

In The Matter Of:
*BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL*

February 25, 2019

*Sharon Hill Court Reporting
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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

FEBRUARY 25, 2019
10:00 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

DR. IVY PFEFFER	Chairperson/ADE Deputy Commissioner
MR. MIKE WILSON	Attorney & Education Advocate
MS. TOYCE NEWTON	Past State Board of Ed. Member
MR. PHIL BALDWIN	CEO, Citizens Bank
MR. GREG ROGERS	ADE Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal and Admin. Services
DR. ANGELA KREMERS	Deputy Director - Career & Technical Education/ Ark. Dept. of Career Ed.

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT	ADE Specialist
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ALSO APPEARING:

MR. REGINALD BALLARD	Public School Program Coordinator
MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN	Public School Program Advisor
MS. VIRGINIA PERRY	Public School Program Advisor
MR. FREDDIE SCOTT	Operations Manager

LOCATION:

Arkansas Department of Education
- Auditorium
#4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas

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E X H I B I T S

A-1: LISA Academy

EXHIBIT ONE (1)
Springdale Enrollment Projection

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ladies and Gentlemen, the February 25, 2019 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is called to order. I'd like to welcome everyone to the ADE auditorium and ask that you please silence your electronic devices.

The Charter Authorizing Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision, and revocation of charters.

We have all of our members here today, except for Dr. Williams. I think you have our nameplates here, so you can see who we are, and if you have any particular questions of us you know who's up here.

As Chair my goal is to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing.

I will request that each person speaking please state your name and title for the record, and ask that you continue to speak clearly into the microphone for the benefit of the Panel, the audience, and the viewing audience. Our meeting is being live-streamed and recorded. And as always, we're very grateful to have Ms. Sharon Hill, our court reporter, who provides a transcript -- [clearing throat] -- excuse me -- of the meeting and the transcript will be posted on the ADE website.

1 CONSENT AGENDA

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Panel Members, as we begin
3 we have on the Consent Agenda the minutes from the
4 January 15th meeting. If you will take a minute to
5 review those, I will accept a motion for the Consent
6 Agenda.

7 DR. KREMERS: So moved.

8 MS. NEWTON: Second.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So I have a motion
10 to approve the Consent Agenda.

11 All those in favor say "aye."

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any opposed?

14 All right. That is approved.

15 And we'll move on to our Action Agenda.

16 A-1: REQUEST FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
17 CAPITAL CITY LIGHTHOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: The first item on our
19 Action Agenda is a request from Capital City
20 Lighthouse Charter School. Mr. Ballard, you are
21 recognized.

22 MR. BALLARD: Thank you, Dr. Pfeffer. Reginald
23 Ballard, Department of Education.

24 On October 15, 2014, the Charter Authorizing
25 Panel approved the application for Capital City

1 Lighthouse Charter School. The charter is approved
2 to serve students in grades K-12 with a maximum
3 enrollment of 750. Representatives of Capital City
4 Lighthouse Charter School are appearing before the
5 Charter Authorizing Panel to request an amendment to
6 their current charter.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So will all
8 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in
9 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.
10 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are
11 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and
12 nothing but the truth?

13 MS. ROBERTS: I do.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

15 And if -- you may go ahead and come on to the
16 microphone and you will have 20 minutes to present to
17 us, and then we'll move forward.

18 MS. ROBERTS: Good morning. I'm Lenisha
19 Roberts, the executive director for Lighthouse
20 Academies here in Arkansas. And I stand today to
21 request an amendment for our charter to serve only
22 grades K-8. We currently have 8th grade right now.
23 We really want to focus on our academic performance
24 in those academies before we add any other academies
25 to that, and we know high school is very rigorous as

1 well. And our 8th grade class is fairly small, so we
2 do have a transition plan for those families. We do
3 have campuses in Jacksonville where we already have
4 an established high school; so we want to begin the
5 process of allowing them to go through the
6 application process. We do have seats as for next
7 year and will also provide that transportation for
8 those students. And we currently have maybe 12 8th
9 graders, so it's not a big class. So we're asking to
10 stop our charter at K-8 for now because we really
11 want to focus on our academic performance in those
12 academies.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So that obviously
14 did not take 20 minutes.

15 MS. ROBERTS: No, ma'am.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And we will come back if
17 you want to respond to anything else.

18 Do we have anyone here in opposition?

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

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No, okay.

21 And if you don't have anything else that you
22 want to go ahead and present at this time, we'll
23 start with questions.

24 MS. ROBERTS: Okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Okay. I will

1 start on this end. Mr. Baldwin, do you have any
2 questions at this time?

3 MR. BALDWIN: I guess in reading your
4 application you talked a lot about the unitary status
5 of the school districts -- unitary status of the
6 school districts in your area and Little Rock and all
7 that. Was that why the charter was started or were
8 you -- you started beyond that?

9 MS. ROBERTS: Well, basically we started because
10 of just the need for families to have choice in the
11 North Little Rock area. There were no current
12 charters in that area and so we wanted to make sure
13 that parents had opportunity to have choice.

14 MR. BALDWIN: My final question would be explain
15 to me why the decision -- why you're requesting to
16 stop at 8th grade; just help me understand that.

17 MS. ROBERTS: So right now we -- we came before
18 you guys earlier this month and you all looked at our
19 academic performance. Of course, it is not where we
20 want it to be right now. We really want to spend
21 this time, you know, making the systematic changes we
22 need to make in order to improve the academic
23 performance in those academies. And high school is a
24 full program that requires a lot of attention, and
25 right now we really want to focus that attention on

1 those grades that we currently serve.

2 MR. BALDWIN: All right.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers, do you
4 have any questions?

5 DR. KREMERS: No questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers?

7 MR. ROGERS: So I just would like for you to go
8 into a little bit more how you're going to improve
9 that because right now your K-5 is an F school --

10 MS. ROBERTS: Uh-huh.

11 MR. ROGERS: -- and your 6 -- and your 7-12 is
12 actually a D. So by getting rid of 8th -- 9th -- the
13 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th how are you going to improve
14 the K-8?

15 MS. ROBERTS: So back to just our presentation
16 earlier in the month, we've already started that
17 process with some -- with putting in place those
18 literacy structures that needed to be in place for
19 those students. We've also hired interventionists in
20 literacy and math to support teachers more. We just
21 got approved for the school improvement grant, so
22 we're going through the process of really doing some
23 rigorous training for our teachers at that level. So
24 the structures are already in place. We just know
25 that a high school, one, is more expensive; and, two,

1 we'd rather put our resources right now into that
2 program to make sure that we have things in place
3 versus, you know, adding all the courses that's
4 required for the high school that requires lots of
5 monetary -- yeah -- it makes a big impact on our
6 budget. So we'd really rather right now focus on
7 just improving the instruction at that level with our
8 current teachers and making sure we can provide the
9 resources needed to improve our instruction.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton?

11 MS. NEWTON: You mentioned transportation. I'm
12 not sure I follow. How does that work?

13 MS. ROBERTS: So we do have buses, so we would
14 just provide transportation to those families that
15 actually want to come from North Little Rock. And
16 we'll be willing, if they want to stay within our
17 Lighthouse program, to transport to Jacksonville; so
18 we'll just create routes for them.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You're talking about those
20 who are going into high school --

21 MS. ROBERTS: Uh-huh.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- you would still provide
23 that service?

24 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MS. ROBERTS: For the 9th -- for those going
2 into 9th grade.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Mr. Wilson, do
4 you have any --

5 MR. WILSON: No questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No questions. Okay.

7 And so you currently -- this is your first 8th
8 grade group?

9 MS. ROBERTS: This is our first 8th grade group,
10 so --

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So this is the time
12 if you're going to make that decision.

13 MS. ROBERTS: Yes, ma'am. We want to also allow
14 parents the opportunity. So we're willing to take
15 them on the bus to Jacksonville to tour the campus,
16 allow the principal to come to Capital City to speak
17 with them, and everything at this point.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any other questions
19 from panel members?

20 Okay. Ms. Hyatt, are there any issues?

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

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So at this time,
23 seeing that there aren't any issues or questions, we
24 can make a decision to -- and I probably should've
25 had Ms. Hyatt go through everything at the beginning.

1 But we can approve the amendment request, deny the
2 amendment request, or take the matter under
3 advisement for a future meeting.

4 So if there aren't any questions, I would
5 entertain a motion.

6 MS. NEWTON: Madam Chair, I move to approve the
7 amendment --

8 MR. WILSON: Second.

9 MS. NEWTON: -- request.

10 MR. WILSON: Second.

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

13 All those in favor say "aye."

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Congratulations.
16 Your amendment request has been approved.

17 Okay. Our next action agenda item -- I've lost
18 my -- hang on just a minute.

19 MS. HYATT: Can we get you guys to fill out the
20 voting sheets on that amendment request?

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes.

22 MS. HYATT: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I'm sorry; I didn't have
24 my notes handy here.

25 Okay. Yes. Let's go on to our online voting

1 sheet, if you'll record your responses.

2 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We'll start with
4 Mr. Baldwin to go through responses.

5 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted for the amendment.
6 And I believe this amendment will help them focus on
7 their elementary grades and improve academics as a
8 result of that.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

10 DR. KREMERS: I voted for the amendment -- to
11 approve the amendment to serve grades K-8, and
12 especially while they're working on academic
13 improvement to be more focused as a reasonable
14 strategy.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

16 MR. ROGERS: I voted for it. Although I still
17 have concerns about the overall F grade for the
18 elementary school, hopefully this move will allow
19 them to concentrate on improvements there and cost
20 savings.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.

22 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion. The
23 amendment serves to strengthen focus on K-8
24 improvement in educational outcomes.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

1 MR. WILSON: Same thing. I voted for the motion
2 to allow Lighthouse to focus on its elementary
3 grades, which it needs.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Panel.

5 A-2: REQUEST FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:

6 EXALT ACADEMY OF SOUTHWEST LITTLE ROCK

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. So we will go
8 ahead and move to the next item on our action agenda,
9 which is for Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock.
10 And, Mr. Ballard, you are recognized.

11 MR. BALLARD: This is a request for an open
12 enrollment charter amendment for Exalt Academy of
13 Southwest Little Rock.

14 On November 13, 2013, the Charter Authorizing
15 Panel approved the application for Exalt Academy of
16 Southwest Little Rock. The charter is approved to
17 serve students in grades K-8 with a maximum
18 enrollment of 540. Representatives of Exalt Academy
19 of Southwest Little Rock are appearing before the
20 Charter Authorizing Panel to request an amendment to
21 their current charter.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will all
23 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in
24 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.
25 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are

1 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and
2 nothing but the truth?

3 SUPT. LONG: Yes, I do.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. You may
5 go ahead and come to the microphone. You'll have 20
6 minutes, if you need 20 minutes -- and if not, we'll
7 move on forward. Okay.

8 SUPT. LONG: No, we don't.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Please recognize yourself.

10 SUPT. LONG: My name is Tina Long. I serve
11 Exalt Academy as the superintendent. Good morning.

12 The reason why we're here this morning is for
13 the waiver request of Principal Licensure. We
14 previously had a -- we have a waiver for
15 Superintendent Licensure and a waiver for Teacher
16 Licensure. Through the transition of kind of the new
17 regulations, that one was missed. We currently have
18 a principal with extensive experience in
19 administrative leadership, charter school leadership;
20 he served at several charter schools for several
21 years and has taken actually several graduate level
22 courses as well, but is not a licensed administrator
23 at this time. So that's the waiver we are
24 requesting.

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

1 anyone here in opposition?

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

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No. Okay.

4 If you have anything additional -- if not, we'll
5 start with questions.

6 SUPT. LONG: Okay.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

8 MR. BALDWIN: No questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Questions? Ms. Newton?

10 MS. NEWTON: No.

11 MR. WILSON: No questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No questions. Okay.

13 And to clarify, this is a waiver that you have
14 had previously; it just got missed in our transition?

15 SUPT. LONG: Yes. We had an administrative
16 waiver before, and now they separated out the
17 principal and the superintendent; so we currently
18 have the superintendent one and not the principal
19 one. But it was what -- it was what we thought we
20 had had.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So my question is
22 the support for the principal. You have -- do you
23 have someone separate as principal from
24 superintendent?

25 SUPT. LONG: Yes, ma'am.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

2 SUPT. LONG: Uh-huh.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So what does support for
4 the principal look like and the expectations, given
5 your current academic standing?

6 SUPT. LONG: Right. We have an entire academic
7 leadership team, so he is not the sole academic
8 leader. There are several members of the academic
9 leadership team, in addition to myself. We have
10 weekly data meetings and administrative meetings
11 focusing on the trends of student achievement. In
12 addition to that, he undergoes professional
13 development with our team -- we all do together. So
14 there's a lot of wraparound support for him. He's
15 also a seasoned leader, so he's done this. It's Will
16 Felton. So he's been in administration at eStem,
17 Lighthouse, so he has a background in leadership as
18 well.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

20 Okay. So if there are no other questions?

21 Okay. And I think Ms. Hyatt stepped out of the
22 room; I wanted to make sure there weren't any
23 remaining issues or public comment, make sure --

24 Okay. So if there is nothing further, I will
25 accept a motion on this amendment request.

1 MR. WILSON: So moved.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: A motion to approve the
3 amendment --

4 MR. ROGERS: Second.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- by Mr. Wilson, and a
6 second.

7 All those in favor say "aye."

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?
10 Okay. Congratulations.

11 And we will now complete our voting sheet.

12 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We'll go through
14 our reasons. Mr. Baldwin.

15 MR. BALDWIN: I voted for the request. I
16 believe the waiver is an appropriate request and
17 consistent with current practice.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

19 DR. KREMERS: I voted for the amendment request.
20 The waiver was in place previously and overlooked
21 with the new standards to separate the administrative
22 waivers.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

24 MR. ROGERS: I voted for. I don't have any
25 concerns, as was previously stated.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.

2 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the amendment. The
3 waiver has a proven administrator to take charge of
4 the program.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Mr. Wilson.

6 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I thought
7 it was a reasonable administrative request.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Panel.

9 A-3: REQUEST FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
10 FUTURE SCHOOL OF FORT SMITH

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And we will move on with
12 action agenda item Number 3 and -- which is a request
13 for an amendment for Future School of Fort Smith.

14 Mr. Ballard, would you present that to us,
15 please?

16 MR. BALLARD: On October 14, 2015, the Charter
17 Authorizing Panel approved the application for Future
18 School of Fort Worth [sic]. The charter is approved
19 to serve students in grades 10-12 with a maximum
20 enrollment of 450. Representatives of Future School
21 of Fort Worth -- excuse me -- of Fort Smith are
22 appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel to
23 request an amendment to the current charter.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

25 And if -- at this time, representatives of the

1 charter and anyone speaking in opposition please
2 stand to receive the oath. Do you swear or affirm
3 that the testimony you are about to give shall be the
4 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

5 SUPT. LOGAN: I do.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. You can come to the
7 microphone -- and if you'll identify yourself for the
8 record, you may begin. And you have 20 minutes for
9 your presentation, if you need it.

10 SUPT. LOGAN: Good morning. I'm Boyd Logan, and
11 I'm the superintendent of Future School of Fort
12 Smith. I don't think it'll take 20 minutes either.

13 So we're coming today to ask for a waiver around
14 the beginning of the school year, the date
15 surrounding that. There's a few reasons for that.

16 First of all, we are a 10-12 high school; so we
17 get our 10th graders in August and then we have, you
18 know, a very short amount of time to try to make as
19 much impact as we can on them for the ACT Aspire.
20 So, a little earlier start would be helpful in that.

21 As well, we are -- our teachers -- this year
22 we're going -- or next year we're going to start an
23 ongoing sustained professional development through
24 the school year. So this little earlier start will
25 allow us to imbed more PD days into the school year

1 so it's not all front-loaded at the beginning of the
2 year; instead, we're having sustained professional
3 development throughout the year.

4 We also -- because Fort Smith School District is
5 starting this same week, it will ease the burden on
6 our families who may have children in lower grades,
7 in other schools in the district to have sort of a
8 uniform start so that we're starting at the same time
9 as the school district is. And similarly, because of
10 our staff who may have children in the district,
11 it'll also help them with childcare and things of
12 that nature.

13 So within this we're not asking to ever start
14 before August 13th; we're not asking for that kind of
15 early start. It's just around that first week, which
16 I believe happens to be the week of August 19th. And
17 so we're asking to start the week before that.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Is there anyone
19 here to speak in opposition?

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

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No. All right.

22 Well, are you ready then for us to --

23 SUPT. LOGAN: Sure.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- proceed with questions?

25 SUPT. LOGAN: Absolutely.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. I'll start on
2 the other end, with Mr. Wilson.

3 Do you have any questions?

4 MR. WILSON: No, no questions. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton?

6 MS. NEWTON: No, thank you.

7 MR. ROGERS: No.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No questions, Mr. Rogers?

9 MR. ROGERS: No.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Questions on this end?

11 Dr. Kremers.

12 DR. KREMERS: I'm just curious the rationale how
13 it was set later in the beginning. Like was there a
14 certain reason it was set at a later date to open
15 compared --

16 SUPT. LOGAN: We weren't opening at a later date
17 than the school.

18 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

19 SUPT. LOGAN: This is the -- we're actually
20 asking for a waiver to start a little earlier than
21 what everybody else does. But if you'll remember,
22 last year a lot of schools applied for that waiver; a
23 lot of traditional public schools did as well, and we
24 didn't at that time.

25 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

1 SUPT. LOGAN: But we are now asking for that
2 waiver.

3 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.

4 MR. BALDWIN: No.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No?

6 So my question though -- if you were granted
7 this waiver you could start as early as August 13th
8 on any given year?

9 SUPT. LOGAN: Correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And your school calendar
11 is only two days longer --

12 SUPT. LOGAN: Correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- as far as student
14 contact days --

15 SUPT. LOGAN: Correct.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- than a traditional
17 public school?

18 SUPT. LOGAN: Correct.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So by granting the waiver
20 though you would -- and I think -- and Ms. Hyatt may
21 want to help me out here. The school districts are
22 receiving the waiver to start no earlier than August
23 13th, but that's a temporary waiver for most of
24 those. Is that correct, Ms. Hyatt?

25 So I think she's coming to the microphone.

1 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas
2 Department of Education.

3 The 1240 waivers that were granted for Start
4 Date I think vary in length. I think the longest is
5 four or five years. There's like a couple of years
6 in a row where the start date to be compliant with
7 the law was like in the middle of a week and caused
8 an issue. So I think the longest is five and some
9 just have it for a year or two. But we have
10 continued to see those 1240 requests this year for
11 those that were only granted it for a year last year.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And so just in
13 thinking through this, if this is a waiver that you
14 were to have would you anticipate starting as early
15 as August 13th regardless, or are you going to try to
16 keep your schedule within a couple of days of the
17 Fort Smith School District?

18 SUPT. LOGAN: Right.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Can you talk to us a
20 little bit about that?

21 SUPT. LOGAN: Yes, ma'am. So right now, I mean,
22 this is really -- a big piece of this is about just
23 aligning with the district. And in our first year we
24 didn't learn our lesson of aligning with the district
25 and it caused a lot of issues around attendance and a

1 variety of problems that we had -- you know, students
2 who have friends in the district and they're all off
3 on a certain day and we're going on a certain day and
4 all of a sudden we have low attendance numbers on
5 that day. So it's really about we've learned the
6 more that we can sync our schedule with the
7 district's at this point -- so that's really all --
8 what we're looking for at this point. We're not
9 anticipating starting in, you know, July or August or
10 anything of that nature.

11 Also, we'll be coming before to re-authorize our
12 charter in a few years, so I believe we'll be looking
13 at this again at that point.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. That makes me feel
15 a little more comfortable. Okay.

16 SUPT. LOGAN: All right.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. If there -- no
18 one has signed up -- Ms. Hyatt, anyone for public
19 comment?

20 MS. HYATT: No.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Okay. If
22 there are not any questions, I would entertain a
23 motion.

24 MR. BALDWIN: Motion.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

1 DR. KREMERS: Second.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I have a motion and a
3 second to approve this amendment request.

4 All of those in favor say "aye."

5 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

7 Okay. Congratulations. Your amendment request
8 is approved.

9 And we will fill out our voting sheets.

10 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We'll let Mr.
12 Baldwin start with stating our reasons for the
13 public.

14 MR. BALDWIN: Yes, I voted for the request. And
15 I believe the establishment of a uniform start date
16 with Fort Smith Schools is a positive decision.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

18 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the amendment
19 request to better align with surrounding district
20 calendars.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

22 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the amendment request.
23 Early start date aligns with schedules of surrounding
24 schools in the district.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

1 MR. ROGERS: I voted for it, along the same
2 lines as everybody else has already said.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And Mr. Wilson.

4 MR. WILSON: Same reasons; I voted for the
5 motion to allow better alignment with the surrounding
6 districts.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you very much
8 and we appreciate you being here.

9 A-4: REQUEST FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
10 LISA ACADEMY

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And we will keep on moving
12 with our next action agenda item, and I believe it's
13 LISA Academy. Is that correct?

14 MR. BALLARD: Correct.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Ballard, would
16 you present that for us?

17 MR. BALLARD: All right. On January 12, 2004,
18 the State Board of Education approved the application
19 for LISA Academy. The charter is approved to serve
20 students in grades K-12 with a maximum enrollment of
21 2,700. Representatives of LISA Academy are appearing
22 before the Charter Authorizing Panel to request an
23 amendment to their current charter.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I think we have
25 several people here to speak on behalf of LISA

1 Academy today. So will all representatives of the
2 charter and anyone speaking in oppos -- excuse me --
3 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.
4 If you'll raise your right hand, do you swear or
5 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
6 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
7 truth?

8 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And if you will
10 come to the microphone, whoever is going to begin --
11 and each of you, if you come to the microphone to
12 speak just please state your name and title for the
13 record and we'll recognize you. And we'll begin.
14 You'll have 20 minutes to begin.

15 MS. BARONI: All right. I'm guessing the
16 forward arrow makes it go forward, right, before you
17 start timing me?

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Go ahead. We'll -- I
19 won't start the timer yet. It looks like you've got
20 it.

21 MS. BARONI: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

23 MS. BARONI: My name is Luanne Baroni. I am the
24 assistant superintendent and LISA West Middle School
25 principal for LISA Academy.

1 And before I get into my presentation, I'd like
2 to recognize members of Ozark Montessori Academy --
3 Barb Padgett, the superintendent, and I believe we
4 have board members here today. But she's going to
5 speak briefly to you before I begin my presentation.

6 MS. PADGETT: Good morning. My name is Barb
7 Padgett. And this is the first time I have ever been
8 excited to be before this Panel. I am currently --
9 for the last 13 months have served as superintendent
10 of Ozark Montessori Academy in Springdale. We are
11 here this morning to request to voluntarily surrender
12 our charter and transfer our charter to LISA Academy.

13 MS. BARONI: So I'm pleased to be here today to
14 present our amendment request to you. This is
15 different than anything we've ever presented before.

16 But just to give a little background on LISA
17 Academy, our mission has always been to provide
18 rigorous academic preparation for our students and to
19 cooperate with families to prepare them for college
20 and career and beyond. Our four pillars are Learn,
21 Innovate, Support, and Achieve.

22 I want to go over our current structure so you
23 can kind of understand who we are right now. We
24 currently have two K-12 systems in central Arkansas.
25 We have three buildings in the West Little Rock area

1 -- LISA Chenal, which is K-6; LISA West Middle, 7th
2 and 8th grade; and LISA West High School, which is a
3 9-12 building. On the north side of the river, in
4 the Sherwood/North Little Rock area we have currently
5 one building housing all of K-12 but we've been
6 approved and are in construction right now for a
7 secondary building that will open this fall. So,
8 there will be two buildings there -- one serving K-5,
9 and the other serving 6-12 beginning this fall.

10 Some of the things that have led to our success
11 over the last 15 years are that we plan academic
12 success for each and every one of our students. We
13 embrace the diversity of our student population and
14 of the community that we serve. We work to prepare
15 all of our students for college and career. We embed
16 STEM engagement into everything that we do. We
17 believe firmly in involving parents and families in
18 supporting their students in education. And we work
19 hard to collaborate and contribute to the larger
20 community by working with other educational
21 institutions in the area.

22 Some of the evidence of our success -- you can
23 see through our ESSA, Great Schools and Niche reports
24 we've had great scores with that in recent years.
25 LISA North High School actually had the highest

1 growth of high schools in the state of Arkansas this
2 past year, so we're proud of that; not only
3 achievement but growth is so important for our
4 students. Also we're leading in our A/B rankings.
5 We're working always to make all of our schools "A",
6 and right now we're doing a great job with aiming in
7 that direction.

8 When we look at some comparative data you can
9 see that LISA Academy has great scores on the ACT
10 Aspire and also graduation rate when compared to both
11 central Arkansas, the state, and the Springdale area,
12 which is the area we're looking at expanding in.

13 Not only do we work on the academics, but we
14 also have built a strong extracurricular program for
15 our students. We have science fair academic
16 competition teams. We also have sports -- and just
17 actually won a regional basketball competition, so
18 that's a big deal for us. We also have lots of other
19 extracurricular programs to meet the needs of
20 students and help them to become well-rounded adults
21 who can be successful in college and beyond.

22 Some evidence of our diversity at LISA Academy
23 -- as you can see, both our free and reduced
24 population and our minority population have grown
25 over the whole life of our existence. We steadily

1 increased both of those and we've been recognized as
2 the most racially diverse school in the state of
3 Arkansas. Not only do we work to represent the
4 community in which we serve, but we also want to
5 embrace and celebrate the cultural diversity in our
6 schools. And we sponsor every year a language
7 festival, which we just had last month, where we
8 invite our students to perform and we present to the
9 public and celebrate the diversity of our students.

10 College and career preparation has been a strong
11 point for us throughout our history. 95% or more of
12 our students each year have gained college
13 acceptance; 100% graduation rate. US News has
14 recognized LISA Academy North and West as number
15 three and number seven in high schools in Arkansas.
16 The Washington Post has recognized LISA North and
17 West as number two and four among the most
18 challenging schools in the state of Arkansas. Our
19 students have been accepted to multiple schools
20 throughout the state and throughout the United
21 States.

22 Our STEM exploration includes a lot of things.
23 These are just some of them. Learning Blade is one
24 of the programs we've been involved with; Girls of
25 Promise coding summit; we have Project Lead the Way

1 in elementary through high school at different levels
2 of the Project Lead the Way program; we have a Space
3 Camp each year for elementary students where they go
4 to the Space Camp in Alabama and have a great time
5 with that. All of our middle school students
6 participate in a science fair each year, and we also
7 sponsor an annual STEM festival for the state of
8 Arkansas. The newest thing on -- in our STEM area is
9 Jig-Jag, our electric solar car which students built.
10 They designed it, they built it, and then they
11 entered it in a competition -- national competition
12 to drive from Texas to California. They didn't make
13 the whole trip; their car didn't make it the whole
14 way, but they learned a whole lot. They're going
15 back to the drawing board, re-engineering some
16 things, and hope to compete again next year. And as
17 you can see, it did survive the Governor test-driving
18 it one day out in front of the Capitol, so it was
19 pretty sturdy.

20 This is something we're really proud of and it's
21 our STEM Festival that LISA Academy and UALR
22 initiated in 2015. The fourth annual STEM Festival
23 was held last year, in March, and we had over 2,000
24 students from all across the state -- not just our
25 kids, but kids from schools all over the state.

1 We'll have the next one on March 8th. We'd like to
2 invite you all to attend. It's a great time to see
3 kids interacting with science and technology and
4 math, and I love to see the wide-eyed little kids
5 watching while the middle and high schoolers do the
6 demonstration. So it's a great event and we'd love
7 to have you there if you can join us.

8 Another strength that I think we have had over
9 the years is engaging families and bringing those
10 families into what we're doing. We know that it
11 takes teamwork for us to be successful in helping our
12 students. We do home visits; we've had over 200 home
13 visits this year. We have over 2,000 hours of
14 volunteer service that families have contributed to
15 our schools. We have lots of activities going on all
16 the time. One thing in particular we do each year is
17 a Thanksgiving dinner with our students involved in
18 our intervention programs, where we just invite the
19 families to come in and get to know them better. We
20 don't sell them anything or expect anything other
21 than getting to know them and to support them. We
22 have a lot of the traditional kinds of things on our
23 campuses as well where we invite families into our
24 buildings.

25 One of the things that we're very proud of is

1 the way we collaborate with other schools in the
2 area. Some evidence of that is we participate in a
3 pilot with the Circles program, which is for students
4 with special needs, going through the transition
5 program in the high school. They work together with
6 community services to plan their own transition into
7 college and career. We've also provided a conference
8 where we've invited educators from throughout the
9 state to come and share best practices and work
10 together to find solutions for students. We have
11 hosted the Little Rock School District superintendant
12 and the North Little Rock school superintendent on
13 our campuses to just talk about -- to talk shop, to
14 talk about school and what we're doing that's
15 working, what we can learn from them, and what they
16 can learn from us. We've had teachers visit from
17 Helena-West Helena as well just to kind of see what
18 it is we're doing that's working -- and we're happy
19 to be that laboratory and to test things and share
20 them with others.

21 There's been a steady growth in demand and
22 enrollment for LISA Academy since our inception. As
23 you can see, we've grown from just under 300 students
24 to around 2,200 today. We currently have a wait-list
25 for all of the grade levels in central Arkansas.

1 The demand for LISA Academy is something that
2 we've heard from other parts of the state. We have
3 received some requests from community members who are
4 interested in a LISA Academy school in their area.
5 As a result of that, last year we decided to form a
6 committee to kind of explore what would be the right
7 environment for us to feel like we could go in and
8 offer something to a community. So we formed a
9 committee to look at that, and these are some of the
10 important criteria that we determined would help us
11 make a decision if an area is suitable for us to
12 grow. First, we looked at student population; also
13 is there limited school choice in the area; is there
14 population growth that's positive; is there proximity
15 to a college or university so that we can work in
16 that collaborative way with them; is there diversity
17 in the community; and is there industry that demands
18 a STEM-trained workforce.

19 After taking a look at that, we began to look at
20 the Benton/Washington County area because we felt
21 like they met the criteria and that was an area that
22 we had had some interest from some of the community
23 members of us opening a school there. So as we began
24 to think about the Benton and Washington area, we
25 were looking at some properties and thinking about

1 it, and an opportunity to work with a school that's
2 already there came to our attention.

3 So I'd like to ask Barb if she would come up and
4 just kind of tell you a little bit about how we came
5 to work together with Ozark Montessori Academy.

6 MS. PADGETT: Barb Padgett, Ozark Montessori
7 Academy.

8 Our admin team has spent the last year working
9 to put Ozark Montessori on a path toward financial
10 and academic stability. With the help of Alexandra
11 Boyd and Virginia Perry we were able to re-establish
12 contacts with the ADE; we've been able to reach out
13 to the ADE to help us make things right for OMA. No
14 matter how difficult the situation was for us or how
15 discouraging, the ADE always stepped up with
16 kindness, solutions, and respect. We have money in
17 the bank this year and we are projected to end the
18 year in the black. But, most importantly, through
19 all of this process our children are happy and
20 they're beginning to grow academically.

21 We are here today because in spite of the great
22 strides that we have made we know that the model that
23 we currently have is not sustainable. It would take
24 us several years to be where we need to be
25 academically and financially. Our children need more

1 now. A year in the life of a child is an eternity
2 and we can't take any more of their valuable time.
3 For this reason we reached out to ADE and APSRC for
4 assistance and it was then suggested that we look at
5 options to transfer or surrender our charter and to
6 join with an academically and financially successful
7 entity to insure that our children could remain
8 together in their school community. To us, it's a
9 building; to them, it's a life and a school
10 community.

11 Throughout this process our board and our admin
12 team looked at several different options, talked with
13 several different folks, and we kept coming back to
14 LISA for several reasons. LISA's student population
15 seems to mirror ours with regard to racial and ethnic
16 diversity, free and reduced lunch, ELL, dyslexia, and
17 special education. We liked LISA because LISA is
18 committed to educating all children, even the most
19 challenging. Also, we found that the organizational
20 structure of LISA is very impressive. They have
21 administrative, financial, technological, and
22 academic structures in place to help the students at
23 OMA to be successful. Their team has been such a
24 rich resource for us this semester and they've been
25 sensitive to our feelings. It isn't easy for me to

1 come before you today and ask to give up our school
2 that we have grown to love and to hand over our
3 children, but we at OMA trust LISA to do what's best
4 for our children. We have 148 students currently and
5 134 of these students have already signed intents to
6 return with LISA next year, if you approve our
7 request. We are confident that surrendering our
8 charter is the best option for our children and we
9 will be grateful today if you will approve our
10 request. Thank you.

11 MS. BARONI: Thank you, Barb.

12 Just to reiterate, we've been working with Ozark
13 Montessori this semester. We actually started in the
14 late fall. We began with approval of a Memorandum of
15 Understanding by both boards. We started off with an
16 evaluation of the situation; we then met with
17 stakeholders. We had a couple of large parent
18 meetings with very good turnout; met with the board.
19 We've met with staff to get their input and to try to
20 be sensitive to this transitional process and to find
21 out what their needs are. We utilize ACT Aspire
22 interim and other diagnostic tests so that we can see
23 where the students are currently and how we can help
24 them. We've provided a part-time project manager --
25 that would be me -- as well as part-time ELA and math

1 leaders to support OMA. We've restructured -- worked
2 with their administration to restructure their
3 schedules so that they're getting grade-level
4 instruction and we're providing a full-time math
5 teacher. Actually, a math teacher from my middle
6 school building has relocated there and is teaching
7 their upper level math to really support them and
8 provide what they need there. We've been providing
9 support for cycle reporting and standards and
10 eSchool. We've provided a great deal of technology
11 support; we have purchased Chromebooks and
12 ChromeCarts, have just upgraded WiFi, and are
13 providing online resources like myON for reading,
14 iReady, STEMscopes for science, and are working to
15 train their teachers to implement that with the
16 students. We've also been advising and supporting
17 them with budget support and feel confident that we
18 understand where the finances are and that they'll be
19 able to finish out the year with a balanced budget.

20 There is a strong interest, as Barb alluded to;
21 most of the students want to return to LISA next
22 year. When I did this slide we had 65 people who had
23 filled out an interest form online; this morning when
24 I checked we had close to 90 who filled out that
25 interest form. We've done no advertising, other than

1 to put an interest form on both of our websites. So
2 there is a good bit of interest in the area for a
3 LISA school there next year.

4 So the turnaround strategies that we plan to
5 implement is to have student-focused education with
6 our STEM way of delivering students curriculum; also,
7 intervention, acceleration, extracurricular
8 activities to meet the needs of the students. We
9 will provide leadership and staffing. We're going to
10 work with the current staff to retain as many as we
11 can who are qualified and willing to work with LISA.
12 We'll also provide building leadership with someone
13 who's experienced. We'll have resources. We've
14 already started the technology upgrades and will
15 continue to do that. We plan to have a lot of
16 opportunities for families to engage with us and for
17 us to hear more about what the needs are in that
18 community. We'll, of course, implement our home
19 visit program as we've done in central Arkansas.
20 We've already begun to work with some of the
21 subpopulations in the area to better understand what
22 we need to do to deliver a good educational
23 experience in that area.

24 So our amendment request today is that the
25 charter of Ozark Montessori Academy be transferred to

1 LISA Academy for the 19-20 school year serving K-8.
2 We're asking for a cap increase of 600 students for
3 next year to serve that area; the 600 would allow for
4 growth at that location. We're asking that existing
5 waivers remain in place, and we have some additional
6 waivers that will effectuate some law changes and
7 rule changes. We're also seeking an amendment to
8 request the name-change from Ozark Montessori Academy
9 to LISA Academy Springdale. And we intend to change
10 the new transfer school sponsoring entity to Little
11 Scholars of Arkansas Foundation, which is LISA
12 Academy.

13 And that's all I have. I've lost my time; I'm
14 now on a compass instead of time.

15 So I wanted to ask if the board members from
16 Ozark Montessori Academy had something to say. Is
17 there still time left?

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: There's about a minute
19 left, but go ahead. We can go ahead.

20 MR. TEMPLE: Thank you. Sure. So I just in a
21 minute just want to say that from a board perspective
22 we're extremely constructive on this. The
23 partnership with LISA and OMA for this transition
24 period has been great. And as we look across the
25 landscape of charter schools in the state and in the

1 country, you really get to see how impressive LISA
2 Academy is -- and who wouldn't want something like
3 that for their community. The number one most
4 important thing for us is insuring (a) that there's a
5 school remaining in that spot where we started one,
6 and (b) that it's as much -- as high quality as
7 possible for the community and the students and
8 families -- and taxpayers, of course. And so we're
9 extremely grateful and very happy to be making this
10 transition.

11 MS. BARONI: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

13 MS. BARONI: I'll be happy to answer questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: At this time --

15 MR. TEMPLE: I didn't state my name.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I started to say --
17 we'll go ahead and state your name for the record so
18 we have that.

19 MR. TEMPLE: It's Ben Temple, president of Ozark
20 Montessori Academy board of trustees.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

22 And then if there is anyone to speak in
23 opposition they have 20 minutes, and then you have an
24 additional 5 minutes if you would like to use that.

25 Okay. So do we have -- we do have people to

1 speak in opposition. Okay.

2 MS. CLAY: Good morning. I'm Kendra Clay. I'm
3 the director of Student and Legal Services for the
4 Springdale School District.

5 I'm not here necessarily to speak in opposition,
6 but this seems like the most appropriate time to
7 bring a couple of concerns to your attention as you
8 begin asking questions.

9 First of all, anybody that's educating kids in
10 Springdale we want to be a partner with, especially
11 the way that Ozark Montessori and potentially LISA
12 Academy are to be structured. When those kids finish
13 in whatever grade, we hope they come to Springdale
14 Public School District and continue their education.

15 Two things I hope your questions would center
16 around:

17 First is the large population of English
18 Language Learners we have in Springdale. Currently,
19 our population of English Language Learners is over
20 50% of our student population. Our student
21 population is almost 23,000, so when you think of the
22 number of kids in Springdale that are English
23 Language Learners that is very high. So anybody who
24 is operating an educational system in Springdale
25 needs to consider that.

1 The second thing would be something that's a
2 challenge for, at least in my opinion, anybody
3 operating a charter is transportation. Of our 23,000
4 kids, over two-thirds of those kids are riding buses
5 every day. So any group that is operating in
6 Springdale has that to consider. That's a need for
7 our students is what I want to say.

8 Otherwise, we're here to answer any questions
9 that you may have as your conversation begins but
10 just want you to be mindful of the educational
11 conditions, that Springdale is a little bit uniquely
12 situated in the state of offering and educating such
13 a high number of English Language Learners and free
14 and reduced lunch students.

15 So we'll answer any questions. Otherwise, I'll
16 let you begin your questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Ms.
18 Clay.

19 Is there anyone else to speak in opposition?

20 Okay. Seeing none, the applicant will have 5
21 additional minutes if there's anything you would like
22 to present.

23 And please state your name and position for the
24 record.

25 SUPT. BOGREK: Fatih Bogrek. I am serving as

1 the superintendent of LISA Academy.

2 I would like to also give our ELL population,
3 Hispanic population numbers.

4 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

5 SUPT. BOGREK: I'm sorry. Yes. LISA Academy
6 has 24% Hispanic students and our (inaudible)
7 population is 16%. LISA Academy is also the most
8 diverse school district in the state. I think
9 Springdale is second after Little Rock. So we have a
10 diverse staff and we have a diverse population. We
11 have activities and small group instruction for them;
12 we're definitely able, you know -- we are able to,
13 you know, (inaudible) and, you know, the population
14 of ADP and we prepare for that.

15 And also LISA Academy is the most collaborating
16 charter school in the state, so we are excited to
17 collaborate also with Springdale and the other school
18 districts to improve our education and move education
19 forward in that area of the state.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

21 Is there anything additional from the applicant?

22 Okay. So if not, we'll go ahead and move to
23 questions then and start with Mr. Baldwin. Do you
24 have questions?

25 MR. BALDWIN: Let me start by commending you all

1 on the obvious thorough analysis that you've done of
2 this potential and also the fact that you're working
3 together to accomplish it. And I thought that was
4 impressive.

5 Two questions really. One is: have you done
6 this before? And then the second one is: what do you
7 think your biggest challenge would be? And maybe
8 also let me ask about the transportation challenge.

9 MS. BARONI: To answer have we done this before,
10 not exactly. We have, you know, expanded, opened new
11 schools; so we're familiar with that. We started in
12 Little Rock; opened a new charter in North Little
13 Rock which began as a separate charter until we
14 unified those charters -- was it 2012? Sometime. So
15 we have combined two charters, but they were both
16 LISA charters. So, procedurally, we have, but we
17 haven't opened one -- you know -- an independent new
18 operation like this before. We've done a good bit of
19 research on it and have tried to do as much
20 preparation as we think we can possibly do without
21 actually doing it.

22 So, let's see, your second question was -- I'm
23 sorry.

24 MR. BALDWIN: What's the biggest challenge that
25 you --

1 MS. BARONI: Oh, the biggest challenges. I
2 think the biggest challenge -- and, Barb and Dr.
3 Fatih, you can chime in here. But I think our
4 biggest challenge will be getting to know the
5 community there. Little Rock -- we started in the
6 Little Rock/central Arkansas area, so we've learned
7 this area; we kind of understand what the challenges
8 and opportunities are here. So learning a new
9 community I think will be a challenge and making sure
10 that we've got support set up to support that campus
11 while it's standing there alone. We have made some
12 preparations so that we do have that, but I think
13 that may be among the challenges.

14 In terms of transportation, we do not currently
15 have a plan for offering transportation. But the
16 students who are currently attending Ozark Montessori
17 Academy have not -- you know, that hasn't been an
18 obstacle for them getting there.

19 So I think what we're going for right now is to
20 meet the needs of those who are willing to come to
21 that school right now -- to continue meeting the
22 students' needs who are there, and then to add the
23 families that want, you know, an alternative
24 opportunity. We don't by any means think we'll be as
25 large as the Springdale School District, but we do

1 want to meet the needs of that community and the
2 families that want that smaller environment.

3 So, does that address your question?

4 MR. BALDWIN: Yes.

5 MS. NEWTON: Madam Chair, may I follow-up on Mr.
6 Baldwin's question?

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You may.

8 MS. NEWTON: Because you addressed I think quite
9 comprehensively the procedural process. My question
10 is philosophically the merging of the Montessori
11 model and the public education -- the, you know,
12 public education model. Those two things to me --
13 and I may just have enough information to be
14 dangerous, but it seemed to be two different
15 approaches and one doesn't seem to follow or merge
16 with the other. So for whatever time they've had
17 their students and to have those two things come
18 together, what -- help me understand how you guys
19 expect to address that.

20 MS. BARONI: Do you want to speak to that? You
21 know the students there.

22 MS. PADGETT: Barb Padgett, Ozark Montessori.

23 Montessori is an amazing -- an amazing method
24 with amazing materials. Had Montessori been married
25 to state standards from the very beginning of our

1 charter we would've been amazingly successful -- but
2 that did not happen. And what we -- what has
3 happened is we have found that our students were
4 getting farther and farther and farther behind with
5 regard to ACT Aspire and iStations and all the data
6 that we had. So we actually polled our parents and
7 did a survey to find out how many people were there
8 actually for Montessori -- because, like you, a lot
9 of people have just enough knowledge to be dangerous
10 about Montessori. What we found is why most of the
11 students and parents chose Ozark Montessori was not
12 for Montessori, but it was for the small caring
13 environment that we offer to our students and the
14 neighborhood school. So it's the antithesis we have
15 Montessori education going to a STEM school but with
16 the support of our board and our parents, as
17 evidenced by the fact that 134 kids want to come back
18 and be a part of LISA.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Does that address
20 your question?

21 MS. NEWTON: I think so. It's just -- it's just
22 hard for me to process going from a less structured
23 -- not necessarily -- that's not a critical piece,
24 but going into a really highly structured environment
25 and the struggles that are inherent with that seems

1 to pose a dilemma for students and parents,
2 especially with the high concentration of ELL
3 learners possibly. I don't know that that would be a
4 particular challenge, but it's hard for me to
5 understand how the transition won't be just
6 completely disrupting. But I'm not saying that's not
7 necessarily a reason I would be against it, but it
8 does present another -- a challenge. It's almost
9 like moving a person that's not speaking English into
10 a completely English -- you know, it could be seen as
11 that with other challenges as well. So I just was
12 wondering how that particular issue or those issues
13 that arise as a result of that will be addressed at
14 LISA probably more so than --

15 MS. PADGETT: I would love to address that right
16 now.

17 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

18 MS. PADGETT: What we have done this year -- as
19 many of you may know, the Montessori system is a
20 multi-age system. At Ozark Montessori we had
21 kindergarten stand alone, and then we had lower
22 elementary grades 1-3, and upper elementary grades 4-
23 6. This year, in looking at the standards and
24 comparing the standards to what we were doing with
25 the Montessori piece of it we realized that the kids

1 -- one teacher teaching three different standards --
2 sets of grade level standards was very difficult and
3 was part of the reason that we've continued to
4 struggle with our scores. So at the first of this
5 year we departmentalized and we have standalone
6 science, ELA, and mathematics classes for our upper
7 elementary. So that process has already begun and
8 the kids love the structure. I think some of them
9 actually craved a little bit more structure than they
10 had had previously. At semester, knowing that we
11 needed to do something to improve student growth, we
12 broke our K -- 1, 2, and 3 into three grade levels.
13 We have one 1st grade, two 2nd grade, and three 3rd
14 grade classes now so that the teachers are only
15 responsible for teaching one set of standards, and
16 we're already seeing academic growth from this model.
17 So actually even with Ozark Montessori we're still
18 using Montessori materials, but we've already made a
19 transition to a more successful structure for the
20 students.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Please state your name and
22 title for the record.

23 MS. KEITH: Yes, ma'am. Jennifer Keith,
24 secretary of the board of trustees and also a parent.
25 And that was why I also wanted to step up to address

1 Ms. Newton's question because as a parent, four years
2 ago I brought my children to Ozark Montessori Academy
3 for Montessori; I stayed because of the small school
4 atmosphere. And I have felt especially for my son
5 that it is -- it was what he needed for his learning
6 style; he needed the less structure and the more
7 ability to kind of work through things on his own.
8 What I have really liked -- and it is -- as you
9 expressed the concern, it is a very major transition.
10 However, what's been wonderful with working with LISA
11 -- and I've been -- had the benefit of working both
12 as a parent and on the board of trustees -- to see
13 the transition. By the transition that Ms. Barb just
14 explained, they're really easing these kids into the
15 new set-up. So we're taking them from where they
16 were in the fall and realizing we're going to have a
17 major transition next year for those kids who do
18 stay. They're kind of having an interim now where
19 they're still in the same classrooms with the same
20 teachers -- well, not all the same because we did
21 split into the grade level changes. But for the most
22 part they're able to stay with their peers and begin
23 this new way of learning while still staying in a
24 comfortable situation. So for those who have been
25 doing one and will continue to do the other, they're

1 getting a transition period which has been fantastic.
2 And then for the new students, it'll be the same for
3 them.

4 So, thank you for your question. It's a good
5 question.

6 MS. NEWTON: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson, do you
8 have any questions?

9 MR. WILSON: I do, yeah. Just to follow-up on
10 Ms. Newton's question just a second -- as I
11 understand it LISA has, under a Memorandum of
12 Understanding with Ozark Montessori, been operating
13 and conducting the school for the last several
14 months. Is that right?

15 MS. BARONI: We've been essentially consulting
16 and providing support services. The administration
17 is still there and we've been working with them since
18 late-November. We've provided -- we provided -- the
19 second semester actually had an opportunity so that
20 we could provide one of our teachers actually there
21 for math. That's the only full-time staff member
22 that LISA Academy has provided. I'm going up about
23 every week to help with it. We have English support,
24 elementary curriculum support, math support, IT
25 people who are just going up and providing support to

1 the current administration and staff.

2 MR. WILSON: Okay. LISA has provided both some
3 degree of administration as well as classroom
4 instruction in that?

5 MS. BARONI: If you think of it more as
6 consulting, that's more of what we're doing. The
7 people are still in place who were there before, the
8 same administration, essentially same teachers still
9 there. Only one teacher we've provided there, and
10 the administration is still the same. We're just
11 coming alongside them and helping to guide them and
12 helping with training, with curriculum, and online
13 resources.

14 MR. WILSON: Well, to follow-up again on Ms.
15 Newton's question, during that time that you all have
16 provided administrative help have you run into -- or
17 classroom instruction help, have you run into
18 problems melding or merging the Montessori and LISA?

19 MS. BARONI: I don't think there really have
20 been any. And as Barb said, they had already begun
21 aiming in that direction this year because they were
22 seeing that students were not -- they were not
23 achieving the grade level standards that the state
24 requires. So they had already begun to do some of
25 that remodeling the Montessori model to better meet

1 the state standards. So I think it has been a
2 gradual step process. And I think from what I've
3 seen when I've been there visiting classrooms, if you
4 walked in the room you might think it's still a
5 Montessori classroom but -- because the kids are like
6 sitting around in different places. But they're
7 working on grade level state standards now instead of
8 working at their own pace with multi grade levels in
9 there.

10 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

11 MS. BARONI: So I think it's been fairly smooth.

12 MS. NEWTON: Along that line I'd like to ask if
13 the LISA staff is training in RISE so that they can
14 teach reading and aligning curriculum. So is --

15 MS. BARONI: Yes, ma'am. We are.

16 MS. NEWTON: -- the LISA staff being trained?

17 MS. BARONI: Yes, we are diligently getting all
18 of our folks trained. They're over there nodding.
19 They're two that are in the trenches with that every
20 day. Yeah. I'm even wearing my reading bracelet,
21 Love to Read.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers?

23 MR. ROGERS: The first thought, the amendment
24 request is for 600. Is that 600 cap -- is that -- I
25 mean, to increase your cap by 600, is that to be

1 applied all towards Springdale?

2 MS. BARONI: It would all be for the Springdale
3 campus. Currently, we wouldn't be able to put that
4 many in there the way the building is constructed
5 right now. But the K-8 model -- 600 we feel like is
6 a reasonable number to grow a K-8 school to maximum
7 capacity, which might require remodeling the building
8 at some point down the road. So --

9 MR. ROGERS: Okay. So when would that be?
10 Because if we gave the 600 right now, but you only
11 have 134 kids -- so what's the timeframe --

12 MS. BARONI: We're anticipating --

13 SUPT. BOGREK: Yes.

14 MS. BARONI: Do you want to talk about --

15 SUPT. BOGREK: Yes.

16 MS. BARONI: -- kind of the number of
17 projections?

18 SUPT. BOGREK: The first year -- by 2024-25, you
19 know, in our projection we're going to have around
20 600 students hopefully, if we have a demand. So it's
21 a projection number for five years, and then this is
22 why we are asking 600 now for the future years.

23 MS. BARONI: So we don't have to come back every
24 year and say, "Can we have a hundred more?"

25 SUPT. BOGREK: So our projection next year is

1 200, the following year is 265, and then it goes on
2 to 2024-25 around 600 with this projection. That's
3 why we are asking 600 cap.

4 MR. ROGERS: But you'll have to do some kind of
5 remodeling to the building to get them all to fit in
6 there?

7 MS. BARONI: We would. The way the building --

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Would you stand to the
9 microphone please?

10 MS. BARONI: I'm sorry. The way the building is
11 structured now is they're huge classrooms. So it
12 would be fairly simple to restructure the building to
13 break up the space a little bit so that we could fit
14 more kids in there.

15 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers, questions?

17 DR. KREMERS: I'm looking at the budget that was
18 included, and for 19-20 and 20-21 it's acknowledging
19 the projected number of student growth. So you're
20 stating you know you need an increase in capacity as
21 far as how many students can be -- that you would
22 like to have accepted into the school. What concerns
23 me is the number of staff projected on the budget is
24 exactly the same. I know some of that you said is
25 LISA Academy is providing a part-time staff member

1 for English and then somebody for math. So I'm
2 worried about how you're going to be able to take
3 care of all the new students without any additional
4 staff increases and no budget acknowledgement of
5 that. And then also at the end of the year the
6 budget balance, I'm concerned with what funds for any
7 type of facility changes. Your end-of-year balances
8 are very limited right now -- \$16,000 for 19-20 and
9 only \$39,000 projected in the black for 20-21.

10 SUPT. BOGREK: First of all, number of staff --
11 you know, when we make the budget, we make the budget
12 based on the number of classes and sections. The
13 section numbers are the same like next two years.
14 But, for example, in the 6th grade we will have just
15 maybe seven or ten kids the first year, but the
16 following year it's going to be 20; it's not going to
17 make any staff changes, just in the class we will
18 have more students. So current, right now in the
19 classes -- like in the 6th grade there are seven or
20 eight; in the 7th grade there are another seven or
21 eight. So we are going to add more in those classes.
22 So the first two years we're expecting the same staff
23 members, just we will have more students in the
24 classes. But the following years definitely we will
25 need more, you know, staff to cover the 600 students.

1 DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh. Along that, what is your
2 student-to-teacher ratio? And then, what are your
3 plans and what staff do you have existing to cover
4 the English Language Learners and then also the extra
5 English and other staff? I'm sure they're licensed,
6 certified teachers. Just kind of, if you would,
7 explain a little bit more about your staffing,
8 student-to-teacher ratio and all of that, please.

9 SUPT. BOGREK: Yeah. Again, usually in our
10 locations we have around 25 students, 28 -- you know,
11 around 25. So we will keep the same ratio on that
12 site too. But, you know, current numbers we have,
13 you know, around seven to ten students. This is why,
14 you know, we will add more students in each class in
15 a few years. But our ratio here, we will try to keep
16 the same in the Springdale location too.

17 DR. KREMERS: So did I hear you right, you're
18 saying you're expecting an additional at least 134
19 new students; correct? You've stated that in your
20 presentation -- approximately. And then you already
21 have --

22 MS. BARONI: The 134 is the students -- of the
23 students who are currently there who have indicated
24 they plan to return if it's a LISA Academy school.

25 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

1 MS. BARONI: We have another 80-something right
2 now who have expressed an interest in the school
3 without any advertising and without applications
4 opening. So we feel like we'll have plenty of
5 students to reach the goal of around 200 for the
6 first year.

7 And you had asked about teachers. We -- there
8 are some teachers at Ozark Montessori Academy
9 currently who are interested in continuing with LISA
10 and who have either certification or highly qualified
11 status. So if we have a case where a teacher is
12 already there who's interested in continuing and
13 meets, you know, the qualifications that we want for
14 a teacher, we want to continue with those. We also
15 have some teachers in the central Arkansas area
16 who've expressed an interest in going there. We
17 would like to do a blend of that so that we have some
18 folks who are already familiar with the LISA
19 structure, but also to keep some of the familiar
20 faces there to help with the community and the
21 transition.

22 DR. KREMERS: What is the LISA structure for
23 English Language Learners?

24 MS. BARONI: We have an ELL person in each
25 building, and then we have a district-wide person who

1 coordinates all of that. So we would provide the
2 same support there.

3 DR. KREMERS: And how does -- is that not
4 included? Because they, existing, do not have that,
5 to my understanding?

6 MS. PADGETT: We have a part-time ELL person.

7 MS. BARONI: They have a part-time ELL person at
8 OMA right now.

9 DR. KREMERS: And so the model you're talking
10 about is a little bit different than that?

11 MS. BARONI: Yes. We would assume that we would
12 need a full-time person there who would do the pull-
13 outs and the testing and intervention with those
14 students --

15 DR. KREMERS: Right.

16 MS. BARONI: -- as we do on our other campuses.

17 DR. KREMERS: The budget doesn't suggest that.
18 It wouldn't be until 2021-2022 then, because there's
19 no staff changes --

20 SUPT. BOGREK: Yes. It will change.

21 DR. KREMERS: In the budget?

22 SUPT. BOGREK: The number of staff will change.
23 You know, after 2020-21 -- no, 21-22 -- we will have
24 more staff. And then our projection number for the
25 enrollment is going to increase, so our budget is

1 going to increase too. Again, the first year, as we
2 understand, you know, because of low enrollment --
3 this is why you want to give worst numbers; so we
4 just say like 200 -- but maybe we will have more than
5 200. So we want to just say right now, currently, we
6 have around 84 interested students. If we have, you
7 know, interested ones or returning ones, it's over
8 200 now, you know. There are plenty to come to LISA.
9 But we didn't start advertising yet. We will have
10 our advertising; we will reach out to the community.
11 We are hoping to get more numbers, you know. And we
12 have availability in the building because we have
13 fewer class sizes for the 7th grade -- 6th, 7th and
14 8th grade. So hopefully we'll have more students and
15 then our budget is going to be better than the
16 projected amount.

17 DR. KREMERS: I'm still -- I still am
18 uncomfortable with the thought that you have a
19 potential increase in the number of students that are
20 not English Language speaking as their natural
21 language, their common language, their regular
22 language but not having the change -- significant
23 change with staff. So if you're waiting till 2021-
24 2022, you're talking all of the rest of this year,
25 next year, and that would be the following year

1 you're saying you have the budget and expectation to
2 change your staffing and your salaries and your
3 budget to address that.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yeah. Dr. Fatih, we're
5 looking at the budget sheet that you had included in
6 the application. And in it you're showing your
7 projected number of students for 2019-20 at 190 with
8 29 projected staff, and then the next year you're
9 showing going up to 255 with the same number of
10 staff. So I think that's what Dr. Kremers is
11 referring to is just are you -- have you projected --
12 as you're projecting your enrollment increase, are
13 you projecting the right number of staff for support?
14 And do you have the finances for that?

15 SUPT. BOGREK: I think this trend line is
16 including ELL, like art, music; all teachers, you
17 know, this trend line is including. But the second
18 year we are not increasing the number of sections.
19 So, for example, you'll have still one maybe 6th
20 grade, one 7th grade. So this is why -- just
21 increasing the number of students in each class. So
22 instead of seven students there will be, for example,
23 20. This is why it's not going to, you know, cause
24 additional staff. We've added, for example, all
25 special education, ESL. In this trend line we have

1 all the subjects. But the thing is, you know, the
2 first year we will have fewer students in each class,
3 but the following year we will have more. But we
4 added special ed., ESL, GT, you know, principals,
5 aids, you know, interventionists, all that all in
6 this trend line. But over the years definitely, you
7 know, this trend line will increase and we'll have
8 600 maybe that's going to go to fifth year.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Does that help?

10 MS. BARONI: Does that answer your question?

11 DR. KREMERS: It does. I am really concerned
12 about the budget, the year-end balances that's
13 projected and all the things it sounds like that you
14 will need to do. It's pretty limited, so there are
15 some concerns about the budget for me.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Baldwin, did you have
17 any other questions?

18 MR. BALDWIN: No.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No. Okay.

20 Coming back to Panel Members, I think I have ADE
21 staff to present an update. Do we have any other
22 questions you want to continue with?

23 MR. ROGERS: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

25 MR. ROGERS: So -- I lost my place. Okay. So

1 on the teachers and administrators how many -- that
2 are at Ozark right now, are y'all looking at
3 replacing only those that aren't -- I mean, how is
4 that going to work?

5 MS. BARONI: Well, I think, first of all, we
6 wanted to see if we get approval and then we can
7 begin talking and looking at credentials of the
8 current staff. I know that there are several staff
9 members there who hold licensure who would be fine to
10 move forward. There are some who don't, who were
11 just certified with the Montessori model; so those
12 teachers we may not be able to move forward with
13 because they would have to meet AQT or certification
14 for us to utilize them. So we will begin looking at
15 that if we're approved to move forward. We would, of
16 course, give them priority -- if they meet
17 credentials, we would give them priority in hiring.
18 As I said, we want that continuity if we can -- you
19 know, if we can keep that.

20 I don't know -- we don't know about the
21 administration. We've had very open conversations,
22 very transparent conversations about what roles they
23 might want to have. So we'll be in discussion about
24 that as we move forward, if we're approved. I don't
25 want to offer any particular number because I don't

1 want people --

2 MR. ROGERS: Yeah.

3 MS. BARONI: -- going, "Oh, was I that next --

4 MR. ROGERS: Well, and really what I was looking
5 at is --

6 MS. BARONI: Yeah.

7 MR. ROGERS: -- the 200 kids there right now
8 you're fixing to turn their world upside-down. I
9 know that you've got 134 that indicated that they are
10 interested in going to LISA.

11 MS. BARONI: Uh-huh.

12 MR. ROGERS: But those are the teachers and the
13 administrators --

14 MS. BARONI: Right.

15 MR. ROGERS: -- and everyone they're used to
16 seeing. And now, in a year term you're fixing to --

17 MS. BARONI: Yeah. And that's --

18 MR. ROGERS: -- to not be there anymore.

19 MS. BARONI: Right. And that's --

20 MR. ROGERS: And so obviously that's a concern
21 that I have because those students are about to have
22 that big of a change.

23 MS. BARONI: We want to keep --

24 MR. ROGERS: So I was just wondering --

25 MS. BARONI: -- as many familiar faces as we

1 possibly can in the school. But, obviously, we have
2 to also look at the state requirements of licensure,
3 AQT, you know, to have them in the classrooms. So we
4 feel like there is a good number there that we can
5 work with that would keep some of that continuity.

6 MR. ROGERS: And I have one more.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Go ahead, and then
8 I have one for you.

9 MR. ROGERS: And then on the -- earlier when
10 Springdale came up, I was just wondering what kind of
11 collaboration does Ozark have right now and how are
12 -- if this is approved, how is LISA going to address
13 that?

14 MS. PADGETT: Right now, there is not a working
15 relationship with Springdale School District. We do
16 trade a lot of kids back and forth, and so we have
17 collaboration with all the schools in the area; the
18 elementary schools and middle schools, we talk
19 frequently. But as far as a partnership with
20 Springdale Schools, we're hoping that LISA will be
21 able to do that, especially in the downtown area
22 which is where our school is going to be located. So
23 we're hoping that LISA can establish what we have not
24 been able to establish to this point.

25 MS. BARONI: I think moving forward we would

1 make efforts to establish that collaboration, like we
2 have here locally. As we all know, schools sometimes
3 get in the competition business, you know, and we're
4 not trying to go in and take all of the Springdale
5 students. It's a small school; we're not going to
6 put a dent in Springdale. So we want to work
7 together to offer an alternative opportunity for
8 folks who want that smaller environment. Now our
9 robotics team was in Springdale a couple of weeks ago
10 at a tournament. So we're hopeful that some of those
11 kinds of things we can partner together, you know,
12 with some of the things that we're doing here in
13 central Arkansas. But we would be certainly open to
14 that and I think our track record has shown that when
15 we say we're open to collaboration we mean it and
16 we'll reach out and try to make that happen in any
17 way we can.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. My question would
19 be for the finance team at the Department. And it
20 was mentioned earlier that prior to this year the
21 school had been operating with some declining
22 balances -- and I'm looking out here for my -- for
23 our finance folks -- and this year they were
24 projected to end in a positive balance. So I was
25 going to just see if we have an idea if that was

1 attributed to the partnership or are there other
2 factors involved. So I don't know if we have -- and
3 Mr. Rogers may have a little bit of insight on that?

4 MR. ROGERS: I don't know that we've gone that
5 far in it because we were just -- Ozark has been
6 working with LISA, so we weren't checking in. But
7 they are projected to show an increased balance over
8 what they were last year, so they are trending in the
9 right way. So whatever they've been doing this year
10 has been able to have some cost savings.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And -- well, Panel,
12 do you have any other questions at this time?

13 Okay. I think, Ms. Coffman, from our Standards
14 and Systems Support -- or our Standards for
15 Accreditation, do you have any --

16 MS. COFFMAN: I do.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- any information to
18 share with us?

19 MS. COFFMAN: Deborah Coffman, Assistant
20 Commissioner, Public School Accountability.

21 Currently, Ozark Montessori Academy in
22 Springdale is showing three exceptions in the
23 Standards for Accreditation, and we would request an
24 oral assurance that they would get those resolved. I
25 think they will be able to resolve them very quickly.

1 But we'd like to have those resolved before the final
2 vote by the State Board next month.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. What are those
4 exceptions, in what areas?

5 MS. COFFMAN: One is 1(a)(1), they're missing a
6 required course offering for Arkansas History;
7 3(a)(5), Employment of a General Business Manager --
8 which I think they have one but there evidently is a
9 coding error -- to have that person posted; and then
10 they still have remaining background checks for five
11 educators, and so that could be that those five have
12 submitted renewals or anything like that that still
13 needs to be worked out. But they need to work with
14 Virginia Perry to get those resolved.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

16 MS. PADGETT: Barb Padgett, Ozark Montessori.
17 It will be resolved before we leave the building
18 today.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So when you say it
20 will be resolved, do you have someone to teach
21 Arkansas History or you --

22 MS. PADGETT: Yes. We are teaching Arkansas
23 History. It was just an oversight. We had -- when
24 we started we had several exceptions, and we thought
25 they were all cleared and we were done. As far as

1 the background checks, the background checks are for
2 people who no longer are at Ozark Montessori at all.
3 But we can correct the Arkansas History while we're
4 here.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And your general --
6 your business manager, is that a --

7 MS. PADGETT: We do have a Chief Financial
8 Officer. Her name is Adrienne McGinnis, and she is
9 here with us today.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So
11 those sound like issues, but we will definitely need
12 that follow-up.

13 Okay. All right. Ms. Hyatt, do you have some
14 things for us?

15 MS. HYATT: Okay. So just a couple of things.

16 Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas Department of
17 Education.

18 A couple of things that came up during the
19 presentation -- so, procedurally, essentially what
20 you would be doing if you granted this amendment
21 request would be to acknowledge that Ozark Montessori
22 would give up its charter June 30, 2019; to amend
23 LISA's current charter contract to add a license for
24 the new campus in Springdale, which would include the
25 name-change and the change of the sponsoring entity;

1 then to increase the enrollment cap by 600 students
2 for that Springdale campus; and then to transfer the
3 waivers.

4 The current LISA contract does not expire until
5 2030, which means that should you grant this license
6 the license wouldn't expire until 2030.

7 So I just wanted to maybe get some clarification
8 from the applicant because it sounded to me like
9 maybe they said five years. But if it's as a license
10 to the current charter, not a new charter, which
11 that's not what this request is, then it goes by the
12 renewal cycle of the charter contract that exists,
13 which does not expire until 2030.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So, Ms. Hyatt, you
15 need them to clarify that that -- that they
16 understand that, but it would -- this is --

17 MS. HYATT: I think yes. I thought I heard them
18 say something about five years. And so I'd like them
19 to --

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

21 MS. HYATT: -- clarify that they understand that
22 it would be until 2030, and then if they have any
23 additional information they want to provide to the
24 board about planning during that time.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MS. BARONI: Luanne Baroni, LISA Academy.

2 The five years was just the enrollment
3 projections. It had nothing to do with the length of
4 charter, so --

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So the five years
6 was due to the -- what they projected out on
7 enrollment.

8 MS. HYATT: Okay. And on that enrollment -- and
9 I may have overlooked it in the amendment request
10 itself. But if we could just get a little bit more
11 information on how that enrollment cap will be rolled
12 out over the next couple of years and whether they
13 plan to start with all the grades offered or increase
14 those grades over a period of time.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Yeah, if you could
16 go year by year and give us that information.

17 MS. BARONI: So the enrollment -- the grade
18 levels we plan to open as K-8 because there are
19 already students at OMA. So we would need all of
20 those grade levels to be able to insure that the
21 students there can be given seats to continue at that
22 school location. So we don't have a year-by-year
23 rollout. We would want to open with K-8 the first
24 year.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And -- but do you

1 have a plan for about how many students you're going
2 to grow each year or is it --

3 MS. BARONI: He's got all --

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I think we had talked
5 about that a little bit.

6 MS. BARONI: Have you got that year-by-year?

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But you wouldn't -- I
8 guess the question is, is there a year-by-year
9 enrollment cap or is there just the request for the
10 600 and at whatever point in the next three years,
11 five years, ten years you meet that cap?

12 MS. BARONI: Right. We were just asking for the
13 600 so that eventually we could grow toward that.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

15 MS. BARONI: So I'm guessing he's handing you
16 the longer-range enrollment projections.

17 (WHEREUPON, A-1 Exhibit One (1) was marked for
18 identification and entered into the record.)

19 SUPT. BOGREK: I don't have the staff numbers
20 here, but I can come up with the staff numbers later.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Panel, do you have any
22 questions regarding the enrollment or anything that
23 we've discussed?

24 Okay. I think that's going to be difficult for
25 us to see. And we talked about the staffing numbers

1 a little bit earlier. Do you have anything
2 additional you can add?

3 SUPT. BOGREK: I can just say, you know, for
4 2021-22, 42 are the projected staff number; for 2022-
5 23, 45; for 24-24 -- 23-24, 50; and 24-25, 50. So
6 this is increasing, you know, after two years.

7 DR. KREMERS: The budget that's in the
8 information we have says 29 and you're showing 40
9 staff?

10 SUPT. BOGREK: So for 21-22, 42. So from 29 to
11 42 the following year; the third year we will have 42
12 staff members.

13 DR. KREMERS: And 29 the first two years. Okay.

14 SUPT. BOGREK: The first two years, 29. After
15 that, you know, it's increasing each year.

16 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.

17 SUPT. BOGREK: And we have the pro-forma, you
18 know, showing we have a positive, you know, balance
19 each year.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt, they
21 have some waivers that they are asking for. So can
22 you help us? Are these -- you said these waivers
23 were being transferred -- or are these waivers that
24 LISA Academy currently holds that Ozark Montessori
25 does not? Can you help us out with that a little

1 bit?

2 MS. HYATT: Sure. So part of the amendment
3 request is to make sure that the waivers that are
4 currently in place at Ozark Montessori would stay in
5 place when it becomes a LISA school. There are
6 additional waivers listed in the amendment request
7 and I believe that those are just to make sure that
8 the waivers that they would need -- either additional
9 waivers that Ozark didn't have but LISA will need
10 will be in place or to fully effectuate waivers that
11 Ozark had that may not have been fully effectuated in
12 the past.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So has Legal reviewed
14 these? Did anything stand out as a concern?

15 MS. HYATT: No, ma'am.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Panel, any
17 additional questions?

18 (BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE)

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And is there anything
20 additional then that we would need to address at this
21 time, Mr. Ballard?

22 MR. BALLARD: (Shaking head from side to side.)

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Or Ms. Hyatt?

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

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So I think we've

1 gone through and had all the information. And if
2 there aren't any other questions or discussion at
3 this time I would entertain a motion.

4 MS. NEWTON: I have a motion. My motion is to
5 add the new licensure for LISA and transfer the
6 waivers -- appropriate waivers.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Hyatt, do we also need
8 to add -- do we need to separate these out and do
9 these separately? I should've asked that before I
10 asked for a motion.

11 MS. HYATT: I think the best motion would be to
12 just approve the amendment request as written; that
13 would incorporate all of the provisions, like the
14 licensure, the enrollment by 600 students, the
15 transfer of all of the waivers. And I don't believe
16 that you would need a motion to have Ozark give up
17 their charter as there's no motion to be had there.

18 DR. KREMERS: Can we have discussion before we
19 --

20 MR. ROGERS: I'd like to.

21 MS. NEWTON: I would change my motion --

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

23 MS. NEWTON: -- then to what was recommended by
24 Ms. Hyatt.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So, discussion?

1 MS. NEWTON: Do we have a second?

2 MR. WILSON: Second.

3 MR. ROGERS: I'd like to discuss.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. At one point -- can
5 we discuss -- I'm looking for my people here. Okay.
6 All right. So we've got a motion to approve the
7 amendment request and a second. We can discuss at
8 this point?

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

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Yes.

11 MR. ROGERS: I'm not concerned with the transfer
12 or anything. My concern is with the 600 cap. I
13 would like to not -- I would like to see that
14 probably around the 300 area just to allow for the
15 opportunity for -- just show that the books are going
16 to stay positive, that the performance for the
17 students they have is going -- that it's going to
18 increase (not that I'm doubting it will). I would
19 just like to see that before we start allowing it up
20 to 600. And then also the collaboration with
21 Springdale, to give LISA Academy the opportunity to
22 address all that with the students they have right
23 now before we expand it out bigger. So that's my
24 only concern with everything.

25 And then with the other things we were talking

1 about with the budget, where the 29 -- I just felt
2 like there's still a lot of questions that have to be
3 answered. Even as far as the administration,
4 teachers, the budget, there's a lot of questions. So
5 I'd be more comfortable not going that high with the
6 cap until we see how it's playing out. That's my
7 only concern.

8 DR. KREMERS: And I second what you're saying.
9 And I think also the concern of it being until 2030,
10 there's a lot of unknowns in this situation,
11 especially Ms. Newton mentioning about the change in
12 the model. And we know that we've got staff that
13 will be working with them to improve, but their ESSA
14 score is a D; so we know that there's a long way to
15 go with the academics, and I know they'll work toward
16 that. So 2030 is also a concern for the length of
17 time to leave that open. I know we can call them
18 back at certain points, but considering the budget,
19 academics, the change in model, it's just a lot to
20 consider of unknowns in this to think about 2030.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

22 MS. NEWTON: With those concerns noted, I'd be
23 happy to withdraw my motion. Someone else may have
24 one.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MS. NEWTON: Do you want to withdraw your
2 second?

3 MR. WILSON: I'll withdraw the second in favor
4 of Ms. Newton's proposal that we modify her motion to
5 some extent.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So the original
7 motion and second has been withdrawn.

8 So in the discussion the concern was raised
9 about the increase to 600, and I believe it sounded
10 like you would be more comfortable with a smaller cap
11 to evaluate -- be able to evaluate and see where they
12 are over time?

13 MR. ROGERS: Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So does anyone --
15 at this time would anyone like to make a different
16 motion?

17 MR. ROGERS: I'll make one to accept the
18 amendment request except for the cap be for 300
19 rather than 600.

20 MR. WILSON: Second.

21 MR. ROGERS: Did I say that right, Mary Claire?

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

23 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

24 SUPT. BOGREK: What about 400?

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So we have --

1 SUPT. BOGREK: What about 400? I'm negotiating
2 for 400 and just, you know, in a few years we can go
3 to 600. From 600 to 400?

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We have a motion and a
5 second for 300. So is there discussion by the Panel?

6 DR. KREMERS: Do we not want to do anything with
7 the length of time?

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: The length of time is
9 already established for LISA Academy.

10 DR. KREMERS: So we can't specifically in this
11 instance say five years?

12 MR. ROGERS: What I was looking at was if they
13 are showing the improvement -- and if they are
14 showing it, then they could come back and ask for the
15 increased cap.

16 DR. KREMERS: Right.

17 MR. ROGERS: Because I'm not saying I'm against
18 it; I just want to see that it's working before we go
19 increasing the cap a whole lot, and that's all I'm
20 saying. That's why I was at the 300 because I know
21 that they have the 200 kids right now but it still
22 allows for some that if they want to go there -- if
23 every one of the kids -- the Montessori kids want to
24 go there, plus another 100 is what I was looking at.

25 DR. KREMERS: Agree.

1 MS. HYATT: Just to respond to Dr. Kremers'
2 question, since this is a license and not a new
3 charter contract it would go by the date of
4 expiration of the current charter contract, which is
5 2030, and the license couldn't be different than
6 that. If this were a new charter where they were
7 coming and asking for a new charter contract, you
8 could negotiate more on the length of time. But
9 since this is an amendment for a license to the
10 current contract that time goes by what's already
11 set.

12 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So we have a motion
14 to approve the amendment request, except for the cap
15 to be 300 instead of the proposed 600, and a second
16 to that motion.

17 So at this time we'll vote on that motion. All
18 in favor say "aye."

19 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

21 Okay. All right. If you will take a moment and
22 record your votes?

23 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We'll go ahead and
25 state our reasons publicly for the votes.

1 Mr. Baldwin.

2 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I vote to approve the
3 request. I believe LISA is a high-quality program
4 and will improve student outcomes. And I also
5 believe you all as a group -- combined group have
6 thoughtfully considered the program transitions that
7 you'll need to make to be successful.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

9 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the amendment
10 request to transition from OMA to LISA Academy. I do
11 have concerns remaining for budget, academic
12 performance, projections of budget, and staffing
13 needs, and they will need to increase collaboration
14 within the community for success.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

16 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion. I like the
17 transition. I think the transition makes sense and I
18 do believe it will be successful. I just wanted to
19 see before we move forward with a larger cap all the
20 kinks worked out and everything is making sense at
21 that time.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.

23 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion. Transition
24 plans seems to be well thought out in the schools and
25 we saw a plan for moving forward.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

2 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I'm
3 familiar with LISA's experience in operations in this
4 central area and believe that they have -- and I know
5 that they have a solid track record. I believe they
6 have a good program for northwest Arkansas too.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you all for
8 being here. I would also add that we do need to make
9 sure that those standards issues are cleared up in
10 the system. So thank you for being here.

11 Okay. Panel, I'm going to check to see what you
12 would like to do, if you want to take a lunch break
13 now or do we want to push on through these next three
14 items on the agenda and then break all at once. So
15 you all help me decide.

16 MS. NEWTON: Can we have a five-minute break?

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes.

18 Okay. We're going to do that. We'll just do --
19 we're going to do a five-minute quick break and then
20 come back and go ahead with the agenda.

21 (BREAK: 11:40 - 11:53 A.M.)

22 A-5: REQUEST FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
23 LITTLE ROCK PREPARATORY ACADEMY

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I think we are now
25 at item number 5 on our action agenda, which is a

1 request for an amendment to Little Rock Prep. And,
2 Mr. Ballard, will you please present that for us?

3 MR. BALLARD: On November 3, 2008, the State
4 Board of Education approved the application for
5 Little Rock Preparatory Academy. The charter is
6 approved to serve students in grades K-8 with a
7 maximum enrollment of 432. Representatives of Little
8 Rock Preparatory Academy are appearing before the
9 Panel -- the Charter Authorizing Panel to request an
10 amendment to their current charter.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will the
12 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in
13 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.
14 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're
15 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and
16 nothing but the truth?

17 MS. BROYLES: Yes. I raised this one.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Understand. Understand.
19 I can see it now. Yeah. We will take your
20 affirmation, your verbal affirmation.

21 Okay. And if you will state your name and title
22 for the record, you're recognized.

23 MS. BROYLES: Good morning. I'm Donna Broyles,
24 and I'm the interim superintendent of Little Rock
25 Preparatory Academy.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And -- okay.

2 MR. WALTER: Good morning. Dr. Pfeffer, Members
3 of the Panel, my name is Tripp Walter; I'm staff
4 attorney with Arkansas Public School Resource Center.

5 And with the Panel's permission, I'm going to
6 open up and make a couple of introductory comments
7 from a legal and procedural standpoint as to how we
8 came to be before you this morning, and then Ms.
9 Broyles will talk more about what's going on at the
10 school right now as far as this issue goes.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

12 MR. WALTER: All right.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

14 MR. WALTER: First of all, I'd like to thank Ms.
15 Moore from the ADE finance section. She is the one
16 who brought this issue to the school's attention and
17 to my attention. And I believe that the situation is
18 such that Little Rock Prep had believed that it was
19 working under a waiver for Minimum Teacher Salary
20 Schedule and was not aware of that until Ms. Moore
21 brought it to their attention. Once she did, then we
22 started working with the school administration and
23 with ADE staff that has been extremely helpful in
24 this process in trying to fashion a waiver to get to
25 you as soon as possible to get the necessary waivers

1 and make sure that the school was in compliance
2 concerning the Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule. And
3 the second piece, the rules concerning the posting of
4 it, we're obviously not seeking for a waiver from the
5 requirement to post the schedule but just that the
6 schedule that was posted was not going to be in
7 compliance with the Minimum Salary Schedule.

8 MS. BROYLES: Donna Broyles with Little Rock
9 Prep.

10 I want to let you guys know I took over as
11 interim superintendent January 1st. And when this
12 was brought to my attention we have been
13 communicating very collectively with APSRC and ADE.
14 I'd met with Deborah Coffman, Tripp Walter, and
15 Virginia Perry, who have been very helpful with me.
16 My board and I are studying the salary -- reviewing
17 all of that and we are -- our goal is to make sure
18 that we're in compliance with the waiver and also not
19 just meeting the minimum salary requirements, but
20 also wanting to pay our teachers -- because this
21 impacts attrition and it also impacts student
22 performance overall long-term. So, but we have been
23 working very collectively with ADE on trying to get
24 everything in compliance.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MS. BROYLES: Any questions?

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Do we have anyone
3 who -- to speak in opposition, Ms. Hyatt?

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

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No. Okay.

6 And if you are ready for us, then, yes, we can
7 go ahead and proceed with questions.

8 Okay. No questions. Mr. Baldwin, do you have
9 questions?

10 MR. BALDWIN: No.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers?

12 MR. ROGERS: No.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton?

14 MS. NEWTON: No, I don't.

15 MR. WILSON: No questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No questions. Okay. It
17 doesn't look like we have questions.

18 I would like to ask one on the waiver you're
19 seeking on posting the documents to the website. How
20 do you -- you know, I look at that as a way for
21 family and community engagement; you know, a website
22 is a great tool for all of that. So I just would be
23 curious as far as, you know, communication with
24 familiars or, you know, when questions come up about
25 that information, is that -- is not having those

1 there -- does that create issues or limit or --

2 MS. BROYLES: No. And it's been -- my executive
3 assistant and I worked very closely together in
4 trying to update not just the state-required
5 components of the website, but making sure that we
6 involve and communicate with all of our -- all of our
7 events to all of our families. Because we want them
8 to know what's going on in our school, especially as
9 we've been transitioning since December 31st. So we
10 do know that we've got some work to do on that.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

12 MR. WALTER: May I just add a short piece, Dr.
13 Pfeffer?

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: (Nodding head up and
15 down.)

16 MR. WALTER: And Ms. Broyles can correct me if
17 I'm wrong, but I think on that piece that they have
18 been complying with that as far as posting the salary
19 schedule that they do operate under, and will
20 certainly continue to do so in the future. The only
21 reason for that waiver is at least for a time they're
22 going to have a salary schedule that does not meet
23 the state minimum requirements; so theirs would look
24 different than a school district's would.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So do they -- do you still

1 post things like your personnel policies? You still
2 post those as well?

3 MS. BROYLES: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

5 MR. WALTER: I'm sorry, I don't mean -- yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

7 MR. WALTER: This is the only -- this is the
8 only piece of it. It's all lumped together.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Understand. Okay.

10 MR. WALTER: But, yes, they've been fully
11 compliant with the state-required information piece.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

13 Okay. Ms. Hyatt, are there -- is there anything
14 else we need to discuss with that?

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

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So if there are not any
17 questions or need for discussion, we can make a
18 decision or make a motion on this waiver request.

19 MR. WILSON: I move the approval of the waiver
20 request.

21 MR. ROGERS: Second.

22 MS. NEWTON: Second.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and
24 a second to approve the waiver request.

25 All those in favor?

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(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any opposed?

All right. We will record our responses and give you feedback. But congratulations, your amendment --

MS. BROYLES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- request was approved.

MR. WALTER: Thank you, Panel.

(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted in favor of the request and I believe it's appropriate and reasonable.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

DR. KREMERS: I voted for the request. They're working to update the Minimum Salary Schedule to meet compliance.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

MS. NEWTON: I voted for the request. Granting the waiver addresses compliance with ADE charter rules and regulations.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

MR. ROGERS: I voted for. I didn't have any concerns with the waiver.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

1 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion for the same
2 reasons, to get the salaries in compliance.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Panel.

4 A-6: REQUEST FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
5 SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And we will move on to
7 item number six, which is a request -- an amendment
8 request for Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High
9 School. Mr. Ballard, you are recognized.

10 MR. BALLARD: On August 27, 2017, the Charter
11 Authorizing Panel approved the application for
12 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High School. The
13 charter is approved to serve students in grades 9-12
14 with a maximum enrollment of 220. Representatives of
15 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High School are
16 appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel to
17 request an amendment to their current charter.

18 I would like to note to the Panel that they have
19 withdrawn their amendment request for the Business
20 Manager waiver.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Will the
22 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in
23 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.
24 Would you raise your right hand? Do you swear or
25 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall

1 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
2 truth?

3 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

5 If you'll state your name and title for the
6 record you'll be recognized.

7 MR. NOGUEROLA: Good morning. My name is Alex
8 Noguera. I am the school leader for Southeast
9 Arkansas Prep.

10 We have a number of waivers here before you
11 today. I'm just going to go in the order in which
12 they're presented to you.

13 The first is for the Uniform School Dates for
14 the beginning and end of a school year. We're asking
15 to start on August 13th for any year in which we hold
16 this waiver. There are a few reasons why. First,
17 our school year is longer than the 178 required. We
18 also have multiple professional development days
19 built into our calendar throughout the school year,
20 so every five to six weeks our students take what's
21 called a battle, since we're the Warriors, and that's
22 their interim assessment. And then our teachers have
23 a data analysis day where there are no students
24 present; so that happens five to six times throughout
25 the school year. So they're getting these days off

1 throughout the year which would make our last school
2 day start going into June and start chipping away at
3 their summer in the June month and would hinder our
4 ability to offer a robust summer school program when
5 we need to offer that for some of our students.

6 As far as it goes for our Guidance Counselor,
7 we're asking for a waiver from that. We split that
8 role among multiple people on our campus. So our
9 Dean of Students handles social/emotional counseling.
10 I have a teacher who has a reduced schedule, so she
11 can deal with schedules, academic counseling, making
12 sure our students are on track towards graduation. I
13 play a strong hand in that as well, making sure our
14 students are on track with graduation. We have an
15 audit sheet that every student has in their file to
16 make sure they're getting all their credits that they
17 need. So we've kind of taken that role and split it
18 out among multiple people on our campus so that they
19 can get that support that they need. We also have
20 another teacher who has a reduced course load to do
21 testing. Even though that's not what a guidance
22 counselor is always supposed to do, we know guidance
23 counselors get that piece. So we also have a teacher
24 who has an extra prep period to help with that
25 testing coordinator piece that most guidance

1 counselors deal with.

2 Library Media Specialist -- we don't have a
3 formal library on our campus. Our students carry
4 around Chromebooks and our English teachers have
5 classroom libraries, so we utilize those pretty
6 heavily for our students. Our students are able to
7 access eBooks on their Chromebooks when they need to
8 and can readily be able to interact with that. We're
9 currently working on trying to make that even more
10 robust for our students. They have an opportunity to
11 continue to grow and expand.

12 These next three relating to our school board
13 kind of help us come into compliance with current
14 law. Our school board is appointed, so we don't have
15 school board elections. And I work with Mary Claire
16 Hyatt on this very closely to make sure we hit every
17 piece that relates to a school board election.
18 There's an application process; our board then
19 considers that application, and then would approve or
20 decline to accept somebody on the board based off of
21 a variety of reasons.

22 For our School Board Size, we're currently
23 hoping to be able to have the option of up to nine
24 board members, and the reason that is we just want to
25 have more community involvement. We currently have

1 seven board members which is the maximum by statute.
2 Our school board has asked for the ability to be able
3 to try to get more people involved from the
4 community, particularly from different sectors as we
5 try to really navigate a community that is trying to
6 rebuild in Pine Bluff through the Go Forward
7 campaign, with the initiatives the mayor has taken
8 on. We really want to try to get the voices of more
9 people involved.

10 And then the last waiver we're requesting -- and
11 then I'll go into more depth on each of these --
12 deals with our School Board Meetings. We have a lot
13 of board members who, as I said, are active
14 participants in the community and can't necessarily
15 always be on our campus present for that time, but
16 are always happy to phone in and be a part of the
17 conversation. Statute limits that to three meetings
18 in order for them to count towards a quorum. And
19 we'd just like some flexibility in that area so that
20 they can continue to be the active and involved
21 community members they are, but still be involved in
22 the governance of our school.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Is there anyone
24 here to speak in opposition?

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

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No. Okay.

2 And you do have additional time if there's
3 anything additional to add.

4 MR. NOGUEROLA: I just want to, you know, really
5 iterate none of the waivers we're requesting diminish
6 the services our students get. Our students still
7 get a very robust program from us. We split that
8 role among multiple people so they can become
9 experts, particularly with like the guidance
10 counselor. They become experts in that area; so that
11 teacher who deals with scheduling and the academic
12 and career counseling, she doesn't have 80 other
13 things that a guidance counselor thinks about at that
14 given moment to worry about. She really has focused
15 on these are the 22 required courses for our students
16 to graduate. She has her checklist that she can go
17 off and check and make sure our students are getting
18 what they need and are on track, and then has been
19 going to the appropriate eSchool trainings to make
20 sure that happens. I think with the social/
21 emotional counseling our Dean of Students does that
22 on a regular basis anyways, and so him really honing
23 in on those for our students and really having the
24 capacity to do that has really been an asset to our
25 school too. I just really want to iterate that our

1 students are getting all the services I think a
2 student would if these people were in our building;
3 it's just provided by multiple different people,
4 instead of one person, and they know this is the
5 expert in this area.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Are you ready for
7 questions from the Panel?

8 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

10 MS. NEWTON: I have a question.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I'll start with Ms.
12 Newton.

13 MS. NEWTON: A couple of questions around the
14 waiver of two and three -- Guidance Counselor, first
15 of all. I'm thinking that there are educational
16 requirements for guidance counselors specific to that
17 particular job. So the first thing, would that --
18 splitting those, would that compromise that
19 background in educational training? And I'm just
20 wondering if those two things are about economics
21 more than anything else, as relates to having someone
22 specific and then having them divided up between
23 people that are already doing things. So the first
24 thing is the educational requirement, because I
25 thought that -- well, sometime ago there was a

1 requirement of a master's degree, so-many years
2 teaching experience for a guidance counselor, so --

3 And then relative to your enrollment, does that
4 create an onus on this person to do, you know, just a
5 lot of work? So --

6 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am. I think to take the
7 first point of that, this waiver would waive us from
8 those educational requirements you're talking about
9 because we have it split up among multiple people.
10 We would use -- we use our more veteran teachers who
11 have multiple years of experience teaching to take on
12 these additional responsibilities with this broken
13 out.

14 MS. NEWTON: But is it driven -- I'm trying to
15 see if it's driven by economics --

16 MR. NOGUEROLA: So --

17 MS. NEWTON: -- is question number one.

18 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am.

19 MS. NEWTON: Is it more of a logical approach
20 or, you know, something that -- you know, that makes
21 the most sense based on what students need? Or is it
22 something that starts first with the economics of it
23 all and then blends down into the other?

24 MR. NOGUEROLA: I think it's two-fold. We don't
25 have a large enough of an enrollment to have such a

1 high administrative team. You know, like I have a
2 Dean of Students; he teaches a career readiness
3 course as a part of his regular responsibilities.
4 And so part of it is just we don't have a size to
5 have a ton of support staff. But also by encouraging
6 our teachers to become leaders, this way we're trying
7 to build a leadership pipeline within the school. So
8 I think it also has a way to come back to our
9 students. We need teachers who are invested, and by
10 investing them by becoming those teacher leaders
11 we're finding ways to continue to retain those
12 teachers over time, because that's some of their
13 goals is to become that. So like the person who does
14 our academic counseling does desire to eventually
15 become a school administrator. So whether that's a
16 Dean of Academics, that's a school principal herself
17 in the future, it's able to help us retain her and
18 give her some of those extra responsibilities which,
19 again, is in service of our students.

20 MS. NEWTON: The next and hopefully the last
21 thing is what if that piece of the puzzle is taken
22 away and you get someone that's not interested in
23 doing anything but what they're doing, and that extra
24 piece is not -- so if that's three -- if that's three
25 or four positions now divided up -- if that's one

1 position divided out to three people or four people,
2 what if two people don't show a strength in being
3 able to do that?

4 MR. NOGUEROLA: I'm not sure I quite understand.
5 I think what we -- what I do is when we're hiring our
6 staff -- and while I'm thinking about who gets those
7 kinds of positions, that's a conversation I have with
8 that staff member. It's not just when I hire you
9 you're doing that; it's -- for these particular
10 people it was, "Hey, this is a gap we have here at
11 the school. We really need to develop a stronger
12 academic and career counseling program. Can I count
13 on you to help me with that, knowing that you
14 eventually want to get into school leadership
15 yourself" -- and be able to do that with them and
16 build that pipeline for them. I think if we were to
17 have that kind of attrition you're talking about then
18 it would be the onus on the person who's in the
19 hiring position, which is me, to find people who I
20 hire on to take those positions on or continue to
21 build within our own staff. Like I have a staff of
22 10 teachers; so if two people left I have other staff
23 members I can look at and see how do I coach you and
24 see if we can get you to want to be able to develop
25 in this way too.

1 MS. NEWTON: And you're located -- your campus
2 is --

3 MR. NOGUEROLA: In Pine Bluff.

4 MS. NEWTON: Pine Bluff.

5 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Along the same
7 lines talking about -- so one of the pieces that
8 counselors deal with is an academic focus, working
9 with students, you know. But also another piece is
10 the social/emotional development. You referenced you
11 have a Dean of Students.

12 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I'm wondering, you know,
14 about the background of that Dean of Students and
15 whether or not you do any contracting with any
16 community organizations that might have -- where
17 students might have access to social workers or
18 people who are trained to work with kids in that
19 area?

20 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am. I'll do that in
21 three different parts.

22 First, our current Dean of Students has a
23 background in mental health counseling. He left that
24 field to come join our school. He worked for one of
25 the local companies in our area.

1 The second piece is we do actively try to work
2 with the multiple mental health organizations in the
3 community -- Southeast Arkansas Behavioral Center;
4 Pinnacle Point, which is both here in Little Rock and
5 in Pine Bluff. I'm running through my names in the
6 top of my head. But we do those pieces. Their
7 counselors are welcome to come into our school and
8 meet with our students when they need to. We
9 actively give referral forms out to students who need
10 them, when we can't always provide every single
11 service here within our school. We're trying to
12 build what might be a stronger mentorship program
13 with community partners too to come in and do that
14 during summer activity periods.

15 And then the last piece I'll say to that is we
16 have an advisory period that happens once or twice a
17 week, depending on the week, where students are
18 getting embedded socio/emotional skills with the
19 program we purchase so that they can build some of
20 those skills, as well as a part of their advisory
21 period. So I think to that point we do actively try
22 to work with our community partners in that way and
23 advocate for our students to go there when we know
24 there's been a traumatic experience that they've --
25 that they need some extra counseling on.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Questions?

2 Mr. Baldwin.

3 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. The question I have is on
4 the waiver for the school board meetings. And I
5 guess the first part of the question would be how
6 many board members do you have right now? And how
7 often are board members missing the meetings because
8 they're busy elsewhere?

9 MR. NOGUEROLA: We have seven board members
10 right now. The attendance -- we've never not had a
11 quorum, I can say that. I think the biggest thing is
12 we have some board members who have a meeting here in
13 Little Rock and to get back down to Pine Bluff at the
14 start of our board meeting is just not always
15 feasible -- or they're traveling as a part of their
16 natural employment outside of the school; and so they
17 call in and be a part of that. And they have the
18 option up to three meetings for that to still be a
19 part of our quorum. They can't participate in
20 executive session at that point. We're not asking
21 them to be able to participate in executive session
22 still as a part of the law, but that three meetings
23 has limited some of our members. We have one who's
24 at that three-meeting limit, but her work often
25 brings her up to Little Rock or across the state and

1 she calls in when she can at that point, because it's
2 not always feasible to be back in Pine Bluff in time
3 before our board meetings start. But we do have our
4 seven members filled up and from different sectors of
5 the community and we're excited about that, and we're
6 excited that they're active and involved -- actively
7 involved in the community as well.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

9 DR. KREMERS: Just kind of a comment on the same
10 -- with increasing to nine board members. Sometimes
11 that is a challenge to get quorum and to get
12 consensus on things as well. So have you -- although
13 it may add some additional feedback to your group, is
14 that a concern that you've talked about as a team?

15 MR. NOGUEROLA: It's not something we've
16 specifically addressed as a team -- and we have two
17 of our board members here who can also I'm sure speak
18 to that, if you need them to. We typically have a
19 pretty good percentage of our board members always
20 present, so getting a quorum has really not been an
21 issue for us. And because of that flexibility of the
22 three meetings we've really tried to navigate that
23 together and, you know, make sure that happens.

24 As far as consensus goes, I think the diversity
25 of voice is really where our board is trying to come

1 from and make sure we're doing what's best for kids
2 every day. We have people who come from a business
3 background, some who come from education background,
4 and some who come from -- we have one from health
5 background -- two from health background. So all of
6 those different pieces kind of come together and that
7 diversity of voice is incredibly important for our
8 community to make sure we're doing what's right to
9 service our kids.

10 DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh. That's an excellent
11 point, but not to the point where you -- where it's a
12 barrier. So that's my only concern is where it's a
13 barrier in that instance.

14 MR. NOGUEROLA: I'll take that under advisement
15 and I'm happy to have some of our board members be
16 thinking about that too. And if that's something we
17 need to come back and ask for at a future time, once
18 they've had time to consider that, I think that's
19 also an appropriate thing that they can spend the
20 time really navigating themselves. But I think the
21 flexibility piece of making sure we get more voice
22 and really try to involve the community more is where
23 they're headed.

24 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

25 MR. NOGUEROLA: And we haven't seen a roadblock

1 with consensus recently with our board. They've
2 really kind of congealed around, you know, "we know
3 what's best for kids in moving ahead and making sure
4 we're doing what's best for kids."

5 DR. KREMERS: And my other question on the board
6 meetings, to be able to call in does the waiver -- in
7 this instance my question, which a team member can
8 answer -- does that mean that a vote can occur by
9 distance, remote, also in those instances?

10 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas
11 Department of Education.

12 Yes. So the law right now allows for members to
13 attend virtually I believe three meetings. It has
14 kind of been amended over time to start allowing for
15 other forms of attendance I think as we -- as
16 technology changes. Lots of charter schools do have
17 waivers of those provisions to allow board members to
18 attend virtually and, just as if someone were to call
19 in here, they can vote over the phone.

20 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. NOGUEROLA: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Going this way,
23 questions? Mr. Rogers, did you have one?

24 MR. ROGERS: No.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.

1 MS. NEWTON: I have a question on Library
2 Specialist. How does a Chromebook -- how does that
3 equate the services or the access -- I mean, how does
4 that work?

5 MR. NOGUEROLA: So students --

6 MS. NEWTON: You're saying they have Chromebooks
7 as opposed to a Library Specialist. Isn't there a --
8 does that create a gap in terms of what a Library --
9 and maybe I'm not sure what a Library Specialist
10 provides. But if you need a waiver for it, it's
11 certainly something -- it's concerning about the
12 Chromebook being the substitute for a staff member.

13 MR. NOGUEROLA: I think in multiple ways this
14 gives us the flexibility to utilize the technology we
15 have on our campus. So, like our students have their
16 own computer with them at all times; we have a one-
17 to-one environment. And so whereas they might have
18 to go to a physical room to check-out a book they can
19 open up their computer, log into a site, and they
20 have a selection of books that they can pick from.
21 So while it might seem like we're substituting a
22 person out of the building, it's still giving them
23 the same access they would have if you were to walk
24 into the library of Pine Bluff High. That librarian
25 is sitting there handling the physical books. And

1 our English classrooms have those physical books, so
2 those English teachers can still do that -- but then
3 they can open up their Chromebook, log into a site
4 and have access to the same number of books that they
5 would if they were to just walk into a physical
6 library.

7 MS. NEWTON: But my -- and I don't mean to be
8 confrontational in the sense that I -- I just may not
9 understand. But you've got a position that requires
10 a master's degree, and so you would assume that she
11 did more than -- or he would do more than just help
12 -- assist in checking out books. I don't -- maybe
13 someone --

14 MR. NOGUEROLA: I think schools -- from my
15 understanding is some schools use that person in a
16 different variety of roles to prioritize buying of
17 books across the campus. You know, again, for the
18 English teachers -- and in that library I think that
19 person typically is also responsible for the
20 technology on the campus and that space. So like the
21 Chromebooks I'm talking about with my students -- if
22 there's a Chromebook cart in a school, that person
23 would be handling that and making sure those updates
24 happened with somebody in the central office. But,
25 again, due to our size and having such a small campus

1 those things kind of consolidate among the people we
2 already have there. So like we have a Chromebook
3 cart that's locked away in a room that the IT and
4 administrators can get to. So whereas you might have
5 a larger campus with multiple -- like many hundreds
6 of students and multiple Chromebook carts that a
7 media -- a Library Media Specialist would handle, we
8 just don't have that kind of volume that might
9 warrant a person in that role. So, again, it's our
10 size doesn't necessarily warrant somebody in that
11 role at this given time. I think if we got up to our
12 maximum enrollment and actually looked for an
13 expansion of that in the long-term future we might
14 need to consider filling that role. And I -- you
15 know, I think that's something that is not lost on
16 us. But given our current size and our current kind
17 of situation with how we handle technology and how we
18 handle our other services to students, just having a
19 person in that role just does not logically make
20 sense for us at this time.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So can I ask a question?
22 Is this your first year in operation?

23 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. You opened in the
25 fall of --

1 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- '18. So do you
3 currently have a counselor or Library Media
4 Specialist?

5 MR. NOGUEROLA: No, ma'am.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So -- but you did
7 not have the waivers for those positions?

8 MR. NOGUEROLA: So something happened from the
9 application to now where we initially applied for
10 those in our initial application, and then when the
11 Standards for Accreditation changed over something
12 happened in that not transferring correctly. And I
13 can be corrected if I'm wrong --

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yeah.

15 MR. NOGUEROLA: -- but I do remember those being
16 a part of our initial application. But we don't have
17 them now and that's -- we're just trying to come back
18 into full legal compliance with the Standards for
19 Accreditation and ADE rules.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And I think help is
21 here.

22 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt.

23 So I think -- the Department has been working
24 very closely with Southeast Arkansas Prep over the
25 past couple of months. In those conversations we

1 noted that there were some missing waivers that they
2 believed that they had that were -- either weren't
3 fully effectuated or were just missing. And I do
4 think that that comes from some misunderstanding
5 between the original application process and some
6 were just left off. It's really common, as I'm sure
7 you remember from this past application cycle, for
8 new charters to leave off waivers that they need and
9 then figure out they need them and come back. Legal
10 doesn't have any type of concern with the ones asked,
11 and we did work very closely with them to make sure
12 they were requesting the ones that they needed in
13 order to continue running the school as they have
14 been.

15 MS. NEWTON: Okay. So Legal doesn't have any
16 issue with it. I'd like to ask Mr. Ballard if the
17 operations end of it or the requirement end of it or
18 your staff -- you know, your staff have any concerns
19 or questions?

20 MR. BALLARD: Not at this time.

21 MS. NEWTON: Specifically about the Library --
22 the Media Specialist; I'm sorry -- and the Guidance
23 Counselor.

24 MR. BALLARD: Okay. So we know they have --
25 they're in the process of getting academically and

1 operationally sound. Currently, not at this time for
2 any hard issues or not -- especially for the waivers
3 that are being requested right now we don't have any
4 concerns.

5 MR. WILSON: Don't have any what?

6 MS. NEWTON: Concerns.

7 MR. BALLARD: Any concerns.

8 MS. HYATT: And I don't know how helpful this
9 is, but I will just mention that most charters, if
10 not all charters -- there may be one or two that
11 don't -- have waivers of the Guidance Counselor
12 provisions and the Library Media Specialist
13 provisions, as well as the board provisions that are
14 listed too. So this isn't a unique request.

15 MR. NOGUEROLA: I would like to say that I
16 really am trying to work with ADE and Legal, Finance,
17 Academics and the Charter Office to just put us in
18 full compliance with Arkansas rules and law,
19 particularly given how we practice. We have 85
20 students right now, and so just given our size and
21 where we're trying to go, just trying to operate
22 within how most of the charters in the state operate
23 and making sure that we are fully effectuating what
24 we need to effectuate in order to be in full
25 compliance.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Panel Members, do you have
2 additional questions?

3 MR. ROGERS: I have one.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers, you do have
5 one?

6 MR. ROGERS: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

8 MR. ROGERS: I have one, and it's not related to
9 these waivers at all.

10 The former superintendent --

11 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, sir.

12 MR. ROGERS: -- is he through? Have y'all cut
13 ties with him?

14 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, sir.

15 MR. ROGERS: I just want that on record.

16 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, sir.

17 MR. ROGERS: That's it.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Scott, do you
19 need to address something?

20 MR. SCOTT: Freddie Scott, Operations Manager,
21 Charter Schools Office.

22 I just want to provide some clarity on the
23 question about remote board attendance. Should you
24 go that route, just one thing to -- that the school
25 should always be conscious of is an open meeting. So

1 it makes good sense/best practices to insure that the
2 calling information that the board member has calling
3 in is also made available to the public as well so
4 that they may be participants.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Are there any
6 remaining issues that need to be discussed with this?

7 MS. COFFMAN: Deborah Coffman, Public School
8 Accountability.

9 We will be working with this charter for senior
10 transcripts. They only have 12 seniors on their list
11 at present, so I can't discuss any issues with you
12 because of the small number of students, to protect
13 student privacy. But I think those are issues that
14 we can resolve very quickly. They may be coding
15 issues.

16 MR. NOGUEROLA: To speak to transcripts, we're
17 working on coding them in from the variety of school
18 districts these students are coming from and we're
19 trying to find ways to make sure that things get
20 coded correctly. So I appreciate being able to work
21 with Dr. Coffman on that.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt.

23 MS. HYATT: I just wanted to note one thing for
24 clarity. On the amendment request all the statutes
25 are written as 16-dash and then the numbers. Those

1 should all be 6-dash. And I just wanted to make sure
2 that we clarified that so you weren't -- I don't even
3 know what's in Title 16, so just to make sure we're
4 not granting waivers of that.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So if we don't have
6 any remaining questions, at this time we can make a
7 decision -- or do you -- comments?

8 DR. KREMERS: I just -- would you publicly
9 confirm that that information for the board meetings
10 would be made public, as he suggested?

11 MR. NOGUEROLA: Yes, ma'am. We'll put it at the
12 bottom of our agenda where they can call in for
13 future meetings.

14 DR. KREMERS: Thank you, sir.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I think before we
16 move into making a recommendation, I think we have
17 concerns here today, as our Charter Office and our
18 attorney has noted, that what you're asking for is in
19 line with what most other charters seek. However, I
20 think it's the fact of coming back over a year-and-a-
21 half into operation -- you know, you're over halfway
22 through the first year of operation now coming back
23 and doing this. So it does give us some pause and
24 concern, I think, as far as the planning and the
25 resources to follow through, so we will have an

1 opportunity to see this first year success when
2 information comes out in the early fall. So, you
3 know, I think there's just a lot of things here that
4 cause us to ask questions and we want to make sure
5 everything from the governance structure -- and that
6 starts with the board and the meetings -- all the way
7 through down to the last detail of academic support
8 for students. So I would just like to say there are
9 some concerns when we're having to come back and do
10 some clean-up after the fact, but we also realize the
11 transition that we went through with the updates to
12 rules and regs and that also could play a part.

13 So with that, at this time I would entertain a
14 motion.

15 MR. WILSON: Madam Chairman, I move that the
16 amendment request be approved, with a little concern
17 about the guidance counselor. It sounds like they're
18 spread pretty thin to me. But I think with proper
19 cooperation with the Department I think some of those
20 things that you all mentioned can be straightened
21 out.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So we have a motion to
23 approve the amendment request.

24 MR. BALDWIN: Second.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And a second.

1 All those in favor say "aye."

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

4 Okay. So your amendment request has been
5 approved.

6 We'll take just a moment for panel members to
7 record their responses.

8 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We're going to
10 start with Mr. Wilson. It looks like his response is
11 in the document.

12 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I think
13 that the remaining issues can be satisfied or
14 corrected with the help of the Department staff. It
15 sounds like they're working on it.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

17 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the request as it's a
18 small charter and needs to be able to balance its
19 people and finances with the needs of their student
20 population. Other charters have similar requests.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton.

22 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the amendment based on
23 the request -- I voted on the amendment request with
24 the condition that the charter's operation will be
25 reviewed at the end of the school year.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

2 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the amendment
3 request. The small school, it seems an appropriate
4 waiver request.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Mr. Baldwin.

6 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I also voted for the
7 request. And I believe the waivers requested are
8 consistent with other small charter school practices.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Panel.

10 And we appreciate Southeast Arkansas Prep being
11 here.

12 The next two items on our action agenda, both
13 schools have said they think that they're pretty
14 quick items. So if the Panel is ready, we're going
15 to keep moving.

16 A-7: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
17 FAYETTEVILLE VIRTUAL ACADEMY

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So the next item on
19 our agenda is the request for the Fayetteville
20 Virtual Academy. Mr. Ballard, would you present that
21 for us?

22 MR. BALLARD: Yes, ma'am.

23 On November 18, 2015, the Charter Authorizing
24 Panel approved the application for Fayetteville
25 Virtual Academy. The charter is approved to serve

1 students in grades K-12 with a maximum enrollment of
2 500. Representatives of Fayetteville Virtual Academy
3 are appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel to
4 request an amendment to their current charter.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will all
6 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in
7 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.
8 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're
9 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and
10 nothing but the truth?

11 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And
13 we'll just ask that anyone who is speaking please
14 state your name and title for the record, and you're
15 recognized. And you have 20 minutes to present your
16 amendment request.

17 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am. Thank you so much for
18 hearing us and for allowing us to go before you break
19 for lunch, if you're going to have lunch. We'll try
20 to be brief in our comments.

21 This is -- my name is Megan Slocum; I'm
22 associate superintendent at Fayetteville Public
23 Schools. And we appreciate you allowing us the
24 opportunity to be here today.

25 This is a different request than you've probably

1 seen before, but one that comes before you in the
2 efforts of trying to be respectful of your time and
3 also trying to give you some context for why we are
4 making this request.

5 One of the things that we can say that has
6 happened and been consistent with Fayetteville
7 Virtual Academy is that we have an excellent
8 education for students. We want to continue that
9 educational excellence and that is one of the reasons
10 that we're coming before you today. One of the
11 things we don't want to compromise is our consistency
12 or our quality that is happening in our public
13 schools for virtual students or face-to-face
14 students.

15 And the other issue that we have had is growth,
16 which is a great thing but at the same time you have
17 to be able to have facilities and you have to be able
18 to insure that you're providing a safe and welcoming
19 environment for students.

20 And so what we're coming today to ask in this
21 request is we've looked at optimal locations for
22 students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. We are
23 wanting to modify our grade level configuration to
24 serve students in grades 4 through 12, instead of the
25 original request of K through 12. We want to do this

1 simply because we want to protect the integrity.
2 It's not something that we don't think that will come
3 forward when we look at a resubmission, but something
4 we think that will come forward with the resubmission
5 process. But we also want to be true to doing and
6 implementing what we said we were going to do.

7 And so with that, that is our overall request is
8 to seek that grade level configuration change.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Is there
10 anyone in opposition, Ms. Hyatt?

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

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No. All right.

13 Are you ready for questions then?

14 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Panel Members, any
16 questions on this end?

17 Dr. Kremers.

18 DR. KREMERS: You may have said it, but if
19 you'll just explain a little bit more thoroughly --

20 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

21 DR. KREMERS: -- the reasoning for taking the K-
22 3 away?

23 DR. SLOCUM: We want to remove the K-3 at this
24 point because we are in a physical space that doesn't
25 allow for that to be facilitated at the level we

1 would like for it to be facilitated to. Currently
2 it's a shared space between professional learning,
3 which is a wonderful thing and we want to be able to
4 provide quality PD, and we also have students that
5 are there that are being housed in that space. And
6 so with the growth and the access of both we want to
7 make sure that we can give appropriate physical space
8 when students do come. It is a virtual school, but
9 that doesn't mean that students don't come. We do
10 have students that come on a very regular basis. And
11 so we want to make sure that we can give appropriate
12 space accommodations if students do want to attend
13 physically, and we don't limit that if they want to
14 come virtually, physically, or in a blended approach.
15 We want to make sure we have space available for
16 teachers who need to provide tutorials, for RTI, for
17 students with special needs. Whatever the
18 interventions are, we want to make sure we have
19 available space to do that.

20 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any questions on
22 this end?

23 All right. It does not look like we have
24 questions.

25 Are there any -- it looks like we don't have any

1 other issues. So with that said --

2 DR. KREMERS: One more question. I apologize.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

4 DR. KREMERS: For those -- since it's for the
5 remainder of the charter approval -- you're seeking
6 educational partnerships. Will it affect -- like
7 when would that go into affect where there may be
8 families that have to have a change of plan like for
9 the remainder of the school year? Or what happens
10 with -- let's say if I'm a kindergarten, 1st, 2nd,
11 3rd grader, what's going to happen to them in the
12 next few months?

13 DR. SLOCUM: We currently serve students in 4-
14 12.

15 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

16 DR. SLOCUM: What we're asking to do is to
17 continue to serve the students we're serving for the
18 duration of the charter.

19 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

20 DR. SLOCUM: Allow us in our -- we're in a
21 growing city with a growing university, with a
22 growing school district, which is a great problem.
23 But real estate is at a premium, space is at a
24 premium. And so we want to make sure that we make
25 solid decisions that will be long-term sustainable

1 options for us. And so I don't see any lack of
2 service for students. We will continue on with the
3 operational services that we've offered. We just
4 want to say give us an opportunity to look at
5 additional physical spaces for students. And then in
6 our upcoming -- when we ask for the renewal, being
7 able to be allowed at that point to flex out to K-12.

8 DR. KREMERS: So you're currently not -- you
9 said you're not serving K-12?

10 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am. That's correct.

11 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. At this time I
13 will entertain a motion.

14 And actually before we do that, it looked like
15 on the amendment request there were three parts:
16 changing the superintendent of record?

17 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And the principal?

19 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Updating those. And then
21 the --

22 DR. SLOCUM: Grade configuration.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- grade configuration.

24 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So if we approve the

1 amendment request that would be -- all three of those
2 would be included in that motion.

3 DR. SLOCUM: Thank you.

4 MR. ROGERS: Make a motion we approve the
5 amendment request.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion
7 from Mr. Rogers to approve.

8 DR. KREMERS: Second.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And a second.
10 All those in favor say "aye."

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you very
13 much.

14 DR. SLOCUM: Thank you very much. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And we'll record our
16 responses, if you would like to have our feedback.

17 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We'll go through
19 our reasons. Mr. Baldwin.

20 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. I voted for the request. I
21 believe the requests are reasonable and appropriate.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

23 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the amendment
24 request. The school has clear rationale with space
25 limitations and other considerations.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

2 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the amendment. I have
3 -- don't have any concerns.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And Ms. Newton.

5 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the amendment request.
6 The adjustments to the present charter were logical
7 and practical.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Mr. Wilson.

9 MR. WILSON: I voted for the amendment. It
10 appeared to be a routine request and reasonable
11 strategy.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you all very
13 much for being here with us today.

14 A-8: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
15 POLK COUNTY VIRTUAL ACADEMY

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And that brings us to item
17 number eight, which is the request for the Polk
18 County Virtual Academy. And if -- Mr. Ballard, we'll
19 let you present this item for us.

20 MR. BALLARD: Okay. On October 19, 2017, the
21 Charter Authorizing Panel approved the application
22 for Polk County Virtual Academy. The charter is
23 approved to serve students in grades K-12 with a
24 maximum enrollment of 200. Representatives of Polk
25 County Virtual Academy are appearing before the

1 Charter Authorizing Panel to request an amendment to
2 the current charter.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will all
4 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in
5 opposition please stand? Do you swear or affirm that
6 the testimony you're about to give shall be the
7 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

8 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. If you'll state
10 your name and title for the record you'll be
11 recognized. And you have 20 minutes.

12 SUPT. WESTON: I'm Benny Weston, superintendent
13 of Mena Public Schools as well as Polk County Virtual
14 Academy.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

16 MS. SMITH: Jeanne Smith, assistant
17 superintendent, as well as director of Polk County
18 Virtual Academy.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We're ready.

20 MS. SMITH: We are here to ask for a waiver for
21 the principal licensure, not necessarily the waiver
22 of a principal. I am currently serving in that role,
23 and I was surprised when we had a Standards of
24 Accreditation violation for our high school
25 principal. I didn't realize that my district

1 leadership license would not cover the high school
2 principal. I currently have -- hold a building
3 principal license of a K-9. So we were missing the
4 10, 11 and 12, and I mistakenly assumed that I could
5 do that. So I'm asking for a waiver for that
6 particular piece of licensure.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any -- are you
8 ready for our questions then?

9 MS. SMITH: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any questions on
11 this end?

12 Any questions?

13 Okay. It doesn't look like there are any
14 questions. We all know licensure can be tricky with
15 --

16 MS. SMITH: Yes, ma'am.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- some of those different
18 building levels and as you're adding on.

19 So if there aren't any questions, I would
20 entertain a motion.

21 MR. WILSON: So moved. Move the approval of the
22 amendment request

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So I have a motion
24 to approve the amendment request.

25 MR. ROGERS: Second.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And a second.

2 All those in favor say "aye."

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. You have a
5 unanimous vote to approve that amendment request. We
6 appreciate you being here.

7 And as you're recording your responses -- I
8 think I could summarize all of your responses.

9 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Baldwin.

11 MR. BALDWIN: Yes. Thank you. I voted for the
12 request which I considered reasonable and
13 appropriate.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers.

15 DR. KREMERS: I voted for the amendment request;
16 it seems reasonable and appropriate.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Rogers.

18 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the request. No
19 concerns.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

21 MS. NEWTON: I also voted for the request for
22 the same reason, no concerns.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Mr. Wilson.

24 MR. WILSON: I voted for because it seemed to be
25 a routine request.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you,
2 everyone.

3 A-9: REQUEST FOR CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENTS: CLASS SIZE AND
4 TEACHING LOAD RULES

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I think this brings us
6 to the last item on our agenda. Is that correct?

7 MR. BALLARD: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Ballard, we
9 have a request for amendments to Class Size and
10 Teaching Load Rules.

11 MR. BALLARD: All right. On October 29, 2018,
12 new ADE rules governing Class Size and Teaching Loan
13 became effective, necessitating charter schools
14 holding a waiver of the Standards for Accreditation
15 Section 1-A.6 obtain a waiver of new rules to fully
16 effectuate the waiver topic. ADE staff is requesting
17 approval of the transition of these waivers on behalf
18 of several schools -- several charter schools.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So all those
20 schools that are listed -- this is an appropriate
21 waiver then for all those schools that have been
22 listed there?

23 MR. BALLARD: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Are there are any
25 questions for ADE staff from panel members?

1 Okay. And these, again, are the result of the
2 change in Standards for Accreditation and the law
3 that changed and updated this.

4 If there are not any questions, I would
5 entertain a motion.

6 MR. WILSON: I move we approve the amendments.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion to
8 approve the amendments.

9 DR. KREMERS: Second.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And a second.

11 All those in favor say "aye."

12 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We have a unanimous
14 vote to approve that.

15 And I'm going to say instead of going through
16 and reading out these we can all say we approve these
17 because this is part of the transition to our new
18 standards, if everyone is in agreement with that.

19 (VERBAL AFFIRMATIONS BY PANEL MEMBERS)

20 CLOSING COMMENTS

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Are
22 there any other concerns, anything we need to discuss
23 as a board?

24 All right. Mr. Ballard, anything you need us to
25 know for anything upcoming?

1 MR. BALLARD: No.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No.

3 Our next meeting is scheduled for -- yeah, so
4 right now it's scheduled in May. Is that correct?
5 What is that May date? Do you have it handy?

6 Okay. We'll just have -- if your office can
7 just update us.

8 MR. BALLARD: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I don't think I have it on
10 my calendar. So let's make sure and get those sent
11 out to be sure that we're all prepared.

12 So, Panel, unless there's something that comes
13 up in the meantime, our schedule is for May, our next
14 meeting.

15 ADJOURNMENT

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. If there's not
17 anything further, I'll accept a motion to adjourn.

18 MS. NEWTON: So moved.

19 MR. WILSON: Second.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion.
21 All those in favor?

22 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right.

24

25 (The meeting was concluded at 12:49 p.m.)

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A-4: LISA ACADEMY

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