

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

August 15, 2018

Susan B. Whitson, CCR, Inc.

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1 BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2 CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

3 August 15, 2018
4 8:30 A.M.

5
6 A P P E A R A N C E S

7 PANEL MEMBERS:

8 DR. IVY PFEFFER Chairperson/Deputy Commissioner
9 DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ State Supt./Office of Coordinated
 Support and Service
10 MR. MIKE WILSON Attorney & Education Advocate
11 MS. TOYCE NEWTON (not present) Past State Board of Ed.
 Member
12 DR. NACCAMAN WILLIAMS Past State Board of Ed. Member
13 DR. ANGELA KREMERS Deputy Director Arkansas Career
 Education

14 ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

15 MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT ADE Staff Attorney

16 ALSO APPEARING:

17 DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD ADE, Charter Unit
18 MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN Assistant Commissioner of Public
 School Accountability
19 MS. CHERYL REINHART ADE
20 MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN Public School Program Advisor
21 MS. VIRGINIA PERRY Public School Program Advisor
22 MR. FREDDIE SCOTT Learning Services Operations Mgr.
23 MS. SANDY SHEPARD ADE, Learning Services
24 MS. SALIHA QAZI Fiscal and Administrative Services
25 MS. KRISTIN HUGHES ADE, Special Education Unit
 MR. FREDDIE SCOTT Learning Services Operations Mgr.

26 LOCATION:

27 Arkansas Department of Education
28 - Auditorium
29 #4 Capitol Mall
30 Little Rock, Arkansas

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S (continued):

2 PRESENTING ON BEHALF OF: Focus Academy of Arts and
3 Sciences

4 Dr. Jessica Thompson, Volunteer

5 Dan Foshee, Board Member

6 PRESENTING ON BEHALF OF: Pioneer Schools

7 William Thomas-Felton

8 PRESENTING ON BEHALF OF: Premier High School of North
9 Little Rock

10 Steve Gast, Superintendent

11 Dennis Felton, Principal/Dean of Students

12 Tripp Walter, Attorney, APSRC

13 PRESENTING ON BEHALF OF: Prolific Learning Arts Academy

14 Edmond Davis, PLAA Executive Director

15 Ella Sergeant, PLAA President of BODs

16 Michael O'Leary, PLAA Board Member

17 Trey Chandler, CPA

18 O'Mont Wiley, PLAA Board

19 Rachel Belmon, A+ Program Coordinator

20 Kendall Ashley, Sponsoring Board, ATK, Inc. President

21 Monica Davis, Sponsoring Board, ATK, Inc.

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

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Good morning,
3 everybody. Can you hear me okay? There we go.

4 All right. Well, welcome, everyone, to
5 our Charter Authorizing session today. We --
6 we'll be spending today and tomorrow hearing
7 applications for Open-Enrollment Charters.

8 I want to welcome everyone to the newly
9 renovated ADE auditorium. I believe we've had
10 one previous meeting in this space, but we are
11 definitely proud of it and appreciate all of
12 you being here this morning.

13 So at this time I would like to call this
14 panel, this meeting to order, and ask you to
15 please silence your electronic devices.

16 I'm going to introduce our Panel.

17 This Panel oversees the authorization,
18 renewal, revision, and revocation of charters.
19 Commissioner Key has named seven members to the
20 Charter Authorizing Panel. I'm Ivy Pfeffer,
21 the ADE Assistant Commissioner and Chair of the
22 Panel. And I would like also to introduce to
23 everyone as we kick off this new cycle
24 Dr. Jeremy Owoh, the ADE Assistant Commissioner
25 for Educator Effectiveness; Dr. Mike Henderson

1 who is our State Superintendent for the Office
2 of Coordinated Support and Service.

3 Do you want to wave so they know who you
4 are?

5 DR. HERNANDEZ: That's all right.

6 MR. WILSON: So they know you're not me.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I'm also
8 very pleased to introduce to you our newest
9 Panel member, she is very new to her role and
10 we welcome her and are glad to have Dr. Angela
11 Kremers, who is the Deputy Director for Career
12 and Technical Education at the Arkansas
13 Department of Career Education. And I've told
14 her that if at any time she has any questions,
15 to please stop and -- and be sure to ask us.

16 I would also like to introduce Mike Wilson
17 who is an education advocate and attorney in
18 Jacksonville. And Dr. Naccaman -- Naccaman
19 Williams. Dr. Williams is a former State Board
20 of education member.

21 We also have Toyce Newton on our Panel and
22 she is unable to be with us today.

23 As Chair my goal is to facilitate a fair
24 and responsible hearing. I will request that
25 each person speaking please state your name and

1 title for the record. And we also need to be
2 sure that everyone speaks into the microphone,
3 because not only is it for our audience here
4 today but for our viewing audience, as this is
5 being live streamed.

6 We are also pleased to have with us here
7 today Susan Whitson, who is our court reporter,
8 and she will be taking care of providing that
9 transcript for us as well.

10 So at this time we will go ahead and get
11 started with our agenda. And the first item on
12 our agenda is the consent agenda.

13 Does anyone wish to discuss any of these
14 items?

15 And then if not, I will accept a motion on
16 the consent agenda.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: Motion to approve.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Second.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion
20 to approve and a second. All those in favor,
21 say, "Aye."

22 PANEL MEMBERS: Aye.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

24 Okay. The consent agenda is approved.

25 ACTION AGENDA

1 A-1: REQUEST FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL
2 AMENDMENTS: STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We will now move
4 forward with our action agenda. And as we get
5 started, I will ask for our first -- first
6 item, we are looking at Request for
7 Open-Enrollment Charter School Amendments and
8 our Standards for Accreditation. So
9 Dr. Alexandra Boyd will be talking to us about
10 this item.

11 Dr. Boyd, you are recognized.

12 DR. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair.

13 Thank you, Madam Chair. Alexandra Boyd,
14 Director of the Charter Unit.

15 This morning we want to talk to the panel
16 about how to proceed with potential charter
17 amendment requests in order for charters to get
18 waivers of the new standards. And to best
19 explain that I would like for the Assistant
20 Commissioner of Public School Accountability to
21 come and describe to you what has happened with
22 the Standards for Accreditation, and then we'll
23 walk through some potential options and have
24 some discussion about the process.

25 All right. So I would like to call

1 Deborah Coffman to come up.

2 MS. COFFMAN: Good morning. Deborah
3 Coffman, Assistant Commissioner of Public
4 School Accountability.

5 Standards for Accreditation. Arkansas
6 monitors all schools and districts and
7 accredits them as public schools in the state
8 of Arkansas. Other states may use vendors or
9 have outside agencies that accredit their
10 public schools, but Arkansas has had a long
11 history of accrediting schools through the
12 Department of Education and the State Board of
13 Education.

14 In 1996 -- 1960 -- excuse me -- 1960 we
15 have a copy of Standards for Accreditation when
16 then Commissioner or Director was Arch Ford
17 himself. They are very interesting to read if
18 you would ever like to read them. But we know
19 for a fact, because we do have that document,
20 that Standards for Accreditation go back as far
21 as 1960. They may go back further, we don't
22 have a copy of those. They are very
23 interesting to read, and over time those
24 Standards for Accreditation have been updated.
25 Most notably Act 445 of 1983, which was the

1 Quality Education Act, pulled together a group
2 of people, stakeholders in the state of
3 Arkansas, facilitated by then Hillary Clinton,
4 wife of the governor, to look at the Standards
5 for Accreditation, and through a very lengthy
6 stakeholder engagement process those standards
7 were updated and became effective June 1, 1987.
8 Since that time there were revisions and
9 updates, but no major overhaul; so we had the
10 1960 version, the 1987 version, and then we've
11 worked on them, tweaked a little here and there
12 as different laws were passed and rules were
13 changed. But this past year -- well, actually,
14 this past two years stakeholders have been
15 coming together to look at the Standards for
16 Accreditation, and in 2018 we find ourselves
17 needing to have a very large update.

18 And so before you, you have a packet of
19 the newly approved Standards for Accreditation
20 2018 version. This version takes all of the
21 best things from the previous standards, plus
22 puts in more modern up-to-date information
23 about what's the current status of education in
24 Arkansas. We use these standards to accredit
25 our public schools.

1 As you look at the table of contents or as
2 you begin to leaf through that, the first nine
3 pages really go over the rules for how we
4 accredit schools in the state, the entire
5 process. And then if you flip to Page 10, you
6 will see Appendix A, and that's where the
7 actual standards that we measure or that we
8 monitor schools and districts for are located.

9 So in those -- in that appendix, the
10 standards are grouped into six systems. These
11 are the six systems that we would expect to see
12 within an educational system, so the six
13 subsystems: Academics, Student Support
14 Services, District Operations of Fiscal
15 Governance, Human Capital, Stakeholder
16 Communication and Engagement, Facilities and
17 Transportation.

18 And so as we look at our last slide, I
19 want to leave you with this slide because these
20 six systems are the systems that we talk about
21 with our school districts, it's the systems
22 that we're looking to see if the schools have
23 those systems working, if they are working
24 effectively independently, and are they working
25 effectively together to ensure the very best

1 student focused education for Arkansas
2 students.

3 You will see this slide many, many times,
4 because we utilize this slide in public school
5 accountability in our conversations with
6 schools about the support districts are
7 providing schools, the support the Department
8 can provide to the schools as well.

9 I would ask you to put this packet of
10 standards in your bag, in your notebook, or
11 where ever, and bring with you to each Charter
12 Panel meeting because, going forward, we'll be
13 aligning the work to these Standards for
14 Accreditation so that all of our charter
15 schools may be accredited.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you,
17 Ms. Coffman.

18 Does anyone have a question for
19 Ms. Coffman now?

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Obviously these
21 standards affect all the schools in the state
22 of Arkansas.

23 MS. COFFMAN: That is correct.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: And so is there a plan to
25 systematically go through to implement the --

1 the new -- I'm assuming several schools other
2 than charter schools have waivers?

3 MS. COFFMAN: Yes.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: So what's the plan for all
5 of the schools along with the charter schools?

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And -- and I think
7 Dr. Boyd is going to address that next.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We just wanted to give
10 you kind of that background --

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and kind of an
13 understanding that when the Standards for
14 Accreditation were revised, it really was a
15 major overhaul --

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, absolutely.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- to the whole
18 accreditation process. So I believe Dr. Boyd
19 is going to get into that, and if we have some
20 more questions, we will sure ask.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right.

22 MS. COFFMAN: And you'll -- you will see
23 as you read through these standards that we've
24 taken into account present day education, so
25 you will see waivers included and expected in

1 some of these areas.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: Some areas? Okay. Thank
3 you.

4 DR. BOYD: Thank you, Ms. Coffman.

5 All right. So the important thing to
6 remember is that the -- the previous standards
7 have been repealed and we have these new
8 standards, which no one has a waiver of, which
9 Dr. Williams brought up, so we have to think
10 about how we're going to get everyone waivers.

11 So there are different ways to get
12 waivers: We have open-enrollments, district
13 conversion, schools of innovation, and then Act
14 1240.

15 The open-enrollment and district
16 conversion are under your purview, so we want
17 to talk about what processes we should use,
18 under your direction, to update the waivers for
19 open-enrollments and district conversions.

20 Schools of innovation fall under the
21 Commissioner's purview.

22 And then Act 1240 are under the State
23 Board, but the way the law is written is that a
24 district cannot have a waiver from Act -- under
25 Act 1240 unless an open-enrollment charter to

1 which they are sending -- they are losing
2 schools from their -- sorry -- they are losing
3 students from their resident district to the
4 open-enrollment charter also has that waiver.

5 So Act 1240 -- districts can't get waivers
6 under Act 1240 of the standards until the
7 open-enrollments have waivers of those
8 standards, so that's important to remember on
9 the front end.

10 We've been thinking about this in the
11 Charter Office and the ADE has been thinking
12 about the process. We've come up with three
13 options that we think could work for getting
14 the charters waivers of the new Standards for
15 Accreditation.

16 The first option is that the charter
17 schools work with the ADE Legal and the Charter
18 Unit staff to map across the -- the waivers
19 that they had of the previous standards to the
20 current standards. We will do this through
21 short conversations and discussions about what
22 they actually need to accomplish their goals as
23 charters. And if we all can come to an
24 agreement on those, then we would like to bring
25 those to you kind of as a big chunk of

1 amendment requests.

2 The second option is that if a charter and
3 the Charter Office and ADE Legal can't get on
4 the same page, then the charter can come to you
5 through a formal amendment request process and
6 ask for an amendment to their charter which
7 would include the Standards for Accreditation
8 and anything else that they saw fit.

9 The third option is that if a charter --
10 if we don't do option one or option two and it
11 comes to a point where a charter is -- that the
12 accreditation status is in question, then you
13 can call the charter before you and we could
14 negotiate what's needed to amend the charter at
15 that point.

16 So do you-all have any questions about the
17 options laid before you or do you have any
18 additions?

19 DR. WILLIAMS: I just think it's going to
20 be a combination of all three. I think that
21 the plan -- I could see doing option one, they
22 may do one specific waiver that you might need
23 to procure.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: But sounds like an actual

1 plan. I just -- I was thinking this is a huge
2 undertaking.

3 DR. BOYD: That's correct.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, I was just
5 wondering how we're going to, but mapping that
6 over just kind of takes away what I was really
7 concerned about. We don't want to hear every
8 waiver again.

9 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

11 MR. WILSON: Excuse me.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson, do you have
13 a question?

14 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

15 It sounds like option one is your
16 preferred or suggested option, with two and
17 three, as -- as Dr. Williams said, to be able
18 to modify those if there is not an agreement.
19 I like the idea of option one, but being able
20 to fall back on two or three if -- if there is
21 not an agreement.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, Dr. Boyd, if -- I
23 just want to make sure then that we are clear.
24 So basically the -- the Charter Office has laid
25 out three different options --

1 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and it's asking for
3 feedback from the Panel?

4 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And so far the feedback
6 is the Panel hopes that option one is going to
7 cover most charters; however, we also realize
8 that there may need to be option two exercised
9 or three, especially if there are questions
10 about, you know, specific things. But it could
11 be much, much -- even working with the Charter
12 Office through option two could really cut down
13 on the magnitude of any amendment request.

14 So basically what you're asking is the
15 Panel to approve what you've laid forward as
16 the way we -- we proceed with mapping those?

17 DR. BOYD: Yes, ma'am. That's correct.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Does the Panel
19 have any other questions?

20 Dr. Kremers?

21 DR. KREMERS: In the instance of option --
22 you know, where it may progress to option two,
23 option three --

24 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

25 DR. KREMERS: If it goes to that point

1 where negotiation is necessary --

2 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

3 DR. KREMERS: -- is there a time limited
4 process at that point? Is it --

5 DR. BOYD: Right. So at the point that
6 the school -- for option three, the new
7 accreditation status starting in October is
8 going to happen on a monthly basis, so we
9 should know in October whose accreditation
10 status is in question.

11 The process works that if you are going to
12 call a charter in, you do have to put them on
13 notice. And I believe -- I don't -- hold on
14 one second.

15 I just wanted to double-check. So we have
16 to give them a 35-days notice. So if you
17 notify them at your November meeting, then it
18 could -- then we could potentially hear them at
19 the December or January meetings.

20 For the amendment request process,
21 amendment requests are heard in October and
22 February. They can be heard at other times
23 with permission from the Commissioner.

24 DR. KREMERS: Thank you.

25 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Are there any
2 other questions from the Panel?

3 So if not, I would accept a motion to
4 approve this as a recommendation from our
5 Charter Office moving forward.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: So moved.

7 DR. OWOH: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion
9 and a second. And all those in favor, say,
10 "Aye."

11 PANEL MEMBERS: Aye.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

13 Okay. The motion passes.

14 And, Dr. Boyd, we will look forward to
15 working with everyone on this process.

16 DR. BOYD: Great.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

18 DR. BOYD: So hopefully you should see
19 some of these requests on your September
20 agenda. Hopefully 29, but maybe not.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we are going
23 to move forward on to our next Action Agenda
24 item, which is going to be the hearing of an
25 Open-Enrollment Charter School application.

1 Before we call the school up, I would like
2 to have our staff attorney, Ms. Mary Claire
3 Hyatt, to come forward and explain the hearing
4 process and the voting process and how we're
5 going to need to proceed through this section.

6 MS. HYATT: Good morning, everyone. Mary
7 Claire Hyatt with the Department.

8 Okay. So anyone who is not an attorney
9 that's representing one of the parties who will
10 be providing testimony or answer questions
11 needs to be sworn by the Chair.

12 The Open-Enrollment Public Charter School
13 applicant will have 20 minutes to present its
14 presentation to you; the Chair, you can grant
15 additional time if you believe it's necessary.
16 Any party that's opposed will also have 20
17 minutes to respond, and that's collectively, so
18 if there are multiple people then they would
19 need to all be within the 20-minute timeline.
20 Of course, the Chair also has the ability to
21 grant additional time if necessary.

22 The Open-Enrollment Public Charter School
23 applicant will then have five minutes to
24 respond and you can grant additional time if
25 necessary.

1 Then you can follow with questions, any
2 outstanding concerns about the application to
3 the -- to the opposing parties, to the
4 applicant itself or otherwise, and then you may
5 issue a final decision or you can take the
6 matter under advisement until a future meeting.
7 You can also defer to vote to approve or
8 disapprove the application and -- in order to
9 allow the applicant to make modifications or
10 receive any type of technical assistance. And
11 then if you are going to vote to approve or
12 disapprove, it's best you do it by roll call.
13 I know you guys have the -- the Google sheets
14 where you will enter your reasons for voting
15 how you vote.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Panel, are there
17 any questions for Ms. Hyatt before we proceed?

18 Okay. At this time I will ask Ms. Perry
19 from our Charter School Office to come forward
20 and introduce us to our first applicant.

21 A-2: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
22 APPLICATION: FOCUS ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES,
23 BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS

24 MS. PERRY: Good morning. Virginia Perry,
25 Program Adviser with the Charter Unit.

1 Focus Academy of Arts and Sciences is a
2 proposed Open-Enrollment Public Charter School
3 to be located within Bentonville School
4 District. The sponsoring entity is Focus STEM
5 Academy of Benton County. The applicant is
6 requesting to serve students in grades K-8 with
7 a maximum enrollment of 900 beginning in the
8 2019-2020 school year. The applicant has
9 notified affected districts of the proposed
10 public charter school.

11 ADE staff reviewed the application, and
12 concerns were shared with the applicant -- with
13 the applicant for response. The application,
14 the ADE evaluation, and the applicant's
15 responses are included for the Charter
16 Authorizing Panel.

17 Speaking today for Focus Academy will be
18 Dr. Jessica Thompson, Volunteer, and Dan
19 Foshee, Board Member.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Will all
21 representatives of the application and anyone
22 speaking in opposition please stand to be sworn
23 in.

24 Okay. If you will raise your right hand.

25 (WHEREUPON, the witnesses were sworn by

1 the Chairman.)

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

3 And you are recognized. If you will come
4 to the microphone and state your name for the
5 record, you will be recognized to begin your
6 presentation. And you have 20 minutes.

7 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you.

8 My name is Jessica Thompson and I am here
9 with Focus Academy. Okay.

10 MR. DAN FOSHEE: Dan Foshee, Board Member.

11 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I'm sorry, Dan.

12 MR. DAN FOSHEE: I'll be running the
13 presentation, if that's all right.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: That is fine. Thank
15 you.

16 I know -- I know that microphone is hard
17 to keep --

18 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: It is.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- but just, yeah, as
20 close as you can have it to your mouth, that
21 will be great.

22 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you.

23 Okay. I'm here for the Focus Academy of
24 Arts and Sciences. I'm an adjunct professor at
25 Northeastern State University and I recently

1 became Dr. Thompson, so I'm excited about that.
2 Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Congratulations.

4 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Thank you.

5 Our mission at Focus Academy of Arts and
6 Science will provide students a place to
7 explore academic learning concepts through
8 interdisciplinary projects that combine
9 science, technology, engineering, arts, and
10 mathematics.

11 We will support all students to -- to
12 success through increased parental
13 involvement -- involvement -- I'm sorry --
14 increased physical activity, and an emphasis on
15 music education. Focus Academy of Arts and
16 Sciences values community involvement, seeking
17 to engender and model the philosophy of
18 community service at all levels, from our staff
19 to our students. So we're really excited about
20 the community involvement and the servant
21 leadership.

22 Okay. Micah Cummings-Sparrow will be the
23 Executive Director; she has 15 years of
24 experience teaching math, science, and reading;
25 she's a lead teacher, team leader, mentored

1 intern students -- intern teachers, PLC Leader,
2 District Data Team, Teacher of the Year,
3 Science Department Chair, and five years
4 private sector experience in corporate training
5 and project management.

6 For the established need, we will have
7 music, which will -- we'll focus on music,
8 which increases student motivation and
9 engagement. There is a study that has been
10 linked to a more positive school culture -- and
11 I think you also got a copy of some of our
12 research that we've done on that -- increased
13 focus and cognitive skills that helps students
14 perform better academically. And music also
15 is -- access to music education varies widely
16 in northwest Arkansas. And I'm pretty sure
17 we'll be the only school that starts music
18 education at the kindergarten level, which is
19 exciting.

20 Goals. Our academic goals are K-2
21 students will make a minimum of one year's
22 growth each academic year in the areas of
23 reading, mathematics, as measured by the MAP
24 assessment.

25 Grades 3-8 students will meet or exceed

1 regional averages on the ACT Aspire
2 assessments.

3 As an organization, our goals are
4 80 percent or better attendance for
5 parent-teacher conferences. And another
6 difference in our school is we will actually
7 have parent-teacher conference once a month
8 instead of just twice a year, which is --
9 really helps with that connection with the
10 parents and having the parents involved in our
11 school.

12 At least 20 community stakeholders will
13 sign in as volunteers.

14 95 percent of staff and students meet the
15 required hours of service. So service,
16 learning, and community involvement is going to
17 be a huge part of our school.

18 Okay. Here is an overview of our
19 innovative model. We have STEAM education in
20 the middle, career education, collaborative
21 teaming, physical, music/art education,
22 project-based learning, parental involvement,
23 and social innovation.

24 For parental involvement we're going to
25 have monthly parent-teacher conferences, an

1 advisory board of five parents that are -- they
2 will kind of be the voice of the students and
3 the parents, as far as keeping us in touch with
4 what they want and what they need in their
5 school.

6 School events, we'll have projects and the
7 hands-on project-based learning and then they
8 will display those, along with, kind of like
9 science fairs. Kind of like that and then
10 we'll have music recitals and intra-murals.

11 Project-based learning, incorporate
12 student choice, integrated across the
13 curriculum, and dedicated time during school.

14 For physical education and our music, we
15 will have support academic growth, positive
16 school climate, active engagement, higher
17 motivation, engage northwest Arkansas' music
18 community, and it will be just plain fun.

19 For teaming, we'll have grade level teams,
20 partner with specialist members, parents on
21 behalf of the students.

22 Curriculum, inquiry and cognitively guided
23 instructional methods.

24 Career education, career information
25 begins before 8th grade. We want to have guest

1 speakers, project research, careers through
2 core content, field trips, and workplace
3 visits.

4 Framework for career orientation will be
5 incorporated into STEM.

6 Explorations for 8th grade, grab -- job
7 shadowing, mentoring, workplace visits and
8 tours, and college tours. So start them young
9 thinking about their career.

10 Social innovation, students involved in
11 the community service, on-campus service
12 opportunities, Mutt-i-grees Program. So that's
13 going to be one of our big things at our school
14 is the students going out into the community,
15 supervised, you know, working in their
16 community, service learning.

17 STEAM education, be curious, explore new
18 ideas, do projects, research, be active, be a
19 part of something, be social. That's what our
20 STEAM is going to be.

21 Okay. Elementary, K-4, instructional
22 support teams, ratio will be 1:16. Classroom
23 teacher, classroom aide, interventionists like
24 dyslexia, ELL, special education, guidance
25 counselors. Hands-on experience in the

1 classroom for students to explore and
2 investigate. That goes back to that project
3 learning that I talked about.

4 Hands-on musical instrument training
5 beginning in kindergarten and continuing every
6 year. We were thinking that ukulele might be a
7 neat way to start in the younger grades with
8 their little fingers, so just get them involved
9 in music right off the bat.

10 Middle grades, 5-8, student selected
11 projects, engaged in meaningful science and
12 mathematics, mentors, job shadowing, high
13 technology utilization, and so they will be
14 ready for advanced placement in high school.

15 And on that, back to that slide that we
16 just talked about, the student selected
17 projects, I mean, if you can get the students
18 learning intrinsically instead of, oh, I'm
19 forced to do this for my grade, you know, when
20 they are selecting their projects and they are
21 working on them and they are exciting about
22 their learning, that would be one of our goals.

23 Okay. Music education, increase cognitive
24 development, better verbal skills, increased
25 brain activity, greater spatial awareness,

1 increased academic performance, greater
2 attention span and focus ability, and being
3 musical. So these are all the goals of music
4 education.

5 All grades twice a week. K instrument
6 discovery, like I said maybe the ukulele. 1st
7 grade will have a piano lab; 2nd grade piano
8 lab; 3rd grade we'll start guitar lab; 4th
9 grade guitar lab; 5th and 6th grade beginning
10 band; and 7th through 8th grade intermediate
11 band.

12 Parental involvement, monthly
13 parent-teacher conferences; quarterly project
14 expositions, music recitals, concerts, be a
15 guest speaker, parental advisory council, for
16 our parental involvement.

17 Community involvement, our goal is to
18 build business partnerships, collaborate with
19 us, mentor students, share their experience,
20 job shadowing, community servants -- service.
21 Students and staff will perform six hours of
22 community service each year, build
23 relationships in our community and give back.
24 So we don't want them to be self-centered, we
25 want them to be outwardly centered; and, like,

1 the goal is to be involved in your community
2 and focus on others.

3 A student's week at a glance: We have
4 Smart Start, Language Arts, recess, and lunch,
5 Music, Visual Arts, Mathematics, Science, Daily
6 Rap Up. And -- let's see. Tuesday, and then
7 they go to the same things except for they
8 would have Makerspace. And for our Makerspace
9 we're interested in having robotics, hands-on
10 building, crafts. There is a neat project
11 through the National Science Foundation through
12 STEM that they actually build a guitar, so what
13 better program for our school than having the
14 kids actually physically build a guitar and
15 then learn to use it.

16 Okay. 5th-8th grade, they will have
17 English, Reading, Science, lunch, Mathematics,
18 Social Studies, STEM Explorations, P.E.,
19 Advisory. So that's their basic schedule there
20 for 5th through 8th grade.

21 School partnerships and resources, Bridges
22 in Math. You can see some of those, MobyMax,
23 Code.org, GamePlan -- let's see --
24 Mutt-i-grees, Bentonville Public Library. We
25 already have a tentative contract with them.

1 PhonicsFirst Structures -- so you can look at
2 that list there.

3 Food service, a food service provider will
4 be contracted to provide tasty, high-quality,
5 high-nutrition lunches to students. The
6 Executive Director will oversee the operation
7 with assistance from the child nutrition
8 consultant.

9 Transportation, a lot of parents will
10 probably drive their children to school and
11 pick them up. We're also working on a contract
12 for shuttle routes to locations in Benton
13 County, based on students' needs, like some of
14 the other schools in our area have done for
15 transportation.

16 Proposed location, 5121 Runway Drive,
17 Bentonville. We have ADA compliant, a
18 sprinkler system, security entry,
19 tornado-related safe rooms. And the builder
20 for our facility is willing to work with us,
21 willing to -- if the enrollment is lower, we
22 will have a smaller space that he's willing to
23 lease, which will cut down on costs; and if
24 we're bigger, he is ready to add on and build
25 more for us, so he's very excited about this

1 project.

2 Meeting the needs of Arkansas' students.
3 Model, this model improves student learning,
4 increased educational opportunities for our
5 diverse community, innovative teaching styles,
6 collaborative teaching jobs that encourage
7 teacher leaders, expanded school choices for
8 families, and goals that keep us accountable to
9 our community.

10 And that is the end of my presentation. I
11 hope you learned a little bit about Focus
12 Academy and what our goals are.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And is there
14 anyone here to speak in opposition?

15 DR. BOYD: No.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No?

17 All right. You have about seven and a
18 half minutes. Anything remaining you want to
19 share with us or are you ready for us to move
20 forward with --

21 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Dan, do you have
22 anything?

23 MR. DAN FOSHEE: I'm fine with that.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.
25 Panel, what I would like to do this time,

1 instead of going straight to Panel questions, I
2 would like to ask for Dr. Boyd and Ms. Hyatt to
3 come up and go through with us any unresolved
4 issues or questions around the legal review.

5 I think a lot of times our questions are
6 about those unresolved issues of the legal
7 review, so some of those may have been
8 addressed during the presentation and, if so,
9 then they'll go ahead and note those for us.
10 But we're going to try to kind of walk through
11 those items. Also I think Dan is going to try
12 to keep up with some of those and maybe help us
13 to -- to narrow down our questions once we're
14 finished here.

15 So we probably will be asking the school
16 to -- Dr. Boyd and Ms. Hyatt may be asking the
17 school to respond to some things, so we're
18 going to -- we're going to work through this.

19 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Boyd?

21 DR. BOYD: Thank you, Dr. Pfeffer.

22 For those of you who are viewing, you may
23 not be able to see the document. The document
24 we're looking at is the summary document, which
25 is the first attachment on the -- the agenda

1 item.

2 So starting with the educational need, the
3 applicant did provide some more quantitative
4 data for you-all, which I passed out in the
5 beginning. So we haven't reviewed this
6 document but you have that if you have any more
7 questions about that.

8 For just the other courses offered, we
9 simply need the applicant to confirm that they
10 understand that if they plan to embed courses,
11 that they have to go through the ADE Course
12 Approval Process.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If the applicant will
14 come to the microphone, please. Dr. Thompson?

15 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yes.

16 Yes, I confirm that.

17 DR. BOYD: Okay. Thank you.

18 And then for the student services, most of
19 the concerns there have to do with SPED. So it
20 remains unclear that the Executive Director
21 position will have the needed credentials and
22 experiences to supervise a special education
23 teacher. Currently they have named an
24 Executive Director who has extensive
25 educational experience; however, there isn't

1 any specific to special ed that I noticed.

2 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. Well, one of
3 the things that we were considering is the
4 Assistant Director may also have qualifications
5 in special ed. So if that was needed, we would
6 definitely do that.

7 DR. BOYD: So it's my understanding that
8 you want to amend the application and say that
9 requirements for the Assistant Executive
10 Director will be to have special education
11 experience?

12 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yes. If that's
13 required. Is that --

14 DR. BOYD: It's not required.

15 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: It's not required?
16 Then, no, we'll leave it as it is.

17 DR. BOYD: Okay. So that remains a
18 concern.

19 So the next -- for the next one, it
20 remains unclear that the applicant understands
21 that some SPED students may require
22 accommodations to State-mandated summative
23 assessments, including ACT Aspire and Dynamic
24 Learning MAPS.

25 Do you understand?

1 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Do you understand
2 That you need to provide accommodations?

3 Yes. We will provide accommodations for
4 all SPED students.

5 DR. BOYD: Okay. And then the last one is
6 a capacity question about a SPED teacher being
7 able to also provide dyslexia services.

8 Just from -- the Department feels like
9 that's a heavy lift to be in charge of SPED and
10 dyslexia services.

11 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: We were thinking
12 that we would shift that to the Lead reading
13 teacher, that -- so that the teacher that
14 was -- that we choose for the reading
15 department, that she would take care of the
16 dyslexic at a certain time, and then eventually
17 we would like to hire someone just for that
18 position.

19 DR. BOYD: Okay. Thank you.

20 So that -- that's all of our concerns for
21 the application itself.

22 And now Ms. Hyatt will come and talk to
23 you about legal concerns with the waivers,
24 unless you have any questions at this point.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I was going to see

1 if a Panel member has any questions
2 specifically related to those unresolved issues
3 that were just asked.

4 And I do want to go back on the -- the
5 supervision of the special education teacher.
6 You know, I think in most schools in the state
7 you don't necessarily have your supervisor that
8 would necessarily have special education
9 background, and so I don't -- that is not a
10 requirement, as you've stated. That's not
11 something they would have to be held to.

12 DR. BOYD: It's not a requirement.

13 We -- our experience has been, with
14 working with the Special Ed Unit, that the
15 special -- you know, the special ed position is
16 a heavy position, and that they need support,
17 and that support could come from a cooperative
18 or somewhere else. And in larger districts
19 there is a district coordinator and then they
20 help the teachers that are at the schools. And
21 just our experience with working with existing
22 charters and especially new charters that have
23 had issues with SPED, it's just something that
24 we like to bring to light that the SPED teacher
25 is going to need support.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Dr. Owoh?

2 DR. OWOH: In response to the comments
3 about dyslexia, and you stated that the reading
4 personnel would provide that --

5 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

6 DR. OWOH: -- support, my question is,
7 based on your budget that you submitted, it did
8 not indicate -- indicate any monetary or
9 funding for dyslexia, for the training or for
10 the program itself.

11 So if you could provide some insight on
12 how you would meet those needs for the teacher
13 for the support, for the training, as well as
14 the interventions and support for the students.

15 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yes.

16 Okay. Let's see here.

17 Okay. On Line 37 of the expenditures, it
18 says, "supplies and materials."

19 DR. OWOH: Uh-huh.

20 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: And we budgeted
21 what we felt was fairly high for that, and so
22 we would -- we figure -- we thought that we
23 could use that for anything needed, plus we
24 have a surplus in the budget. So we would
25 definitely do training or whatever we needed to

1 do for the dyslexia students and to train that
2 Lead teacher. And if we need to send her --
3 and we also have -- let's see what line -- we
4 can take that out of professional development
5 also. I'm not sure exactly what line that is
6 on right now.

7 Dan, do you have that?

8 MR. DAN FOSHEE: I'm trying to get there.

9 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. I know we
10 did budget for professional development. So
11 either one of those, I would feel comfortable
12 using those funds for that, for training and
13 support and supplies needed for those students.
14 Because I know that's a big -- you know, there
15 is a difference between the dyslexic students
16 and the special ed. I have a lot of experience
17 in that.

18 DR. OWOH: All right. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez?

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: So you had mentioned as
21 far as the shifting over to the Lead reading
22 teacher?

23 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: (Nodding head up
24 and down.)

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: So are you planning on

1 having several top lead teachers? And then
2 what does that look like in terms of budget
3 impact?

4 You know, we see in your budget you have,
5 you know, salaries allocated towards that. So
6 is that an extended day contract? Is that a
7 stipend basis, or is that just a, hey, you're a
8 lead teacher designation?

9 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I think it would be
10 a stipend. And we could adjust, like in the
11 hiring process, I think we would talk to the
12 teacher about that and their experience.
13 Especially when we're hiring for that, we would
14 say, you know, do you have experience in this
15 area, this is what we would want you to do, and
16 because of that we would add to your salary.
17 So that would -- I think we would all discuss
18 that, you know, in the beginning when we're
19 discussing the hiring and the salary amounts.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I think at this
21 time we can move on to Ms. Hyatt and the legal
22 review, and we'll ask the -- Dr. Thompson to
23 stay up here, please, to answer questions.

24 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay.

25 MS. HYATT: Well, I don't know how we're

1 going to do this because there is such a height
2 difference between the two of us, but I'll
3 stand on my tippy toes.

4 So I think Alexandra past out kind of a
5 summary of the legal review, so for those of
6 you watching, the document I'm going off of is
7 just basically a summary of the legal review
8 that was attached to the agenda. I just
9 thought that this was a more concise way of
10 reviewing it rather than having all the words.

11 So in the middle column you'll see waiver
12 requests. These are based on the back and
13 forth between the two legal reviews, the waiver
14 request that the applicant is asking for, so
15 there is some variation from the initial
16 application to these waiver requests. And then
17 anything in red is just something I need to get
18 a little more clarification on.

19 And just kind of briefly, because this
20 relates to all of the charters that we'll hear
21 over the next two days, due to the change in
22 standards, it was right in the middle of the
23 application cycle for the open-enrollment
24 charters, so the applications were written with
25 waiver requests for the old standards, so a lot

1 of what we'll be doing is just making sure we
2 get them under the new standards rather than
3 the old.

4 So if everyone is good with that we'll
5 just kind of start on No. 1, which is
6 administrator licensure. And the only thing
7 here is just they will need waivers from the
8 standards. And I -- for principal licensure --
9 and I'll let you confirm which ones you'll
10 need. And so for principal licensure it will
11 be 4-C.1 and 2; for superintendent licensure,
12 it's 4-B.2; and then 4-B.1 is the requirement
13 that the district employ a full-time
14 superintendent. So if the superintendent is
15 going to be hired by the CMO or not be full
16 time, then they would need a waiver for 4-B.1
17 as well.

18 So I just need you to confirm which of
19 those four you need.

20 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay.

21 MS. HYATT: So just the principal
22 licensure?

23 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: And administrator.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay. So principal licensure
25 is 4-C.1 and 2, so you confirm that you --

1 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. I confirm
2 that we need 4-C.1 and 2.

3 MS. HYATT: Okay. Superintendent --
4 superintendent licensure is 4-B.2.

5 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yep, we need 4-B.2,
6 please.

7 MS. HYATT: And 4-B.1 is the requirement
8 that the district employ a full-time
9 superintendent. So if your superintendent is
10 not going to be full time or if -- if it's
11 employed by someone other than the district,
12 like the CMO, then you'll need that one.

13 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. I think we
14 do. Yes.

15 MS. HYATT: Okay. Just confirm it.

16 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I confirm that.

17 MS. HYATT: So I have 4-B.1 and 2 and
18 4-C.1 and 2 and that will resolve any issues on
19 No. 1.

20 Number 2 is the teacher licensure, same
21 thing with the standards, the new standard is
22 4-D.1, and that covers teacher licensure; so --

23 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yes, I confirm that
24 we need that.

25 MS. HYATT: Okay. And the waiver request

1 for 6-15-1004 is a teacher licensure statute.
2 The only part that requires -- has a
3 requirement on a teacher is 6-15-1004(d), not
4 the entire statute. And so the request is
5 currently for the entire statute, and so either
6 just a little bit of clarification as to the
7 need for the entire or confirmation that you
8 would just like to seek part (d)?

9 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: So basically we
10 want middle level -- level teachers to be able
11 to teach elementary and elementary middle, so
12 is that --

13 MS. HYATT: So you have the teacher
14 licensure waiver from standards. The -- the
15 part of the law that -- that says that teachers
16 that are not licensed can't teach is 400(d) --
17 or 1004(d) rather than the entire law. The
18 other part of the law is more this is how you
19 get teacher -- teacher licensure and doesn't
20 really have an impact on -- on schools, more so
21 the teachers themselves in the -- and the
22 Department.

23 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. We are also
24 thinking that we may be interested in hiring
25 music professionals that are interested in

1 getting their teacher license, so would that be
2 the other part of the --

3 MS. HYATT: No. So that's still a teacher
4 licensure waiver.

5 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. So then we
6 just need 4-D.1.

7 MS. HYATT: Okay. Is that -- would that
8 be easier?

9 Okay. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: That does help. Thank
11 you.

12 MS. HYATT: Okay. On No. 3, employee
13 contracts, there are no remaining issues.

14 On No. 4, which is School Board, during
15 the legal review, Focus Academy of Arts and
16 Science rescinded some requests for 608, which
17 is the length of the Board of Director term;
18 611, which is vacancies and how you fill them;
19 and 634, which is the size of the Board, but
20 based on the application, I believe that those
21 waivers are necessary. And so I believe that
22 you need those waivers in order to effectuate
23 your goal.

24 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay.

25 MS. HYATT: So if -- if you're okay with

1 that, just confirm that.

2 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yes. I'll confirm
3 that.

4 MS. HYATT: Okay. Similarly, 613, 609,
5 610, 614, 627, and 633 have been repealed, so
6 there is no waiver necessary for those and
7 those were included in the request.

8 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. So we don't
9 need that.

10 MS. HYATT: Okay. And -- and that's it
11 on -- on No. 4.

12 Number 5 is good.

13 Number 6, same thing, applicant rescinded
14 the request for Section 4 of the ADE Rules
15 Governing Student Special Needs Funds, but
16 that's a waiver that they will need in order to
17 effectuate their waiver under -- for
18 alternative learning environments, and they
19 need a waiver under the new standards instead
20 of the old, and the new standard is 2-I.1.

21 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: So we will need
22 those?

23 MS. HYATT: Yes.

24 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I confirm that we
25 need those then.

1 MS. HYATT: No. 7, gifted and talented, is
2 just the standards, kind of walk over 2-G.1 is
3 the new standard for gifted and talented rather
4 than the old Section 18; so just a confirmation
5 that you're going to get it under the -- the
6 new standard.

7 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I confirm.

8 MS. HYATT: All right. Okay. Number 8,
9 Media Center standards, again, the new standard
10 sections are 4-F.1 and 4-F.2, which covers
11 licensure of the library media specialist and
12 then the ratio of students to -- per library
13 media specialist, and -- and those will be
14 necessary to effectuate the waiver of the law.

15 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. I confirm.

16 MS. HYATT: Okay. Personnel policies,
17 this is just one of the ones where I had needed
18 a little bit more information. I was just
19 unsure, based on some of the rationale
20 provided, exactly what they were trying to do
21 with the waiver so it was kind of hard for me
22 to understand which sections they would need a
23 waiver of to effectuate their goal. And so if
24 I could just -- if we could get a little bit
25 more information on that so we can make sure

1 you have everything you need.

2 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. On the --

3 MS. HYATT: Personnel policy. So the
4 waiver request, as it stands, is a waiver
5 request from having the policies, posting them
6 on your website, incorporating them into
7 teacher contracts, giving copies to teachers,
8 and then having them for classified employees
9 as well and incorporating them into the
10 classified employee's contract. So those are
11 kind of the questions, how you plan on doing
12 your personnel policies and that kind of stuff.

13 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. As far as I
14 can tell, we would like just to follow the
15 ADA -- or the ADE rules for that and just
16 follow the procedure. I don't think we need a
17 waiver, do we, for anything like that. I think
18 we're just going to follow the steps.

19 Do you know, Dan?

20 MR. DAN FOSHEE: If I may. I feel like
21 I'm on karaoke.

22 Dan Foshee, Board Member.

23 And we will develop and -- and publish our
24 personnel policies. We -- the work of the
25 policy committee will be done by the Parent

1 Advisory Council, and we'll have five teachers
2 and a school administrator as members. And we
3 would like to request waivers of 6-17-205,
4 6-17-2303, and rescind the request of 6-17-201,
5 et al.

6 MS. HYATT: Okay. Can you just say that
7 last part again so I have it for my notes.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah. And in the
9 microphone a little more, please.

10 MR. DAN FOSHEE: I'm sorry. I may spit a
11 lot.

12 We would like to rescind the request of
13 6-17-201, et sequitur, and 6-17-2303, et
14 sequitur.

15 The Academy would like to request waivers
16 of 6-17-205 and 6-17-2303.

17 We will develop and publish our personnel
18 policies on -- on the website.

19 MS. HYATT: Okay. And I think you will
20 need a waiver of 6-17-209 to effectuate the
21 waiver of 6-17-205.

22 MR. DAN FOSHEE: We would like to request
23 that waiver as well.

24 MS. HYATT: Great. That resolves any
25 remaining issues there.

1 Just the last few. No. 10 is guidance
2 counselors, and it is first they will need a
3 waiver of Arkansas Code Annotated
4 § 6-18-1001(a)(2) in order to effectuate their
5 waiver, and they will need waivers under the
6 new standards of 4-E.1 and 4-E.2 rather than
7 the old standards.

8 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. I confirm
9 that we need those waivers.

10 MS. HYATT: Okay. I'm going to skip
11 No. 11 and come back to it at the end.

12 Number 12, start and end dates. Based on
13 the legal review, the -- the request was
14 rescinded, but I don't believe you're starting
15 your new calendar until the second year of
16 operation, so I think you need a two-year
17 waiver of 6-10-106.

18 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. I confirm
19 that we need that waiver.

20 MS. HYATT: Okay. Number 11 is school
21 nurse. These are health and safety rules and
22 laws. Charter rules and charter laws prohibit
23 the waiver of health and safety rules and laws.
24 Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-23-401 prohibits
25 those waivers. So I believe that these waivers

1 are prohibited.

2 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. We rescind
3 that waiver.

4 We are going to hire a full-time nurse.
5 We're going to contract the nurse, actually,
6 out.

7 MS. HYATT: Okay. Those are all the
8 remaining legal issues. So I think we're good
9 to go as far as legal is concerned.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So at this time,
11 I know those were -- there were a lot of
12 waivers there to think through and digest
13 through, but it does help also going back and
14 looking at the document that Ms. Coffman
15 provided.

16 So if -- right now if you have questions
17 on any of these waivers or something, you want
18 to make sure that you clearly understand what
19 has or has not been waived, I'll ask the Panel
20 to address those at this time, and then we'll
21 move on to then any remaining questions from
22 the Panel.

23 So we'll start, Mr. Wilson, do you have
24 anything with the waivers?

25 MR. WILSON: I don't. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez?

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: I do have a question.

3 So on employee contracts, that it
4 referenced that grievance procedures will be
5 outlined in the personnel policy manual, and so
6 I don't know that I'm fully clear on the
7 personnel policy waivers exactly what you guys
8 are planning to do, whether to have one or not.

9 I know I heard them say about posting it
10 on the website and then also there is a
11 reference to ADE policy. And we don't have a
12 policy and procedure manual as a template, and
13 so I was wanting to get clarification of where
14 the policies that you would be looking for
15 would come from, and -- and that can get kind
16 of messy if you're not careful with that. So I
17 just kind of want to hear about the -- the
18 plans to -- if there is going to be a policy
19 manual and the plans to how to get there.

20 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. For the
21 policy manual for the teachers, is that what
22 you're -- and the personnel?

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: Uh-huh.

24 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I'm a big advocate
25 of sharing information, so I -- I'm sure that

1 we would look at other districts and their
2 personnel manuals, and do what -- create a
3 document based on what they have done, and
4 then, of course, follow the standards or what's
5 required; so --

6 MS. HYATT: And if I may, I think that on
7 No. 3, the employee contracts, what they are
8 waiving is Teacher Fair Dismissal and
9 Classified Employee Dismissal; and then in the
10 personnel policy section, they are -- they are
11 not waiving having the personnel policies and
12 having them posted and giving them to the
13 teachers and the employees, so just the
14 fair -- the fair hearing parts.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Did that address --

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh, any
18 waiver questions?

19 DR. OWOH: No.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No?

21 Dr. Williams?

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Mine is maybe a
23 little bigger question.

24 Is this pretty much -- we went through a
25 lot of waivers. Is this going to kind of be

1 until we make this transition kind of the
2 standard operating procedure to have this many
3 waivers?

4 On -- on one hand I'm thinking if -- if we
5 are -- as I listen to you-all going through the
6 waiver process, the thing that comes to my mind
7 is are you ready? I mean, have -- has this
8 been discussed, has it been worked out? You
9 know, I mean,-- what is the status of the
10 application if we haven't resolved these waiver
11 issues?

12 Now, if it's part of the fact that the
13 waivers have changed, the accreditation
14 standards have changed through the application
15 process, I -- I understand that. But if it's a
16 question of all of these waivers and it's not
17 related to that, then I wonder are we ready, is
18 this application ready, and I defer to ADE
19 staff to address that.

20 MS. HYATT: So just in terms of the
21 standards, part of the reason why we had to go
22 through so many of these is due to the change
23 in the standards and making sure that every --
24 we had the correct standards and not under the
25 repealed standards.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

2 MS. HYATT: And so I think that is unique
3 to this application cycle, because next time
4 those will be the standards that are in place
5 during the application cycle.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

7 MS. HYATT: So I think we will experience
8 that through all of the charters this
9 application cycle but not necessarily in the
10 future.

11 Any of the additional ones that were about
12 law or being unclear, those are separate from
13 the standards transition and so those will vary
14 by -- by charter.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. All right. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers, do
18 you have any questions at this time?

19 DR. KREMERS: Do not.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I do have one
21 waiver related question -- or two, actually.

22 On the guidance counselor, so it's my
23 understanding that you -- are you waiving
24 hiring a guidance counselor --

25 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: No.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- or just hiring one
2 with a license? You're just waiving the
3 licensing portion of that?

4 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I'm pretty sure
5 that the waiver -- and I'm new to all of the --
6 the waivers and things like that -- I'm more of
7 a vision of the school person. But I'm pretty
8 sure we were interested in hiring people
9 that -- not necessarily a school counselor but
10 a counselor, someone with a degree in
11 counseling that we can --

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And then the
13 other question then is you did rescind the
14 waiver for the school nurse and said you would
15 be contracting that out?

16 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Is that included in
18 your budget?

19 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yes, it is.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I just, when I
21 looked at the health services, you have a
22 physical education teacher there. Am I just
23 missing the -- the nursing in the budget?

24 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I looked at that
25 yesterday evening and I know we have that in

1 here.

2 MR. DAN FOSHEE: In health services.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: It is in the budget?

4 Okay.

5 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: It is in the

6 health -- health services.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you very

8 much.

9 All right. So does that take us through
10 all of the -- all of those remaining issues or
11 legal -- legal questions?

12 MS. HYATT: Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So
14 hopefully that has addressed, maybe, some of
15 the questions that were there.

16 So at this time, Panel Members, if you
17 have any other questions as you look through
18 the application that you would like to address,
19 we'll go through. I'll start again with
20 Mr. Wilson to see if he has any questions.

21 MR. WILSON: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

22 I noticed in your application there was a
23 public hearing in April, and maybe one or more
24 then, five families attended you said.

25 Give me some idea of the demand, the

1 public demand, the parent -- parental demand
2 for a charter school in that area.

3 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. Well, in our
4 county there is 50,000 students and we have 810
5 seats there, so there is a need in other
6 schools in the area. So -- in other charter --
7 is it the other charter schools, Dan, or is it
8 the other --

9 MR. DAN FOSHEE: I think so.

10 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yeah.

11 So 50,000 students, 810, there is a
12 waiting list in the other charter schools in
13 this -- in our county, so we feel like there is
14 a need. And the other charters don't start
15 music as early as our school will.

16 MR. WILSON: You won't have a waiting --
17 your -- Focus does not have a waiting list at
18 this point. Do you?

19 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: We haven't actually
20 publicized, we wanted to get approved first and
21 then start, since we won't start until the
22 following year. So we were going to start
23 advertising and getting community interest in
24 it.

25 MR. WILSON: Okay. Thank you.

1 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez,
3 do you have questions?

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: Can I ask them all or
5 rotate around?

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You can ask two and
7 then we'll move on and come back, how is that?
8 When you say all, okay, so your top two at this
9 time.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. So the first one
11 is, if we go to the section that were required
12 information, or I don't know what the title
13 exactly was, additional documentation, there is
14 a copy of a lease agreement in there. And so
15 my question, the you showed at the 5121 Runway,
16 you know, it reflects that this lease agreement
17 was signed in April of last year, 2017, and the
18 way it's written it says that this is approved,
19 basically, that if it's ready to go by August
20 of '18. And so being that this would -- would
21 be -- could be potentially approved by the
22 Charter Authorizing Panel today and then
23 wouldn't be approved by the State Board
24 potentially until September, and you wouldn't
25 be in until 2019, so what I'm asking is, is

1 this lease the most current up-to-date lease,
2 and will it be valid by the time that you
3 actually would take possession of the property?
4 Because the way it reads it's not. Maybe there
5 should be an updated lease agreement, so that's
6 the question.

7 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I'm fairly sure
8 that there is an updated lease agreement. And
9 the -- the owner of the building is a very big
10 supporter of our charter and he's excited about
11 it, and he's actually offering us, like, some
12 gift money towards the lease, so he's very
13 excited about the project and he's still on
14 board.

15 And I'm not sure -- do you know about the
16 updated lease?

17 MR. DAN FOSHEE: The lease would still be
18 in effect. It -- it was not -- I understand
19 your timing point, but that would be in effect.
20 He is still committed to the project and
21 with -- with all the structures.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: That's just maybe
23 something to double-check on to get a written
24 one. I just wouldn't want to move down the
25 road and then you guys all of a sudden get

1 ready for school and, hey, we've seen that
2 happen, you know, on a building, so that might
3 be something you want to check on.

4 The second question, on the goals you had
5 listed as one of your goals having 20
6 volunteers. So does that mean, are you talking
7 about 20 volunteers a month, a year? What
8 does -- what does that mean, when it says that
9 your goal is to have 20 volunteers that sign
10 in?

11 MR. DAN FOSHEE: Are you talking about the
12 business partnerships?

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: Just kind of the way it's
14 written in the application and then what was in
15 the presentation, that one of your goals was to
16 have 20 volunteers, and that's why I'm -- I'm
17 not sure so that's why I'm asking.

18 MR. DAN FOSHEE: Right. The -- the 20
19 would be various partnerships would -- be it
20 individuals, parents, business individuals --
21 I'm sorry. The mic. Thank you.

22 It would be various business individuals,
23 it would be parents, it would be just a
24 variety, but it would be 20 people and it would
25 be -- I think we would start with that per

1 year, but, you know, as it allows and as it
2 grows we would certainly be more responsive.

3 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. So it's more about
4 business partnerships but it -- so it's not --

5 MR. DAN FOSHEE: Not necessarily.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: It's not parents coming
7 in, signing in and working with the kids, or it
8 is?

9 MR. DAN FOSHEE: It could be. We're
10 trying to be very flexible on that.

11 What we really want to do is not only
12 engender a sense of student leadership and
13 servant leadership, is we want them to have as
14 diverse a mix of experiences. So parents, as
15 they go through their careers and their lives,
16 they will have something to give as well as
17 business and local nonprofit leaders. We
18 want -- we want to make sure that they have
19 just a broad spectrum of things to draw from.

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. DAN FOSHEE: Uh-huh.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh, questions?

23 DR. OWOH: How --

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Two. Limit to two and
25 then we'll move --

1 DR. OWOH: I was just going to say, I will
2 ask my top two.

3 One, as we look at your educator staff,
4 how would you ensure for the -- that Arkansas
5 Qualified Teacher, those requirements are met
6 before hiring your teaching staff? What would
7 be your process?

8 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Do you want to talk
9 about that or do you want me to?

10 MR. DAN FOSHEE: Go ahead.

11 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. We would
12 definitely look at their resumé and make sure
13 we have copies of the teaching certificates and
14 definitely call references to find out, you
15 know, how the teacher was at other schools,
16 look at their education. We want highly
17 qualified teachers at our school. And but
18 everything like that is on a piece -- I mean
19 we're going to definitely follow that, but
20 checking those references and finding out what
21 other people have said about the teacher I
22 think is huge.

23 DR. OWOH: Because I -- I just want to
24 make sure that we're clear that AQT, those
25 requirements need to be met before the teacher

1 actually enters the classroom or is hired;
2 so --

3 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Definitely, yes.

4 DR. OWOH: Okay. And my follow-up
5 question for now is how would you ensure --
6 what's your process of ensuring that all
7 background checks for the required staff
8 members are completed before they enter the
9 school setting as well?

10 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: That would go
11 through our HA -- HR person, and no paychecks
12 until the -- basically, until the background
13 check has come in. So, yeah, effectively you
14 won't sign your contract until everything has
15 come through.

16 DR. OWOH: So are you saying before the
17 payroll check or before the first day of
18 school? What was it?

19 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Before -- before
20 the first day of school. Definitely before the
21 first day of school.

22 DR. OWOH: Okay. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams?

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. They have addressed a
25 couple of my questions. One was around how are

1 you going to go about the recruiting students?

2 I live in Washington County, work in
3 Benton County, I've worked in Benton County for
4 22 years so I'm very familiar with the -- with
5 the landscape, and I know enrollment is kind of
6 flattening down a little bit. So how do you go
7 about -- I think we're beyond if you build it
8 they will come.

9 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Right.

10 DR. WILLIAMS: So what do you-all plan to
11 do from a recruitment standpoint for students?

12 And your numbers, you're looking at a lot
13 of students over the years when you're looking
14 at -- Cabot had about 900 students, so do you
15 have any recruitment planned?

16 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I would say
17 definitely use social media, the newspapers,
18 have some events.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

20 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: You know, host some
21 free -- or, you know, events, information, get
22 them there, get them talking. Are you
23 interested in music, we're going to have so and
24 so come, bring all the children and we're going
25 to maybe -- you know, I have a friend that's a

1 musician, invite him to come, invite the
2 community to come, we talk about the school and
3 he plays music.

4 I mean, I don't know, Dan, do you have
5 some ideas on recruitment?

6 MR. DAN FOSHEE: And in addition to what
7 she said we were -- there are also several
8 community-based, like first Friday.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

10 MR. DAN FOSHEE: We would also go to --
11 there are similar events in Rogers and in
12 Fayetteville, we would go to those and drum up
13 support, and interact one on one, because we
14 found that when you have that, I mean even if
15 they are not directly involved with -- well, my
16 child is a little old for that, and that's fine
17 but I bet you know someone, and we will be
18 engaged on that.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: So to follow up on that,
20 I'm still on my one question, the follow-up on
21 that, where do you intend to draw from? Like
22 we have some charter schools that come in and
23 they're saying, we're going to try to hit this
24 ZIP code, you know, we're going to focus on
25 maybe addressing low income students and so

1 forth.

2 So are you-all looking to draw from both
3 Benton and Washington County or just Benton
4 County? Where are you looking to draw students
5 from?

6 MR. DAN FOSHEE: It would primarily be
7 Benton County, but we want to leave it open to
8 those residents who may be maybe on the
9 northern part of Washington County or maybe
10 anywhere because we're going to have
11 transportation routes set up, so it will be
12 from both.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

14 MR. DAN FOSHEE: Fort Smith might be a
15 stretch.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

17 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: I have something to
18 add to that. For the low income families, we
19 have a neat program where we're going to do --
20 because instruments can be expensive and we
21 included that in part of our budget where they
22 will be able to have instruments provided, so
23 get their hands on the instruments right off
24 the bat.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. Okay. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

2 DR. KREMERS: For your service-based
3 learning, is that voluntary or is it mandatory,
4 part one of the question?

5 And then part two, what, when they are
6 doing the project-based learning, such as the
7 robotics example that you gave, is it
8 explicitly tied to a curriculum, is it a model,
9 example which has been provided? And what is
10 the teacher's involvement in that project-based
11 learning?

12 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: When we hire the
13 teachers we will talk to them about the
14 community involvement. And for the students it
15 is going to be required. Now, we will let that
16 be something that they are already involved in
17 through their school or their family or their
18 church, that can count towards those hours, you
19 know, because some students are going to be,
20 like, I don't have anything -- you know, they
21 don't have an option, but we can talk to them
22 about, you know, all of the definitions of
23 community service and what they are already
24 doing and so we can count those. So basically
25 teachers will have to use part of their time, I

1 mean we're not going to make them every evening
2 do that, but for their class if their students
3 need something then that will be part of their
4 job to go with the students, hey, we're going
5 to do this in the community, we're going to do
6 this with the senior citizens this week, and we
7 want all of you that haven't finished your
8 hours, we want you to attend and I'm going to
9 be there, the teacher will be there also.

10 DR. KREMERS: And could you answer the
11 question about the link to curriculum? So they
12 are doing projects. So there was STEAM
13 embedded, so I'm kind of -- I'm trying to see
14 where the curriculum link is with STEAM and how
15 the teacher's role come into that project.

16 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yes. It will
17 definitely be linked to the curriculum. Some
18 projects may be outside of their curriculum if
19 they are very interested in it and it's
20 educational. We don't want to say, no, you
21 can't do that, you can't focus your study or
22 your research on that, we want to let them have
23 some freedom of choice because of the intrinsic
24 learning. You know, if they are excited about
25 it and very interested in it they are going to

1 want to do it. But most of the projects that
2 we offer, you know, they are going to be linked
3 to the curriculum.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. A couple of
5 things that I had noted that I wanted to ask
6 you about. In your literacy program, you are
7 going to use READYGEN, and it talks about a
8 balanced approach using all language modalities
9 to respond to authentic text. And so I wanted
10 to ask a little bit about why that one was
11 chosen. And I may also want, if we have
12 someone here from the Department of Ed who may
13 can respond to that as far as a curriculum, and
14 is it aligned with the Science of Reading
15 approach.

16 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Dan?

17 I didn't actually pick the curriculum and
18 so I'm going to let Dan talk about that.

19 MR. DAN FOSHEE: Our Executive Director
20 could probably speak more in detail to why
21 READYGEN was selected, but my understanding, it
22 is one of the leading more comprehensive honest
23 programs that would be -- that would fit most
24 with what our goals are.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And so -- so in

1 thinking about the Science of Reading and
2 Arkansas' R.I.S.E. Initiative, with -- with
3 your grade span that you're going to be looking
4 at, that is going to be a very, very critical
5 component. So can you talk to me a little bit
6 about your knowledge and background around the
7 reading initiative or, you know, specific
8 things you're going to be looking at to ensure
9 that your teachers get the training and the --
10 and meet the requirements for the legislation
11 that's been passed for the proficiency and the
12 Science of Reading and how is that going to
13 really be a focus for your students.

14 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: We will definitely
15 look at -- when we're developing our curriculum
16 and our lesson plans, we will definitely align
17 it with the -- did you say it was the R.I.S.E.?
18 Is that what was --

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: R.I.S.E. is the State's
20 reading initiative.

21 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: The Science of Reading
23 is the legislation, the requirement that our
24 teachers will have that, the knowledge and
25 skills to actually instruct students from a

1 scientific approach to teaching reading.

2 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay. I teach at
3 college so I'm past that, but we will
4 definitely do all the training needed for the
5 teachers so that they can, and in lesson
6 planning, if that's a State requirement, we
7 will make sure that the teachers are looking at
8 their lesson plans and aligning them with the
9 requirements.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. But that the
11 curriculum that you-all have chosen, then you
12 don't have anyone here to speak to why that was
13 specifically chosen and whether or not it is a
14 reading curriculum that is aligned with the
15 scientific approach to teaching reading?

16 MR. DAN FOSHEE: My understanding is that
17 it is, and if it is not, then we will make sure
18 that that is addressed. We do have funds
19 available for professional development and as
20 well as training, so that would be reflected.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh. Well, the
22 adoption of your curriculum is going to be
23 crucial in terms of what teachers actually will
24 be teaching, and so that would be -- that would
25 be a big concern. And I'm not -- I would like

1 to have a little more information on that
2 before I'm comfortable.

3 The only other question I have, and
4 someone else had kind of alluded to, was in
5 your goals, you -- you have a specific math and
6 literacy goal and then you have your other
7 goals. But both your academic and
8 organizational goals, you really don't have
9 anything with music. And I would expect that a
10 school that that's going to be a major focus --
11 it doesn't seem that that approach is really,
12 really -- if it's not -- if you don't have
13 those goals and I think I -- I would need to
14 know more about is this really, truly going to
15 be a school where students are getting that
16 music experience or is just music something
17 that you're going to do to enhance the learning
18 program, and it seems just more right now that
19 it's an enhancement rather than a really
20 integral part of your charter, and because I'm
21 not seeing that with explicit goals and really
22 throughout. So that -- I wanted to give you a
23 chance just to maybe speak to that a little
24 more.

25 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yep, I have that.

1 Okay. In the application, on mine it's
2 Page 11, so it says, year one, all students K-4
3 will participate in instrument discovery. Year
4 two, grades 1-4 will have piano lab, and that
5 is built into the schedule that I posted or
6 that was on the slide show; and then grades
7 two -- year three they will have piano lab two,
8 grades six will be added to the beginning band.
9 So every single grade every week -- is it three
10 days a week or --

11 MR. DAN FOSHEE: (Nodding head up and
12 down.)

13 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: -- from the
14 schedule we will have music instruction.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I thought I remembered
16 it being two in the presentation.

17 MR. DAN FOSHEE: It was two, Tuesday and
18 Thursday.

19 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: It may be, it may
20 have been two. Tuesday and Thursday?

21 Okay. So it is built into the schedule.
22 And it will be a big focus as far as the school
23 goes and that -- I don't know -- the recitals,
24 that would be -- I mean our goals would be
25 definitely to start in, like, by Christmas,

1 already have some kids on instruments and ready
2 for a Christmas program and things like that,
3 but we can build that into our goals, the
4 music, but it is going to be a big part.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.
6 Panel, I know some of you may still have some
7 questions and we can go back through and have
8 you ask questions.

9 One other aspect that I've asked the
10 Department personnel to provide is people here
11 that work in the Department that address each
12 of those six systems that we looked at.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we would have
15 someone here from the Department who has
16 reviewed the application who could also answer
17 any questions specific to those six systems.
18 If you -- if you do not have a burning question
19 for the applicant and you want to get more
20 Department perspective or if the Department --
21 if there is a particular system where a
22 Department personnel has something that they
23 want the Panel to consider, we could let them
24 speak now.

25 So I'll ask you-all, do you -- do you have

1 another question that you want to go ahead and
2 pose to the applicant at this time --

3 MR. WILSON: I don't.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- or would you be
5 ready to address anything maybe with anything
6 from the Department?

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: No. I have more for the
8 applicant.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. You've got more
10 for the applicant? Okay. We'll go ahead and
11 finish up with those questions and then we'll
12 move to any input from the Department.

13 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Okay.

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: So in looking at your
15 budget and how you have the 500 students listed
16 as being year one and then looking at some of
17 the sign-ins and -- of people that have, I
18 guess, coming to the hearings, I guess my
19 question involves around need and how, in
20 reading through the application and questions
21 Dr. Pfeffer asked specifically about not
22 feeling -- not really seeing that music goal,
23 seeing there is some activities around music,
24 but what are you seeing that gives you
25 confidence in -- in that there is a need for

1 this charter school in this area and that
2 you're going to get that kind of enrollment
3 that you're seeking, that your budgets are
4 built off of?

5 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: We would be the
6 only charter school in the area that offered
7 the music for the younger ages. The other
8 schools start it at an older age, so the
9 parents that were interested in music, like,
10 right off the -- you know, right from the
11 beginning in kindergarten.

12 Also the other schools in the area aren't
13 as focused on community, and in the world we
14 live in I think, you know, everybody is self
15 focused, and just to get that outward, that
16 would be an awesome school to have that as our
17 platform, as we're into -- you know, we're
18 focused on servant leadership and developing
19 students that are outwardly focused instead of
20 inwardly focused.

21 MR. DAN FOSHEE: If I may?

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: Go ahead. Yeah.

23 MR. DAN FOSHEE: I would also like to
24 speak to, for the northwest Arkansas area, we
25 kind of take charters in stride. It's --

1 it's a more established idea, it's not big of a
2 treck to say, oh, well, I'll go somewhere else,
3 you know. So in terms of our response on the
4 public hearings, I think that just shows that
5 it's -- it's kind of a common thing, it's not a
6 real big deal.

7 And as far as a specific need, I think
8 that there -- this is one of the biggest
9 growing areas in Arkansas and it's going to
10 continue to do that. And we think that given
11 the unique structures of our curriculum and the
12 unique features, such as the servant
13 leadership, such as the early music, we think
14 that that is enough of a draw.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh, you had a
16 question for the applicant?

17 DR. OWOH: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

18 In reference to the human capital system,
19 my question is focused on the educators, both
20 the teacher and the administrators. What will
21 be your processes for recruitment, support,
22 development, and retention, seeing or just
23 focusing on the current attrition of educators.
24 And so if you could kind of expound upon what
25 would be your processes to ensure that, one,

1 you attract -- attract the most effective
2 educators for our students as well as how would
3 you support both the educators, the teachers,
4 and the administrators, and then develop them
5 and provide the support to retain them?

6 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: As far as
7 attracting educators, I think when we start
8 advertising and they see the values and the
9 goals and I -- I feel like some educators would
10 be interested for their own children. You
11 know, if they are big in music or in the
12 developing the STEM and the building robotics
13 and they see a school that's going to be
14 focused on the project-based learning, I mean,
15 they may come over to our school as an educator
16 and bring their children based on the things
17 that we're going to be offering.

18 As far as retention, I think community
19 among the teachers and making them feel like
20 they are a part of everything and they have a
21 voice and that they are a leader in their
22 community, that's going to be huge. Because I
23 know I have a friend that's an educator and she
24 left her school this year and moved to another
25 one, and the -- the one decision, the one

1 question she asked me was, do the teachers
2 collaborate and work together? And I was,
3 like, "Yes, they do," she goes, like, "Okay.
4 I'm leaving my school." So that, I think, is
5 huge for educators, for teachers.

6 I mean they are, like, when I was in a
7 public school when I was a teacher, working
8 together, you're better together; so definitely
9 building community, having events for the
10 educators, professional development for them,
11 things for them to do together and to bond, and
12 that -- I think that's huge. I mean you work
13 together to make the students better and you
14 work together to make each other better. How I
15 feel.

16 Do you have anything to add to that?

17 MR. DAN FOSHEE: I think you're doing very
18 well.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Any other
20 questions for the applicant?

21 So if not, if -- if we could put the
22 system graphic back up there for just a minute
23 that Ms. Coffman had shared with us early --
24 earlier. And so these are the six systems that
25 are included in our Standards for

1 Accreditation. Six systems that operate within
2 a school district.

3 And just for any remaining questions, if
4 the Panel -- we'll go through, see if the Panel
5 has anything that kind of aligns with that or
6 if there is anything -- I would ask ADE staff
7 to share anything that maybe we need to
8 consider or look at.

9 So I think we can start with the academic
10 system and go back to that question on the
11 literacy program that has been chosen, which is
12 READYGEN Literacy Program. I don't know if our
13 Department staff is familiar with that, but
14 if -- if we could look at that part of the
15 application and have one of our ADE specialists
16 that's in that area, I think we have someone
17 here speak a little bit about the reading
18 curriculum and science -- Science of Reading
19 importance.

20 MS. SHEPARD: I do not know READYGEN at
21 all.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If you will go ahead
23 and just state your name, please.

24 MS. SHEPARD: I'm Sandy Shepard and I'm
25 from Learning Services, my job is R.I.S.E.

1 Arkansas. I don't know the curriculum at all,
2 READYGEN, I glanced at it just a second online.

3 What we would need to do is do like we do
4 for every other public school is look at our
5 rubric. We have a rubric that's pretty
6 detailed, it's pretty long, and that has all
7 the components of the curriculum and deciding
8 what they have is going to match the Science of
9 Reading. So we have a multiple-page document,
10 we can have question and answer, but it would
11 be putting them on the spot to know that pretty
12 deeply.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

14 MS. SHEPARD: So how y'all want to handle
15 that, I'm willing to be here and help.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, and -- and they
17 had said that they are unsure whether or not it
18 aligns with the Scientific Instruction of
19 Reading and their -- the person who chose the
20 curriculum is not with them today; so --

21 MS. SHEPARD: Okay. So we can --

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- that was just --
23 that was something important for to me to know
24 is to whether we know if the -- if that has
25 been addressed as a part of this application.

1 MS. SHEPARD: That has not been turned in
2 as -- as an academic review and I have not seen
3 that in action so I can't speak as an expert on
4 it at all.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

6 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Can I say
7 something?

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

9 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: We would be
10 interested in working with you and, you know,
11 getting the correct curriculum. And if that
12 one doesn't meet the standards, then we would
13 definitely be in favor of finding a curriculum
14 that does.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. So with
16 regards to the academic system, is there
17 anyone, any of our ADE personnel that has
18 reviewed the application that would have
19 anything that they would like for the Panel to
20 consider?

21 All right. I know Dr. Owoh has addressed
22 several questions with the human capital
23 system, personnel, supporting and developing
24 teachers, teacher recruitment and retention. I
25 was -- are there any ADE staff members that had

1 anything to note that was not already
2 addressed?

3 Okay. Dr. Owoh has one more related to
4 that system, so we'll let him ask that.

5 DR. OWOH: Yes. If you could please
6 provide some insight on how you would provide
7 or ensure that Code of Ethics Training would be
8 provided.

9 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: That would be
10 definitely provided at the beginning of the
11 year during the professional development before
12 school started, along with the Special Ed
13 Department as far as the rules and laws that
14 follow it. So both of those would be presented
15 before school started in a professional
16 development and be part of -- it would probably
17 be part of the teacher handbook, the code of
18 ethics would be in there for the -- are you
19 talking about for the teacher?

20 DR. OWOH: Well, it's the Code of Ethics
21 for all educators, the State of Arkansas Code
22 of Ethics.

23 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yeah, it would be
24 in there and we would go over it during
25 professional development.

1 DR. OWOH: Okay. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The next system
3 in student support, we've asked a few questions
4 already related to the special education, the
5 nursing, counselor. So, Ms. Coffman, do you
6 have anything?

7 MS. COFFMAN: Yes. Our question is how
8 will the school remove barriers that might
9 prevent a student from having access to all of
10 the learning opportunities?

11 So today they were mentioning community
12 service opportunities, and so a barrier to that
13 might be travel or there may be some additional
14 expenses for equipment or materials, and so
15 we're interested to know how you are planning
16 to remove all barriers.

17 MR. DAN FOSHEE: We would make sure, be it
18 through contracting with a -- in the case of,
19 like a physical barrier, we would contact with
20 a -- a builder or the builder itself of the
21 building to make sure that that is removed and
22 addressed.

23 In the case of when we're going out and
24 about, the -- the project and -- and the off
25 site visit would -- that would be kept in mind.

1 We would make sure that we are going to some
2 place that is accessible for those students.
3 If there aren't, there will be -- we would make
4 sure that every student is capable of
5 participating in that event, be it on campus or
6 off.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

8 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Can I say
9 something?

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

11 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Also in the
12 activity fund that the principal has to work
13 with, if there were students that couldn't
14 afford a field trip, that moneys would be taken
15 out of that, so that the -- the student could
16 participate, because we don't want financial
17 problems to hinder a student's participation.

18 MR. DAN FOSHEE: (Inaudible.)

19 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Yeah.

20 COURT REPORTER: I didn't hear that.

21 MR. DAN FOSHEE: I'm sorry. We wanted to
22 address the financial barriers as well as
23 physical.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. In the
25 stakeholder, communication, family, and

1 community engagement system, I know we've
2 talked about different things with the service
3 learning and the volunteers. Are there any
4 remaining questions from the Panel in this area
5 or there anything from ADE?

6 Okay. The next system, very important
7 one, district operations and fiscal governance,
8 and we've looked at some items in the budget.
9 Are there any remaining questions from the
10 Panel as related to the -- the applicant's
11 fiscal operations or anything from ADE that
12 would like to --

13 Okay. All right. And our last is
14 facilities and transportation. I know you
15 noted in your presentation that you felt most
16 parents would be bringing students to school.
17 Is that based on percentages that you've looked
18 at in the other schools within that geographic
19 area that, you know, or -- or are you -- are
20 you fully anticipating what you might see in
21 terms of students who need transportation?
22 Because that can be -- that can be a barrier,
23 if the -- the perception is to parents that
24 transportation may not be looked at as a very
25 important system. So could you talk a little

1 bit about that?

2 DR. JESSICA THOMPSON: Also one of the
3 things that we want to offer is before and
4 after school, so that if a -- if a parent is on
5 their way to work and they need to drop off
6 early or pick up late, that will be available.

7 In the transportation budget, we have
8 other areas we have a surplus and so we were
9 anticipating if we need it and there is more
10 need for transportation, we will definitely
11 pull from that so that we can cover those
12 costs. Because we're -- we've got -- we've had
13 several estimates on the transportation, we
14 kind of tried to put the middle one in the
15 budget and then know that we have extra if we
16 need to pull for it for the transportation.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. That
18 helps.

19 All right. So that takes us through --
20 through all of our systems and I think we've
21 done a pretty thorough job of -- of going
22 through. Panel, do you have any -- any
23 remaining questions?

24 Okay. Dr. Boyd or Ms. Hyatt, is there
25 anything else that you can think of?

1 Okay. So, Panel, at this time we can make
2 a decision. If -- if anyone has a motion, I
3 would entertain it at this time.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Could we get our options
5 again on this?

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes. I'll let Dr. Boyd
7 go through that.

8 DR. BOYD: Thank you.

9 So you can approve, deny, or you can table
10 to a later meeting if there were additional
11 information that you wanted.

12 If in the case that you do deny, the
13 statute states that we have to provide the
14 applicant with the reasons why you deny. So
15 you just want to be specific if that's the
16 motion.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. Yes. Okay.

18 Just -- just to comment on my -- my part
19 here. As I listen, there is just so many
20 unanswered questions that keep coming back
21 around that they are willing to make this
22 adjustment, make this adjustment and so forth.
23 I don't think they are ready. I'm just going
24 to say it that way. And I'm thinking in terms
25 of tabling it or I'm open to other options from

1 the Board.

2 You know the reading program hasn't been
3 vetted completely yet. Getting 500 students
4 in -- in year one, it's going to be a stretch
5 in -- in Benton County.

6 So there are just some things that
7 there -- I like the part that there is a
8 willingness to address whatever the issues are,
9 that's not the question. The question for me
10 is are they ready today, based on the
11 presentation I heard. I think there are some
12 things that we need to get worked out, just
13 looking at the reading program alone. I also
14 share your concern with the -- the music
15 program. I thought it was an add on, I didn't
16 think it was totally incorporated into the
17 curriculum.

18 So that's where I'm at on this. I --
19 there is just some unanswered things. It
20 wasn't as tight as it could have been for me;
21 so --

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh?

23 DR. OWOH: I move that we deny the charter
24 school request application.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So I have a motion.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Second.

2 MR. WILSON: Question when you come to it.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Second.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we have a
5 motion and a second. Discussion?

6 MR. WILSON: Well, Madam Chairman, if the
7 motion carries, will the applicant be allowed
8 to come back before this group at a future time
9 and what -- what -- I'm sorry, I don't recall
10 the time sequence, but what happens next? What
11 could they do next?

12 DR. BOYD: Okay. Mr. Wilson, there is
13 nothing in statute that prevents an applicant
14 for submitting a future application, but it
15 would start -- the next application cycle for
16 open-enrollment charter schools starts the
17 first Tuesday of March, so it would be for the
18 next application cycle.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So just to clarify, if
20 an applicant is denied today, then they would
21 not be opening -- the -- the timing would not
22 allow them to be ready for the next school
23 year? Is that --

24 DR. BOYD: That's correct. So it would be
25 the one after. So applicants right now, if

1 they are approved during this process, will be
2 able to open a school in the fall of '19. If
3 this application was denied and they had to go
4 back through the application process, then that
5 would be delayed a year, and if they were
6 approved in a subsequent application process,
7 they would be able to open in fall of '20 at
8 the earliest.

9 MR. WILSON: Then what would be the effect
10 of a motion to table the application rather
11 than deny it?

12 DR. BOYD: Right. Well, in the past we
13 have had an application tabled before where the
14 Panel requested more information and then at
15 the next Panel meeting the applicant was able
16 to submit that additional information and then
17 a decision to approve or deny was made at that
18 following meeting.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez?

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: So I think that I agree
21 with everything that -- that Dr. Williams
22 stated there. And I think where I was kind of
23 feeling is -- is going back to that need. You
24 know, I always feel like I've got to be
25 compelled to do something, and I didn't feel

1 that, you know -- there doesn't appear to be a
2 lot of interest or a good solid planning of why
3 this charter needs to be opened at this time.
4 And so I don't know if, you know, putting it
5 off a month or two months or whatever would --
6 would give time to help that, and so -- so
7 that's just kind of, you know, where my -- my
8 thoughts are right now as far as the, you know,
9 this particular application.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So at this time
11 we do have a motion and a second to deny this
12 application. Let's go ahead and vote on this
13 motion. All those in favor of the motion, say,
14 "Aye."

15 PANEL MEMBERS: Aye.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

17 MR. WILSON: No.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The -- the
19 motion carries, the application is denied. We
20 did have one dissenting vote.

21 And so at this time I would ask the Panel
22 to record your votes in the -- in the online
23 tool that you were provided and also state your
24 reason, and if the applicant would stay, we
25 will go through and give you some feedback and

1 some information that may help you.

2 Okay. I'll go ahead and ask the Panel to
3 verbalize their vote and the reason for their
4 vote, and I'll start with Dr. Hernandez.

5 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. I voted for the
6 motion. I have concerns about the need and
7 support of the charter to be successful,
8 especially without a solid plan around
9 academics and recruitment of students.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

11 DR. KREMERS: I voted for. I have
12 concerns about the curriculum, the required
13 service learning and the statement to provide
14 the financial support, and I didn't see a line
15 item in the budget specific to that. The
16 ambiguity of how the projects in further
17 evidence of learning linked to curriculum and
18 articulation of a teacher's role, especially
19 when STEAM is related.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh?

21 DR. OWOH: I made the motion to deny
22 because I still have remaining concerns and
23 unanswered -- unanswered questions on the
24 curriculum supports for the students,
25 educational support and development that would

1 need to be provided, and then several unplanned
2 and unclear sections of the application and
3 preparation process.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams?

5 DR. WILLIAMS: I -- I supported the
6 motion. There are unanswered questions, e.g.,
7 the reading program, the curriculum that the
8 presenters are willing to address, but I
9 believe more time is needed to address these
10 questions appropriately.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And, Mr. Wilson?

12 MR. WILSON: I voted -- excuse me. I
13 voted against the motion. I would prefer to
14 table the application to give the applicant
15 sufficient time to demonstrate -- sufficient
16 time without foreclosing a whole year waiting,
17 but to demonstrate the demand and the need and
18 the interest of the public and parents in that
19 area.

20 And I quite agree with Dr. Williams and
21 Dr. Hernandez's evaluations of the local
22 situation there.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. We hope
24 that you can take this feedback and be able
25 to -- to look over things, and we do appreciate

1 you being here today.

2 So at this time we're going to take a
3 break. Let's break until 10:30, and then at
4 10:30 we'll start our second -- our review for
5 our second hearing. Thank you.

6 (WHEREUPON, a break was held from
7 10:17 a.m. to 10:32 a.m.)

8 A-3: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
9 APPLICATION: PIONEER SCHOOLS, NORTH LITTLE ROCK,
10 ARKANSAS:

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. At this time we
12 will call our meeting back to order. And the
13 next item on our action agenda is the hearing
14 of Open-Enrollment Public Charter School
15 Application, Pioneer Schools North Little Rock,
16 Arkansas.

17 Ms. Perry, if you will come forward and
18 introduce this.

19 MS. PERRY: Pioneer Schools is a proposed
20 Open-Enrollment Public Charter School to be
21 located within North Little Rock School
22 District. The sponsoring entity is Pioneer
23 Schools. The applicant is requesting to serve
24 students in grades K-12, with a maximum
25 enrollment of 1,000 beginning in the 2020-2021

1 school year. The applicant has notified the
2 affected districts of this proposed public
3 charter school.

4 ADE staff reviewed the application, and
5 concerns were shared with the applicant for
6 response. The application, the ADE evaluation,
7 and the applicant's responses are included for
8 the Charter Authorizing Panel.

9 Speaking today for Pioneer Schools is
10 William Thomas-Felton, Head Education Director.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Perry,
12 before you leave, you mentioned K-12. And I
13 just, in the application, it -- the maximum
14 grade level is K-9, so can we just get a
15 clarification?

16 MS. PERRY: It is K-9. I'm sorry.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: K-9? Okay. I just
18 wanted to get clarification on that.

19 MS. PERRY: Typo.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I understand.

21 Okay. So will all representatives of this
22 application and anyone speaking in opposition
23 please stand and receive the oath.

24 (WHEREUPON, the witnesses were sworn by
25 the Chairman.)

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

2 If you will come to the microphone and
3 state your name for the record, you are
4 recognized, and you will have 20 minutes to
5 begin your presentation.

6 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: My name is William
7 Felton, William Thomas-Felton.

8 I am the Head of Schools for Pioneer
9 Public Charter.

10 When -- about 12 years ago I started
11 working on a school project to create a school
12 that was targeted towards Arkansas and the
13 needs of Arkansans and school teachers and the
14 students therein. I've had eight years of
15 experience at Martin Luther King where I
16 started my career, I taught 2nd and 3rd grade
17 and was one of the first EAST facilitators for
18 an elementary school there.

19 I spent five years, the first five years
20 at eStem, I then spent a year in North Little
21 Rock, followed by three years as a
22 CPA/Principal in Jacksonville, and then I was
23 with Rockbridge for one year and I'm currently
24 at Exalt Southwest.

25 The -- the mission statement is that

1 Pioneer is a member of a community ecosystem
2 guided by Master Teachers and student voice
3 that will facilitate experiences outside the
4 four walls to engage students to be passionate,
5 empathetic, and global citizens, hoping to
6 deeply get them to understand and adapt to this
7 world in the future.

8 A little explanation of that is that in a
9 community ecosystem we are actually looking at
10 a community of individuals, not just teachers,
11 administrators, and students, but also parents
12 and family, businesses, colleges, and local
13 community leaders.

14 For Master Teachers we are looking at
15 teachers that are trained heavily in what we
16 call a program that will help facilitate
17 learning from apprentice teachers.

18 For a student voice, we can talk about
19 that. We really feel that it's beneficial for
20 students to give their input into what happens.
21 When they realize their expertise and opinions
22 matter they tend to be more engaged and
23 involved. And then the skills built during the
24 process mirror those that the employees were
25 asking the schools to produce.

1 Outside the four walls, even though it's a
2 common phrase, we've learned through research
3 that depth of knowledge is very important, and
4 that Webb talks about the highest level
5 requiring sustaining strategic thinking
6 processes over a long period of time to solve a
7 real life problem. With us being heavily
8 engaged in the community, we are looking for
9 those opportunities.

10 Passion happens when a student enjoys
11 going to school, when they can have their voice
12 heard, they can create projects to show
13 mastery. You know, we do understand this is
14 teacher facilitated. And my experience at
15 Rockbridge Montessori showed that three year
16 old, four year old, and kindergarteners can
17 actually become passionate about learning
18 through their work cycle, a three-hour work
19 cycle where they get to investigate work with
20 teachers and small groups and pretty much
21 tinker and building things, things that they
22 are interested in.

23 This also requires Maker Space and the use
24 of Genius Hour.

25 Empathy, we are quite aware that, you

1 know, empathy is something that is missing in a
2 lot of youth. By teaching and employing
3 empathy in the school we can build positive
4 classroom culture, strengthen the community,
5 and prepare students to be leaders.

6 A study from the Center of Creative
7 Leadership says that empathy is positively
8 related to job performance and that it can be
9 taught by incorporating reading and culturally
10 accurate books in the classroom. This also
11 includes technology empathy.

12 In 2012-'16 the Department of Education
13 established the International Strategy to
14 Strengthening Education. This is sometimes
15 referred under the larger umbrella of
16 Culturally Appropriate Schools. A Globally
17 Competent Student is one who can investigate
18 the world, weigh perspectives, interact with
19 different audiences and take action.

20 When we talk about understand and adapt,
21 we're talking about how fast the world moves.

22 When I was a kid the cellular phone was in
23 the shoe of a bumbling special agent. Now
24 technology is moving so fast. When I was a kid
25 I had no idea that this was coming and today

1 our students are inundated with newness.

2 When we look at the five pillars that we
3 base Pioneer on, of course, the first is
4 academic achievement. We want to ensure
5 academics and student achievement is our top
6 priority and we believe the following pillars
7 will only support that.

8 When we talk about the student well-being
9 initiative, this is based on research that
10 shows that students that are -- have their
11 basic needs and that are engaged into other
12 activities help development them into young
13 leaders and enjoy going to school.

14 We divide it into four years -- or four
15 sessions, play and fun, mental and physical
16 health, city and arts, and involvement and
17 improvement. In each of these areas we have a
18 first year plan when the school opens in 2020,
19 and then as we grow in future years.

20 We've already looked at, you know, most
21 schools request no counselor, we are wanting a
22 counselor. We are also looking at cognitive
23 behavioral therapists for the development of
24 students that might be suffering from PTSD and
25 other things that I have noticed in my time

1 serving the student populations as those.

2 We are going to be a shared leadership
3 school. We do believe that those decisions
4 that impact stakeholders the most should have a
5 leg in the game. Over the past several decades
6 a new model of interdependence has arose.
7 Margaret Wheatley, she talks about the approach
8 in which people organize together to accomplish
9 more. She says, "Behind every organizing
10 impulse is the realization that by joining with
11 others we can accomplish something important we
12 could not accomplish alone." That is why
13 having the community, the parents, the
14 students, local leaders in the process is so
15 important.

16 The teacher training program, this is
17 something that we are trying -- we have not set
18 forth because we need to work with the ADE and
19 other organizations to ensure that we are in
20 line with protocols and laws. We want to bring
21 in everyone that's involved in this, local
22 colleges, the ADE, and alternative certifying
23 programs to plan how this will look. That is
24 why, one of the reasons we've waited an extra
25 year to start, so that we can do this and not

1 be rushed. Even if it's it doesn't start until
2 year three or four, as long as we're doing what
3 we feel is correct.

4 I really feel like my experience as a
5 student teacher did not prepare me for
6 education, and I've worked as a mentor to a lot
7 of first year teachers. And the frustration
8 was there are so many things that a teacher has
9 to go through that they are not properly
10 trained and prepared for those little bitty
11 things that people don't think of.

12 In this model, the Master Teacher will be
13 working with the apprentice teacher for two
14 years, and they will be working side by side,
15 not just observing but co-teaching, going to
16 professional development together, researching
17 data, talking to parents, managing the
18 classroom.

19 Career Maker Spaces, I've learned over the
20 years with EAST lab that that constructive
21 approach in areas that are tied to standards
22 and learning where students have certain
23 projects they want to build, to learn, and to
24 understand more and to apply is a great way for
25 students to love learning.

1 For early education we've looked at the
2 EAST Lab Project Lead The Way, and we don't
3 want to go and say we're not teaching the
4 basics, we do know, these are the things that
5 the local businesses and leaders say that they
6 want from their students, not only to be able
7 to work in collaborative grouping or cooperate,
8 but also to write and read, to be able to
9 problem solve and be innovative.

10 Tinkering spaces are what we call labs.
11 In the middle school will look more like these
12 skills both hard and soft. So we're hoping
13 down the line to work with other high schools
14 and then partner with other businesses to
15 create these labs.

16 We've talked to several construction
17 companies, VCC, Alessi Keyes and Hydra. We've
18 talked to the architectural firm, ARS, Holiday
19 Inn and Marriott, we've talked to all of the
20 local businesses down in the area of North
21 Little Rock, and they would love this idea of
22 kids going to school, learning the skills that
23 business leaders want them to know, and then
24 building minor labs or labs particularly
25 targeting certain skills. For instance, one of

1 the things Dassault was talking was if we know
2 in two years we're going to need, you know, 30
3 leatherworkers, it would be great to work with
4 local high schools.

5 Now, this sounds like a vocational school
6 project, and it kind of is, and we would need
7 to work with the ADE and Dr. Kremers to set up
8 that kind of thing, because we want to instill
9 these skills from kindergarten up.

10 The other thing is is we want to invite
11 other schools to come in and work with these
12 other businesses and be the kind of agent
13 between them.

14 Now if we have students that want to go to
15 college, that is great. We want to make sure
16 we have every option available for them, but I
17 have seen, working at a high school, that
18 forcing students to college because you want
19 100 percent college acceptance rate is not
20 always the best thing for some students,
21 especially when I have people in my family with
22 no college degrees that make three times as
23 much as I do.

24 To lessen the loss of instruction or
25 regression of learning we're doing the extended

1 year with family breaks that are targeted
2 around holidays. The daily will be extended
3 and the extended year will go from July until
4 June.

5 When we talk about curriculum, at Pioneer
6 we not only use curriculum with pedagogy that
7 we can prove with evidence to move student
8 achievement, we have experiences and training
9 with curriculums over years in education. They
10 will be developing and implementing and
11 assessing MAPS based on these curriculums.

12 We do know that explicit instruction is
13 very powerful because Dr. Hattie has made an
14 analysis that shows that; however, we also know
15 that lining up with the Science of Reading,
16 making sure that we have a strong foundation in
17 phonics, phonetic awareness, vocabulary
18 building, these things are also important and
19 we really want to make sure that these are
20 taught through all teachers through all grades
21 in all subjects having that basic knowledge.
22 This will require heavy training for our
23 teachers, both in reading and out of reading
24 curriculum, but we know that research shows
25 that this is the best way to help students

1 read.

2 The other thing is grasping phenomenal
3 science is about real world science and
4 phenomena that happens in the world, and then
5 hands on history incorporates reading and
6 writing. When we talk about vocabulary in
7 science, social studies, and math, we're
8 looking at Marzano's instructional vocabulary
9 instruction for explicit instruction.

10 Now these are not set in stone, these are
11 things that are researching. We do like some
12 of them but there are other things that we're
13 looking at that has a more phonetic awareness
14 in higher grades and how that looks.

15 We are going to have a Pre-K-12 career and
16 college planning. This will be a specialist
17 who will work, making sure that we make
18 students aware of these opportunities and
19 pathways. We will be using PLCs.

20 The four and -- the four and one school
21 week, we'll have four days on our academic
22 schedule and one day of what we call Pioneer
23 Community Driven Enrichment Day. Now teachers
24 will be able to teach classes that they enjoy;
25 so, for instance, if I was a teacher I enjoy

1 photography, and teaching kids photography you
2 can tie in a lot of standards with that. But
3 again, this is all led with instructional
4 leaders who have a firm foundation in
5 curriculum and instruction.

6 Now, the community members that we've
7 already talked to are interested in coming in
8 and teaching sessions -- sessions. For
9 instance, we have somebody that would like to
10 come in and teach kids how to eat healthy.
11 There are other organizations that we've talked
12 to about, you know, having an engagement with
13 science, having an astronomy lesson followed by
14 star gazing, and everything is dedicated to
15 give the sense of agency and opportunity to our
16 learners.

17 Now we are using Hattie's approaches
18 that -- that are being shown as the most
19 effective for student achievement, with
20 directive exclusive instruction, we are going
21 to model note taking and model for our
22 students. We're focusing on meta-cognition and
23 problem solving, and then we're teaching the
24 mastery, but we know that reciprocal teaching
25 is very important for this. Space practice and

1 then cultural awareness and relevance.

2 The Pioneer difference, what we're trying
3 to accomplish is to have a set of Master
4 Teachers that are able to guide and do a
5 training with teachers in the classroom. We
6 want these teachers to leave our program in two
7 years not with only high achievement scores for
8 our students but to go out into Arkansas, to go
9 out into Pulaski County and help other schools
10 and be leaders in their schools to effect
11 change and improve learning. We are using
12 explicit in teaching for most of our subjects
13 when it is proven by evidence to work.

14 We want to focus on student success, not
15 only academically but also by wellness and
16 health. This is why we wanted to have a nurse
17 on staff, and we wanted to eventually put in a
18 student-based health center.

19 We're looking at specific career paths for
20 the older grades, and we're going to focus on
21 both soft and the basic skills that workers
22 said they need, and our intention is to only
23 try to serving severe low socioeconomic areas
24 where we will place our schools.

25 So this is time for questions.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So you do have
2 about six and a half minutes remaining, but if
3 you're finished with your presentation we'll
4 see if there is anyone here to speak in
5 opposition.

6 Okay? Any opposition?

7 Checking.

8 MS. PERRY: No.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. No? Not at this
10 time.

11 All right. So we will move on into
12 addressing some of the unresolved issues or
13 remaining questions that might have been part
14 of the application.

15 So, Dr. Boyd and Ms. Hyatt and Mr. Felton,
16 they will need you to stay handy to --

17 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- to work through any
19 of those.

20 DR. BOYD: Thank you, Dr. Pfeffer.

21 The applicant has provided a written
22 agreement with the local library, which was a
23 real main concern, so that has been corrected.
24 Thank you.

25 I don't know that we have spoke

1 specifically to the qualifications that the
2 people providing professional development in
3 the areas of gifted and talented and
4 alternative learning will have.

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: I strongly believe the
6 best thing for that is people that are
7 certified to do those, and we will reach out to
8 people that have those qualifications to
9 training.

10 Unfortunately, I -- those are two areas
11 that I myself don't have a lot of experience
12 in; but we have some coworkers that are
13 licensed and a few people in northeast Arkansas
14 that are certified to provide that.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

16 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: But it won't be
17 trained by anybody that can't.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So that -- those
19 were the unresolved issues that were there when
20 ADE staff had reviewed.

21 DR. BOYD: (Nodding head up and down.)

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Do you-all have any
23 questions related to those unresolved issues
24 from the summary?

25 Okay. So we'll go ahead and move on into

1 the legal -- the legal review and --

2 MS. HYATT: Okay. Kind of piggybacking,
3 the first one, Alternative Learning
4 Environment. When I went back through this it
5 seems like all of the waiver requests were
6 rescinded, and so I'm unsure if you're planning
7 to meet the requirements or if you do actually
8 need waivers that -- that haven't been asked
9 for?

10 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: The Board and the
11 members of my planning group felt that it
12 necessary, if we're going to be an open charter
13 to open to all students, therefore if a student
14 comes in that needs an ALE, we will be more
15 than able to accomplish and provide that, so we
16 do not need a waiver for that.

17 MS. HYATT: Okay. Number 2, Attendance is
18 fine.

19 No. 3 is the School Board. Similar issues
20 to the previous one. 6-13-601 through 107,
21 609, 610, 614, and 633 have all been repealed,
22 so waivers of those sections aren't necessary.
23 And I just need them to confirm that they are
24 not needing to seek waivers of those repealed
25 sections.

1 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That is correct.

2 MS. HYATT: Okay. And the waiver request
3 for 613 and 634 was rescinded, but I believe
4 that it is necessary for you to have if your
5 board is going to be appointed rather than
6 elected; so --

7 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Okay. Then we will
8 put those back in.

9 MS. HYATT: Okay. And I just wanted to
10 touch base on 619, which is the meeting
11 requirements, number of times you have to meet.
12 It does allow for the exception for someone to
13 attend the meeting virtually or by phone now
14 for, I think, maximum three times?

15 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Uh-huh.

16 MS. HYATT: So I just wanted to clarify
17 that you're still seeking that waiver request?

18 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So they can miss up
19 to -- they can do it three times with the
20 waiver?

21 MS. HYATT: By phone or virtual without
22 the waiver but --

23 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Okay. That will be
24 fine.

25 MS. HYATT: -- but you're still requesting

1 is, so I just want -- I mean, it's --

2 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: No, you can remove
3 that. I can't think of a situation where it
4 will be more than that.

5 MS. HYATT: Okay. And I'm okay with 617
6 and 620, which are on the list, but I have
7 figured those out since then.

8 And the last one on the list is 613 and
9 612, which is the -- the law that says if
10 you're convicted of a felony it creates a
11 vacancy on the Board. I believe that the only
12 section in need of that is (c), which requires
13 the vacancy to be filled as it says in 611,
14 which they are getting a waiver from, rather
15 than the entire section. So I'll just allow
16 you to --

17 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, no, I don't want
18 any criminals serving on the Board so I will be
19 staying with that.

20 MS. HYATT: I didn't think you did.

21 Yeah, can you just confirm that 613 and
22 612(c) is the request?

23 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay. Okay. Number 4,
25 Business Managers. All of the requests were

1 rescinded for this too, so I wanted to make
2 sure you're planning on following the rules or,
3 in the alternative, there are suggestions here
4 for things you might need a waiver from.

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: I can trust you, all
6 business rules will be followed "to a T."

7 MS. HYATT: Okay. I'm moving now to
8 No. 12. First thing is they need a waiver
9 under the new standards rather than the old,
10 the new standard Section is 2-G.1. And they
11 will also need an additional waiver of the ADA
12 rules governing Gifted and Talented Program
13 approval standards, so if you can just confirm
14 whether or not you agree to those waivers?

15 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: We do.

16 MS. HYATT: Okay. And I was unsure just
17 on this whether or not you were rescinding
18 6-42-101, I was unclear. So I just wanted
19 either you to confirm that you did intend to
20 rescind it or say, "No, we didn't intend to."

21 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: And which one was
22 that?

23 MS. HYATT: So it goes in with the Gifted
24 and Talented. But I think it's just the
25 legislative intent part rather than 109, which

1 is actually the -- the Gifted and Talented
2 requirements.

3 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Okay. Yeah.

4 MS. HYATT: Okay. Okay. Moving now to
5 No. 17, the only issue here is just on
6 standards, you'll need waivers under the new
7 standards of 4-F.1 and 4-F.2. Can you confirm?

8 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, please.

9 MS. HYATT: Okay. And No. 19, same with
10 standards, so for superintendents it was 4-B.2,
11 4-C.1 and 2 for principals, 4-D.1 for teachers,
12 4-E.1 for guidance counselors, and 4-F.1 for
13 library media.

14 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Okay.

15 MS. HYATT: And then I just wanted to
16 confirm whether or not you needed a waiver of
17 4-B.1, which is the requirement that the
18 district employ a full-time superintendent;
19 employed by the district, not the CMO, and full
20 time.

21 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes.

22 MS. HYATT: You do need a waiver there?

23 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, they will be
24 employed full time by the district; so I guess
25 that's --

1 MS. HYATT: So no waiver?

2 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: -- no waiver, yeah.

3 MS. HYATT: Okay. Okay. On No. 21, I
4 just wanted to confirm that you intended to
5 seek a waiver of 6-17-2301, et seq., rather
6 than just the 2301 itself?

7 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That's correct.

8 MS. HYATT: Okay. And I just wanted a
9 little clarification on No. 21; 6-17-2203 and
10 2403 are the minimum salary schedules. In the
11 rationale for the waiver, it was so that they
12 can pay more to their employees and their
13 teachers, which wouldn't require a waiver
14 because these are just minimums. So I just
15 wanted to clarify that with you to see if you
16 wanted to just provide a little bit of
17 additional explanation.

18 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, we -- we want to
19 make sure, like, if we need to hire somebody
20 that, like, for instance, with plumbing, then
21 they -- and they are not a certified teacher
22 then so we can pay them at a different scale
23 than a certified teacher as well. Right.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay.

25 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: We just want to be

1 competitive also.

2 MS. HYATT: Okay. Number 23, it's just
3 standards, the new standards for principals are
4 4-C.1 and 4-C.2, which covers the accreditation
5 and -- and the other issues with the
6 principals.

7 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes.

8 MS. HYATT: Okay. Number 29, Teacher
9 Licensure, there -- there are several things on
10 this. So Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-17-201,
11 et seq., is related to person -- personnel
12 policies rather than teacher licensure. So I
13 was unsure if that was intentional, to have it
14 in this section, or if you intended maybe to
15 put it somewhere else or --

16 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: With the changes I
17 guess it needs to go -- but I think we intended
18 so that we wouldn't have to say it in our
19 personnel handbook; right?

20 MS. HYATT: So it is a requirement that
21 you have the personnel policies.

22 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Uh-huh.

23 MS. HYATT: That they be posted on your
24 website, that they be given teachers, and that
25 they are incorporated into teacher's contract,

1 all that stuff.

2 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Right. That's why we
3 wanted to waive that.

4 MS. HYATT: Okay. On 6-17-1004 -- oh,
5 pardon me.

6 On 6-17-320, that is not a law that
7 exists. I believe that it was just maybe a
8 typo to 302 --

9 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That's right.

10 MS. HYATT: -- but I just wanted to
11 confirm that with you. Okay?

12 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes.

13 MS. HYATT: And we have already gone
14 through all of these, the new standard sections
15 4-B.1, 4-C.1, 4-C.2, 4-B.1, but those are just
16 reiterated here.

17 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

18 MS. HYATT: And I just needed you to
19 confirm that you knew that ADE rules governing
20 Arkansas Qualified Teacher Requirements cannot
21 be waived?

22 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am, we
23 understand that.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay. Legal is good.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So Panel

1 members, as we go through the waivers, are
2 there any of these that you had questions
3 relating to that you would like to go ahead and
4 ask about now, either for legal or for the
5 school?

6 MR. WILSON: No.

7 DR. OWOH: I have one.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh?

9 DR. OWOH: In regards to Arkansas
10 Qualified Teacher requirement, since we've
11 received that clarification, will you go ahead
12 and just expound on how you would ensure that
13 all of the educators who need to meet the AQT
14 or meet the AQT requirements have met those
15 before they start teaching?

16 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, sir. Of course
17 we'll do the standard background checks, both
18 of them, but also a transcript is going to be
19 required, proof of completion of the program in
20 order to reach that qualification before we
21 hire them.

22 DR. OWOH: Okay.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Anyone else have a
24 waiver question?

25 I did have one.

1 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Your waiver from the
3 grading scale, the Uniform Grading Scale, can
4 you tell us a little bit about what the plan is
5 there if you get a waiver from that?

6 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, yes, ma'am.
7 This might be a legal advice. Because what
8 we're looking at is the -- it would be the same
9 scale, but I think what we're looking at is,
10 like, A would be exemplary work, that went way
11 up; B is that they can master the standard.
12 Anything under that is what we call redo with
13 support; so they would -- C, D, F, we will make
14 sure that they get the support before they
15 reach the standard for the grade they get and
16 they will have the entire quarter to make up
17 that grade with support.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And the main
19 reason I asked was thinking about grade nine --

20 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yeah, that one will --

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- where we get into --

22 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: -- accreditation --

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- student
24 accreditation and things like that if a student
25 after grade nine leaves, what would that mean

1 for that -- okay, so --

2 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: It will be the A, B --

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So it's more about how
4 you're going to intervene with students in --
5 based on the letter grades that they have?

6 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am. Yes,
7 ma'am.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. That answers my
9 question then.

10 MS. HYATT: And I have one more thing.
11 And I'm going to look into this, so if I could,
12 we could come back to this after you have your
13 questions.

14 But this was not a waiver request, but
15 Alexandra just pointed out it might need to be
16 for the way they are planning on doing physical
17 education, so a waiver may be necessary to
18 accomplish that. And so I'm going to look
19 quickly while you ask questions, and then if
20 you wouldn't mind allowing me to come back and
21 just make sure they have everything they need?
22 Thanks.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

24 And so I will turn it over now to the
25 Panel for questions that you may have

1 formulated while you reviewed the application.

2 Mr. Wilson, do you have any questions?

3 MR. WILSON: Yeah.

4 Mr. Felton, tell me about your public
5 hearing, your town hall that y'all conducted in
6 April. Looks like you had a number of people
7 in person there, and then you had a number of
8 inquiries through the social media. Tell me
9 how that works.

10 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So we did a live cast
11 through Facebook and other media while we were
12 doing presentation. A lot of people tagged in,
13 asked questions, showed support, made a lot of
14 follow-up emails. We made sure that everybody
15 would have a chance for whatever they need. We
16 had some follow-up town halls later down the
17 line where more people showed up as the word
18 got out. We've also met with the Argenta
19 Business District to help get the word out to
20 get people talking about this.

21 MR. WILSON: I didn't see in the
22 application the reference to more than one town
23 hall meeting, which is okay --

24 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Right. We just put
25 that first one in there.

1 MR. WILSON: But I'm trying to get a sense
2 of public interest, public demand, parental
3 inquiries. Tell me -- tell me more about that.

4 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, we've -- we're
5 looking at a place, several locations that are
6 close to the Boone Park Elementary School on
7 7th Street. We've had a lot of parents come to
8 those meetings saying that, you know, if we're
9 going to build in this area, they would like to
10 have access to a school like this.

11 We -- it was really not planned town
12 halls, these were churches and families that
13 said, hey, we want our parents to meet you,
14 could you please come on this day and talk with
15 people. We had one at the library there, there
16 was one at the Historical Society in North
17 Little Rock. And so they -- they were kind of
18 last minute and they have kind of happened
19 after the application was sent in. Does that
20 make sense?

21 MR. WILSON: Sort of.

22 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: I should have added
23 them when I sent in the new material.

24 MR. WILSON: This is a self-serving
25 question, but give me some assessment, your --

1 your assessment of how strong or interested --
2 how strong the demand is in that local area
3 for --

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson, I can't
5 hear you.

6 MR. WILSON: Yeah. Give me a sense of how
7 strong the local demand is in that area for --

8 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, the
9 Argenta business --

10 MR. WILSON: -- for the --

11 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: I'm sorry the Argenta
12 Council -- I'm sorry. You know, they are
13 building new housing in that area. They
14 actually had a request for people that wanted
15 to move -- one of the questions they are
16 getting a lot of is is there a school located
17 nearby, a quality school. When they go and
18 look at the schools that are there, they are
19 not quite interested in moving in. So there is
20 a -- there is a demand as they build these new
21 areas and they are filling up already. With
22 the new local businesses and the restructuring
23 of Argenta, there is demand. I know for a
24 fact, and I don't like to estimate, but most of
25 the families that we have talked to have come

1 from 7th Street, and that's probably about 30
2 or 40 families.

3 MR. WILSON: Okay. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez?

5 DR. HERNANDEZ: Still limited to two?

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Let's -- let's start
7 with two.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. So the first one,
9 going back to the -- the cap question, on
10 the -- I know we said there was a typo on
11 there, that it was K-9. But I was curious
12 about the overall enrollment cap was set at
13 1,000, and typically -- and this may be a
14 Ms. Boyd -- Dr. Boyd question -- is that we
15 always kind of like see what that trend looks
16 like going up to 1,000, and so I'm just --

17 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Okay.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: I'm just curious about,
19 you know, it's -- what we're seeing is it stops
20 K-9 at 525, but there is still that -- does the
21 cap need to be set at 525 or does it need to be
22 a thousand?

23 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: I'm sorry. I messed
24 up. Dr. Boyd just pointed out, the -- we --
25 the ninth grade is at year five, we will

1 eventually go to seniors, which up to the 12th
2 grade, so it will be a thousand. So when you
3 asked K-9, I was confused, it's K-12, so that
4 will be a thousand. No, I'm thinking --

5 DR. BOYD: No, you're right. I just want
6 to -- I just want to restate and clarify.

7 So charter applications are initially only
8 issued for five years, so the table accounts
9 for the first five years, and that accounts for
10 K-9. The application's intention is to be for
11 a full K-12 eventually, and eventually to reach
12 a thousand students for the cap, should they
13 be approved and renewed.

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: So I guess my question is
15 if we're approving this charter based on a K-12
16 configuration and a thousand cap, are they held
17 to the stair step increase that they have
18 outlined, or are we opening them up to say they
19 can be a K-12 tomorrow with the thousand
20 students?

21 DR. BOYD: So they will be held to the
22 stair step plan, unless they come back and ask
23 for an amendment.

24 So in the previous years we've had schools
25 that have been approved and then they had a lot

1 more interest than they originally thought they
2 were going to have, and they have had to come
3 back and request to go ahead and roll up sooner
4 or add more numbers within the cap that they
5 were granted. Does that make sense?

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: It does. So would it be
7 appropriate to adopt it or approve it that way
8 or would it be more appropriate to approve it
9 where the five year is going to be?

10 DR. BOYD: So in the past the way we've
11 approved it is we've approved it for the full
12 plan; so like in this case it would be K-12 and
13 a thousand, with the caveats that in year one
14 they will be planning and have no students, in
15 year two they will have K-6, and only 350
16 students or less.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. And my
18 second question is around in the -- in that
19 first year being a planning year, but when I
20 look at the budget, the budget reflects revenue
21 and expenditures in '19-'20 and then '20-'21.

22 And so my question is, is obviously not
23 having any students, there won't be revenue
24 coming in in the planning year, and so how does
25 that -- how did the --

1 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That's -- right.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: The way it's -- maybe it's
3 just our budget template that maybe you have to
4 put in two years?

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yeah, that -- that's
6 the way it was, we had to put something in
7 there. We thought, okay, what if we get a
8 grant, a start-up grant, then that's what that
9 will be based on. If that doesn't happen, we
10 have no problem working for free, so I mean,
11 and the budget will be built on the building
12 itself and the curriculum materials moving
13 forward.

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: So planning year would be
15 based on any grants that would be received and
16 staffing would be according to whatever funding
17 was available --

18 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, sir.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- and then -- because
20 what shows in our books as 19-'20 would
21 actually be '20-'21 in the third year?

22 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

24 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: And I didn't know how
25 to explain that when we went the extra year.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh?

2 DR. OWOH: Couple of questions about your
3 training, educator training. Will you provide
4 some additional information on what your Master
5 Teacher training would look like and the
6 purpose, kind of expound on the purpose of
7 that? I know you kind of mentioned to assist
8 other teachers both inside the school system
9 and additional districts, but if you could
10 expound upon that as well as the cultural
11 awareness training that you mentioned, the
12 purpose of that and what that would look like.

13 And then you also mentioned PLCs, if you
14 could share what that would look like within
15 your school system as well.

16 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, sir. So let's
17 start with your first question about Master
18 Teachers. For Master Teachers they will have
19 to be certified and have some experience within
20 the classrooms.

21 All professional development will be, you
22 know, just like normal schools with the 30.
23 The Master Teachers will be trained more in how
24 to mentor and coach on one end but also make
25 sure they understand the curriculum and

1 instruction that we use on a daily. So they
2 would be trained and explicit instruction,
3 direct instruction, you know, bringing in
4 experts from those programs to help in that
5 area. And then making sure that they are,
6 almost want to say overly trained --

7 DR. OWOH: Uh-huh.

8 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: -- in order to assist
9 for the apprentice teacher. Now, the
10 apprentice teacher will also be trained over a
11 two-year term on those same things, but they
12 will also be working side by side with the
13 teacher.

14 So in my experience I went in and I spent
15 six weeks -- and I know it's changed since
16 then, I spent six weeks in one grade and six
17 weeks in the next, and I only really taught
18 maybe three days, and but they are going to be
19 teaching, co-teaching every day. Now, I know
20 that's changed over the years and by no means
21 am I downing anything.

22 But this would be side by side. And I've
23 seen that work when I was at the Montessori
24 school, and now at Exalt we use the co-teaching
25 model, and it with the younger teacher with

1 less experience and the accredited teacher that
2 has training and the most experience in those
3 items.

4 For the cultural awareness, this one is
5 really like -- there is not a -- we really want
6 to make sure that we're using responsive and
7 restorative justice in our school for
8 discipline. I've been trained in that. We
9 did -- we did restorative at the CPA in
10 Jacksonville in high school; I used it at
11 Rockbridge; and we're using it now at Exalt.
12 It's a very good system, it helps teachers
13 understand. And there is a lot of front
14 loading you have to do with teachers about, you
15 know, why kids behave a certain way. What does
16 PTSD look like for students living in a
17 stressful environment. You know, what -- how
18 does poverty affect learning, you know,
19 teaching with the brain in mind or teaching
20 with poverty in mind, those kind of situations.
21 And we are looking at those more being, you
22 know, half experts coming in and talking with
23 teachers, another half book study. Most of the
24 stuff that I've learned over the years is
25 experience.

1 Martin Luther King was in a district
2 school, Jacksonville was mostly poverty, and
3 then of course Rockbridge and Exalt are
4 100 percent. And once I learned more about how
5 things work -- now, Exalt, on the other hand,
6 you know, is Hispanic, over 70 percent
7 Hispanic, so that's another learning curve that
8 we need to make sure that we have our teachers
9 with ESOL training and then also make sure that
10 they are -- you know, have special education
11 training in order to provide modifications and
12 anything of that nature that need to make sure
13 the student is successful.

14 And, I'm sorry, your third one?

15 DR. OWOH: PLCs.

16 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So I've worked with
17 PLCs -- the second question it was, that was
18 your second question.

19 I've worked with PLCs in those three
20 campuses too. The way it's set up, there are
21 several different versions. In high school, of
22 course, we went by curriculum. They will look
23 at data that the students were scoring on
24 biweekly assessments or weekly assessments, and
25 then kind of adjust what they think the focus

1 needs to be for the next year or how we need to
2 move forward.

3 In the lower grades we looked at exit
4 tickets, weekly assessments in math, and also
5 took a look and said what are they getting,
6 what are they getting, and we set up our small
7 group RTI based on that information and where
8 they needed to go.

9 So the PLCs for me is not only just about
10 making decisions in the school but it's also
11 making sure that we're giving students
12 everything they need and having the teachers
13 looking at student work and student data in
14 order to make those decisions. Again that will
15 have to be trained and modeled -- and modeled.
16 I've been very successful in that.

17 DR. OWOH: Okay. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams?

19 DR. WILLIAMS: What's PLC?

20 DR. OWOH: Professional Learning
21 Communities.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, okay.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: In the microphone.

24 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: It's Professional
25 Learning Communities.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

2 I just, you know, I got the -- talk -- I
3 had a mind melt there for a minute there.

4 I have a couple of questions for you. You
5 know, the Master Teacher model and the
6 Montessori model are expensive models.

7 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: They will be, yes.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: And so kind of going back
9 in the past a little bit. So how are you going
10 to make sure that this is going to work out?
11 You know, and you don't receive funding for the
12 Pre-K piece, so how do you plan on making that
13 work?

14 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: I totally understand,
15 I mean, of course we can't use federal funds
16 for three-year or four-year programs.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely, uh-huh.

18 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: And the idea is, of
19 course, you know, grants or anything we can do
20 or have to try to charge parents the minimal
21 amount and then, hopefully -- I mean that's why
22 we've given ourselves so much time to get this
23 going. You know, I know it sounds like a pie
24 in the sky, but I really truly believe that it
25 can happen.

1 The master teacher is going to be about
2 slow starts so we definitely have to work with
3 the ADE and the certification programs to make
4 sure that, you know, whatever we're deciding to
5 do fits what the State Department says. And
6 even local colleges, you know, we've kind of
7 had passing conversations, not real in-depth
8 conversations, about what that would look like
9 for a college and how that would work. They're
10 kind of interested in the idea of paying the
11 apprentice teacher or the student teacher to go
12 to school. I've met with Arkansas Teacher Core
13 and I'm going to have a discussion with the
14 ethics -- Arkansas Ethics, about the same thing
15 of getting teachers in there to work with
16 Master Teachers. I think it's doable if you
17 don't put all of your eggs in one basket and
18 try to make the first year everything.

19 Does that make sense? So you're going to
20 have to build up that.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. So you're looking at
22 the Master Teachers are only working with
23 pre-service teachers, basically, or student
24 teachers and not --

25 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Student teachers or

1 alternative certification programs, things like
2 that.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. And not, like, first
4 or second year teachers?

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: We -- you know,
6 that's -- we never thought about that. That's
7 a -- it probably would -- that would be a good
8 idea, actually. You know, we could partner
9 with the local school districts. I really want
10 this charter to partner with Little Rock and
11 North Little Rock and be open to that. You
12 know, that's why we've put in, you know, at
13 least one day of our professional development
14 is offered to the public school if they want to
15 attend and if they want to see it. So that
16 actually is good, I think, we could work it out
17 with a district that, hey, you have a
18 first-year teacher, you want to work with one
19 of our Master Teachers, I have no problem
20 working with the school districts on that.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, all of this, it
22 sounds like you've really got a lot of great
23 experience, first I looked at the supplementary
24 material that was provided. And, you know,
25 my -- I'll just tell you my -- my own

1 concern -- well, my concern right now is that
2 between the Montessori piece and the Master
3 Teacher piece and the student achievement
4 piece, you -- there is a lot going on here.

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: (Nodding head up and
6 down.)

7 DR. WILLIAMS: And then when I try to
8 apply a financial model to all of that I'm --
9 I'm still coming up with some --

10 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So I think I know
11 where you --

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Even though it looks good
13 on paper now, reality is --

14 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So Montessori, what
15 we're talking about is that two and a half hour
16 work cycle.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

18 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So in the Montessori,
19 we don't have to have Montessori equipment in
20 order to make that happen, so there is not
21 really any plan to buy all of that equipment
22 and shelving and furniture. As you know and I
23 know, that was expensive. However, the
24 training of getting students to build stamina
25 and perseverance, working on a project over an

1 extended period of time, that doesn't really
2 cost anything.

3 Now, the Master Teacher program, these
4 teachers -- we've talked to a lot of teachers.
5 I've worked with a lot of teachers, really
6 great teachers. And for them and for me when I
7 was a teacher, I know it sounds some -- but it
8 really wasn't about the money, when I got to
9 thinking about it. It was about having someone
10 listen to me, being able to develop myself as a
11 better teacher or a better leader, to grow.
12 And then, basically, in order to, you know,
13 build my efficacy for other -- that what I was
14 doing was actually effective for students.

15 So we've had a lot of teachers that want
16 to do this, that want to apply if we open. And
17 they have even talked about, look, I know I
18 make this much at the school district, but I
19 would work there for whatever you offered to
20 have that opportunity, and that's a common
21 thread with all of the great teachers that I've
22 talked to and worked with over the years, just
23 to be able to work with students and have that
24 freedom to do what they know impacts student
25 growth, evidence based, being able to work,

1 co-work teaching, those kind of things.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. Okay.

3 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: But I would promise
4 you, finance for me after last year is a
5 priority, so I will not -- I promise you that
6 will not happen again. Not when I start it,
7 no, no, no.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: So if all goes well, we
9 won't be having another conversation?

10 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: No. No. No. That --
11 no. No.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: All right.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

14 DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh. In the application
15 it talks about incorporating career readiness,
16 career development throughout the application
17 and the frame work of -- of your planning,
18 which is wonderful, especially the lower grades
19 bringing in professionals.

20 Number 1, would there also -- will there
21 also be discussion of when the speaker comes
22 in, they talk about a career field, that there
23 will be discussion of what requirements it
24 takes to prepare for that career?

25 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: (Nodding head up and

1 down.)

2 DR. KREMERS: And then No. 2, when you lay
3 out the frame work for the career and technical
4 education courses, several of those mentioned
5 were not CTE courses, such as drivers ed and
6 EAST initiative. And then in the response you
7 did mention the introduction to business and
8 technology courses, keyboarding, but it didn't
9 address the career pathways, the nine -- the --
10 to lay out the nine coursers that are the
11 career and technical courses and what pathway.
12 So if you would respond.

13 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So that is because,
14 you know, I got stuck on that K-5 -- that first
15 five years. In the waiver we set out computer
16 programming definitely to be one, cybersecurity
17 is another one. Of course, we want to build
18 our own teachers too within the school so that
19 introduction to teaching and that whole career
20 pathway will be optional.

21 The Marriott and Holiday Inn and other,
22 they are really interested in hospitality and
23 helping in that area, and they have a big
24 demand for it currently right now. And then
25 with the construction, that's where I'm going

1 to have to lean on the ADE. What does that
2 look like in a classroom. They have to get
3 their -- their -- their basics, they have to
4 get their credits. Do we put, you know, I --
5 do we put, like, internships into place in
6 order to have that work? What does that look
7 like for a junior or a senior.

8 You know, there is a -- that area for me,
9 I can have the career pathways, I did that at
10 CPA, but that other extra part where they are
11 training them to enter the work force or enter
12 college with above average pay at a specialist,
13 you know, not just a, what we call a grunt, I
14 guess, what does that look like, you know, in
15 conjunction with all the requirements. And,
16 honestly, that's -- you know, I didn't get a
17 chance to meet with your predecessor on that,
18 but I would love to sit down and talk to you
19 because I know that it's doable, I just need
20 assistance in making sure it's done right.

21 DR. KREMERS: And that would be important
22 for the career technical. We do have trade and
23 industry pathways.

24 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes.

25 DR. KREMERS: It does include

1 construction, and there is apprenticeship, so I
2 think it would be critical to collaborate on
3 those pathways.

4 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Absolutely. And
5 Pulaski Tech was also -- we've kind of went
6 back and forth as well, but definitely I need
7 to sit down with you at some point, or my team
8 and I need to sit down with you and your team.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Panel, do you have
10 additional application questions?

11 Okay. Come back to Dr. Hernandez says he
12 does.

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: So you had mentioned a
14 couple things that you had said. One, the
15 APSRC, or I saw them listed as the finance
16 person and didn't see another fiscal entity.
17 So are they going to be completely running the
18 books or are they going to be consultants?

19 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, at the time I
20 knew what APSRC charged so I could put a solid
21 number in there. Of course, you know, we have
22 to do the request for proposals and all that.
23 If they get that, then it would definitely take
24 care of -- at Rockbridge, like they did at
25 Rockbridge, it would be debits, credits,

1 payroll, those kind of things, invoices.
2 The -- the -- the one of the things I liked is
3 I got to meet with them weekly so we got to
4 review, and I definitely want to keep that up
5 because that was very informative to me as a
6 superintendent.

7 At the same time we have a person now
8 focused, and you know why, to focus on HR,
9 making sure background checks are done, and
10 making sure all those things are in place, that
11 we're following the law and those kind of
12 things. And that's the JD that is on the team.

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right. So you will be
14 contracting out basically for fiscal service?

15 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Basically, yes.

16 Since we're starting and funds are
17 limited, I just felt like that would probably
18 the best since I already know what the expense
19 would be solid and I could budget for that.

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: You mentioned your team
21 and that was another question that I have was
22 that, you know, looking at your staffing and
23 spreadsheet, I noticed that in the -- in the
24 year one and year two there seemed to be a lot
25 of administrative costs, a lot of

1 administrative positions, so it was upwards of
2 30 percent of your teaching staff are in
3 administrators.

4 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Uh-huh.

5 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so I was just curious
6 about the reason, the thought, in having, in a
7 of this size in the beginning having four and
8 five different administrative type positions.

9 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Right. So that's
10 going to be a mistake on my part, because I
11 thought it was, like, at the end -- in year
12 one, and, like, the first year of planning no
13 one may be getting paid, which is fine because
14 we all have jobs. In year two, again, without
15 a grant, no one is getting paid. In year
16 three, the pay will be based on the number of
17 students. We can't just say someone is going
18 to get paid this much and not know how many
19 students we get. Does that make sense?

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. So your -- so your
21 intention, just like reading off the list is,
22 is Superintendent, Director of Academics and
23 Instruction -- Instruction, Director of Human
24 Resources, and Director of Operations in the
25 first year, and then the fifth year having a

1 Director of Special Projects and Enrichment.

2 So if I'm understanding you correctly, you
3 may not have all of those positions --

4 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Year three, based on
5 the number of students, we may just have a
6 superintendent or principal and a really good
7 registrar.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

9 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: But, you know, others
10 too in place to make sure that we're doing what
11 we're supposed to.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Others? Keep
13 going?

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

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. So in your NSL --
17 and this is just something you may want to look
18 at -- but in the budget, under your revenues,
19 you had listed your NSL numbers being -- let me
20 find it again -- about 250 students out of 350;
21 and so you had that budgeted at the -- the
22 lowest tier, the zero to 69 percent.

23 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: (Nodding head up and
24 down.)

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: But that's actually would

1 be in the 70 percent range, so you would get
2 that higher tier of revenue, so that's maybe
3 something to look at within your --

4 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Right. We tried to
5 keep out, you know, Title I funding, those
6 funds. We felt like if we could make it on
7 just per student we could show that we could
8 make it and that gives us some viability and
9 then if other funds come in, and we would
10 target that towards specific things for
11 specific students.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: In your mass -- Master
13 Teacher Program, is there -- I know you
14 mentioned that it's -- sometimes it's not about
15 the money but then sometimes it is about the
16 money. And so will there be additional
17 responsibilities outside of the normal school
18 day for Master Teachers and training where
19 there would be --

20 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: (Nodding head up and
21 down.)

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- will there be
23 expectations or a plan to compensate that way
24 or --

25 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: If they work anywhere

1 outside of what their normal contracted hours
2 are, we will compensate, of course.

3 The four and one day on the Friday where
4 those things are happening, there is also
5 people coming in, like P.E. and art, to free up
6 teachers. And the Master Teachers will
7 probably be Leads on the PLCs and that will
8 give them time to do that.

9 Plus, if you're doing project-based
10 learning, if you're working with tinkering
11 labs, that requires a lot of planning,
12 especially if you're going to tie it to
13 standards and make sure it all fits and goes
14 with the curriculum, so they need that extra
15 planning time.

16 We're hoping, when we looked at the
17 regular day, what that would look like, and
18 we've done some mock schedules of times to make
19 sure that they are getting, the students are
20 getting their seat time, which that's not what
21 it's called but you know what I mean, making
22 sure they are getting it and then how that
23 looks for planning with teachers so that they
24 don't have to do anything after the day. And
25 we are going to be asking them, you know, fall

1 fest, you know, come to a ballgame or two if
2 you can, but we're trying to keep them within
3 the scope of what we're asking them to do and
4 the leadership would within that.

5 Now if we have to do a position, like a
6 E.L. position, that would definitely be a
7 stipend to make sure they are being
8 compensated.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I'm going to go ahead
10 and ask a few questions.

11 So the year one is the planning year.

12 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Uh-huh. Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But at this time it
14 kind of goes back to something Dr. Hernandez
15 had asked earlier. You don't have any revenue
16 coming in; is that correct?

17 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That is correct.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So at this time you
19 haven't secured any grants or any of funding?

20 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That's right, because
21 you have to get approved.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Right.

23 And I think the -- the question I would
24 have is just with your -- part of this, with
25 your teacher training program, that first year

1 your plan is to find and train Master Teachers
2 and --

3 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yeah, within that
4 first year. So the first year we might not be
5 able to do apprentice teachership, we're
6 trying to shoot -- you know what I mean,
7 because we want to have the best teachers.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Sure.

9 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: And when we meet with
10 colleges, what does that look like, like what
11 do you want out of your people, what does it
12 the need, if we talk to the Arkansas Teacher
13 Core or somebody like that. Okay. So it may
14 take us that year to establish the Master
15 Teachers before we bring apprentice teachers
16 on.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I guess my question
18 would be without -- without the promise of
19 funding during that planning year --

20 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Uh-huh.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- at what point would
22 you make a decision -- so I guess the question
23 is what if you don't get funding?

24 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, we've mentioned
25 that to them that if we don't get a grant, and

1 they are willing to meet with us in the
2 afternoons and on Saturdays and Sundays.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Who is they?

4 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: The Master Teachers as
5 they apply. I mean we all have jobs outside of
6 this, so right now, you know, we're focused on
7 that. Like my focus is on Exalt. These kind
8 of things are being happening on evenings and
9 weekends when school is not involved. That's
10 similar for other people too, we're willing to
11 put in the work, whatever it takes.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

13 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Now, building funding
14 and that, I'm sure we will get -- that will be
15 fine with. We'll be able to find a building so
16 -- I've talked to people; so --

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And then that's my
18 second question though. Again, as a Panel
19 approving an application when, you know, right
20 now it's a we think we will get it and this is
21 what we'll do, I think it's just more of that
22 at what point, if you don't, do you then -- are
23 not able to do the planning, not able to move
24 forward and then what does that do to the
25 application.

1 So I think that I would just voice that I
2 do have some concerns about that because then
3 that leads into the curriculum, I'm looking at
4 your site on your curriculum, and you talked
5 about a lot of different things.

6 You do have -- you know, specifically,
7 you've talked about the Engage New York and
8 Open Up Math curriculum.

9 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But outside of that
11 there is very little detail on curriculum. And
12 you've talked about the Montessori approach,
13 Explicit Instruction, Hands-on History, but I
14 think again that goes back to, you know, having
15 a planning year is great but having a planning
16 year with no funding, no facility, you know,
17 even -- even the most dedicated people wanting
18 to do on their own, that's a big, big ask, and
19 the kind of curriculum, even just the Engage
20 New York and that doesn't even get -- touch
21 the -- the Science of Reading and the
22 curriculum there. That would be a very big ask
23 and a very big task to try to get people
24 trained up to start a school year, especially
25 then again without a guaranteed funding. So I

1 think that -- that is just something that I
2 would kind of leave out there as part of
3 consideration.

4 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: I understand.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh, did
6 you have any follow-up questions?

7 DR. OWOH: Just one on training.

8 We've -- you discussed the teacher
9 training but I'm curious to hear what training
10 would you provide the building leaders, the
11 educational leaders, to support -- to ensure
12 that they are prepared or have the capacity to
13 support the educators who are in the classrooms
14 as they support and educate our students? So
15 what type of leadership training and support
16 would you or have you prepared or thought about
17 providing?

18 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yeah. I've -- I've
19 been -- like, I've had the benefit of being
20 really well trained in a lot of things. It
21 takes time mentoring. The leadership team has
22 had many years of experience and have trained
23 in several different programs.

24 I'm very familiar with Engage New York. I
25 mean I've taught it, I've actually mentored and

1 coached teachers to teach it. It does take
2 time, there is a lot of reading, a lot of
3 planning involved and knowing your students'
4 data.

5 The Science of Reading, you know, the
6 options for us are really into, like, will we
7 able to get everybody in training of Science of
8 Reading.

9 You know we have a couple of teachers that
10 want to work that have masters in reading or
11 are doing -- are doing it now, are running
12 through the R.I.S.E. Program.

13 So the thing for a leader, though, I
14 believe is that, in my experience, people
15 that we -- we're the kind of people that always
16 reach out for learning. That's -- that's the
17 way we've done it. And, you know, we're
18 heavily trained in coaching, standards, most of
19 us have one or two masters, especially masters
20 in curriculum instruction and building level
21 leadership.

22 Like I said, we've been working on this
23 plan for 12 years. We've thought over and
24 over what does that look like. We've had
25 people committed to us for that long of a

1 period, teachers that would meet with us on
2 weekends and they will say, well, what does
3 this look like, what does that look like, you
4 know, and they are willing to go.

5 Now, I can't -- you know, back to
6 Dr. Pfeffer's question, I can't promise that
7 everybody is going to work for free, that's --
8 that's crazy. However, for the leader
9 training, it really comes down to can you coach
10 an adult. Can you -- when do you know that
11 they are working, when do you step in and say,
12 okay, we're going to do this, or when do you
13 become a collaborator.

14 Also are you familiar with the curriculum,
15 do you understand the curriculum, do you
16 understand the standards. You know, those kind
17 of things can be done in house when you break
18 them down. But also working side by side with
19 the teachers and going through training with
20 them is very -- I just went through direct
21 instruction training with my teachers. It was
22 very beneficial for me as a leader to
23 understand how that program works, what it
24 looks like, so when I go into a classroom to
25 give teacher support, I know how to support

1 them, where -- where they need help, and if
2 there is any resources, where to get them.

3 So I think that's a little vague for you.

4 DR. OWOH: It is.

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yeah.

6 DR. OWOH: So I have a follow-up.

7 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Okay.

8 DR. OWOH: But you -- you, I guess, saw my
9 facial expression.

10 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yeah.

11 DR. OWOH: So it was vague. Because I was
12 really asking, is there a specific plan of
13 support and training that's already -- there
14 that has already been established for the
15 leaders as you start -- start it. And the fact
16 that you mentioned that you've had several
17 years of planning, that's a concern of mine,
18 because if there is not a specific or a
19 specified training path for your leaders and
20 you've had years of planning, then -- well, I
21 guess, that's just a concern. So if you're not
22 able to --

23 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, we were
24 planning --

25 DR. OWOH: -- instead of --

1 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: We were talking
2 about -- you know, the Science of Reading, all
3 right, so when I was in the Little Rock School
4 District we had a sort of similar, we did Words
5 Their Way, heavy phonetic awareness, you know,
6 they moved from whole language. So in our
7 planning sessions a lot of the leaders have
8 said, okay, well, I need this. So I went to
9 college for a couple of semesters in reading
10 just to have that background and help me become
11 a better reading leader.

12 It -- it's kind of hard to explain but
13 over the 12 years we've taken a lot. I joined
14 the Little Rock Writing Project, you know, I
15 became National Board Certified, all these
16 things in order to become a better leader and
17 that's what the other leaders have done.

18 Now, when we get new leaders, the
19 mentoring process that's established by, you
20 know, the ADE is definitely going to be in
21 place using the standards; so, for instance,
22 you know, I went through TESS training, I was
23 judged under that rubric, I -- also for
24 teachers, you know, those are out there. We
25 don't really have to set up a whole, like, what

1 are they weak in and then set up, you know,
2 professional growth plans in that instance.
3 And it really depends on the leader because I
4 really truly feel one path for everybody might
5 not be the right way to do it. So we would
6 have who look at professional growth plan as an
7 individual. As a superintendent or director of
8 instruction, when you're mentoring and you're
9 monitoring your leaders, that's going to lead
10 you to what paths they need to have.

11 DR. OWOH: I have nothing else.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So if -- if we
13 could put the -- the systems slide back up
14 there we'll just kind of go through, and we've
15 asked several questions, but kind of do follow
16 up or any additional input that the Panel may
17 need to consider based on what we've discussed
18 here today.

19 So with the academic system, I think
20 knowing that the charter is a K-12, looking
21 closely at the course offerings, I think
22 Dr. Kremers addressed the career and technical
23 questions. Just make sure from the ADE staff
24 that everything -- everything is clearly
25 outlined with regard to Standards for

1 Accreditations graduation requirements, since
2 this is a K-12, as far as we've seen.

3 Okay. And, Ms. Hyatt?

4 MS. HYATT: So this falls into academics,
5 but regarding their plan for physical
6 education, there -- my understanding is they
7 are providing it, it's just being provided in
8 kind of a chunk in one part of the school year
9 and not the entire year; so -- did I get that
10 right?

11 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

12 MS. HYATT: Okay. So they are going to
13 need waivers in order to do that, because the
14 law and the rules say 40 minutes per week, and
15 since they are doing it all in one part of the
16 year, there will be weeks where they don't
17 offer the 40 minutes of physical education
18 because they are getting it all done at the
19 beginning of the year.

20 So there are waivers, academic waivers
21 that they would need to accomplish that.

22 DR. BOYD: And I just want to add that
23 this is for the K-6 portion. So it's -- it
24 doesn't have to do with graduation
25 requirements, which is why it can be waived.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. But then the
2 actual P.E. for the secondary 9-12 graduation
3 requirement would be taught in accordance with
4 required graduation credits or --

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

7 MS. HYATT: So I can tell you what the
8 waivers are and just have them confirm, if
9 that's okay.

10 So Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-16-132(b)
11 is where the minute requirement is contained.
12 They will also need a waiver of 1-B.3 of the
13 standards and Section 7.0 -- 7.01.1 of the ADE
14 rules governing nutrition and physical activity
15 standards, because it includes a minute
16 requirement in there as well.

17 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: We confirm.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

19 MS. HYATT: Okay. That resolves any
20 remaining issues on that.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And thank you
22 for checking on that.

23 MS. HYATT: Absolutely.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right.

25 Ms. Coffman?

1 MS. COFFMAN: We have one academic
2 question that's a two parter.

3 On Page 16 of 80 in the application with
4 ADE review, the applicant provides very
5 specific performance goals. And so we were
6 interested in the data utilized to inform those
7 specific performance goals, and then how school
8 performance would be monitored throughout the
9 year and not just with the summative
10 assessment.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And you said Page 16 of
12 that 80-page application?

13 MS. COFFMAN: Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do you have
15 access to that, Mr. Felton?

16 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes.

17 So for an assessment, of course, the ACT
18 Aspire, but also we will be using NWEA not only
19 for K-2, but also the ACT interims throughout
20 the year. That's part of the PLC meetings in
21 order to make sure that we're meeting our
22 goals.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I think if I'm
24 understanding what the question -- where you,
25 on your performance level, like where you have

1 "47 percent of students will meet," where --
2 how did you arrive at those percentages?

3 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So we look the
4 surrounding areas and what they had and then we
5 raised them up, I think, by 6 percent and then
6 6 percent each year after that.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So to clarify then,
8 47 percent of students will meet standards, and
9 I'm assuming you're saying of readiness --

10 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- or a readiness
12 level. Is that 47 percent after the first year
13 or is that after -- at what point is that
14 47 percent?

15 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: It says at the end of
16 year 2023.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

18 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Hopefully it's higher.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Also on the
20 academics we've talked about the Science of
21 Reading, we've talked about teacher training,
22 and I want to verify that since you're talking
23 about an opening in the '20-'21 school year,
24 clarification on the point at which all of our
25 teachers have to -- especially at the

1 elementary level, have to have the demonstrated
2 the proficiency in the Science of Reading. Is
3 that the fall or the beginning of the '20-'21
4 year or the '21-'22 school year?

5 MS. SMITH: '21-'22 school year.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So that would be
7 the '21-'22 school year, so that would be the
8 year after that. So I wanted to clarify that.

9 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Academics,
11 do we have anything else?

12 MS. SHEPARD: Okay. Just to follow up on
13 what you just said.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If you'll state
15 your name again for the record.

16 MS. SHEPARD: I'm sorry. I'm Sandy
17 Shepard, I'm from Learning Services.

18 Just to clarify, is there a plan for the
19 student -- for the teachers to meet that
20 requirement in the Right to Read Act in their
21 plan?

22 And the second question is, it looks to me
23 like the plan is for the teachers to write
24 their own curriculum and they have given them
25 three weeks to do that. And I need maybe some

1 clarification about what they are going to use,
2 what resources, or just a plan. It seems very
3 vague.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Felton?

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So for the three
6 weeks, that curriculum is based on things that
7 are not already set in place. So for direct
8 instruction, there is levels based on data on
9 when you start, for the intervention -- there
10 are also -- and it gives you, you know, the
11 curriculum is pretty much set out on whatever
12 we choose, so that.

13 But what we are talking about is that four
14 to one, making sure that are project-based
15 learning and what they are asking the children
16 to do to proficiency matches with the standards
17 of Arkansas state and what we're supposed to
18 teach. That also includes looking at the new
19 science standards, any other standards outside
20 that, like library media, are we -- are we
21 reaching our G.T. kids that are that, are we,
22 you know, doing those things. So that three
23 weeks is basically for those curriculums, and
24 not the whole three weeks but those that are
25 not the whole three weeks but those that are

1 not already coming with already a curriculum
2 map or a year-one plan.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

4 MS. SHEPARD: Okay. That -- so are you
5 saying that direct instruction is -- is what
6 you're going to use for literacy? Is that your
7 program plan?

8 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That's what we're
9 looking at, yes.

10 MS. SHEPARD: Okay. And what was the --
11 what was your plan for meeting the requirements
12 for the Science of Reading and the Right to
13 Read Act.

14 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Well, we'll have to
15 provide the professional development and make
16 sure our teachers get that, in order -- in
17 order to be proficient in that area by then.

18 MS. SHEPARD: Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We've asked
20 questions related to the human capital system.
21 If there is anything remaining?

22 Okay. And our student supports? No
23 concerns?

24 Stakeholder communications, family and
25 community engagement?

1 Okay. District operations and fiscal
2 governance?

3 If you will state your name and position
4 for the record, you will be recognized.

5 MS. QAZI: Saliha Qazi, Program Fiscal
6 Manager.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And go ahead and make
8 sure you're in the microphone, please.

9 MS. QAZI: Saliha Qazi, Program Fiscal
10 Manager.

11 During the legal review, they presented
12 some G.T. -- some waivers. I know they are
13 asked for the G.T. waiver but the
14 transportation and ALE is not listed in the
15 systems -- in the budget application. So if we
16 can -- if they can address that question.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And you said
18 transportation and --

19 MS. QAZI: ALE.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- ALE, it's not --

21 MS. QAZI: -- it's not in the budget.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Felton?

23 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: We -- of course, our
24 goal is to have buses down the line once we
25 build our thing, but one of the things we are

1 looking at is to have -- to pay for students if
2 they want to ride the bus later in the years,
3 much like the other charters do that are
4 located in this area. So at this point we
5 didn't have anything in transportation to
6 offer, because we didn't know what that would
7 look like for the K-6. I do know a few
8 students who ride the bus at that age but we
9 didn't think we would have a whole lot.

10 For ALE, we weren't really sure at the
11 time when we made the budget whether we would
12 have but we have no problem, we did heavy hand
13 every area that we did budget for, so money can
14 be shifted over for ALE in the year.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. But those two
16 items then have not been accounted for --

17 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That's correct.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- in what you've done
19 so far?

20 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. And we --
22 we addressed the issue right now that the
23 facility -- we do not at this time have the
24 facility, and you just talked about the
25 transportation.

1 Again, though, you -- you did say one of
2 your goals is to serve low income areas?

3 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

5 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: And so eventually we
6 would like to be able to procure buses to help
7 children.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.

9 Ms. Hyatt, are there any remaining issues then?

10 I know we addressed the P.E., I think she
11 may have -- she may have stepped out.

12 I'll go ahead and ask the Panel then, is
13 there anything remaining for the Panel that you
14 want to ask or discuss?

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: Wasn't there something she
16 was supposed to check on? Did she check
17 on that?

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: The P.E., I think, so,
19 yes. So you checked on the P.E. and that was
20 the only remaining issue you were checking on?

21 MS. HYATT: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. All
23 right. So, Panel, we have your decision
24 options are to approve the application, to deny
25 the application, or take the matter under

1 advisement, table it for a future meeting.

2 So at this time I would entertain a
3 motion.

4 MR. WILSON: I move the approval of the
5 application.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We have a motion
7 to approve the application.

8 DR. KREMERS: I second.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we have a --
10 a motion and a second to approve the
11 application. All those in favor, say "Aye."

12 MR. WILSON: Aye.

13 DR. KREMERS: Aye.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Opposed, same sign.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: I say no.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Nay.

17 DR. OWOH: Nay.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Then the nays
19 have it. We have three nays and so the -- the
20 motion did not pass.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, just -- just to
22 comment here. I struggle with the -- with
23 supporting this, knowing that there is probably
24 a year in which the possibility -- I got
25 budgetary concerns still. They are just --

1 they are just there for now. But I also
2 struggle with approving it and knowing that
3 there is a -- I call it a zero year, in which
4 we're basically saying that we -- that if you
5 don't raise the money the teachers are expected
6 to work for free, and I just, I'm not quite
7 sure --

8 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: That -- that I
9 understand, but that's not what I was saying.
10 A lot of the grants that we are available for
11 cannot be applied for until we're approved.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: I understand that.

13 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: So we would never ask
14 anybody to work for free.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, uh-huh. But the
16 budget is the real issue.

17 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: It is a concern, yes.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, Panel, seeing that
19 that motion did not pass, is there another
20 motion?

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: I make a motion to deny
22 the application.

23 DR. OWOH: Second.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion
25 and a second to deny the application. All

1 those in favor, say, "Aye."

2 PANEL MEMBERS: Aye.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

4 MR. WILSON: No.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The motion
6 passes that the application is denied. So,
7 Panel, I will ask you at this time to record
8 your responses in the online form.

9 And, Mr. Felton, we will be giving you
10 feedback here in just a minute.

11 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Yes, ma'am.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We'll go ahead
13 and have the Panel articulate their reasons.
14 Dr. Hernandez?

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: I made the motion. I feel
16 like there is some additional planning that
17 needs to be done in terms of academic programs,
18 facilities, staffing, and finances. I think
19 that time will allow the applicant to return
20 with a defined application next year.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

22 DR. KREMERS: I think additional
23 information on the -- the full career pathway
24 7-12, the requirements, and being more
25 thoughtful in explaining that.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh?

2 DR. OWOH: I voted to deny the application
3 because I felt like there are still some
4 unanswered questions about the curriculum
5 preparation and offerings,, educator support
6 and development, and budgetary items. So
7 additional planning and development in those
8 above-mentioned areas are still needed.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams?

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Support the motion to deny.
11 There are still several unanswered questions
12 regarding curriculum and budget. More planning
13 would be appropriate.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And, Mr. Wilson?

15 MR. WILSON: I vote against the motion to
16 deny the application. I -- I would have
17 preferred some sort of middle ground, perhaps,
18 with additional time to firm up some of the
19 financial questions that have been properly
20 raised.

21 I do have confidence in Mr. Felton, that
22 has a large bearing in my vote, having known
23 his work previously and I think he has a
24 Master's Degree in Public School Finance from
25 Rockbridge --

1 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: Feels that way.

2 MR. WILSON: -- with the help of you-all.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

4 And, Mr. Felton, thank you for your time,
5 and we hope that this feedback is helpful.

6 MR. THOMAS-FELTON: It is. Thank you very
7 much.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

9 So at this time we are going to break for
10 lunch. Let's come back at 12:45 and we'll
11 begin again at 12:45 with the remaining
12 applications for the afternoon. Okay.

13 (WHEREUPON, a lunch break was held from
14 11:50 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.)

15 A-4: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
16 APPLICATION: PREMIER HIGH SCHOOL OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Welcome back
18 everyone. We appreciate you for being here and
19 it is time to reconvene -- reconvene the
20 Charter Panel.

21 We are on Action Item 4, the hearing of
22 our Open-Enrollment Public Charter School
23 application for Premier High School of North
24 Little Rock.

25 Ms. Perry, you are recognized.

1 MS. PERRY: Premier High School of North
2 Little Rock is a proposed Open-Enrollment
3 Public Charter School to be located within the
4 North Little Rock District. The sponsoring
5 entity is Responsive Education Solutions. The
6 applicant is requesting to serve students in
7 grades 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 250
8 beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. The
9 applicant has notified affected districts of
10 the proposed public charter school.

11 ADE staff reviewed the application, and
12 concerns were shared with the applicant for
13 response. The application, the ADE evaluation,
14 and the applicant's response are included for
15 the Charter Authorizing Panel.

16 Speaking today on behalf of Premier High
17 School of North Little Rock is Steve Gast,
18 Superintendent, and Dennis Felton,
19 Principal/Dean of Students.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Will the
21 representatives of the application and anyone
22 speaking in opposition please stand to receive
23 the oath.

24 Go ahead and raise your hand.

25 (WHEREUPON, the witnesses were sworn by

1 the Chairman.)

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So, Mr. Gast, we
3 are ready for you to get started, and you'll
4 have 20 minutes.

5 MR. GAST: Thank you. So as any new
6 grandfather -- I just had a new grandbaby on
7 Sunday -- I was going to start with a slide of
8 the baby but my team told me that that wouldn't
9 be very appropriate to do.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, congratulations.

11 MR. GAST: Thank you.

12 Let me start my clock here.

13 So good afternoon. It is good to see you
14 once again, as we were in front of you, all
15 except for one new member, in -- in December
16 getting the five-year renewal for our Premier
17 High School in Little Rock.

18 We are pleased to be able to stand before
19 you for our application for Premier High School
20 in North Little Rock. As you know from our
21 renewal presentation last December, Premier is
22 a unique type of school. We provide another
23 chance to those students who for whatever
24 reason have left the public education system
25 and have disengaged from education in general.

1 We are excited to have the opportunity to
2 open a new Premier High School in North Little
3 Rock and start providing the same opportunities
4 for that group of students that we offer in
5 Little Rock.

6 Responsive Education is part of a larger
7 family, known as Responsive Education to
8 Charter Schools. We have a main corporate
9 headquarters, which is located in Lewisville,
10 Texas, and a local Arkansas district also here
11 in Little Rock.

12 And speaking of our team, I would like to
13 take just a second to introduce the members of
14 our Arkansas District Office that are here that
15 will be available as well to answer any
16 questions that you might have when we get to
17 that section of the presentation.

18 Again, my name is Steven Gast, I'm the
19 superintendent. I have Mr. Curtis Shack here.
20 Curtis, raise your hand. And Curtis is our
21 Regional Director and our Program Director.
22 Marla Pearson is our Director of Special
23 Programs. Dennis Felton, who you will be
24 hearing from in just a second, is our Campus
25 Director as well as on consulting on our

1 opening of other Premiers here in Arkansas.
2 Katie Stephens, our Director of Finance, and
3 her finance team is here, Tamera Larry and
4 Tracy Samples. Rhonda Bradford, who is also
5 the Principal of our Quest School in West
6 Little Rock, is also our Federal Programs
7 Director. And that's our current -- current
8 group that works here out of our Little Rock
9 office, which is on Hardin Road.

10 Responsive Education shares a common
11 mission across all of its brands, and our
12 mission is to provide hope for students through
13 innovative character-based personalized
14 learning environments. Responsive Education
15 was founded in 1998. It has always prided
16 itself on being responsive to the needs of
17 individuals and the individuals within separate
18 communities. There are currently 37 Premier
19 High Schools operating in Texas and one in
20 Little Rock. It is also the largest charter
21 school district in the state of Texas.

22 As evidenced in our application, under the
23 section titled "Other Charter Schools Sponsored
24 by this Entity," we operate 75 schools in Texas
25 and Arkansas, and offer six unique and very

1 different types of schools. Our brands include
2 Premier High Schools, Founders Classical
3 Academies, Classical Academies, Digital
4 Learning Campuses, high schools which are STEM
5 based, and one special school we have in Austin
6 for the School of Autism.

7 Recent information published by the
8 National Guard Youth Foundation states that if
9 you want to reduce crime, increase graduation
10 rates. The numbers are almost staggering
11 regarding those individuals involved in crime
12 or incarcerated who never finished high school.

13 It's also been shown that there is a
14 direct correlation between annual cost of
15 educating a student that graduates and the
16 annual societal cost of those without diplomas
17 that have been incarcerated.

18 Looking at North Little Rock we find that
19 it's one of the highest crime rates in America,
20 compared to all communities of its size. It
21 has a higher crime rate than 90 percent of all
22 communities compared in Arkansas.

23 Sharing a few more facts about North
24 Little Rock, the overall crime rate in North
25 Little Rock is 79 percent higher than the

1 national average; you have a one in 20 chance
2 of becoming a victim of any crime in North
3 Little Rock.

4 Here are also some statistics we shared
5 with y'all in the December meeting, but there
6 are -- they are very, very alarming and I want
7 to share with you again. Every year over 1.2
8 million kids drop out of high school in the
9 United States. That's a student every 26
10 seconds or 7,000 a day. About 25 percent of
11 the high school freshman fail to graduate from
12 high school on time, that's with their
13 graduating cohort. A high school dropout will
14 earn \$200,000 less than a high school graduate
15 over its lifetime and almost a million dollars
16 less than a college graduate. Almost 2,000
17 high schools across the U.S. graduate less than
18 60 percent of their students; and in the U.S.
19 high school dropouts commit almost 80 -- or,
20 excuse me, 75 percent of crimes.

21 Premier High School helps students recover
22 credits. We also help them graduate early,
23 provide college and career coaching and
24 planning, and help them apply and gain
25 accept -- being accepted into college.

1 Based on TEA statistics, which is the
2 Texas Education Agency, there are 145
3 alternative accountability charter schools in
4 Texas, 6 of the top 10 and 15 of the top 25
5 best schools are Premier campuses.

6 100 percent of the graduates are accepted
7 into a university, junior college, trade
8 school, or military, and that includes our
9 schools here in Arkansas.

10 So why we believe that North Little Rock
11 needs a school like Premier: The school will
12 be located within the attendance zone of North
13 Little Rock High School. These statistics and
14 numbers that we have on here are the same
15 numbers that you have on your application.
16 They are under our educational justification in
17 the area as to why we believe that a Premier
18 High School is needed in North Little Rock.
19 And you look at those, you see that breaking
20 down the data by race shows significant gaps,
21 including the difference between Whites,
22 African-Americans, and Hispanics in their
23 graduation rates. And one of the most
24 compelling statistic is the 34.7 percent gap --
25 or point gap between whites and Hispanic

1 students' graduation rates.

2 I had the opportunity to meet with the
3 superintendent of North Little Rock, and he and
4 I sat down for about an hour and visited about
5 Premier because I wanted to educate him about
6 what Premier High School actually does. And I
7 was mentioning that I've had 17 years
8 experience as a high school principal, and I
9 guarantee you that over those years in some of
10 the larger schools that I was at we had a lot
11 of kids that were walking the hallways in the
12 high school that were old enough to be juniors
13 and seniors but had only enough credits to be
14 freshman. And I guarantee you there's hundreds
15 of those kids walking the halls in the North
16 Little Rock High School that are in the same
17 boat.

18 One of the unique things about our school
19 and our brand is we don't compete directly
20 with North Little Rock Public Schools for their
21 kids. We take those kids that have already
22 disengaged, and we also take those kids who are
23 maybe two or three years behind, give them the
24 opportunity to come to us, restore their
25 credits, and if they would like they can

1 graduate with us or they could go back to North
2 Little Rock High School and graduate with their
3 class, and that was a very attractive thing
4 that we were talking about because, you know,
5 whether they graduate from Premier or North
6 Little Rock public schools, that's a kid that's
7 graduated and that's a kid who is not in those
8 numbers anymore, that's a kid that we've given
9 a chance to.

10 And so, you know, we are -- I'm very
11 optimistic about the future that we have and
12 the partnership that we could build, and I
13 really foresee, based on my discussions, that
14 we could be building something in North Little
15 Rock that could be a model for many, many
16 cities across Arkansas to really help move this
17 graduation rate forward.

18 At this time I'm going to turn the
19 presentation over to Dennis, who you have heard
20 from last December and will hear again talking
21 about the -- the Premier model.

22 MR. FELTON: Good afternoon.

23 Good afternoon. My name is Dennis Felton.
24 I serve as the principal of Premier High School
25 of Little Rock as well as the Premier

1 consultant.

2 So what I want to do is spend some time
3 giving you guys more of an insight into the
4 Premier model and the school, kind of what we
5 do to try to get these students back on track
6 and ultimately prepare them for post-secondary
7 goal.

8 And so one of the things that we like to
9 pride ourself on is reaching every student by
10 connecting them with talents outside of the
11 classroom, and so each year we're constantly
12 having student lead organizations -- or I'm
13 going to say student implemented lead
14 organizations that faculty members are
15 overseeing to allow them to engage in extra
16 curricular and enrichment activities on the
17 campus and outside the campus as well.

18 So talking about our graduates. One of
19 the unique things that we try to focus on each
20 year is putting high school diplomas in
21 students' hands. So you will see our
22 statistics from the first year that we actually
23 opened up the Premier model in Texas, and even
24 looking at our statistics just here in Little
25 Rock alone, we have over -- almost 100 students

1 that have a high school diploma that may not
2 otherwise had a high school diploma if it
3 wasn't Premier High School Little Rock.

4 So we're talking about the academic piece,
5 and one of the things we pride ourself on is
6 each year we sit down with our students and we
7 develop individualized graduation plans. And
8 so we want students to understand this is what
9 you have currently towards high school
10 graduation, and then we want to develop an
11 individualized plan for each student to ensure
12 that they receive the support they need in
13 order to graduate with their class or catch up
14 and graduate as well. And so we offer a
15 flexible school day for students that need so;
16 we have students that are parents, we have
17 students that take college classes, we have
18 students that are even outside -- have other
19 academic partnerships, which they are taking,
20 like, advanced placement so it works out with
21 their schedule, as well as even going to work
22 to provide for their families. And then
23 ultimately we have students that come over for
24 their personalized learning approach in which
25 they could graduate early with anticipation of

1 getting started with college early.

2 So, for instance, I had a student come in
3 just Monday and the student was two credits shy
4 of graduating, supposed to graduate with the
5 class of, 2018 and the student wants to finish
6 the graduation requirements and automatically
7 try to enroll in Arkansas Baptist College. So
8 for those that don't know, we're located on
9 Arkansas Baptist College campus as well.

10 And so talking about the different
11 structural strategies that we use, you'll see
12 there we have got direct instruction,
13 independent instruction, accelerated
14 instruction, and connected instruction, and so
15 one of the things that we try to do is offer a
16 myriad of opportunities for students to receive
17 instruction, because, you know, each student
18 learns -- has different learning styles and
19 different learning preferences.

20 And so talking about our goals. One of
21 the things we want to sit -- we set down and we
22 met with you guys just here in December, you
23 know, talking about some of these goals and how
24 we could use multiple measures to ensure that
25 we're being fair to the school but at the same

1 time holding the school accountable. And so
2 you see we have our goals in literacy, in
3 science, and math. And also we want to stay
4 true to our goal with making sure that students
5 are not only graduating from high school, but
6 they are applying to post-secondary
7 institutions, that way it doesn't stop when
8 they cross the stage in May in a cap and gown.
9 And then we also -- we think it's important to
10 focus on student attention -- I mean
11 attendance. A lot of our students, they come
12 to our school because they have been dropped
13 from the previous district due to lack of
14 attendance, so we try to provide not only
15 professional development for staff but
16 intervention programs within our school.
17 Instead of saying, "Hey, you missed 20 days,
18 you don't get credit, you're out," we are here
19 to provide hope for students, and so we want to
20 provide interventions to allow the students to
21 continue to earn their credit, and then
22 ultimately we want to build the retention of
23 our students and our staff. We want to
24 continue to grow as a school, that way we can
25 continue to grow and increase our capacity by

1 impact.

2 And also we think Premier is very invested
3 in the community. Because of the different
4 partnerships and agencies we have to work with,
5 it's a must, it's a guarantee, we have to work
6 with community stakeholders to ensure that
7 we're using all of the wrap around services to
8 help parents and to help students.

9 And so let's talk about staff support.
10 One of the things we want to continue to do is
11 job embedded coaching and provide teachers with
12 instructional coaching and feedback and then
13 that way even our novice teachers are getting
14 the professional development support they need,
15 and then also each teacher is held with the
16 responsibility of developing a PGP with the
17 Building Level Administrator, in which they are
18 identifying their strengths and their
19 weaknesses, and then we are putting plans
20 together to address those weaknesses.

21 Also for our new leaders, we like to use
22 the Charter Leadership Institute that's
23 implemented by the Department through the
24 orientation and as well as APSRC, which the
25 leaders go through several standards preparing

1 them and being able to collaborate with other
2 novice administrators and veteran
3 administrators as well. And then also
4 endorsing the program the State has as well as
5 far as the mentoring.

6 Mr. Gast commented on our strong Central
7 Office team that we have that's here to support
8 our campus leaders and our teachers. And so we
9 want to ensure that not only we're evaluating
10 all the LEADS and TESS, but we're putting
11 professional development plans to grow
12 individuals, that's what the whole purpose is,
13 to grow them and to -- and to increase
14 instruction capacity as well as leadership
15 capacity.

16 And then also we want to replicate our
17 PLC. For those that are familiar with
18 Professional Learning Communities, Premier High
19 School has been blessed with the opportunity by
20 the State to participate in the PLC Pilot
21 Project, and we want to replicate that
22 practice. We know there is a lot of research
23 out there that supports how professional
24 learning communities ultimately also increase
25 effective teaching, and then when we increase

1 effective teaching, then ultimately we're
2 increasing student achievement and student
3 learning. And so we want to replicate the
4 practice we're doing with the PLC models in
5 which teachers are collaborating weekly. And
6 then we're staying around the three ideals. We
7 want to focus on student learning, student
8 focus. We want to focus on collaboration. And
9 then ultimately we want to be data driven. We
10 want to focus on our assessments and look at
11 what's working and what's not working and that
12 way we can ultimately put the plans together
13 intervention wise to ensure that students are
14 getting the things that they need.

15 And then we want to continue to
16 participate in the Arkansas PLC Institute. For
17 those that were able to go to Rogers this past
18 summer, it was a phenomenal event in which
19 educators across the state who were involved in
20 this PLC process were able to bounce ideas off
21 of each other. And I'm excited, I think we got
22 even possibly ten more schools that's even in
23 the cohort in Arkansas, which strengthens our
24 endeavors amongst administrators as well.

25 I want to recognize that Premier High

1 School the -- in Little Rock was ultimately
2 also recognized by the Department as being a
3 model for best practices in personalized
4 learning. And so just revisiting this video we
5 showed you guys actually in December about the
6 things that's going on at Premier High School
7 in Little Rock.

8 I want to share a few words while Mr. Gast
9 is headed up. And one of the things that
10 ultimately reminded me of what we're doing is
11 each time we have a student enroll at Premier
12 High School, during that registration process
13 we talk to them, we have conversations about
14 why are you here, what are your goals, what do
15 you plan to accomplish here, what are some of
16 your strengths, what are some of your
17 weaknesses. Because we want to start that
18 conversation of why. What do you plan to
19 accomplish here.

20 And just yesterday I had a guy come in,
21 he -- he dropped out of high school, actually
22 two years ago. He's 19 years old. And he
23 said, "Mr. Felton," he said, "I received a
24 letter in the mail." He said, "The letter in
25 the mail told me you guys had a flexible

1 program, how you were getting kids back in high
2 school that had dropped out. And most
3 importantly on that flyer I saw my friend in a
4 cap and gown, and when I saw him in the cap and
5 gown, I knew I could do it too."

6 And so it's stories like that that
7 constantly remind me of the work that we're
8 doing every day is important and what we want
9 to do is increase our capacity of not just
10 serving Little Rock students but be able to
11 provide these opportunities with North Little
12 Rock students as well, so that's why we're
13 here.

14 MR. GAST: Again, thank you, Dennis.

15 To piggyback on what Dennis was saying,
16 with our training for our teachers, but not
17 only but also training for our leaders, we
18 train to try and get our individual campus
19 directors to be interior, you know, people that
20 we promote from within. And in the APSRC
21 Program we have one of our future
22 administrators is working with -- with us at
23 our Quest campus and working with Rhonda, who
24 is also in the mentoring program. And I was
25 fortunate enough to be asked, you know, about a

1 month or so ago from Dr. Todd to come and speak
2 to some of the new trainees and work with them
3 for a little while.

4 And so we firmly believe in the leadership
5 programs. We know we've got some good ones
6 here in the state and we're allowing our folks
7 to take advantage of those as well.

8 Our last couple of slides deal with
9 financing. One of the most critical --
10 critical aspects of any charter, obviously, is
11 finance. You know, many well-intended charters
12 with great ideas and great programs come before
13 you but have a hard time with the financial
14 aspect of it as well as the sustainability of
15 that particular campus.

16 For the first time I brought to you a --
17 the -- the audit report from our home office
18 in -- in Lewisville, that shows our -- our CMO
19 and our corporate headquarters, and it kind of
20 gives you -- and I'm not going to go through
21 each individual particular line, but I wanted
22 you to see the financial stability of our
23 company. And when you've got a company that is
24 projected to have well over a 21-million-dollar
25 surplus at the end of the year, when we start

1 looking at and have some of the questions on
2 the applications that we have, like, what
3 happens if you don't get the right number the
4 first year and how do you support the
5 development and the -- the different things,
6 the moneys that you want to have if they are
7 not coming in, and I wanted to share with you
8 the fact that -- that we have a strong
9 financial backing that is not you afraid to, if
10 in fact we need help, they are there with those
11 funds to go ahead and do that.

12 Now, our goal is not to have to call Mom
13 and Dad and say, hey, you know, we need help;
14 but at the same time it sure is nice to know
15 that -- that if that's -- that happens or if it
16 needs to happen, we have the financial
17 wherewithal to do that.

18 Coming on a more local note, looking at
19 the -- the Arkansas Premier High School here,
20 we've already told you that, you know, we have
21 a financial team here. We have -- all four of
22 our charters last year went through an
23 independent audit, and in those independent
24 audits not a single finding occurred for any
25 school for any financial concerns whatsoever.

1 And I think that's important as you look at us
2 for future schools to realize that not only do
3 we have the funds available from our corporate
4 sponsor, we also, from a local level, have
5 very, very talented individual people who are
6 very good.

7 Our particular budget for this school was
8 put together with very close work with ADE and
9 working with them on our budgets and on our
10 projections. Katie Stephens, who is our
11 financial guru here as far as Responsive
12 Education is concerned, probably a capital C
13 for conservative needs to be in front of her
14 name when it comes to putting budgets together,
15 and that has done really well for us, you know,
16 as we've gone through the years.

17 And we consider this to be a very, very
18 conservative budget, because we would rather
19 have -- you know, be on the -- on the
20 conservative side of it and know that we are
21 going to have funds available than we would
22 speculating, you know, what might happen, what
23 might occur.

24 So based on that we came up with the
25 calculations. And what I did is you have a

1 more complete budget in your application that
2 breaks it down line item wise. What I did is I
3 just took some of the -- you know, the major
4 categories of personnel, the revenue, the
5 expenditures, and then what the net revenue
6 over expenditures will be each year, so a plus
7 \$32,552 after the first fiscal year. Now,
8 granted that can change. You know, if our
9 enrollment is higher or if we have to hire
10 another teacher or two, you know, that might
11 change, but that would shift all those numbers
12 all the way up, including the revenue as well,
13 so this is based on 125 students.

14 That wraps up our -- our presentation.
15 And like I said, we had a slight advantage here
16 because you-all have just heard a lot about our
17 Premier High School and went through the
18 application renewal process last December, and
19 we're kind of glad that that occurred because
20 it kind of gave us an ability to share a few
21 other things with you that we normally wouldn't
22 have shared. All right.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. You timed
24 that just perfectly. Twenty minutes.

25 MR. GAST: I did. Even without the

1 picture.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You did, yes. So thank
3 you for your presentation.

4 Is -- Ms. Hyatt, is there anyone here to
5 speak in opposition?

6 MS. HYATT: I don't believe so.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So
8 you do have an additional five minutes if there
9 was something you wanted to wrap up with before
10 we start any questions.

11 MR. GAST: No, really not. I think that
12 Mr. Felton probably did it best when he talked
13 about the most recent activity. Those are the
14 types of stories that are replicated all the
15 time in our Premier schools. They are the same
16 type of thing that we see.

17 I will just reiterate what I really see
18 happening is developing a strong partnership
19 with North Little Rock High School and to work
20 with their kids, just as I -- and I said it in
21 training with the principals, you know, it's
22 not an us against them. It's not an are they a
23 charter school kid or are they a public school
24 kid. They are kids and they are all our kids,
25 and as soon as we start realizing that the

1 better off we're going to become in how we
2 service all of particular our kids.

3 So we're very excited about the
4 possibility. I will mention that, since I do
5 have a couple seconds, we have -- are very
6 interested and have actually designated two
7 different sites that we are currently looking
8 at that would serve really, really well for
9 the -- for the school, including its proximity
10 to North Little Rock High School. Because I
11 think that if you're going to talk about a
12 partnership, the availability has to be there
13 where those kids can actually get from Point A
14 to Point B or back again and we would -- we
15 need to be within the proximity of that. So
16 the locations that we're currently looking at
17 every one of them are within a geographical
18 range of the high school that would make it
19 easy for the kids to do that.

20 So we'll entertain any questions or
21 anything that you have at this point and we
22 appreciate your time.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

24 So as we have done previously, I think we
25 will ask Ms. Boyd and -- or Dr. Boyd --

1 sorry -- and Ms. Hyatt to go through any
2 questions or unresolved issues.

3 So Dr. Boyd will go over issues that the
4 internal review raised.

5 DR. BOYD: Thank you, Dr. Pfeffer.

6 Yeah. We had a remaining concern about we
7 couldn't tell if there was a particular
8 curriculum designated for the program or not.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

10 MR. FELTON: Dennis Felton again.

11 So we have a team, a curriculum team,
12 Responsive Ed has a curriculum team and which
13 creates our curriculum. Internally we have a
14 team that reviews the curriculum each year. We
15 want to make sure, because the standards are
16 constantly changing, that our curriculum is
17 aligned to the Arkansas Standards and the
18 Common Core State Standards as well.

19 We also have academic partnerships with
20 individuals like Virtual Arkansas, in which we
21 offer students additional courses as well which
22 are approved by the Arkansas Department of Ed.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So -- so just to follow
24 up on that. Students are -- a lot of the
25 instruction is done virtually and self-paced

1 or --

2 MR. FELTON: It's a personalized approach.
3 I wouldn't say all virtually. That means they
4 are all taking digital classes.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Can you describe
6 it just a little bit more then as far as --

7 MR. FELTON: Yes. So it's sort of like a
8 hybrid model. We have direct instruction going
9 on as well. You saw in connected instruction,
10 which we have students who do take virtual
11 learning classes that they have -- and we have
12 personalized courses where students are able to
13 have individualized courses and work at their
14 own pace.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So but as far as the --
16 you don't have necessarily a single curriculum
17 provider that you purchase? I didn't know if
18 that was something that was pretty consistent
19 in the Premier Schools or --

20 MR. FELTON: Yes. The curriculum writing
21 is pretty consistent from the Department.

22 Now, when we purchase Virtual Arkansas,
23 they just purchase it per course the students
24 are taking.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MR. GAST: So we have a branch of our
2 company called Blue Learning, which is the
3 curriculum base for our -- our schools, and
4 they write the Premier curriculum. The group
5 that writes that takes the Core Standards and
6 the Arkansas Standards and makes sure that the
7 stuff that's being presented to our students
8 here in Arkansas meet the Arkansas Standards.
9 They are not a Texas-based curriculum that we
10 buy that comes in here and that -- and we try
11 and do that because they are not a Common Core
12 state and so we're very careful to make sure
13 that that occurs. And then for each class that
14 a student has there is -- there is X amount of
15 units and they have to show proficiency
16 throughout the course of those units before
17 they are actually given credit for that unit,
18 and that's where they work at their -- they can
19 work at their own pace.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

21 MR. GAST: Okay?

22 DR. BOYD: So in the presentation the
23 applicant addressed meeting the social and
24 emotional needs of students, and we would like
25 to hear a little bit more about how they will

1 meet the social and emotional needs of students
2 that are identified as gifted and talented.

3 MR. GAST: Go ahead.

4 MR. FELTON: So one of the things that we
5 try to do is, of course, through our
6 identification process using assessments as
7 well as we have a college career coach, and we
8 developed partnerships we like to be proud of.
9 In particular we have a program, Premier Prep,
10 in which we allow students to take advance
11 placement courses as well as concurrent college
12 courses so they are earning high school credit
13 and college credit at the same time. That --
14 college and career coaches are constantly
15 meeting with students to develop post-secondary
16 plans and strategies to guide them in the
17 direction they want to go. So, for instance,
18 that person brings college personnel to the
19 campus to meet with students to talk about the
20 college opportunities they have. They take
21 those individuals out to college campuses and
22 participate in STEM events and college days as
23 well.

24 MR. GAST: And one of the great outcomes
25 of a question like this is it makes you look at

1 not only how you're doing with the social and
2 emotional needs of your gifted and talented
3 kids, but it also takes you a look at, well,
4 how are you doing with the social and emotional
5 needs of your regular ed kid or your special
6 needs kid or -- and, you know, this entire
7 population of the group of the kids that we
8 deal with have their own set of individual
9 social and emotional needs. And so, you know,
10 one of the things that Premier High School does
11 is they wrap a lot of those things in and we
12 provide a lot of different services. Some of
13 them obviously contracted out where people can
14 come in.

15 But if we have a student that comes to us,
16 whether they are a gifted and talented child or
17 something else and they have a particular need,
18 you know, we have our own Special Programs
19 Director in Ms. Pearson here who is very
20 involved in not only the special ed and the 504
21 side of things but also any other needs that
22 those kids might have, whether it be from
23 speech to occupational therapy to, you know,
24 whatever it might be to make sure that we are
25 available to provide individuals for those

1 students. And it is in our budget as well, and
2 services to provide those kids to -- excuse me,
3 I'm losing my voice, sorry -- to meet the needs
4 of those particular kids.

5 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Department
6 of Ed.

7 So -- oop. Oh, please.

8 MR. GAST: She's getting used to me
9 speaking up on her. No.

10 We've been working very closely with the
11 attorney as well as with the APSRC and with
12 Tripp on the waivers and he is -- if I call him
13 an expert he's going to feel a lot of
14 pressure -- but an individual that is going to
15 be doing some help or helping us through some
16 of the answers to some of our waivers.

17 MS. HYATT: Thank you.

18 So to piggy back off of that, after the
19 second legal review, I had an opportunity to
20 speak with Mr. Walter about some of their
21 remaining legal issues, and we were able to get
22 on the same page about a lot of stuff, so a lot
23 of the remaining issues have been resolved with
24 the exception of a couple of the standards,
25 walk overs, and one or two other areas, so I

1 anticipate that this will go pretty quickly
2 because there's not a lot left there.

3 So will you come join me? On number --

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Do we have that extra
5 microphone for him?

6 MS. HYATT: Would you prefer -- do you
7 have a preference?

8 MR. WALTER: No.

9 MS. HYATT: I'm going to do five and six
10 together, it's Gifted and Talented and then
11 Alternative Learning Environment. On both of
12 these the only remaining issue is a standards
13 transition, so rather than old Sections 18 and
14 19.04, it would be new Sections 2-G.1 and 2-I.1
15 for both of those.

16 So I think we're in agreement but --

17 MR. WALTER: But for the record, Tripp
18 Walter, Staff Attorney, Arkansas Public School
19 Resource Center.

20 I confirm on behalf of Responsive Ed.

21 MS. HYATT: Okay. I'm moving down to
22 No. 9 now, which is Teacher Licensure and
23 Contracts. The first remaining issue is just
24 again a standards transition. So rather than
25 the old Section 15.03 and 15.02, it's 4-B.1,

1 4-B.2, 4-D.1 and 4-C.1, and 4-C.2 for the
2 standards.

3 MR. WALTER: Confirm and confirm that.

4 MS. HYATT: Okay. The second remaining
5 issue was an outstanding request for Sections
6 5.02.4 and 5.03.2 of the ADE Rules Governing
7 the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing Assessment
8 and Accountability Program. As of yesterday at
9 ALC, those have been approved to be repealed,
10 so ten days from the day that they are filed,
11 which I believe will be Monday. The issue was
12 that those rules required that the assessment
13 be administered by a licensed teacher, and if
14 we have waivers of teacher licensure, that
15 created some sort of issue. Those rules are
16 being replaced by the Arkansas Educational
17 Support and Accountability Act. Also that will
18 be in effect on the same day, ten days from
19 Monday, and they do not have that requirement
20 in them. It actually allows for the classroom
21 teacher to administer the assessment, so I
22 don't believe that there is a remaining issue
23 there.

24 MR. WALTER: That -- that's correct.

25 Given the information that Ms. Hyatt has shared

1 with us, if that is indeed the case, if this
2 will allow classroom teachers, whether licensed
3 or not, to administer the State assessments,
4 that that has -- and the standardized tests,
5 that's what we were wanting.

6 MS. HYATT: So can we just confirm the
7 rescission of the ACTAAP request?

8 MR. WALTER: I confirm that.

9 MS. HYATT: Thank you.

10 Okay. Moving on to No. 11, which is
11 flexible schedule, kind of a similar situation,
12 is that the ADE rules governing mandatory
13 attendance for grades 9-12 have been repealed,
14 those are already final so the repeal is -- is
15 final now, so no waiver of those are necessary.

16 And additionally just a standards
17 transition from the old sections to the new, so
18 it will be 1-A.5.2, 1-A.2, and 1-A.6 will be
19 the standards transition there, so I just need
20 a confirmation of acceptance of that.

21 MR. WALTER: Confirm acceptance.

22 MS. HYATT: And I just wanted to allow the
23 applicant a chance to provide you with some
24 additional information, because one of the
25 waiver requests is for a waiver from the 38,

1 which -- required courses to offer, and I know
2 that that is not often granted and I wanted you
3 guys to be able to have an opportunity to hear
4 their reasoning behind that, so I'll let them
5 provide you with a little bit of info.

6 MR. WALTER: Okay. Thank you. I'll go
7 ahead and make some comments, and if there are
8 any deeper educational concerns then I think
9 Mr. Gast or Mr. Felton could -- or one of the
10 RES team members can explain that.

11 This is a waiver that's currently held by
12 Premier's Little Rock school and also by
13 SIATech. So what the waiver -- how the waiver
14 is being used at Premier Little Rock and how
15 it's going to be used at Premier of North
16 Little Rock, if granted, is this: Obviously we
17 know that graduation requirements cannot be
18 waived, and that is not what we are asking for.
19 The full 22 units required for graduation will
20 be offered and taught as required. What the
21 waiver does ask for is that the remaining 16
22 units out of the 38 be allowed to be offered on
23 an as-requested basis. And my understanding
24 is, and again, there may be some help needed
25 from RES to further explain, that there is an

1 individualized plan that's set up for every
2 student to address that, obviously, trying to
3 set them on the path as soon as possible to
4 recovering credits and graduation.

5 But, again, this -- this waiver, although
6 as Ms. Hyatt said correctly, it's not commonly
7 granted, this is the specific reason it is
8 here, because of their program and to allow for
9 the model's implementation and making sure that
10 they can get students graduated.

11 MR. FELTON: Just to piggyback off Tripp,
12 because we do have a lot of students who are --
13 typically just have a few credits left to
14 graduate, it allows us to tailor the student's
15 schedule according to their needs.

16 And so just to give you an example of
17 that, I was meeting with a student just a
18 couple of days ago, a senior, just transferred
19 in. The student needed just three more credits
20 to graduate, had previously dropped out, and we
21 started having a conversation about what do you
22 want to do after high school, and that student
23 commented they wanted to actually potentially
24 work in business. And so we explored our
25 course catalog and that student wanted to take

1 accounting, and so we got that student set up
2 with a computerized accounting course that we
3 have available through Arkansas -- Virtual
4 Arkansas.

5 MS. HYATT: Okay. If it is okay with you
6 guys, I'm going to come back to No. 12 because
7 I know we have to have a little bit more
8 conversation about that. So I'm just going to
9 skip to No. 13 and come back to No. 12.

10 So 13 is Administrators. This is just a
11 simple transition of the standards, so it will
12 be 4-B.1 and 2 and 4-C.1 and 2 under the new
13 standards. So just need a confirmation on
14 that.

15 MR. WALTER: We'll confirm that.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And, Ms. Hyatt,
17 before you move on, if you think 13 -- or
18 No. 12 will take a little more discussion, I
19 was going to see if any of the Panel members
20 had questions about any of the other waivers
21 that have been discussed?

22 No?

23 Okay. All right. Let's go on then.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay. Number 12 is Student
25 Services. So it encompasses guidance

1 counseling, library media program, and school
2 nursing services. I think we have come to an
3 understanding -- an agreement on the guidance
4 counseling and library media, but I do think
5 there is kind of an outstanding, just, issue
6 with the school nursing services.

7 So it is ADE's position that a waiver of
8 Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-18-706 as well as
9 2-E.1 and 2-E.2 under the new standards would
10 be prohibited; as a health and safety law or
11 rule, that is not allowed to be waived.

12 And then Arkansas Code § -- and I will
13 give it to you just for your info, is -- no,
14 it's on the front, not the back -- is
15 6-23-401(b), and it outlines things like
16 graduation requirements, health and safety laws
17 and rules that can't be waived.

18 And I think Mr. Walter has some comments
19 of his own there.

20 MR. WALTER: Yes. Thank you.

21 Our Executive Director, Scott Smith, has
22 talked to Commissioner Key about the whole
23 waiver transition process that the Department
24 is undertaking and his concerns as to that
25 process, and as a result of that discussion,

1 it's my understanding that's why the six
2 charter schools that were originally scheduled
3 to be, I guess, your first topic and order of
4 business this morning to discuss their
5 transition waiver plans or maps were not --
6 were not presented to you today.

7 So we are willing to withdraw this waiver
8 at this time to allow for further clarity and
9 this conversation with the Department to obtain
10 further clarity in this area. Since this is a
11 new position they are taking as to the health
12 waivers as to them being prohibited by
13 6-23-401(b), this is the first time this
14 position has been taken by ADE legal, and there
15 are many other charters that hold these same
16 waivers. So we will withdraw at this time but
17 we do reserve the right to come back and make a
18 request at a later date.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I think that the
20 discussion that we had this morning as far as
21 mapping out the -- the waivers lends itself to
22 this as far as either if -- if -- if a group
23 consensus isn't reached, then any individual
24 charter would certainly be welcome to come back
25 so that we could discuss that further; so --

1 MS. HYATT: And just a point of clarity
2 for you-all. I think that the -- the
3 comprehensiveness of the changes to the
4 standards really shed some light on some --
5 some areas where there might have been some
6 inconsistencies or some areas for improvement
7 by the Department, and so this is -- that's
8 kind of why some of them were granted in the
9 past and -- and the position has kind of
10 changed. So I just wanted to clarify that in
11 case you were wondering.

12 And if there aren't any questions about
13 that, we can move on to the -- the other parts
14 of Section 12.

15 Okay. Under the new standards, the
16 applicant will need 4-E.1 and 4-E.2 for
17 guidance counseling; 4-F.1 and 4-F.2 for
18 library media specialist; and 2-C.1 and 2-C.2
19 for student support services plans.

20 And then I have a question about one of
21 them if you just want to confirm those first
22 and then I can ask my question.

23 Yeah, I said those. And 2-D.1.

24 MR. WALTER: Okay. Thank you.

25 Responsive Ed does want to go ahead and

1 request waivers of new standards for
2 accreditation 2-D.1, which I believe deals with
3 library and library media specialists, in
4 general, and this goes to the 6-25-101 et seq.
5 statutory waiver as well, that they want --
6 basically what they want to do, as again, as
7 per their model and as in operation now at all
8 their Arkansas schools, is they want the
9 flexibility to be able to hire somebody as a
10 Arkansas library media specialist who is not
11 necessarily certified in that area, and also
12 they want some flexibility as to the library,
13 the media collection, so to speak, given the
14 wide range of digital materials and programming
15 that they have.

16 And also on the student service support
17 plans, we would also ask that 2-C.1 and 2-C.2,
18 for a waiver of that. Again, as with -- as
19 with virtually all of these, it's not that
20 Premier is seeking a diminution of any type of
21 services, such as guidance counseling, licensed
22 media -- library media specialist, etc., it's
23 just the flexibility of being able to do it in
24 a way that relates to their model.

25 MS. HYATT: And just a point of

1 clarification, when Mr. Walter was talking, he
2 said 2-E.2, which is one of the prohibited
3 school nurse waivers. I believe you meant
4 4-F.2, which is library media. So I just need
5 you to clarify that for me.

6 MR. WALTER: Okay. 4-E, 4-E.1 and 4-F.2
7 and 4-F.1 and 2 were ones that -- right -- ones
8 that Ms. Hyatt suggested that we will agree to.
9 The ones I was attempting to add more
10 information on in support of our request were
11 2-D.1 and 2-C.1, and 2-C.2. As I understand
12 it, 2-D.1 deals with media collections and
13 libraries, 2-C.1 and 2-C.2 deal with student
14 support service plans.

15 MS. HYATT: That's correct. Thank you.

16 Okay. The other outstanding issue was
17 just on the prohibited -- it also deals with
18 school nurse, the school nurse prohibition.
19 But it's the ADE Rules Governing Public School
20 Student Services, just Section 301.6 which
21 deals with school nurse services. And that's
22 my last thing on that.

23 MR. WALTER: So two comments on that.

24 First we would urge our same concerns as to
25 that as part of the health services waiver.

1 Secondly, just make sure Ms. Hyatt and I
2 have an understanding. It's my understanding
3 is the rest of our request for 6-18-1001 et
4 seq. series is acceptable, with the exception
5 of that for now.

6 MS. HYATT: That's right.

7 Okay. That is the last of any legal
8 concerns on this one, so unless there are any
9 questions.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Doesn't appear that the
11 Panel does have questions at this time. Thank
12 you.

13 Okay. So with those issues having been
14 addressed, we'll start in with questions from
15 the Panel about the application.

16 So I'm going to start this time with
17 Dr. Kremers, see if she has any questions she
18 wants to ask.

19 DR. KREMERS: Under the measure --
20 measurable goals table, No. 4, where all are
21 enrolling in post-secondary, enrolling for
22 post-secondary program or continuing education
23 of some kind, right now your -- it looks like
24 your curriculum is designated through Blue
25 Learning, you mentioned, for the career and

1 technical courses as well; is that correct?

2 MR. FELTON: We tend to lean on Virtual
3 Arkansas.

4 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Of the courses that
5 you have listed, the Intro to Criminal Justice,
6 Criminal Law, Foundations, Family and Consumer
7 Sciences, have you had communication with the
8 Department of Career and Technical Education
9 that those courses are also Career and
10 Technical Ed-approved courses and aligned with
11 those courses?

12 MR. FELTON: Yes. And then we are also
13 able to use the ADE's data center, it also
14 gives you the information as well.

15 And one of the things we're hopefully
16 implementing is the JAG program. We recently
17 met with Kathy Lee Turner trying to implement
18 that in Little Rock, and giving students the
19 ability to earn credit for some of the work
20 they are doing already in the community.

21 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

22 MR. GAST: We had reached out to
23 Ms. Turner several months ago to meet with us
24 and they actually came to our district office
25 and we had a meeting to start planning coming

1 forward how we could implement CTE not only in
2 a career model but in other models as well.

3 MR. FELTON: If I could comment. One of
4 the things we're trying to grow into -- are you
5 familiar with Workplace, Workforce and Career
6 Grades Certificates --

7 DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh.

8 MR. FELTON: -- through work ease
9 assessments and trying to give the students
10 opportunity to earn those certificates, so that
11 way when they go out to employers it makes them
12 more marketable because they have the 21st
13 Century skills.

14 DR. KREMERS: Okay. When you have -- are
15 these courses delivered online or is that
16 hybrid on the career and technical courses?

17 MR. FELTON: Most of those are offered
18 digitally through Virtual Arkansas.

19 DR. KREMERS: Okay. And one of the
20 questions I have with that is that many of the
21 career and technical courses have hands-on
22 components. So through the Career and
23 Technical Education Pathways there are means
24 for the hands-on components, there is equipment
25 related to that for learning, enhancement of

1 learning. So if it's online, whether it's
2 asynchronous, synchronous, that's why my
3 curiosity is with the Department of Career and
4 Technical Education, so we would know for sure
5 if you could confirm or not whether there is
6 collaboration with CTE so we know there is the
7 hands-on component through the approved courses
8 through CTE.

9 MR. FELTON: Well, I'll confirm that we do
10 plan working hand in hand with the CTE
11 Department to ensure that's going on.

12 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

13 MR. FELTON: And then any time we use a
14 digital course, we actually hire a facilitator
15 as well and that's able to engage in those
16 hands-on activities. And then Virtual Arkansas
17 instructors do a great job of providing us with
18 a syllabus and that way if we need to provide
19 instructions or supplies or materials for those
20 courses, we do so.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, Mr. Felton, are you
22 planning to do pretty much the same thing in
23 North Little Rock that you're already doing in
24 your Little Rock school --

25 MR. FELTON: That is correct.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- with the career
2 courses?

3 So what might be good is Dr. Kremers
4 can -- you may not have been here earlier but
5 she is the new Deputy Director at Arkansas
6 Career Education.

7 MR. FELTON: Congratulations.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So it -- it may be good
9 that if you would be able to visit actually the
10 Little Rock school and -- and get to know that
11 better and then work hand in hand going through
12 this year at the Little Rock location and that
13 will help out also with that opening and any
14 new courses that they may wish to add. Because
15 in your model, if you are kind of continuously
16 adding things based on student needs, that's
17 probably something Career Ed would be very
18 interested in and how could we support more
19 on-demand time learning, but also for those
20 students to complete career pathways and obtain
21 those readiness certificates.

22 MR. GAST: Well, consider this an open
23 invitation, you know, to work with us. And
24 like I say, we -- I think you've learned over
25 the short time that we've worked together, is

1 we don't just want to do, we want to make sure
2 we do it right. And if you can provide us the
3 type of information that will help us better
4 make that particular course relevant to that
5 child so that it's not just a course and they
6 go and they never do something with it again,
7 we are all for that and we would appreciate it.
8 We really would.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams?

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. A couple of lines of
11 questioning, if may make it brief.

12 You mentioned a meeting with the North
13 Little Rock Superintendent. And how did that
14 go? I mean --

15 MR. GAST: Well, we gave each other a hug
16 at the end of it, if that means anything. No.
17 But we actually did. He's a -- really a top
18 notch individual, I thought. We --

19 I originally set up the meeting because I
20 knew that with him coming in, I didn't know how
21 much he knew, one, about charters and how much
22 he knew about the Premier model and, you know,
23 I understand that it's a little bit of -- in
24 some districts can be a tenuous situation.

25 And I think that our philosophies are

1 very, very similar in that, you know, it's
2 what's best for that child and how we can help
3 them. And I think when -- when I started
4 explaining to him how I saw us fitting into
5 their school district in being able to help
6 with -- you know, with the kids in the credit
7 recovery, he was very interested in that. And
8 so I was very encouraged by the meeting that we
9 can continue to move forward. You know, we've
10 been talking for years that one of the keys to
11 a successful charter is the relationship that
12 they try or can build.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

14 MR. GAST: You know, it's a shame that we
15 have a part of the meeting that says, "Is there
16 anyone in opposition," and I think that we have
17 to work and continue to work against in
18 opposition and more into how we can fit in.

19 Now, I do understand the neat thing about
20 Premier is we are a different type of school,
21 we don't necessarily compete for the same kids,
22 and that does make a difference as well. But I
23 thought the meeting was very encouraging and
24 went very well.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. And my second line

1 is just that you-all have, looking at your
2 sheet here, four schools currently, Northwest
3 Classical, Quest, Quest Pine Bluff, and Premier
4 Little Rock.

5 Could you kind of give us a status of
6 those schools, how well they are doing?

7 MR. GAST: Sure. Of course, we do not --
8 we have closed the Pine Bluff location.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Pine Bluff is
10 closed. Okay.

11 MR. GAST: The Pine Bluff location still
12 was operating when the application was turned
13 in, and so we listed it as a -- as a current
14 school. That school has been closed out.

15 And the other three schools are obviously
16 in operation. We graduated 25 kids from --
17 from Premier this school year, and so we're
18 happy with that.

19 The progress of the school up in
20 Bentonville, the Northwest Arkansas Classical
21 Academy, their numbers are outstanding. We
22 have some work that we continue to do. Yeah,
23 number top three schools in the state.

24 Our scores were a little disappointing
25 they come in in some of the areas in Quest.

1 When you look at them and compared to the state
2 averages and those types of things, they came
3 in looking okay. But at the same time, you
4 know, there is some -- some identification that
5 took place on that campus and some programs
6 that had already been put in place to try and
7 to help raise the scores in some of those
8 areas, you know, on that particular campus.

9 That campus has seen an interesting kind
10 of change over in the last several years to the
11 population of the group that we serve there,
12 and that necessarily hasn't been -- they are
13 coming up for renewal and you will get a lot
14 better picture of -- of what we're doing at
15 that campus coming up in December.

16 But overall our schools, we think, are
17 doing extremely well. At the same time, when
18 we know there is a challenge and there is
19 something that needs to be worked on, we take
20 it head on. And I believe I've got, with
21 Ms. Bradford, probably one of the top
22 administrators in the state of Arkansas,
23 working at that campus to get it to where it
24 needs to be.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. And just to kind of

1 close out, you gave a nice overview of the
2 three schools. What about Pine Bluff, it's
3 closed. Why was it closed?

4 MR. GAST: It was a closed -- it was a
5 joint effort between us and ADE and Mr. Freddie
6 Scott's department and us worked extremely
7 close over the course of the year to transition
8 those students over to other schools, to make
9 sure that all the finances were handled
10 appropriately, that all the equipment was
11 handled appropriately.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Was it a lack of
13 performance, is what I'm trying to get to?

14 MR. GAST: Sure.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Like Classical Academy is
16 doing well in Northwest Arkansas; so can --

17 MR. GAST: Right. Premier -- Pine Bluff
18 School there were -- there were a number of
19 challenges. We had serious challenges with the
20 location of the facility. We opened the school
21 as a 5th -- starting in 5th grade and going up.
22 When those kids came in they were several
23 grades -- several grades behind, which was
24 difficult for us to move them forward.
25 Historically, if you look, we went back and

1 asked for K-4 and asked to be able to move the
2 facility because of the disadvantages that we
3 had within that particular building and where
4 it was located and that request wasn't
5 approved.

6 And so when we looked at, you know, and we
7 talked about the financial stability of our
8 main company, we were putting well over
9 \$100,000 into a -- into the program, and when
10 we thought what we needed was to give those
11 kids a running start and that didn't occur, it
12 became in our best interests, in that
13 particular model for that particular area to
14 possibly give another charter school who was
15 maybe a little bit different, had a different
16 look, to give them the opportunity to do that.

17 And in all fairness, what I think we --
18 you know, we might look at is this Premier
19 model is something that could be an extremely
20 beneficial model, not only a Pine -- in the
21 areas we're in now but also in the Pine Bluff
22 area.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. That's
24 very helpful.

25 I was just looking at your overall

1 portfolio here and look like Premier model is
2 just kind of the model that you-all have more
3 schools in that model than the others.

4 MR. GAST: We have more in the Premier and
5 now -- and the Founders model, the model that
6 we have up in Northwest Arkansas is becoming an
7 extremely popular model. Those are just a
8 little larger schools.

9 The Premier has never been built to be a
10 school that's going to have five, six, 700
11 kids.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

13 MR. GAST: You know, we capped it at 250.
14 It would be a miracle if we got that particular
15 high, but we want to make sure that we give
16 everyone that wants a chance to go to a school
17 like that to be able to go to that, but its
18 design was to be a little bit smaller.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh?

21 DR. OWOH: Couple of questions. In your
22 application you mention several times Highly
23 Qualified Teachers. I want to make sure it was
24 clear that that's -- HQT is no longer in
25 existence, that we have Arkansas Qualified

1 Teachers and they -- if you could address the
2 assurance that teachers would meet those
3 requirements prior to entering the classroom.

4 MR. FELTON: Yes, you are correct.
5 Basically we know that Arkansas Highly
6 Qualified, basically, adopted the federal
7 mandate that's required. In our interviewing
8 and the application process, we ensure, using
9 college transcripts, official transcripts, and
10 as well as licensure, and the licensure portal
11 you guys provide us as well. And in the event
12 that we have somebody that's not highly
13 qualified, that we need to put on an additional
14 learning plan, we ensure that's done through
15 the appropriate universities as well.

16 So, for instance, I got a teacher who is
17 seeking additional licensure, they are going
18 through MAT program that's been approved by the
19 state.

20 DR. OWOH: Okay. I was just -- just
21 caution, making sure that all the teachers meet
22 the AQT --

23 MR. GAST: Sure.

24 DR. OWOH: -- requirements prior to
25 entering. And to realize the AQT is not a

1 pathway and that those requirements should be
2 met prior to the teacher teaching a course.

3 MR. GAST: Yeah. And once again, one of
4 the other benefits of a larger organization is
5 that we have, you know, through our -- the
6 talent ed portal that we have that's our
7 application process and the way we go about
8 doing things, we have many steps of checks and
9 balances that are put in place to make sure
10 that -- you know, the last thing I want is a
11 call from one of these principals, saying,
12 "Hey, guess what, I just hired so and so and I
13 just found out." You know, we don't want to
14 just found out, we want to find out long before
15 we hire that particular applicant.

16 So a lot of those safeguards are put in
17 place a lot of it though the size of our
18 company that allows us to go ahead and do that
19 because we have resources available to us that
20 normally somebody who is just sponsoring one or
21 their own particular charter might not have.

22 DR. OWOH: Okay. Did you --

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. Go ahead.

24 DR. OWOH: The second question is in
25 regards to the background checks. I know that

1 there was some previous waivers requests. And
2 I just want to make sure that it was clear of
3 the requirement to ensure that all background
4 checks were done and completed.

5 MR. GAST: Yes, sir. And I will -- I will
6 guarantee that. I don't want your child or my
7 child in somebody's classroom that doesn't
8 belong there.

9 DR. OWOH: Okay. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez?

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: So looking at a lot of the
12 goals that were set up here, I see things in
13 regards to literacy, math, science, and
14 attendance all talking about increases. And so
15 I know that it -- maybe -- you had mentioned
16 this is going to be the same model that we have
17 now in Little Rock, and so what we didn't have
18 in December and what we have now is kind of an
19 updated version of this last year's data. And
20 so when I look at some of these things, you
21 know, I see kind of a three-year trend of
22 decreases in attendance rates, decrease in math
23 and literacy and science. And so those, I
24 guess, are concerning in -- in that I
25 wouldn't -- wouldn't feel comfortable in

1 replicating that model somewhere else without
2 hearing about what are some of the plans to
3 address those and some of the reasons, you
4 know, why we are seeing some of that.

5 In addition, kind of a decrease in ADM, so
6 we are seeing, like, from about 127 students
7 down to 95. And so where does that performance
8 level and viability come into question there?
9 And does that concern you, you guys as a whole
10 and what are you doing to address that that
11 kind of gives us some comfort in replicating
12 this model somewhere else?

13 MR. FELTON: One of the things that we're
14 trying to improve on in particular through our
15 PLC process is using the data. And we're
16 conscious, we're going to own our data and we
17 understand that the population we're serving, I
18 may have a lot of 18-year-old ninth graders and
19 19-year-old 11th graders and seniors, and so
20 trying to use that data to put plans together,
21 interventions.

22 So we started RTI over in Little Rock a
23 couple of years ago trying to ramp up our
24 literacy and our math support as hiring
25 paraprofessionals as well to work in the

1 classroom for those students who are,
2 typically, two or three who are struggling.

3 And then on the ADM, we continue to
4 recruit and -- and try to advertise our program
5 and to solicit and push the information out for
6 people to increase their awareness, and so we
7 like to think there is a lot of hope in that
8 area.

9 One of the things that Mr. Gast commented
10 on is we're not trying to be a 300-student
11 school. We want to ensure that we are meeting
12 the needs of our students. And I would like to
13 think that our marketing efforts helps with
14 that as well. And so like currently right now,
15 even our school in Little Rock I think we're,
16 like, 115 students. And we just constantly,
17 because of the population we work with, we have
18 students that get back on track and go back
19 into the traditional district, and on the flip
20 side we have students that are not being
21 successful and are coming to the school as
22 well.

23 And so we implemented an attendance
24 committee, and that attendance committee meets
25 each week. We actually put an attendance

1 incentive plan together to try to look at the
2 trends of attendance and try to incorporate
3 interventions, like home visits and incentive
4 programs to try to get students to come back in
5 school and understand the value.

6 MR. GAST: And I -- and I think that we
7 have to be careful when we talk about what --
8 when we say replicate, what that means and what
9 we're actually trying to replicate -- replicate
10 and not. You know, every -- you know, every
11 school has its own culture, every school
12 develops its own set of -- of the way they --
13 they do things and whatever. And, of course,
14 we don't have a baseline in North Little Rock
15 right now so we have to base some of that off
16 of what we currently have with one school that
17 we're at. But, you know, our intent is,
18 obviously, never to be happy with where those
19 numbers are.

20 If you will recall at the renewal hearing,
21 I came out and I said, "If you're looking for a
22 school that's going to have these huge ACT
23 Aspire scores and be right on the top of
24 everything, you know, that's not what Premier
25 is and Premier never will be that." But that's

1 not to mean that we don't have successful kids,
2 but it does mean that we have to look at those
3 trends and we do, and as you can tell from what
4 Dennis said , you know, we take some action in
5 those particular areas.

6 And so any time you get to replicate a
7 school, what that means to me is I get to take
8 all the good stuff and then I get to start the
9 programs that we can see we needed to work on
10 Little Rock and start it at a higher level or a
11 different level when we open up the next one.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: So but -- but the
13 intention is with these goals is to see
14 increases and not be satisfied with decreases?

15 MR. GAST: Oh, that's correct. No doubt
16 about it. I mean, but there is a difference
17 between wanting the increases and doing nothing
18 about it and then noting -- noting that you
19 have some place that you have to work and then
20 putting some type of plan in place to go ahead
21 and target that and do that.

22 And so again, we own the data, like he was
23 saying, and I don't think that that should be
24 as big a concern. I think what -- what's more
25 important is the direction that we're heading

1 and the plans that we've put in place to go
2 ahead and make sure that those types of trends
3 don't continue.

4 MR. FELTON: I was just going to mention,
5 Steve talked about replicating, and one of the
6 things that we try to constant revisit as a
7 school is our why and our mission and vision.
8 And ultimately we know we're trying to tap into
9 a forgotten population that typically are just
10 walking the streets of Little Rock and North
11 Little Rock who are not even in high school and
12 we're trying to get those students back engaged
13 and understand the value of a high school
14 diploma, and if we can continue to graduate 25
15 or 30 kids who otherwise wouldn't have had a
16 high school diploma, then I think we're doing
17 great work in at we're trying to do. But at
18 the same time, we have a great team that
19 believes in continuous improvement. That's the
20 thing I like about -- that's what I like about
21 the PLC process. Each year we're sitting down,
22 looking at, okay, this is our needs assessment,
23 these are the things we need to work on, these
24 are the goals we need to set forth to become
25 the school that we need to become.

1 MR. GAST: And, Dr. Hernandez, if I could
2 just make one more comment in there. I think
3 one of the things that would be alarming to me
4 is if I saw our graduation kind of start -- I
5 mean starting to skyrocket, having our daily
6 attendance at 160 and 170 all of a sudden and
7 us being looked at as more of a diploma factory
8 than an actual school. And I think that when
9 you see these fluctuations going back and forth
10 or the ADM, you know, it's not easy to graduate
11 from Premier High School. You know, they can't
12 just show up and they get themselves a diploma.
13 And that works but even for those kids that
14 have not -- have been disengaged to begin with,
15 you know, for us to grab them and re-engage
16 them is not an easy process to -- to happen,
17 but I think that some of the things that you
18 are concerned about are also showing us that
19 it's a viable program and it's a program that
20 they can't just -- they don't have the
21 reputation that you just come and you get a
22 diploma, and I think that's important too.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson, do you have
24 any questions?

25 MR. WILSON: A couple.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

2 MR. WILSON: Mr. Gast, Mr. Felton, I'm
3 impressed that y'all reached out to the North
4 Little Rock Superintendent, which I think is
5 fairly new at that job --

6 MR. GAST: Yes, sir.

7 MR. WILSON: -- but been around North
8 Little Rock for a while, I believe. I think
9 that's really good that y'all are communicating
10 with each other.

11 And did I understand you to say that you
12 might be able to work out some kind of
13 concurrent credit program with North Little
14 Rock public schools?

15 MR. GAST: Well, Steve's vision here would
16 be that we would be able to work -- that we
17 could work something out or it could evolve
18 over a course of time.

19 Basically what I did in that first meeting
20 is I asked the superintendent, if we continue
21 to move forward here and if things, you know,
22 go well, would you entertain the -- the -- the
23 idea of possibly me visiting with your
24 principal or visiting with your counselors
25 or -- and getting some more ideas from people

1 on how we might be able to work together. But,
2 you know, professionally, when I was a
3 superintendent, I certainly wanted whatever
4 outside entity it was to come to me first and
5 ask me if it was okay to do that. And so we
6 didn't get that far yet, but in my vision of
7 where I would like to see things going, I could
8 see a number of different partnerships
9 developing between our school and the North
10 Little Rock School District --

11 MR. WILSON: I hope you pursue that.

12 MR. GAST: -- but, frankly --

13 MR. WILSON: I hope you pursue that.

14 MR. GAST: -- it's way too early to state
15 what that would be.

16 MR. WILSON: I hope you pursue that.

17 MR. GAST: Okay.

18 MR. WILSON: And I hope the same thing
19 holds true with Little Rock as well,
20 communication between the charter schools
21 and -- and the public schools.

22 Tell me about your -- briefly about your
23 open house that you had in April, what sort of
24 response did you get from the community there,
25 if any?

1 MR. GAST: We didn't get any. We didn't
2 have good response at all as far as attendance
3 at those particular meetings. They were
4 advertised, they were put out there, but there
5 again, you know, we look at such a different
6 group. This isn't the -- generally the parent
7 populations that are -- are going to be showing
8 up, you know, for a particular meeting. Now
9 the plan is us getting approved, and now as we
10 move forward we start advertising and
11 continuing to have, to have meetings now to
12 say, a school is coming and if you're
13 interested, you know, here's where you go from
14 there and here's how you have them.

15 And so, you know, the other part of it is
16 any of these meetings, the way our -- the way
17 the calendar is set up, you know, we're asking
18 people to come and be interested in a school
19 that might not open for a year and a half, and
20 that's a -- that's a tough sell, period, more
21 or less to a community where you're trying to
22 get the -- the kids that are disengaged.

23 MR. WILSON: And so many of these young
24 people know how to use Facebook and all that
25 stuff, that's the way to get the message out to

1 them, I guess.

2 MR. GAST: You're not on Facebook?

3 MR. WILSON: No. Hell, no. And I'm not
4 going to be either.

5 MR. FELTON: I was just going to comment
6 on the fact that, I mean, we are -- since we
7 are Premier High School of Little Rock, we are
8 an Open-Enrollment Charter, we do have family
9 members and parents who are from the North
10 Little Rock area and the Sherwood area and
11 beyond, and so I have had conversations with
12 those parents in our meetings about it. And
13 it's interesting because those parents are just
14 as excited about that opportunity to have as
15 well. Because I do have students that are
16 coming as far as North Little Rock to come to
17 school for that opportunity.

18 MR. WILSON: Okay. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Any other Panel
20 questions regarding the application?

21 No?

22 Okay. So if not, we'll direct questions
23 to see if there is anything that our ADE staff
24 has heard today with regards to the different
25 systems that the Panel might need to consider

1 or questions that have come up for the
2 applicant?

3 Ms. Hyatt, looks like she has a question.

4 MS. HYATT: I just wanted to confirm on
5 the record, and Mr. Walter -- oh -- I guess my
6 peripheral vision is just going.

7 MR. WALTER: I'm stalking her.

8 MS. HYATT: On No. 9, Teacher Licensure
9 and Contracts, on the waivers, I just want to
10 confirm, at Cheryl Reinhart's' suggestion, that
11 the waiver has been changed from 6-17-401 et
12 seq. for teacher licensure just to 6-17-401, so
13 we've avoiding any prohibited waivers of
14 background checks and stuff like that.

15 MR. WALTER: That's correct, with one
16 comment. And I know it's -- I know I think the
17 way it's listed on the waiver list is teacher
18 licensures its subset and superintendents
19 another. But we have asked for a waiver of
20 6-17-427, which is superintendent licensure, to
21 go with 401, which is teacher licensure.

22 With that comment I'm in agreement.

23 DR. PFEFFER: Okay.

24 MS. HYATT: That really does conclude any
25 legal concerns at this point.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We appreciate that.

2 And so if -- if there aren't any items
3 that -- or additional items that we need to
4 take under consideration, then we can go ahead
5 and move to the decision phase, if we're going
6 to approve, deny, or take this matter under
7 advisement until a later meeting.

8 So at this time, if there isn't anything
9 remaining, I would entertain a motion from the
10 Panel.

11 MR. WILSON: So move. I move the
12 approval.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I have a motion to
14 approve.

15 DR. OWOH: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And a second. All
17 those in favor, say, "Aye."

18 PANEL MEMBERS: Aye.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Opposed?

20 Okay. The motion passes.

21 Congratulations.

22 And we will record our comments and give
23 you feedback.

24 Okay. I think we're just about finished
25 with our responses. So, Dr. Hernandez?

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted -- I voted for the
2 motion because of the overall plan and support
3 of Responsive Education, but have some
4 lingering concerns about the model meeting
5 their overall goals as outlined.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

7 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the
8 motion. It appears the financial team is in
9 place for some solid financial oversight, they
10 have some implementation models in other places
11 that have shown students are graduating its
12 risk, high need populations. Utilization of
13 data that is focusing on the student. I do
14 have a little bit of concerns just on the CTE,
15 the hands-on apprenticeship type of experiences
16 and not being just solely online for some of
17 those things.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh?

19 DR. OWOH: I voted for the motion to
20 approve the application. I felt that the
21 charter school application and presentation
22 both address the current need of the
23 geographical community as well as the student
24 community in that setting and provide a
25 detailed explanation of the supports that will

1 be provided to both the students and the
2 educators.

3 I am concerned about the assessment
4 results and so I definitely would like to
5 continue to see how the educators and students
6 would be supported as we move forward.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams?

8 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion.
9 Premier is proposing to work with slash
10 creating educational opportunities for a
11 population of students that is not currently
12 being addressed in that geographic area.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And, Mr. Wilson?

14 MR. WILSON: I supported the motion. I
15 was impressed with that there has been
16 communication between Premier and the public
17 school districts as well, and I'm impressed
18 with their good track record otherwise in
19 Little Rock and -- and other places.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Again,
21 congratulations.

22 And we hope that as you've listened to the
23 feedback you realize that we -- we understand
24 that you're serving a unique population of
25 students, but that we would like to be able to

1 continue to work with you, support you to see
2 how maybe some of those concerns can be
3 alleviated, and welcome the opportunity to come
4 and visit and work with you in this planning --
5 upcoming planning for that school year.

6 Dr. Hernandez, in some of his concerns
7 about -- about the goals, I think that as we
8 have the opportunity to work with you-all on
9 that district plan of support and your school
10 support, your school plans, that -- that are
11 developed over time, that will be a good
12 opportunity, I think, for us and you-all to
13 engage in good conversation about what are
14 those, what are those evidences of achievement
15 for -- for students that are -- and -- and how
16 do we help you help them.

17 So anyway, we look forward to a lot of
18 conversations coming up. Thank you.

19 And, Panel, do you need a five-minute
20 break or are we ready to keep going?

21 Everybody is good?

22 A-5: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
23 APPLICATION: PROLIFIC LEARNING ARTS ACADEMY:

24 DR. PFEFFER: Okay. We will go ahead and
25 move to the final item on our action agenda

1 today.

2 MS. PERRY: Prolific Learning Arts
3 Academy --

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Let's let everybody get
5 transition out.

6 Okay. We're going to pause for about a
7 minute or so.

8 Okay. So our final item is the
9 application for the Prolific Learning Arts
10 Academy.

11 Ms. Perry, you're recognized.

12 MS. PERRY: Prolific Learning Arts Academy
13 is a proposed Open-Enrollment Public Charter
14 School to be located within the Little Rock
15 School District. The sponsoring entity is
16 Aviate Through Knowledge, Inc. The applicant
17 is -- is requesting to serve students in grades
18 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 350 beginning
19 in the 2019-2020 school year. The applicant
20 has notified affected districts of this
21 proposed public charter school.

22 ADE staff reviewed the application, and
23 concerns were shared with the applicant for
24 response. The application, the ADE evaluation,
25 and the applicant's response are included for

1 the Charter Authorizing Panel.

2 Here on behalf of Prolific Learning Arts
3 Academy today we have Mr. Edmond Davis, the
4 PLAA Executive Director; Ella Sergeant, PLAA
5 President of BODs; Michael O'Leary, PLAA Board
6 Member; Trey Chandler, CPA; O'Mont Wiley, PLAA
7 Board; Rachel Belmon, A+ Program Coordinator;
8 Kendall Ashley, Sponsoring Board; and Monica
9 Davis of the Sponsoring Board.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So will all
11 representatives of the application and anyone
12 speaking in opposition please stand to receive
13 the oath.

14 (WHEREUPON, the witnesses were sworn by
15 the Chairman.)

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you very
17 much. And we will begin with the presentation.

18 If you will come forward and state your
19 name and position for the record, you'll be
20 recognized.

21 MR. DAVIS: Sure. My name is Edmond
22 Davis, Executive Director.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Davis, you
24 have 20 minutes.

25 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

1 Well, I want to say thank you, Board, and
2 thank you for the introduction, Ms. Virginia.
3 I appreciate that. And to everyone here I will
4 be introducing to you for the Prolific Learning
5 Arts Academy, a/k/a we also know each other as
6 PLAA.

7 Our mission, dedicated to empowering
8 learners to become prolific leaders through
9 high quality educational standards, the arts,
10 parental initiatives and in real-world best
11 practices for the 21st century.

12 Our vision. PLAA is dedicated to becoming
13 a world-class Open-Enrollment free Public
14 Charter High School that strategically employs
15 integrated arts, parental initiatives, and
16 social responsibility into the curriculum.
17 This is, of course, to increase student
18 achievement moving forward.

19 I'm going to let you-all look at the image
20 here. This is 145 years of educational
21 experience before you; this is the Board of
22 Directors. Of course, from the charter schools
23 to military academies to high schools to
24 collegiate level ranks, to middle schools, you
25 have different genres of education, 145 years

1 on that film right there. That's my Board of
2 Directors. They hold me accountable.

3 Actor, Director, and Activist Mr. Wilbert
4 Cobbs, they call him Bill Cobbs, he's an
5 advisor to PLAA's decorated board. Mr. Cobbs,
6 for those who don't know, was the man that shot
7 Wesley Snipes at the end of New Jack City. He
8 is also a counterpart to Whitney Houston in the
9 Bodyguard, and Mr. Bill Cobbs is also starring
10 with Ben Stiller in Night at the Museum. He is
11 just a phone call away from giving us advice
12 moving forward as a 50-year veteran of the
13 arts.

14 Another ambassador is an -- Arkansas's own
15 American comedian James Lewis, also known as
16 Lil JJ. He's a college graduate and, of
17 course, he's in Netflix now but, of course,
18 this person right here stars with Queen Latifah
19 in Beauty Shop and also the Nickelodeon series
20 Just Jordan.

21 PLAA's proposed location is at the
22 epicenter in the most -- arguably the most
23 busiest street that we know in southwest Little
24 Rock, that's the intersection of Geyer Springs
25 and Baseline. We would say that's pretty much

1 the line of demarcation, if you will, for
2 southwest Little Rock. This location is 6210
3 Baseline Road.

4 The American Tae Kwon Do building, the old
5 one, is 6210 Baseline Road, and the footage,
6 the square footage there is about 36,000 square
7 feet, and the building was built in 1983, it's
8 still good, we've been there several times.
9 This is the proposed location for Prolific
10 Learning Arts Academy, also known as PLAA. And
11 it's also right across the street from one of
12 our potential mentors -- one of our potential
13 partners, that's the Dee Brown Library.

14 These are the programmatic features of
15 Prolific Learning Arts Academy. We have --
16 excuse me -- we have the three-fold arts
17 infused curriculum; we also have the Parental
18 Involvement Education, we also call that P.I.E,
19 and I'll explain a little bit later to y'all
20 what P.I.E. means. We've got personalized
21 learning because these under serviced
22 individuals we will be serving, this is where
23 personalized learning comes into play.

24 We've got social and civil responsibility.
25 That's something that's going to stand us

1 differently and set us apart from other
2 schools, that being public charter schools.
3 And career college readiness.

4 Now, how is PLAA different? Dr. Jeremy,
5 do you like Spiderman?

6 DR. OWOH: I do.

7 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Now, of course,
8 Spiderman is not only a superhero, he's also an
9 artist. For those who know, Peter Parker was a
10 photographer working as a side hustle, if you
11 will. So we would just want to let you-all
12 know that you can tie arts into things like
13 this in moving forward.

14 PLAA will infuse the arts into its
15 curriculum by using the A+ Model Program, and
16 of course, we're big on arts.

17 And without further ado, we have one of
18 our state leaders here that's a Program
19 Director for the A+ Program's model. Right now
20 I would like to introduce to you Ms. Rachel
21 Belmon. Come on up, Ms. Rachel.

22 MS. BELMON: Thank you, Edmond.

23 All right. Good afternoon. I'm coming to
24 you as a representative of Arkansas A+ School,
25 which is a program under the University of

1 Arkansas Fayetteville, and we are excited about
2 the potential to partner with PLAA and having
3 PLAA designate as an A+ School.

4 A little bit about A+ is that it provides
5 a whole school transformative model that some
6 of you, I believe, are familiar with, and it
7 allows for teachers to receive professional
8 development for a three-year implementation in
9 how to infuse and integrate arts into a daily
10 experience for students. So it's not taught in
11 isolation, but it's actually a part of how
12 curriculum is introduced and assessed daily.

13 Edmond and I have talked a lot about how
14 to bring artists into the school so that it's
15 not all just taught in isolation. We've talked
16 about how A+ will help support in the summer
17 with unit planning and lesson planning through
18 the arts; we also talked about how the fellows
19 in A+ will provide support to those teachers,
20 so that no matter the teachers' background or
21 experience level, they are still going to
22 receive support in meeting the goal of infusing
23 arts into a student's everyday experience at
24 PLAA.

25 MR. DAVIS: All right. Thank you,

1 Ms. Rachel.

2 And, of course, in this next slide -- I
3 won't read it all verbatim. In fact, I'm going
4 to take off my jacket real fast right here.
5 Thank you, sir. Pull this off. I'm going to
6 move around and be little bit more mobile.

7 Of course, we will foster this model, the
8 A+ Model. Right there you see a set of
9 commitments. These commitments are something
10 that's essential to the development of the A+
11 Model, which will be a partner with Prolific
12 Learning Arts Academy.

13 Now, I want you-all to take a good look,
14 Mr. Wilson, at this three-fold arts curriculum.
15 We will use multiple levels that talk about the
16 arts, but first let's look at the arts infused
17 curriculum. It will be content heavy, that's
18 where we're going to nail it home with regard
19 to the classroom for the arts.

20 The second part, okay, we will foster the
21 arts with our project and community-based
22 learning for our students, this is outside and
23 inside the classroom.

24 And last but not least, we will use arts
25 to enhance the social and emotional learning

1 for students. Research tells us this is a
2 great route to go about and that's what PLAA is
3 designed to use, this three-fold arts
4 curriculum fashion. This is what we're going
5 to do, this sets us apart from other schools
6 moving forward at Prolific Learning Arts
7 Academy.

8 You think children don't need the arts in
9 the 21st century? Think again. They really
10 need arts, and is here an arts education that
11 teaches children to problem solve, Mr. Wilson.
12 Also self direct. It talks about being
13 socially and civically responsible, also to be
14 fluent in technology, those are some of the
15 things it talks about.

16 Now again, getting back to comic books,
17 whether you like the Marvel series or the DC
18 Comics. Matt Murdock. Dr. Williams, you know
19 who Matt Murdock is?

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Daredevil.

21 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. Let's give him a
22 hand, y'all. That was Daredevil. He got me
23 off on that one. Daredevil is a pianist. Look
24 at him, he's an artist. He is also blind, by
25 the way. I know Dr. Williams knows about that.

1 But also Colossus. Colossus was an artist
2 as well, he was one of the original X-Men. And
3 so again, this is not about cartoons and
4 comics, it's about esteem and the arts. And,
5 of course, we can take comic books and all of
6 these types of characters, you would be
7 surprised who else is an artist. Super Girl,
8 by the way, was a sculptor. And I digress.

9 Moving forward, here we go.

10 PLAA plans to implement the Four Cs
11 Instructional Model to prepare students for a
12 global society. Now, of course, we're talking
13 about collaboration, communication, creativity,
14 and critical thinking.

15 PLAA's classroom instruction is a tale of
16 two sides. We're leaning more towards the B
17 side, but I'll show you what the A side is.
18 And, of course, the A side it says teachers
19 knows everything. That's tradition. 21st
20 century like PLAA, we're talking about teachers
21 as learners.

22 Of course, side classroom A traditional,
23 it says kids listen. Classroom B, Prolific
24 Learning Arts Academy, kids think or children
25 think.

1 And lastly, of course, finish pages at the
2 traditional level. What PLAA is going to talk
3 about and what we're going to be all about is
4 problem solve and create, and that's what
5 Prolific Learning Arts Academy is all about.

6 Of course, that side on the right,
7 Dr. Jeremy, is good for robots -- okay, my left
8 side -- I'm sorry, but on my right, that's good
9 for young people, that's moving forward.

10 The ACT Aspire will be used to -- as an
11 assessment -- excuse me -- as a summative
12 assessment to measure career and college
13 readiness. Of course, in 9th and 10th grade,
14 we know that; but for 11th and 12th grade, it
15 will be the traditional ACT.

16 The MAP Assessment will be used as an
17 interim tool to precisely measure growth and
18 performance.

19 Do we all learn the same? Dr. Angela, do
20 we all learn the same?

21 DR. KREMERS: No, sir.

22 MR. DAVIS: We don't all learn the same,
23 no. Not at all. Okay? But look at this quote
24 from Dr. Albert Einstein, "Everybody is a
25 genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability

1 to climb a tree, it will live its whole life
2 believing that it's stupid." This is quote,
3 unquote. Okay?

4 PLAA will personalize learning to meet the
5 diverse needs of students. Now again, in this
6 demographic ZIP code we're talking about, we're
7 talking about under-serviced, we're talking
8 about under-resourced individuals, for the most
9 part. We're talking about personalized
10 learning.

11 PLAA will align its curriculum with the
12 Arkansas Academic Standards. English for
13 Speakers of Other Languages, ESOL, PLAA will
14 support the use and accommodations in classroom
15 instruction and assessment to ensure that
16 students will have access to instruction and
17 assessment based on ESOL standards.

18 Now, I speak four languages but I'm
19 speaking English right now, so the students
20 will have multiple ways of getting this out
21 there.

22 Now, how is PLAA different?

23 What kind of pie do you like, Dr. Pfeffer?
24 What kind of pie?

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All kinds. All kinds,

1 so I can't even pick.

2 MR. DAVIS: She likes all kinds of pie.
3 Okay. All right. Yes. I like apple pie, I
4 like peach pie, but check this kind of P.I.E.
5 out. PLAA has a parental engagement education.
6 That's what P.I.E. means when you're talking
7 about these acronyms. So when you hear Ed
8 Davis talk about P.I.E. we're talking about
9 Parental Involvement Education. This parental
10 involvement, I just you-all to look at this,
11 this graph right here. It's not about
12 students, it's about their parents. So it says
13 54 percent, when you're talking about being a
14 part of the PTA. The higher the tax bracket,
15 the more the parents are involved in school
16 activities. Okay. The lower the tax bracket,
17 the lower you see these numbers are -- are
18 relevant on the screen here. You've got the
19 lower SES, socioeconomic status, okay, for
20 volunteering in classroom committees and things
21 like that. So again, the more you get the
22 parents involved, the more the students' grades
23 goes up essentially. So PLAA is about getting
24 students' parents involved moving forward, you
25 have to have that parental involvement

1 education.

2 PLAA will implement Dr. Epstein's
3 framework on involvement, which includes these
4 six principles. Okay. These six principles,
5 one is parenting; the other one is
6 communicating; one is volunteering; the next it
7 says here is learning at home; decision making;
8 and collaborating with the community. And that
9 goes back to our foundation we're going to talk
10 on a little bit later.

11 Again, how is PLAA different,
12 Dr. Hernandez? How is it different?

13 Social responsibility. Everyone say
14 "social responsibility."

15 AUDIENCE: Social responsibility.

16 MR. DAVIS: That's very important. A lot
17 of schools don't talk about this. There is a
18 lot of A students, B students getting gunned
19 down because they are socially incompetent. We
20 don't have these conversations too much. It
21 should be a standard all the way across the
22 board from the college ranks on down to
23 elementary school now. This is 21st century.
24 So again social responsibility.

25 There's a picture of arguably the most

1 famous cop in American, Tommy Norman, who
2 doesn't know him. But again, he has a great
3 relationship by community policing.

4 What PLAA is planning on doing is, when
5 we're talking about infusing the arts with
6 community and project-based learning, we're
7 learning inside and outside the classroom. Our
8 students need to be scholastically competent,
9 yes, they do; but also socially and civically
10 responsible, and that's one of the ones that
11 PLAA has. And there's a video down there at
12 the bottom, for those with smart devices, you
13 can look up Tommy Norman and Prolific Learning
14 Arts Academy or the respond-i-bility and you
15 will see the video that he submitted on behalf
16 of support for this school.

17 Research states that the arts foster
18 social responsibility. This is true. Okay.
19 I'm a 3D kind of guy, data driven decisions.
20 That's what it says when it comes to the arts.

21 To help enhance student's social and
22 emotional development, we have Dr. Wyngaard's
23 four Rs, and those four Rs are relevance --
24 okay -- respect, relationship, and
25 responsibility.

1 Arts improve social and emotional
2 development.

3 PLAA plans to implement the Elevate Your
4 Game Mentoring Model, which infuses the arts
5 again and mentoring.

6 I had a chance to talk to the founder of
7 this program, his name is Mr. Michael Freeman.
8 You can Google him as well. He started this a
9 number of years ago, he has met much success
10 out in California with mentoring and using the
11 arts in the curriculum, in the curriculum model
12 moving forward. And again, PLAA plans to
13 partner with Mr. Freeman and to initiate the
14 Elevate Your Game into our fabric.

15 Again, there we go Dr. Williams, we've got
16 Green Lantern, we know that's DC Comics, okay,
17 and also the Wasp. That's still in the movies
18 now with the Ant, I think the Ant, that's in
19 the movies now. But again, you've got Marvel
20 and DC Comics, those two again essentially are
21 artists. Hal Jordan, you all know that guy, he
22 played a couple of years ago in the movie. He,
23 of course, is an architect. And the Wasp,
24 she's a fashion designer. Okay. So now you
25 have the arts, a lot of superheros are artists.

1 And that's something that we just wanted to
2 give you some tidbit piece of information
3 there.

4 So why is PLAA needed? Prolific Learning
5 Arts Academy, PLAA, is needed because there has
6 been a lack of high school options in southwest
7 Little Rock for over 50 years. Okay?

8 And to touch a little bit more on that, I
9 would like to invite to you -- up to the mic is
10 Mr. Michael O'Leary. Mr. Michael O'Leary is a
11 retired military specialist and seasoned
12 educator.

13 Mr. O'Leary?

14 MR. O'LEARY: Well, one of the things that
15 we noticed, and I know the question is going to
16 come up, why, why is this charter school
17 needed, why is it needed at this particular
18 time.

19 The district in question is getting ready
20 in the future of 2020, as I understand it to
21 combine two different high schools together in
22 into one location. Anyone who has been a high
23 school administrator and such knows that
24 districts have their own problems, schools have
25 their own problems, but when you bring two

1 schools together from two different
2 communities, there is bound to be many problems
3 that are going to occur.

4 Having a charter school provides the
5 school district an opportunity to give kids
6 another chance, another place to go to to
7 possibly be successful.

8 As educators I think, and I've been a life
9 long educator for 40 years, I think we have the
10 obligation to provide -- try to provide young
11 people opportunities to be successful. You're
12 all educators and I think you would agree that
13 having another avenue, pathway, where students
14 could go either for a semester, for a year,
15 possibly even graduate, because the public
16 school over here is not working out for them,
17 this gives them the opportunity to be
18 successful. That's why we think that there is
19 a real need.

20 The community, I think, would get behind
21 the opportunity; parents would look at it as an
22 alternative, when it's not working out for
23 their children. And in the end, if we can help
24 young people be more successful by changing
25 their location and possibly the venue of

1 education that they're getting, then we've been
2 successful in accomplishing that.

3 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. O'Leary.

4 According to the Arkansas Division of
5 Youth Services, African-Americans make up of
6 nearly 20 percent of the state's youth
7 population but represents 60 percent of the
8 children locked up. Talking about the school
9 to prison pipeline, check out this next slide,
10 and keep your mind on that one there.

11 This next slide it says here, the
12 percentage of high school dropouts by age 25,
13 again, look at the disparity, ladies and
14 gentlemen. African-Americans right there and
15 Hispanic/Latino Americans right there. Again,
16 it's definitely mind boggling, to say the
17 least.

18 But what PLAA is doing, PLAA is designed
19 to help minimize that, to help counter that
20 curve when it comes to the highway to prison
21 pipeline and also high school dropouts.

22 And we've got another slide I want to show
23 you here. We all know that Little Rock is
24 about 200,000 people. Of course, if we look at
25 the number within the ZIP code where PLAA is

1 projected to be, that's 72209, it's 81 percent
2 minorities of color: African-Americans are
3 64 percent, Latino-Americans at 17.3 percent,
4 and my stats are from, at the bottom, the
5 census down at the bottom.

6 So again, you're taking 81 percent of the
7 minority group and just centering an arts
8 academy right in the middle when data tells us
9 as educators that this is one avenue which they
10 will do well in and they learn in. So again
11 that's something that we have to consider and
12 it's just one to -- something that we should
13 all talk about a little more.

14 Research continues to indicate that
15 students with similar demographics such as PLAA
16 perform better academically and socially in the
17 arts-riched schools than in schools that don't
18 have a robust arts program. Students have
19 showed the greatest relative improvement in
20 academic achievement when participating in the
21 arts.

22 PLAA understands the charge to be
23 scholastically and culturally responsible to
24 meet the needs of the community.

25 PLAA will encourage scholastic excellence

1 such as the academic S.W.A.G. Award. As you
2 see the symbol, it's very artistic. S.W.A.G.
3 is Students With Academic Gains. That's what
4 S.W.A.G. stands for.

5 Additionally PLAA plans to focus on
6 financial literacy skills, okay, because
7 literacy illiteracy kills. That was a joke,
8 y'all didn't get that one.

9 Closing remarks. Pablo Picasso said,
10 "Every child is an artist. The problem is how
11 to remain an artist once we grow up." Quote,
12 unquote. Give Southwest Little Rock
13 educational options for 72209, as these
14 learners will become our future prolific
15 leaders. Don't let the educational system get
16 in the way of real learning.

17 Arkansas State motto from 1950 to 1989 was
18 Land of Opportunity. Don't raise your hand if
19 you remember. Okay?

20 So, again, that's something right now we
21 want to know if this Board, this Panel will
22 give PLAA the opportunity.

23 Thank you.

24 And to my Spanish speakers (speaking in
25 Spanish).

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you.
2 And very well timed. Your 20 minutes is just
3 ending.

4 So, Dr. Boyd, is there anyone here to
5 speak in opposition?

6 MS. BOYD: No.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No.

8 All right. So you do have an additional
9 five minutes before we start questions, if you
10 would like to finish up anything else.

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

12 Do you have any questions? I don't have
13 anything else.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.
15 Well, we'll go ahead and move on.

16 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If you need something
18 else we'll give you a little more additional
19 time. We can work that out.

20 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am. Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So there were a
22 couple of -- let's see here. Yeah, there were
23 a couple of unresolved issues after the ADE
24 internal review, and I think there are some
25 legal items that we'll walk through, so we'll

1 do this as we've done before.

2 And I think Dr. Boyd has an extra
3 microphone there.

4 DR. BOYD: Thank you, Dr. Pfeffer.

5 So in reference to the remaining concerns,
6 as it relates to the academic achievement
7 goals, the goals for 11th and 12th grade
8 students do not seem to be aligned to college
9 entrance exams or other post-secondary career
10 options.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So, Dr. Boyd, can you
12 direct us to where that might be? Are you
13 looking at the application on Page 20?

14 DR. BOYD: The goals -- uh-huh. The goals
15 are on prompt for the application.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

17 DR. BOYD: Then you can see under there
18 where the Internal Review Committee and
19 applicant went back and forth, and in the end
20 the Internal Review Committee felt that the
21 goals and their alignment to college entrance
22 exams or other post-secondary career options
23 were not accounted for.

24 MS. DAVIS: Hello, Monica Davis.

25 And in regards to the career options, we

1 realize that we needed to have three pathways
2 to career options for our students, and we do
3 have those rectified and I can read them if you
4 would like. We definitely will submit those
5 in.

6 We have a program of study through the
7 audio and video tech film. With us being an
8 arts infused school, we definitely want to
9 utilize the -- the arts program of study. And
10 so up under those programs of study we have
11 Fundamental of Audio Video Tech and Film. We
12 also have Intermediate Audio Video Tech and
13 Film. The last one in that program of study is
14 Media Communications Lab.

15 The second program of study that we have
16 is the advertisement. It falls under the
17 Visual Arts, with us being an arts school.
18 Okay. We have the Advertising and Graphics
19 Design, and the actual courses for those, we
20 have Fundamental Advertising and Graphics
21 Design; then we have Intermediate Advertising
22 and Graphics Design; and then our last program
23 of study we've chosen Advanced Advertising and
24 Graphics Design, that extra unit that's
25 required.

1 And then we have one last program of study
2 for the three pathways would be
3 entrepreneurship. In order to build that
4 community and help our learner to become
5 responsible within the community we have
6 computer -- under that particular program of
7 study we have Computerized Business
8 Applications; and then we have entrepreneurship
9 itself, which is, of course, one credit unit;
10 and then we also have Small Business
11 Operations. We want our students to be in --
12 entrepreneurs and we want them to be very
13 responsible within the community.

14 DR. PFEFFER: Okay.

15 MS. DAVIS: So that addresses the programs
16 of studies that were not rectified.

17 And then as relates to -- what was it,
18 that other concern?

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I think -- I think
20 this first question was actually referring to
21 the goals that you-all have established.

22 MS. DAVIS: Okay. Okay. I thought
23 that --

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And those are on
25 Page 20 of the application where -- and it --

1 and I want to make sure that -- that we're all
2 on the same page --

3 MS. DAVIS: Yeah.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- about what the
5 question is.

6 MS. DAVIS: Right.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You've got several
8 goals listed as far as the percent of students
9 that will be meeting the -- the readiness score
10 on the state -- the state assessment, the ACT
11 Aspire. Is -- those questions though were
12 specifically talking to the post-secondary,
13 what kind of readiness goals were being set for
14 that? Is that correct, Dr. Boyd?

15 DR. BOYD: Right. Right. That's correct.
16 Part of the educational need was talking about
17 the need for a high school in the area and the
18 need for post-secondary graduation and
19 post-secondary success.

20 So the Internal Review Committee felt that
21 there was a hole there because the goals didn't
22 speak directly to -- to goals that would help
23 fill that educational need.

24 MS. DAVIS: We do have goals that will
25 help monitor progress for academic growth, and

1 that's one of our areas.

2 But I will let Michael --

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

4 MR. O'LEARY: All right. And I need to --
5 I'm not quite clear on this one piece. Are you
6 looking at the type of goals regarding pathways
7 for students?

8 DR. BOYD: We're looking for goals --

9 MR. O'LEARY: Because that was -- that was
10 the expectation that I was under the impression
11 that's what you were looking for.

12 DR. BOYD: So the goals, I think we're
13 looking for something tied to, like, the ACT or
14 having work certification before leaving or
15 something like that that will increase the
16 opportunities of the students once they leave
17 the school.

18 MR. O'LEARY: Well, taking those into
19 consideration, one of things that we had a
20 discussion on is that I know just in the last
21 eight years as I've watched curriculum change
22 in the state of Arkansas, in another two years
23 when we get to the 11th and 12th grade, we're
24 not quite sure that the goals that we would
25 align with today would actually be the same

1 that we could do two to three years from now
2 because of the changes that the Department has
3 made just in curriculum requirements alone.

4 So we were looking more at the pathway
5 idea because we're not even close -- we're only
6 going to have 9th and 10th grade. And I'm not
7 trying to cop out on that answer, but I think
8 that as you look at the changes that have been
9 going on in the last four or five years
10 regarding curriculum, it's hard to establish
11 goals other than the standard, the ACT test,
12 the Aspire test, basically spending time with
13 students through counseling services to make
14 determination what is it that they want to do
15 post secondarily and so on like that. And
16 then, of course, the relationships that you
17 build with local community colleges and local
18 other higher institutions of education, you're
19 building that rapport at the same time to be
20 able to say to students, here, here is the list
21 of the things that are available to you based
22 upon what your test scores are, etc., etc. And
23 then I think there is common ground where you
24 come together to try to determine what's the
25 goal of the student, which in turn helps with

1 the goal of the -- of the program that you
2 administer, so that you can help them achieve
3 that goal and establish that.

4 But I still think there is going to be
5 changes that may change a little bit about how
6 we will proceed with that aspect with each
7 individual student.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And maybe
9 something that this might clear it up a little
10 bit, and we'll go ahead and address the
11 remaining issues and we may probably come back
12 with more questions of the goals. But when we
13 look at the chart that you have where you have
14 articulated what the goals are for your
15 students, everything is based on an assessment,
16 either the ACT Aspire or the NWEA MAP
17 Assessment. So when we look at those goals and
18 are thinking through with you as this is how
19 we're going to determine whether or not you're
20 successful one year, two year, three years,
21 five years out, and you've said that 75 percent
22 of your 9th and 10th graders will meet
23 readiness scores in reading after three years,
24 I think those are things you want to be
25 thinking about is if you are banking all of

1 your goals on specific percentages on specific
2 assessments and we get down the road and -- and
3 because those are addressing your 9th and 10th
4 grade, you know, if you're not meeting that
5 75 percent mark, what else have you put into
6 play to show that you've been a success, your
7 students are being successful based on what the
8 school is offering? So I think that's probably
9 where that question is coming from. And in
10 your presentation you talked a lot about the
11 arts integration and those opportunities for
12 students but we're not seeing that reflected in
13 terms of how we're going to know if students
14 are successful after having been at that school
15 over the course of their high school career.
16 So I think that may be what the internal
17 committee was trying to get at, there is a
18 disconnect.

19 MR. O'LEARY: Are you expressing that from
20 an academic standpoint?

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I'm expressing that as
22 a member of the Charter Panel. When you come
23 back in a few years and want a renewal, if
24 these are the goals that you've established and
25 you're not hitting those goals, then I have

1 nothing else on which to base your success
2 other than percentages on these assessments.

3 MR. O'LEARY: Well, the assessment numbers
4 on that that we've presented here, they are
5 hard numbers. And they are not -- it's not
6 speculation, it's saying, this is what we hope
7 to obtain by a variety of -- of things that we
8 put into the curriculum for student
9 achievement. And so I would say that in the
10 discussion that we've had, we're stand -- we're
11 putting our program standing on those types of
12 percentages.

13 Are you saying that we should broaden that
14 more or is this too narrow of a scope for the
15 Panel to -- to feel comfortable with?

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: So just to give you a
17 little bit of context, when we, you know, look
18 at some of our most recent test scores in the
19 county as a whole, so take Pulaski County, all
20 the schools, charters, all of them together,
21 and we'll just use math, for example, is that
22 we're seeing kind of an average number of
23 percentage of students that are ready or
24 exceeds in mathematics at being around, for 9th
25 and 10th graders being around 21 percent. And

1 so I'm all about, you know, big giant hairy
2 audacious goals, but when you set every goal as
3 being 70 percent, 75 percent of your kids are
4 going to meet or exceed readiness benchmarks,
5 you know --

6 MR. O'LEARY: You're seeing a lower
7 number?

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: That's way off, I mean,
9 and so what I'm -- I guess what we're trying to
10 figure out is what did you base these goals on
11 or just -- or are you saying that, hey, we're
12 saying that in three years when we come back
13 for renewal or whatever that year time limit
14 is, if we don't hit those marks, then what do
15 we do as a Charter Panel as far as saying,
16 well, we want to continue this, when you come
17 back with a lot lower than what your goals
18 were. And if that's the only thing that we're
19 basing your charter application on, then that
20 could be problematic down the road. So
21 that's -- that's kind of the context of what
22 we're saying --

23 MR. O'LEARY: I understand. Uh-huh.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- is did you look at how
25 the surrounding districts are doing?

1 MR. O'LEARY: Are you saying we're too
2 ambitious?

3 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I'm not saying that
4 either. I'm just saying that that is something
5 that kind of sticks out to me is all of those
6 goals are very -- are they arbitrarily set
7 based on that and based on the kind of kids
8 that you're trying to serve.

9 MS. DAVIS: Yeah. Typically we set the
10 goals based on student growth 100 percent, a
11 typical growth one school year worth of growth
12 in regards to that grade level. So that's what
13 we -- now, the ACT actual testing, of course, I
14 noticed that discrepancy, we didn't set a goal
15 for that; however our students will take
16 college and career exams to help them prepare
17 for college. So just a little --

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And why don't we
19 go ahead and continue on with the unresolved
20 issues and then we can come back if we want to
21 address the goals a little bit more in the
22 application.

23 DR. BOYD: Okay. So in Section C-5, we've
24 already addressed the career and technical
25 education courses pathways. Thank you.

1 And then we also noted that
2 African-American history was listed under
3 social studies, and right now the way it is in
4 the course code system, it's only half a
5 credit, so that would leave social studies
6 missing -- the need to offer an additional half
7 credit of social studies to meet the
8 requirement.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And can you tell us
10 what page they have that on? Do you have that
11 marked in the application?

12 DR. BOYD: It's -- it's C-5 so it's
13 following the next section that we just looked
14 at.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Page 25.

16 DR. BOYD: Page 25. Thank you, Dr. Owoh.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Starts on 23, I think,
18 high school courses.

19 DR. BOYD: So I guess what we're looking
20 for is what additional social studies course
21 would to be offered to complete the
22 requirements?

23 MR. DAVIS: The additional social studies
24 courses we have are Arkansas History and
25 Psychology, we added those two; of course, we

1 already have American History, World History,
2 Civics, and World Geography. And those two
3 were half credits.

4 DR. BOYD: Could you -- could you repeat
5 that?

6 MR. DAVIS: Sure, yes, ma'am.

7 The Arkansas History was added and
8 Psychology was added.

9 DR. BOYD: Okay. We're going to let
10 Standards check that out and we'll circle back
11 with that new information.

12 All right. Next, under student services,
13 it remains unclear that a full continuum of
14 special education services will be provided,
15 including but not limited to occupational
16 therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy.

17 We could -- we need confirmation that
18 these will be offered and a little description
19 about them.

20 MR. O'LEARY: Well, first of all, when it
21 comes to special ed services, I'm a special ed
22 administrator, and I notice my counterpart
23 that's sitting in the back back there that I've
24 worked with with the Department of Special
25 Education here in Arkansas for many, many

1 years.

2 When it comes to the basic services, the
3 special ed instructor has the responsibility to
4 interpret the IEP and make sure that the
5 services that are identified from the IEP
6 conference are in fact put into place while the
7 student is attending school. If you need
8 speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc.,
9 those services can be brought in from an
10 outside vendor, such as Kid Source or some of
11 the others that are available. The special ed
12 teacher would be the one that would make that
13 interpretation and also make the
14 recommendation.

15 If you take a look at the budget, I
16 believe our budget reflects the fact that we
17 have about \$81,000 put aside for the SPED of
18 services and for the purpose of obtaining a
19 qualified special ed teacher to be on site on a
20 day-to-day basis to handle the day-to-day
21 issues that come up with students that have an
22 IEP.

23 They also would be responsible for
24 identifying students that have not been
25 identified as special ed to make those

1 recommendations to staff and at the same time
2 proceed forward with the necessary testing.

3 As far as special ed law, any questions
4 that have to do with the law and interpretation
5 of that, we have a Department that has
6 responded quite rapidly here in -- in Arkansas
7 and provides that type of information and
8 support on a regular basis.

9 Are there any questions regarding that?

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And since we're
12 on that specific piece, and I know we do have
13 people in here from our Special Education
14 Division, can I -- can we go ahead and just get
15 you all to confirm whether or not you're
16 comfortable with the responses that have been
17 given with regard to -- because it was a
18 remaining issue. And from the response, do we
19 see any missing pieces there?

20 MS. HUGHES: Hi, Kristin Hughes, Special
21 Education Unit at the ADE.

22 I just wanted to clarify that it wasn't a
23 single teacher decision, it was an IEP team
24 decision on the services?

25 MR. O'LEARY: IEP team. Sorry. My

1 mistake on that one.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

3 MR. O'LEARY: You have an IEP team that
4 considers --

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We'll need you to come
6 to the microphone, please.

7 MR. O'LEARY: Sorry. I forgot to mention
8 that the IEP team at the school is headed up by
9 the IEP -- by the special education teacher,
10 and then other teachers on the staff serve as
11 the IEP team at the time you meet with the
12 parent or parents of that particular student to
13 either make recommendations, adjustments, and
14 put the IEP together. It's every 12 months
15 that you meet and you evaluate where the
16 student is at based upon whatever type of
17 learning disability that they may have at that
18 particular point in time.

19 The Department has always been, like I
20 said, very supportive and helpful when it is --
21 some decisions or information is needed in
22 order to arrive at that -- that conclusion.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

24 DR. BOYD: So the Department would also
25 like to clarify if there is a plan for

1 contracting the SPED services in place already?

2 MR. DAVIS: Say that one more time.

3 DR. BOYD: Is there a plan in place for
4 contracted SPED services already?

5 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am. We are still
6 under construction with that plan. Yes, ma'am.

7 DR. BOYD: Okay. Circling back to the
8 courses offered, looking at what the applicant
9 submitted, if they could confirm that this is
10 what they intend to offer, then we will be on
11 the same page.

12 So for social studies, that's where we
13 have the issue, there is U.S. History, which
14 previously they stated American History but for
15 our purposes it's U.S. History; World History,
16 which is already mentioned; a half credit of
17 Civics; and a half credit of Economics and
18 Personal Finance; and then a half credit of
19 African-American History; and a half credit of
20 World Geography.

21 MR. DAVIS: You said a half credit of
22 Economics?

23 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

24 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am. And the other one
25 was African-American History?

1 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

2 MR. DAVIS: Uh-huh.

3 DR. BOYD: And World Geography?

4 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am. We have that --
5 we have it on here. Yes, ma'am.

6 DR. BOYD: Okay. So that's what we're
7 agreeing on?

8 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Do would have
10 Economics and Personal Finance?

11 DR. BOYD: I'm sorry. Yes, ma'am, I
12 shortened that. Personal Finance and
13 Economics.

14 Thank you for the clarification.

15 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

16 DR. BOYD: I'm sorry, I missed it. Did we
17 talk about the special education teacher
18 getting support? Was that part of the -- was
19 that going to be part of the contracted
20 services?

21 MR. DAVIS: The special education teacher
22 getting support?

23 MR. O'LEARY: I'm sorry, I missed the
24 question.

25 DR. BOYD: So it was to ensure that the

1 special education teacher gets support in
2 understanding special education law and
3 carrying out required meetings, documentation,
4 and implementation of IEPs.

5 MR. DAVIS: Well, most of the -- most of
6 the special ed teachers that go through and
7 become credentialed in the state of Arkansas do
8 have a clear understanding of IDEA of 2004 or
9 2006, I think was the last time it was written.
10 So when it comes to the law and the
11 implementation of IEPs, there -- there are
12 several seminars and conferences throughout the
13 year that the Department of Special Ed for the
14 State puts on.

15 So if there are, again, any type of
16 questions or anything that relates to the law
17 or implementation of the IEP, there are many,
18 many resources that are available through the
19 school. That teacher knowing the federal law
20 that's behind it would definitely be supported
21 to be able to provide students the appropriate
22 services as needed based upon the IEP.

23 So yes. The answer is yes, yes, and yes.

24 DR. BOYD: Thank you.

25 And then also in -- during the internal

1 review process it was stated that budget
2 adjustments would be submitted and we did not
3 receive those.

4 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am. We have some
5 budget changes we want to submit.

6 I would like to call Mr. Trey Chandler up
7 real fast, our CPA.

8 MR. CHANDLER: Trey Chandler, CPA.

9 I've -- I've just become involved in this
10 process and I've noticed that they have asked
11 me to go through the budget numbers and address
12 some of the questions you guys have.

13 We have had some changes we have not yet
14 submitted or they have been submitted already,
15 I'm not quite sure, but just some small changes
16 about some of the -- the P.I.E., and the
17 marketing materials have just been removed from
18 that, but that really covered, I think, the
19 only changes that I had once I looked through
20 there. And then they are going to be submitted
21 as soon as today even.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I've got a
23 question there. We're not aware of what budget
24 adjustments were asked to be submitted so --
25 but if they were asked to be submitted and they

1 have not been submitted, I think that would be
2 problematic in trying to move forward and
3 approve an application for things that weren't
4 submitted. So can we get clarification as to
5 what was requested and whether you have
6 something to submit or not?

7 MR. CHANDLER: Okay.

8 DR. BOYD: All right. So if you look on
9 Page 43 of 66 in the application, we requested
10 more information about marketing and parent
11 involvement, because they -- they were listed
12 twice. And then in the response it was stated
13 that there would be a correction and
14 adjustments as needed for accuracy. And we did
15 not receive those adjustments.

16 MR. CHANDLER: Okay. So from what I'm
17 looking at, the very last -- the two last
18 budget items, there was \$5,000 for marketing
19 materials and another 3,000 for the parental
20 involvement education, and those will be
21 just -- just removed because those were
22 duplicates.

23 DR. BOYD: Okay. So will those be, like,
24 reappropriated to a different section or are
25 they just going to go as a surplus.

1 MR. CHANDLER: We will just increase the
2 surplus that we have on the books right now.

3 DR. BOYD: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So the budget
5 adjustments, it was a total of \$8,000; is that
6 correct?

7 MR. CHANDLER: That's correct.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And that would just be
9 added then to --

10 MR. CHANDLER: To the net revenue over the
11 expenses. Uh-huh.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The net revenue.
13 And going back to the -- one of the
14 other -- let me go back to the summary. When
15 you were updating on the revised list of career
16 and technical education courses, you read
17 through those for us. Do you have something to
18 submit so that we could look at those? Do you
19 have a copy?

20 DR. KREMERS: I would like to comment on
21 that, if I may.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

23 DR. KREMERS: They collaborated with our
24 staff this morning on those.

25 MS. DAVIS: No, I don't have those now.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So -- so you-all
2 have had a chance to review those?

3 DR. KREMERS: As of this morning.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: As of this morning.
5 Okay. Thank you.

6 MS. DAVIS: Okay. Yeah.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And are you comfortable
8 then that they will meet the requirements for
9 the Career Technical Education part of the
10 graduation requirements for the course
11 offerings?

12 DR. KREMERS: It was just a quick staff
13 message.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

15 DR. KREMERS: So I think there is really
16 not adequate time to fully, since it happened,
17 so I --

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

19 DR. KREMERS: I can't fully answer this.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

21 MS. DAVIS: Okay. Well, they are coming
22 straight from the Career and Technical Center,
23 Building 3, so the updated version, 2017 -- I
24 mean, 2018, so I can get those submitted. We
25 can get those submitted.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. But you did not
2 submit them prior to today?

3 MS. DAVIS: Not the revised version
4 because we wanted to come and speak with you
5 first.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So
7 that goes through the list there from the
8 summary sheet. Did the Panel members, do you
9 want to ask any questions or have any
10 conversation?

11 All right. So let's move on then to the
12 legal review and walk through questions around
13 these waivers.

14 MS. HYATT: Okay. The first section is
15 educator licensure. So the first issue is just
16 moving them from the old standards to the new
17 standards, and I just need a confirmation that
18 they intend to seek waivers of 4-B.2, 4-C.1,
19 4-C.2, 4-D.1, 4-E.1, and 4-F.1, which would
20 cover superintendents, principals, teachers,
21 guidance counselors, and library media
22 specialists.

23 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay. The second is that I
25 believe that you need a waiver of Arkansas Code

1 Annotated § 6-25-103 and 6-17-309 -- pardon the
2 typo there -- in order to effectuate your other
3 waivers.

4 We're still on No. 1, yeah, bullet point
5 No. 2.

6 MR. DAVIS: All right.

7 MS. HYATT: And if -- if you're -- if you
8 intend to -- if you want to effectuate those
9 waivers, you will need waivers of these two
10 additional sections, so I just need
11 confirmation.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And can you just give
13 us a brief description of what those sections
14 would be?

15 MS. HYATT: Yes. Give me just one second.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

17 MS. HYATT: So 6-17-309 is actually the
18 licensure waiver. So in the law, talking about
19 that no student should be instructed under a
20 teacher who is not licensed, so that is the
21 first one.

22 And then 6-25-103 is library media
23 specialist licensure.

24 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

25 MS. HYATT: Okay. And on the request for

1 6-15-1004, again this has come up in every
2 school, it's only section (d) that's necessary,
3 which that's the only section of that code that
4 addresses any type of teacher licensure that
5 would affect a school or a charter school. So
6 I just need confirmation that (d) is
7 acceptable?

8 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

9 MS. HYATT: Okay. Moving to No. 2, which
10 is a Flexible Schedule. You will need a waiver
11 of Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-10-106(a), which
12 is start and end dates for school, and you will
13 also need a waiver under the new standard
14 Section 1-A.5.2, in order to effectuate the
15 waiver.

16 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am, we accept that.

17 MS. HYATT: Okay. Number 3 is duty free
18 lunch. The waiver request as it stands is for
19 6-17-111(a)(1), so I need them to confirm if
20 they plan to compensate teachers not receiving
21 a duty free lunch, because otherwise they would
22 need a waiver of the entire code section, not
23 just Section (a)(1).

24 MR. DAVIS: Let me see, look down there.

25 Now that question, say question that

1 again.

2 MS. HYATT: So do you plan on compensating
3 teachers not receiving duty free lunch for the
4 time that they are spending working during
5 their -- during their lunch period? Otherwise
6 you will need a waiver of the entire section.

7 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am, we are going to
8 get a waiver for the entire section.

9 MS. HYATT: Okay. So it's 6-17-111 in
10 full then would be a change to the waiver
11 request.

12 Moving down to No. 7, Gifted and Talented
13 and Alternative Learning Environments, it's
14 just a transition from the old standards to the
15 new. So the new standard sections are 2-G.1,
16 which is gifted and talented, and 2-I.1, which
17 ALE, and I just need you to confirm that.

18 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am. Confirm.
19 Absolutely.

20 MS. HYATT: Okay. On No. 8, which is
21 personnel policies, you'll need a waiver of the
22 ADE Rules Governing School District
23 Requirements for Personnel Policies, Salary
24 Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents
25 posted to the website, Sections 6-8, to

1 effectuate the waiver, so I just need a
2 confirmation there.

3 MR. DAVIS: I think we've checked that
4 one. Let me see.

5 Now that was No. 8, you said?

6 MS. HYATT: I'm on No. 8. And in order to
7 effectuate the waiver of the code sections, you
8 will need a waiver of the ADE Rules Governing
9 Personnel Policies, because those contain the
10 requirements that are in the code.

11 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Yes, ma'am.

12 MS. HYATT: Okay. Okay. On No. 10,
13 Planning Time, the waiver request is for
14 6-17-114(2)(d), which is not a section that
15 exists. I believe that it should have just
16 been (d)(2) or (d).

17 MR. DAVIS: Uh-huh. Typo.

18 MS. HYATT: So I just need a confirmation
19 there.

20 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am, correct.
21 Clarification.

22 MS. HYATT: Okay. And I believe that you
23 will need a waiver of A-2 as well.

24 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

25 MS. HYATT: Okay. That's it.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So, Panel, do we
2 have questions on some of these waivers?

3 DR. OWOH: I do. A couple of questions.

4 One, in reference -- well, both -- my
5 question is in reference to Item 3 and Item 10.
6 Considering that you're asking waivers for duty
7 free lunch periods as well as planning time,
8 how are you planning to support educators and
9 when will they have the time to be able to
10 collaborate, to plan, to meet with parents?
11 And so I'm concerned about the level of support
12 for the educators so I wanted to hear how will
13 plan to ensure that the educators had time to,
14 one, to have time to eat, and then, two, to
15 collaborate and plan effectively.

16 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir, Dr. Jeremy.

17 This time will be used to prepare for
18 lessons, grading student assignments, and
19 contact parents, attend teacher-parent
20 conferences, to collaborate with other
21 instructors moving forward. That's what we put
22 up under our additional rationale.

23 MR. O'LEARY: I think the first question I
24 want to answer is is how do we get the
25 collaboration. Collaboration would be, for

1 example, we would have a -- when we have our
2 department meetings within the school, we would
3 have a special schedule for that particular day
4 where we would be early dismissal and give us
5 the opportunity and the time for the teachers
6 to get together, either in their
7 interdisciplinary teams or as a faculty whole
8 to be able to discuss the various issues that
9 go on at school. So that would be the first
10 way.

11 Second way for teachers to collaborate
12 with parents is, obviously, your you schedule
13 parent-teacher night conferences, or in some
14 schools that I've been in, they sometimes have
15 a parent conference day periodically set up to
16 where teachers can meet with parents off an
17 order at specific times throughout the day to
18 meet with all the parents of the students that
19 they have. So there is a variety of ways in
20 which you can administer to meet that
21 obligation. It doesn't necessarily mean that
22 you have to take time out of the school day or
23 the day of when you're delivering curriculum to
24 the students that you have collaboration going
25 on with the teachers.

1 Other ways is teachers, I know my teachers
2 meet, for example, after school, they meet
3 during lunch time, they meet in a variety of
4 ways to talk about where students are at, so on
5 like that. We have our department meetings
6 where we separate time in the daytime to be
7 able to get together and have a two-hour
8 department meeting based upon staff things that
9 are going on, etc., etc.

10 So again, those are flexible issues that
11 you can build into your schedule, make that
12 time available for that kind of collaboration.

13 DR. OWOH: Well, some of those things that
14 you've just mentioned are the things, very
15 things that you're waiving with these waivers.
16 And so if -- if the teachers do not have the
17 time built into the day, one, they are not --
18 they won't really have the time available to
19 plan nor to make contact with parents to follow
20 up just on day-to-day issues that may arise
21 during instructional time.

22 And so you answered the one question when
23 you mentioned collaboration. So you're
24 expecting for teachers to meet after school?

25 MR. O'LEARY: I think teachers have the

1 opportunity to meet before school, during
2 school, and after school as a -- if -- if I
3 have a prep period, let's say you and I have
4 the same prep period, you're teaching history
5 and I'm teaching mathematics, you and I might
6 get together to talk about specific students
7 that we share between the two classes.

8 DR. OWOH: But you're waiving the prep,
9 planning time.

10 MR. O'LEARY: I understand that. So that
11 prep time might turn into after school time.

12 DR. OWOH: On the teacher? Okay.

13 MR. O'LEARY: Well, not necessarily on the
14 teachers. What I'm saying is that teachers
15 find time to get together to talk about
16 students many times. Is this a -- a set time
17 that's designed by schedule? No. I take it
18 you've worked in a high school before.

19 DR. OWOH: I have and on the middle
20 school.

21 MR. O'LEARY: Okay.

22 DR. OWOH: So that's why those -- that's
23 what's really informing my concern that there
24 is not a set or established time for teachers
25 to -- one, to communicate with parents, nor to

1 communicate with each other; so --

2 MR. O'LEARY: So your interest at that
3 particular point is having a set designated
4 time period for that type of collaboration to
5 take place. I understand.

6 DR. OWOH: My interest is making sure that
7 teachers are supported --

8 MR. O'LEARY: Right.

9 DR. OWOH: -- and have the time to do
10 their job effectively.

11 MR. O'LEARY: Well, you have to have that
12 time or you can't be effective.

13 DR. OWOH: Correct.

14 MR. O'LEARY: Yes. Do you have a --

15 MS. HYATT: Just a quick note. I will say
16 that in their response to the first legal
17 review they did affirm that teachers would have
18 at least 200 minutes of planning time per week,
19 despite the fact that they are asking for a
20 waiver of the 40 minutes per day. So the
21 waiver that we have set up right now would just
22 be they don't compensate for times that they
23 don't have that period, and it's not on a
24 day-to-day basis, but they did affirm in the
25 legal review that they would have ten minutes

1 of planning period per week, so I just wanted
2 to make sure that that was clear.

3 MR. O'LEARY: Does that help answer the
4 question a little bit more clearly?

5 DR. OWOH: It answers it.

6 MR. O'LEARY: Thank you.

7 DR. OWOH: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Panel, do we
9 have any other questions related to these
10 waivers?

11 Okay. Seeing none, we'll move to any
12 questions that you have about the application
13 as you reviewed. We'll start, Mr. Wilson, do
14 you have any questions?

15 MR. WILSON: Only one. Is your sponsoring
16 organization, is that ATK? Is that the name of
17 it?

18 MR. DAVIS: Mr. Wilson?

19 MR. WILSON: Yeah. I say is that the name
20 of your sponsoring organization, ATK?

21 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. ATK, Aviate Through
22 Knowledge, Incorporated. Yes, sir. ATK.

23 MR. WILSON: Aviate Through Knowledge?

24 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

25 MR. WILSON: Does it sponsor or support

1 any other charter schools anywhere?

2 MR. DAVIS: No, sir. We have one of our
3 sponsoring mentor persons back there.

4 MR. WILSON: Okay. That's all. Thank
5 you.

6 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez?

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yes. On your -- I've got
9 a question on your budget. There is a line
10 item that refers to fiscal services saying CPA,
11 and I know we've met the gentleman earlier.

12 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: But an earlier line item,
14 I was just curious about if that was written
15 right. It has one line item that says efinance
16 software, and it has it listed as, like at
17 22,000, and so I was just kind of wondering. I
18 know the software itself shouldn't come as a
19 cost because it's provided by the State. But
20 is that meaning something else in addition to
21 the CPA fees?

22 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir, Dr. Hernandez.

23 MR. CHANDLER: Again Trey Chandler, CPA.

24 The efinance software is not something I'm
25 familiar with personally. In my discussions

1 with them, it was something that is an industry
2 standard that's used like this and there's
3 one-time set up fee that's pretty steep and
4 then it's ongoing maintenance after that. So
5 if you see the second year, the costs go down
6 dramatically. I'm going to investigate other
7 options that may be a cheap alternative to that
8 even.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: So there -- so -- so every
10 school district in the state is required to be
11 on the efinance.

12 MR. CHANDLER: Okay.

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: And it's State provided,
14 so it's a -- I don't know that there is a cost
15 associated with it.

16 MR. CHANDLER: Okay.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: So that's what I was -- I
18 was trying to figure out. Maybe that might be
19 something if you were reaching out to purchase
20 it yourself, then that may be where the fee
21 came from, and so that may be a line item that
22 could go away, so I didn't know if it was in
23 there, supposed to be or not supposed to be, I
24 guess.

25 MR. CHANDLER: I would say it probably is

1 not supposed to be there then.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. The other question
3 was just kind of in, you know, looking at the
4 overall number of students in the first year
5 listed at being, I want to say it was around --

6 MR. CHANDLER: 150.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- 150, yeah. So in that
8 you have, you know, several admin positions
9 listed in year one. And then so just curious
10 about the ratio of teachers to administrators
11 and was wondering if that's a hire the
12 administrators first and then teachers or is
13 that just a you're going to build up over time?
14 How is that going to work?

15 MS. DAVIS: We're going to build up --

16 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir, I would say build up
17 over time. Yes, I believe, yes.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: So in year one, it has
19 listed Executive Director, the Principal,
20 Curriculum Specialist, Business Manager and, of
21 course, there is an Admin Assistant in your
22 administrative team. And so what will you --
23 what are your plans to start with in year one?

24 MR. DAVIS: Those were our plans, but we
25 also had a discussion about several people

1 having dual roles to help cut the budget costs
2 moving forward; like the Business Manager being
3 the Curriculum Specialist, and especially if he
4 or she is qualified, so we've had those
5 discussions before. And the executive --
6 excuse me, the Principal being -- and the
7 Principal also being somewhere of a manager as
8 well.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. So the Business
10 Manager role functioning as the Curriculum
11 Specialist, so the Business Manager is not
12 being a Business Manager in the sense of doing
13 the finance like a CPA would do? That's where
14 I was kind of confused as having a CPA but also
15 having this Business Manager role.

16 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir, and also we may have
17 the opportunity to change a few things because
18 we have Mr. Chandler involved. And most of
19 this was developed before we ushered him to
20 come on to assist us in this endeavor. So that
21 we would be open to make some of those
22 adjustments. Yes, sir.

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: All right.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I'm going to go
25 ahead and ask my question, it's kind of along

1 the lines of Dr. Hernandez in thinking through
2 high school --

3 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and the courses that
5 you offer. So this -- this also goes back to a
6 question on waivers, and I may have overlooked
7 it.

8 But will -- do they have a waiver from
9 offering the 38 units in year one?

10 DR. BOYD: Currently they have not asked
11 for a waiver of that. Ms. Coffman just brought
12 that to our attention and Mary Claire is
13 looking to see what they would need to get a
14 two-year waiver from that, because within two
15 years they would have 9-12.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Because I was
17 looking at the number of teachers. If you did,
18 let's say you did reach the maximum first year
19 of 150 students and, you know, just even with
20 the number of teachers, I'm wondering how
21 you're going to teach a full spectrum of
22 courses and teach the 38 units and get those
23 9th graders off to a good start for completing
24 their graduation requirements.

25 Running a high school is very tough --

1 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and takes a lot of
3 resources, so just in looking at your budget,
4 looking at your plan, looking at, you know,
5 telling us what courses you're going to offer
6 today, I'm -- I'm a little bit concerned about
7 the preparation.

8 So do you -- have you had a chance to look
9 at that information?

10 MS. HYATT: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

12 MS. HYATT: So if they don't intend to
13 offer all 38 credits in the first two years
14 while they are rolling -- becoming a full high
15 school, they are going to need a two-year
16 waiver of the 38, which is 1-A.1.3 in the
17 standards, which would cover the curriculum.

18 I'm just noting that they can't waive any
19 type of graduation requirement.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And my concern would be
21 them asking for that waiver right here right
22 now and not having planned out and knowing what
23 it is that they would actually offer and not
24 offer, what they would waive and not waive. So
25 we'll probably need to determine whether or not

1 you're going to need to add that to your list
2 of waivers and --

3 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Are you -- are you
5 clear on what --

6 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- what you would need
8 to be waiving?

9 MR. DAVIS: Come on up, Mr. O'Leary.

10 MR. O'LEARY: Okay. I'm not quite sure I
11 understand the question, that's my --

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So there is a
13 requirement -- I will -- I'll let -- I'll let
14 our attorney talk through the legal aspects as
15 far as what's required and what you're going to
16 be needing.

17 MS. HYATT: Okay. So on the new version
18 of the standards, and I'm just going to flip to
19 it for your convenience, 1-A.1.3 has a list of
20 courses that must be taught, and you also have
21 to abide by the 38 classes that must be
22 offered, courses that must be offered that are
23 approved by the State Board each year, which
24 were just approved two board meetings ago. So
25 if you're not going to offer the full 38 due to

1 not having all of the grades of a high school
2 9-12, you would need some type of temporary
3 waiver from teaching all of the 38, because you
4 will -- unless you plan to teach all 38 just
5 for the limited grades that you have.

6 Also it's prohibited to waive Arkansas
7 graduation requirements, so any of the list on
8 the 22 graduation requirements that were
9 approved by the State Board last month -- this
10 month, last week -- sorry -- would -- can't be
11 waived, so there is a list of those.

12 And also these are available on the ADE
13 website, just so that you can have them later.

14 MR. O'LEARY: So the question is being
15 posted as to whether or not we would -- we
16 would offer the 38, in other words?

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

18 MR. O'LEARY: What I find is, is that in
19 the curriculum of 9th and 10th graders where --

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We need you to
21 speak in the microphone. I'm sorry.

22 MR. O'LEARY: I'm sorry. I apologize.

23 What I find is is that when we are -- when
24 we are administering the curriculum, both for
25 9th and 10th grade, you basically have your

1 basic building blocks that students have to go
2 through. What you find is when you get into
3 the upper grades is where you start to obtain
4 more flexibility for those courses that you
5 start entering into careers, you go this way,
6 you go that way, you have more flexibility.
7 But we're looking at a basic completing six,
8 six and a half, possibly seven credits within
9 the first -- in the 9th grade year, almost the
10 same situation in the 10th grade year, because
11 I believe to become a junior you need to have,
12 I think it's 17 credits, I believe, to become a
13 senior and it's at least 11 or 12 to become a
14 junior.

15 So the -- the 38 that we're talking about
16 would have to be the basic building block for
17 the 9th and the 10th grade.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So --

19 MR. O'LEARY: So if the question is
20 whether we would do it or not, the question
21 would be -- or the answer would be, yes, we
22 would.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I think my --
24 my question is, with the staffing that you're
25 proposing here --

1 MR. O'LEARY: Yes.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- I don't think you
3 have the staff in place to be offering 38 full
4 units of credit, and that is a requirement --

5 MR. O'LEARY: Correct.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- in a high school
7 where you have a 9-12 situation.

8 MR. O'LEARY: Well, I think one of the
9 things to take into consideration as -- as
10 Mr. Davis alluded to in the beginning, is you
11 have to have people that are
12 multi-credentialed.

13 I'm a -- I'm an administrator, I'm
14 certified as a counselor, I'm certified as a
15 teacher and I can teach in six different areas
16 under Arkansas law. So the deal is is that you
17 have to find teachers. And the subject was
18 brought up before, highly qualified
19 instructors, you have to really go fishing to
20 find the correct people in a charter school
21 environment because you're probably only going
22 to have -- usually the ratio is one to 20, one
23 to 25 at the maximum; so if you have 150 kids,
24 you're looking at a minimum of six instructors,
25 and out of those six instructors, just the

1 minimum capabilities, you're going to have to
2 have at least three that can teach more than
3 one particular subject.

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: So what we're getting at
5 is year one you're going to have 9th and 10th
6 grade; correct?

7 MR. O'LEARY: Correct.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so under the law or
9 the requirements you're required to teach all
10 38 credits.

11 MR. O'LEARY: Correct.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so one of those being
13 12th grade English, so it makes no sense --

14 MR. O'LEARY: I didn't hear you. Say it
15 again.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: 12th grade English, for
17 example. So it makes no sense to teach 12th
18 grade English and you're not required if you
19 don't have 12th graders.

20 MR. O'LEARY: No, correct.

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so what Mary Claire,
22 the attorney, is trying to say is if -- you
23 need the waiver to waive teaching all 38 at
24 this time because you're going to roll into
25 eventually having to offer all 38.

1 MR. O'LEARY: Correct.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: So you're wanting the
3 waiver as opposed to saying, yeah, we're going
4 to teach 12th grade English this year even
5 though we don't have any 12th graders. Does
6 that make sense?

7 MR. O'LEARY: It makes sense. I
8 misunderstood the question. I thought the 38
9 was required just for 9th and 10th.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: But -- they are --

11 MR. O'LEARY: Okay. Then I am.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: But it's required for
13 9-12, so but not -- but since you don't have
14 all 9-12, you don't want to have to teach all
15 38.

16 MR. O'LEARY: I see. Well, I think in the
17 discussion that we've had on the curriculum,
18 the idea is to be able to support that 9th and
19 10th grade with the maximum number of credits
20 and classes that they are required so that at
21 the time that they leave 10th grade and move
22 into the 11th grade they are right on target
23 making progression towards graduation and they
24 have the correct classes to support that.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

1 MS. HYATT: I just want to comment that no
2 waiver has been sought for 6-17-812, which is
3 no teacher can teach more than 150 students per
4 day. And so if the idea is to have one teacher
5 that is teaching multiple classes, and they may
6 go over that, then that may need to be
7 something that they consider.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And did we get
9 clarity if they are going to seek a waiver from
10 the 38?

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

12 MS. HYATT: Yes?

13 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

14 MS. HYATT: Okay.

15 MR. O'LEARY: Okay.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We'll move forward. If
17 there are questions, if the Panel wants to
18 continue questioning about the application.
19 Dr. Owoh, do you, and then I'll come back.

20 DR. OWOH: Yes. I have one, and I
21 apologize if you've addressed it. I don't
22 recall hearing it.

23 In reference to your application, you have
24 mentioned highly qualified teachers --

25 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

1 DR. OWOH: -- several times. And so I
2 wanted to -- for you to share with us your
3 process of ensuring that all of the core
4 academic areas will be taught by Arkansas
5 qualified teachers and what process would you
6 have in place to ensure that those teachers are
7 AQT and meet those AQT requirements?

8 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. Thank you for that
9 question, Dr. Jeremy.

10 We have a process set up in place, a
11 traditional and standard process to have the
12 applicants come in, we'll go through their
13 background checks and to make sure they have
14 their credentials.

15 And I would also ask this question to you,
16 Dr. Jeremy, and also the entire Panel, what
17 provisions are set up in place for charter
18 school entities that -- because we have a high
19 issue with Highly Qualified Teachers Arkansas,
20 it's hard to find, we all know that it's been
21 kind of hard, it's been a challenge for us,
22 it's been a challenge to find those highly
23 qualified teachers to fit this model right
24 here.

25 So, of course, what provisions will be set

1 in place, that way an agency like us can jump
2 on that avenue and exercise the right to find
3 these teachers. Can y'all give us some
4 information like that?

5 DR. OWOH: Well, we definitely have
6 alternate educator preparation programs. But
7 that's the premise of my question and concern,
8 because those educators who are teaching those
9 core academic areas must meet the AQT
10 requirements prior to teaching that class. So
11 just reiterate what I shared with a previous
12 applicant, that it's not a pathway, and so it's
13 up to you-all to ensure that those educators
14 are meeting those requirements, and that was
15 the reason for my questioning --

16 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

17 DR. OWOH: -- on what steps would you put
18 in place to ensure that those individuals are
19 meeting those requirements.

20 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

21 MR. O'LEARY: We've noticed that that
22 question has been asked of every group that's
23 been up here, and it is a highly concern to
24 ensure the fact that the students receive the
25 appropriate instruction from people that

1 actually know what they are doing.

2 DR. OWOH: Correct.

3 MR. O'LEARY: I think the biggest factor
4 in assuring the fact that you get -- get highly
5 qualified teachers is that it's one of the
6 criteria through the hiring practice. When you
7 advertise for the job, I think the information
8 that needs to appropriately accompany that
9 advertisement is the fact that this particular
10 institution is looking for highly -- highly
11 qualified instructors, that it's one of the
12 main points in the advertisement piece, that
13 when the individual comes through, that the
14 credentials, the background, and all the
15 necessary things that the individual has
16 experienced prior to applying to this
17 particular job applies exactly to that form for
18 HQT teachers to fill out and demonstrates the
19 fact that they have met that requirement and
20 are currently on that particular pathway.

21 As Mr. Davis indicated, one of the things
22 that we've noticed, and especially where I'm
23 at, because I'm the principal of a school and I
24 have to go through the hiring of instructors,
25 is there has been a lull in getting highly

1 qualified teachers to apply, that the -- in
2 some areas we have an abundance and in other
3 areas, especially in the area of mathematics
4 and science, seems to be there is a diminished
5 number of individuals.

6 So I think as a charter school as we go
7 forward, the question that we become -- that
8 Mr. Davis asked is, is that you advertise,
9 you're seeking, you're trying to get, you can
10 two, you get three, but maybe that fourth math
11 teacher that you're looking for to bring on
12 staff you can't find a highly qualified, so
13 where does that leave a program at when you
14 can't meet that requirement because there are
15 no applications or individuals coming forward.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And if I could go ahead
17 and interject here. Highly qualified teacher
18 was a term formerly used under the No Child
19 Left Behind requirements.

20 MR. O'LEARY: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And that went away when
22 the new Every Student Succeeds Act came into
23 play. That doesn't mean we don't want
24 qualified teachers in every classroom. So what
25 Arkansas did is, with groups of stakeholders,

1 we sat down and said what do we need to have in
2 place for times when a licensed teacher may not
3 be available. Licensure is part of determining
4 qualifications of teachers, obviously, a very
5 important part. But as charters can seek
6 waivers from licensure, that did -- what we did
7 is we put into place the Arkansas Qualified
8 Teacher. Okay? So instead of the highly
9 qualified teacher it's what in Arkansas we
10 value in qualifications for teachers. So in
11 areas where licensure may be waived, the person
12 does not have an Arkansas state license, they
13 still meet qualifications. So that's what
14 we're talking about --

15 MR. O'LEARY: I see.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- when we -- when we
17 do that.

18 So it gives flexibility for schools,
19 districts, charters, you know, in cases
20 where -- where that person is not licensed, but
21 it means that that person still can demonstrate
22 the content knowledge and has either the
23 education, the background experiences that that
24 proves that they will be good for kids in that
25 classroom.

1 So you've -- you've received the waiver
2 from licensure, as we went over a few minutes
3 ago, in your charter; but what you still are
4 obligated to do is to ensure that in every area
5 the person you hire meets at least the Arkansas
6 Qualified Teacher requirements. And if they
7 are licensed for that area, then they meet
8 that, but in the absence of a license, there
9 are qualifications. And you no longer get to
10 fill out a form to reach those qualifications,
11 it means that you hire someone with that, the
12 qualifications. And there is flexibility in
13 what those qualifications entail and the
14 licensure team can definitely work with people
15 on that.

16 MR. O'LEARY: Okay.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: But we just want to be
18 sure that we're all on the same page in what
19 we're saying when we talk about meeting AQT.

20 MR. O'LEARY: So then to answer the
21 question a little bit more directly is, is
22 that, and I understand that process. But it's
23 been a while, I haven't had to hire a teacher
24 for three years so I've been very, very lucky.

25 And so but I was used to the HQT form that

1 we used for years, and I worked at DYS so we
2 had teachers at seven different sites in the
3 state so I was responsible for taking care of
4 that.

5 But to answer your question directly is
6 that in order for the program to be successful
7 there is a recognition that we understand that
8 you have to have key people that are teaching
9 in the classroom that have the subject matter
10 expertise in order for the student to
11 accomplish what it is that we're trying to
12 accomplish. So that is a dedicated part of the
13 hiring process is that we are looking for those
14 individuals that meet those types of
15 requirements. Delivery in the classroom, be
16 able to give the basic techniques of
17 instruction are probably the key to the
18 learning, and the ability of that individual to
19 deliver those aspects in different ways,
20 because people learn in different styles.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Are there additional
22 questions about the application?

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I -- I just kind of
24 have a general concern. It's more along the
25 lines of teach then learning. I'm familiar

1 with the A+ model from when it was first
2 brought into the state.

3 When will the training take place for the
4 teachers to implement that? And also to
5 implement that model, we've got to have a good
6 cadre of teachers who are already really well
7 versed in their content area. I haven't heard
8 anything about that thus far so I'm going to
9 give you the opportunity.

10 Also the graduation rate. I know you're
11 just now starting with the first two grades,
12 but this is the time when you set the rates
13 because you're moving forward. You don't -- we
14 don't wait until they get to be 12th graders
15 and then we set those goals. So I'm
16 interested, even though it's not in writing
17 here, what are your expectations. I want to
18 hear that.

19 And, well, the graduation rate, any idea
20 how does it compare to the current high school
21 that's serving that area in the Little Rock
22 District?

23 Let's start out with the A+ first.

24 MS. BELMON: Okay. So in regards to
25 training the teachers, there will be a summer

1 institute held here in Little Rock and we'll do
2 a three-year cycle of summer institutes and
3 then on-site professional development in the
4 fall and in the spring. So the teachers will
5 have three trainings annually in order to get
6 that support.

7 As far as -- I would like to check with
8 Mr. Davis on this.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. I understand.

10 MS. BELMON: Okay. So upon implementation
11 of A+, your question was will they --

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Well, I'm -- I'm looking to
13 see, once the A+ is implemented, I'm still -- I
14 guess the first part of A+ I'm looking for
15 is -- is what are the expectations of learning?
16 Because A+ comes in on top of what teachers
17 already --

18 MS. BELMON: I see what you're saying.

19 So as far as they need to have the
20 curriculum established in order for the arts to
21 be implemented into the curriculum --

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely.

23 MS. BELMON: -- and have a strong
24 understanding of it; so --

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. And I just haven't

1 heard anything --

2 MS. BELMON: Absolutely.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: -- around the curriculum
4 whatsoever.

5 MS. BELMON: We -- in terms of A+
6 involvement, we would make sure that the
7 fellows assigned to work with PLAA will have
8 the background to support that implementation
9 process with that curriculum.

10 So, for example, one of our fellows is
11 recognized for his work in the English --
12 excuse me, ELA and doing dramatic arts, and so
13 that would be someone we would put on the team
14 to work with that school.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

16 MS. BELMON: So they would have fellows
17 that have the experience and expertise to share
18 and be, literally, an email away to support
19 that teacher with their unit development.

20 But if you're looking in terms of someone
21 on staff, we have the advocate program.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

23 MS. BELMON: And what the advocate would
24 do is kind of serve as that go between for the
25 principals and the staff expectations and what

1 A+ needs to plan for those professional
2 development sessions.

3 So, for example, the teachers do a
4 self-reflective survey.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

6 MS. BELMON: The advocate would be the
7 collector of that information of all those
8 surveys from the staff members, determine with
9 the principal who -- or the focus of what the
10 next PD needs to be based on the A+ model.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

12 MS. BELMON: Does that help?

13 DR. WILLIAMS: That helps a lot,
14 especially on the A+ basis.

15 My -- just the next level now is what will
16 be done to assure that kids will be ready to go
17 to college?

18 Your graduation rates, you know, are you
19 doing any extra work with the students that may
20 be struggling in math? You know, you just kind
21 of brushed over the general curriculum. For me
22 it's all about teaching and learning. You can
23 lay any -- everything else can -- but it's
24 about teaching and learning. What are you
25 doing to assure us that kids will be ready to

1 go to college?

2 MR. DAVIS: Yes. Well, we have a number
3 of components in place, what I'm calling
4 academic skills assistants, we'll have some of
5 those personnel in place to help those academic
6 assistants. I don't want to use the word tutor
7 too many times. As far as the graduation rates
8 for the other school that's been there since
9 1966, McClellan, there are some challenges
10 there. We definitely want to raise the bar
11 from -- from Prolific learning standpoint with
12 our graduation rates.

13 And as going back to something that you
14 said earlier, Dr. Williams, about talking about
15 expectations for the 9th and 10th graders when
16 they graduate, I will say in 8th -- 8th grade,
17 you know.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, absolutely.

19 MR. DAVIS: We're actually recruiting,
20 well, we've been on the streets, per se, if you
21 all can follow this hashtag, investing from
22 within the community, if you follow that
23 universal hashtag anywhere, investing from
24 within the community, we've been out at
25 Cloverdale, we've been out at Mabelvale Middle

1 School, letting people know about the idea for
2 Prolific Learning Arts Academy in 2020 and
3 2019. And so just kind of getting that
4 conversation started, I believe, is essentially
5 important to talk about graduation in the 8th
6 grade and 9th grade, not just talking about it,
7 you know, during your junior year or during
8 your senior year.

9 Because I'm a product of the public school
10 system and, you know, traditional public school
11 system, because PLAA, if the green light comes
12 with you-all, it will still be a public school,
13 it's just a nontraditional public school.

14 And so as far as the -- our graduation
15 rates are concerned, I'm going to be talking
16 with my team about those numbers moving
17 forward.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

19 MR. DAVIS: But that's something that, as
20 an educator myself, we're definitely be looking
21 at. I'll have to get back with you.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Not necessarily to
23 go to college. Actually to go to college or a
24 career.

25 MR. DAVIS: Career?

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely.

2 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. Of course, there are
3 different pathways, whether it's straight to
4 the workforce, military, college or university,
5 and, you know, or a trade school. You know, my
6 sister is a three -- three-year veteran of the
7 University of Pennsylvania Hospital and she
8 didn't go to college but she's a radiologist.
9 So, anyway -- yes, sir.

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I -- and I think,
12 along those lines when we were questioning
13 about the goals earlier --

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

15 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- those are the things
17 that are missing in your application as far as
18 goals. What are those expectations of
19 students. What is it that you are doing and
20 you would expect for students as they leave.
21 And so in terms of attendance, engagement,
22 in -- while they are in high school and, you
23 know, the students that will go on, how are
24 you -- what are those measures you're going to
25 set up to know if you're being successful?

1 That's missing from your application, because
2 your 11th and 12th grade goals are tied to the
3 NWEA MAP assessment and the growth students
4 show there. And while that could be a
5 contributing factor, it's again missing what
6 are those college and career readiness goals
7 that you -- that would actually be set for
8 students in your school, and that's what we're
9 missing.

10 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers?

12 DR. KREMERS: I have just a clarifying
13 question on the budget.

14 MR. DAVIS: Dr. Kremers, yes, ma'am.

15 DR. KREMERS: Under the classroom
16 instruction, the WiFi and telecommunications
17 phone --

18 MR. DAVIS: WiFi? All right.

19 DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh -- is listed as
20 \$8,000 in the budget, and then down below in
21 maintenance and operations they are separated
22 out and it's for a total of 14,000. So I just
23 wanted clarification on the differences between
24 phone and Internet classroom instruction versus
25 maintenance and operations.

1 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Yes, ma'am, Dr. Angela.
2 I would ask Mr. Chandler to come on up, she had
3 a question about the WiFi.

4 MR. CHANDLER: So you have the \$2,000 for
5 the Internet and WiFi. And then, I'm sorry,
6 the second part of your question?

7 DR. KREMERS: That's under maintenance and
8 operations, it's listed as 12,000 for phone and
9 2,000 for Internet WiFi under maintenance and
10 operation, M and O, and then up above under
11 classroom instruction it's listed there as well
12 as 8,000.

13 MR. CHANDLER: Where is the classroom --
14 on the telecommunication and Internet services?

15 DR. KREMERS: Uh-huh.

16 MR. CHANDLER: So is one of those a
17 duplicate or is it -- this is something I don't
18 know the answer to.

19 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

20 MR. CHANDLER: Monica, do you know that?

21 MS. DAVIS: Yeah. That is a typo, that's
22 an oversight.

23 We'll take the \$8,000 one and then remove
24 the 4,000 -- I mean the 4,000 one.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: While we're on a budget

1 question, under that same -- not to let the CPA
2 have a seat.

3 No, I'm saying not to let you have a seat.

4 So under other, there is a line item there
5 under "other revenue sources" and it lists a
6 grant from the Walton Foundation --

7 MR. CHANDLER: Yes.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- of 325,000. Is that --
9 I didn't see a letter anywhere, unless I missed
10 it in the application, that that money is
11 committed, or is that something that you
12 don't -- do you have a commitment on that?

13 MR. CHANDLER: I think that's something
14 Mr. Davis can speak to better than I.

15 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

16 MR. CHANDLER: As I understand, that's
17 pending approval.

18 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am, Ms. Kathlyn, we
19 communicated --

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We need you in front of
21 the microphone, please.

22 MR. DAVIS: Sorry. Yes, ma'am. That's
23 Ms. Kathlyn and we don't have the letter in
24 hand, but it's underway. We can have it sent
25 and it's not a problem at all.

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. So do we typically
2 put those in the budgets, Ms. Boyd, when we
3 don't have -- because I know it lists in there
4 having a verification letter or something like
5 that, so is that --

6 DR. BOYD: Right. In instructions for the
7 document it says that if you are going to
8 receive private funds that we need a formal --
9 formal documentation, which means written
10 documentation that you will actually receive
11 those funds.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: And we don't have that
13 right now?

14 DR. BOYD: And we do not have that right
15 now.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: All right. I don't have
17 any other questions.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I mean, if we've
19 gone through the application questions, I would
20 like to move on to the different systems and --
21 and see if there are any additional things or
22 comments and kind of wrap up in terms of -- of
23 that.

24 So starting with the human capital system,
25 have we asked all of those questions? I think

1 we did get some clarification on the human
2 capital.

3 Student supports, did all of those
4 concerns get addressed? That would include our
5 special education, EL, child nutrition.

6 And stakeholder communications, family
7 engagement? Okay. District operations and
8 fiscal governance?

9 Okay. So one area that we do note, then,
10 that the grant money is included in the budget
11 but we don't have that letter in hand; correct?

12 DR. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The facilities,
14 were there any ADE staff that had anything to
15 add?

16 And then academics?

17 I'm going to be honest, I'm -- I'm
18 concerned about academics and what we're
19 actually going to be teaching next year. Do we
20 understand, do we have the staffing
21 appropriately planned and budgeted. So I think
22 that is a big concern, that I still have
23 remaining questions about whether the charter
24 fully understands what they have asked for and
25 agreed to.

1 So, Ms. Hyatt, on the -- on the waiver for
2 the 38, it makes me uncomfortable to ask
3 somebody to waive something that they don't
4 know what they are actually asking, so I do
5 have some questions there. Would you --

6 MS. DAVIS: Was that something that was
7 just changed last week, the 38?

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No, ma'am. It was
9 changed about 15 minutes ago.

10 MS. DAVIS: No. I'm saying the actual
11 requirements.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No. Those requirements
13 have not changed. School districts have been
14 required to teach 38 units of credit for a long
15 time, and the graduation requirements of 22,
16 those have not changed. No. That has been a
17 requirement.

18 Ms. Hyatt referred to the State Board
19 meeting. Those were just brought to the State
20 Board as part of a new cycle of an annual
21 review that they will do, but and those
22 courses, the course lists have been updated
23 with new course codes and things like that.
24 But, yeah, they are not -- the 38 requirements
25 is not something new.

1 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. So it
3 doesn't look like that there are any questions
4 from the Panel.

5 And, Ms. Hyatt, did you have any remaining
6 issues that you wanted us to go over?

7 MS. HYATT: So I just, I know I briefly
8 mentioned this before, but I do think it is
9 kind of an outstanding concern, if they are
10 going to have teachers that are teaching that
11 150 maximum, based on some of the information
12 that was presented about having teachers teach
13 multiple classes in order to cut down on the
14 number of teachers, I'm still unsure whether or
15 not they are confirming that they are going to
16 follow 6-17-812 or -- or -- or where we are
17 there.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Do you have questions
19 about the class size maximums or the maximum
20 number of students that a teacher can teach per
21 day or are you comfortable with the 150
22 maximum?

23 MR. DAVIS: Yeah. We were entertaining,
24 the Board of Directors and myself, about, you
25 know, having smaller classrooms, and, you know,

1 we talked also about -- Mr. O'Leary also
2 mentioned the fact that you said, I think,
3 20 -- 17 to 22? What were those numbers?

4 MR. O'LEARY: What was that again?

5 MR. DAVIS: Smaller numbers for classroom
6 size.

7 MR. O'LEARY: The classrooms, if you look
8 at the current -- the current classroom size
9 that's going on like at A.J. Fair [sic] right
10 now and also McClellan, you're looking at, I
11 think, that what it said on the website is that
12 A.J. [sic] right now has a class size of one to
13 11 is what they are, they are posting right
14 now.

15 As far as our classroom size is determined
16 is based upon the number of students that you
17 have in and the number of teachers you have on
18 the staff. If we project that 150 and we staff
19 accordingly, then we should be able to handle
20 the 150 that show up at the door.

21 I think what we're most afraid of, if
22 anything, is that -- and this is going to
23 happen as sure as I'm standing here in front of
24 you -- those two schools are going to come
25 together on that school site in North Little

1 Rock [sic], you're going to have 2,200 kids
2 from two different communities, and we strongly
3 believe that our charter school would be that
4 outlet that's going to help assist that
5 particular school district and staff at that
6 location with some of the issues and things
7 that are going to come up.

8 And I know that there has been some --
9 some doubts that have been heard from the Panel
10 that's expressing some concerns and so on like
11 that, and what I'm hoping is, is that we can
12 make the necessary adjustments in the charter
13 to get rid of those doubts and perform as we've
14 indicated that we can do with this particular
15 group of kids that are going to come through,
16 because they are going to be looking for a
17 secondary location.

18 I have kids right now from both high
19 schools in my program right now. There are
20 issues between those students because of the
21 community that they come from and some of the
22 affiliations and things that are going on. And
23 we're going to put 2,200 kids in one location
24 with that same kind of community involvement
25 together --

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

2 MR. O'LEARY: -- and so we're hoping that
3 we would be able to provide an outlet for the
4 district and at the same time provide
5 additional pathways for kids that are not going
6 to be successful in that environment but in a
7 smaller environment.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. So thank
9 you.

10 And what I'm hearing is that we do not
11 need a waiver from the 150 maximum; is that
12 correct?

13 MR. DAVIS: Correct. Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So,
15 Panel, at this time it's time for a decision.
16 We can either approve, deny, or take the matter
17 under advisement until a future meeting. So I
18 would entertain a motion.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: I make a motion to deny
20 the application.

21 DR. KREMERS: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I have a motion and a
23 second to deny the application. All those in
24 favor, say, "Aye."

25 PANEL MEMBERS: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any opposed?

2 MR. WILSON: I vote no.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. One, one
4 opposed, but the motion does pass.

5 The motion was to deny the application.
6 So if you will give me a few minutes -- or give
7 us a few minutes, we will record responses and
8 then give feedback.

9 Okay. We will talk through our reasons
10 for votes. Dr. Hernandez?

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: So I made the motion. I
12 believe the application has some deficiencies
13 in terms of finances and academic programs; the
14 goals that are set need to be revisited for
15 alignment with the arts and academic
16 attainability.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

18 DR. KREMERS: I voted to deny; concerns
19 regarding preparedness, clarity of planning and
20 goals; advocacy support for teachers and
21 training; curriculum; and responsiveness to
22 requests for documentation in advance; and
23 budget.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh?

25 DR. OWOH: I voted to deny the

1 application. I felt that the charter
2 application and presentation were missing key
3 components in the areas of student goals,
4 educator support and development, staffing
5 requirements and budgetary items. I felt that
6 additional planning and preparation are needed.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams?

8 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion. The
9 plan application is not complete, additional
10 information, as lack of clarity, is needed
11 regarding curriculum, budget, staff and
12 waivers, and goals for graduation and
13 attendance problems.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And, Mr. Wilson?

15 MR. WILSON: I voted against the motion.
16 I don't disagree with any of the valid points
17 made by my colleagues and friends. I would
18 simply have tabled, rather tabled the motion
19 than have the -- and allow the applicant time
20 to firm up its application and address any of
21 the concerns the Panel had.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We do appreciate
23 you being here and the time and effort you've
24 put into this. We hope that -- that the
25 feedback will give you the areas where our

1 concerns were and an opportunity to look at
2 something in the future. So thank you for
3 being here.

4 At this time that brings us to the end of
5 our action agenda item.

6 Ms. Boyd, do you have any remaining things
7 for us to consider today?

8 DR. BOYD: I don't have anything for you
9 to consider today. I just wanted to prepare
10 you for tomorrow. We do have three
11 applications to review tomorrow and we begin at
12 8:30.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: 8:30 tomorrow? Okay.

14 Does anybody on the Panel have anything
15 remaining for today?

16 I thank you-all for a hard day's work.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: Do we need a motion to
18 adjourn or anything?

19 I motion to adjourn.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes, if not --

21 DR. OWOH: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Can I thank you-all for
23 being here today? We appreciate you, you've
24 done a lot of hard work.

25 Do I have a motion to adjourn?

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DR. HERNANDEZ: So moved.

DR. OWOH: Second.

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. We are
adjourned.

(WHEREUPON, at 3:47 p.m., the
above-entitled proceedings were concluded.)

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EXHIBITS FOR AGENDA ITEM A-1

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EXHIBITS FOR AGENDA ITEM A-2

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EXHIBITS FOR AGENDA ITEM A-3

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EXHIBITS FOR AGENDA ITEM A-4

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1 EXHIBITS FOR AGENDA ITEM A-5

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1 CERTIFICATE

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3 STATE OF ARKANSAS)

4) ss.

5 COUNTY OF PULASKI)

6 I, SUSAN B. WHITSON, Certified Court Reporter

7 and notary public in and for Pulaski County, State of

8 Arkansas, do hereby certify that the meeting of the

9 Arkansas State Department of Education, Charter

10 Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, August 15,

11 2018, was taken by me in Stenotype and was reduced to

12 computer-generated typewritten form by me or under my

13 direction and supervision; and that the same is a true

14 and correct reflection of the proceedings that occurred,

15 to the best of my knowledge and ability.

16 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel

17 for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to

18 the action in which these proceedings were taken; and,

19 further that I am not a relative or employee of any

20 attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor

21 financially interested, or otherwise, in the outcome of

22 this action; and that I have no contract with the

23 parties, attorneys, or persons with an interest in the

24 action that affects or has a substantial tendency to

25 affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish

control of an original transcript or copies of the

transcript before it is certified and delivered to the

custodial attorney, or that requires me to provide any

service not made available to all parties to the action.

19 SIGNED AND SWORN this _____ day of

20 _____.

21 _____

22 SUSAN B. WHITSON, CCR, #158

23 NOTARY COMMISSION #12388076

24 NOTARY PUBLIC IN AND FOR

25 PULASKI COUNTY, ARKANSAS

My Commission Expires: June 4, 2022.

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\$				
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