we're dealing with individuals who have a boatload of life barriers, we're there working with them consistently, trying to help them face and facilitate those life barriers so that they don't hinder their success.

And so, again, that connection with them and
being constantly present helps to support the mission.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Did you speak to the other waiver that you were seeking?

MS. DAVIS: So for the student services plan, so although -- with the comprehensive counseling plan, the Act that came down, although -- because our students are nontraditional, everything that we do for our students does not traditionally line up with that plan. Now, granted, our life coaches do complete many of the responsibilities that a traditional counselor does do. They help with the scheduling of the classes, they help with the career and college planning for students outside -- because we focus on what comes next. But our life coaches also -- again, they are that support system to our students. So the part of that that we're requesting is -- because in that comprehensive plan it puts a time limit on the amount of time that a quote/ unquote "counselor" can spend doing certain activities with their students. And we would like for our life coaches to have the autonomy to spend whatever time is necessary to support the students. We are big on saying, "We meet our students where they are." And so with that, however much time that
needs to be dedicated to that student for whatever specific person -- purpose it is, that's what we want to be allowed to do. We do have MOUs with a community organization; so with additional counseling and things of that nature that we cannot handle inhouse, we have those connections to be able to make referrals.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. You still have time remaining. Are you -- do you want to make any kind of closing statement or are you ready for questions? MS. DAVIS: I will just say this -CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. MS. DAVIS: -- what we do is beyond what we do within those walls. Being granted the ability to service more people allows us to be able to service more of the children in the traditional school systems. When you educate a parent you educate a child, and that's our focus.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you very much. And we will go ahead and move on to questions.

Mr. Wilson.
MR. WILSON: Thank you, Madam Chairman.
Your operating budget, as I'm reading it, shows no state funding at all?

MR. MARSH: Correct. At this time we get no
state funding. We're fully funded by Goodwill Industries of Arkansas.

MR. WILSON: That's amazing. Thank you.
MS. NEWTON: I have no questions.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No questions.
Mr. Rogers?
MR. ROGERS: Not right now.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. On this side anybody want to ask a question?

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I just need some clarity. What's the difference between your waiver for sick leave and what currently should be happening? I was trying to track that in the wording here and I'm --

MS. DAVIS: So according to the law, currently every employee should be receiving eight hours of sick leave per month; so you get a day per month, and then they can accumulate up to 90 days. There is no accumulation with our staff. They're given 64 hours each calendar year to use at their discretion. So from January to December they get 64 hours that they can use however they need to use it, for any emergencies or illnesses.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MR. MARSH: Also, our school is set up in eightweek sessions and there are five of those throughout
the year. So the breaks between those are also afforded to the staff as time away from the job. So, yes.

DR. WILLIAMS: Excellent. So approximately what's the break between sessions?

MS. DAVIS: Between each eight-week session we have one full week.

DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, okay.
MS. DAVIS: So we have one full week.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. And they are basically off during that time or have some flex time during that --

MS. DAVIS: Well, we consider it to be administration days -- administrative days. But they're allowed to take off if they need to take off. But it's non-instructional.

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Okay. That's good. I was worried about the eight for a whole year is --

MS. DAVIS: So our --
DR. WILLIAMS: -- not reasonable.
MS. DAVIS: So our instructional week is Monday through Thursday.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MS. DAVIS: So we don't do instruction on Friday.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MS. DAVIS: And then there's one week off of instruction between each eight-week term.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Makes sense now. Thank you.

DR. KREMERS: I'm curious why the cap is requested for 350 . It looks like your current enrollment is 72 . So what do you anticipate changing to raise the cap so high from where it is?

MS. DAVIS: Again, like I say, it would be our marketing. Right now, it's strictly -- we just -- we really don't have a marketing boost where we're putting out extra things. So it's also -- right now, it's more so word-of-mouth. We talk to students; they refer people. Our marketing department with Goodwill is working on a marketing plan. So when we receive the approval for such, then we will ramp that up and put that into place. Because the number -there is about 10 -- 30,000-plus individuals in Pulaski County that are adults who do not have high school diplomas, and so we could serve them.

DR. KREMERS: Okay. My other question is about the life coach modeling. And it looks like on the budget you have three life coaches, plus one lead. So I'm assuming that means there's four total?

MS. DAVIS: There will be four total. Yes. DR. KREMERS: And if you have at your current 72 students that would allow ample time for each student -- because as you mentioned, the whole idea is that there's a lot more dedicated time. But if you hit your max cap of 350 , they'd be serving almost 90 students per. So is there any plan to add coaches at that time?

MS. DAVIS: I will say I came from a location in Tennessee, which was an Excel Center that had a 350 cap, and we were able to operate with four life coaches. Because, honestly, you have -- you'll have a portion of your caseload that needs high-touch, and then you'll have a portion that really doesn't; it'll be a matter of just temperature checks, how are you doing, making sure they have their plans identified, and then they really don't need your services. But then you do have those that need that extra fullblown life support coaching. But it is doable.

DR. KREMERS: And I think -- and that's -- I think it was just the statement that you just mentioned that it would just -- they'd have as much time as they would want. But if you have 90 -almost 90 students, that really isn't practical.

MS. DAVIS: So we are an environment where
everybody within the school -- although all are not identified as life coaches, we all do life coaching. So there's not a staff member there that a student isn't capable of -- or able to go to to get the support that they need. I find myself even pulling students in, talking to students, trying to help with the guidance of the students that we currently have now, and we have the two life coaches.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And if I may, something you mentioned a while ago, Ms. Davis, that there are limits to the time that your life coaches -- or that, going back to the Counseling Act, there are limits to the time they can spend with students. I don't know that that's actually reflective of the legislation. What the legislation did was basically open up for more time to be spent with direct student services. So your -- so I'm needing a little bit of explanation as to why you need the waiver from the School Counseling Act. I can understand that your life coaches are not the licensed school counselors like that might be in a traditional school; so those components I would understand. But the legislation is not limiting the time; it limits the amount of administrative time that a counselor or life coach would spend with students. But I think from what you
described you would see that as a good thing.
So can you help me understand maybe what the legislation is limiting and why there would need to be a wholesale waiver from the entire piece of legislation?

MS. DAVIS: So with our life coaches, they serve -- when it comes to disciplinary referrals and things they all serve on the team collectively with my-self and the other administrators within the building, because they have that connection with the students. And so, therefore, whatever time that needs to be dedicated to those type of duties -- it may be an administrative duty. But if it's there to improve services that our students receive, we want them to be able to dedicate that time to it.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So have you visited with our staff to determine whether or not participating on a team would be considered an administrative duty or the indirect services versus the direct services? Because with what you're describing, I'm not sure that that would actually be a problem.

MS. DAVIS: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I just -- with this -with waiving this piece of legislation $I$ just want to make sure that those asking for the waiver really
understand what they're asking to waive, and why, and is it absolutely necessary. So I don't want to prevent you from being able to do what you need to do, but I really want us to stop and think about it before we would waive.

And Ms. Hyatt is walking up here, so she may be able to help us a little bit.

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt.
And because I knew this -- we were going to talk about the counseling legislation a lot today, I have printed a copy. So I'm just going to read what it says in terms of what can be in that $90 \%$ as it relates to that particular question.

So in the $90 \%$ of time engaged in direct and indirect student services it includes serving as a contributing member of decision-making teams, which include without limitation several things, including positive behavioral intervention support programs, any type of decision-making team. I think the 10\% administrative duties is really things like being the ELL coordinator, being the 504 coordinator, and not actually serving, because the law differentiates between serving on a decision-making team versus being the coordinator of those activities. So in the 90\% you could be on a behavior decision-making team
or a 504 team making decisions; you just couldn't be the coordinator in that $90 \%$.

So -- and we did talk about this before it came before you guys today and they did kind of narrow it down just to this section as opposed to a waiver of everything. But hearing more today, you know, that is something that can be done with the legislation based on what you are saying today. So there might be other things -- I'm not exactly sure, but --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
I think I cut you off from asking your questions

MR. BALDWIN: That's okay. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: I just have two questions.
Let me ask about the life-coaching first. Is that a -- is that something that is a certified position, like a counselor, or is that a different type of skill?

MS. DAVIS: No, it is not. We try to employ individuals who have a background with serving the public, public service. I'm trying to think --

MR. MARSH: There have been -- they have -- her background -- another one of our life coaches came through and worked at our -- with our re-entry team
as a counselor and coach with the re-entry team; so she was working with individuals who are re-entering society upon being released from incarceration. So her training is in that life soft-skills building, but also the surrounding -- building the surrounding support system and working with an individual on how they can build their support system so it's enriching the family. So it's some of that also.

MR. BALDWIN: Okay. My other question is going back to the increase in the cap of students. And I guess you would need to have additional facilities if you increased up to 350, and that's what the capital purchases are for?

MR. MARSH: Yes, sir.
MR. BALDWIN: Okay. And explain what you would add -- what you plan to add.

MR. MARSH: What we will do is we're building out a new -- basically a new facility for the classrooms, the drop-in center for the school location. We have 587,000 square feet on Scott Hamilton and I-30. The space that we're in right now is limiting; it butts up against our administrative offices, and it's actually where our trade school will move into. We have a licensed trade school with the State that supports the graduates of The Excel

Center. So we will move this into another location in the building to allow for the 350 students and also for the supporting efforts and activities for the students.

MR. BALDWIN: Will you need to hire any new teachers to -- I mean I guess you do, obviously.

MR. MARSH: Yes. With the staff -- with the change with this, this will allow us to look at hiring staff prior to the ramp-up, which would be with the start of the new fiscal in July. So it allows us to move forward with our build-out. If the Panel so approves, we will start our build-out of the facility. With that, what we will do is we will hire the staff -- we'll bring the staff on early so that they can learn the way the school operates and also then be trained in any of the special skill-sets, and also then couple with our partners in the Excel model, which are in Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Washington, D.C., and Austin, Texas.

And the life model works. It works well enough that we're going to do it now for our employees. And so we have 1,000 employees across the state. What we see is -- Dr. Kremers, as you mentioned -- that ratio of high-touch and low-touch support. We anticipate with 1,000 employees that we're going to need to
start with five spread across the state, and then we will evaluate their time and whether or not they have the -- an adequate amount of time to serve the public or the -- our employee population. It's the same with the school, if we need to add an additional life coach because of our mix. We're basing our numbers on the schools that are operating across the state -across the country, and it fits what they were saying, as Tomeko mentioned, in Memphis, but also in Indianapolis.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any remaining questions?
Mr. Rogers.
MR. ROGERS: Remind me again what age group y'all are trying to serve, because I know it's a 9-12 school but I just can't remember --

MR. MARSH: 19 and above.
MR. ROGERS: Okay. So earlier when you were asking about the state funds -- he was asking about the state funds --

MR. MARSH: Yes.
MR. ROGERS: -- and you said, "Not right now" --
MR. MARSH: Yes.
MR. ROGERS: -- do you have plans to ever go with that? Because I have -- I guess I have some concerns there about granting these waivers and
everything if that's in the future.
MR. MARSH: Well, what we look at is we're looking at working with the state in two ways. One, we're working -- looking at working with legislators to expand the funding. The way the bill is written today the funding shall not come from the public school model.

MR. ROGERS: Right.
MR. MARSH: So it will not come from those funds. What we're looking at is working with the Governor and with his staff, but also working with legislators so that we can look to expand the schools across the state. In the State of Arkansas, we have over 300,000 Arkansans over the age of 25 without a high school diploma. In Washington and Benton Counties combined, using the 2015 numbers, there's over 40,000 there. Here in central Arkansas we have over 60,000 in the three counties that touch together. We feel that we have to try and expand the school. We cannot fund five schools across the state with the Goodwill -- right now with the Goodwill model and with our social enterprise. But with other both public and private funding that we're looking at we are looking at expanding the school. Yes.

MR. ROGERS: And to go back to the school
counseling waiver, I guess I'm going to need a little more clarification. Did we establish whether you need it or not? Because it sounds like --

MS. DAVIS: I don't need it.
MR. ROGERS: So does she need to --
MS. DAVIS: We can withdraw that.
MR. ROGERS: Okay.
MS. HYATT: And this was kind of an oversight on my part. Seeing that the coaches are not certified, they will need a waiver of 6-18-2003(2)(a). They are meeting all of the other requirements of that law to have a comprehensive school counseling program. But that particular section says that it has to be implemented by an Arkansas certified school counselor or someone serving under an ALP or under a waiver -but it cites to the 1240 law, not to a waiver granted from a charter. So they will need a waiver there, just that little-bitty section, 6-18-2003(2)(a).

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So you would be rescinding the waiver that you have in the application as far as the $90 \%$ of the time or those duties, but needing the waiver from the actual license to be able to utilize your life coaches. Is that correct?

MS. DAVIS: Yes.
MR. MARSH: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Is everyone good with that? Okay.

MR. ROGERS: Yeah. And I had one other just about the cap. So right now, you said you had 102?

MS. DAVIS: In our 2017 numbers, yes.
MR. ROGERS: Okay. And you're wanting to go up to 350 --

MS. DAVIS: Yes.
MR. ROGERS: -- all at once? And I thought you said you were going to try to push the marketing?

MS. DAVIS: Yes.
MR. ROGERS: So if we approve the cap today, the cap would go up at the next school year?

MR. MARSH: The facilities would allow us -right now, we could have as many as 140 in the classrooms that we have. We would not seek to try and lift that until we had the other build-out done so that we can serve those students, to look at that cap or that -- excuse me -- that 350 number. We would then start our marketing. Our marketing will start in the spring for that July start-date. So we would look to expand in that July -- in that July --

MR. ROGERS: July 2021?
MR. MARSH: July of this year -- of this coming year. Yes, July of '20.

MR. ROGERS: '21, Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: 2020.
MR. ROGERS: 2020.
MR. MARSH: Yes.
MR. ROGERS: But right now you would only -- you could only go up to 140?

MR. MARSH: 140, yes, that's what we would -- we would not seek to drive to that number because of the disenfranchising of students. We don't ever want to do that.

MR. ROGERS: Okay. I just -- it's aggressive. I mean, and then you don't have the facilities done yet, so that's -- but then again, I understand the population you're trying to reach is different from the traditional schools. And so that's why I'm going back-and-forth in my head right now.

MR. MARSH: Mr. Rogers, I do understand. To tell you where we are on the build-out, we have -we're in the process of hiring an architect. We've already talked with the architects. We brought in six to look at the build-out. We've already prepped the space for the construction. So we feel that the construction can be done in a timely manner and we would be ready for that. The staffing that -- we would seek to do the recruiting and the staffing that
would fall in line with that start-up so that we would be prepared. Tomeko has gone through a school start-up. We went through the start-up here in Little Rock. With that, we held a lottery. So we had a number of people apply; we had two hundred -over 250 students apply. We drew names for those students that would be in the school and then the other students went on a waiting list. We would anticipate doing the same thing, but we don't want to disenfranchise -- and that's the biggest concern we have with the population we serve; they've already got a lot of barriers in their way and we don't want to add another barrier of that disenfranchising. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And you all have had two graduating classes; is that correct --

MR. MARSH: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- so far? What is -- have you been able to determine is there a typical amount of time that -- so far, that a graduate or that an enrollee has taken to work through -- I know you've got such a unique population and that would be very unpredictable. But I didn't know if there was kind of a pattern developing? MS. DAVIS: So, traditionally, as a student comes full-time, which is from 9:00 until 4:00 --

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and they need what we consider to be refresher courses, which is the remediation to even start the course progression, then it takes anywhere between 16, 18 months or so for them to complete their high school diploma. But we also have had individuals who are on the younger side of the population who have come in and after 16 weeks -- because each eight-week term they earn credits -- have earned the credits that they need to graduate.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I think that unique population and the timing probably really does play into the uncertainty with the facilities, the numbers.

MR. MARSH: Yes.
DR. KREMERS: I think just one more question on that. The enrollment report enclosed within the packet is from September of '19, and it says enrollment is 72. But you're using a different number?

MS. DAVIS: Yes. Well, so the information -I'm referencing our enrollment, official enrollment number of 2017. But currently -- so that information that I submitted was prior to the term. So, again, we have a term that starts every eight weeks, so that
was prior to the start of our second term of this school year. And so that term began with an enrollment of 96 students.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.
MS. DAVIS: So it varies each week. We have students who withdraw, come in, and every eight weeks we have an increase or a decrease in student enrollment.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we really -- to get a true picture you almost have to look at enrollment per the eight-week term that your students come in, which is a lot different than what we're looking at with the three-quarter ADM for a traditional school.

MS. DAVIS: Right.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And remind me, you said your average daily attendance -- did you mention that?

MS. DAVIS: And that's on -- with that 2017, and that's in the 90th percentile. But our retention rate from term-to-term is in the 70th percentile.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
Okay, Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: Thank you. Going back to the employee sick leave waiver, is that -- I guess the system right now is working well for your staff --

MR. MARSH: Yes.
MR. BALDWIN: -- your teachers and staff. Are they supportive of this?

MR. MARSH: Yes.
MS. DAVIS: Very much so. Like I said, I have employees that get down to the end of the school year -- because they hate to take off. Because we tell our students missing a day of school with us, because we're an accelerated program, is like missing a week; and the teachers feel the exact same way.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Panel, any other questions?

Okay. If not, I will entertain a motion.
DR. WILLIAMS: I move that we approve the waivers for increased enrollment, sick leave, and counseling licensure.

MR. BALDWIN: Second.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and a second.

All those in favor say "aye."
(CHORUS OF AYES FROM ALL PANEL MEMBERS, EXCEPT MR. ROGERS)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I apologize.
MR. ROGERS: I'm confused about what the -- so did that include the enrollment cap?

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I said enrollment.
Sharon K. Hill, CCR

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Enrollment cap.
MR. ROGERS: I'm sorry; I missed that. I was -and then as they amended it?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: As the -- yes, their --
MR. ROGERS: Okay. So --
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Would you like to say -would you like to vote at this time?

MR. ROGERS: Yes. I'm good with that. Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Any opposed?
Okay. Thank you. And we will record our votes and that way we have it completely accurate for the record. Thank you.
(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I think we are ready.
Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I believe that the request for waivers for -- actually for the enrollment increase and waivers for employee sick leave and counseling were well considered and well presented and part of your planned growth. So I am in support of the request.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: I support the motion to increase the enrollment cap, the sick leave, and licensure for the life coaches. I think for the population served
that it is -- it will help serve those.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.
DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion for all the waivers -- to increase the enrollment, sick leave, and counseling licensure. Increased enrollment will allow them to reach more students, ages 19 and above, that can use their services. Given the structure of the academic year, the sick leave is in line with other organizations and schools. The counseling waiver will allow instructional staff to continue working with students.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.
MR. ROGERS: I approve the motion as it was amended for this kind of thing.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Newton. MS. NEWTON: I'm having technical difficulties. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Oh, okay. Sorry about that. MS. NEWTON: Granting the waivers seems both logical and practical with the need.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.
MR. WILSON: I vote for the motion. I
understood, with Mr. Rogers' help, the funding question. And I'm satisfied and appreciative of the work you all do.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we do appreciate
you working with us on the waivers to insure that you have the waivers you need to do the work you need to do. But you also recognize that we want to make sure that other components stay intact, because they really do help you continue to do what you need. So appreciate you very much and have a great rest of the day.

MS. DAVIS: Thank you.
MR. MARCH: Thank you very much. And I would like to invite the Board to come and visit the school, if the chance affords itself. We've had Commissioner Key, we've had the Governor come through, and would love to have the Board come through. So, thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes. Thank you.
Okay. Before the next item, can we take a 5minute break? And we will come back to hear the amendment request for Lisa Academy. Thank you. (BREAK: 9:30-9:40 A.M.)

A-4: HEARING FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER AMENDMENT REQUEST LISA ACADEMY

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. We will reconvene and begin with action item Number 4. Ms. McLaughlin, you are recognized.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you. For Action Item 4
we have Lisa Academy coming before you asking for an amendment request. They were granted or authorized a charter on January 12, 2004, and their charter will expire on June 30, 2030.

Today they are asking for multiple items. If you'll bear with me, I'm going to go through those:

Transferring the Collegiate Choices dba Little Rock Preparatory Academy charter to Lisa Academy, beginning in the 2020-2021 school year;

Reconfiguring Lisa Academy Chenal, Lisa Academy West Middle School, and Lisa Academy West High School by adding a new campus at 6711 West Markham Street;

Rename schools to provide consistency and clarity;

Increase Lisa Academy's enrollment cap by 432 to accommodate the LRPA's current cap;

Lisa Academy requests that all of its current waivers be extended to include what is now Little Rock Preparatory Academy for the reasons originally provided in the rationale when the waivers were first granted by the State's charter authorizer;

And they also intend to change the name of the new transferred school to Lisa Academy.

Today we will have Dr. Fatih Bogrek, superintendent; Luanne Baroni, assistant
superintendent; Donna Broyles, Little Rock Prep director; and many others. And you will want to swear them in.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. So will all of those who are going to be presenting or speaking on behalf of Lisa Academy -- yes, all of you -- we're going to swear you in. If you'll raise your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay, thank you. And we are ready to begin the presentation. You'll have up to 20 minutes. And if you'll state your name and title for the record, we will -- you'll be recognized. Thank you.

SUPT. BOGREK: Fatih Bogrek, Superintendent of Lisa Academy. Dear Respected Panel Members, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present our amendment requests. Assistant Superintendent Luanne Baroni is going to show the PowerPoint presentation. MS. BARONI: Good morning, Dr. Pfeffer and Panel Members. My name is Luanne Baroni. I'm the Assistant Superintendent and Director of Communications for Lisa Academy. And it's my
pleasure to present to you this morning our amendment requests.

I'd like to start off with a little bit -- let me make sure I've got the technology -- there we go. I'd like to start off by reviewing our mission and pillars. It's the mission of Lisa Academy to provide an academically rigorous college prep curriculum in partnership with students, families, and the community, and to guide all students in knowledge, skills, and the attitude necessary to direct their lives; improve a diverse society and excel in a changing world by providing dynamic resource rich learning environments. That has always been our mission. We have added in recent years our four pillars which are Learn, Innovate, Support, and Achieve.

The current structure of Lisa Academy consists of essentially three different systems. In West Little Rock we have a K -12 system that's housed in three buildings, and that's about 1400 students in that system. And then north of the river, in North Little Rock/Sherwood, we have a K-12 system as well, with about 550 students in the 6-12 grade building, which is brand-new, and then 676 in our $\mathrm{K}-5$. We also have a K-8 system that we just opened this fall in

Springdale, serving around 230 students. Our current enrollment cap is 3,000 for the entire system. This is just some photos of our recent grand opening of our Lisa North building, which has been many years in the making. Our $\mathrm{K}-12$ students were all in a former Best Buy building for a number of years, and we were very happy to open this new building for our secondary students this fall. And so we're excited about that opportunity.

Some of the things that have made Lisa Academy successful over the years are listed here: first of all, planning academic success for all of our students. Regardless of the background they come to us with, regardless of their preparation before we get them, we believe that we have to make a plan for each of them. We also embrace the diversity of our students. We prepare all of our students for college and career. We embed STEM in everything we do. We intentionally involve our parents in all of the activities and programs that we have for our students. And we really aggressively try to collaborate with others in our community, other schools and organizations that can help us provide the best education possible for our students.

We've had great success over the years. This is
from last year and we had to submit this before this year's was ready, but our grades have been good over the years. We've done a good job with providing for our students and we -- one of the things we're very proud of is the growth that we've had in our students, not just achievement but also successful growth. Lisa North last year was the highest growth in the state of Arkansas, and we're very proud of that.

As you can see, our ACT Aspire results and graduation have been strong, particularly when compared with central Arkansas. We have achieved good scores in math, in ELA, and also have maintained a strong graduation rate over the years.

Beyond just the classroom, we believe that there's more to a student than just what happens in the classroom -- and because of that we have always offered a lot of extracurricular activities for students. All of our middle school students and some of our high school students participate in Science Fair. We have other academic competition teams. We have a sports program that's pretty broad that's developed over the years. And we have other extracurricular programs, including things in the fine arts -- music, art, drama -- to broaden the
students' horizons.
Our diversity is something that I mentioned earlier and that we have been very deliberate about working with. We have steadily increased both our low income and our minority student populations each year since inception. This shows the growth since 2012. We currently have a minority enrollment of around $80 \%$, and we have currently a $64 \%$ free and reduced lunch population. We've been recognized as the most racially diverse school in the State of Arkansas a couple of years ago. And you can see from the graph that this has been a steady progression that we have consistently grown both of the populations -- the minority population and the free-and-reduced lunch -- and that has been done through some deliberate efforts on our part to do that.

We believe that college and career preparation is one of our strongest focus points. We've had a 95\% or more college acceptance rate for our students graduating, and we've maintained a $100 \%$ graduation rate. We also have been recognized nationally by US News as one of the -- some of the best high schools in Arkansas, and also by Washington Post as some of the most challenging high schools.

We believe in parental involvement. We have a
lot of activities and these grow every year. One of the things that has been kind of unique over the years is our home visit program. Last year, we had over 200 home visits that we offered to our families, where our staff goes to visit with them in their homes, learns about them -- not coming to tell on their kids, but just to get to know them and let them know what -- who we are and what we offer for their students. We also have active volunteers within our schools from our parents. We have a lot of other activities, the traditional Donuts with Dads, Muffins with Moms, and all of that. One of my favorite activities is our Thanksgiving dinner that we have for our students who are in our intervention programs. That grew out of a desire from some teachers who just wanted to spend some time with the families without any agenda, without trying to talk to them about anything other than just getting to know them. And now that's become an annual event where we just invite those families in, feed them, serve them, and get to know them and try to understand where they're coming from better. Lots of other things that we have to try to engage parents because that's very important.

We have always provided STEM exploration
programs for our students. Some of those include Learning Blade, which is a STEM career exploration online program that we use in our career orientation and in our science classes; we've had some of our girls participate in the Promise -- Girls of Promise Coding Summit; we now offer Project Lead the Way courses from elementary all the way through high school; we have a Space Camp trip each year for our 5th grade students to go to Huntsville and learn about the space program there; we have Science Fair, again, for all of our middle school students each year; and we have sponsored a STEM Festival that's a statewide program for the last five years. We began that in 2015, in cooperation with UA-Little Rock; it's been housed at UA-Little Rock for the last five years. We've had over 2,000 students from all across the state participating in that, and it's a hands-on event where students present to students about STEM activities and all the science that they can get their hands on. This year it's going to be on March 13th. We've moved it to the State Fairgrounds because we needed more room. So we invite all of you to come there. Our website is -- ARSTEM.org is a website dedicated to that. We'd be happy to have you there.

We also -- another STEM-related activity we've had is our solar car team. Lisa North's solar car team has participated two years in a national competition. The first year they burned out two engines and learned a lot. This past summer they went back; it was at the Motor Speedway in Texas, and they came in fifth nationally. So we're very proud of them. They did that with a very low budget and lots of learning. They designed, engineered, welded, did everything, and then we had to have a couple with driver's licenses to actually drive the car around. So it was an exciting event and we're really proud of them. They say they're going to go back and do better next year.

We also have listened to what the state has told us over the years as a charter school. We believe that part of what we need to do is share what's working for us. We've made a lot of efforts to collaborate and to share best practices with other schools. These are just some examples of that: the Circles program for special education, we provided a conference to invite educators from all over the state; we've invited leaders and teachers from other schools to come and visit with us and have conversations about what's working for students in
our schools and learn from them about what's working in their schools.

Oh, wrong button. There we go.
A recent success and collaboration that we're very happy about was a new venture. Last year, we worked with Ozark Montessori Academy in Springdale. We did consulting in partnership with them throughout the year. We really started working with them in the second semester and as a result of that, as you can see they had some significant increases in their scores. And I believe that their reading score improvement was one of the top two or three improvement scores in the state. All of that was the result of collaboration; it was not all Lisa Academy. But we came in and gave them some structure, provided some curricular supports, gave some guidance to the leadership there, and we feel like the bottom-line on that was students benefitted from that. We're very proud of that and happy about the way that rolled out. And I think the success of that came because we began the process with meeting with their staff, answering their questions, having information parents for their -- nights for their parents, we reached out to the community. There's a Latino and Marshallese community there; we reached out to them to let them
know who we are and what we're doing. Before we had our lottery we had application nights to help the parents, had translators available there to speak in their own languages to help them. And as a result of that -- we also reached out to Springdale School District, which is the main school district there. We brought students here to see our STEM Festival and we also took some of our robotics students there to show their students about robotics and some of the STEM activities we were doing -- are doing. As a result of that, on August 12th we successfully opened Lisa Academy Springdale with 230 K-8 students. Over 100 of those students were previously enrolled at Ozark Montessori Academy and transferred over -- came to us prior to the lottery as a result of that. And so they're off and running there, and we're excited about the new opportunities available to those students there.

We're looking now at a partnership between Lisa Academy and Little Rock Prep Academy. Little Rock Prep currently serves, at the time of this report, 255 -- I think they have a few more than that now --K-8 students in two buildings or two locations. The primary school is located on Spring Street and the middle school is on West Markham. As a CEP school,
all of their students are currently qualified for the free-and-reduced lunch program. And you can see their demographics for the -- I guess this is from the fall, the beginning of the fall demographics. So they're predominantly African American with some other -- Hispanic, Latino, and some other races as well.

At this time I'd like to ask Donna Broyles, who's the Superintendent, to say a few words about the partnership and what we'd like to do.

MS. BROYLES: Good morning. I'm Donna Broyles. Thank you for this time.

I want to say that this opportunity kind of -when the board sat down with me and talked about the direction of the school, they -- we sat down with Lisa and talked about the direction and what we wanted to see for next year. And what that's going to look like for us is we've experienced some declining enrollment; I mean we've got some competition around us. And one of the problems -the challenges that we've also experienced is we go to 8th grade, and so our students that leave 8th grade they -- the parents have always said, "Where do we go next?" Well, we have an opportunity now for our students to continue quality education through a

K-12 program.
So the board sat down with my-self, and then we've all sat down with Ms. Baroni and Dr. Fahti, and we've done an assessment of our school and what the needs are for moving forward. And it's going to be a very positive transition for our students. We've had a Parent Night with our parents and we are looking forward to our students and our families having choices -- another choice for them to continue quality education.

So if there's any questions after Ms. Baroni gets through with her presentation, I'll be glad to entertain those. Thank you.

MS. BARONI: So to move forward with some of the details about the partnership, we have already -- our boards have already approved a Memorandum of Understanding for Lisa Academy to provide some consulting and support services this year. As Ms. Broyles said, we've already sat down together with their leadership to see what those might entail. They particularly need some support for an effective science curriculum. They also need some support for providing some guidance for some of the areas where they have waivers, for nursing services; they need some help in child nutrition. And we're also looking
at providing potentially some RISE training for them; we have trained trainers on our staff. And they need some support in their state testing, and then additional academic supports -- ELA, math -- and some technology assessment to see what we could do to help them in that area. So that is already underway; we're beginning that process already.

Our plans for next year would involve some reconfiguration of our buildings, and the details of that are that our elementary campus right now houses K-6; our 6th grade is in a modular building, which is not optimal for them. What we would like to do is make that campus just $\mathrm{K}-5$, a pure elementary school. Then we would like to move the 6 th grade to what is currently our middle school building on Corporate Hill Drive so that it would be side-by-side with the building that's currently our high school building, which we'd like to move the 7 th and 8 th grade to that building. So the middle school would be on one campus but in two separate buildings, with a 6th grade academy in one building and then the 7 th and 8th grade next door in the other building. Our plan would be, if that's approved, to move our high school students to the building that is currently serving Little Rock Preparatory Middle School, which is on

West Markham. That building has a full-size gym with seating that we could use for home games, which we currently do not have. We have a gym but no seating area, so it's only for P.E. and for practices. Those are the only reconfigurations; it would just be in our west campuses.

We're also asking for some name changes on those just so that our names are consistent. With the amendments and growth over the years names kind of are mismatches right now, and we'd like to make those all more consistent so people know which building we're talking about.

We plan to offer seats to all of the Little Rock Preparatory Academy students who are enrolled prior to the lottery, in a similar way that we did with Ozark Montessori. We would provide application opportunities and support for them to make sure that any parents who want to claim seats would be able to do that. We would intend to offer a seat either on our north campus, if they live closer to that, or at our west campus, if they live closer to that.

In addition, we're going to try something new that we haven't done before and that's to offer transportation. Our plan right now is to offer transportation for the students who are currently at
the primary campus because we don't feel like that campus is -- meets the standard in terms of the structures. It's actually four buildings that involves crossing the street to go to the cafeteria, and we don't feel like that's the same quality campus that we offer to our other elementary students. So to make our campuses accessible to the students there, we're going to provide transportation from that area to our west middle school -- I'm sorry -our west elementary school, so that any of those primary students who want to continue will be able to take advantage of that transportation. As I said, that's a first-run for us doing transportation; so we want to start it at that place and then see what the demand is, what the response is, and then consider if we want to broaden that down the road. As an additional benefit to the reconfiguration that we're proposing, we want to provide a Maker Space at the Corporate Hill location that we want to open up to the community and other schools so that other students could come in and benefit from that Maker Space, not only our students.

So to summarize, our amendment requests are transferring the charter for Little Rock Preparatory Academy to Lisa Academy for the 2020-21 school year;
reconfiguring our west campuses; renaming the schools to provide consistency and clarity; increasing our cap by 432 to accommodate Little Rock Prep's current cap. We want to keep the existing waivers that Lisa Academy has; we're not asking to blend in the Little Rock Prep waivers, but just to keep the Lisa Academy waivers. And we're asking for a couple of subsection waivers in the counseling act that would allow us to continue doing what we've been doing with our counseling program. And we intend to change the name of the new school sponsoring entity to Little Scholars of Arkansas Foundation.

Thank you. And I'll turn it back over to you. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt, is there anyone to speak in opposition?

MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. Okay.
So you still have 5 minutes to close, if you or anyone would like to speak. Okay. If not, then we're ready for questions. So I'll open it up to Panel Members who have questions.

Mr. Baldwin, do you want to start us?
MR. BALDWIN: Yes, thank you.
So job well-done and great scores and great program that you have.

As you transition and basically bring together these organizations, from a culture perspective what do you think your biggest challenge will be -challenges will be pertaining to that?

MS. BARONI: In terms of the cultural changes?
MR. BALDWIN: Any culture, bringing together two teams to be one team.

MS. BARONI: Yeah. I don't -- I really don't see it as being a huge challenge because our population now has changed a whole lot and we're dealing with a lot more students who come from poverty backgrounds and from other kinds of struggles. Yes, we're going to have to learn some things to best serve these students -- and we've already begun some conversations with Ms. Broyles about some of the programs that Little Rock Prep is doing to provide a little more wraparound services for their students. So I think as we work through this year we would want to learn from what they're doing that's effective and to see if we can transition some of that into what we're doing, similar to with Ozark Montessori Academy. They were a Montessori model, which is very different than our model. We are kind of test-driving kindergarten Montessori there and we feel like if that's effective
and we feel like it's going to work we may spread that and use that in our other schools as well.

So when we talk about these collaborative and partnership relationships, there's a two-way piece to that. It's not just us saying, okay, here's our model. We want to also pull the pieces out of what they're doing that have been effective, but also provide the things that maybe they couldn't as a very small school. So, does that answer your question?

MR. BALDWIN: Yes, thank you.
MS. BARONI: Okay.
DR. KREMERS: Just can you confirm is the waiver request for counseling just the licensure of the counselor?

MS. BARONI: It is. Currently, it's just the licensure which is the same section you talked about earlier, the 2003 (a) -- (2) (a). We've also asked for (2) (b) and that is to utilize state and nationally recognized counselor frameworks. The reason we included that is because we are still vetting frameworks to determine, under the new law and looking at the model we've been using for 15 years, which framework might work best for us. And on the short timeframe we had to prepare this amendment we did not have time to vet that or run that through any
committees to see what would line up. We still fully intend to provide the Comprehensive School Counseling Plan; we'd just like a little flexibility because what we've been doing has been working and we want to make sure that we're not boxing our-self into something that we haven't fully vetted yet. So -DR. KREMERS: Okay.

DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. What is the current status of LRPA? I mean are they still -- has the merger occurred? Where are you all in the process? MS. BARONI: No. Currently, they are still operating as Little Rock Preparatory Academy. DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. MS. BARONI: And the intent is for them to continue that through this school year. We would just be providing consulting services to them based on what they define as their needs and how we could help them this year in sharing curricular resources and other supports that might help them this year. DR. WILLIAMS: And then the following year -MS. BARONI: The following year the transfer of the charter would make that then just merge -DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. MS. BARONI: -- with Lisa Academy. Yes. DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. That's -- I needed clarity
there. Okay. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.
MR. ROGERS: So the following year Lisa will take over the revenues and any debt of Little Rock Prep; correct? Any bills or anything that Little Rock Prep has still outstanding?

MS. BARONI: You're asking we would take over that?

MR. ROGERS: Yes.
MS. BARONI: I'm not sure how exactly that all rolls out through the State now with the new law about the transferring of a charter. But our intent is to make sure that everything is clear financially before we complete that.

MR. ROGERS: And then so I guess that's why I'm concerned.

The other one is I was looking for just an overall budget of how you intend to use the allocation of funds for reconfiguring your schools, how it goes in, how your Title 1 funds are going to be used, your state funds, your special ed. funds, and I didn't see any of that on the presentation. And I was kind of wanting to know how that's going to impact --

MS. BARONI: Okay.

MR. ROGERS: -- how all the new schools are going to look. Because with the Title 1 obviously it's got to go with where the school -- how the poverty has been allocated on that because -- the Title 1 district or Title 1 building. And so, those are some of the things that I'm kind of concerned about and then $I$ just don't know where I am right now. Honestly, I'm just -- and I don't know where I am right now with this, and so that's why I was looking for that budget to kind of go -- I know that the Ozark seems to be working good, and I'm glad about that. I just don't know how the reconfiguring is going to take over.

I'm glad I saw where you're offering the transportation as well. But how will -- have you had any discussions with your parents at Little Rock Prep about their feelings on this merger?

MS. BROYLES: Yes, sir, Mr. Rogers. This is Donna Broyles again.

Yes, sir. We had a parent meeting last night to inform our parents and we will continue to be very transparent with them. It's mixed feelings, of course. Change is always different and interesting because we are a small school. We do a lot of handson approaches. But also the families that did stay
and say, "It's a great opportunity for my students to continue quality education" -- and again those 8th graders are what we are -- we always get the questions about is "where do we go from here." And so, again, it was very mixed feelings. Those parents that have expressed some concerns and some passion about LRPA they hopefully will come around, because we've had some students that said, "I want to go to a K-12 school that has more resources." Again, change is different but I believe that those parents trust us to take care of their children, and we will continue to do that between now and June 30th. Because that's my primary focus is to stay focused on their children and to assure them that we are in this together and that their children are our concern as well.

So I hope that answers your question, Mr .
Rogers. And we will continue to have those meetings.
And as a matter of fact, this afternoon -- we've had parent conferences going on this week. The counselor from Lisa is going to set up there this afternoon and answer any more questions that the parents may have and just offer that personal time to answer any questions and give some assurances to those parents, and so --

MR. ROGERS: What brought Little Rock -- your board -- Little Rock Prep's board ultimately to wanting to look for a partner to go to?

MS. BROYLES: I can answer that or I can have Mr. Stewart, our board -- one of our board members answer that question. But $I$ can answer that if you --

MR. ROGERS: Yeah, that's fine. I just --
MS. BROYLES: Okay. Mr. Stewart, are you good with that?

MR. ROGERS: Or both of y'all. I mean it's just --

MS. NEWTON: If I can piggyback on your question, that was one of the things that -- you know, it's not -- it's the same thing but it's not the same thing, because I think this is the first time I've seen this. This is a different animal in terms of what we see; the contentiousness is not there, the conflict is not there, the lack of performance is not there. So, you know, what other than 8 th grade drives this change? How does the board feel about it? And what are the one and two major issues and challenges that stands there in the room that has to be acknowledged for this to be successful? What do you have to overcome? You know,
everybody is -- you know, it's like a blended family; you know, I'm marrying into this family, and it seems that everybody is happy at the wedding and the reception, but then when the party is over -- those things that we knew that would be issues, rather than coming to the board, saying, "You know, we've come up with this and this is insurmountable or it's difficult." Not insurmountable necessarily, but difficult.

But to Mr. Rogers' question also, that to me -I remember -- I know Mr. Stewart's passion and your passion and Lisa's passion for the separate entities. And it seems kind of counter to what the nexus was at the beginning to have this come to be. So, you know, I see it and then I struggle to understand all of it. But it just -- and given -- last we dealt with the Montessori and Lisa, so that was obvious, those things were. And we just saw the reciprocal change that was having that come to bear, knowing there was something -- and to me it's not as clear here. It makes sense and it sounds like a great plan, but that doesn't always drive plans that they make sense and they're logical. So, I'm sorry.

MR. ROGERS: No, ma'am.
MS. BROYLES: Well, before I turn the mic over
to Charles Stewart, who is one of our founders of LRPA, it's quite emotional. The school has been around for -- since 2009. I started with them in 2010. These kids come from all backgrounds. We've gotten to know their families. But we're experiencing some declining enrollment. We don't have the resources to take care of our teachers or our students and give them what they deserve and that is one-to-one Chromebooks, more curriculum. That declining enrollment has really impacted us. But our teachers -- and forgive me -- but our teachers are there because they want to be. They could be making $\$ 60,000, \$ 70,000$ a year, but they're there because they want to be. And some of the programs that we've started at Lisa is sitting down and talking with us about those wraparound services; they've sat down with my admin team and myself and said, "What do you need to help transition?"

This has not been an easy decision for our board either. I want to speak before Mr . Stewart speaks. It has not been an easy decision for our board. They founded this school. I started the year after they founded the school. The passion is there. But we started seeing that our students deserved more and we weren't really making the growth that we needed to
make because of the lack of resources. It wasn't because of the lack of effort and passion; it was the lack of resources. And when you start experiencing lack of funding too that impacts resources.

So I hope that gives you a sense of direction of where we've gone, because we've grieved over this, we've talked about it, we've discussed it, and we've said, "This is in the best interest of our students too," other than closing the doors, which I think would be more of a detriment to these students. Because they deserve quality education and I believe that Lisa can do that.

MS. NEWTON: Well, I appreciate that. I think Mr. Williams and I were on the Board in 2009, when Lisa came and Mr. Stewart came with a passion and a desire. And it doesn't always follow just because you have the passion; everything else doesn't follow. So we know that. And everybody that comes generally comes with a passionate request. So I applaud you for being forward-thinking and getting in front of it before it gets, you know, to the point of no return, because we sacrifice our students in the process and our families suffer as a result of it.

MS. BROYLES: Thank you.
Mr. Stewart, did you want to add anything?

MR. STEWART: I have nothing to say after that. I think she has actually given the justification, that it's about the -- our families and our children and them getting a quality education.

You know, there's a lot -- there is a lot of emotion tied to this, and we've had changes in our management structure. I think that you're aware of our changes from our -- the long-term relationship that we have with a charter management organization. And then we had started talks with another charter management organization that got us way down the road, we thought, and only to find out that they then did not have the capacity to come in and do what we needed for them to do for our children and our families. And so we had to look for other options, and in that search we were able to have conversations with Lisa. And one of the things that we knew is that at the 8 th grade a number of our students would in fact go and transition over to Lisa to finish up their high school career and that that was working. And so we saw this as a very viable option, again to be able to continue the work that Little Rock Prep has started and the relationship with our families and so-forth, and we see this as just an extension.

I'm in business -- I've been in banking -- was
in banking before $I$ retired and went through five different mergers in those organizations. And in many instances there's a strength that comes out of that that allows you to do things that as separate entities you're not able to do. And the bottom-line is capacity and I think that this gives that much more capacity for our families and for us to achieve the objectives of providing these kids with a quality education and helping to move the needle for a lot of children that are challenged and are not getting what they need through the regular system.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Did we get your question fully answered, Mr. Rogers?

MR. ROGERS: I think so.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MR. ROGERS: I do have a couple more, but you can come back.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do you want to ask a question?

MR. WILSON: A couple.
I'm supportive of your request and vote for it. I have seen the work that Lisa has done north of the river where $I$ live, in particular, and the effect that you've had there on many of the lower-income students in the North Little Rock, Sherwood, and

Jacksonville area. I believe this is going to work for you, for both of you.

I noticed on your presentation you mentioned the collaboration that you'd undertaken with Mr. Poore or the Little Rock District. Do you plan to -- I mean I hope you do plan to expand your cooperation and collaboration with the other districts in Pulaski County, particularly Little Rock. They need all the help they can get too. So that's the -- do you -- I guess my question is do you plan to continue and expand your contact, cooperation, collaboration with the Little Rock District and any others?

MS. BARONI: Yes. I mean that's -- that is something that is on the forefront for us. And we have -- Dr. Fahti and I have met with Mr. Poore several times; we've shared some information with him about some of our STEM programs, and have ongoing conversations with him about that and would like to do whatever we can to work together. You know, I think a lot of things turn into big political battles but when it's all said and done, like Ms. Broyles said, this is about the students. And, you know, we want to do whatever we can to serve the students in this community the best way we can -- and if that means they go to Little Rock School District and we
help by providing things we've learned --
MR. WILSON: Sure.
MS. BARONI: -- good. If they come to us, we want to do the best we possibly can there. And I think if we all keep the students in front of us at all times and let them be the focus, then we'll end up in a better place.

SUPT. BOGREK: And last month Mike Poore and Lisa Academy (inaudible), so he's scheduled a collaboration meeting with other, you know, poverty charter schools and also poverty schools. So almost all, you know, Pulaski County school districts, you know, and also charter school districts were there. So we talk about collaboration, how we can do, you know, better for our community. And they're going to have another one maybe in January. So we've started, you know, conversations, you know, with other school districts, how we can work together and, you know, serve for the community.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Baroni, you spoke a little while ago about some of the supports that you all had, some of the specific supports you had provided to the Ozark Montessori school last year. And we do see evidence of that collaborative work with the improvement in the data for that school.

And you indicated a lot of that would be similar to what you would do this year with Little Rock Prep.

Can you go back through some of those specific supports and then speak to how you all will insure that? You know, because growing, you've got to expand the capacity of support. So how are you going to do that without creating a situation where you get stretched too thin?

MS. BARONI: In terms of the supports we offered Ozark Montessori Academy, I think one of the most impactful things we did was work very hard to engage students in reading. We went first for that because we know that if we can improve students' reading ability and the reading culture -- we begin to try to build that through -- we provided My Own, which is an online library for students; so that we pushed that out with the parents, provided some incentives for students who were engaging in reading and on level reading. We also provided some ELA curriculum resources, which they did not have -- I mean in terms of just some books, you know, that they did not have for their classroom, which really helped that. We also provided an ELA coach who was going up there I think about every two weeks to work with their staff to help them and train them, do some professional
development. We also in the math area provided a coach in that area as well and provided some other online resources for them to support what they were doing. We also worked with them to reconfigure their schedule so that they were providing more time for the math and ELA instruction. And we also provided a science curriculum support for them.

So I think those are all kind of the tangible academic pieces that we provided for them. And I really think the most impactful was that reading piece, that we just put some structure to that and provided the resources so that the teachers and the students could move them forward with that reading.

And, I'm sorry; your second question?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I think just how do you expand that support --

MS. BARONI: The capacity.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- without -- and insure that the capacity is there to continue that so it doesn't negatively affect the already positive results that you have within Lisa?

MS. BARONI: I think that's something we've had a lot of conversations about in the last year. Dr. Fahti has taken some initiatives in the past year to restructure some of our district level support.

That's why it no longer says Middle School Principal on my name badge. We've built a support system in our district office so that we have some people available to provide training and support, and that will allow us to build a little more without it straining us because we've got those district level positions now that can support the school level leaders. And so far, it's working. We're constantly having those conversations. We're not oblivious to the fact that this is a lot of growth, but we're trying to plan with that growth in mind and build our system so that we can handle that growth and not back off on our quality.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MS. NEWTON: I have a follow-up question about the growth, if that's okay.

MS. BARONI: Yes.
MS. NEWTON: Are you the largest charter operating in the state, Lisa Academy?

MS. BARONI: I don't think so. I think eStem actually is and the online schools I'm sure.

MS. NEWTON: Well, I'm not referencing --
MS. BARONI: But I think eStem actually has a larger cap than we do currently.

DR. WILLIAMS: Which one did you say has the
largest enrollment?
MS. BARONI: I think eStem --
DR. WILLIAMS: eStem.
MS. BARONI: -- has the largest cap. I don't know what their current enrollment is, but I think their cap is --

DR. WILLIAMS: That would make sense.
MS. BARONI: -- larger than ours. Yeah.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
DR. KREMERS: I just have a quick question. On the reconfiguration, on the document that says the Facilities Utilization Agreement, it looks like rent is based on the enrollment.

MS. BARONI: Uh-huh.
DR. KREMERS: Is that your current situation or that's something new with the configuration that's an additional -- it kind of decreases your risk with reconfiguration with that.

MS. BARONI: That is not our current configuration. We own some of our buildings and lease some of our buildings. The only other building that we have a percentage lease agreement on is the Springdale building, I believe. Yeah.

SUPT. BOGREK: So for the new facility that Little Rock Prep is using, so it's the agreement for
that building specifically. And buildings owned by (inaudible). So they do not -- rent is a percent of student funding. So this is only leasing for (inaudible) for Springdale; so the same thing for Springdale. So a percent of funding is the rent amount. But we have a five-year term and after five years we are able to purchase the building and (inaudible) is going to credit that all the rent we've paid. So it's a great deal. And if you have more students that sets it higher; if you have less students it's, you know, less expensive. So it's reasonable. And we can pay for other leases; I think that amount is very similar.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Go ahead.
MR. BALDWIN: Just a follow-up question on the growth. So you all have grown a lot in the last couple of years -- Ozark Montessori and now LRPA. And I think your plan seems reasonable with the provision of consultancy services this year and then the following year merging the charters. Has the board -- has the Lisa board talked about what happens next, if there's another opportunity for growth? Are you all -- you know, after this are you all going to have a period of time where you take a moratorium or would you be open to another opportunity?

MS. BARONI: Do you want to --
SUPT. BOGREK: Especially for Pulaski County, you know, we are not planning to expand. But this was, you know, something that happened. You know, we would like to help another charter system, you know. And so, you know, we are looking forward to the expansion with that. Our expansion plans is mostly northwest Arkansas. We have right now only one $\mathrm{K}-8$ school. Lisa is, you know, established for K -12 system, so we might come for, you know, maybe some northwest Arkansas options in the future. But as of now, maybe for Pulaski County, we are not planning any more expansion.

DR. WILLIAMS: No, and just a comment -- I agree with Ms. Newton when she was talking about doing something now before it reaches a point of where they're closing down the school, we're dealing with large debt, and so-forth. And I see a pattern, and I think it's a good pattern, and you all just happened to be the right ones at the right place.

I live in Springdale, so I've been kind of tracking what was happening with the Montessori school up there. It's an ideal location; it's actually -- it used to be the old Decision Point building there. It's close to downtown, which we
have a rather large Latino and Marshallese population over in that area. And one of my general concerns was is that when it closed the folks in that area, the students, would kind of be disenfranchised basically. And you all have come in -- and I'm just now really paying attention to who actually came in to help the school; I didn't realize it was Lisa at the time. But it's vibrant; its test scores have improved. And I knew at one time just in the education circles up there that we thought it was going to just close completely. And you kind of came in at the very last minute -- now you could've done it a little sooner, you know -- but at the same time it's been a great turnaround. And I've got a lot of faith and confidence in Mr. Stewart back there.

And you all coming in for Little Rock Prep I think is timely and I trust their board to -- because I know how much they -- you all think about Little Rock Prep and we were all excited when it came before us, when I was on the State Board and Ms. Newton also. So I think you all are doing the right thing.

I've been kind of sitting up here thinking about this as I was listening to it and I kind of hate to see Little Rock Prep go away. But at the same time, when I think about the Springdale -- the Montessori
school up there I think the timing is good, instead of waiting till things get so bad that we're dealing with all sorts of other issues. So I think you all are doing the right thing. Uh-huh.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Are there any remaining questions from Panel Members?

Mr. Rogers.
MR. ROGERS: When is Little Rock Prep's -- when would Little Rock Prep's charter be up for renewal, if they weren't looking to do this merger?

MS. BARONI: The end of June 2020.
MR. ROGERS: So it would be --
MS. BARONI: And that's the reason we wanted to come now so that their families can know what the plan is rather than for them to be left kind of hanging, so --

MR. ROGERS: And so y'all have been working together with them to go over all the finances, all the -- because I don't want the situation that happened with another one where we got to the finish line and, oh, they had debt that nobody knew about, and then --

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.
MR. ROGERS: -- it kind of blew up. And so that's -- I'm just wanting I guess some reassurances
that we're --
MS. BARONI: We have begun those conversations, and will have many more of those before -- you know, before it happens. And we'll probably have some conversations with you or some other folks at ADE to make sure that we have a clear understanding. We've talked through contracts, taken a look at contracts, and how we can work out contracts that they're in now and all of that. So, yes --

MR. ROGERS: Okay. And then --
MS. BARONI: -- we'll make sure that's all resolved.

MR. ROGERS: -- since you are amending your charter and adding a campus, July will -- have you current-year funded for the year in which you do that? Have you -- there would be -- how does that work?

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt.
So I believe the request is to take over the Little Rock Prep charter --

MR. ROGERS: Okay.
MS. HYATT: -- not to add a campus to the Lisa charter. So, do I have that correct?
(COURT OREPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Bogrek speaks with Ms. Hyatt away from the microphone.)

MS. HYATT: Would the Little Rock Prep be part of the long-term Lisa charter or will you be taking over the Little Rock Prep charter? Right. So it will exist independent of Lisa's charter; it will be a separate charter. They'll be taking over the Little Rock Prep charter, so they'll be on that renewal cycle and they'll be -- I believe they would still qualify for the current year funding because they are reconfiguring their grade configuration. Yeah. So you're saying -- sorry. But I wanted to -because your question -- since Little Rock Prep is in the middle of their renewal cycle we kind of find ourselves in a similar situation, although not the same as we've done before. And I want to make sure that Lisa and Little Rock Prep are both clear that if you approve the amendment request today you've effectively approved the transfer of the Little Rock Prep charter to Lisa, which would mean that any debts of the school would become liabilities of Lisa and that Lisa will now be responsible for doing the renewal application for Little Rock Prep. DR. WILLIAMS: What's the date, timing on that? CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think -(COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Several people begin talking at once.)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay, excuse me. Okay. So I'm looking at the actual amendment request and the transfer is set to begin in the 2020-2021 school year.

MS. HYATT: Correct.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Is that correct?
MS. HYATT: Right. But if -- as the renewal cycle is happening right now, Little Rock Prep has already submitted a renewal application as Little Rock Prep. If they're not going to continue to be Little Rock Prep next year, because they're going to be a Lisa school, Lisa will need to be at least working with Little Rock Prep to do the renewal application -- because, otherwise, we're going to do a renewal application for a school that's not going to exist next year.

SUPT. BOGREK: My understanding is since, you know, we are adding this school to our portfolio -we have done the same thing for Ozark Montessori -it's going to be a Lisa school and it's going to be under our charter. It means we have our own, you know, term until 2029. So I don't think we are going to do another application for that. Because their term is ending in June and we are just adding this one to our portfolio, we don't need to require
anything.
MS. HYATT: The way that the amendment request was written, at least my interpretation of it, is that they've asked to take over the Little Rock Prep charter, which is different than assuming it as part of their charter. So I think there needs to be some clarification on what the request is.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. We need some clarification because we were thinking -- or my understanding was -- and it may go back to what was the arrangement with Ozark Montessori last year. I thought that they were just working in consultation and support, but the actual ownership or --

MS. HYATT: The way that they did Ozark Montessori was to add Ozark Montessori to the Lisa charter --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MS. HYATT: -- not to take over that charter.
It was my understanding that the way they were doing it this time is to take over the currently existing Little Rock Prep charter. If that is not a correct interpretation, I think there needs to be some clarification.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
Please state your name and title for the record.

MR. WALTER: Thank you. Tripp Walter, Staff Attorney, Arkansas Public School Resource Center. Hopefully I can clarify it. I believe the intent of Lisa and Little Rock Prep is similar to what was done with Lisa and Ozark Montessori, and that is have Little Rock Prep become part of Lisa's charter and, therefore, also fall under the entire Lisa charter renewal period, which I believe is 2030. The reason I think it was phrased the way it was was to recognize the new act that became effective in July, which allowed for a process to be utilized by the Panel, by the State's authorizer, to transfer or assign a charter from one entity to another. But I think substantively the idea behind it from both the Lisa and Little Rock Prep standpoint is similar to what was done with Ozark; it would become part of Lisa's charter and the renewal date would become -would mesh into Lisa's now.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So based on what has been submitted here, are there adjustments that would need to be made if that is --

MS. HYATT: I think the confusion is just in the way that it was worded. When we talk about transferring charters, you're transferring the actual charter to a different organization. In this
instance, they are asking to effectively not have that charter anymore and for that school to become basically a Lisa license. So that's a different request.

I think they have clarified that now, but I think it's worth clarifying again that the charter that exists for Little Rock Prep will expire in June; there will be no renewal application and that charter will go away and Lisa will add the school as a campus to Lisa in its current charter. Is that correct?

MS. BARONI: Yes.
MR. WALTER: Yes.
SUPT. BOGREK: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So what implications though are there in terms of finances and all of that? We need to make sure that --

MS . HYATT: Sure.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- that we're not creating a situation that could be problematic.

MS. HYATT: So I do think they would be currentyear funded because it would be for Lisa -- for the Lisa charter a new campus and a new grade; right?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And so you're saying the change would be current-year funded for this -- for the '19 --

MR. ROGERS: No.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MR. ROGERS: It would start in FY21.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MS. HYATT: Yeah, 20-21.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Yeah.
MR. ROGERS: So to go back to what I was saying earlier --

MS. HYATT: Mr. Rogers, you were correct. I've said it on the record. You were correct. Yes.

So there was confusion on my part I think because of the wording, because we can transfer a charter to another organization where that charter remains, just with a different sponsoring entity and a different CMO. That is not what they're asking for. They're asking basically for the Little Rock Prep charter to no longer exist, freeing up an additional spot in the charter cap; then for them to absorb that school basically as a license so they can open a new campus.

So that -- I'm glad that we cleared it up because I had a very different understanding reading the amendment request.

MR. ROGERS: So if we approve this today then Lisa is taking on, starting in FY21, all of the
responsibilities, financial responsibilities that may be out there for Little Rock Prep?

MS. HYATT: I don't believe so. Because if the Little Rock Prep charter ceased to exist at the end of the year, June 30th, then the charter will cease to exist and the Charter Office and I will work to wrap the school up.

MR. ROGERS: But in that situation then by law all the funds for Little Rock Prep would have to come back to the State and we would have to pay the bills

MS. HYATT: That's correct.
MR. ROGERS: -- up to the amount that is -MS. HYATT: That's correct.

MR. ROGERS: So going forward then, in FY21 they would have to be current funded and there would be essentially no funding that they could draw back from from Little Rock Prep to start taking on those two new schools?

MS. HYATT: That's correct.
MR. ROGERS: So Lisa is going to have to absorb, at least in the first couple of months till we get enrollment in, all the financial responsibility of reconfiguring their schools, having these two new campuses, and all the new -- and the 400-whatever cap
students that they're going to have?
MS. HYATT: Right.
DR. WILLIAMS: But wouldn't they be funded in arrears once it catches up?

MR. ROGERS: For the next year they would be current-year funded. Yes. But until we get that -we base it off what they do and what they turn in in their enrollment. And then once we get to October 1st then we --

DR. WILLIAMS: And that's when they're in arrears.

MR. ROGERS: -- then we make adjustments to what it has to be. But that would be -- and it would be current funded for all of Lisa's academies; right? All of Lisa's campuses?

MS. HYATT: Yeah. I think what the law says is that the charter -- and they only have the one -will be current-year funded any year that they add a new campus or a new grade. And in this instance, they would be I think doing both.

MR. ROGERS: Right. Which goes back -- I'm sorry?

MS. BARONI: We're not adding any new grades; we're just --

MR. ROGERS: Well, that's where I'm getting
confused.
MS. HYATT: New grades at a new campus.
MR. ROGERS: Yes.
MS. HYATT: Yes.
MR. ROGERS: And so that's -- going back to earlier where I was, I would've felt better if I would've been able to see the budget of how we're going to allocate this. Because I guess I wasn't -I was thinking ahead if this was going forward-year funding how that would look. And then really that's --

SUPT. BOGREK: You know, in our packet we provided the pro forma. So we included as a cap increase, you know, (inaudible). So we projected our budget, you know, the new numbers. And then we are in good shape, strong -- you know, strong finance. So I think with this cap increase we don't see any problem. And I think Little Rock Prep financials, they're going to finish the year with a positive surplus. So we don't --

MR. ROGERS: I think that I just wanted to point out that by not renewing that charter for Little Rock Prep this date will -- they'll have to take the funds that are remaining in their accounts and take them and then pay whatever was left. So you won't have
that to draw on if there's any --
SUPT. BOGREK: No, again, we do take any of the money from Little Rock Prep. What we said is we're going to have another like 350 students (inaudible) you know, funding. And including the new buildings cost I think (inaudible) we will have a surplus after this. So we don't see any problem financially.

MR. ROGERS: Okay.
Did you want to add -- you were over there waving at me, so -- sorry, I'm taking over.

MS. BROYLES: This is Donna Broyles again.
I want to say that we will continue to have these conversations with the finances as part -- it's not just part of our MOU. Ms. Baroni and Dr. Fatih and I have sat down and said, "We will have extensive -- continued extensive conversations about that," because we want to make sure that everything is free and clear on June 30 th when we change over and transition to Lisa."

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So along with those lines, in your discussion earlier, the pretty significant decline in enrollment that you've experienced, so that will be less funding coming in for you this year. So I guess I'd have a two-fold question: if ADE Finance has any concerns about

Little Rock Prep finances at this time; and then also, you know, not knowing for sure how many of the Little Rock Prep students will come to Lisa Academy, and you're doing this work with an idea of completely reconfiguring all of your school buildings -- should you not see a substantial increase in enrollment, do you have the funding?

So I think that goes back to the question about the capacity, how far can you stretch? Do you have the funding without a significant increase in enrollment and a significant increase in ADM funding coming in?

SUPT. BOGREK: This year we have over 400 applications, so I'm sure, you know, last year at Ozark Montessori around 70\% of students stayed (inaudible). I'm sure, you know, we're going to recruit more students again for, you know, this school year. But also we had a gain of more demand. So if needed, we can add more, you know, seats for other students. So I think our projection is a very reasonable number, so we don't see any problem.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So you're going to project to have that increase -- it would first -- those would first be for the Little Rock Prep students --

SUPT. BOGREK: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- because of the partnership. But if not, then this would be for -SUPT. BOGREK: They would ultimately be added to our system.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. KREMERS: If the State would have to take the charter back, is there anything in the packet that shows us the finances of Little Rock Prep Academy? Because it's almost like the risk is there, but we have no idea what the budget looks like for that risk as we're making the decision.

MS. BROYLES: I'm not aware that there's an issue or challenge with finance. I mean everything seems to be in very solid standing right now. And we project that to continue through the rest of the school year based all the monies that we do have. So, Dr. Kremers, what was your --

DR. KREMERS: It would be nice --
MS. BROYLES: But we did not put anything in the packet.

DR. KREMERS: Right.
MS. BROYLES: So we did not --
DR. KREMERS: Like a budget just to look at what revenue expense that there might be, because we have no idea.

MR. ROGERS: Right now --
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.
MR. ROGERS: Right now, there's not any concerns with Little Rock Prep. It's just that given the declining enrollment and given the unknown it's kind of -- I guess I'm a little gun-shy because of the last thing, that at the last -- at the 20 -- you know, at the 12 th hour stuff started popping up, which is the only reason why $I$ wanted to bring that up and make everybody -- make sure that we're going through that process, that we're discussing with our parents, that we're discussing all the financial situation with Lisa so that -- that's really where I was -- why I was asking that. But, no, I don't know of any finance situation --

DR. KREMERS: Okay.
MR. ROGERS: -- going on with Lisa Prep -- I mean Little Rock Prep right now.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.
DR. WILLIAMS: Rightly so.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Any remaining questions?

Okay. If there aren't, then were there any legal issues or --

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

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Then at this time I would accept a motion.

DR. KREMERS: Is it okay to break it -- remind again like the actual -- like do we want to vote on each one individually or all of them together? Because there's multiple -- what would be the easiest way, I think, to --

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt.
You could do whatever you want, as long as you're clear. You can vote to approve the entire amendment request as written or if you want to separate it out between waivers, enrollment, and the absorption of the school -- however you want to do it.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Could we do this? I think -was it on the presentation, the amendment requests?

Okay. Yeah. So, Panel, would it be helpful if we broke it down with each component of the amendment requests? I'm seeing heads shaking. Okay. And we would want to clarify that first part. Is that right? Because of the way it's worded and make sure -- because I think we determined it would be -MS. HYATT: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So let's -- Ms. Hyatt, you may need to be up here helping us
with the wording of that. And if someone would like to begin a motion, and we'll take each part individually.

MR. ROGERS: I do have --
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay, question.
MR. ROGERS: So the current cap for Little Rock Prep is 432? That just seems weird that it's 432.

MS. BROYLES: Yes.
MR. ROGERS: Okay. I guess they needed those two extra --

SUPT. BOGREK: (inaudible, speaking from the audience.)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Everybody is sitting, I guess I'll take a shot at this. All right. Here's my question before I start this motion: are we transferring the charter or are we transferring -what are we transferring? Because it didn't sound like we were --

MS. HYATT: Right.
DR. WILLIAMS: -- transferring the charter.
MS. HYATT: We're not.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MS. HYATT: Yeah. I would -- I think it would be clearer if you said transferring the Little Rock

Preparatory Academy school, rather than charter. When I read the word "charter" I think you're talking about the charter contract.

DR. WILLIAMS: Charter. I absolutely agree.
MS. HYATT: And we, as we've learned, are not. So just to be clear, I want to make that clear in your motion.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And were there any questions about items 2 through 6 by the Panel? Were we comfortable? Because we could -- if we could just work on the wording for number 1 , $I$ don't know that we would have to separate out each one of these individually.

MR. BALDWIN: Right. I like that.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So maybe if we voted on request numbers 2 through 6 we could do that, and then go back and re-work item number 1 . Would that be something that would help?

DR. KREMERS: Are we all comfortable with the waiver request on the counseling framework change versus just the licensure? That would be in number 5 -- because it's all-encompassing.

MS. HYATT: I did work with Lisa and APSRC on that piece. Originally, the request was for the entire subchapter and they did pare it down just to
the two sections that they needed, which I think was 2003(2) (a) and (b). So, just a very small part of the law. And I do believe that's the only two pieces that they needed.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do you want to take a stab at it?

DR. WILLIAMS: I was just going to do number 1, and then do 2 through 6.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I move that we approve the request to transfer Collegiate Choices dba Little Rock Preparatory Academy school to Lisa Academy, beginning in the 2020 -- the 2021 school year.

MR. WILSON: Second.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and second on that first item.

All those -- any discussion?
All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?
Okay. That motion passes unanimously.
DR. WILLIAMS: I move that we approve the following requests as listed, items 2 through 6, made by Lisa Academy.

MR. WILSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and a second for those remaining items with the amendment requests.

Any discussion?
All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?
Okay. The motion passes unanimously.
And if you will record your votes, we will provide feedback.

DR. WILLIAMS: Y'all are making me think this morning.

DR. KREMERS: Should we record both on the same sheet since it was the two?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think they'll record both on the same sheet. Yeah. If you just want to put your comments in there, since it was a unanimous vote on both.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And, Dr. Fatih, I wanted to also acknowledge the partnership that you and Mr. Poore and other area superintendents have engaged in. That is something that I know you're -- it shows that our schools are being responsive to concerns and to opportunities. I know Mr. Wilson has talked about
that a lot in his time on this Panel, and now our State Board members have encouraged that as well. And I think that it's exciting when we attend events and we see people from our traditional public schools working with our open-enrollment schools. So I appreciate you, and I wanted to also -- I appreciate you for acknowledging Mr. Poore's leadership in that. SUPT. BOGREK: Thank you. Thank you. We do our best to collaborate with other schools.
[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin, we'll let you go ahead and provide feedback.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I vote to approve the transfer of the LRPA school in the 2020-21 school year due to the declining enrollment being experienced by LRPA and also because of the strong program offered by Lisa. And I also approve items 2 through 6 as essential components of the school transfer.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: I approve Motion 1 to transfer the Little Rock Prep Academy school to Lisa Academy in 20-21. I approve Motion 2 for the remaining requests. Lisa Academy has a well thought-out plan and has demonstrated good student outcomes.

Communication is good to facilitate the transition. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams.

DR. WILLIAMS: I support both motions: one, to transfer the Little Rock Preparatory school to Lisa Academy; and Motion 2, for items 2 through 6 as listed in the request. The overall plan will serve all students -- will serve all students on all the campuses.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.
MR. ROGERS: I approve both motions. I understand there's going to continue to be challenges; however, Little Rock Prep board and Lisa are committed to making the transition smooth. And in doing so, $I$ believe it's in the best interest of the kids at Little Rock Prep.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.
MS. NEWTON: I approve both motions, with the justification that transfer increases capacity for growth for the students and families at Little Rock Prep Academy.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.
MR. WILSON: I supported both motions. I'm satisfied that the boards of Lisa and Little Rock Prep have carefully considered this. And I'm relying on Mr. Rogers watching the cash register too, and I
appreciate his clarifications --
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.
MR. WILSON: -- and remarks .
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes. And I want to thank the Panel too because it does, it takes all of us looking and asking questions. And, you know, these decisions are those that we don't -- we take these decisions seriously. We want to work with schools. So, yes, thank you. Don't ever hesitate to ask those questions because they're needed.

And I also do want to say too that I think it's given an opportunity for demonstration in hard decisions, but putting kids first. I know it's not what you all necessarily wanted, those of you who are invested with Little Rock Prep. But you're making it in the best interest for students and you're finding good partners, and I think that's going to promote a really positive pathway forward. So, thank you all for being here today and giving us your time.

Okay. So in terms of our agenda, that was the end of the morning agenda, and I think we probably ended a little earlier than what we would have expected to. But I also know with structuring it with a designated time for the afternoon we may have our afternoon folks who are not here. So I didn't
know whether there was anyone here to move up earlier on the agenda, or do we need to just stick with the agenda as it is?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: I'm afraid so.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. I didn't want to have folks that were sitting here and just having to wait if they were ready to go.

So we will need to take a break then until our afternoon agenda at 1:30. Is that correct? MS. MCLAUGHLIN: (Nodding head up and down.) CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. So we -- do we need a motion to -- we're just breaking for lunch. Okay. We're taking a break for lunch and we'll be back at 1:30. Thank you.
(BREAK: 10:57 A.M. - 1:27 P.M.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we will go ahead and reconvene our meeting. And before we get started, I do want to introduce to everyone and introduce our Charter Panel Members to Tracy Webb. And, Tracy, do you want to come up here and introduce yourself and tell them your role and --

MS. WEBB: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.
MS. WEBB: My name is Tracy Webb. I am in
Public School Accountability. I'm over the Charter

Unit, Standards for Accreditation and State Federal Monitoring.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes. Yeah, thank you.
B-1: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION - SOUTHSIDE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. So we are on the first item on our action agenda for the afternoon. And I'm going to let Ms. McLaughlin come up and -or, I'm sorry, Ms. Webb come up and introduce us to this action item.

MS. WEBB: Good afternoon. Tracy Webb, Charter Unit.

This item is the Southside Junior High School; it has a proposed district conversion charter application. The application is requesting to serve students in grades 7 through 8 with a maximum enrollment of 600 students. Speakers for the Southside Junior High School today include Roger Rich, superintendent; Novella Humphry, director of Curriculum and Federal Programs; George Sitkowski, junior high principal; Dr. Jody Smotherman, vice president of White River Health Service Systems; Crystal Johnson, CEO of Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce; Senator James Sturch; and Senator Stu Smith.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we customarily allow our elected officials or invite our elected officials to go ahead and introduce or make their remarks early, if you would like to, or if you would like to just wait and be part of the presentation. But we -- if you would like to go ahead -SENATOR STURCH: We'll wait.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You want to wait. Okay. All right.

Then let's go ahead and we need to swear in those who are going to be speaking on behalf of this application, if you'll raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY) CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And we will go ahead and begin with the presentation. You have up to 20 minutes to begin, and we will then have time for additional comments. SUPT. RICH: Okay. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And please state your name and title for the record. SUPT. RICH: I'm Roger Rich, superintendent, Southside School District.

Are you ready?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We are ready when you are. SUPT. RICH: Thank you, Madam Chair, thank you, Panel, for allowing us to present Future Story Discovery, which is our proposal for a conversion charter at our junior high.

To know a little bit about where we're going I think you need to know a little bit about us and where we've been. Southside School District serves families 18 months to high school. We're located in Independence County, about five miles south of Batesville. We're very fortunate to be in a growing school district; not just a growing school district, but a growing area as well. I think the newest estimated census data shows Independence County having about a 6.9\% increase. Our school district is continuing to grow. It has about a third of our students that come to us by School Choice. We were just recently named as the Number 4 high-growth school district in the State of Arkansas and the Number 1 school district with students of -- 500 students or more. We have very strong partnerships, and we have a lot of our partners with us today, and we'll kind of mention a little bit more of that later on. But we have about 60 business and ministry
partners that just partner with us in so many different ways and we're very, very appreciative of that.

Our Project Future Story was our conversion charter for our high school; that's grades 9 through 12. It serves as a model of innovative rural education beneficence in the state of Arkansas. Future Story was a birth-to-career model, and that's kind of what our philosophy at Southside is. We implemented Future Story about a decade ago. Student success plans just became required within the last couple of years, and we were -- we've been doing this for about a decade. We have been very fortunate, even with Dr. Pfeffer and Commissioner Key even to send some people to us to look and see what we were doing as far as student success plans for our kids. The focus of the conversion charter was grades 9 through 12 at that time, and one of the key parts was our shared leadership with UACCB, our community college in our area. We meet with them monthly. We have just been able to do great things with that partnership. And that evolved into not only meeting monthly with UACCB, but now with Lyon College and eight other school districts. We've had a lot of successes along the way, the strong partnerships,
increasing concurrent enrollment to tech certificates, certificates of proficiency. And what's very important to us is that teacher pipeline we continue to grow and also reducing cost and time to a degree. Very proud to say we saved $\$ 274,000$ in tuition for our students over the last four years; so we're very proud of that.

This is -- our plan today is kind of based off of a strategic impact plan in Independence County. And I'm going to have Ms. Crystal Johnson, CEO of the Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce, come and share it with us.

MS. JOHNSON: I just want to tell you a little bit about our relationship with the Southside School District. It started when we discovered a little project that they had created called Project Future Story, and we knew that it was too good not to share. We went to them and they were gracious enough to share their model with first our other schools in Independence County, other school districts; and then we scaled that project statewide. So that's now known as the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship.

Our community really supports projects like that because we know that they do. We created an impact
strategic plan. It was a grassroots strategic plan created by about 1200 community survey results with 300 volunteers. That number is continuing to grow. So our community told us that they not only care about education, they care about healthy living and wellbeing, tourism, and then the economic prosperity. So our community is dedicated to these priority items. And many of our successes from this plan have been in education -- so things like Independence Promise, Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program, the new Workforce Development Center at UACCB, record enrollment at UACCB which is setting the pace. I think once the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship gets in place we'll see that trend throughout the state.

What you will always see is Southside at the forefront of these projects. They lead our state and our community and make an impact.

So, thank you.
SUPT. RICH: Thank you, Ms. Johnson.
So why establish the Discovery phase? And this is kind of what takes us into what we're going to propose to you today, that we will be able to equip our junior high students with tools and experiences to make future choices. We want them to have
academic success and that can come in a variety of different ways. It could be through acceleration, could be through enrichment, or could be through remediation. We want to meet the needs of all students.

Another important part is the wraparound services. We want to make sure we really hone in on the mental health piece for our students and be proactive instead of the way we have been in the past, being reactive.

Discovery Options may not be for every kid, and that's okay. If they want that traditional model, then we want to make sure that we have that for them. But if they want more, then that's exactly what we want for each and every child that's within our school district is more. We want to be -- want to have the flexibility to be able to provide those opportunities. We have about 60\% of our kids, or better, on free-and-reduced lunches and we want to make sure that we serve every single child.

Those personal competencies that we hear about so often from our business community, the soft skills, we really want to hone in on those as well. And one very important piece is the coping strategies. We always talk about coping strategies
for success -- I mean for failure, but we also want to have it for success, starting students out at a young age. We want to make sure that we have strategies for both failure and success. Sometimes our greatest success does come from failure as well. And our collaborative community partners that will share a little bit more even about that are willing to help us tackle all kinds of issues.

We're very fortunate to have Dr. Jody Smotherman with us this morning. He's a pharmacist by trade, he's on the executive team at White River Health System, and he's going to come and share a few things with you at this time.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And go ahead and state your name and title for the record; it'll make it easier for --

DR. SMOTHERMAN: Yes, ma'am.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- our listening audience.
DR. SMOTHERMAN: Jody Smotherman, vice president of Community Engagement, White River Health System. Madam Chair, Panel, thank you for the opportunity to share with you today. I'm approaching my third decade in healthcare and the issues that are facing our young people today are paramount, whether it's mental health issues such as depression,
suicide, or other issues that you're aware of such as the opioid crisis and vaping. I believe as a health system that covers eight counties, 100,000 people, we have an opportunity and obligation to help some of our communities through our schools. Some of the best partnerships that we have are through our schools, and one of the most vibrant is with Southside School District. I believe that in healthcare if we can partner with schools to not only provide information and education to children but provide training and mentoring to their parents or caregivers, we can take a step in the right direction with these problems that we face in our communities and in our state and around the nation. The innovative model that's being proposed gives us the opportunity as healthcare providers to come to a school, whether it's breakfast with parents to provide information, lunch learnings with young students or with teenagers, or perhaps being mentors to show them not only what preventative wellness looks like, things to stay away from, but what proactive wellness looks like, things to be involved in. I hope that we'll be able to work with Southside to do this through this opportunity. I believe if we can help promote wellness for children we can help
promote wholeness for children. And a student who's well and a student who's whole can then begin to prepare for the future in ways that they might not have been able to before. I appreciate your consideration on this.

SUPT. RICH: Thank you, Dr. Smotherman.
Future Story Discovery is based on four components and it's really -- it compares with the Strategic Impact Plan that Ms. Johnson shared earlier.

Student success for educational excellence is the first one and this is really where that personalized learning piece comes in. This will be meeting every child where they are and moving them forward, whether it be double-blocking, whether it be accelerating, whatever it could be; meeting the kid where they are, not by their age level but where they are academically. Also, this is where you look at the accelerated, the enrichment, and remediation pieces too.

Healthy living and wellbeing, as you just heard, is really an important piece of this and it's mostly dealing with the mental health curriculum, but also an enhanced physical education piece. We have a proposed partnership with Apple that we're super
excited about for our P.E. classes where we'll be using different devices to be able to track their health and their wellbeing. So we're really excited about that possibility.

Community engagement is very important to us. And we tell people when they are interviewing to be employed at Southside there's not a more rewarding place in the world to work than within our district, but there may not be a harder place to work either. If you don't have a servant's heart, if you're not willing to put others before yourself, then you're not going to be very successful there and probably not going to last very long there. So we require that and that is something that we want from every employee. We also want that from every child too. We want them to come back and be our employees at some point in time, so we try to instill those same characteristics in them.

We also want to teach them through a couple of curriculum pieces, the first one being The Leader in Me by Stephen Covey, for highly effective teams. And the second part will be kindness and teaching those type things through Rachel's Challenge, which is -unfortunately, she was the first young lady killed in the Columbine school shooting tragedy.

And the last part, connections to make an impact. This is where we really hit that discovery piece, really bring in guest speakers, take them on industry tours, take them and do -- anything that we can expose them to that we possibly can we try to. Even virtually, we have a lot of our students that go off and work on the pipeline and we'd like to connect virtually with them to show them what it actually looks like. Our kids don't know what they can't see, so I think it's our job to promote that and provide that for them.

And the last part is to be able to write in the workplace. I have a local employer that tells us that he would love to be able to promote different individuals within his organization, but unfortunately he can't because they can't communicate with the written word. So we really want to hone in on that as well to make sure that they can increase their ability and we give our students every unfair advantage that we possibly can.

So our mission is to open the doors of academic success and community enrichment for all children, committing to high levels of learning, exploration, discovery, and supporting the whole child.

As you'll see, we have -- we want to do this
through innovative flexibility. We have our bullet points on the left as basically the traditional model where every child would fall if they were in the traditional model that we would have for our students just meeting standards. On the right-hand side, if you look at innovative flexibility, we want to make sure that we have these things for kids. We want to be able to place them on academic need by where they -- what grade level they're in. We want to be able to provide them with so many real-world life type experiences and that's what we hope to do with this. So to kind of give you some examples, this young man is Tyler. His future story is to be a firefighter or EMT. He's a great kid, comes from a hard-working family, but Tyler struggles to read. So how are we going to be able to handle and take care of his needs? So here's a sample schedule. On my left-hand side that's bold and gold, it shows the traditional 7th grade schedule, what that individual might have. If you look at the very bottom, he struggles in reading. For us to give him additional help in literacy he has to give up the elective, the one thing that he might enjoy coming to school for. The worst thing we can do for a child is take away something that they love to do and be able to give
them an extra dose of something that they don't enjoy. Our hope -- as you can see with our 7th and 8th grade schedule there, what would be different is in bold. He would have an extra learning -- literacy learning lab. We'd be able to embed some things in literacy and he'd still have that opportunity to have those electives, those hooks that make him want to come to school. And then hopefully in that 10th, 11 th and 12 th grade year we've got him in that concurrent credit pace to be able to become an EMT or a firefighter or a paramedic and be making around \$38,000 a year, and hopefully help him achieve his future story because it's that possibility.

Here's another young man. His name is Brandon. Brandon is already a senior. He's doing extremely well, so he's a little bit different. So what can we do for him to be able to accelerate or help him along the way? Here's what his schedule might look like -a traditional 7th grade schedule, again on the left; and on the right, his advanced schedule. He's very good in math, so we're going to hopefully move him up into 8 th grade math as a 7th grader, be able to embed his literacy, accelerate him in 7th grade science so he's able to take Algebra I, physical science, and those type things to help him towards his future
story.
Through a career fair and enrichment classes at our middle school he really enjoyed the classes taught by Citizens Bank and Carter Ford's insurance company, and he really now has an interest in business and insurance. So we're trying to help him get to that level as we go all the way through. As you see, he's taking classes at Lyon and UACCB, by his senior year hoping to graduate with 36 concurrent credit hours and being able to achieve his future story.

So that's a little bit about where we are and what we're looking to do. We're asking for flexibility. We're asking for the opportunity to do more for our kids. And if you have any questions for us today, we have an awesome team with us that would be available and ready to answer any of those questions. And we appreciate the opportunity to come and share with you today.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And you still have 5 minutes of your original time, if anyone else wants to speak before we go to questions.

SUPT. RICH: Can we cede to them?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You certainly can. Yes.
Welcome to our meeting.

REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Good afternoon. I'm State Representative Stu Smith, District 63, Independence County.

And I wanted to talk a little bit about Southside and their charter school. They've established a program that strives to strengthen each student's weaknesses while continuing nurturing their strengths and interests through schedule flexibility, which I think is very important. As a 36-year educator myself, I've been very impressed with Southside Charter High School and their ability to prepare each student for life after graduation. Adding a conversion charter to their junior high will further enhance their students' opportunities to become successful students and productive Arkansas citizens. By zeroing in at an early age on any weaknesses they can help to develop a can-do attitude in a student who may otherwise become frustrated and disinterested, falling further and further behind. I appreciate how they continually strive to give their students an educational experience that will move them to future success, and I'm very proud to represent their district. And I think this is a fantastic idea because I've seen what they've done with their high school and how many students will
stay in school that may ordinarily not stay in school -- at the same time, giving those kids that are accelerated a chance to even be taught at a higher level. So I think this is great -- a great opportunity, something that a lot of schools should look at. And like I said, I'm very, very impressed. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you for being here. SENATOR STURCH: [adjusting microphone] Short people. James Sturch, State Senator for District 19. I'm coming up on my fifth year in the Legislature, so many of you may remember I was here when Southside did the charter high school program; and so we're coming up on five years for that. But the reason I wanted to be here today is to show my support for the conversion charter request for the junior high. To me, I've been on Education nearly half my time in the Legislature now and it seems like we keep coming back to the same things: if we can reach kids earlier, if we can reach kids earlier; if we can't, you know, find some way somehow to reach that kid who may be struggling and get them on the right path before they end up graduating high school and they can't write a report or they can't read an entire nonfiction book. It seems like we say it all the time and this is our opportunity to act.

I wish that it was different. I wish that we didn't always have to come and ask for flexibility in scheduling and flexibility to reach kids where they are, but that's the way it is. And I really hope that we can find ideas through this project, through other projects around the state to where we can really reach those kids where they need it. If we can meet that need while they're in junior high, as the Superintendent has said, and several of the other speakers, maybe we can set them on a path to success earlier to where we don't know what their future may be but we know it would be bright. So thank you for your consideration today.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Senator Sturch, can I ask you a question? And it was mentioned earlier in the presentation about the Concurrent Challenge Scholarship and that legislation that you helped to pass in this last session. Do you mind just for a minute talking about how you see this early beginning really promoting those opportunities and -- because I don't know that we've talked enough about those opportunities that exist for our students starting this year with a different kind of opportunity for concurrent credit.

SENATOR STURCH: Yes, ma'am. The Concurrent

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Credit Challenge was based off of the Future Story for the Southside Charter High School. So basically it allows juniors and seniors then to start taking concurrent classes at no cost to them. So we provide extra scholarship money; schools would be able to provide NSLA money or other partnership money through the community to help those students out.

So if I could, can I get them to go back to that sample schedule that you had? Yeah, right there. So if you look at this, if we could get more young people as far as in junior high used to the idea of taking a higher rigorous course -- so if you look up there, instead of taking a regular 7 th grade math they're actually trying to get the young man into a pre-AP 8th grade math because he's already advancing, he's already honed those skills. So, in my opinion, if we could get more junior high kids to I guess get access to pre-AP classes before they're in high school -- they would either take AP classes or they'd be able to take concurrent, or even both, depending on what career path they wanted to go to. So to me this kind of feeds into that pipeline, exactly what Mr . Rich was saying, is that we're trying to meet kids where they are. So those kids who are struggling, they could also meet that need as far as
with an extra literacy course, with an extra math course, or time to just meet for their needs. But on the other end of the spectrum, those kids who are really excelling this would meet them where they are too and it would give them extra opportunity, in my opinion, to get on that career path even further. And so, to me it makes perfect sense as far as the meeting the whole -- meeting the whole need of the child and meeting them where they are. Because as he said, many of these kids -- academics -- being wellrounded is more than just the standards or more than just what we have here on the gold schedule. Most of those kids they're going to school for a basketball course or basketball team or they're going to school for choir or band or art or whatever it might be.

And I can make a very good argument because I've been in those meetings where those fine arts are just as important sometimes as those academics.

And so with that, I think that would be the answer to your question, Ma'am.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And even in the schedule example before, the student who's going to be taking courses in criminal justice --

SENATOR STURCH: Correct.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So it's not even just the
traditional courses we think of with concurrent. SENATOR STURCH: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So my Panel Members may have already known that, but I get excited with the opportunity to share that information because I think sometimes we don't always talk about the opportunities until it's a little bit late. SENATOR STURCH: Ma'am, I appreciate it -CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you. SENATOR STURCH: -- because as a Legislator sometimes it's nice to be told "thank you" once in a while. We get plenty of calls the other way.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
SENATOR STURCH: Thank you very much.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you for being here as well.

Okay. All right. So we'll start with questions and we'll go ahead and start down here with Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Mr. Rich, talk to us a little bit about your cohorts and about your thoughts on how you form cohorts and progress them through them.

SUPT. RICH: I'm going to let you speak to someone a little bit more -- who can speak really well.

MS. HUMPHREY: I'm Novella Humphrey. I'm the Director of Curriculum and Federal Programs at Southside School District. And when we looked in the application and our cohort groups, our grade level groups as they progressed, we saw some grade levels were growing and some grade levels were at a stalemate; they were not progressing. And so as we really examined the data something stood out to us. Number one, because of our growth as a district some of those cohorts have grown over $35 \%$ in the last five years. So we've taken a class of maybe 110 and now they're 150, they're 160 . So we've had tremendous growth in the class size, which presents challenges to us as students move into the district with unknown levels and placements in those cohorts. So we want to use our data, and we're doing a great job of that at junior high this year, and really hone in on where are they when they enter the first day of 7 th grade and how do we make sure they're high school ready. And so those cohorts were all -- in the past they've always been based on grade level placement and based on age. And so now we want innovative flexibility to look at where they are in academic ability and placing that cohort -- do we need more; do we need acceleration; are we right on track and we just need
to enrich so we can make really great choices at the high school level.

MR. BALDWIN: Okay. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: How does the Impact Plan compare to the Student Success Plan?

SUPT. RICH: I think the Impact Plan basically looks at what our community wants and needs. Like she said, we have 1200 stakeholders that told us what they want education to look like in Independence County. So we wanted to follow that, and the Student Success Plan is exactly that. We're going to look at each individual child, make sure that we get them exactly what they need for them to be successful. So we continue to hone in and I know it's kind of -- we say it over and over, but their future story. We're going to do whatever we can to make their future story come true. We hope that they're able to do that and stay locally. That's a big part of our plan is to stay within Independence County -- and if not, to give them all they need to have that unfair advantage when they leave us and be successful. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

DR. WILLIAMS: Just in layman's terms, connect the dots for me from junior high to high school. You
already have a conversion charter for the high school. So how does the conversion for the junior high roll into that?

SUPT. RICH: We'll tag this. But one of the most important things for junior high, we have probably only 10 or 12 FTE's of our teachers who actually just work in the junior high alone. The other 20 or so are shared amongst our district. So they're functioning one way at the high school, with flexibility and ability to do a lot of different things; now they have to come back to the junior high and they're constrained, restricted, not able to teach that particular subject area because the waiver we may not have for grades 9-12 -- or for 7 th and 8th.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MS. HUMPHREY: And then from an instructional standpoint at high school we look at each student, what is their future story, and we build that fouryear plan to meet that future story -- and sometimes their future stories change along the way, and that's okay. So in junior high we really want to give them time to discover their future story and narrow those choices. So we have the young man whose schedule is still on the screen; he knows he wants something
maybe banking, maybe insurance, maybe data analysis. So we build a potential four-year schedule for him while he's in junior high and then we adapt that along the way based on his successes -- or his change of interest. We are 14- and 15-year olds. We do change our mind. And so we really want to tightly align so that if a student has a solid future story they can take full advantage of the opportunities at high school. And we can't be what we don't know, and so we have to give them those exposures at junior high to discover that future story career.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. A follow-up: you're requesting the conversion charter, which as I listen makes sense now.

MS. HUMPHREY: Yes.
DR. WILLIAMS: Where was the future story beginning before the request for the charter school?

MS. HUMPHREY: The charter school -- about a decade ago our high school principal, Roger Reed, started asking students about their future story. He learned that in a poverty training, some professional development. And he would just say, "Where do you want to be in 10 years? 10 years out of high school what do you want in your life, 10 years out?" And then, "How do we get there? How -- what's step one,
what's step two, what's step three?" I'll give you an example: kids would say, "Well, I'm not going to go to college. I just want to weld." They didn't realize to be a certified welder in our area you needed to attend UACCB, because that's where the welding courses are in our community. So really to help build that step-by-step -- and we didn't just look at what job do you want, but what things in your life do you want; do you want a family, do you want to live locally. And so that started about a decade ago and it's just spread.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So you basically backward map?

MS. HUMPHREY: We start with the end in mind and --

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. And work your way down?
MS. HUMPHREY: And work our way down.
DR. WILLIAMS: So now by this conversion charter -- for the junior high now, does that allow the Future Story now to start in the 7th grade, where maybe before the conversion it's really starting in the 9th grade?

MS. HUMPHREY: It was generally starting -- with Student Success Plans it starts at the end of 8 th grade as they begin to build that four-year plan.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MS. HUMPHREY: So we're going to go into this at the beginning of 6 th grade -- what are those three to five areas that you're really interested in so we can build some opportunities for you throughout 7th and 8th grade to try it out, to look it over and see if this is something I want to do.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Good. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers, any questions?
MR. ROGERS: No.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Questions?
MR. WILSON: Dr. Williams' questions and their answers were enlightening to me and I appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MR. WILSON: I don't have anything.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Back down here, any questions or comments?

DR. WILLIAMS: Comment, it just seems like it makes sense.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
Yeah. I would just say that I -- you know, I don't know how many people are watching this, but these are the kinds of applications that really I think are exciting. They're well thought-out. The
flexibility that's being asked for is flexibility that's needed in order to accomplish these goals, and this district has already shown a success with their high school students.

So I just -- I would hope more people would come to you-all, talk to you-all about this process, and look at how these ideas can be replicated throughout the state. So it's pretty exciting to get to be here with you.

DR. WILLIAMS: A quick follow-up for ADE: are we missing anything? You know, I just noticed in the application there were some questions asked and the responses look like they were good responses. It just really looks like a good application and a good project overall. But are we missing anything?

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

No. Southside worked I think really, really well with the Charter Internal Review Committee and with me. All of the waiver issues were resolved -from the initial application were resolved prior to today, and I think the same with any issues that were identified by the Review Committee. So there's nothing outstanding from anyone from the Division.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right, Panel. If there are any questions or discussions, or we can entertain a motion?

MR. BALDWIN: I'd like to make a motion -proudly make a motion. I live five miles north of Southside and I've seen this for the past six years work in the lives of children. And you're right, this is very innovative. So I'm proud to make that motion.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion.
DR. WILLIAMS: Second.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I have a motion and a second to approve the application.

All -- any discussion?
All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?
Okay. Congratulations. It's unanimous.
And if you want to wait for just a few minutes and we'll let the individual members give you some feedback that you can take back and talk about. So, thank you.
(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We'll start with Mr. Wilson for feedback.

MR. WILSON: I voted for the application. I thought the proposal was well-done, well-considered, and a logical extension of the success for the high school charter.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.
MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion. The District has a complete and comprehensive proposal and plan.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.
MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion. I didn't have any concerns with the conversion charter.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.
DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion. The request aligns with what's happening in the high school and also it allows students to learn about and start moving toward real world opportunities.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: I have no concerns. I voted for the motion. I think it's a well thought-out plan and provides the flexibility needed for an innovative approach extending to grades 7 and 8.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted for the motion.
Very impactful and innovative program, an example of what can be accomplished in education when we think
outside the box.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you all very much and we appreciate you being here today.

B-2: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION - ADVENTURE ONLIN ACADEMY

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We will move on to the next item on our afternoon agenda which is for the Adventure Online Academy.

MS. WEBB: Next on the agenda is the hearing for the district conversion charter applicant, Adventure Online Academy in the Waldron School District. The applicant is requesting to serve students in grades $K$ through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 150 students. Speakers for Adventure Online Academy include Superintendent Daniel Fielding and Curriculum Specialist Toni Dozier.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So will everyone who's speaking on this proposal please stand and raise your right hand? Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

SUPT. FIELDING: I do.
MS. DOZIER: I do.
CHAIRMAN OFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And if you'll state your name and title for the record, you
may begin.
SUPT. FIELDING: Yes, ma'am. My name is Daniel Fielding; I'm superintendent of Waldron Schools. Madam Chairman, thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak. The rest of the Panel, thank you very much for this opportunity as we present this application to have Adventure Online Academy at Waldron Schools.

And I would actually like to start off by breaking with what I'd practiced to say how much I enjoyed listening to the Southside presentation, because a lot of the theme that was talked about there was the idea and the notion of flexibility which is in essence what we are asking for at Waldron Public Schools.

As I said before, we are trying to get a charter for a virtual academy. We've named it Adventure Online Academy (or AOA for short). And just to kind of give you a little bit of background, when we were developing this presentation we really wanted to touch on why we need this, how we need this, how we're going to do this -- just kind of go through that flow there. Although our students have changed dramatically over the years, $I$ think it's kind of safe to say that education sometimes tends to remain
the same. And then I will say this: at Waldron Public Schools we're very proud of the educational program that we have at our school, we work very hard, we have a great number of professional teachers, we have wonderful students -- but we are asking for some flexibility, and in just a few minutes I'll be explaining why we are asking for such flexibility.

But I will say that parents do tend to -- I'm going to use -- I'm going to say home-school -that's one of the examples I'm going to use is they home-school for various reasons, and that's what I'm going to touch on today. And as you've probably had presented to you before, there are a lot of quality aligned curriculums out there, but they're -- some of them are very challenging and often -- sometimes expensive for home-school students and parents to find. And some of the requirements for on-site delivery often fall to the parents who may not necessarily be comfortable or familiar with an instructional program like that. You know, we have a number of students in our district that are being home-schooled. We also have a number of students who are in high school that are in line to graduate, to get their high school diploma, and for whatever
reasons -- it could be because of work, difficulties at school, issues at home, just a desire to not come to the public school anymore -- there are a variety of reasons why we -- and I know that Waldron is probably not dissimilar than a lot of places -- are bleeding students. And that's kind of a tough pill to swallow for us, especially -- you know, at our school district we're trying to reach all students. When I took this job as a superintendent $I$ kind of made that oath to the board that $I$ would be doing everything that $I$ could to reach all the students within our community. And I believe that there is a population that we simply aren't reaching, which is why I'm here requesting this online -- the virtual school application.

Just to give you a little bit of background about Scott County, we're on the far western side of Arkansas; we're almost to the Oklahoma border. Scott County has got an area of 892 square miles. Now unlike a lot of school districts Scott County is one school district. So we're very -- we're a large county but in that county there's only one school district, and so we have a number of our students that travel great distances. And, you know, I don't have the exact numbers now because I think that has
changed, but at one time Scott County had the longest square mileage bus route in the state of Arkansas. I think we're number two now. And so we have a very large square mileage that we go and pick students up, which presents a challenge. But I'm not here today to talk about challenges; I'm talking -- I'm here to talk about future solutions.

And so this is one of the things that we're trying to do today is to talk about how we can reach these students. As you also can see, Waldron School District is -- we're a poverty community; Scott County is a high-poverty county. I saw some statistics in our application as we were putting it together that kind of -- and it even kind of surprised me. I think we have $10 \%$ of our population has a bachelor's degree within our county, you know, and if -- with a population of about 11,000 , if you took out the -- some -- the almost -- I'm sorry, I'm not clicking -- sorry -- yes, sorry about that. If you took out the approximately 200 certified staff that we have, we may be down to $6 \%$ or $7 \%$ with our county. So it does present quite a challenge to us. We are currently close to breeching the 90\% free-andreduced population. I know this because our elementary school, which typically tends to be your
population that gets your highest number of free-andreduced lunches, we're close to $90 \%$. And so we know that that need is great in our county and it's growing and -- but, again, we're looking for things to help enhance our county. And with those long distances that we face we often face a lot of attendance issues. We fight that tooth-and-nail. I think my administrators probably get very sick of calling and asking where they are, but we just know that being in your chair is the key to learning. And I've got a big bulletin board -- a big huge billboard right outside our central office and we decided that we wanted just a simple statement this year, and it says, " $10 \%$ of school days missed in a year can lead to reduction in learning." Just a simple statement, but we wanted everybody that drove down 71 South to know that we want your child there, we want your child present. But this is just kind of a classic I would say Ruby Payne mindset. I know you're probably all familiar with some of Ruby Payne's work. But I truly feel in my heard that the only way to consistently overcome poverty or poverty mindset is through education, and that's what we're trying to do here.

Based on knowledge of our population and
demographics in our county, I do believe that there is an alarming number of students who home-school or simply stop coming to school that are receiving no -little to no education. And I want to try to kind of back that up a little bit with just kind of factual evidence that's with our county is that -- unlike a lot of counties Scott County does not have any type of home-school consortium. I know that in a lot of counties there is a -- there's kind of like a school within a school for home-school students, and so -but there is no consortium that we're aware of within our county. We have -- the county just to our south has a consortium, and so we have a few things for students that are involved in that. But a lot of the students that we have simply, for lack of a better term, disappear, and I have trouble living with that.

Occasionally we have students that return to us, former students that elected to go to home-school and return to public school. Now I've been at this school district for 17 years, and I was really trying to think back to any of the students that we've had that have come back to us from home-school and I could actually only think of one student that came back to us, to the public school that was either on grade level or above it. Now this particular student
was the exception to the rule; he was a brilliant young man and he basically knew just about everything that we were teaching him before we taught it. But the fact of the matter is a lot of them come back to us and have regressed substantially. And, again, we're in the education business and we're trying to get them ready for college and career.

And so I said all that to say this is that we seem to have a certain population of students that are just simply falling through the cracks. And so I'd like to present to you what we're looking for with our AOA program.

In developing a vision we wanted it to just kind of be simple. We wanted it to be simple, but I think this is simple but robust. We've got two key components: to provide a rich and rigorous curricular program for students and families who are seeking an alternative to a traditional school setting. Just a simple one-sentence statement about what our vision is. And a second part of that vision is to utilize this AOA program as sort of a bridge between the home-school community and the public schools. Again, I do believe that there are some home-school programs that are very good; there are some home-school programs that are -- that can be very effective.

There are some students -- my daughter-in-law being one of them -- never came to a public school but she is a very educated, well-rounded young lady. But, again, I think that there are so many of them that they're -- that are unable to get this for whatever reason, and that's why I'm trying to establish this. This next slide kind of touches on just how we plan to bridge that gap, the actual kind of meat and potatoes so-to-speak for how we're going to bridge that gap between them. Waldron Public Schools -- we currently maintain a curriculum known as Edgenuity. You may have heard of it before. There are some other schools that use it, including us. We use it for a credit recovery program. But this program has basically all of the components needed to do a K-12 online program and we've been in many discussions with them and working with them. There are other educational programs out there. This is one that we have used at Waldron with a lot of success in helping students pass courses. This program is a K-12 instructional program which is completely online; it has built-in video recorded lessons, and it's presented by a licensed teacher -- an Arkansas licensed teacher -- because that was -- when we were trying to research all the information that we could
and gather everything we could about this program we visited Van Buren. Van Buren has a fabulous online educational academy. I know that they -- it's -- I think they're about three years old. And we went and visited with them and asked them lots of questions, spent about two or three hours with them just kind of picking their brain and asking things about, you know, what are some pitfalls that you ran into, help us to avoid those things. And so we were able to gain a lot of knowledge from them.

Students can work through these lessons or courses at any time day or night, which I think is a part of that flexibility that we're asking for is to give these students that opportunity to still seek their education if, for whatever reason, they are not coming to public school. And these students are still required to maintain certain percentages, as I've got up here, for mastery course passage.

This Edgenuity program, if you're not familiar with it, provides a daily percentage of how much of the course is being completed. So it also gives the overseers the opportunity to see if a student is having trouble with a course, it lets us know how much of the course is being completed, and we can gauge that by how much time is left in a semester
when we make our calls and we make our visits to try to help these students along.

Further student benefits is that a student will be enrolled as a Waldron Public School student. And, again, something that I really enjoyed hearing from the presenters from Southside was that we too feel like it's very important that there be that opportunity for students to be involved in fine arts -- band, music, athletics -- that there still be an opportunity for them to do that. And this program would, as I said before, kind of bridge that gap and help these students to still feel like they can be a part of the Waldron Public School System, even if it's not in the brick-and-mortar building. It still gives them the opportunity to pursue some of their passions. Because as the Senator said, a lot of these students that come to our schools are here because they want to be in band or they want to be in choir. I don't think that's any different even with a student that's at home, is that there is still I think that desire for music or for activities and things like that, and we want to try to provide that to them. It's to allow them to do those extracurricular activities -- sports, band, cheer, agri -- or students may choose to never set foot on
campus. You know, the only time that we do feel like they would have to be on campus, if they so chose to, would be to meet the requirements for all state-level testing, such as the ACT and ACT Aspire and things like that.

We do have designated staff members that we have -- one of whom would like to have been here today, but she had a family emergency literally last night. And so we would have loved to have had her here, but she is going to be a part of this also. But we have designated staff that will -- and contact personnel that will be available to help the students and the families.

And the school benefit -- there is a school benefit. Again, I want to be honest and transparent about this is that we are a community that is shrinking. You know, we just recently lost our WalMart. We have a lot of students that have moved away, but we still have a lot left; we still have a lot of students. And what we want to do is we want to design a program that can spark interest in our community again. You know, obviously this is something where we would like to reach all the students and they would be Waldron Public School students. So as I've got noted up there, each
student would be enrolled as a public school student and would count toward our student count, which then in turn helps with foundation funding with the Department of Education. But I will say that finances were not, however, the primary motivation for this program. I won't lie to you and tell you that it's not nice, but our main goal is to reach all students in Scott County. We think that this program will better serve Waldron School students, both home and in the brick-and-mortar building.

As far as our staffing and other services go, the AOA's educational delivery is going to be fully digital. We offer -- this Edgenuity program offers tutoring services, special education modifications, ELL; they're all built into this program. There will, however, be an on-site location which we felt was very important. In the event that a student or their family needed something that required one-onone assistance, we do have a space available in our central office where they can come and seek help.

As I said before, all the students will participate in all state testing. And as I've got noted up here, this may be the only time that they actually have to come to the school to take tests and all arrangements can be made on kind of a case-by-
case basis there.
The Edgenuity program also has built-in labs. That's one of the questions that I would like to make sure that this Panel knows, that we have the labs, which is sometimes something that the programs struggle to have in their system. So they can come to the building to participate in the labs or they can just do the labs outside the Edgenuity program. And this is a list of our staffing. My name is up here first as superintendent of the schools, but just kind of a list of my credentials: I have a bachelor's degree in Science, master's degree in Educational Leadership; I'm a graduate of the ESL Academy, and I'm a graduate of the Arkansas Master Principal Program at the Arkansas Leadership Academy.

I also have with me Ms. Toni Dozier, and she will be our administrative director -- kind of our administrator over this program. She has a pre-K through 6 certification, a bachelor's in Science, Middle Level Technology endorsement, and she has a master's degree in Educational Leadership with the Curriculum Endorsement. And we also have a lady named Melissa Brewer; she serves as our high school counselor currently. She has a bachelor's in Special Education in K-12, and then a master's in School

Counseling and Leadership. So we tried to cover all of the areas that we might -- all the bases that we might need to cover in this program with the staff that you see before you.

And I have a video from State Senator Terry Rice that I would like for you to watch at this time.

MR. WILSON: I'd love to see it.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dan may need to -- can you play that?

MR. DAN DAVIS: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. He's going to take care of that for you.

SUPT. FIELDING: Okay. Thank you.
VIDEO SHOWN (TRANSCRIBED AS FOLLOWS):
SENATOR RICE: Hello. This is Terry Rice, State Senator from District 9, and talking about the Waldron School District in Scott County has applied for the district conversion charter, Adventure Online Academy. And I just want to say I've talked to Superintendent Daniel Fielding about this and I fully support it. We want to reach students that are much in need and that are not fitting the traditional way that I was grown up with and -- had grown up with. And I want to reach all the children we can in the timeline that we're able to. So anything I can do in
support of this I would be happy to.
[END OF VIDEO]
SUPT. FIELDING: That's my presentation. I appreciate your time and consideration in this matter. And if you have any questions, let's ask.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right.
Ms. Hyatt, is there anyone else to speak?
MS. HYATT: (Shaking head from side to side.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, if you're ready for questions we will go ahead and get started with that part. We'll start down here.

MR. WILSON: I can't help but observe that Terry Rice is the son of my colleague; I've known Bud Rice a long, long time. And tell Terry, if you're successful, his video didn't have anything to do with it.

## [LAUGHTER]

MR. WILSON: You mentioned the pretty large and rural nature of Scott County. How can the kids that -- students that are using online services, how can they get access to the signal on the internet? How do you plan to handle that?

SUPT. FIELDING: Yes, sir. Thank you for the question. We've actually tried to time this well. Now I'll give you a little bit of a statistic. We've
researched this and there's approximately $53 \%$ of the citizens in our county have purchased broadband. Okay. So if you really think about it, that's kind of a -- what I would consider to be a low number. I mean it's just slightly over half. And so when we were considering how we were going to do this, the school district was going to offer if a student needed one or requested one a Chromebook, which we're a one-to-one high school. We were also going to offer them a hotspot, if needed, out in the county. Now, you know, there are a lot of our students that -- if you're familiar with Scott County, we have a population within our town of about 4,000; the county population is 11,000 -- and so spread out over the county is a large number of people. Now in the town there's good internet service. I mean it comes and it goes out just like every other place, but we have access to it. There is also a -- our local electric company, Arkansas Valley Electric, is currently doing a program where they are burying a fiber-optic line in an effort to offer internet service to every citizen in Scott County. Now it's still about a year out, we're being told, but they're currently working on getting it in place. And so we feel like that's just something that's going to further enhance and
give the citizens of our county an opportunity to receive these online services. But in the meantime, we were still going to offer them -- we're going to offer them a Chromebook, no matter what. But if you live out in the county and you have no way of getting internet service we're going to offer you a hotspot to use there.

MR. WILSON: How do you grow a hotspot? How do you plan on -- how does it work, is the question.

SUPT. FIELDING: Well, a hotspot -- you can actually kind of even use it on your phone. It's a -- you know, our phones -- we may not have like WiFi where we're at; you know, we may not be able to use WiFi. But you can even turn on a hotspot with your phone so that you can use internet access through like a phone or a device. These are just like a little box that you use.

MR. WILSON: I'd better quit asking questions.
I'm past my level of incompetence here.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.
MS. NEWTON: What is the census of the district?
SUPT. FIELDING: I'm sorry; what?
MS. NEWTON: What's your district's census, the number of students that you currently have?

SUPT. FIELDING: Currently, our actual number is

1404 as of our October 1 count. That's down 31 students from the previous year.

Actually, what I did -- when I took over as superintendent one of the things that $I$ did was $I$ went back and looked as far back as I could go to determine what was our student population, and I just went back to when I started as an administrator. And when I went back and looked the number that I could come up with -- the best number I could come up with was 1781. And so, you know, we've lost approximately 350 or so students in the past, you know, 12 to 15 years. But again, I'm trying to look at this -- I'm looking at this on the positive side, is, yes, that's a problem; yes, that is a funding -- you know, is a funding issue. You have to make provisions according to that. But the reason why we are trying to do this is it's not financial. But again, I'm not going to lie to you and tell you that it's not good to try to increase your student numbers. But we do have a population of students that go to home-school and we just can't -- we don't know where they're at. But when you see those students around town I cannot help but wonder -- you know, they haven't left Scott County and yet, we are not -- they're not coming to Waldron Public Schools. Honestly, it is my hope that
if we have a student that's successful in this program maybe they will also consider, "hey, I want to come up and I want to do welding in the agri shop; I really enjoy doing that;" "I want to come to the auto mechanic shop;" "I want to come up and work -play in the band or be a part of the choir, but I'm also a student that doesn't come to the traditional school." And that kind of goes back to that bridging the gap piece that I was talking about earlier, which is simply a net. You know, we have the traditional students that are going to come to seven or eight periods a day; they're going to participate in all of -- everything; they're going to graduate with a diploma. Then you have everything in between. What we're trying to do at Waldron Schools is we're trying to provide a way to catch everyone, from the student that's -- I'm just going to say easy to educate to the student that's difficult to educate. Because they're all going to be in this world; they're all going to be working; and we're all -- we want them all to be productive citizens. And just like what the Southside folks said, we would really love for them to be able to stay in Scott County and help for us to begin to grow our population.

MS. NEWTON: What other towns -- I'm not
familiar with Scott County. What other towns are there?

SUPT. FIELDING: We're about 45 miles south of Fort Smith. That's probably the best way that I can describe. We're straight south of them on Highway 71 South, in between Mena and Fort Smith.

MS. NEWTON: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Fielding, can you talk to me a little bit about the teachers of the online courses? Who will be the teacher-of-record for those and how are you -- what does that relationship look like between those teachers-of-record and the students?

SUPT. FIELDING: When we talked with Van Buren, one of the things that we learned -- and I will say this, even in the time that we submitted this proposal to you guys we've learned some things since then. One of the things that we learned from speaking with Van Buren is that each one of the teachers that are listed as an online teacher through the Edgenuity program we have to list -- we list as a teacher-of-record. And so whoever that teacher is through the Edgenuity program, whoever it may be, if they teach math we list them in our system as the teacher-of-record. Does that make sense?

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.
SUPT. FIELDING: Does that answer your question? CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

SUPT. FIELDING: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I wanted to kind of see what you were looking at. And then, so I was going to go back to look at your success measures and I can't find them immediately. But can you just describe again how -- what you're going to be looking at as those success measures? Because this will be K-12; correct?

SUPT. FIELDING: Yes, ma'am.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
SUPT. FIELDING: Yes, ma'am. Well, and I may have Ms. Toni Dozier speak on that.

MS. DOZIER: I'm Toni Dozier; I'm the District Instructional Improvement Administrator.

And part of our goals -- we kind of had math, reading, social studies -- or no social studies -science $60 \%$ of our students would be ready or exceeding. But we've kind of looked at that since the time and we think that maybe trying to make sure our students are at the state average might be a better -- you know, a better goal for us to start with. On our goals we put that we were going to kind
of look at the first three years and kind of get a plan so that we could, you know, move our students up. But, you know, we would like to be at the state average. We would like for our students in Scott County to be at the state average.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
SUPT. FIELDING: I would also like to say that just making sure that we're passing -- you know, passing these courses and staying current on things, you know. You know, I personally think that that sometimes is part of what leads to a successful person is sticking it out. You know, I always called it -- it's a slang term, but stick-with-it-ness. You know, that's something that we picked up when we talked with Van Buren was -- I think they're running a 99\% passage rate, which is phenomenal to me. And I asked them why, because that was what really peaked my interest, was, "How are you doing this?" And they said, "Well, we stay in a lot of like constant contact with them, communication." And so, you know, I think that that is a goal too is for us to continue to work together. Because for whatever reason there is a divide between families and students that are not enrolled in public schools and students that are. And I think that, again -- I know I sound like a
broken record, but that bridging the gap process starts with communication also. And having some success in passing these courses and moving on to the next one you get to the point where they say, "Okay, you know, $I$ really got this now."

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams?
DR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Wilson took my questions.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. I think y'all traded off then; he did that a while ago.

All right. Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: Looking at the Career and Technical Education, the nine units, you list -- it looks like you have programs of study at Waldron High School. I'm assuming you've got ag facts and business and STEM?

SUPT. FIELDING: Yes, ma'am.
DR. KREMERS: Okay. And so the option that you speak of, the automotive lab, that would be where the online student would have to then come to the campus to have that hands-on experience for that portion? Or do you also plan to have an online option for the lab components also?

SUPT. FIELDING: The labs that they speak of -and Ms. Dozier may have to step up here and say this again, but I'm going to try to answer this best I can
-- is the labs that we -- that are currently through Edgenuity are kind of the standard labs that we use. Now one of the things that Ms. Dozier and I have talked about is the one course that Waldron Schools would have to create is the computer course, the computer programming course in the middle school. That's something -- and we've been in contact with the Edgenuity folks about some of the -- there are a few programs that they're going to have to maybe add and modify. You know, in high school there's a -there's not any -- there's not an economics class in the Edgenuity program, but they have assured us that that is a simple matter to overcome. As far as the labs go, yes, there would be lab opportunities for them to come up to the school, if they so chose. But as far as lab opportunities that are a part of the curriculum -- like science, for example, physical science -- those are built into the Edgenuity program. But again we want to extend that olive branch to these students and say, "Hey, come on up. Come up and come to this lab. We're going to have it on Tuesday. Come up and be a part of this. Get to know some people." And so, you know, that would be a best-case scenario. But we want to have it designed for either way.

DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh.
SUPT. FIELDING: Okay.
DR. KREMERS: And maybe to go into a little more detail, so if I'm taking family consumer sciences and it's food science and we're -- you know, are the students doing things at home? Does the video guide them through that?

MS. DOZIER: I think there's a mixture. There are -- you know, they would include things that would -- the student would have at home already. If they were cooking, it would be something that they would have at home already. But there are also videos; they put that in there. Or like in a science experiment, if you needed a microscope they have that online that the kids can view. So they can -- or they could come to our school and use the microscopes there, so --

DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.
SUPT. FIELDING: I would also say too that one of the things that they did talk about was when they do the labs, if it's a lab at home that they indicated that they would -- that the attempt would be for it to be things that they already had at home, things that they could do, you know, which, of course -- you know, it kind of goes back to that Wal-Mart
philosophy: it needs to be able to be purchased at Wal-Mart, you know.

DR. KREMERS: Okay. Will you offer certifications to students that might be in those courses? Would that be an option available?

MS. DOZIER: Yes. And we do that at our high school also. The Google certifications, we would certainly offer those to any students, any that we're familiar with, or we would find something for them if we need to. We really want to make sure that we're meeting the needs of all of our students.

DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any questions?
MR. BALDWIN: I may know the answer to this, but I'm going to ask it anyway. The Edgenuity curriculum, is that state -- is that an approved curriculum? I guess it would be or they wouldn't be --

SUPT. FIELDING: Yes, sir.
MR. BALDWIN: Okay.
SUPT. FIELDING: It sure is.
MR. BALDWIN: If I'm a student and I'm following the online courses, and I may have questions and I just can't get past where I am, how do I get help, real-life help?

SUPT. FIELDING: Well, what we're trying to do is we've tried to set up a network. And during the presentation I wanted to make sure I point out that we do have an onsite place for students to come and get help. But one of the things that we talked about -- like with the high school principal, for example, we -- she -- of course, everyone is onboard with this and knows what we're doing with this. But in the event that -- say upper level math, if it's an upper level math question and the student simply can't find the answer to it that someone has got to be available to be able to answer that question. So that's where that cooperation with our higher level math teachers comes into play. And they're already -- they've already been briefed on the fact that there would be some occasions when a student may ask these questions. We're also looking to try to build sort of a library of online resources. Because, you know, I'll just use with my own children -- Khan Academy was an excellent site that could be used in helping with math problems. Because a lot of these students, you know, they're digitally minded; they've -- they were born with a cell phone in their hand or computer in their hand, and so they're very comfortable with not only manipulating it that way but finding their
information that way. But we want to be able to cover both bases. If a student chooses to find it that way, that's excellent; if a family member or the student wishes to come up to an onsite location or seek the help from one of us, we just kind of have this network of people that we're going to cooperate with.

MR. BALDWIN: So would the student have to drive in to the office, to the physical site, or could they -- is there a phone number to call? Would they be able to reach out by phone?

MS. DOZIER: Yes, we will have a phone number and Edgenuity also has an online tutor. If the kids need help with something, that could be their first -- you know, first place to go. And then they even have problems that are worked on white boards. So they have a lot of built-in tutoring options. But if the students need tutoring -- I know Van Buren has a tutoring day, like on Thursday, for any kid who wants to come in and have tutoring. So we'll be looking at something like that. Or if the kids or parents want to call in to us we can tutor or give the kids whatever they need. We really want to build that safety-net to help them succeed.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Panel, do we have any
more questions for the applicant?
Okay. I was going to check with Ms. Hyatt to see if there are any remaining issues with the application or the legal review.

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division. There's only one. So most of the services, guidance counseling, school nursing, it says they're going to provide at their -- with their -- through their regular district. On the school nursing and library media waivers, which is number seven on the legal review, if you're following along, they requested three statutes and two standards and a rule. They repealed the request for the standards and the rule citing that they would be providing those services online -- I mean, not online, through their traditional district. But they didn't repeal their request for the statutes. And so I either need them to repeal that request along with the others or to explain how they're -- they might need those standards -- or need the statute, so -MS. DOZIER: Yes, we would like to repeal that. We will not need that for media services and library. MS. HYATT: And the statute for school nursing? MS. DOZIER: Yes, also the statute for school nursing.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. That got it?

MS. HYATT: (Nodding head up and down.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. So, Panel, if there aren't any questions or discussion we can entertain a motion.

MR. WILSON: I move the approval of the application, Madam Chairman.

MS. NEWTON: Second.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion to approve and a second.

All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?
All right. Congratulations.
SUPT. FIELDING: Thank you very much.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: It's been approved. And we will record our comments and provide you some feedback.
(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I'm going to just summarize because most used the same -- the same supporting of the motion to re-engage your students and having developed a comprehensive plan.

So thank you and good luck. And we can't wait
to see what happens in your school district. SUPT. FIELDING: Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.
B-3: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION - CENTERPOINT ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURE AND SKILLED TRADES

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We'll go ahead and move on with our next item and that will be for Centerpoint Academy. Ms. Webb, you're recognized.

MS. WEBB: The Centerpoint Academy of Agriculture and Skilled Trades is a proposed district conversion public charter school in the Centerpoint School District. The applicant is requesting to serve students in grades 11 and 12 with a maximum enrollment of 75 students.

Speakers here from Centerpoint include the superintendent, Dan Breshears; principal -- high school principal, Dr. Nick Mounts; director of Curriculum, Tonya Harrison; and agriculture teachers Jerry Fendley, Billy Minton, and Marcus Crawley.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. So if everyone who's going to be speaking on this application can raise your right hand and be sworn in. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you give will be the
truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you very much.
And we are ready for you to begin your
presentation. You'll have 20 minutes -- up to 20 minutes for the presentation. And if there will be multiple people you can just come up to the mic as you're ready and if you'll state your name and position for the record you'll be recognized.

Wait, hang on just a moment. We can --
MR. DAN DAVIS: I just wanted to apologize.
Whenever I converted it back for the PowerPoint from the media, it looks like it's jumbled up there, on the slide there.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Oh, okay.
MR. DAN DAVIS: On the pdf it does not look like that. So that was me, not them.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you for updating us. And Ms. Newton had gotten really worried there, and so --

Okay. Well, hopefully the rest of it will look okay. And if we need to make copies and give paper copies we can, but -- and we may have it online. Is that correct?

MR. DAN DAVIS: Yes.
Sharon K. Hill, CCR

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. We're ready when you are.

SUPT. BRESHEARS: Good afternoon, Dr. Pfeffer. I appreciate you and the Panel listening to us this afternoon and sharing the vision we have for the Centerpoint Academy of Agriculture and Skilled Trades.

I know Secretary Key has said I think on more than one occasion that we're no longer focused on college or career ready; it's just career ready. You know, some kids are going to go to college to have that career, and some aren't, and we do a good job with our higher students in the Centerpoint School District preparing them for that. But we also serve another population. I think we're very well-known, as Dr. Mounts is going to point out, for our agricultural studies, our agri students.

We're a very rural school district in western Arkansas, and we've got a lot of farm families out there. A lot of our students thrive and even lead when they go down to the meats lab or out to the farm, whereas as a junior or senior they may not be too jazzed on Shakespeare -- and they frankly aren't going to be in the next 12 to 24 months before they step out and begin citizens in our community, and
taxpayers.
So the nature of that community and those kids that have come up in those families has led us to want to create a school -- a special place, a school to focus on these career and technical skills. Again, our rural location prevents us from taking kids to career centers; so we want to bring the career center to the kids and to the community, and that's why -- that's where the vision started. And Dr. Mounts has worked very tirelessly and very hard and this is his vision and I appreciate the work he's done, along with the ag. guys.

And at this time I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Dr. Mounts. Thank you.

DR. MOUNTS: Yes. Thank you, Panel. Nick Mounts, Centerpoint High School principal.

Like Mr. Breshears said, our goal is to develop a charter school that's focused on agriculture and skilled trades because that is who we are and that's what we do. I feel like we do it very well. If you've heard of Centerpoint, the Centerpoint School District, Centerpoint High School at all, you've probably heard about our agricultural program in some regards.

This vision actually started back in 2017. One
of the agri teachers and $I$, Mr. Fendley, we traveled to -- all the way to Minnesota to see their agriculture high school there in Vadnais Heights, Minnesota. What we saw was pretty impressive. We both left thinking that we could do that -- we could do that even better than what they had done. We also visited Pea Ridge High School and their Pea Ridge Manufacturing and Business Academy twice, with two different groups of teachers. And we came away from that thinking the same thing: that we can apply this, we can take those ideas, then we can make them our own.

Our college-going numbers -- we survey our students, our outgoing students, like every school does. About $80 \%$ of our graduates indicate to us that they are planning to attend a post-secondary education in some regard, in some way. About 85\% of those students do. But in two years though, only about $60 \%$ of those students are still in some sort of post-secondary training. What we have realized -what the data tells us is that we're getting them there. We're doing a very good job of preparing our students for a four-year college, for a four-year university to go on to be accountants, to be doctors, to be lawyers, whatever it may be. What we're not

|  | 179 |
| :---: | :---: |
| 1 | doing a very good job of right now, that we can |
| 2 | certainly improve upon, are those skilled trade |
| 3 | laborers, those agriculture focused careers that we |
| 4 | can send our students to that Pike County -- where we |
| 5 | are, in extreme southwest Arkansas, Pike County is |
| 6 | made up of those kinds of people. For every lawyer |
| 7 | we have -- I would say we have 10 or 20 farmers, and |
| 8 | it doesn't make sense to prepare everyone to go to a |
| 9 | four-year college or university. |
| 10 | What you see on the screen right now is -- those |
| 11 | are two pictures from our meats lab. What that is, |
| 12 | we -- it's one of the five I guess agriculture venues |
| 13 | or classrooms that we use. Mr. Crawley, one of our |
| 14 | agri teachers, is in charge of this. This is -- |
| 15 | again, this is one of the things that we're known |
| 16 | for. This is one of those hands-on classes where our |
| 17 | students come in and they process this meat, |
| 18 | typically beef or pork; they process this, they send |
| 19 | it out. They're learning a hands-on skill. We've |
| 20 | had students go on to have pretty high-paying careers |
| 21 | in butcher shops. That's not all we do, that's not |
| 22 | all we try to do, but the hands-on aspect is there in |
| 23 | multiple ways. |
| 24 | This is a couple of pictures in our agriculture |
| 25 | shop. There on the left, the bigger picture, is a |

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

CNC machine that we -- Isaac is one of our students there. A CNC machine is a Computer Numeric Control device that has a computer hooked to it. Isaac had to develop a computer file that had what he wanted to print or cut on it, and he is seeing the product of that. On the right is a smoker that our students built using a plasma cam, a CNC metal cutting machine. They're very proud of that.

Here we have a couple of pictures of the community outreach activities that our agriculture students have a reach to our community. The one on the left, the bigger one, is our livestock cutter parked at our Centerpoint Elementary School and those students are going through there; they're developing that love of agriculture. On the right there, that was taken at our school farm where our students get to interact with the animals; they get to medicate the animals, feed the animals. Everything that they would do on a typical family-owned farm they do on this school farm.

Agriculture has changed in the last several years, especially in the last 10 years where it's not just that the most high-tech tool that you have at your disposal is a saw or is some sort of planer, what-have-you. Agriculture has changed to the point
that we have a computer lab in our agriculture shop. This computer lab is where those two boys are right now. They are designing what will eventually be printed -- and I say -- I use the word "printed" to mean cut -- cut out on one of our CNC machines. I'm not sure if that's a wooden -- a wood machine that that will lead to or if that's a metal cutter. But they -- what they're designing there will eventually be sent to one of those CNC machines; the end product will be cut out and they'll have something hands-on tangible that they can hold. Again, agriculture has progressed to the point to where you must innovate with it and you must be able to do those computerbased projects. The boy on the left, his name is Gabe. Gabe's family is in the logging industry. Gabe -- the one thing Gabe knew for sure was that he didn't want to go into the logging industry; he wanted to be a surveyor -- he wants to be a surveyor. He's a senior this year; he's learning those skills as a senior there at Centerpoint High School. He will be able to take those skills, he'll be able to go to a two-year college, and he'll be able to come -- to become a land surveyor.

Our newest facility, our newest program of study is our plant systems program of study. These girls
there in the bigger picture, they're in our greenhouse. The boys on the right are actually in our greenhouse too. But this greenhouse was funded with a start-up grant from CTE. Those students there are planting it looks like maybe tomato plants, pepper plants. The boys on the right are working on a hydroponics system, "hydroponics" meaning water -fed by water, nourished by water. This has been a great addition to our offerings that we already have in place.

Our show and judging teams, we're very, very big into these two areas. Our students get incredible amounts of exposure at the county, district, and state levels at the fairs. The girl on the right, her name is Amy Williams; she is showing there the grand champion market pig at the district fair just this year in Hope. She's very proud of that, as you can tell. She put a lot of time, a lot of effort, a lot of money into that pig to get that to where it needed to be. She's at the State Fair right now. If she hasn't already shown, she'll show later this week.

But I give you those pictures, those stories -those short little stories to show you and to tell you and to prove to you that we are an ag-based
community. We are very much -- agriculture is very much ingrained in us and us in agriculture. We feel like the next step for us is to -- I would say, for lack of a better term, to place a school-within-aschool. What we're looking to do honestly is to develop this charter so that we can train, so that we can nurture these students in a life of agriculture, a life of skilled trades; we can show them the value of skilled trades, of agriculture -- and just like the other two presenters have already said, so that those people, those students, those graduates of ours can see that there is value in agriculture, there is value in skilled trade, becoming a skilled trades laborer. And selfishly, we want those students to get trained and to continue to reside in Pike County where they can make our community a better place, so they can give our community better workers, better skilled workers.

Our goal is to offer a value-added diploma through an ag-infused and ag-powered program that serves the population of students, as well as what we're doing with our other population of students. We have -- like other schools have, we have a very high-performing AP program; we have a concurrent credit program where students can earn an associates
degree before they leave our campus. We have those things in place. We have a good agriculture program. What we're not doing is making that connection between our high school and agriculture courses and feeding them into that career pipeline so that they can go and earn a living in what they love doing. We want to elevate the relevance of agriculture instruction at Centerpoint High School with those students. We want to let students know and experience that skilled trades are a relevant and viable career option for them. We also want to lift our agricultural students up and hold them accountable in a way that's similar to our AP students.

So why focus on agriculture and skilled trades? Well, the numbers don't lie. The top 20 most indemand jobs in southwest Arkansas, which again is where we're located, according to the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services -- those highlighted there in purple, those are directly related to the mission we have for our agricultural charter school. Those are the careers that we think we can help prepare students to fit directly into. 40\% -- 40\% of all jobs in Pike County are in the fields of agriculture, forestry, construction, or farming.

Another table here, this is the increase that the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services predicts [clearing throat] -- excuse me -- the increase in those agriculture related industries. Construction is expected to increase in the number of workers by 12-1/2\%; transportation/utilities almost 10\% -- and you see the rest. These are the increases again between 2016 and 2026.

Agriculture by the numbers at Centerpoint High School -- we already have three full-time agriculture teachers; we have five programs of study, and last year alone we had 29 completers. We have 322 students in grades 9 through 12 at Centerpoint High School. Of those 322 students, 157 of those students already take at least one agriculture class; that's 48.7\% of our kids. You can see that agriculture is a part of our life at Centerpoint High School. Total agriculture enrollment, meaning all the students, all the classes they take, we're at 207. So obviously we have several students taking multiple agriculture classes. Over $25 \%$ of the students in these agriculture programs of study are female, and plant systems is the most popular with our girls. Almost half, $48 \%$, of those students in the plant systems program of study are girls.

We want to develop partnerships. We already have several partnerships in place. Some are local; some are on a regional or even a state and national level. But these entities here are either -- they've either pledged their support to us in this endeavor or we're already working with them in some regard. But we'd like to have these partnerships to develop into internships for industry certifications that they can earn, site tours, guest speakers; and then even formal pipelines to careers straight from Centerpoint High School to a two-year degree, to a technical certificate into one of these companies or workforces.

Our targeted students for the Centerpoint Academy of Agriculture and Skilled Trades are those students entering the 11th grade who have shown an interest in agriculture and skilled trades as a career choice. Our students will be in a cohort together, those students in CAAST. They will take agriculture classes with students already enrolled -still enrolled in Centerpoint High School, but they will take their core classes as a group. So those CAAST students, those members of CAAST will take their core classes as a cohort group.

Our agriculture students consistently tell us
again and again that the best parts of their day are the times they spend down the hill -- "down the hill" being at our agriculture facilities. What we're trying to do is to make their entire day the best part of their day. What we're trying to do is to make it to where they don't dread math and English, but look forward to their agriculture classes. What we're trying to do is to infuse agriculture into every core subject area that these students have so that they love English, that they love math because it has that ag flavor to it. We want to make their whole day great and their whole day relevant. Students excel in their agri classes -- we want them, again, to excel in all areas and to see that agri is relevant across all disciplines.

Skills to be taught -- of course, the curriculum will remain just like it is in Arkansas-approved curriculum. All classes will have an agricultural focus and all classes will be project-based. Perseverance, collaboration, innovation are the three primary tenants of what we're trying to do. The skilled trades will be taught by practitioners within our community. We want a value-added and an aginfused diploma; a partnership with the industry, as I mentioned -- the instruction supplemented by those
practitioners. And then, of course, we want internships once those students leave our campus -while they're on our campus.

Student requirements -- the requirements for a CAAST student will be even more rigorous, I guess, than a Centerpoint High School student. They will complete a minimum of two programs of study. They will actively participate in our FFA program. They will complete at least one CDE, a collaborative capstone project, and they will have a job or an internship with one of those partners, or a similar partner. And they will gain an industry-recognized certification, which we all know are becoming more and more important. We are not trying to lessen the requirements or cheat them the value of their diploma. What we're trying to do is to elevate it so that those kids -- so that our whole community sees that there is value in those skilled trades area. We will still require 24 credits for graduation, just as we do now.

Waivers or approvals needed -- that we mentioned in our application. They're on the screen there: teacher certification for those non-core students -or, excuse me, for those non-core teachers; a minimum classified salary schedule; a fourth math credit. We
are -- once this is approved we will seek approval to embed a fourth math course into one of our agricultural courses.

We do have some advantages that other schools don't typically have. Of our three certified agricultural instructors, one is already certified in 9-12 math and another one is also certified in 9-12 science. We will definitely be taking advantage of those certification areas.

This table is just the classes that those students take currently, and if approved in those different programs of study. Again, we offer five -those are across the top. And then you see how those students would progress through those.

Possible future programs of study -construction, technology, medium and heavy-duty truck technology, welding, criminal justice.

Long-term goals -- and like Mr. Breshears alluded to at the very beginning, we're too far from technology centers, from career centers to send our kids to them. It's not feasible in the least to bus kids or to allow them to get there on their own; we're simply too far away from those campuses. We're pretty isolated in that regard. We want to eventually hopefully partner with a two-year college
so that they can come to us more, in a better way. We want to be able to eventually maybe serve multiple school districts with this -- with our plan.

And that is my presentation -- that was our presentation. We'd entertain any questions that you have about it.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you for that. And I will go ahead and open it up for panel questions. We'll start on this end.

MR. BALDWIN: You say here partner with a twoyear college. Do you have a list of colleges that you will partner with or is that a -- kind of a perceptual statement?

DR. MOUNTS: Yes, sir. Well, that is a longterm goal. We do have a partnership currently in place with University of Arkansas at Cossatot, in DeQueen, where we offer concurrent credit classes. And we do have an Animal Science I and II offered at our campus. We have an articulation agreement that that course at their place is waived if those students complete both of those courses of ours.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: Are you going to count the courses that they're taking in ag. in 8, 9, 10 so that you can get the full -- because your goal is two programs
of study by the time they're done. But if it's only 11th grade -- 11 and 12, they would need more time to be able to do --

DR. MOUNTS: Yes.
DR. KREMERS: -- the two full programs of study? DR. MOUNTS: Yes. We would -- yes. In the 9th grade, these students typically take CASE AF\&R in the 9th grade. So, yes, we would have to count that 9th grade foundational course and then move up. Yes, ma'am.

DR. KREMERS: To reach that goal?
DR. MOUNTS: To reach completer status, yes.
DR. KREMERS: And then on the slide that talks about the approvals needed, it says waiver or approvals needed, I just wanted to clarify. So the math credit, which we know, if that's now approved, to be a math credit for the CASE courses. But you're not asking for a waiver of the instructor training for CASE or anything like that --

DR. MOUNTS: No.
DR. KREMERS: -- from that --
DR. MOUNTS: No.
DR. KREMERS: -- request? Okay.
DR. MOUNTS: I believe two of our three teachers right now are currently certified in at least one
area of CASE.
DR. KREMERS: Great.
DR. MOUNTS: Yes.
DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Questions?
DR. WILLIAMS: I don't think I have a question; I've just got a comment. You know, if you go out through the back-side door it locks when you go out.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I'm sorry. I should have told you that. Sorry.

DR. WILLIAMS: If I can help somebody --
I noticed on the enrollment -- on the application that you go from '20-21 maximum enrollment of 25 to '24-25 up to 75?

DR. MOUNTS: Yes, sir.
DR. WILLIAMS: That's quite a jump there. You know, that's really a $200 \%$ increase there. So where do you all see the -- are you looking for an enrollment change or are you just looking for more students that are already enrolled to move into the program? What's your thoughts?

DR. MOUNTS: Yeah. So what we're -- so to answer the first question first, the 25 in year-one, which will go into effect August 2020, the '20-21 school year -- but that's just one grade level.

We'll start with juniors only. So that's --
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
DR. MOUNTS: That's 25 11th graders.
DR. WILLIAMS: Right.
DR. MOUNTS: The next year ideally, you know, we would add -- well, we will move those 11 th graders to their senior year status and then we'll add a new class, a new cohort of 11 th graders. So where we came up with the 25 number roughly -- our classes typically have 75 students in each grade level.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
DR. MOUNTS: Roughly half of those students take an agri course. So we're looking at, you know, 37 or so students in that. Just running the numbers, I don't think that all 37 of those are so sold on agriculture that they would want to I guess endear themselves to an agricultural school. I do think between 20 and 25 would definitely take us up on the offer and say, "Yes, I do want to make that jump."

DR. WILLIAMS: I think that's a good answer and that's a reasonable expectation.

DR. MOUNTS: Okay.
DR. WILLIAMS: I just didn't understand the thought.

DR. MOUNTS: Yes, sir.

DR. WILLIAMS: Because 25 here, 25 -- if you just get 25 a year, that's going to give you 50. But you're looking at half the class of 30 -something, then so the numbers will work --

DR. MOUNTS: Yes, sir.
DR. WILLIAMS: -- basically.
Just to follow-up, what communities make up Centerpoint Public Schools?

DR. MOUNTS: Glenwood in Pike County and Amity in -- just over the county line, in Clark County. DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I used to work for the Ranger out at Lake DeGray way back when -DR. MOUNTS: Yes.

DR. WILLIAMS: -- so I remember Centerpoint. DR. MOUNTS: Yes.

DR. WILLIAMS: So I just couldn't remember what schools --

DR. MOUNTS: Glenwood and Amity.
DR. WILLIAMS: -- have consolidated over time
that now are coming to Centerpoint.
DR. MOUNTS: Right.
DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Questions?
MR. WILSON: I don't have any. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I'm curious as to what made
you decide to go the district conversion charter route rather than looking at a different way to be able to implement this?

DR. MOUNTS: Well, I think the -- I think establishing, like I alluded to earlier, a school within a school model serves us best because in some ways those -- it's already -- our entire 9-12 campus is under one building, except for our agriculture program. They're already, in a sense, their own being, their own entity. I think this solidifies that; I think this gives more emphasis to that. Not that we don't want them to be a bigger part of the Centerpoint High School, but they are -- they're a very big part of our school. And as you can see by the numbers -- as you can see by the number of kids that we send down the hill to agri, I think this -instead of making them seem even more separate from us I think this will give them more -- I'm not sure what the word I'm looking for -- legitimacy, I guess, as a part of our overall school.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. That's a good answer.
So my next question is with regards to the waivers that you're seeking -- and, again, I'm wanting to just make sure that the waivers that you're seeking are only the waivers that you need.

DR. MOUNTS: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And so with regards to the licensure and certification, it seems that you're looking at those -- you're not looking at the core teachers. But it almost seems like you're looking at those industry certified people who are either adjunct instructors --

DR. MOUNTS: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- or those coming in. So I don't know if they're technically not employees of the district and they're technically not filling those teacher-of-record roles? Because I remember reading somewhere in here these people may only be coming in --

DR. MOUNTS: Yes, ma'am.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- at very intermittent times during the year. So Ms. Hyatt may be able to also talk about the need for the waivers and how expansive the waivers would be.

DR. MOUNTS: Yes. And you are correct; our core -- we're asking for no waivers of core teachers, core subject area disciplines at all. We are asking for some flexibility through waivers for two non-core positions. And then, like you said, what we're referring to is the adjunct skilled trades
instructors. Because those are not teachers-ofrecord, it may -- I'll let you speak to that; it may not be necessary for us to even seek the waiver of those.

MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division. That's right. If it's not the teacher-ofrecord, I don't think -- is this working? Okay -- I don't think it's necessary. And that kind of leads into one of the things we've talked about on the legal reviews is they have made requests for waivers of the Right to Read Act and standard. And it's my understanding that the request is just for those adjunct professors; the professional development required by the Right to Read clearly doesn't apply to those people because they're not licensed educators. It may be a requirement for them to have the awareness credential because they are an educator working with students in a $\mathrm{K}-12$ environment, but definitely not the professional development piece which ties into this and is in the legal review under this section and another section. I think they wanted some teacher licensure waivers outside of the adjunct professors?

DR. MOUNTS: Yes, but for non-core.
MR. HYATT: For non-core classes. But for the

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adjunct professors, if they're coming and they're not the teacher-of-record and they're just coming a couple of times throughout I don't think it necessarily needs to apply to those teachers.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So if the waivers are granted does that apply to the whole high school?

MS. HYATT: It -- I mean however you decide to approve them. So if the representation being made in the application right now is that they only apply to non-core classes and the adjunct professors, that's the standard that they would be held to. And when the waivers are entered into My School Info and then the Standards for Accreditation monitoring tool those limitations would be added in there as well.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, and I would like to really know exactly what we're talking about when we're talking about non-core classes. Because noncore classes -- or is it the non-core classes within this conversion charter concept? And then that also would play into the minimum teacher salary. Again I'm reading, you know, what the -- I think the intent is. But again, if we're not real clear on which teachers we're talking about I think that there are opportunities for confusion down the road. And when you talk about the professional development in the

Right to Read Act and starting to waive that, that gives serious, serious pause.

So I really think we need to get some clarity on all of this. And you all may have some thoughts on that.

MS. HYATT: And just briefly, any waiver that's granted through this process would only apply to a district conversion school, not to the rest of the school district, since it's done through the district conversion process and not through a 1240 waiver.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But is that the whole high school?

MS. HYATT: Is this -- it's --
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No?
MS. HYATT: Yeah.
MS. MCLAUGHLIN: 11 and 12.
MS. HYATT: 11th and 12th grade. And also just to note, since you brought it up, this Panel has never granted a waiver of any of the Right to Read components -- the professional development, the awareness, or proficiency credential, or the law before. So that would be the first time that that's ever been waived.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But again, I'm thinking how many of the teachers in your district only teach 11
and 12. So anyway, maybe you can help me think through this and what does it need to look like. DR. MOUNTS: So just to clarify, it is only -this charter school would only serve students in grades 11 and 12. It would not serve all students in grades 11 and 12.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. DR. MOUNTS: This would -- again, the best way for me to think of it is as a school-within-a-school mentality. And, yes, our intent was not to ask for any certification of waivers, core or non-core, for the larger Centerpoint High School, or especially the Centerpoint School District. What we're asking for certification of waivers are for non-core teachers within the Centerpoint Academy of Agriculture and Skilled Trades.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. DR. MOUNTS: I hope that -CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. DR. MOUNTS: -- clarifies. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: What was the acronym for that?

DR. MOUNTS: CAAST.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: CAAST. Okay. All right. DR. KREMERS: So I have a comment on that.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.
DR. KREMERS: So for the ag teachers, you know, we do technical permitting. But what I wouldn't be sure of is if the ag teacher then becomes also the math and English teacher and they're not going to the core academic courses -- or they're still going to their core academic courses?

DR. MOUNTS: Agriculture teachers wouldn't -- I mean with our current staff agriculture teachers -none of our agriculture teachers are certified in English, like you said. One is certified in 9-12 mathematics and one is certified in 9-12 science. Based on staffing right now, neither one of those will be teaching in those -- in either of those areas; they would still be teaching agriculture classes because of the demand for those courses by those students. We would -- again, we're only asking for certification of waivers for non-core -- and we're thinking health, physical education, just to be honest with you right now -- health and physical education.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: That could be for students not in the CAAST program?

DR. MOUNTS: No, ma'am. We're only asking for certification of waivers for --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. MOUNTS: -- that have been applied to the CAAST .

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: To the CAAST.
DR. MOUNTS: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MR. WALTER: May I be recognized, Madam Chair?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: State your name, please.
MR. WALTER: All right. Tripp Walter, staff attorney, Arkansas Public School Resource Center.

I think Dr. Mounts hopefully addressed a fair amount of your and the Panel's concerns. I just want to re-emphasize a couple of things.

Number one, what they've tried to do in the application is I think narrow down the scope as much as possible. I understand in this discussion and one this morning obviously the concern about opening up an act-wide waiver in a situation like this. And, again, to reiterate what Dr . Mounts has said, and hopefully will allay some fears, we're talking approximately 25 to 75 students; we're talking about those teachers in non-core classes mostly dealing with adjuncts and skilled trades that will be instructing that group of students -- not anybody else, not any other students within Centerpoint High

School. And we will be willing, if necessary, to visit with Ms. Hyatt or the Panel about denoting how that's going to be spelled out so it covers what they want but raises your comfort level as to the specific areas.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So with the professional development how would that apply, Ms. Hyatt, on that one in particular?

MS. HYATT: The professional development for the Right to Read or -- the only professional development -- hold on, let me double-check. So the representations that have been made at least in the legal review is that they are going to be providing even to the adjunct professors the professional development for suicide awareness and prevention, bullying, human trafficking, and -- but not the Right to Read professional development. It's my opinion that that wouldn't apply to the adjunct professors to begin with. And so if that's the limitation I don't think there's a necessity for a waiver of the Right to Read provisions related to providing professional development. But they are going to be providing the other mandated reporter, parental involvement, teen suicide, and bullying; that's required by law.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And again I think it's
just hard when we're trying to think through providing waivers when they may not even be necessary for the adjunct instructors that are being discussed. That one just does give me concern because I think once we start it's going to be really difficult to work through. And it just -- I don't -- it goes against everything I think we do when we say we would waive a Right to Read professional development requirement. Because I really don't think it matters what you're teaching, what age group you're teaching; there are just -- there's a level of awareness that I believe is going to be beneficial, especially if you have students who are in grade 11 and are struggling readers because we've not caught the -- we've not taken care of that early on.

So that's I guess more my comments for the Panel to think about, but --

MS. HYATT: And some of the remaining legal issues were around the same thing, the Right to Read Act waivers, based on -- you know, there's only one law that is the Right to Read Act, and then the Department has issued guidance that's elaborating on what the requirements are. So CTE educators or educators that kind of fall into this group would be required just to have the awareness credential and
not the proficiency credential which requires a lot more work. I think based on my review of what the Division put out you can achieve the awareness credential online through a several-component professional development course. My remaining concern, which is -- was $I$ just wasn't understanding the necessity of the waiver to achieve the goal unless they just didn't want to provide that. So those are the remaining waiver issues.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. MOUNTS: May I?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes, please.
DR. MOUNTS: Okay. Yes. So it is -- I need to clarify. All of our current teachers in the Centerpoint School District, including the elementary, middle school, and high school teachers, the fact was they -- we have all -- we are all I guess current in RISE training. Of course, high school teachers so far have only had six hours of awareness training for that, and we will progress as we progress through the years until we are all fully aware, as defined by ADE.

So our intent wasn't to get away from the RISE training in regards to anything to do with the value of the training or the appropriateness of the
training. We were simply trying to remove a barrier from some of those practitioners that we thought that we would probably be able to hire to come onto our campus to provide those skilled trades instruction; whereas, if we said, "Would you come work for us," they say yes, and the first thing we say is, "By the way, you're going to need to get -- become 18 hours aware of the Science of Reading," I think that would be prohibitive to what we're trying to do. And I do want to point out that, like the previous applications -- you know, Edgenuity, Career and Technical Centers -- I don't know what the stipulation is on those instructors being required to have the Science of Reading awareness or proficiency. I know that we use an online --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If they're a teacher-ofrecord in Arkansas schools, then that is a component that's going to continue to apply. So I think that there is -- there are a lot of things --

DR. MOUNTS: So concurrent -- so our -- but we have dozens of kids receiving concurrent credit through various institutions around the state, and those teachers have told us they're not -- they haven't been trained in RISE yet, so --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I think what we'll have
is we'll have to be looking at are -- who are employees of the school district versus other -DR. MOUNTS: Right.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- types of employees. And I think -- so I don't want to get into a debate -DR. MOUNTS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- over requirements for teachers. That's not what this is about.

DR. MOUNTS: Right.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think what it's about for us as a Panel and what we approve. Okay? So the PD conversations later on --

DR. MOUNTS: Right.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: When we waive certain laws and begin waiving certain laws, then it's wide open for anybody and everybody to request waivers from those laws.

DR. MOUNTS: Of course.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You know, you've worked hard on a plan, as far as the plan for this; you've worked hard to really think through something that's going to be good for kids. It's just my job to make sure the Panel --

DR. MOUNTS: Right.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- is fully informed that
there are implications when we start granting waivers. And we need to make sure that those waivers are absolutely essential for you to accomplish your goal. My personal opinion in this case is that the people that you are asking about, if -- especially if they're not employees of your school district, then they wouldn't be required to meet that criteria anyway. That's kind of --

DR. MOUNTS: And throughout the process with the attorneys that's the impression that I got too, that they were --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah.
DR. MOUNTS: -- that they were not necessary. They would in no means be teachers-of-record for any of those classes; they will simply be a supplement to what we're already providing --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Right.
DR. MOUNTS: -- in those instructional areas.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So then that would make me wonder if the waiver was necessary at this time. I would even go so far as to say if you began this process and found that it was going to prohibit you from doing certain things, then you could come back to the Panel and discuss, "Hey, this really is a barrier and this is why it's a barrier."

DR. MOUNTS: Right. I feel comfortable -- I think I could speak for Mr. Breshears -- in saying if this is a sticking point or if this is in any way in doubt we can repeal that portion, especially since there is some indecision on whether or not it applies to those people or not. We can repeal that request.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And that -- I guess that's probably something the Panel -- my fellow panel members would have to weigh in on as well, so --

Is there any question or discussion around this or any of the other waivers that they've asked for?

DR. WILLIAMS: So what actually are we -- what would be the -- what are we -- are we just approving waivers or are we approving the conversion charter school? What exactly --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, in their application they have all of the waivers listed. So if they don't make any adjustments to what they've asked for and we approve, then we've approved what they -- as they've submitted. They can withdraw some of the waiver requests and -- but again, you all have heard my thoughts on that, but they may not be reflective of the rest of the Panel's thoughts.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
MR. BALDWIN: I agree. You know, if the waivers
aren't necessary it would be easier to withdraw them. DR. WILLIAMS: So we need some guidance to tell us what's necessary.

MS. HYATT: So just a couple of comments. I think we need to have some understanding before there's a motion about where we stand with the Right to Read waivers, whether they are going to rescind their request from those or they're going to move forward with the request from those.

And then $I$ just had a clarifying question on this particular slide because I didn't see a math credit waiver requested. And so I just want to make sure I didn't miss something before you guys voted and then turned out I had missed something and you guys didn't have everything you needed.

DR. MOUNTS: Yes. For clarification, I do rescind those waiver requests -- anything to do with RISE or the Right to Read, the Science of Reading instruction.

Also, the -- yes, the third bullet there, those three sub-bullets, those are simply -- I'm not asking for waivers of that; I'm saying we will seek approval through Mr. Coy's office for -- to embed those.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Does that work? I just noticed too up there it says Minimum Classified

Salary Schedule.
DR. MOUNTS: It should be certified.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. It should be certified as in the application. All right.

MR. WALTER: Dr. Pfeffer, may I be --
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: (Nodding head up and down.)
MR. WALTER: So I just want to make sure I guess with you and Ms. Hyatt then what we have in front of us now is the fourth math credit and the non-core teacher certification.

DR. WILLIAMS: So the certified/classified salary schedule, is that gone also? I was just basing it off of --

MS. HYATT: So just based on their waiver section, looking at the legal review, they do have waivers for teacher licensure and those will be for non-core classes. They have teacher minimum salary waivers in their request.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And is that also for non-core teachers in the CAAST program?

MS. HYATT: For -- yes, for -- yes. And then they have rescinded their request for the Right to Read stuff. So I think those are the only waivers.

And it's my understanding that the math credit, they'll get the approval through Learning Services
and it's not -- they don't need a waiver in order to do that; they can just get the appropriate approval through the Division.

DR. MOUNTS: Yes, that is correct, what she said.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. KREMERS: I'm trying to confirm on the last -- on the third bullet for the fourth math credit, I do know that CASE was approved for the fourth -- for math credit.

DR. MOUNTS: Yes.
DR. KREMERS: Is -- I'm not sure of the quantitative literacy embedded in agri is approved for a math credit.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think that's something they would seek the course approval through Mr. Coy's office.

DR. MOUNTS: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And so that would be something that they would work with your division on.

DR. MOUNTS: Exactly. That was my understanding of that. Yes.

DR. KREMERS: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So they'll be coming through -- so that fourth math credit will not actually be a
waiver; it will be a course approval process. And they'll have one of those options. DR. MOUNTS: Yes. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Is that right? DR. MOUNTS: Yes. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we'll make sure our teams are synced on that. Okay. All right. Any other questions or comments from the Panel?

All right. And, Ms. Hyatt, anything else then? MS. HYATT: (shaking head from side to side.) CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If not, then we can consider a motion.

DR. KREMERS: I approve to -- to -- I move to approve -- I'm tongue-twisted today -- to approve the motion -- to make a motion to approve --

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: The application? DR. KREMERS: Yes, thank you -- the application. Long day.

DR. WILLIAMS: Just a final clarification.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. WILLIAMS: A motion to approve the application for what? The charter school or conversion charter school -CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

DR. WILLIAMS: -- with the proper adjustments to the waivers that are requested?

MS. MCLAUGHLIN: (giving a thumbs-up signal)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. WILLIAMS: And somebody has taken down -- I second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we have a motion and a second for this application with the adjustments that have been made as discussed.

Okay. All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?
Okay. We have a unanimous decision.
Congratulations.
And we will record our feedback.
DR. MOUNTS: Thank you, Panel. And I'm sorry about the confusion regarding the certification waivers.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you for your patience to answer our questions and listen and be responsive.

DR. MOUNTS: Absolutely.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we are excited about this for your students and look forward to seeing the success there.

DR. MOUNTS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And as you finish your comments, does anybody need to take a 5-minute break?
[SEVERAL PANEL MEMBERS NODDED ASSENT TO A BREAK] CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: A 5-minute break, okay.
(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson, do you want to start off giving some feedback?

MR. WILSON: I supported the motion. I thought the application was well made and has a lot of potential in the rural areas of the state; it's important.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.
MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion because it increases career choices for the students based on background-slash-demographics and personal-slashprofessional interests.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams.
DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion. It provides curricular-slash-career options for students based upon the needs of the community.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: I approved the motion. The charter offers additional opportunities for students closely related to the community and labor market needs. And in addition is attracting females into a
nontraditional career field as well.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. Mr. Baldwin.
MR. BALDWIN: I approved the motion. She said it better than $I$ could.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you, everybody, and have a safe trip. And we appreciate you being here with us.

And we will start -- let's do a 5-minute break and we'll get started with the last application. We know you've been waiting on us. Thank you.
(BREAK: 3:29 P.M. - 3:38 P.M.)
B-4: HEARING FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION - MOUNTAINBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL BRAIN ACADEMY

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I think we're ready for our final action agenda item today.

DR. WILLIAMS: So we vote to approve and go home.
[LAUGHTER]
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Webb, if you will present that to us.

MS. WEBB: The next item on the agenda is a hearing for district conversion charter applicant Mountainburg Middle School Brain Academy, which is located in the Mountainburg School District. The applicant is requesting to serve students in grades

5-8 with a maximum enrollment of 400 students.
Present to give the presentation is Superintendent Dr. Debbie Atwell and Principal Amanda Howard.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If you will raise your right hand and receive the oath. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY) CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. You are -- you may begin. You have up to 20 minutes for your presentation. And if you'll state your name and position for the record you are recognized. SUPT. ATWELL: Debbie Atwell, superintendent. MS. HOWARD: Amanda Howard, principal. SUPT. ATWELL: So thank you for this opportunity. We understand that we are standing between you and dinner, so we're going to be engaging and succinct. Okay. So it's my honor today to talk to you about our vision with the school we aspire to be at Mountainburg Middle School Brain Academy.

Who are the Mountainburg Dragons? If you've ever traveled up Highway 71, up towards Fayetteville, Mountainburg is located just off of Highway 71 and off the interstate just south of the Bobby Hopper
tunnel. Now before the interstate opened then you -and the tunnel was an option, you had to travel up old Highway 71. So you might remember that little town with the speed-trap and the dinosaur park.

And so in our middle school we currently serve grades 5-8. We have about 200 students enrolled and we have 11 full-time teachers, and we do have shared staff with the high school. Our middle school campus is adjacent to our high school campus. We are an older facility that was started in the 1930s. We have a lot of WPA stone, a lot of native stone, and a lot of traditions in our community. I am actually a graduate of Mountainburg, and then came back and taught there, and was the principal that opened the middle school back in the early 90s. And then I had to spread my wings and go work in other districts and get some experience and some opportunities, and now I'm back home as the superintendent. So this is not just a job; it is my passion. And our school is the heart of our community.

And so when I came home and I started to talk about who we are and who we wanted to be I brought back some of my knowledge and my experience and my passion about learning communities; so we are on the journey to becoming a professional learning community
as a district. And so that means that we have to do a couple of things: we have to guarantee -- we have to make sure we have a guaranteed and viable curriculum, that we provide time and support to insure that all of our students learn at high levels, and we have a culture that says we're going to focus on results and we're going to work collaboratively to do this.

And so year-one we started jumping into understanding what it meant to be a PLC. Now as a district focus that's great, but when our --

You're clicking. Great. I forgot about the clicker.

So that's my team. Welcome to my team. That's our district-wide team, support service, bus drivers, transportation. There are about 114 of us. $40 \%$ of our graduates are -- of our employees and faculty staff are Mountainburg graduates. Mountainburg is a place where people love to come back and stay. And so these teachers over on the side, those are our middle school staff. They're a little crazy, they opted into middle school. Okay. And so as you know, you have to be a fit for your environment. They're career teachers who have chosen to spend their entire career serving our kids.

And so when we started talking about what was going on -- in the early 90 s we had some interstate construction which brought jobs and industry to our community and we had a rise in our enrollment. Also, when the dam was expanded to provide Fort Smith's water supply that construction job for the dam brought in a lot of jobs and changes. And so our enrollment grew and we got up to almost 900. But when those jobs ended, those construction families moved on with the next interstate, with the next dam; and so, we don't have as many jobs in our community that we had 20 -- 15, 20 years ago. Also, the manufacturing jobs in the River Valley have dried up -- Rheem, Whirlpool, Therma-Tru -- those manufacturing jobs that supported our families are no longer there. Our community is comprised of an aging population and they're not having as many kids as they did. And a lot of times the family and the grandparents stay on the farm, the kids move, and we don't have as large of an enrollment in our community. So we are kind of like the show Cars, if you've seen the Disney movie Cars, we're a little bit of Radiator Springs. The traffic has bypassed us on the new interstate. People don't stop and have a Mountain-burger or fill up their tank of gas like
they used to, and so some of our businesses have closed and our enrollment is declining. And so that is an alarming -- alarming situation as a superintendent. How do I stop that decline?

And so as I started to look at our statistics, our poverty rate is increasing, our enrollment is declining 10, 15 students a year, resulting in a decline in funding, and our performance has fallen down. We also have an aging facility and it takes a lot of money to maintain buildings that were started in the 1940 s to make them feel warm, safe, and dry. And so when I walked around the campus, when I walked around the community, I started getting shareholder input and I just sense that there's also a decrease in our motivation. One of the things our teachers said is, "If our students were motivated and knew how to behave, then we could teach them." And so student motivation is low, teacher motivation at this point is low. So where do we go from there? Well, we know absolutely without a doubt that our mission has to be to insure high levels of learning for all, not just the ones who are motivated, not just for the ones who come from a family that gives them support, not just for the ones that are capable. We have to insure high levels of
learning for all. And we're going to do that through a professional learning community, because not one teacher has the knowledge, time, strength, or ability to serve and meet the needs of every one of their students.

So as we started to work together in our mission and vision work -- and any time you have an opportunity for a change in leadership that's a great time to go back and clarify your mission and your vision -- these three points came forward:

We have a rich history and tradition. Last week we crowned our 64 th homecoming queen and we had an awesome parade and we had the fire department and the mayor there, and we had from pre-K all the way through seniors, and the whole town came out for that community. We love our rituals; we love our ceremonies. That's a picture of a piece of the wall in our cafeteria. If you come in on October 26th, come play Bingo, have some pie at the Fall Festival, and look at the composite of all of our graduating classes going back to the 1940s. We have a rich history. And it's our job to value and honor that history through our traditions and our values -- but we also know nobody else is going to come in and fix this. It's up to us and we have to build our
presence. So we're going to do that, and we do that through teamwork and collaboration.

So we had to make some structural changes and start working together in collaborative teams and we had to give up a little bit of our own independence and autonomy and start looking and working together in identifying what are our essential standards, developing common assessments, and looking at our data together.

And then our third leg, our third piece is we know that it's up to us to create our future and we are going to have to do that through creativity and innovation. And so as this mission and this vision statement became alive and became real for us we realized that we had to get our culture right. If we don't have our culture right, then no strategy, no innovation, nothing else will stick. And so our culture has to be that it doesn't matter what happens; what matters is how we respond. And I wish I was the genius who invented that phrase, but I'm not.

So we started working on what is our culture, what's our belief system -- and when we look at barriers that we face, how do we overcome those. And so, together as a district team we created

Mountainburg's Culture Playbook, because we have to control our own 20-square feet and our attitude and our actions within our control are what matter the most. Each teacher on our campus is responsible for the culture and the environment and the attitude in their own 20 square feet. And we know that when we do these things -- when we do these things that we are Dragon strong. We have to start strong. We have to believe that we have the capacity to learn and grow. And we know that the struggle is real. And so when the struggle gets real, we have to have strength and persistence to overcome, and then we have to finish strong. We have to be personally accountable for our personal achievement and our collective greatness. Not only do we believe this is essential for us as our culture playbook, we believe this is a life skill that we should equip our students with. And so at this point I'd like to talk to you about the innovations that we see, the creativity, and the innovation for Mountainburg Middle School Brain Academy.

We see this charter opportunity as a way to rebrand and to reinvent ourselves and come back in with that infusion of creativity and innovation and engagement that's so necessary. We know we need
rigor and we know we have to do some curriculum work, but we also need that engagement and that buy-in. We need all those factors to be present. So we're working very hard to provide for our whole district quality professional development. To increase our opportunities for collaboration we're expanding our partnerships. We have a partnership with a medical clinic, we have a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club for an afterschool program, we're bringing in providers and services into the community that we haven't realized in the past, and that's been really great. We're also working on our engagement, getting our parents involved, getting them on campus for more than a football game, getting them to come in for a monthly meeting and participate, and then we're seeking innovation. So $I$ know that's what you want to hear about now: what are your innovations.

All right. So with me, my partner is Principal Amanda Howard.

MS. HOWARD: So I love this picture. If you look at the left, $I$ really do believe -- we never want to talk negatively of our school, but $I$ want to be real with you today, and that is I've been on campus for nine weeks, but about six months hanging out; right? I love this school. But the first
moment I walked in the left is what I felt. There is -- you know, when you look at middle school kids, 5th and 6th, you don't expect cartwheels or jumping jacks about math, but there should be some level of engagement. And so immediately I thought we need to fix this. Tomorrow, for Brain Academy, we want to see the brain on fire and one way is through exercise -- exercise, exercise, exercise -- movement, physical movement. My daughter is in 7th grade and she never sits still. This work is researched, it's evidencebased; the more kids move the better they learn. And I was going to ask Dr. Atwell to say this for me, but I'm just going to look at my notes. Are you ready? Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor -- it's brain fertilizer. When our bodies move we get brain fertilizer. And so as we begin to talk about our innovations know that this is the foundation of the work.

Our first priority is always a culture of academic growth. We have begun our work as a PLC. Teachers are doing well. We have also begun the training in RISE. Everyone is excited. There is more to do with RISE and we look forward to implementing Project Lead the Way.

Right now our PLCs meet once a week. We believe
with a more flexible schedule we can do a lot more with our PLCs. We all know as educators there's never enough time. But with Brain Academy we want to offer this a couple times a week for teachers and not invade their individual planning.

We also -- with Brain Academy we want to offer individualized PD sessions for teachers. Just like students don't need the same level of learning or the same type of learning, we want to do that for teachers on an individual level, and we believe that at Brain Academy with a schedule that's more flexible we can offer that to our teachers.

With RISE, I've been online day-six of my RISE training. I have a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. I'm proud of that. I will tell you the trainings have been wonderful. I don't know enough yet to implement it into the classroom, and so I guarantee that my teachers aren't there yet. So we need more time to do RISE, of course, but to do it really well. And I want to be able to offer my teachers the time and support to do that.

Project Lead the Way -- right now our kiddos do not have any extra in science and math, and we want to offer that at the Brain Academy. We want to offer changes in the curriculum, both through enrichment
opportunities but also through their current courses. SUPT. ATWELL: Middle school is a great time to tear things apart, blow things up, try to figure out how they work. And we want to offer more creativity, more innovation, more exploration for our students, so we feel like Project Lead the Way is a good evidence-based research-developed curriculum. It will help our students. We know that they start to disengage at the middle school level, before they get into high school. The dropout has started before they hit 9 th grade. And so we want to re-engage them; we need to push their academic rigor but we need to do that with engagement and exploration. So we feel like Project Lead the Way is the right move. MS. HOWARD: You'll never hear me say that academics is not my favorite, but I'm going to tell you this Priority 2 I am in love with. So the concept of self-efficacy, evidenced by John Hattie's research, has an affect size of .92. We have to be -- and then also our teachers said, literally, "We can teach them if they're motivated." And we know never to blame the student, right, for not learning, but this is where my teachers are. We're going to move them in their own self-efficacy but through students of efficacy.

So Brain Breaks -- if you've heard of them it might sound kind of cheesy; we're going to pause for a minute and not think. But the reality is that as you pause you gain more on the flipside. So this could be something as simple as stand up and march in place for 60 seconds, all the way to for 10 minutes you're going to run through a course and time yourself. If you're getting better, then better. So this is an example of a young man in the middle of a Brain Break and his peers are cheering him on. So now we're kind of playing around with Brain Break; teachers are trying. Tomorrow in the Brain Break Academy I want it to be very organized, structured where students set their own goals. Maybe they can run a quarter of a mile -- I don't know how fast you should run a quarter of a mile. But let's say they want to do it in a minute and they don't succeed, then we're going to press in to that goal every day and they're going to watch themselves improve. The goal is the more you practice -- when kids understand a growth mindset, we want to push that into their academics as well.

SUPT. ATWELL: So the picture with the yellow outline, that is our current playground. We may win the award for the most barren, plain playground in

Arkansas. It's very bare. But what we want to see is the picture on the right. We want to see the tomorrow. We want to see an obstacle course that's challenging and it's inviting, it's good for structured activity; it's also good for free play, and it's available for our community outside of school hours. So we're excited about the potential of invigorating our campus and our physical activity with a course that says, "Hey, come play on me." MS. HOWARD: And also to use this continually. The other piece of self-efficacy that I love is thinking of teachers like personal trainers. And I don't know that anybody is super-excited to meet with their personal trainer. I know I'm not. But one thing I know is that a personal trainer knows everything about you, including the weight that you see on the scale, the number -- the number that's awkward, the number that's uncomfortable. I want my teachers to begin to understand that they need to know the numbers that their kids struggle with. Many of our students are 2.5 years behind in reading and we need the teachers, the personal trainers, in our building to know that. What I'd like to see is the personal trainers in our building work with 12 to 15 students throughout the course of their middle school
career. And when the student walks in their personal trainer has a flipchart of your academic growth for today, your physical growth for today, and how well your citizenship is going, your culture growth; where students set their own goals, they meet their own goals, and they have a personal trainer to help them through it.

SUPT. ATWELL: So John Spencer says, "Our job is not to prepare students for something; our job is to help our students prepare for anything." And that was a huge takeaway for me, and it's tied back into some other research and reading that I was doing. I'm not a huge Urban Meyer fan; okay? I'm a true SEC girl. But $I$ am a fan of winning programs. And Urban talks about it's not what happens that matters; it's how you respond. And this is one of my takeaways in this leadership study: chaos, confusion, and conflict -- they're going to have to face it. It's our responsibility to teach them how to learn to deal with it and how to rise above it. We have to teach our kids to be above the line.

So for our culture we've chosen to follow the "R" factor. Now the "R" factor is a powerful piece of leadership that we think is great for adults and for our learners. There's a formula, or an
algorithm, that's the heart of the "R" factor: $E$, which are the events, plus $R$, your response, equals the outcome. Now we don't control the events, but if we want a positive outcome what we can control is our response.

And so right now when we talk about wellness and mental health and satisfaction and engagement, not all of our students have the life skills they need to cope and make appropriate choices. And so we feel like we've got to, as the adult leaders in the building, learn that ourselves, and then we've got to -- they've got to see and we've got to teach and they've got to model that; they've got to learn that through us. And so the "R" factor, the focus three approach, is really great.

There are six disciplines that we teach and we model, and we use that language in our discipline approach. We want to see our students -- we want to see a decrease in the number of discipline referrals we have. We want to see an increase in satisfaction and engagement. And we feel like equipping students, equipping learners with skills and strategy, so when they get in a tough situation where things don't go their way, where they don't feel like they're going to be successful, they have the skills to step up and
choose right.
MS. HOWARD: And one thing that really has been applicable to me are these six things. For example, I've been the new principal of some new people for nine weeks now and I have pressed pause a lot. And so knowing that it can be applied to my own life, I feel very positive that our students will gain a lot from Focus 3.

And right now we're doing great work with the teachers. It's going to be systematic. You don't change a culture overnight, and we know that. The biggest thing is, as our teachers are learning this year, next year the hope is to press it more into the students and that they take ownership, that they're teaching their peers, and that they're teaching the younger students. We want this to be a very public thing --
[TIMER BELL RINGS AGAIN]
MS. HOWARD: -- for kids, privately and publicly praised for all of these things: citizenship, academic growth, and physical fitness.

Do you all have time for this 60-second video?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No, you go ahead. You actually would have an additional 5 minutes. But, yeah, we definitely want to see your video.
(COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: A short video was shown, which may be viewed on the DESE website.)

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do you have anything else you want to add?

SUPT. ATWELL: No, ma'am.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Are you ready for questions?
SUPT. ATWELL: (Nodding head up and down.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ready for questions. Okay. All right.

I'll start with Mr. Baldwin, if you have questions.

MR. BALDWIN: The students that will go into the charter program, will it basically be students from the school or is there an opportunity to bring other kids into this?

SUPT. ATWELL: No, it would be all students.
MR. BALDWIN: It would be --
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah, well, go ahead and come up to the microphone please. Yeah.

SUPT. ATWELL: The charter would be for all Mountainburg Middle School students.

MR. BALDWIN: Okay.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers, questions?

DR. KREMERS: What do you feel the charter will
do that you can't do otherwise with your school?
MS. HOWARD: Over the summer I worked with Dr. Atwell to build a schedule, which was very nearly -it was just really difficult. I was going to say impossible, but we did do it. We just need flexibility to work with the limited resources, and that's human resources, right, where Sherry teaches from the high school and they come down to the middle school to make sure our kids are covered with P.E. There's just a lot of things that come with limited resources, and we think the flexibility in the schedule will help us introduce things like Brain Break and Project Lead the Way.

SUPT. ATWELL: And we also want to rebrand. We want something -- we want a splash; we want to show that we care and we're seeking and we're trying and we want to do things differently.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: To piggyback on your comment with the Project Lead the Way, I know that there have been a couple of other districts implementing that and they have at times had questions about our -- the requirements around those middle school courses and several different things that have to be offered. So I think this is maybe a time to -- with you all starting this and us looking at our other Project

Lead the Way districts, and with Ms. Webb's role now, maybe we do need to look at whether or not there are some requirements in law that -- for those middle grades that could be prohibitive of being able to implement some things. So we -- your work with this could help us know if there are some things that we might want to look at asking for changes.

SUPT. ATWELL: Appreciate it.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. A couple of questions.
One, you have 200 students enrolled now and you have a cap of 400. Where are the --

SUPT. ATWELL: Where are they going to come from?

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.
SUPT. ATWELL: We hope they're so excited that they're knocking on our door. And growth is a new challenge for us; we want to stop our decline. But we hope to gain back some of the students who have opted out, who are school choicing to neighboring districts, going to virtual schools, going to homeschool.

DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.
SUPT. ATWELL: And the 400 cap, that number was arrived at by looking at the number of class spaces
we have and what our campus has accommodated in the past or what we could probably as a maximum accommodate.

DR. WILLIAMS: So essentially you're saying that the students are there in the district somewhere pretty much, but they're opting out -- either homeschool or just, you know, transferring to other districts?

SUPT. ATWELL: Driving to neighboring districts.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So you're looking to bring them back in?

SUPT. ATWELL: Uh-huh.
DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. And just really a comment on the Brain Break: there's a lot of work going on in mindfulness now for kids to take a break to -- just to reflect, to slow down some. I know the Goldie Hawn Foundation is really big on mindfulness in schools throughout the nation. Uh-huh. So this is not that far off-base. Uh-huh.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.
MS. NEWTON: Yes. My concern is that -- back to Dr. Kremers' remark about the need for a charter to do this -- you know, and maybe you do that. And I don't think at this point the information that you've given substantiates the gain or the connectivity
between Brain Breaks and learning as demonstrated by data; that we've found that kids that, you know, participate in this exercise they're more alert, their grades -- you know, their grades increase, their attention span. And I'm just wondering, I've been -- I noticed the lack of activities that schools are going into now based on schedules; you know, you don't get as much outside time and those things. Now I understand how that works in terms of getting young people, you know, to exercise and releasing some of the energy. But I'm just not making -- and it may just be me because I'm not an academic. I'm not making the academic connection between this Brain -the Brain -- I'm sorry --

MS. HOWARD: Brain Break.
MS. NEWTON: Yeah, that, and how it relates directly to improving grades, improving outcome, improving education. You know, you may be in a situation where kids in the neighborhood, you know, hear about the play part of it and want to come back. But I'm just -- I'm not following the connectivity and relationship. I think it's a wonderful thing; I think it certainly is an opportunity for folks to relax and have fun. But I'm wondering you come from the high school to the middle school [sic], what
happens to the high school students? So I'm just trying to -- if it were -- is it a curriculum? And I don't think that it is. I don't know; it may be. But is it a curriculum, you know, to enhance performance, is what I'm wondering. And, you know, communities are going to respond to, I believe, young people doing better in their grades and seeing more learning going on. And to me this is just kind of "give you a break from the routine to energize yourself." So it may just be my lack of understanding to be able to follow the concept.

MS. HOWARD: Sure. Thank you for that question.
For one thing, when you say Brain Break, you have to be really careful to also say there's rigor involved. So one thing, it's not recess. It's a very --

MS. NEWTON: But is it academic rigor? So we're thinking rigor -- you know, when I hear "rigor" I think of rigor as it relates to subject matter or teaching --

MS. HOWARD: Sure.
MS. NEWTON: -- specifics. But I don't think of it as it relates to the physical part.

MS. HOWARD: Improving scores.
MS. NEWTON: And, you know, and our nation is --
you know, the obesity rate is growing, and the need to get up and move around, you know, for all of us is very important, and the lack of it is alarming. But I'm wondering, the conversion charter -- you've been here all day and you've heard the concepts of "this charter will enhance this, or this will change, or this will involve another learning process." And I'm just trying to get a way to measure what do we anticipate as a Panel to be the improvement expected or natural or logical or anticipated improvement in performance based on this approach?

MS. HOWARD: So it goes back to the brain fertilizer. We're not saying "now you've learned, go play." We're saying we're going to pause this learning because you're shot; your brain is shot. You know, we put kids in a classroom for 50 minutes for math, Algebra $I$, and we expect them to really be engaged that whole time. Average attention span is 12 minutes, and then we keep pressing in, you know, for 32 more. It's really painful for students.

MS. NEWTON: I can imagine. But what --
MS. HOWARD: And so in that pause, the research says now they can come back and their brain -- when they do shots to the brain they literally are on fire now.

MS. NEWTON: Yeah.
MS. HOWARD: So that's what helps us improve academic scores is because now we have children -now we have students who are ready to learn again.

MS. NEWTON: But show us -- show me, not us -show me a demonstration of this. I'm wondering -- I think this is a wonderful idea; I think it's a great concept. But I'm wondering why a charter is needed for this.

MS. HOWARD: Okay. So one thing is we have P.E., traditional P.E. You get 40 minutes a week. My 7th grade daughter, it's not going to do a thing for her. What we'd like to do is take the concept of physical education and put it in smaller increments throughout the day and do it every day. We're not losing P.E. time; we're increasing it and we're increasing its effectiveness.

SUPT. ATWELL: Instead of P.E. being a class that's scheduled, and maybe you don't get it until the second semester or maybe you only get it on Thursdays, we have physical activity built into their day and in transition periods, and an increased awareness about their physical fitness, their personal levels. We also really want to create a neurological response; we want their brains to be
fired up. And the more they move, the more they get their oxygen flowing to their brain, the more they get their blood pumping. We want them to feel physically better.

MS. NEWTON: But what I'm asking is why can't this be integrated? You know, if you call it P.E. or you call it whatever, why can't it be integrated into the day, you know, if it's -- P.E. has to be so many minutes for the week, so it couldn't be 10 minutes here, 10 minutes there, 10 -- you know --

SUPT. ATWELL: In a traditional model with a certified teacher, $I$ don't have the staffing to provide everybody P.E. every day, and I'd have to take them out of some other learning.

MS. NEWTON: Where else is this happening?
MS. HOWARD: I asked a lady from the ADE way on in the early stages, and I said, you know, "This is our idea. What do you think about it?" And she said -- I asked her what schools could I talk to, and she said, "There's no one doing it in Arkansas that I know of."

MS. NEWTON: Where -- anywhere else?
MS. HOWARD: Do what?
MS. NEWTON: Where in other places?
MS. HOWARD: (Shaking head from side to side.)

MS. NEWTON: That's all.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson, questions?
Okay. Anyone else have a question?
DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I'd like to come back.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
DR. WILLIAMS: I'll tell you what might be helpful. I've had an opportunity to kind of engage and actually fund mindfulness in the foundation $I$ work for, so -- and it's about a balance between stimulating the brain and over-stimulating. And there are times where kids are stressed they can take a Brain Break and refocus; times when they are dragging and just need to expend some energy. So I see the balance between the two and what you're trying to accomplish. I think one thing that would be helpful for us is to -- no, let me rephrase that. What would be helpful for me would be to do a little bit of active research or action research which would look something like where are the kids now as from an academic perspective, and if you implement this where does it go; is there a change in the process.

Because this sounds good; I almost want to help answer your questions in the sense that why do you need a charter school to do this. And it may be structural reasons -- you know, we don't have enough
bodies to do all the things that we want to do, so we need the flexibility. So that's more of a structural issue. But if we look at it from an academic issue -- I hear the branding piece, "something to make us splash," something to really get things moving within the community and within the school. But from a data standpoint, from an academic data achievement standpoint $I$ don't see anything in the information that really kind of addresses that in such a way of what are some expectations we can look for. But it may be from an innovation standpoint, if you all could track whether there's any change, whether it be from behavior when you get young kids and give them an opportunity to burn some energy off in a very structured manner; it could be from behavior; it could be from an academic achievement standpoint. If we don't know that right now, which we don't, it may be worthwhile for you all to kind of document this to see if there's any change.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, and to piggyback, I think what I really appreciate from the very outset of your presentation, you were focused on what do we want to become, what do we want our schools to be. And I think that's something that we at the Department have really been talking about with --
actually we're talking about that with school board members as we're able to go to regional meetings, in terms of thinking beyond just taking the data that you have and being able to think beyond what is it that we want to become. And from your presentation I think we can see that there's this -- there's an idea there, but it may be that it's hard to visualize, you know, what does this flexible schedule look like, what does having the flexibility so that teachers really are engaged in that PLC process. And that may be a little bit difficult to see within the application and therefore hard to determine why the route that you're going through, a district conversion. So that may be just helping to explain maybe the questions that you're getting.

MS. HOWARD: Do we need to speak to that, or no?
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Sure, you can. I know I didn't ask you a question --

MS. HOWARD: Yeah, I didn't know for sure if that was a question.

I just -- from this perspective, this very basic gut feeling, every time I'm with teachers they need more; you know, to say, "Let's do Brain Breaks, and let's do them well and consistently, and chart the child's progress." They need support from me, from

Dr. Atwell to know how to do this, to become personal trainers, right, in academics, as well as student Citizenship, what that looks like to be a Focus 3 student. And so it would be lovely to have flexibility in those spaces to be able to really do this.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Any other thoughts or discussion?

DR. WILLIAMS: Just one other comment. I also like the idea of what the -- similar to what the Waldron District is doing, is trying to come up with a way to re-engage your community. You know, if you're losing students $I$ think a district kind of owes it to the community to do whatever they can to re-engage parents and students.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MS. NEWTON: I'm not suggesting -- you know, volunteers -- you may have a group of volunteers that maybe will give you that relief that you need. You talked about high school teachers coming over, but maybe a group of volunteers or some students doing a practicum or something that you could start there and say, "This demonstrates" -- or "we've done it with these folks; you know, if we're able to elevate this to do." But I don't see supporting evidence. I
think that's probably the best way I could put it. I don't see supporting explanations or evidence that this is something that is practical and that would work.

MS. HOWARD: And I know that's not really a question. But if you do look at John Hattie's work, all we have is, you know, that he has 252 things, strategies, you can do in a classroom that improves academic growth. And we're looking at the top five, and in this Brain Academy we're meeting those top five. And so while there might not be a school yet that has done this with success, I don't want to be the school who didn't try it, you know -- and we do need help to do that.

MS. NEWTON: And I'm encouraging you to the degree that you can to give us some evidence to operate on, the evidence that we need to make a decision, for -- personally, for me to make a decision to help you make this happen. But, you know, I tell my husband -- you know, he reads something on the internet; you know, anybody that can write can write what they want to write. So I'm not sure that that documents success because an individual said do these five things. And I think in practice I think we need to be able to have our young
people be involved in proven practice and best practice. And so I -- you know, it's unique and it's different, but is it a best practice, is it a promising practice. And I think that's, you know, professionally how we want to be able to explain that we've transcended this program from here to there, because we've seen it other places with the same characteristic and it works.

SUPT. ATWELL: May we offer the Panel to accept Dr. Williams' suggestion for action research, to collect information about our academic, our physical, our self-efficacy levels, and then monitor progress and having positive impact on those qualities?

MS. NEWTON: I have no problem with that at all. SUPT. ATWELL: Okay.

MS. NEWTON: But I think -- like I say, I can't speak for the board; but it's an awesome responsibility I think when we make the decisions more -- not as much about conversion charters, because there's a system already in place, but a practice that's totally foreign and it sounds good. I made -- baked a cake one time out of a cookbook with all the ingredients and it never rose, but there was that cookbook that I used and went by every ingredient that was there. So I think that we need
to know that there's some efficacy in this and be able to demonstrate it and uphold our responsibility to all the other schools in the state to be able to support our decisions.

SUPT. ATWELL: The concept of student selfefficacy is not tangible. And we hope to demonstrate to the students in a very measurable, tangible way that when they set a goal and they do the reps, they do the work, and they monitor their progress, and they're coached, and they're supported, and they take ownership for their action they can see a change. MS. NEWTON: I think we're saying the same thing.

SUPT. ATWELL: And that's a hard thing to do for literacy or for math; it's abstract. But with physical it's very -- I mean you wouldn't think it by looking at this body, but I am -- I used to be a runner. And that's something that we don't have a lot of access to in our community. I could -- I worked up at Rogers and I could go and run on the trails. And I started with Couch to 5 K and I saw some success. And I built my confidence and I built my ability, and then I ran a half-marathon, and you could've thought $I$ was ready to go race in the Olympics from my ego at that point, once I survived
that, because I did something I never thought I could do.

And so what we want to create is an opportunity for those students. And we know from the basis of neuroscience that the more they're active, the more stimulated their brain is, it increases the oxygen and the blood flow. We want to make -- and that -and that's not in and of itself -- our innovation is we tie into that and harness the power of selfefficacy, goal-setting, and a reward for seeing their actions, and then how does that carry over to their choices in discipline, their choices in behavior, their academics. And so I understand and I appreciate that. And we're open to research to look for other schools that are doing it, and doing it well. We just haven't found them in our stage of this journey at this point.

DR. KREMERS: I'd like to just add a comment too. I feel uncomfortable on the marketing piece of it because I think the purpose of the charter is not to assist schools to market and rebrand. I think if it -- it depends on the mission, and then is that mission over and above what can already happen within a school. And so the part about the marketing/ rebranding, I think that should be a separate

waivers that they've requested. Again, in trying to develop this I think they have the three components: one is the really work with the professional learning communities in PD; you've got the implementation of Project Lead the Way; and then the third component is the personal training/Brain Breaks. So I think maybe that could help. What is it that they -- what would they need if they weren't going to have a conversion charter?

MS. HYATT: SO I'll talk about --
Mary Claire Hyatt with the Division.
I will talk about that in terms of what they've requested versus what I've heard today. So some of the waivers that they requested in their application I haven't necessarily heard a necessity for them based on the information that was presented today; not that there was an issue in the legal review. But Class Size and Teaching Load, Educator Licensure, those are some of the waivers that were requested, and there weren't any outstanding issues on those. But if the question is what do they need in order to do what they want to do and do they have to have a charter to do that, based on my limited understanding, you know, I do think they may need some waivers. Of course, there are other waiver
pathways, such as the 1240 waiver pathway.
Some of the waivers that they requested are about Flexible Scheduling. Those are actually some of the ones that I kind of had outstanding issues with.

They did request waivers of the standard and the law that requires an average of the six-hour Student/Teacher Instructional Day or 30-hour a week Student/Teacher Instructional Day. I didn't really see how that fit in with what the application, how it was supported by the application. And I think there was one waiver, which was $1(a)(1)(2)(5)$, which is physical activity curriculum 4, 5, 8, that I do think is necessary given that they want to provide that physical education in a more innovative and integrated way than a traditional, as they were discussing, 40 minutes one time a week. So I do think they would need that waiver in order to accomplish that.

These other waivers I don't -- I don't know if they're necessary. All of the other flexible scheduling waivers that they have listed, my opinion was I didn't believe they were necessary based on the rationale that had been provided. But, of course, there could be something that I'm missing that they
might want to speak to.
MS. HOWARD: For one, on the hours that were, you know, in the classroom, one thing we'd love to do is with the implementation of Project Lead the Way to allow our kids to compete with one another. Just as an example -- an apology when you can't express all the ideas you have in 20 minutes -- but let's say we're going to have a big competition, you know, in what you're working on in your Project Lead the Way class; I also need extra time to do professional development with my teachers. So maybe my aide, maybe my instructor in Project Lead the Way, they go off out in the parking lot and do -- they release an hour early, they release two hours early, where I can have my teachers -- the majority of my teachers and we're doing professional development.

MR. WILSON: So you would need a waiver in that sense?

MS. HOWARD: Yes. Yes, sir.
MR. WILSON: Well, $I$ can follow that, sort of But it seems to me maybe Project Lead the Way can be done under your existing authority now.

MS. HOWARD: The actual --
MR. WILSON: And I applaud the idea. But Project Lead the Way or other -- Brain Pause or
whatever, those may be innovative projects and methods, and that's huge; I think that's what charter schools are intended, among other things, to do, and I applaud that. But it's a shot-in-the-dark at this point. It's a gamble as to whether the Brain thing works because we don't have a history or experience in other schools with it. I'm glad you're trying; I'm just thinking it's off in all directions right now.

MS. HOWARD: One thing, if I could kind of clear it up, I think we've focused on Brain Breaks -- and it's not a small piece; it's kind of a fundamental piece. The other huge part is that our teachers are years behind in professional development and there's -- we cannot catch them up, and they have individual planning time and that is theirs. And we're working with PLCs and we're trying to stay true to what a PLC looks like, looking at data and then informing our instruction based on that data and putting kids where they need to go. We do not look at, "Hey, what does it look like to divide your class in groups and teach in a different way." My teachers cannot improve until they get time for professional development, and that's one waiver that we need, where our kiddos can be -- and it's not just Project Lead the Way; we can
introduce that into the curriculum, as we are now. But if we want to do exceptional projects with the kids -- let's take the culture piece as well. What if we want to go read to a nursing home for half of the day? There's no way that's going to happen. But if we could, I could pull my teachers and teach them during that time.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, Ms. Howard, we -- just from listening to the Panel Members -- and it may be here in a minute that we just need to kind of --

MS. HOWARD: Yes.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- to have some general discussion, in thinking about the design and how you all -- you've got a lot of innovative ideas that you're considering doing. And the concept of taking these innovative ideas with your middle school to allow some flexibility to promote professional learning for your faculty and different options for kids in terms of their educational delivery, it seems that there is some concern as to whether or not a conversion charter is the right fit for you to be able to do this.

And so I don't know whether we need to talk about are there other options for you to do, is this something that the Panel would want to take under
advisement until a next meeting and maybe ask for some additional information. But it seems right now we're kind of -- we're not necessarily moving toward making a decision is what I'm starting to ascertain.

So, maybe some discussion among the Panel?
DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. As I listen, I'm a little bit further along on the brain research than probably most here because I've actually been funding in that area, so -- but as I listen to what you're trying to accomplish, I appreciate the questions because I have kind of the same questions. I'm thinking more in terms of tabling it and that would give you all an opportunity to go back and either flesh this out, to come back, or look at other options and actually determine whether this is -- the conversion charter school is the right route to go. And if you think it is the right route to go, then you can come back with a little bit more defined -- maybe some research to support what you're doing and maybe take a little bit of that approach, and to give us a chance to kind of reflect, and it will also give you all a chance. That's just my thinking. Other board members may have something different than I have.

MR. BALDWIN: I would agree. I think -- and I appreciate your passion in wanting to make a change.

You've come home to do that and we want to help you do that. Changing culture in a new organization is hard and you've got to have something new that excites people. It's hard for us to step forward with you right now just because we don't see the metrics. And so if you could listen to what we've said and come back and respond to that at our next meeting I think that would be helpful.

SUPT. ATWELL: Thank you. We appreciate that opportunity.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.
MR. WILSON: We'll call it a pause.
SUPT. ATWELL: What?
MR. WILSON: I said we'll call it a pause.
SUPT. ATWELL: Press pause.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Hyatt, so what would be the proper steps for us to take based on this conversation?

MS. HYATT: There needs to be a motion to that effect. So if you want to hear it in November -- and we do have a meeting scheduled in November -- you could make a motion to take it under advisement until November and request the additional information that you've just said. I think that would be appropriate. CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

MR. WILSON: So moved.
DR. WILLIAMS: Second.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we have a motion to take this under advisement. And so I'll go ahead and ask for everyone to vote.

All those in favor say "aye."
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And so it probably would be helpful in our feedback if we articulate the types of additional information that would help if they come back.

And we are saying the November meeting; correct?
MS. HYATT: (Nodding head up and down.)
MS. MCLAUGHLIN: (Nodding head up and down.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So let's go ahead and go to the voting sheets at this time. The motion did pass to take the matter under advisement. And we're going to jot down some of the things that -- at least just kind of get a start, and then we can follow-up with our Charter Unit to work with the District prior to that November meeting.
[A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I'll start with Mr. Baldwin to begin the feedback.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I approved the motion. I
think the additional time will enable the school system to develop a more metric-driven presentation.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.
DR. KREMERS: I approved the motion to table the request until further information can be provided. Primary items to detail would be why the conversion charter is needed to accomplish the goals, and how will you measure if this will improve academics.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.
MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion. I need more information to determine whether the approach is successful and whether a conversion charter is needed to accomplish this goal.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.
MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion for the same reasons that the others have stated and to give the applicants time to furnish their -- or focus their interview, so-to-speak, a little more narrowly.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.
DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion to take the request under advisement. This will allow the Mountainburg School District to provide additional supporting information in support of the request of a conversion charter school -- supporting data for both Brain Breaks and physical activity's impact on
student achievement; also the effective use of teacher time to support this initiative.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.
Thank you both again for being here. And we are excited about the focus that you have on the future of what Mountainburg Schools will become.

And I think that if -- what we can do in working with the Charter Office is make sure that anything additional that members may think of or that might be helpful if we can communicate that.

Would that be with you?
MS. WEBB: (Nodding head up and down.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. With Ms. Webb.
And we'll be able to get that information so that you all can be prepared next month.

Okay. All right. Thank you for being here, safe travels.

So at this time we have finished our action agenda. Is there anything we need to discuss before next month's meeting?

MS. WEBB: (Shaking head from side to side.)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. And our next meeting is on November 15th --

MS. McLAUGHLIN: 19th.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: 19th. November 19th. Okay.

So I appreciate all of you for being here today. And if there's nothing else to discuss, we can have a motion to adjourn.

MS. NEWTON: So moved.
MR. WILSON: Second.
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Motion and second. All those in favor?
(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)
CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you. We're adjourned.
(The meeting was concluded at 4:38 p.m.)

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

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on October 15, 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: October 27, 2019.

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

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| \$ |  |  |  |  |
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| 25:1 | 169:1;170:12;171:1, | Academy's (1) | acronym (1) | 77:25;90:22;93:15; |
| \$274,000 (1) | 11;181:13,21,21,22; | 51:15 | 200:21 | 95:9;98:18;100:9; |
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