

In The Matter Of:
Department of Education
Charter Authorizing Panel

August 16, 2018

Susan B. Whitson, CCR, Inc.

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

August 16, 2018
8:30 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

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

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT ADE Staff Attorney

ALSO APPEARING:

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

LOCATION:

Arkansas Department of Education
- Auditorium
#4 Capitol Mall
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: THE SEVEN ARTS LYCEUM

3 DR. JEFF KREH, Likewise, Inc., Cofounder and President,
4 Likewise College, President and Tutor, and 7L Vision
5 Bearer

6 MR. MARK FARLEY, Likewise, Inc., Treasurer and CFO

7 MS. SARAH DORAN-BLAKE, 7L Public School Policy Specialist

8 PRESENTING ON BEHALF OF: SIMS-FAYOLA INTERNATIONAL

9 ACADEMY PINE BLUFF

10 MR. DEDRICK SIMS, CEO of sponsoring entity

11 DR. MARY LIDDELL, Board Member

12 MS. DORA SERGEANT, CFO

13 MS. DEBE HOLLINGSWORTH, Past Mayor of Pine Bluff

14 PRESENTING ON BEHALF OF: SUGARLOAF VALLEY ACADEMY

15 MR. JOHN HARRIS, Superintendent

16 REPRESENTATIVE MARCUS RICHMOND

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Good morning.

At this time I would like to call to order our August 16, 2018, our Charter Authorizing Panel. We would like to welcome everyone here today.

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

This morning we have here on our Panel Dr. Angela Kremers, who is -- who joined us yesterday for the first time, and she is the Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education at the Arkansas Department of Career Education. So we welcome you back today.

We also have Dr. Naccaman Williams on the Panel, he is a former State Board member. And Dr. Jeremy Owoh, the Assistant Commissioner for Educator Effectiveness. My name is Ivy Pfeffer, and I'm the Deputy Commissioner and also Chair of the Panel. And also Dr. Mike Hernandez, who is a State Superintendent for the Office of Coordinated Support and Service. And also joining us will be here soon is Mike Wilson. He's an education advocate and an

1 attorney in Jacksonville, so he will be coming
2 in soon but we are going to go ahead and get
3 started this morning. And our Board Member
4 Toyce Newton is not able to be with us today.

5 As Chair my goal is to facilitate a fair
6 and responsible hearing. I will request that
7 each person speaking please state your name and
8 title for the record, and continue to speak
9 clearly into the microphone, for the benefit of
10 the panel, the audience, and the viewing
11 audience. We have a -- two different
12 microphones there; if you're more comfortable
13 speaking into a hand-held microphone, we have
14 that as well. But the meeting is being live
15 streamed, so we also need -- need you to speak
16 clearly into the microphone for the benefit of
17 that audience.

18 We also appreciate having with us
19 Ms. Susan Whitson, our court reporter, and so
20 we know she does a lot of hard work and
21 appreciate having her here.

22 So at this time I think -- good morning,
23 Mr. Wilson. We're glad you're here with us.

24 MR. WILSON: Appreciate it, Madam Chair.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And we are ready to

1 begin our action agenda. And, Ms. Hyatt, we'll
2 let you go ahead and briefly walk us through
3 the process. I think we're all familiar, but
4 anyone new joining us, we'll go through kind of
5 how this is going to work today.

6 MS. HYATT: Sure.

7 Good morning, Mary Claire Hyatt, attorney
8 for the Department.

9 So first, anyone who is not an attorney
10 representing one of the applicants would need
11 to be sworn by the Chair. They will have 20
12 minutes to present its case to the Authorizing
13 Panel. Anyone that's here in opposition will
14 have 20 minutes, and that's collectively, so if
15 there are multiple people, it's 20 minutes
16 together. Then the applicant would have five
17 minutes to respond to any comments. The Chair
18 can grant additional time as necessary in any
19 of those parts.

20 Following the presentation there will be
21 time for questions, any outstanding concerns,
22 and then you may issue a final decision. You
23 can also take the matter under advisement, so
24 you can vote to approve or disapprove, and you
25 will do your vote and then type into your

1 Google docs your reasons for your vote and then
2 do a roll call and go through for each one.

3 Thanks.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you,
5 Ms. Hyatt.

6 And at this time we will ask Ms. Perry to
7 come forward and introduce our first action
8 agenda item.

9 A-1: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
10 APPLICATION: THE SEVEN ARTS LYCEUM

11 MS. PERRY: Virginia Perry, Program
12 Advisor, Charter Unit.

13 The Seven Arts Lyceum is a proposed
14 Open-Enrollment Public Charter School to be
15 physically located within the Searcy School
16 District, but will be a statewide virtual
17 school. The sponsoring entity is Likewise,
18 Inc. The applicant is requesting to serve
19 students in grades K-12 with a maximum
20 enrollment of 700 beginning in the 2019-2020
21 school year. The applicant has notified
22 affected districts of this proposed charter --
23 public charter school.

24 ADE staff reviewed the application, and
25 concerns were shared with the applicant for

1 response. The application, the ADE evaluation,
2 and the applicant's response are included for
3 the Charter Authorizing Panel.

4 Speaking today on behalf of The Seven Arts
5 Lyceum are Dr. Jeff Kreh, who is the Likewise
6 Cofounder and President of Likewise College,
7 President and Tutor, and 7L Vision Bearer; and
8 Mark Farley, the Likewise Treasurer and CFO;
9 and Mrs. Sarah Doran-Blake, 7L Public School
10 Policy Specialist; and Dr. Michael Crouch, the
11 Charter School Specialist.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you,
13 Ms. Perry.

14 Will all representatives of the
15 application and anyone speaking in opposition
16 please stand to receive the oath?

17 Okay. If you will raise your right hand.

18 (WHEREUPON, the witnesses were sworn by
19 the Chairman.)

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

21 And you may go ahead and come forward.
22 And if you will state your name for the record,
23 you will be recognized to begin and you'll have
24 20 minutes.

25 DR. KREH: I'm Dr. Jeff Kreh.

1 Ladies and gentlemen of the Charter
2 Authorizing Panel, thank you for your time and
3 attention.

4 Together with my colleagues I would like
5 to present our vision for 7L Charter School,
6 and we certainly welcome any questions you
7 might have at the end.

8 Adults who really know what's best for
9 everybody want all children to actualize their
10 highest potential for good, but it's impossible
11 for every student to succeed always without
12 significant innovation and risk.

13 The Seven Arts Lyceum integrates three key
14 innovations with time proven materials,
15 methods, and motives for teaching today's youth
16 to create brighter tomorrows so that more
17 children in more places have better access to a
18 leadership class education.

19 The world is changing at a frantic pace.
20 Around 20 years ago Bill Gates called it change
21 at the speed of thought, but it's much faster
22 now. Each new gadget brings with it the
23 promise of near utopian results. Specialized
24 jobs that barely existed five years ago now
25 dominate the scene and will likely be made

1 obsolete by a few lines of code during the next
2 five years. It's hard to keep up.

3 Mean time we in America's heartland want
4 to lead in positive categories. Here in the
5 heart of the heartland, we used to call
6 ourselves the land of opportunity, but recent
7 research shows that compared to our neighboring
8 states Arkansas is struggling.

9 We have one of the fastest growing prison
10 populations in the world, vast food and
11 education deserts, near bottom rankings in key
12 economic areas, and we are, according to a
13 recent report, dead last in the heartland when
14 it comes to innovation. We are flatlining.

15 Like some of you, I grew up here and I
16 chose to raise my family here in Arkansas. As
17 a kid growing up in Searcy I never liked the
18 jokes that relatives and friends from other
19 states told about Arkansans, but it hurts more
20 as an adult to analyze research and see where
21 we stand in the heartland, in America, and in
22 the world. And like you, I want my children to
23 grow up in an ever brighter Arkansas.

24 If we want to lead in positive categories,
25 like computer science, college and career

1 readiness, military and community service, then
2 we desire all children to have an education
3 that better prepares them to navigate any
4 emerging circumstance.

5 And in a country like ours, where any
6 child could grow up to serve in the highest
7 offices, we owe it to the world to make sure
8 every child is prepared to lead. To us this
9 means critical thinking skills, close reading,
10 active listening, debate and rhetoric, depth
11 and breadth of knowledge, moral imagination and
12 moral courage, innovation and entrepreneurship.

13 When my wife and I studied education at
14 the university 25 years ago we had Internet on
15 campus, but we didn't see why we should use it.
16 Everybody with an email address lived on campus
17 and we could only access it in the library,
18 where we kept all the material for educational
19 research. It was easier to visit face to face
20 or do research using printed materials than
21 through technology. Still, even though it was
22 an infant technology, she and I would stay up
23 late dreaming and debating about how the
24 Internet, if it should ever catch on, might
25 shape the future of education. She believed we

1 might one day really serve all kids who need
2 special education. I thought we might able to
3 use the Internet to bring master teachers into
4 every classroom.

5 Since then I've taught at every grade
6 level in public and private schools, including
7 entrepreneurial work and one-on-one music
8 instruction, establishing highly innovative
9 university model school, and launching
10 Arkansas's first online hybrid Great Books
11 college and, to the best of our knowledge,
12 history's first college established to open
13 schools to closed prisons.

14 And I have experienced firsthand the
15 difference between an online model that uses
16 technology for asynchronous activities,
17 shifting the burden of education to the student
18 and family in a way that cuts costs at the
19 expense of relationships, confidence, and
20 proficiency, and an online model that uses
21 technology to invest in synchronous activities
22 involving highly trained and qualified learning
23 experts in a way that builds lasting
24 friendships, increases moral courage, is
25 financially sustainable, and builds the

1 knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary
2 for self learning, self leadership, and
3 sacrificial leadership.

4 Like other education innovators, our team
5 has firsthand experience with ideas that work
6 and ideas to avoid. Some of our best
7 discoveries, like meaningful and doable
8 involvement of the family and expert developed
9 public school reform framework, student
10 centered discussion of Great Books, Great
11 Ideas, and Great Discoveries are part of our
12 plan. And since the Internet and the
13 information economy are here to stay, our kids
14 need an education for the post-industrial age.
15 Education that is not simply provided by or
16 infused with technology but built upon long
17 lasting principles that allow humanity to use
18 its tools to better the world around us.

19 Here's how we do it. The Seven Arts
20 Lyceum integrates three winning puzzle pieces
21 to make available a constructivist education
22 fit for the emerging age.

23 First, establish a culture of self
24 governance to unleash the legendary power of
25 liberty and leadership development in the

1 learning process.

2 Second, use an integrated pedagogical
3 model that inculcates knowledge, increases
4 trusted relationships with academic coaches,
5 and trains every student for the self
6 leadership that comes with self-directed
7 learning.

8 And third, empower a vision driven school
9 community to help solve the hardest challenges
10 and enjoy the most exciting opportunities for
11 our state. A community built on the idea that
12 all of us have a stake, a voice, a gift to pay
13 forward, even in the most underserved areas and
14 populations. And we look forward to unpacking
15 each one of these puzzle pieces during the
16 discussion round.

17 Still we would like to give you a little
18 detail now. Once approved we will show how
19 K-12 education can benefit from the growth of
20 self governance in the business and tech
21 sectors; how the historically proven
22 efficiencies of power and power of
23 discriminative authority, accountability, and
24 constructive autonomy will produce an
25 environment where innovation will flourish.

1 On Page 16 of our application we begin
2 listing our distinctive features with self
3 governance. Regular involvement in the
4 organization's tactical and governance
5 processes inculcate our principles of
6 operations.

7 We also include the operations manual for
8 our college division, starting on Page A4 of
9 the attachment section.

10 This model, freely acquired from
11 HolocracyOne provides over 1,000 corporations
12 around the world with an operations and
13 structure that encourages a high level of
14 engagement among stakeholders. It's key
15 strength is clear and concise language that
16 distributes managerial authority, holds those
17 who hold various organizational roles, whether
18 faculty, staff, students, parents, guardians,
19 administration or volunteers accountable for
20 specific outcomes, and sets strong expectations
21 that allow for greater autonomy at the point of
22 participation.

23 Liberty is making a noteworthy difference
24 for these Holacratic companies. This model
25 brings into the 21st century an operations

1 structure that encourages the democratic spirit
2 of ancient Athens. Ancient historians say that
3 the strong sense of liberty in Athens powered
4 her to defeat the stronger military might of
5 Sparta. Simply put, the Athenians' citizens'
6 liberty made the difference. That same spirit
7 of liberty sustained the continental army
8 during Valley Forge in the long campaign for
9 independence.

10 We fully expect to experience with The
11 Seven Arts Lyceum the same benefits and
12 advantages regarding efficiency, effectiveness,
13 and engagement that we've already experienced
14 in our college division and observed in the
15 Great Books record of the historic struggle
16 between liberty and tyranny.

17 We will also show how the integrative
18 Pedagogical model has brought students together
19 across our many social divisions and trace this
20 model back through top U.S. schools like the
21 University of Chicago, Harvard, St. Johns
22 College, and others, leading European
23 institutions with like Oxford and Cambridge,
24 and to the ancient schools of Aristotle, Plato,
25 and Socrates.

1 On Page 17 of the application we reference
2 12 distinctives related to the integrated
3 Pedagogy model, beginning with relational
4 learning and ending on Page 18 with embedded
5 courses.

6 The relational learning model provides the
7 core for all synchronous activities in the 9-12
8 self-governance school. A student's typical
9 week includes a close reading of a primary text
10 written by a master in the subject area;
11 systematic marking of the text for academic
12 profit; crafting at least two interpretive
13 questions to drive the formal class discussion;
14 spending 90 minutes in a discussion facilitated
15 by expertly trained faculty, and delivering a
16 formal response essay.

17 The primary texts come mainly from the
18 Great Books series that John Erskine of
19 Columbia University pioneered in 1920. We make
20 these public domain works available to the
21 students in their Google classroom account for
22 individual marking and asynchronous faculty
23 interactions. These writings developed western
24 society's leadership class during the past 50
25 or so centuries. America's founding generation

1 studied these works extensively while forming
2 their ideas for what has become these United
3 States of America. They considered a working
4 knowledge of these texts as essential for
5 handling the blessings and dangers of liberty
6 to mutual benefit.

7 One other innovative feature that may be
8 new to some in this room is the Paideia model.
9 In 1982, when the future of the relatively
10 young U.S. Department of Education was very
11 much in doubt, Mortimer Adler of the University
12 of Chicago lead a team of professional
13 educators to design this model. The team made
14 up of encyclopedia editors -- editors,
15 university board chairmen, provosts,
16 presidents, and professors, heads of
17 foundations for teaching and research, high
18 school principles, superintendents, and
19 teachers, as well as authors offered an elegant
20 path -- plan in three successively more
21 detailed books.

22 The central feature of the Paideia model,
23 which forms the core of our K-8 program, is its
24 three distinct modes of teaching. In the
25 earliest grades didactic instruction via

1 lectures and responses, textbooks and other
2 aids help students gain the tools to acquire
3 knowledge.

4 Next, coaching exercises and supervised
5 practice helps students develop the
6 intellectual skills of learning. In
7 preparation for ongoing relational learning,
8 the upper years use mywebex or Socratic
9 questioning in active participation to help
10 students to enlarge their understanding of
11 ideas and values.

12 Speaking of ideas, Adler and his team had
13 earlier identified a list of 103 ideas that
14 interested humans since the time of Homer. We
15 have selected five of these ideas as part of
16 our independent study curriculum, God, man,
17 liberty, duty, and courage. Optional writing
18 prompts for essays may, at the student's
19 discretion, be replaced with an asynchronous
20 discuss of their interpretive questions for any
21 text. Students may request faculty with
22 specific expertise to further individualize
23 their independent studies of these areas.

24 Third, and finally, we believe you will
25 see the immediate good of a vision driven

1 school community made up of students, parents
2 and guardians, faculty, staff, and
3 administrators, and members of the broader
4 community coming together to surround our most
5 at risk for generational poverty, joblessness,
6 and incarceration with peers and mentors in a
7 model designed for and designed to elevate its
8 students into the leadership class.

9 On Page 18 we name our primary social
10 cause recidivism prevention.

11 When our team started discussing the
12 possibility of a Great Books college and
13 charter school, because of our background as
14 volunteers in Arkansas' prison system since
15 2003, we saw the potential to turn around lives
16 and reshape destinies.

17 There are several factors to consider
18 here. The ADC reported in 2016 that over
19 15,000 men and women were in prison, a number
20 forecast to exceed 20,000 by the end of our
21 first year of our operation. Another 23,431
22 were on parole, 29,995 were on probation, and
23 another 5,000 were in drug court. Many of
24 these current and former prison inmates have
25 children. The 2016 U.S. census data

1 estimates -- estimates showed that Arkansas had
2 at that time 705,226,000 -- or 705,226
3 children. Of these one in 11 have had an
4 incarcerated parent. These children are
5 underserved and especially at risk.

6 An official State of Texas report found
7 that 70 percent of the children of the
8 incarcerated will end up in trouble with the
9 law too.

10 It's been said that there are three paths
11 out of multi-generational crime and poverty:
12 Athletic or artistic skill, charm and good
13 looks, and education. We learned that prison
14 inmates who participate in college education
15 while in prison are on average 46 percent less
16 likely to reoffend. We first focused on
17 educating this population group in 2012 and
18 have experienced significant interest in our
19 college program for prison inmates. The
20 college program for inmates is the first of two
21 horns in our open schools to close prisons
22 strategy.

23 The interest and excitement that existed
24 from the beginning only increased in the summer
25 of 2015 when the governor asked the faith-based

1 community to help address the problem of prison
2 population growth and Arkansas' other social
3 challenges. Our program is similar to programs
4 in other states where education has proven to
5 curb recidivism and return productive citizens
6 instead of re-offenders.

7 The other great horn of our open schools
8 to close prisons strategy is to market 7L
9 through our incarcerated students to offer
10 their children the same type and level of
11 education, but these children need to be
12 surrounded by, even saturated with our
13 vision-driven community.

14 We witness dramatic behavioral and social
15 improvements in our incarcerated students. We
16 see the changes in them that our peers in other
17 states have seen, prison inmates learning how
18 to go home for good. We want as much or more
19 to see the children of the incarcerated break
20 the cycle in their generation. We believe
21 solutions will come from investing in our
22 innovative strategy so that our
23 incarceration-affected youth have a better
24 chance for a better destiny instead of joining
25 the 70 percent statistic. These young people

1 know the problem firsthand. Surround them with
2 a vision-driven community, equip them with a
3 leadership class education, empower them with
4 friends and mentors and encourage them with
5 entrepreneur training and relationship with the
6 business sector and broader community, do this
7 and we believe they will discover powerful
8 practical solutions to the darkness of
9 incarceration. We believe these at-risk kids
10 can be the heros that will change the world if
11 you will give us a chance to give them the
12 education we have presented here today.

13 We presented many facts in a revolutionary
14 proposal. Here is what we're asking you to do:
15 Approve The Seven Arts Lyceum. Let's negotiate
16 for what's possible, a generation of
17 self-directed learners equipped, empowered, and
18 encouraged with the knowledge, skills,
19 disposition, and relationships to create a
20 brighter tomorrow.

21 Now, not everybody is a fan of innovation.
22 We have yet to find those who support
23 innovation and oppose a Great Books education.
24 We have yet to find those who question whether
25 an online education can result in meaningful

1 relationships and reliable learning, and we're
2 happy to point them to research regarding
3 online learning that's pretty discouraging and
4 show them how our model specifically addresses
5 such concerns.

6 Some might even question whether a family
7 involved education or some other aspect of our
8 proposal should be promoted. Each of these is
9 a piece of greater strategy to move Arkansas
10 forward. 7L will be a small part of that
11 solution, but a leader nonetheless, and we want
12 to be responsible for shaping the next wave of
13 leaders.

14 If we don't innovate, starting with a
15 model like ours, one that's rooted in 50
16 centuries or so of training Western Histories
17 Leadership Class and well designed to elevate
18 Arkansas during the emerging digital age, then
19 we know where we're going to be, still near the
20 bottom talking about wanting to lead. However,
21 with your approval, we can help revive the
22 heart of the heartland, we can train children
23 across the entire state to think critically,
24 act wisely, and live courageously. We can help
25 build stronger families, encourage today's

1 leaders to pass the torch to tomorrow's problem
2 solvers, industry leaders, and culture shapers.
3 We can lower crime, increase college going and
4 graduation rates, create job creators, and make
5 good on our old state nickname, the land of
6 opportunity. We can educate today's youth to
7 create brighter tomorrows, starting with your
8 recommendation for approval.

9 Thank you for your time.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Thank you,
11 Dr. Kreh.

12 Is there anyone to speak in opposition?

13 MS. BOYD: She went to go see.

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

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. And you
17 do have an additional five minutes if there is
18 anything more you would like to add before we
19 get into questions.

20 Okay. All right. Then we will go ahead
21 and move forward, kind of following similar
22 procedure from yesterday.

23 We want to start with the remaining issues
24 that the Internal Review Committee noted. But
25 on a couple of these, because there are several

1 items on the legal review, as we discuss that
2 first one, that unresolved issue, I would like
3 to go ahead and look at it here as well.

4 So, Dr. Boyd, I think, on the unresolved
5 issue that the applicant was asked to provide a
6 revised schedule of courses that they were
7 going to offer, and it looks like that that
8 revised schedule was not sent, so if we could
9 talk about that.

10 So we'll need the applicant to go ahead
11 and come forward.

12 And then in this next part you all may
13 want to come up to the front because we will
14 probably be going back and forth in kind of
15 question and answer to look at some of these
16 unresolved issues.

17 Just please state your name for the
18 record.

19 MS. BLAKE: Sarah Blake, I am the 7L
20 Public School Policy Specialist.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

22 MS. BLAKE: And I have paper copies in
23 front of me of our revised schedule of courses,
24 both the elementary schedule and the secondary.

25 MS. BOYD: Okay.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And,
2 Ms. Coffman, this probably will directly
3 impact, if you -- we'll need to make sure you
4 have a copy of that and will help us look at
5 whether or not this is going to meet
6 requirements.

7 Okay. And so, Ms. Hyatt, just in glancing
8 at this, and may need my ADE friends to help
9 out, it doesn't appear that this aligns with
10 the required 38, or it doesn't indicate that
11 the courses being offered are going to
12 necessarily meet that. So I know on the legal
13 review, No. 23 is where there were several
14 questions that you had in your legal review
15 about the secondary units offered. And so to
16 me it just makes sense to kind of talk about
17 this together and address these questions
18 together so we're not jumping back and forth,
19 if that's okay.

20 MS. HYATT: That's great.

21 So on No. 23, and the little sheet I gave
22 you at the beginning has this information on
23 it. Does someone have it?

24 Okay. So the request was for waiver of
25 the old standards, all of the curriculum

1 standards for, I believe it was 9-12, I need to
2 double-check. And so it was really a broad
3 request of -- of a waiver of all of the
4 curriculum standards, and so I wanted more
5 information on what it is that they needed a
6 waiver from, but also confirmation that they
7 knew that they can't waive graduation
8 requirements, and that all of their classes
9 were not eligible to be concurrent. And then I
10 guess kind of a larger issue with the
11 curriculum.

12 So Likewise College, it's my
13 understanding, and Likewise, Inc. have some
14 religious -- I mean on their website and
15 through kind of researching what that
16 curriculum looks like, it became apparent that
17 it is very much religious, and 6.11.1.8 of the
18 Charter School Rules and 6-23-401 of the
19 Charter School Law say that an open-enrollment
20 public charter school shall not be religious in
21 operations or programmatic offerings.
22 Additionally, it says that an eligible entity
23 is one who is non-sectarian in its program,
24 admissions policies, and operations. And
25 sectarian is defined in the rules as -- as --

1 as being a particular religious sect. So there
2 are some outstanding -- that's a pretty big
3 legal concern, and I think maybe it should be
4 addressed before moving on because that might
5 preclude moving forward.

6 DR. KREH: Likewise College is part of
7 Likewise, Inc. Likewise, Inc. is recognized by
8 the IRS as a 501(c)(3) corporation that is not
9 religious in nature.

10 The college is aligned -- came into being
11 to serve the inmate population, and any time
12 you're going to bring something into an
13 organization you have to have a champion, and
14 the champion with the Department of Corrections
15 that facilitates with greatest ease and
16 greatest regularity the entrance of volunteers
17 into the prison system is the chaplaincy
18 division. At the time that we started our
19 conversations with the chaplaincy division the
20 new Department of Re-entry had been formed and
21 chaplaincy had been moved under re-entry. So
22 we came into our relationship as an
23 organization with ADC through Re-entry, which
24 no longer exists, and it has been pulled back
25 underneath and with chaplaincy in a

1 unit-by-unit basis. And so our access point in
2 and our relationship is with Chaplaincy
3 Services Division.

4 They had two things that they required of
5 us. One was they needed this to be something
6 that they could champion, something that would
7 fall under a very broad non-sectarian status,
8 but that would still be not atheistic so that
9 they could champion it for their cause.

10 The -- if I understand what you just said,
11 a religious sect would be a sect of a religious
12 group, and we have no religious denomination or
13 religious sectarian entanglements at all. That
14 was the other requirement from Department of
15 Chaplaincy or from the Division of Chaplaincy
16 Services for Department of Corrections in
17 whether or not we could even come in and bring
18 the program is that it be non-sectarian,
19 according to their judgment. And we included
20 documentation in that from the Director of
21 Chaplaincy Services Joshua Mayfield, where he
22 refers to us as, although Christ-centered, and
23 we're not ashamed to be Christians, but we are
24 nonsectarian and we do not limit our student
25 involvement in any way based on whether or not

1 somebody has a specific faith or doesn't have a
2 specific faith.

3 The other -- the programmatic offerings,
4 we do not have any stand-alone bible course
5 that is designed to inculcate religious values
6 of a denominational indoctrination by any
7 means. Our -- our involvement with the sacred
8 text has to do with the academic study, and
9 reading, as we would read any other text, to
10 try to determine before we would seek to apply
11 it, do we understand how to evaluate it, before
12 we can evaluate it how do we interpret it, so
13 we read it to see what the text actually is
14 saying and we debate that and we encourage
15 disagreement, we encourage debate. We prohibit
16 in our classroom in the prison, we prohibit any
17 kind of proselytizing because that is
18 prohibited by law and it's against the spirit
19 and nature and policy of our college.

20 That said, within the umbrella, within the
21 sponsoring organization of the 501(c)(3), we
22 have a college and then we have this division,
23 which is a charter school proposal, and they
24 are separate units.

25 The -- the challenge with delivering this

1 kind of program and bringing this kind of
2 opportunity to 9th and 12th graders is faculty.
3 And so what we are essentially doing is taking
4 the faculty and the course offerings so that we
5 can also offer third-party credit bearing
6 courses and making that available to the -- to
7 the charter.

8 As far as the -- as far as the religious
9 question, we are not affiliated with any sect.
10 As far as the operations, we included the
11 operations manual, and if you were to glance
12 through that, you would find that there is
13 nothing in there having to do with religion at
14 all because -- and we have nothing in our
15 charter that speaks to the idea of not
16 proselytizing because we're not a religious
17 organization, you know.

18 MS. HYATT: I would just note, so the
19 eligible entity, you know, if it's a 501(3)(c),
20 that's separate from the other laws that say
21 that charter school should not be religious in
22 their operations or programmatic offerings.

23 And I just kind of wanted to read to you
24 something from the bylaws of Likewise, so that
25 you guys have the information. Because it

1 says, "We the participants of Likewise,
2 respecting the residual image of God within all
3 humans, and desiring to equip, empower, and
4 encourage the highest fulfillment of human
5 potential, through constructivist methods,
6 classically humane materials, and a great
7 commission model for helping others to live,
8 learn, and lead Christianly, and hereby ordain
9 and establish these bylaws for Likewise, Inc"

10 Also on the website it says, "Likewise
11 seeks to encourage students to understand what
12 it means to be a human being who lives his life
13 before a righteous God."

14 So I do have some concerns that, although
15 maybe their entity in itself wouldn't violate
16 the nonsectarian requirement, that in its
17 operations and programmatic offerings and using
18 Likewise College as kind of the guide for their
19 curriculum, that we would be violating that,
20 that legal requirement.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Panel members, do you
22 have some questions?

23 DR. OWOH: I do.

24 After reviewing the Likewise, Inc.
25 website, under the "about" section, it has

1 listed a K-12 lyceum. Is that referencing this
2 charter school that you're proposing?

3 DR. KREH: That -- that lyceum model and
4 that lyceum idea has been part of what we have
5 wanted to do from the beginning.

6 Now, our -- our ability to do that and our
7 recognition of certain ability to do that has
8 changed since we began, which is why we're
9 standing here before you today.

10 DR. OWOH: So my concern is, since it is
11 listed as K-12, and then it highlights part of
12 what Ms. Hyatt just talked about, but it also
13 quotes the scripture, scriptures from Matthew
14 and Mark, and it talks about partnering with
15 religious groups.

16 And so to separate -- to stand today and
17 to say it's separate brings some confusion to
18 me because it clearly outlines that the intent
19 is to partner with religious groups and then to
20 also to help or to reference scriptures and be
21 scripturally based. And so I'm having a hard
22 time to see where it's separate.

23 DR. KREH: If I may, the partnership with
24 religious groups there, the intent of that, and
25 we can clarify this to any degree that you want

1 to, but the intent of that is the same type of
2 agreement as, say, what ArLA has with the
3 College Church of Christ in Searcy, which they
4 use that building to do their testing. So when
5 they have to come together to do testing, they
6 find somebody who is willing to help them with
7 that, and in ArLA's case it's historically been
8 College Church of Christ in Searcy there in my
9 area. And so the use of facilities, if I
10 understand the law correctly, there is nothing
11 that prohibits partnering with the religious
12 organizations for the use of their facilities.

13 That is not -- again, we are seeking to
14 indoctrinate -- we are seeking to inculcate
15 certain values, like when you see your neighbor
16 in need, responding to that need. And that is
17 very much something that is referenced
18 throughout the -- throughout the website and
19 what we are seeking to do.

20 We also speak specifically to the call to
21 the religious community, to the Christian
22 community especially, to be willing to engage
23 with those who are, for example, in prison and
24 to help them. One of the reasons why the
25 governor called for the faith-based community

1 to step in and help with this is because there
2 is a mandate for us to step in and help with
3 this outside of the state, and he recognized
4 that, I believe, and wanted to -- to leverage
5 that to the state's good.

6 DR. OWOH: Okay.

7 DR. KREH: Does that answer your question?

8 DR. OWOH: It -- it does provide
9 additional insight, but the concern is still
10 there because it's definitely outlined, the
11 religious connection and focus is -- it's --
12 it's prevalent on your website, the parent
13 website.

14 DR. KREH: Uh-huh.

15 DR. OWOH: So I have to admit the concern
16 is still there; so --

17 DR. KREH: Well, I would be -- I would be
18 curious, because I don't see anything in the
19 law that really defines what this looks like,
20 but I would be curious to know what religious
21 operations means. And then with the
22 programmatic offerings, we -- we are confident
23 to show that what we offer is a Great Books
24 education, and that's -- that's not a sectarian
25 or a religious education.

1 But when it comes to religious operations,
2 I'm curious as to what that conjoined term
3 means and what that would involve.

4 MS. HYATT: It's not defined in the law.

5 You know, when reading it, I think that
6 the intent of it is to make sure that we're not
7 sending State money to a religious organization
8 or a nonprofit who is going to operate
9 religiously, in a religiously-affiliated
10 program.

11 And so, I mean, that is where the legal
12 concern comes from; because of the flow of
13 State money to charter schools, we can't send
14 State money to an organization that's
15 religiously affiliated for purposes of running
16 a school. And that's why that prohibition is
17 in there and it's repeated in the law, in the
18 rule, and then in another place in the law when
19 it's talking about the entity itself.

20 So I think it is important, an important
21 consideration.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Any questions?

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: I did have a question
24 about on the website, where it refers to the
25 learner lyceum. Is that currently in

1 operation? Do you have, like, home school or
2 anybody else? I mean, basically, do you
3 offer a K-12.

4 DR. KREH: That's -- that's vision casting
5 in that part of the website.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: So there is no --

7 DR. KREH: That -- that entity and that
8 language -- we are in the accreditation process
9 right now with the college. We're in a
10 re-branding process with what we're doing and
11 that language is place holder language from the
12 first application referencing our intent, but
13 the name itself has changed.

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: No -- so there would -- so
15 there is no K-12 operations right now that's
16 going on?

17 DR. KREH: No.

18 And on the religious question, I would
19 just point out that in the college setting we
20 have approximately half of our students
21 affiliate in some way -- well, let me put it
22 this way, we have a student named Daniel, and
23 Daniel, when we comes into the chapel, which is
24 where our courses are hosted because that's who
25 our host -- our host has that area at their

1 disposal -- when we come into the chapel,
2 Daniel is an atheist and Daniel sits in a
3 circle and he looks around at his peers in that
4 class, and we want him to be comfortable to
5 know that he is not going to be proselytized.
6 And in that circle, about half of his peers
7 come from some flavor of Christian-don, some
8 sect within Christian-don. Roughly 25 percent
9 come from some sect of Islam, they are Muslim.
10 Fewer, about 12 percent are Hindi or Buddhist;
11 and then we have a variety of agnostics and
12 atheists.

13 Now we have been piloting and prototyping
14 and actually running a program at that unit
15 since 2015, and there have been no instances --
16 and I can tell you that prison inmates are very
17 quick to cite and to complain when they feel
18 their rights are being violated -- we've had no
19 instances of proselytization and we've had no
20 instances of complaints of that or even a
21 feeling or a whiff of that going on because,
22 again, our course material is not religious, it
23 is Great Books.

24 MS. HYATT: I would just like to clarify
25 that I don't think it is an issue that they are

1 going to discriminate against people based on
2 their religion, because certainly they wouldn't
3 be able to do that and that's not what the
4 concern is. The concern is really the
5 underlying issue of is the Likewise College
6 curriculum and their idea to have concurrent
7 courses with that and the involvement with
8 Likewise College, Inc., is that violative of
9 this requirement that they shall not be
10 religious in operations or programmatic
11 offerings. And even though the information
12 that's been presented has been really helpful
13 to me, it hasn't relieved my legal concerns on
14 that issue.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And so I would like
16 to -- I would like to ask you a question along
17 those lines there.

18 DR. KREH: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Because I noticed, in
20 looking at your budget, the way you have it set
21 up, in 2019-'20 you would plan to start with
22 grades 9-12; correct?

23 MR. FARLEY: That's correct.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And -- and I'm
25 seeing you're not budgeting for any teachers.

1 And then in '20-'21 you're only budgeting for
2 four teachers, classroom teachers. So I -- I'm
3 under -- or I guess I'm assuming and I probably
4 shouldn't assume, I should ask you. So who
5 will be delivering the instruction during that
6 first year?

7 MR. FARLEY: Right. So this gives us a
8 little opportunity to distinguish between
9 what -- what has been shown as a CMO fee is
10 actually just -- we are leasing the faculty
11 from Likewise --

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So then I think --

13 MR. FARLEY: -- to be able to teach
14 classes.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So then I think then
16 that bears into part of the concern, if the
17 faculty is with Likewise College, that is a
18 religiously-affiliated college. How -- that --
19 that's where I think maybe we would have some
20 concerns and --

21 MR. FARLEY: Again, in terms of -- I think
22 any of our faculty would admit to their own
23 religious affiliations, whatever they may be,
24 but there is no content that is brought into
25 the classroom that is specifically religious.

1 So in terms of our leasing them to a
2 charter school, the -- and we have to be very
3 clear here because there is words that we
4 cannot use until we're accredited, but the
5 intent is to be able to offer college credit at
6 some point down the road in those courses, and
7 to do that, of course, we need college faculty
8 to teach. And so we're just making the
9 assumption on the front end, and Jeff, correct
10 me if I'm wrong here, but we're making the
11 assumption on the front end that we want to be
12 able to have faculty in place when that
13 accreditation process is complete and then we
14 can increase our offerings at that point. But
15 in -- in no way are these faculty -- would they
16 be considered religious instructors, because
17 there is no religion being brought into the
18 course.

19 This will be, in essence, if you're
20 looking at the course offerings, the -- the
21 specific course that could even be questioned
22 would be the one entitled God, and that is God
23 as an idea, not god as a Christian god or a
24 Muslim god or any religious sect god. This is
25 just the notion of God throughout history.

1 And Jeff could speak more to that than I
2 can because I don't -- would never teach that
3 course.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And can you identify
5 yourself for the record?

6 MR. FARLEY: I'm sorry. Yes.

7 I'm Dr. Mark Farley, I'm CFO/Treasurer.
8 When you said budget, I stepped up for that
9 reason.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I understand and I
11 didn't --

12 MR. FARLEY: But it's another opportunity
13 to say I think it's important to know that
14 no -- no dollars will be allocated to any form
15 of religious instruction as well, which I know
16 is also a concern so -- or is usually a concern
17 in these discussions. We don't intend to use
18 dollars for religious instruction, we don't
19 intend to have religious instruction; so --

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Panel, do you have
21 other questions along these lines?

22 DR. KREMERS: Yes.

23 Can you clarify, as far as the curriculum,
24 you mentioned the course that you guys
25 provided, it does talk about God and I know you

1 mentioned that one. There is also one on
2 Theology. And, of course, Theology is defined
3 as the study of the concepts of God and
4 religious ideas, and you have that --

5 DR. KREH: And the Religion Theology
6 course is redacted from the offerings for the
7 charter school and --

8 DR. KREMERS: Even though it's in this
9 that you just gave us?

10 DR. KREH: Does it show up in the actual
11 listing of the 38 units, or is it just in the
12 syllabus -- in the course descriptions?

13 DR. KREMERS: That was -- it's on this
14 sheet so I wanted to ask.

15 DR. KREH: Okay. I thought we removed
16 that.

17 I know it's not in the application and we
18 are not intending to slip that in last minute
19 or anything.

20 And in that course, just to -- just to
21 give you an idea, not everybody is familiar
22 with -- with Great Books. That course on
23 Religion and Theology, which we are not be
24 teaching at the high school level, it starts
25 with Prometheus Bound, and so I don't know

1 anybody in Arkansas -- I've not met anybody in
2 Arkansas who is practicing the religion
3 Prometheus Bound sets up to overthrow, which is
4 basically essentially something that is near my
5 heart, which is it essentially overthrows the
6 idea of spiritual abuse, the use of religion as
7 oppression, that's what Prometheus Bound is.
8 And that's a pretty profound idea for people
9 who have never questioned the role of religion
10 in society and what it can be used for, what it
11 is used for historically. And so we start with
12 Prometheus Bound and move through several
13 works, like Plato and Aristotle and others
14 before we even get to anything that's related
15 to the contemporary Western History that
16 includes the Judeo-Christian ethic.

17 DR. KREMERS: Okay. And my second
18 question is what are your plans to meet career
19 and technical education requirements?

20 DR. KREH: Okay. I'm glad you asked that.
21 I can answer that or let Sarah address that.

22 The -- the main point with that, and it's
23 in that document that shows out to the right
24 things that are career and that would be
25 aligned through the process with career

1 education, externships, a focus on
2 entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship, connections
3 to those externships with different businesses
4 in the community.

5 The Capstone project for that is very much
6 like Shark Tank, and so it's the development of
7 a business idea, an actionable actual business
8 idea that solves a problem, and the students
9 come up with that and they come up with
10 their -- their log line, their tag, their
11 elevator speech, and they deliver that a
12 certain number of times. In other programs
13 that we've looked at and we like this number,
14 it's 1,600 times they have to get initials that
15 they have shared their vision before they come
16 in front of a panel of businessmen, and that
17 idea is evaluated and they get feedback from
18 businessmen, members of the business community
19 and education as well, and then the intent in
20 that is that they actually find somebody that
21 they partner with when they leave high school
22 and that they can actually start their program
23 and start their business while they are doing
24 their additional education and while they are
25 doing additional work. And so it's very much

1 designed to -- to create industry while
2 participating in an academic sense within
3 industry.

4 And so we have -- we have listed courses
5 that would align with the tech sector, with
6 business in general. I'm not as familiar with
7 this area so, Sarah, you might need to help me
8 out on this point.

9 MS. BLAKE: Sarah Blake.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We need you to speak
11 into the microphone.

12 MS. BLAKE: Sorry.

13 I'm a bit shorter than the guys here.

14 Sarah Blake, I'm the Public School Policy.

15 In terms of our career education, we do
16 have -- and I've gone through the required 38
17 that are set forth in the Standards for
18 Accreditation, and made a note both in the
19 document that we provided today and then in our
20 internal documentation a crosswalk of what
21 provides -- what corresponds with each of our
22 courses that we plan to offer with the courses
23 that exist in the 38 high school requirements.
24 We have on the sample schedule that we provided
25 for you on the right side it does have the 38

1 in column and I believe the -- I believe it was
2 there, the category in which it would fall. Is
3 that the copy that you have? Good.

4 We do exceed, meet or exceed, in fact in
5 almost every category exceed the required
6 number of credits in each of these subject
7 areas.

8 And for career education in particular, we
9 are following, of the existing programs of
10 study, the exhibit business marketing
11 technology and then the STEM as well, and then
12 our third set of offerings would be designed by
13 the student in conjunction with a -- with their
14 advisor to sort of create their own career
15 education tract, so that I won't say design
16 your own, but with the approval of the school
17 itself.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So if I could get
19 Ms. Coffman to come up here and also speak to
20 that, what you're describing as far as the
21 crosswalk --

22 MS. BLAKE: Uh-huh.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and alignment of
24 this.

25 MS. BLAKE: Yes.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I'm not seeing it very
2 clearly, and my concern is that this is all
3 information that really was needed way in
4 advance so that the Department could go through
5 it, have conversations with you. And getting
6 it today and asking the Panel to make a
7 decision and -- and again, it's -- I'm not
8 seeing that, and so I would have concerns about
9 whether or not you were going to teach the
10 required 38 courses. You're starting high
11 school that very first year, whether the
12 graduation requirements are going to be met.
13 And also then the instructors who are going to
14 be teaching these courses, you know, not -- not
15 actually seeing or knowing what we're going to
16 be looking at in those terms.

17 So, Ms. Coffman, if you would look, you
18 may have a different take as you look through
19 this document.

20 MS. COFFMAN: Thank you. Deborah Coffman,
21 Public School Accountability.

22 And as in taking a very quick look at all
23 the documents provided, it appears that the
24 expectations for K-4 would be met, grades 5-8
25 are not complete as documented in this document

1 and, no, we do not see the full 38 courses
2 identified. There may have to be some
3 crosswalk to figure out if there is a match to
4 different titles, but the majority of the
5 courses that we did find were in the self-paced
6 third-party course work and that was not
7 complete.

8 So it -- I don't know if that's even a
9 possibility to align to Arkansas Academic
10 Standards.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yeah, questions from
12 the Panel?

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: So I just, you know, have
14 kind of a -- just two things. One, that the
15 credits being an issue.

16 And then from what I'm hearing from our
17 legal folks over here is that for us to even
18 move forward and approve this application would
19 be problematic; is that accurate?

20 MS. HYATT: So I -- you know, in my legal
21 review I do believe that the school and its
22 partnership with Likewise College, Inc., and
23 using the teachers from Likewise College would
24 violate the mandate that charter schools are
25 not religious in their operations or

1 programmatic offerings. And as Dr. Owoh
2 pointed out, you know, even though here today
3 they are providing information about how they
4 would separate the two, just the information on
5 the website and the bylaws of the organization
6 itself is still really problematic.

7 So the panel would have to decide that it
8 is not religious in its operations or
9 programmatic offerings in order to grant the
10 charter.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: All right. And is that
12 something we are supposed to decipher through,
13 whether or not an organization is religious in
14 nature or not, or --

15 MS. HYATT: So this Panel has the ability
16 to, you know, review the information in front
17 of it and decide whether or not the charter
18 school meets the requirements of -- of being
19 eligible to have a charter.

20 And so I do think that it is appropriate
21 for you to consider that information in front
22 of you and to determine whether or not this
23 would be appropriate or not.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: All right. So, I mean,
25 just my thoughts, if we can -- we can kind of

1 continue on having discussion, but with those
2 two big things, I don't know why we would
3 continue to have discussion, but that's just
4 me.

5 DR. OWOH: I agree. And I don't want to
6 make -- take the opportunity from the rest of
7 the Board to -- the Panel to -- to discuss, but
8 I would like to move forward with the motion at
9 the appropriate time; so --

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: If -- does anybody else
11 have a --

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- concern or something
14 they want like to comment on before --

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Well, I just wanted to --
16 he was doing exactly what I was just wanting to
17 do also, I was just waiting until we finished
18 the discussion. I am struggling also. There
19 is not, for me, a clear line between offering
20 religious offerings, even though it may not be
21 overtly, I don't want to say that it is
22 covertly but, you know, I was looking at one of
23 the courses here, I do have the same concern,
24 and it is enough of a concern for me not to
25 move any further than what we are now.

1 I think that Mike wanted --

2 MR. WILSON: For my part, Madam Chairman,
3 I -- I have a degree of concern but I'm
4 reluctant to speculate --

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Would you speak in the
6 microphone?

7 MR. WILSON: I'll try.

8 I'm reluctant to speculate on what the
9 instruction in this proposed charter will look
10 like to a student or -- or other -- or the
11 public. I would give it benefit of the doubt
12 and -- and accept on the face of it as what you
13 say is a Great Books curriculum, which includes
14 a lot of philosophy, theocracy, and whatever
15 Holacracy tactical might be -- I have no idea
16 what that means, but I won't speculate on it
17 either. So I'm reluctant to vote really either
18 way, but I'm reluctant to speculate on what
19 might occur in the classroom.

20 DR. KREH: May I address what the
21 classroom looks like?

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Well, actually --

23 DR. KREH: Because, I think it's to the
24 point to the question about whether it's a
25 religious programmatic offering or not.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I know, and I'm going
2 to -- I'm going to go ahead and pause there. I
3 don't think it is simply just a matter of that.
4 I would add to the concerns that have already
5 been noted as far as it's -- we're really
6 struggling here with feeling comfortable about
7 any kind of -- with the question there about
8 whether or not there is that separation, but
9 also just in the fact of whether or not those
10 high school students will be taught the
11 required graduation credits in Arkansas, the
12 required 38 curriculum, and the fact that you
13 did not provide that information to us until
14 today, so that we can't even feel confident
15 moving forward in that regard.

16 So I'm going to go ahead, I think, with --
17 with all the concerns and questions that have
18 already been raised, I'm going to go ahead and
19 move forward. I think Dr. Owoh has asked to go
20 ahead and make a motion.

21 DR. OWOH: Okay. I move that we deny the
22 application for the charter school.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: 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: Opposed?

4 MR. WILSON: No.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The motion
6 passes, and the application for Seven Arts
7 Lyceum has been denied and we will record
8 responses and give you feedback in just a few
9 minutes.

10 DR. KREH: Thank you again for your time
11 and your kind attention.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Has everyone found the
13 voting sheet?

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

15 DR. OWOH: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Okay. I
17 think we're ready to share responses.

18 Dr. Hernandez?

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. I
20 have concerns on the required courses being
21 taught in the secondary level and the legal
22 question of religious affiliation.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

24 DR. KREMERS: I voted for, to deny the
25 motion. I am concerned about the curriculum,

1 the religious affiliation questions, and the
2 career and technical education requirements,
3 whether those would be met.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh?

5 DR. OWOH: I made the motion to deny the
6 application because I just, just based on the
7 material that was provided to us and the
8 presentation, there were several significant
9 academic and program concerns that were not
10 efficiently addressed.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams?

12 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion to
13 deny. I am concerned that there is not a clear
14 separation of religion from the curriculum.
15 Also the required graduation units are not
16 clearly defined.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson?

18 MR. WILSON: I voted against the motion.
19 My -- my -- as I expressed, I'm not -- I'm
20 willing to accept the proponent's statement at
21 face value that -- that the concept of the
22 charter would be the study Great Books
23 curriculum as opposed to any particular
24 sectarian thing, but at the same time I agree
25 again with the concerns of the Panel, it's not

1 altogether clear.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Thank
3 you. Hopefully our feedback is helpful. We
4 appreciate your time. It's obvious you put a
5 lot of time and effort into this so,
6 hopefully -- hopefully the feedback you got
7 will help you.

8 DR. KREH: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you for
10 being here.

11 Okay. Panel, at this time are we -- is
12 everyone ready to continue on?

13 Okay. All right. Well, we will go ahead
14 and move to the second item on our agenda.

15 And, Ms. Perry, if you will come forward
16 and update us on this next action agenda item.

17 A-2: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
18 APPLICATION: SIMS-FAYOLA INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY PINE
19 BLUFF

20 MS. PERRY: Sims-Fayola International
21 Academy Pine Bluff is a proposed
22 Open-Enrollment Public Charter School to be
23 located within Pine Bluff School District. The
24 sponsoring entity is Sims-Fayola Foundation,
25 Inc. The applicant is requesting to serve

1 students in grades 5-8 with a maximum
2 enrollment of 200 beginning in the 2019-2020
3 school year. The applicant has notified
4 affected districts of the proposed public
5 charter school.

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

11 Presenting today for Sims-Fayola
12 International Academy Pine Bluff are Dedrick
13 Sims, CEO of the sponsoring entity; Debe
14 Hollingsworth, former Pine Bluff Mayor; and
15 Mary Liddell, School Board President.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Would the
17 representatives of the Sims-Fayola
18 International Academy please stand, and anyone
19 speaking in opposition, stand to receive the
20 oath.

21 Okay. If you will raise your right hand.
22 (WHEREUPON, the witnesses were sworn by
23 the Chairman.)

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

25 And you are recognized to begin the

1 presentation. Anyone who will be speaking
2 during the presentation, you may come on up,
3 and if you will state your name and title for
4 the record, you will be recognized.

5 MR. SIMS: Good morning, Panel. Dedrick
6 Sims. Good to see you again. I presented to
7 you last year so it's great to see you again.
8 Thanks.

9 MS. HOLLINGSWORTH: Good morning. Can you
10 hear me?

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

12 MS. HOLLINGSWORTH: It was hard to hear
13 back there.

14 I'm here before you to say that the
15 application that has been submitted by
16 Sims-Fayola is -- is a great application, and
17 it really speaks to a specific need within our
18 city, and I think that it does that very well.

19 I'm here today to speak to the other side
20 of the need, the need that we have within our
21 city that speaks to this particular age group
22 of young men that we have tracked. And when I
23 was in office I had the opportunity to work
24 with a criminologist for four years, and we
25 worked very close with Juvenile Judge Ernest

1 Brown. We tracked every incident that a young
2 person did, if it was a misdemeanor, whatever
3 it was. This particular curriculum speaks to
4 that.

5 When you look at a healthy city you look
6 at public safety, you look at economic
7 development, and you look at education. And
8 I -- I mentioned education in the third plank
9 because it affects every part of your city if
10 you want a healthy city. So in saying that, in
11 working with Economic Development, I learned
12 the last company that -- that came to our city,
13 \$240 million they invested, the issue is do we
14 have a skilled workforce? We're having to
15 recruit from outside.

16 So I believe that this particular school
17 will address the needs of the young people
18 age -- grades 5th to the 8th grade that need to
19 be exposed to certain cultural impact, they
20 need to be challenged as far as their creative
21 side goes, they need to be able to do hands-on
22 skilled thinking processing, and I believe this
23 school will do it. It -- it -- it addresses
24 another need on the other side.

25 Thank you very much.

1 COURT REPORTER: Would you identify
2 yourself?

3 MS. HOLLINGSWORTH: I'm sorry.
4 Debe Hollingsworth, Pine Bluff, former
5 mayor.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.
7 Okay. And if you state your name and
8 title for the record, you will be recognized.

9 DR. LIDDELL: My name is Dr. Mary Liddell.
10 I had the opportunity this morning to talk
11 with the now mayor of Pine Bluff, Mayor Shirley
12 Washington, and she regrets that she wasn't
13 able to be here, but she wanted me to say some
14 words in support of this particular school.

15 This particular model will be great for
16 the city of Pine Bluff. This school promotes
17 all of the components that the city of Pine
18 Bluff needs for the 21st Century.

19 The school will focus on building
20 character, critical thinking skills, and a
21 higher order of thinking skills, communication
22 skills.

23 Because this focus would be on boys 5-8,
24 this would help to stop the pipeline of school
25 to prison.

1 As a former middle school schoolteacher,
2 and this is me, I am a former schoolteacher, I
3 retired from the Little Rock School District
4 but I also taught in Pine Bluff for many, many
5 years. It is evident that -- that the grade
6 level 5th through 8th is a crucial, crucial
7 grade level that we must focus on at this
8 particular time.

9 During my teaching career each year when
10 we analyzed the data it was evident that the
11 males were the ones that brought down the test
12 score each year. Whether I taught in Little
13 Rock, and I -- like I said, I retired from the
14 Little Rock School District, but I also taught
15 in West Memphis, taught in Connecticut, and in
16 San Antonio, Texas, and it was evident through
17 all of my teaching career that the males were
18 the ones that brought down the scores.

19 So many of our young men in Pine Bluff are
20 in the juvenile court system because they lack
21 self control. We need to start developing
22 discipline skills that would help prepare them
23 for the future. This charter school would be
24 an asset to the community of Pine Bluff.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Thank you.

1 MR. SIMS: Thank you.

2 All right. Dedrick Sims, CEO of the
3 Sims-Fayola Foundation.

4 We'll start the presentation. So our
5 mission of the school is to graduate globally
6 competent college-ready urban males who have
7 the knowledge, skills, and the habits of mind
8 to succeed.

9 Even though we're a middle school, I think
10 focusing on college is very important. If we
11 put them in the mindset of post-secondary
12 educational opportunity starting in middle
13 school then it doesn't become a shock to them
14 as they get into high school.

15 So and I will talk about how we address
16 the college gap that happens between high
17 school graduation and students entering college
18 and how we address it.

19 Our model is a single-gender male school
20 grades 5-8 with a focus on international
21 studies and also college -- college prep. Our
22 primary instruction delivery model is
23 project-based learning and we have a heavy
24 focus on character education and also service
25 learning. I believe that is very important.

1 One thing I do believe is that culture
2 trumps strategy and if you have the
3 opportunity to create a good culture and you
4 have kids that understand what character brings
5 to the table as relates to projecting their
6 long-term goals, then we have -- we're
7 producing a well-rounded student.

8 Here are the main models of our -- or the
9 main components of our model. Extended school
10 time, which means we start a little bit earlier
11 and we leave the campus a little later.
12 Data-driven instruction, and an emphasize on
13 character development there again. Two-phase
14 instructional programming approach that deals
15 with students who are behind but also students
16 who are at grade level and are pushing to -- to
17 retain that growth.

18 Single gender instructional strategies,
19 and this is key. I've seen around the country
20 where schools tend to move to single-gender
21 classrooms but they -- but they teach the same
22 way, the instruction framework is the same way
23 and they don't get the results that they are
24 looking for. Culturally relevant instruction
25 and school design and effective effort belief

1 system. And that speaks to that we will teach
2 our young man that smart is not something you
3 are, smart is something you get, so what you
4 put into it is what you get out of it.

5 Project-based learning, which is key for
6 young men who tend to operate and live in the
7 world from a spatial kinesthetic space, and
8 then a focus on international studies and
9 making global connections.

10 As we all know, that this world is
11 connected and what happens across the big pond
12 definitely -- definitely reflects here through
13 gas prices and grocery prices and other things
14 and So for them to understand that they are not
15 competing against Tyrone who is sitting next to
16 them but someone who is across the big pond
17 is -- is super important, so we make sure to
18 make that intentional as a part of their
19 learning experience at the school.

20 Here are our internal goals. Our internal
21 goals is to increase the number of students at
22 Ready or Exceeding on the State exam by
23 15 percent in every subject year after the
24 first year. We plan to use the first year as
25 our diagnostic year and then increase it by

1 15 percent moving forward. To grow every young
2 man two years or more in reading, language
3 usage, and math in one year and each academic
4 subsequent year, and we will talk about how
5 we're going to do that. For 100 percent of our
6 young men to communicate effectively in a
7 second language in three years, and that second
8 language that we're focusing on is Spanish. To
9 send 100 percent of our young men to high
10 school without the need for remediation. So
11 those are our internal goals. So every
12 component of our program is aligned to making
13 sure that we actualize those -- those goals.

14 Why boys? Low academic achievement. I
15 think we can all -- we can all agree on this
16 that when we look at the data across the state
17 or any state in the USA, when you decipher that
18 data you see that boys are bringing up the
19 rear, and so we are making sure that we address
20 that, so low academic achievement, low
21 graduation rates, high suspension rates, and
22 over identification in -- in special education,
23 that's why boys.

24 And here are some facts here. Did you
25 know that the majority -- that boys get the

1 majority of Ds and Fs in most schools, as high
2 as 70 percent. Over 80 percent of students who
3 are on Ritalin are boys, and of those students
4 who are diagnosed with behavioral disorders,
5 80 percent are boys. So we can see that there
6 is some work to be done to -- for our young men
7 to realize their future.

8 And here is our solution. Three points of
9 focus on literacy and writing each day;
10 mandatory academic supports built into the
11 school day; movement-based instruction to align
12 with young men being kinesthetic and -- and
13 more hands on; and an intensive approach to
14 character development. There is character
15 again. We think that's really important that
16 we address the character of the young men, and
17 we do that partially through having a creed,
18 which is the last side in this presentation
19 that we'll look at.

20 Blazer and tie is how they are going to
21 present themselves; and each one of the young
22 men will have a mentor. We also have our
23 international focus in every learning
24 experience so when teachers plan using our
25 lesson plan template that it forces them to

1 think about how does this -- how does this
2 lesson for today align with something
3 international; college going culture and
4 character development and mentoring, as I
5 mentioned.

6 I want to take a moment out here to play a
7 video. We had a school in Denver, in Denver
8 Colorado, that existed for -- for three years,
9 and so I wanted to show you the video of what
10 we are bringing to Pine Bluff and what it
11 actually looks like.

12 So how do I play this?

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I think he will help
14 you.

15 MR. SIMS: Okay. All right.

16 (Playing video)

17 -- "national academy, where we are
18 engaging the world one young man at a time. We
19 are super excited to be Denver's first all-male
20 public charter school, and with that there are
21 some unique things that we bring to the table.
22 Be bring some very unique options for the
23 families of Denver who have young men in grades
24 6-12.

25 Our focus is on international studies,

1 using project-based hands-on learning. The
2 research tells us that boys like to interact
3 and engage in materials using their hands. How
4 many times have you seen your son around the
5 house breaking things apart, putting them back
6 together, not reading directions. Those are
7 things that boys naturally do and those are the
8 things that we capture in our school, in our
9 classrooms, in our hallways, with our teachers
10 are trained in that way.

11 There are three things that I would like
12 to focus on and talk to you about as it relates
13 to boys and how we educate boys. Let's start
14 quickly with instruction.

15 With instruction, we engage our young men
16 in project-based learning, which means that
17 they are allowed to interact with material,
18 they are allowed to learn standards using their
19 hands. As they learn they do. They are
20 allowed to make the mistakes in a very natural
21 and safe setting.

22 Number 2, environment. When you walk
23 through our doors the environment says, this is
24 a place for boys, with our wide hallways, with
25 our big classrooms, with our desks that are

1 shaped like triangles to promote project-based
2 learning. With our basketball goals on the
3 wall that allow for young men to throw their
4 trash away in a very natural manner and not get
5 in trouble. To the way they engage you, our
6 environment is such that you will know that our
7 young men are training for a world of success.

8 Number 3, culture. When you walk through
9 the doors of our building our culture is
10 undeniable. From the moment you walk in our
11 doors there is a quote on the wall that says,
12 "We're not here to teach young men how to make
13 a living but how to make a life," and when you
14 walk through the halls you will see that there
15 are lessons being taught on the walls of our
16 schools in addition to the lessons that are
17 being taught in the classrooms. We have
18 quotes, inspirational quotes on the wall.

19 If you walk through one of our classroom
20 doors you are guaranteed to be greeted by one
21 of our Fayola men in our coveted maroon blazers
22 and maroon and gold ties. And you may even see
23 a few gold tie wearers that are walking around
24 the campus as well. That's an indication that
25 those young men have demonstrated on a

1 consistent basis academic efficiency.

2 At Sims-Fayola our culture is that we
3 celebrate those who are reaching their goals
4 academically and we support and encourage those
5 who are getting there. That's what we do as
6 Fayola men.

7 At the end of the day our mission is to
8 graduate globally competent college-ready young
9 men who have the knowledge, the skills, and the
10 habits of mind to succeed in a 21st Century
11 in a global environment.

12 I hope you enjoyed our website. I welcome
13 you to come to one of our open houses that are
14 on our website, and we look forward to seeing
15 you and your son in the hallways and in the
16 doors of Sims-Fayola International Academy.

17 Go Spartans."

18 (Video stopped.)

19 MR. SIMS: So I thought that was important
20 for you to actually see what we're actually
21 bringing to -- bringing to Pine Bluff and what
22 it looks like when it's -- when it's
23 actualized.

24 So some of the academic supports -- now,
25 we know that our young men are going to walk in

1 the door two, three, and sometimes four grade
2 levels behind, and so it's important that we
3 have supports in place where we can support
4 them to get to where they need to get to go,
5 but also to track it so they are not surprised
6 when they take the State assessment.

7 And those supports are Fayola Academy, so
8 that's summer school. So at the beginning of
9 the school year we'll give every one of our
10 young men the NWEA MAP assessment, and as you
11 know guys know that MAP assessment projects a
12 grid score of where the kids should be. NWEA
13 MAP scores compare our kids' performance to how
14 they are performing to -- to young men across
15 the country and in the same grade.

16 So not only are we preparing kids and we
17 understand where they are as relates to their
18 competitors, competitiveness to students in
19 Arkansas and Pine Bluff, but we are ensuring
20 that when we produce young men who walk away
21 and graduate, that they are also competitive
22 amongst people who are across the country. And
23 so we will do that using the NWEA MAP
24 assessment and we'll use Odysseyware as our
25 differentiation tool to make sure that the

1 instruction meets kids where they are.

2 Academic support center in school, again
3 we'll us Odysseyware and a blended learning
4 approach. And where Odysseyware comes in for
5 academic support center, is every six weeks
6 we'll give our interim assessments and we go
7 through data analysis and -- and we develop
8 reteach plans, and those students who are not
9 still not at the 75 percent grade level or
10 efficiency level after the reteach and
11 reassessment, that they will have to go to
12 academic support center during the day.

13 And also Reading Gym. Now this directly
14 aligns with the R.I.S.E. Initiative for
15 Arkansas, in that we are making sure that we
16 are in alignment -- that, well our goal is
17 directly in alignment with increasing the
18 efficiency of the numbers of students who are
19 proficient in reading. And so we are looking
20 for those things that -- that feed into what
21 those things are, fluency sight words, phonetic
22 decoding, comprehension, and solid reading
23 fluency and -- and vocabularies. When you
24 think about what it takes to become a good
25 reader, when you drill down to the

1 microcomponents of what it takes to be a good
2 reader, those are the things that students
3 struggle with.

4 Assessments, summer diagnostics, again
5 we'll give the NWEA MAP assessment during the
6 summer. And if you look at that reading
7 battery there, that TOWRE, TOSCRF, and the
8 GDRT, those are those assessments, those
9 batteries that gets us through the silent
10 reading fluency, the comprehension, phonetic
11 awareness. Those are the assessments that will
12 allow us to drill down and see exactly where a
13 kids are so that we can develop individual
14 learning plans to -- to address those needs.

15 Interim assessments with analysis and
16 reteach. I mentioned earlier in our mission
17 that we are here developing college-ready
18 students, and what we find often as educators
19 is that students that graduate high school with
20 a 2.5 or 3.5 GPA and they will feel really good
21 about going to college, but when they get to
22 college find they have a significant gap, so
23 they end up spending money taking remediation
24 courses in the very beginning, reading,
25 English, and math, when those are the skills

1 they should have mastered and be able to be
2 taught in high school.

3 The gap comes from -- if you look at the
4 ACT college readiness standards, you will see
5 there's a significant gap between what states
6 usually require students to master and what
7 colleges require for students to be able to
8 sustain. Right? And so what we are doing is
9 we're taking the Arkansas Standards and we are
10 embedding the ACT College Readiness Standards
11 to a ACT score projection of 27. We're saying
12 that, you know, we're preparing our kids to
13 score 27 on the ACT. And we're taking those
14 standards that have gaps and we're putting
15 them -- we're putting them as a part of our
16 standards that we're teaching. So when our
17 teachers developed pacing guides, they are not
18 only tracking Arkansas standards, they have the
19 college readiness standards in there was well.

20 That will increase the likelihood that we
21 will prepare the students to walk into high
22 school being successful and that they will be
23 able to navigate high school curriculum and
24 that learning experience and then walk into
25 college successful as well.

1 Winter growth and assessments, so you see
2 we have the same assessments throughout the
3 year so that we can continue to track where
4 kids are reading as it relates to our goal of
5 having our kids to grow two or more years in --
6 in reading; but also having an understanding
7 of -- of where they are. And we have a heavy
8 focus on reading because we understand that
9 reading is the key to access all other
10 information. Students sometimes struggle with
11 math, and particularly word problems because of
12 the words, and they can't understand what the
13 words are saying and how to -- you know, how
14 to -- how to navigate the words within context,
15 then they totally miss the math problem even if
16 they understand the concept, even if they
17 understand what the math problem will
18 eventually is.

19 Here's our success in Denver. So I want
20 to focus on that, because even though the
21 school closed, that the school failed to stay
22 open but it didn't fail to make an impact. And
23 we can -- I can answer any questions about
24 that.

25 But look at our results. So in our first

1 year, we said our internal goal was two -- was
2 one and a half to two years of growth.

3 You will see we had 2.66 years of growth
4 in reading; 2.45 years in language math -- in
5 language usage; one and a half or a little less
6 than one and a half in mathematics. But 63 of
7 our young -- 63 percent of our young men who
8 entered in below grade level, they grew one
9 year or more in reading because of this intense
10 reading approach that we have.

11 64 percent of our young men who entered
12 below grade level grew one year or more in math
13 because of our blended learning approach and
14 adding programs like Khan Academy as a part of
15 our -- our platform.

16 Even -- let's drill down a little bit
17 more.

18 We talked about how our reading -- our
19 reading focus aligns with the Arkansas R.I.S.E.
20 Initiative. If you will look, you will see
21 sight word fluency, phonics decoding, silent
22 reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;
23 you will see the gains that we made from August
24 until May. 15.8 percent of our kids came in
25 proficient or at grade level at sight word

1 fluency. By May that increased to 75.3
2 percent, and that was using both the NWEA as --
3 as our guide to comparing how they are
4 competing across -- across the country, but
5 also those battery of scores that -- I mean
6 those battery of assessments that -- that we
7 talked about so. You can see that produced
8 some real -- some real gains there.

9 And if you will look at this chart, this
10 is directly from the Denver Public Schools and
11 also the college -- I mean the Colorado
12 Department of Education. You will see that for
13 growth, we exceeded in our high school every
14 category, and we -- and we met in -- in math.
15 If you go back to the previous slide or
16 previous two slides, you will see that math had
17 only 1.33 percent. If we would have met our
18 two years or more growth in goal -- goal in
19 growth there, we would have met that meets will
20 be exceed as well.

21 Now, let's dip down to status. When you
22 see status you see some red and does not meet.
23 We all know that our kids -- we had some kids
24 that come into Denver at 5 percent proficiency
25 in reading, 10 percent proficiency at reading,

1 so on the surface level that does look bad.
2 But when you think about do we have a program
3 that's moving kids in the right direction, the
4 top part of that -- the top part of this
5 diagram shows that we do, so we feel -- we felt
6 really good and still feel really good about
7 the mechanisms that we used to get kids to --
8 to exceed.

9 And now I'll say this and as a part of
10 the -- well, I'll keep going just for the sake
11 of time. I'm sure you will ask me some
12 questions about that.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Your -- excuse me, let
14 me stop this.

15 Your 20 minutes is actually up.

16 MR. SIMS: Okay.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So do you -- can you
18 bring that to a close? And if there is no one
19 in opposition, we can go ahead and give you the
20 additional five minutes.

21 MR. SIMS: Yeah, absolutely.

22 So what -- I'll just take -- I'll just
23 take it in the -- in the five minutes.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Yes, so there is
25 no one in opposition, so we'll go ahead and

1 give you five additional minutes --

2 MR. SIMS: Okay.

3 DR. PFEFFER: -- to finish up --

4 MR. SIMS: Okay. All right.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and anyone else that
6 needs to speak.

7 MR. SIMS: All right. Thank you.

8 So as far as preparing students for
9 college, we talked about our instruction is
10 aligned to the Arkansas college readiness
11 standards, so wouldn't need to focus any more
12 on that.

13 But culture, we talked about how culture
14 is just as important as academics, and if you
15 look at how we address culture in our -- in our
16 student management system or our discipline
17 system, which I don't like to use discipline
18 but more student management. We're more
19 corrective and reflective than punitive using
20 the restorative justice or restorative
21 communication techniques that most of the
22 country is adopting now. We are finding that
23 zero tolerance or zero sum game is leading to
24 increase of the student to prison pipeline,
25 especially for young men of color.

1 Classrooms named after countries, so when
2 you think about our international piece, we're
3 saying that instead of saying Ms. Smith's
4 class, we're saying that you are in Nigeria, so
5 we say, "Nigeria, will you please come to the
6 coliseum."

7 In addition to that, students will, if
8 they -- as part of our positive-based system,
9 our students will receive paychecks at the
10 beginning of every -- every week, and that
11 those paychecks will be in the currency of the
12 country of their -- of their homeroom.

13 So, for example, if Dedrick Sims is in
14 Nigeria, I will receive my paychecks in naira.
15 And so at the end of the week when it's time
16 to -- when we can go to the store to buy
17 things, I will have to learn to convert that
18 naira to the U.S. dollar. So we will be taking
19 a deep dive -- it allows us to take a deep dive
20 in understanding how international currency
21 will work as well.

22 So character lunches, two times a week we
23 will lead our young men in character lunches
24 that focus on our core values, which we will
25 talk about in a little bit. So not only do we

1 have this intentional focus on culture and
2 character, the character lunches will allow our
3 young men to understand what working lunches
4 look like.

5 Gold ties and lapel pins represent
6 achievement. You saw on the video that every
7 six weeks after we take interim assessments the
8 young men will come into the coliseum and it's
9 sort of like a graduation, students will be
10 called up to the front, and if they have
11 achieved growth in any one of the academic
12 subjects, that they will get a lapel pin placed
13 on their blazer. And so now it's not just a
14 certificate that they lose but it's a lapel pin
15 that causes conversation and they can show it
16 off proudly. And the dress code is a blazer
17 and tie dress code.

18 As far as competitive Spartan, student
19 clubs, you'll see we'll have chess club and
20 other subject -- subject clubs.

21 In Denver we had robotics, and I want to
22 take a few minutes here to show -- if we have a
23 few seconds to show that video so you can see
24 what the robotics look like.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You've got -- you've

1 got about three minutes.

2 MR. SIMS: Okay. This is a feature that
3 they did on us. We were one recipient of the
4 Verizon Innovative --

5 (Showing video)

6 "'How is this going to work?'

7 'It's the first question within all
8 engineering, really.'

9 'Trying to figure out why it's not
10 moving.'

11 'And when something doesn't work, you
12 rebuild, rewire, and reprogram until it does.'

13 'Because it's reversing we're going back
14 and making adjustments to the robotics to see
15 so we can make it --'

16 'These robotic students at Sims-Fayola
17 International Academy are piecing together
18 solutions and fixes to real world problems.'

19 'To pick up the materials that are our
20 objective, so that's with the plow will be used
21 for, to pick up inanimate objects.'

22 'Even when the engineering spins out of
23 control, the learning is still so far ahead of
24 the track, and it's happening as Sims-Fayola
25 teachers develop new ways to engineer that

1 technology into every classroom with the help
2 of a \$50,000 grant from the Verizon Innovative
3 Learning Schools Program.'

4 'You know, to see that future career path
5 or college path is what we're really working
6 towards.'

7 'Sims is just one of 24 U.S. schools to
8 receive the grant.'

9 'That's what I want to hear.'

10 'It provides two years of online
11 professional development to teachers like Bubba
12 Aragon.'

13 'It's a pretty exciting time to be a
14 teacher or a student.'

15 'Giving them new ideas on how to use those
16 or tablets or robots to help drive the
17 students' learning --'

18 'I want to be a robotic engineer when I
19 grow up.'

20 '-- and maybe help engineer the next Bill
21 Gates or Steve Jobs.'

22 'We're super thrilled about Verizon coming
23 through to assist us because it's an abundance
24 of knowledge and information, the interactive
25 games on solar photosynthesis and electricity.

1 I can spend less time with my lessons and focus
2 more time on getting these kids to understand
3 the content.'

4 'So ideally what we're creating are
5 students who are really well suited for future
6 college, future careers --'

7 'This is, like, their best subject out of
8 all of these classes in this school.'

9 'Science is pretty fun.'

10 '-- and not just because they have skills
11 but because they have a passion because we can
12 see themselves as being successful in those
13 areas and because they are really creative and
14 thinking innovatively about how to leverage
15 technology in what they are going to ultimately
16 do.'

17 'For DPS features, I'm Ben McKey.'"

18 (video stopped)

19 MR. SIMS: And so I wanted to show you a
20 way that we are tapping into career and
21 technical education as well and we want to
22 continue to have that focus on robotics and
23 STEM as well.

24 Parent support, we don't leave parents
25 out. We will have a School Accountability

1 Committee that's made up primarily of parents,
2 Spartan Parent Association, and then we'll also
3 reach our parents by doing monthly family
4 nights that help parents to understand how to
5 work with their boys.

6 And here's, at the end of the day, that we
7 believe this, this statement right here, is
8 that we believe that the males need to be
9 loved, guided, trusted, educated, and mentored
10 to become effective men, leaders, fathers, and
11 stewards in their lifetime.

12 So thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you for
14 your presentation.

15 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So let's move
17 into looking at the unresolved issues from the
18 application and also at our legal review.

19 And so if you will stay up here, we'll
20 have Ms. -- or Dr. Boyd and Ms. Hyatt kind of
21 question and you-all respond and if we have
22 additional questions we'll chime in.

23 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

24 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Dr. Pfeffer.

25 Alexandra Boyd, Director of Charter Unit.

1 So we had issues about -- remaining about
2 the governing structure, the length the terms
3 of the board members remain unclear. Could you
4 explain that to us?

5 MR. SIMS: Yes. So the Board terms are
6 three two-year terms, and each -- each
7 subsequent term is predicated on them
8 completing or satisfying qualifying actions.
9 Like they have to be at eight -- at least
10 80 percent of all board meetings; they have to,
11 you know, be at at least, you know, 80 percent
12 of all school -- school activities; they --
13 they have to meet their financial give or get
14 on the Board as well.

15 So there are some -- there are some things
16 that make sure that we have board members who
17 are engaged and not just on the Board just
18 because they want to be on a.

19 MS. HYATT: So I just wanted to piggyback
20 off of that.

21 In the waiver section, no waivers of the
22 Board of Directors and of the election sections
23 were requested. And just based on information
24 from your presentation and that question, I do
25 think you're going to need waivers in order to

1 have a board that is appointed rather than
2 elected, and to have terms set, set like that
3 and how you fill vacancies and that kind of
4 stuff. So I have a list of those that I may --
5 it's not on that sheet because it wasn't one
6 that was requested before, but we can go over
7 that. It's quite a few. And it's from the
8 6-13-101, et seq. kind of section, but at 608,
9 611, 613, 615, 616(a), 618, 620, 630, 631, 634,
10 and 612(c), and then 6-14-101, et seq., which
11 is the election law.

12 So if the Board is going to be appointed,
13 which I think it is, they will need -- I'll
14 just need confirmation that you intend to seek
15 those waivers as well

16 MR. SIMS: Let me ask a question

17 MS. HYATT: Yes, sir.

18 MR. SIMS: So when you say elected, are
19 you meaning, like, publicly elected --

20 MS. HYATT: Yes.

21 MR. SIMS: -- or can the sitting board --

22 MS. HYATT: No. It so the way it's set up
23 in the law is that a traditional public school
24 board is elected by the public --

25 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

1 MS. HYATT: -- and that these are the
2 rules for that and for filling vacancies and
3 length of term and size of the Board.

4 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

5 MS. HYATT: And so based on what you said,
6 I think you guys are planning to do something a
7 little different than that, so that --

8 MR. SIMS: Yeah. Yeah.

9 MS. HYATT: -- so these will be needed for
10 that.

11 MR. SIMS: We'll seek that, then.

12 MS. HYATT: Okay.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Panel, do you have any
14 questions then on the Board make up and any
15 kind of the waivers?

16 DR. WILLIAMS: No.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. All right.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. BOYD: Okay. Thank you.

20 Okay. Next, under same section, there was
21 concern because it appears as if the principal
22 would have the final decision in all financial
23 and personnel matters. Usually that's
24 something that's held by the Board at the
25 recommendation of the school leaders, so we had

1 concerns with that.

2 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So the principal would
3 have financial decisions up to a certain
4 threshold. So, for example, the principal
5 would be able to sign contracts and to sign
6 invoices up to a, say, \$15,000 threshold;
7 anything above that requires the principal and
8 the treasurer's signature.

9 MS. BOYD: And the personnel issue?

10 MR. SIMS: Now, the principal, that the
11 Board will hire the principal and that's the
12 board's only hire, the principal will have the
13 final decision on hiring and releasing any of
14 the staff.

15 MS. BOYD: Thank you for your
16 clarification.

17 MR. SIMS: All right.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Ms. Hyatt, anything --

19 MS. HYATT: And can I just get you to
20 clarify that you intend to have a fully
21 qualified business manager? Because no waivers
22 were sought for the business manager
23 qualifications.

24 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

25 So as the foundation or the sponsoring

1 entity, we will have that back office support,
2 and we will have our CFO Dora Sergeant, who
3 will be -- raise your hand, Dora -- who will be
4 the acting business manager and handle all the
5 financial transactions.

6 MS. HYATT: Okay. And so I guess my
7 question is more is she going to meet the
8 requirements of the ADE business manager
9 qualifications requirements?

10 MR. SIMS: Yes.

11 MS. BOYD: Thank you.

12 Do y'all have any questions about that?

13 All right. The next one is the scheduled
14 courses offered. We just need clarification
15 about Arkansas History, is it going to be a
16 stand alone or is it going to be embedded?

17 MR. SIMS: It's a stand alone course.
18 It's -- it will be taught as a semester course,
19 so stand alone.

20 MS. BOYD: Okay. Great.

21 And then it remains unclear that both
22 visual and performing arts will be offered.

23 MR. SIMS: Both visual and performance art
24 will be offered; it's actually in the -- in the
25 charter, so yes.

1 MS. BOYD: So -- okay. And then with
2 student services, there is a mention that the
3 Dean of Students will be responsible for making
4 sure that a number of social and emotional
5 needs of students were met; however in the
6 response to prompt C-13, where it outlined the
7 requirements and experience for the person to
8 hold that position, it didn't mention that --
9 that that would be a requirement.

10 MR. SIMS: Yeah. Let read what I -- what
11 I wrote here so that I will be able to
12 articulate it well.

13 I said, "Bullet three on the job
14 description of the dean is meant to be an
15 over-arching umbrella of social and emotional
16 needs among other things, that have highly
17 effective -- someone to have highly effective
18 interpersonal skills, which is on there; has to
19 be able to pick up on the nuances of a person's
20 social and emotional being, some people call
21 that having a high EQ or Emotional
22 Intelligence. But in addition to that, we
23 are -- I am a trained restorative justice and
24 restorative mediation trainer and so that dean
25 will get that -- will get that support. So

1 while that's not explicitly said in the job
2 description, it was assuming that if they had
3 highly -- you know, highly effective
4 interpersonal skills, that they would be able
5 to do that.

6 MS. BOYD: Thank you.

7 That's all we had with that, and I'll turn
8 it over to Mary Claire.

9 MS. HYATT: Thank you.

10 Okay. So this list is actually relatively
11 short.

12 There were some that I have added just
13 based on the presentation. So we'll just start
14 on No. 3, which is teacher and administrator
15 licensure.

16 So first, as I'm sure you're familiar with
17 now, just switching over to the new standards
18 rather than the old, so I'm going to read the
19 corresponding standards sections and I'll just
20 need you to confirm that. So rather than 15.02
21 and 15.03 of the standards it's now 4-D.1 for
22 teachers, 4-C.1 and 4-C.2 for principals, 4-B.2
23 for superintendents, 4-E.1 for guidance
24 counselors, and 4-F.1 for library media
25 specialist; and so those would be the

1 corresponding ones for that.

2 MR. SIMS: Yeah. I see that.

3 MS. HYATT: Can I just get you to confirm
4 you seek those?

5 MR. SIMS: Yes, yes, I seek those.

6 MS. HYATT: Okay. Thank you.

7 And I believe you will need a waiver of
8 4-B.1, which is the requirement that the
9 district employ a full-time superintendent,
10 because I don't think it's going to be employed
11 by the district. Instead I think it's the CMO.
12 Can you just --

13 MR. SIMS: Correct. I confirm that.

14 MS. HYATT: Okay. Okay. So that's 4-B.1.

15 My other question was whether you needed a
16 waiver of 6-13-109, which is superintendent
17 licensure.

18 MR. SIMS: And that one says?

19 MS. HYATT: That the superintendent has to
20 hold a valid Arkansas Administrator's License.

21 MR. SIMS: So the principal would act as
22 the final -- the top administrator of the
23 schools; there won't be a named superintendent.

24 MS. HYATT: So are you having a dean of
25 students or how is that working? Is the

1 principal the superintendent or --

2 MR. SIMS: Yeah. Well, will act in the
3 superintendent's role.

4 MS. HYATT: Okay. Is that person going to
5 have a superintendent's license?

6 MR. SIMS: If we could find one, but if I
7 need a waiver to protect myself, I'll seek the
8 waiver.

9 MS. HYATT: So if they are not going to
10 have a superintendent's license, then I would
11 suggest a waiver of 6-13-109. So if you could
12 just confirm.

13 MR. SIMS: I confirm that.

14 MS. HYATT: Okay. And then the last one
15 on this is the waiver request as it stands is
16 for 6-15-1004, which is the qualified teachers
17 in every class law. Only section(d) applies to
18 any type of prohibition that would prevent them
19 from having an unlicensed teacher teach a
20 class, so I believe only subsection (d) is
21 necessary, as the other sections just talk
22 about how teachers go about getting licenses.

23 MR. SIMS: I wish to seek that.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay. Thank you.

25 Okay. Moving down to No. 5 now, which is

1 Library Media and Technology. So the new
2 waiver sections are 4-F.1 for licensure and
3 4-F.2 for the ratio, and rather than the old
4 standards. So can I just get a confirmation
5 from you there?

6 MR. SIMS: Yes.

7 MS. HYATT: Okay. So 2-D.1, I'm just
8 going to tell you what it says rather than try
9 to do it by memory.

10 I just needed confirmation that you plan
11 on meeting the requirements of 2-D.1, which is
12 the Library Media Specialist Section about the
13 program; and all it requires is that you
14 annually budget and expend sufficient resources
15 to purchase and maintain an appropriate balance
16 of print, nonprint, and electronic media.

17 MR. SIMS: I do.

18 MS. HYATT: Okay. So no waiver of that is
19 necessary then.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Oh, can I pause there,
21 because I do have a question?

22 MS. HYATT: Yes, ma'am.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So you are not waiving
24 2-D.1; is that correct?

25 MS. HYATT: Correct.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

2 MS. HYATT: Also on library media, since
3 they have sought waivers of -- okay. They
4 actually have it here. Sorry. My -- my bad.

5 I wanted to just touch base on Alternative
6 Learning Environments, given the discussion
7 about your restorative justice and discipline
8 practices. No waivers were sought for
9 alternative learning environments, so I just
10 wanted you to confirm whether or not you
11 planned on following the Alternative Learning
12 Environments Rules and -- and Laws?

13 MR. SIMS: So because I'm -- I can't
14 recall them off the top of my head right now --

15 MS. HYATT: Okay.

16 MR. SIMS: -- could you give me more
17 context?

18 MS. HYATT: Sure. So 6-48-102 and 3
19 require the district to have an alternative
20 learning environment, which is an alternative
21 placement for students that have a need in
22 order to operate outside of the traditional
23 kind of school environment. It is a separate
24 placement, not a -- not services within the
25 traditional classroom. And then the other

1 rules that kind of follow that require the
2 same.

3 MR. SIMS: Yeah, I do -- I do request a
4 waiver for that. We feel like our program will
5 satisfy the needs of those students.

6 MS. HYATT: Okay. So I'm just going to
7 tell you what those would be, 6-48-102 and 3,
8 6-15-1005(b)(5), 6-18-503(a)(1)(c), and Section
9 4 of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules
10 Governing the Distribution of Special Needs
11 Funds. So those would be it to effectuate
12 that.

13 I didn't catch any others, but if I do
14 during the questioning, I'll make sure and
15 bring them to your attention.

16 MR. SIMS: Can I make a point?

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And -- well, if you
18 wait just a moment.

19 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Does anyone on the
21 Panel wish to comment on the addition of a
22 waiver from ALE, Alternative Learning
23 Environment, since that's kind of a -- it's
24 something new that's been added, that's kind of
25 a big thing, but also in line with what we

1 heard in the presentation and the structure and
2 make up of the school, it does seem that -- I
3 can understand why they would be requesting
4 that. But any -- any comments or questions
5 from the Panel on that?

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: So just have a general
7 question, you know, kind of as we're -- we're
8 going or we're hearing, you know, things that
9 come up for a waiver and/or needing additional
10 waivers. And when I look at the list of
11 waivers that are requested, there are not very
12 many, which is, you know, not a good thing, not
13 a bad thing. But I guess what is the -- the
14 process for as -- because we don't really know
15 as you're operating this school where we're
16 going to find what you're doing maybe violate
17 the standards, so will they get a standard
18 violation or would they come back for a waiver
19 or an amendment or how does that look in our
20 new process?

21 MS. HYATT: I'm going to give that to
22 Alexandra.

23 MS. BOYD: Thank you. That's a great
24 question, Dr. Hernandez.

25 So with the new Standards for

1 Accreditation system that's going to start in
2 October where we're going to be checking the
3 accreditation status monthly of all schools, I
4 think that will help us to identify some areas
5 of need and to either go in and provide
6 technical assistance to help schools get into
7 compliance or identify a way and where the
8 programming may not permit for the school to
9 get in compliance and suggest that they come
10 forward and seek an amendment request.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And -- and I
13 believe you were wanting to make a comment. I
14 apologize.

15 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

16 I would like, on Page 16 and 17, I hope
17 mine line up, the pages -- Pages 16 and 17 and
18 18.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You're on your
20 application?

21 MR. SIMS: Yes. On the application under
22 the -- the goals, the measurable goals. If you
23 notice, that's a lot of goals there. And but
24 what we would -- we do realize that our
25 ultimate goal is to satisfy the ACT Aspire

1 requirements. But I want to note that we are
2 absolutely serious about understanding where
3 kids are at all times and making sure that our
4 internal metrics will allow us to project
5 that -- that -- those goals and that success.
6 And so when you see that NWEA assessments on
7 one page and when you see the Fountis and
8 Pinnell reading assessments, those are internal
9 to us. I put them on here just to be
10 transparent, but those are internal to us, so
11 you can see how we are tracking towards making
12 sure our kids are -- you know, moving two or
13 more grade levels and move each cohort
14 15 percent every year after the baseline.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I think we --
16 we finished with the -- the legal review and --
17 and questions. So, Panel, at this time, if you
18 have questions related to the application,
19 we'll go ahead and do those.

20 And we'll just start down here and go down
21 the row. Dr. Kremers?

22 DR. KREMERS: I would be interested if you
23 looked at other models that are similar that
24 have already operated in Arkansas at one point,
25 and especially an all male school for the

1 middle levels, and if you've kind of looked at
2 that model and maybe why they have challenges
3 and what your plan was to implement it a little
4 bit differently.

5 MR. SIMS: Yeah, I did. I've taken a look
6 at some models here, the particular one that
7 closed as well as some other models around the
8 country, and what I find, as I mentioned
9 earlier, sometimes schools will look to serve a
10 single gender model but not put the research
11 behind what it takes, how boys learn, and so
12 the professional development and all the
13 support for teaches mirror what happens in a
14 traditional schools, the instructional
15 strategies is not different, the brain based
16 research behind how boys actually learn is not
17 different, it's merely separating boys from
18 girls, so you tend to get the same thing.

19 So when you look at schools that have been
20 successful, for example, Eagle Academy in New
21 York, and you look at Boys Latin School in
22 Philadelphia, those schools have been very
23 successful because of their ability to
24 understand how boys learn and interact with the
25 world and to make sure their teachers are

1 supported that way.

2 DR. KREMERS: My second question is, you
3 may have stated it, but what -- what was the
4 reason the Denver school closed?

5 MR. SIMS: So I put together -- so there
6 was a couple of reasons, there is no one reason
7 why our school failed.

8 It was a balance between not -- well,
9 underestimating the kind of teacher that was
10 needed for -- especially the -- especially the
11 middle school level. It was a new school in
12 Denver, a new concept. They -- they never had
13 a single-gender boys school, so when all the
14 boys came together, the kind of teacher that I
15 was initially looking for is someone who had
16 international experience and someone who could
17 bring some authenticity to the school as it
18 relates to the international feel. I was
19 successful in getting that kind of a teacher,
20 but underestimated the other skills that they
21 needed to deal with them, in an urban
22 environment of over 200 boys. And so,
23 consequently, we were more successful in the
24 high school, which is the result that you see
25 on the presentation; but inside the charter you

1 see I included both the middle school and the
2 high school information. We had better success
3 in the high school because the model was
4 implemented better in the high school; the
5 safety and supports happened more consistently;
6 we happened to get the teacher that was needed.
7 And so moving forward we said, "Look, let's
8 really zero in on the teachers who are
9 successful here and what characteristics and
10 qualities they brought to the table that we
11 could use to -- to do the middle school." So
12 that was -- that was one component.

13 The second component was -- was just a
14 mistake on my part. As a new founder I was
15 really ambitious about opening other schools,
16 and so we had success in year one and I just
17 felt that we were on our way and I started to
18 focus on Atlanta and other schools. And the
19 Board really didn't have the capacity to do --
20 to kind of govern the school without my
21 continual support. The -- the leadership team
22 that I hired, again, just -- we all felt too
23 good about what we did year one and we just
24 started seeing things just kind of -- kind of
25 fall apart.

1 I had lost focus on the Board, which is
2 some of the -- some of the lessons that I
3 brought into last year with opening Southeast
4 Arkansas Preparatory High School. I lost focus
5 on the Board, the Board had started to revert
6 back to what they knew, and that was
7 traditional public school, and so some of the
8 vision of the school got lost and they started
9 to bring on board members who were more versed
10 in traditional schools rather than
11 understanding what a Charter School does and
12 the authority that a Charter School has. And
13 I -- I kind of -- just I lost control of it and
14 so that was a mistake on my part. And I think
15 those are the two things that really brought
16 the school -- really brought the school down.

17 Now, when the school closed, I was not
18 even part of it. I stepped away to build the
19 foundation. The foundation was always meant
20 to -- to serve the school, to serve the school
21 and provide that 360 degree support from the
22 socio-emotional standpoint and also fund
23 raising and bringing in moneys for parents who
24 couldn't afford the uniforms and being able to
25 provide opportunities for the students to

1 travel overseas.

2 So I stepped away from that because
3 ultimately the Board had the contract, they had
4 the fiduciary responsibility with DPS, and so
5 they exercised their right to -- to want to run
6 the school the way they wanted to run the
7 school and, you know, even at my caution they
8 did that and -- and made some decisions that
9 were kind of fatal for the school.

10 And so it was -- it was kind of sad to
11 watch them fall. And but I take responsibility
12 for my part and that was a learning experience
13 for me.

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Just the -- to follow up.
15 The governance was a major issue on my end as I
16 listened to you. And there is -- actually I
17 have two parts. I always listen to the
18 governance, I always want to know what's
19 actually happening in the classroom too, so you
20 really didn't -- you didn't cover that part
21 yet.

22 But on the governance side, how is
23 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High School
24 doing?

25 MR. SIMS: It's fine. We opened up on

1 Monday, have smiling kids walking in the door,
2 fully staffed, the building is ready to go and
3 everything is fine.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So since that school
5 is just opening, you don't think you're making
6 the same mistake that you made in Denver? And
7 I say it because you just brought it up.

8 MR. SIMS: Yeah. No.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: I had no idea it was all
10 connected until now.

11 MR. SIMS: No. You know, I really don't
12 because it's in the same city, and when I was
13 trying to expand the Sims-Fayola model, which
14 is the -- we were -- we were the sponsoring --
15 we were the supporting entity for Southeast
16 Preparatory High School. We designed it and
17 all of that type of deal. But Sims-Fayola,
18 that -- Sims-Fayola in Pine Bluff will be in
19 Pine Bluff with Southeast Arkansas Preparatory.
20 The issue with Denver, though, was I was
21 leaving Denver, going to Georgia, going to
22 Detroit, and -- and trying to -- to start teams
23 there, so I lost focus on there.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Which leads me to the next
25 question. Where are you based now?

1 MR. SIMS: Well, I'm still based in Denver
2 but, I'm in -- I'm in Pine Bluff a lot.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

4 MR. SIMS: I haven't been home in the last
5 month.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Now I'm going to
7 tell, now we're kind of going down this road
8 and I see a lot of those things that you just
9 talked about in Denver happening here in
10 Arkansas: Starting another school very
11 quickly, you're not based in the same city in
12 which -- everything you just talked about in
13 talking about Denver is kind of mirroring
14 what -- what's here in Arkansas. But I'm going
15 to just -- I'm just laying that out there.
16 It's not either --

17 MR. SIMS: Can I -- can I speak to that a
18 little bit?

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, you know.

20 MR. SIMS: So again, one of our major
21 components of the Denver failure or the Denver
22 school closing was I -- I lost my eye on the
23 prize in terms of being there. That's not the
24 case, I don't have a plan to open a school the
25 year after, year after. I learned from that

1 lesson and this is the focus, focus now.

2 If I told you that I was going to open up,
3 you know, two more schools in the next two
4 years, I think that would be a valid concern,
5 but that's not the concern.

6 And Pine Bluff is my hometown so I'll
7 spend a lot of time there.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: You say Pine Bluff is your
9 hometown?

10 MR. SIMS: I grew up in Pine Bluff and I
11 am from Pine Bluff.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: And so -- okay. I'm
13 just -- but you're still based out of Denver,
14 though?

15 MR. SIMS: My house is in Denver, as my
16 neighbors will tell you.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

18 MR. SIMS: It's a storage unit.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. The other piece is
20 just the general governance process. But, you
21 know, I'm hearing that the principal is the
22 final decision maker?

23 MR. SIMS: So the principal is the final
24 decision maker in regards to personnel.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Personnel?

1 MR. SIMS: So he has the autonomy to lead.
2 And most performance charter schools have that
3 model.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: So what is the role of the
5 Board?

6 MR. SIMS: So the Board is to govern and
7 to set policies, and their only hire is the --
8 is the principal. So they evaluate the
9 principal and the principal hires and evaluates
10 the staff.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. They don't -- I
12 guess I'm missing a check and balance system.

13 MR. SIMS: Financially?

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Well, actually, overall
15 governance from a policy standpoint. You know,
16 for -- you know, in most cases the school board
17 approves all contracts, you know, even the
18 hiring of -- of contracts.

19 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So even with the
20 Southeast Arkansas model that you guys approved
21 last year that wasn't the case. The -- the
22 principal hires and fires all the staff so he
23 has the autonomy to be able to see --

24 DR. WILLIAMS: So who does the principal
25 report to?

1 MR. SIMS: The Board. The principal
2 reports to the Board.

3 Now, if the principal is going to release
4 someone then, you know, a smart principal
5 would, and the principal is going to be
6 worth --

7 DR. WILLIAMS: So there is no -- if the
8 principal is going to release someone, there is
9 no due process for the person?

10 MR. SIMS: Yes. There is due process in
11 place, but it doesn't include the Board.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Say it does or does not
13 include the Board?

14 MR. SIMS: It does not include the Board
15 unless the -- unless the personnel files a
16 grievance, then there is a grievance policy,
17 grievance procedure in place.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Hmm.

19 MR. SIMS: But I --

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right.

21 MR. SIMS: -- I mean I hear what you're
22 saying, but charter -- but most high performing
23 charter schools or charter school give the
24 autonomy to the principal to be able to hire
25 and fire their staff. Right? And that -- and

1 the principal is the only hire of the board.

2 You have Kip Model is the same; the
3 Achieve First Model is the same, all the high
4 performing models, that's how it works.

5 In a traditional school system, you're
6 right, the Board does kind of help the
7 principal negotiate contracts and approve that,
8 but that's not the case in most charter
9 schools.

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

11 DR. OWOH: Thank you.

12 Read your application and -- and then, of
13 course, the history of the school in Denver.

14 So I have similar questions but more so on
15 the staff part of it.

16 MR. SIMS: Okay.

17 DR. OWOH: It was noted that the decline
18 or the challenges at the Denver school was
19 based upon the inconsistent leadership and high
20 staff turnover. A lot of that high staff
21 turnover was due to poor training, poor
22 support, no mentoring for new teachers,
23 teachers not feeling support because of the
24 long day. And so my question is, with this
25 proposal that you have before us, what are you

1 going to do differently to not repeat these
2 same issues as it pertains to staff?

3 MR. SIMS: So you read the Chalk Talk
4 article; the article, they reached out to me
5 several times to respond to and I chose not to
6 respond to it because it was -- it came from a
7 place of attacking.

8 And I'll tell you -- and I'll read what I
9 have here, what I wrote down because I knew
10 this question was coming.

11 So the lessons we learned are the lessons
12 that we bring to Sims-Fayola of Pine Bluff.
13 Our hiring focus is on teachers that have
14 significant experience with urban students,
15 have demonstrated grit, personal
16 responsibility, resourcefulness and also
17 achievement.

18 Our teaching development model includes
19 significant professional development time three
20 weeks prior to school starting for three weeks,
21 significant support with instructional
22 strategies that are best practices for young
23 men, the implementation of peer-to-peer
24 support -- more -- more peer-to-peer support,
25 more effective behavior supports for our Dean

1 of Students, and significant equity training.

2 Our student supports as it relates to
3 behavior, includes the use of restorative
4 justice, mediation protocols, peer mentoring,
5 social, emotional, and wrap around services,
6 and in-house development of character,
7 education, and core values that we call Failure
8 101, which is -- it's actually called the
9 Empowerment Ambition and Youth Development
10 Program that we developed and we support
11 schools around the country with that now.
12 That's required of all of our young men for the
13 first two years.

14 So when the school started to fail, the
15 people that were brought in by the Board to --
16 to take over the school or to work -- work with
17 the school had their own opinions about how
18 things should go. And they felt that -- that
19 the day was too long, when charter schools
20 regularly have extended day and extended time,
21 but was a person who came from a very
22 traditional school system that had just left a
23 school that released at two o'clock and we got
24 out at 4:15 so she felt as though it was -- it
25 was too long of a day.

1 The teacher -- some of the teachers who
2 were the loudest also said it was too long of a
3 day and aligned with her, so those are the
4 people who were, unfortunately, interviewed
5 by -- by Chalk Talk.

6 (Mr. Wilson left the room.)

7 MR. SIMS: That was in no way consensus of
8 everyone who was involved with the school and
9 subsequent years have shown that. If you were
10 in Denver the conversation has changed very
11 much. What was said then is, you know, doesn't
12 ring as loud as it -- as it did then.

13 So I am still very confident in the model
14 and the supports that the teachers get, and the
15 first year results showed that

16 DR. OWOH: Well, and -- and I understand
17 that it may be the opinion or the views of a
18 small group, but that's perception.

19 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

20 DR. OWOH: And as we look at recruitment
21 for this proposal or proposed school --

22 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

23 DR. OWOH: -- then to me other educators
24 or potential educators who may seek employment
25 may have those concerns, and so I -- and that's

1 really what stemmed my questions.

2 Because if the support isn't there, I
3 mean, they could have the capacity of an
4 effective teacher and have all of the capacity
5 in these other areas that you outline, but if
6 they are not consistently supported and
7 developed, then there is going to be an
8 opportunity for decline or a decrease in
9 capacity. And we also know that effective
10 educators need that effective leadership
11 support as well, and if we're not continuing
12 developing those individuals, then there is
13 going to be a shift in student learning. And
14 so I still haven't heard on how those key
15 individuals, those key roles, people who are
16 filling those roles are going to continue to be
17 supported and developed throughout the year so
18 that they are able to meet the needs of -- of
19 the students who may come with challenging
20 needs.

21 And based on your application, you know,
22 you have project-based learning but that's one
23 of the most important or most significant
24 aspects that was talked about in that article,
25 that you -- you touted that school was going to

1 have project-based learning but the teachers
2 did not receive ongoing training so they didn't
3 know how to really implement that strategy,
4 those strategies or initiatives efficiently or
5 effectively. And so that's a concern to me
6 that you're going to -- that you propose to
7 bring those same initiatives and supports to
8 this school but you have, based on the article,
9 based on the teachers, you have a history of
10 not supporting those initiatives that you
11 mention in your proposal today.

12 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So I understand that,
13 but let me -- that -- that's not true.

14 We have built into our program over 60
15 days of professional development for teachers.
16 Every Wednesday teachers have professional --
17 professional development built around our big
18 buckets, and those big buckets are
19 project-based learning, single-gender
20 instruction, and making sure that we -- and --
21 and differentiated blended learning.

22 If you look at our calendar that was a
23 part of the application you will see that they
24 have those supports. Three weeks prior to
25 school those supports are there, and also

1 through -- throughout the year.

2 (Mr. Wilson returned to the room.)

3 MR. SIMS: The people that we used in
4 Denver to support project-based learning was
5 the Buck Institute, and Buck Institute is
6 nationally known for their work around
7 project-based learning, specifically the
8 consultant we used was Tim -- was Tim Cubic
9 from Cubic Perspectives, and so I have a number
10 of invoices that will show -- to show that the
11 teachers did receive that, that support. And
12 that same support will -- will be here.

13 Again, I -- what you -- what you read in
14 the Chalkbeat article is, you know, very, very
15 opinionated. If you take -- and, you know, I
16 don't want to get into credibility of -- of
17 Chalkbeat because that's -- that's not
18 important. But it's unfortunate again that,
19 you know, a few people were able to make the
20 article, but I assure you that there are
21 significant supports in place for that to
22 happen.

23 DR. OWOH: Just think it's always
24 important and when you know that that side is
25 going to be told and that you take the

1 opportunity to tell your story as well so that
2 it's heard and -- and unfortunately it wasn't
3 told and the information I shared was what
4 was -- what's out there.

5 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

6 DR. OWOH: Those are all my questions.
7 Thank you.

8 MR. SIMS: I understand that. But I will
9 assure you that there -- that there is
10 significant support in place. As a matter of
11 fact it's the same supports that are in place
12 for Southeast Arkansas Preparatory School, and
13 that principal is getting support from me,
14 which is one of the reasons why I'm here, in
15 addition to this. I'm here every -- every
16 second week of the month for the entire week to
17 provide support. We Skype every two weeks --
18 well, Zoom technology to give supports as well.
19 And then I have consultants that come into the
20 school as well to train on STEM and other
21 aspects of that.

22 So that's important, that support, that
23 support is here and that will be a part of this
24 model.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And before I move on, I

1 think some of my thoughts were somewhat aligned
2 with what Dr. Owoh said. That we actually
3 heard yesterday from a previous charter that
4 had operated a middle level school in Pine
5 Bluff that one of the challenges that they
6 faced was students beginning in the school
7 several grade levels behind and, you know,
8 trying to spend that time to catch up. And I
9 realize that -- that you've -- you've got a
10 different design than what that was, we do know
11 that. But I think what we -- what we want to
12 hear is what are those things that really will
13 be put into place so that we know that students
14 who do come in who are going to be
15 significantly behind, that there is that
16 knowledge and expertise, that structure in
17 place for them to accelerate, to catch up, to
18 even exceed, so that they are moving forward
19 and are really, really ready for high school.
20 And I think maybe what we've not necessarily
21 heard is what would you do differently now,
22 after having an experience in Denver where, you
23 know, maybe there were issues with teacher
24 training or just capacity or -- and you have
25 talked about being more present, more stability

1 with the leadership. You talked about having
2 the -- the half day on Wednesdays for the
3 professional development.

4 But another piece that I had questions
5 about when I read, because you did talk so much
6 about the reading and the importance of
7 reading, and a lot of your measures aligned
8 with reading, is whether or not you've really
9 grasped the whole Science of Reading approach
10 to teaching reading and the requirements of
11 Arkansas' Right to Read Act.

12 I didn't see where -- under dyslexia,
13 where -- where you're really talking about the
14 dyslexia interventionist and a dyslexia
15 program.

16 So I think those are some things that I
17 would -- I would like for you to speak on a
18 little bit, whether you're -- whether you've
19 made some decisions there or what is your plan
20 to ensure that these students are going to have
21 a really, really strong instruction for --

22 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- for reading and
24 teachers really prepared for that.

25 MR. SIMS: Thank you for the question.

1 The data that I showed reflected the
2 students making significant gains in -- in
3 reading, and that was because of the structure
4 that we have -- that we had in place. And that
5 structure specifically will be that students
6 will have three touches of literacy per day.
7 Each day we'll start off with what we call our
8 reading gems. And our reading gems are
9 informed and based on those reading battery of
10 assessments the TOWRE, the TOSCRF, TCRF, which
11 also speaks and -- it speaks to students with
12 dyslexia.

13 If you look at dyslexia and some of the
14 progress monitoring tools that schools use in
15 order to identify students with dyslexia but
16 also implement to help move them forward and
17 navigate text, those three batteries
18 assessments are -- are mentioned.

19 So to have that reading -- reading zone at
20 the beginning of the day, they will have a
21 language class, and they will also have a
22 reading writing class as well to continue to
23 drill down on those subskills of sight -- of
24 sight -- of fluency, sight words, and
25 vocabulary and comprehension. They will have

1 that time to drill down on that as well in
2 addition to a separate writing piece that feeds
3 into reading called the Collins -- the Collins
4 Writing Project.

5 The teachers will have the supports to
6 implement that through those half days every --
7 every six weeks, in addition to our data
8 analysis day that happens every six weeks as --
9 as well. And the students will have the
10 blended learning platform with the Odysseyware
11 and some other programs that will help them to
12 continue to get those results that we got in
13 Denver.

14 That's one of the reasons why I
15 highlighted the components of our model that
16 deal directly with reading, to reassure you and
17 to show the data that I do understand the
18 importance of reading and here are the
19 components that we've put in place in order to
20 make sure that kids -- kids get that, get that
21 support and that teachers get that support as
22 well.

23 In regards to professional development,
24 our professional development is centered just
25 around those big components of our model, and

1 we're not trying to be everything to everybody,
2 but we're trying to be good at what it is that
3 we focus on, and so reading is a part of that,
4 and -- and that's why I put it there.

5 We were using the Fountis and Pinnell
6 system as well that that addresses reading.

7 Our kids, during that reading zone part,
8 will be divided into three groups: Aspire,
9 Ascend, and -- it's Aspire, Ascend, and Lip
10 Service. So students who need that support in
11 foundational reading components, like phonetic
12 awareness and decoding and sight words and
13 being able to identify words will be in our
14 Aspire group.

15 The Ascension group will be kids who need
16 more support around reading comprehension and
17 maybe some silent reading fluency.

18 And then our Lip Service will be students
19 who are at grade level or above, it's more
20 about comprehension, putting -- putting text
21 together to produce new products.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

23 MR. SIMS: Okay.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez?

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: Just -- just some

1 questions around the budget.

2 So I'm looking at the -- this may go back
3 to Dr. Williams' governance and how the
4 day-to-day function goes through the principal.

5 Can you tell me a little bit about the CMO
6 fee? I see the total is reflecting around
7 95,000, and I'm on the budget section where the
8 CMO fee is identified. And so there is one
9 large item within that CMO fee, that's
10 professional development. So does that --

11 MR. SIMS: Yeah, that's the flying in,
12 that's us coming in, bringing in consultants,
13 being here to give that professional
14 development, the curriculum alignment also, and
15 also assessment development.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. And so as far as
17 the -- the day-to-day operations of -- of
18 making payroll, doing all the things that --
19 paying bills, all those things that need to be
20 done, that's not a function of the CMO part of
21 it, is it?

22 MR. SIMS: It is. That's the back office
23 support that you see for 35. We actually have
24 adjusted that to 40, so that's us as well.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: So up in the earlier

1 budget there is a Business Manager also, a
2 salary?

3 MR. SIMS: Yeah, that's an adjustment as
4 well. So it's adjusted here on my paper, that
5 position goes away, so that's part of --

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. No business
7 manager, all business is going to be --

8 MR. SIMS: And that's would be one --
9 that's part of the changes that have been made
10 since the submission of the charter until now.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Then as far as the
12 salary relating to the principal, and what I
13 heard you describe earlier is the person is
14 going to be kind of autonomous to deal with
15 personnel and day-to-day functional part of the
16 school, and I just -- I wonder about the -- the
17 salary range that's listed there. Do you feel
18 fairly confident that you will be able to
19 get -- because don't want to have the same
20 issue that you've had before.

21 MR. SIMS: Yeah, absolutely.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so the kind of person
23 that's going to need to -- to do a lot of those
24 things is going to have to be a pretty unique
25 and talented individual, I would suspect. And

1 so given the area and things like that, do you
2 feel confident that you would be able to get
3 somebody in that range?

4 MR. SIMS: So, yeah. Let me step back for
5 a second and say that our focus for the
6 principal is to hire someone who -- our is an
7 instructional leader, not a building manager,
8 and so that's why the CMO takes a lot of the
9 operational pieces. And so that person that's
10 a principal can be a former dean of academics,
11 could have been a former instructional coach
12 who is probably not at that salary.

13 These salaries are based on our experience
14 of these roles in Pine Bluff and in Pine Bluff
15 charter schools particular. We wanted to be
16 competitive with -- with those. We were able
17 to get over 25 principal candidates for
18 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory at that same --
19 at that same salary range, and so we feel
20 pretty comfortable that we will be able to get,
21 you know, a very similar pool of people.

22 And we had some highly qualified people
23 who were -- who were from Pine Bluff, but also
24 from Houston, and Baltimore, and as well as New
25 Orleans to apply for that position. So I feel

1 confident that that's a competitive salary
2 range for -- for Pine Bluff for what we're
3 looking for; for someone who is really focused
4 and has the knowledge and skills around
5 instruction and driving instruction, so yes.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. And then the other
7 part is you've got a line item in there for
8 facilities at \$60,000. Have you located or
9 there -- right now it says still to be
10 determined, but have you --

11 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So, no, we have not
12 located a facility to -- to just kind of zero
13 in. We wanted to wait until we get through
14 this process, but we have identified some
15 sites, and talking to some people who -- who
16 own those sites, that's a -- that's a good
17 number. That's a good number.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

19 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: And then kind of my last
21 question was around your goals. You set a goal
22 about increasing the readiness benchmark by
23 15 percent and then 15 percent year after.
24 Have you looked at other districts and what
25 their increases have been over the last three

1 years to make a determination about if that
2 15 percent jump is a -- is a reasonable goal?

3 MR. SIMS: It is. We used the same
4 measure for Southeast, and it's based on what
5 we've seen happen. Based on what we've seen
6 happen around Arkansas, we felt that that's
7 pretty safe and doable.

8 After we get our best -- our baseline,
9 moving kids 15 percent for -- I mean increasing
10 the number of students who are making or
11 exceeding by 15 percent is -- is a -- is
12 definitely a reasonable number.

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. That's it.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson?

15 MR. WILSON: Is there communication
16 between you and your team and the Pine Bluff
17 School District regarding this application?

18 MR. SIMS: We've reached out; we've
19 reached out to Pine Bluff, Watson Chapel, White
20 Hall, as well as Dollarway. We've made it
21 clear that we're not looking to be competition,
22 we're just looking to be an additional tool for
23 the families in the Pine Bluff area.

24 MR. WILSON: I want you to be a loyal
25 opposition and a cooperating competitor --

1 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

2 MR. WILSON: -- in that respect.

3 Tell me about the public hearing that you
4 had in April, you had 25 or so people there, it
5 seems. What other interest besides that group
6 that was there are you receiving in the -- from
7 the public, from --

8 MR. SIMS: Well, I will tell you this,
9 people are -- have started to call. As a
10 matter of fact we had about four parents come
11 to the Southeast Arkansas Preparatory office to
12 sign up for the Sims-Fayola, and so we thought
13 that was kind of funny. So we hope it's a
14 premonition for what's going to happen.

15 But we have had several interest meetings
16 since then. We had another one on June 19 as
17 well, we had a similar number to show up there.
18 We have continued to engaged the public through
19 social media as well. We've started to develop
20 a community database of over 400 people who
21 signed up to be a part of our -- our list serve
22 to -- to get our information. We consistently
23 send out information to them, so we -- we're
24 consistently engaging them because that --
25 that's key. Right? Once you, you know, like

1 if the approval happens, being able to have the
2 public to say, I want this, I want this
3 opportunity or I want this opportunity for my
4 kid is -- it's key. And I know from experience
5 that if you don't get that, that's trouble, and
6 so it's been very intentional to -- to keep
7 them engaged.

8 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Panel, any
10 remaining application questions that you noted
11 from your review?

12 DR. KREMERS: I have another question. I
13 noticed on the grievance policy that's written
14 in the application, it looks like it addresses
15 grievance -- grievance policy for students. I
16 didn't see one for staff.

17 MR. SIMS: You are correct, this is the
18 one for students.

19 There is one for staff but it's not in
20 here, but it's a very similar process. So if a
21 staff issue has -- if a staff has an issue
22 with -- with the principal, if it's a Title IX,
23 then the business manager will serve as the
24 Title IX officer. If it's any other issue,
25 that they do have the ability to go to that

1 same officer who will project the -- the
2 problem to the principal, if it's about the
3 principal. All right. But if it's not, then
4 it goes directly to the principal and if the
5 principal can't handle it and if they need
6 additional guidance, then the principal will go
7 to the Board to seek -- to seek support and
8 guidance.

9 DR. KREMERS: I think the governance is
10 still a piece that's a concern. It talks about
11 the business manager. You said you are -- you
12 are changing that now to eliminate that? Is
13 that going to be a --

14 MR. SIMS: No. So we -- the initial
15 budget included a business -- an on-site
16 business manager.

17 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

18 MR. SIMS: And so that has been removed
19 because we will take on that role. And so our
20 CFO will serve as the business manager for --
21 for the school. So we removed that from the
22 budget because those fees are included in the
23 CMO fee.

24 DR. KREMERS: But because the role as a
25 business manager also in your application

1 speaks to that person's role in advocating for
2 policy and procedure; so then does the CFO also
3 then become the advocator of the policy and
4 procedure advocacy?

5 MR. SIMS: As it relates to financial
6 matter, but they do have an input into it, like
7 advocating and making suggestions and --

8 DR. KREMERS: Because the business
9 manager's role was advocacy for policy and
10 procedure otherwise.

11 MR. SIMS: For finances?

12 DR. KREMERS: Otherwise than finances. It
13 appears that the business manager's role --

14 MR. SIMS: Where? Could you direct that
15 to me -- direct me to that?

16 DR. KREMERS: Sorry, I've been scrolling
17 through the document quite a bit so I'm trying
18 to go back to the -- it's where you've listed
19 the function of the business manager and
20 salary.

21 Okay. It looks like it's Page 48 is what
22 is pulling up on my laptop, Page 48. I don't
23 know if that corresponds to your page number.

24 MR. SIMS: It does.

25 And so advocate for all policies,

1 procedures, and communication across the school
2 committee to drive successful student outcomes;
3 the implication there is that it's financial,
4 so not -- not other policies as it relates to
5 anything other than financial.

6 DR. KREMERS: So who would oversee that?

7 MR. SIMS: Would oversee?

8 DR. KREMERS: Nonfinancial, policies and
9 procedure advocacy?

10 MR. SIMS: The Board. I mean the Board is
11 the entity that drives policy. The principal
12 can also make recommendations as to policy, but
13 the Board ultimately adopts that and makes that
14 decision.

15 Does that answer your question?

16 DR. KREMERS: Yes.

17 MR. SIMS: Okay. Thank you.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: From a -- what's going to
19 happen in a classroom, you know, that -- just
20 in looking at a previous school, kids are
21 coming in behind.

22 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: What's going to happen in
24 the classroom to get them up to -- to get them
25 on grade level?

1 MR. SIMS: Part of -- part of -- part of
2 the gap for traditional public schools
3 having -- having -- and I say the gap of making
4 sure the kids get from -- you know, close that
5 gap is that the -- the deficiency has been
6 around the teacher planning. All right?
7 Teachers tend not to plan to the level that the
8 students are required to -- to perform as
9 relates to depth of knowledge. And so our
10 instructional framework has a -- has a planning
11 platform that forces teachers or guides
12 teachers to consider all the aspects that
13 relates to why -- why students are behind.

14 For example, part of that platform -- part
15 of that document asks about, you know, what are
16 the vocabulary words that students need to be
17 able to access the information. Right?
18 Sometimes we as teachers make the assumption
19 that students understand every word that we say
20 and students will get lost in a lecture and
21 won't raise their hand to say, "Hey, I'm lost,"
22 so it forces teachers to identify what we call
23 academic bricks and then to talk about those in
24 the very beginning to make sure that the
25 students can access that information.

1 Also part of that lesson plan process is
2 to look at how are we differentiating the
3 instruction in the classroom and who in
4 particular needs what kind of differentiation,
5 so that when we think that we are moving kids
6 who are behind up, that we are not providing
7 blanket instruction, that we are being really
8 specific about what Johnny needs in order to be
9 able to -- to -- to move.

10 So in addition to having teachers to plan
11 a very different kind of way and a more
12 comprehensive way, the academic supports that I
13 mentioned in the -- in the presentation, the
14 academic support centers, the reteach weeks --
15 so, for example, after our interim assessment
16 students will come home, so they will take
17 interim assessments for two days, then they
18 are -- then they are off. During that interim
19 assessment time the principal and the Dean of
20 Academic Services will be working with teachers
21 to identify all standards where students score
22 less than 75 percent on. Those standards
23 are -- a reteach plan is developed to those
24 standards, and then for the next two days the
25 teachers only reteach those standards where

1 students needing additional support in and
2 those students will test. And when the
3 students who do not still meet that 75 percent
4 marker, those students are funneled into
5 Academic Support Center and put on Odysseyware,
6 the blended learning approach we talked about.
7 The teachers will input those standards where
8 students continue to struggle at, the ones who
9 still struggled after reteach. And -- and what
10 Odysseyware does is take those standards and
11 develop questions and instruction for them to
12 continue to -- to go.

13 So those -- those inherent mechanisms
14 allow us to really increase our -- our
15 likelihood of not leaving any kid behind.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right. Thank
17 you.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And as we kind
19 of wrap up our questions, I want to look to our
20 ADE folks and see if, with any of the systems,
21 we have noted any areas.

22 I wanted to check specifically with our
23 special education, were there any questions or
24 anything that came up today that might -- that
25 you -- that you feel we need to touch on with

1 regard to special education or with child
2 nutrition?

3 Okay. Looks like they are -- they are
4 saying that there is not anything.

5 With our fiscal, any fiscal issues that
6 might need to be brought to the Panel for
7 consideration?

8 Okay. And if you will state your name for
9 the record, please.

10 MS. QAZI: Saliha Qazi, Program Fiscal
11 Manager.

12 I just wanted to point out that on the
13 budget it shows that they are ending in a low
14 cash balance and it's due to them not including
15 the federal funding, which is a conservative
16 approach and good for the budget. It is going
17 to be in a high priority area, the school is
18 located in a high priority area or a high need
19 area, and they will receive title funding. So
20 I just wanted to point that out.

21 MR. SIMS: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Panel, any
23 questions relating to that?

24 Okay. You did address the -- the
25 facility, and I've noted in your application

1 that there is some funding for transportation
2 in terms of -- do you want to speak to that?

3 MR. SIMS: Yes. So that -- that line item
4 has also been removed. That company gave us
5 the initial number based on them being able to
6 provide services to other surrounding charter
7 schools, and when I came back, for example,
8 Quest went away and there was another school
9 that didn't -- didn't engage with them, so that
10 number became more expensive than I wanted
11 to -- to pay, and so that number is backed out
12 as well, the -- the number for transportation.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So will transportation
14 be provided at all?

15 MR. SIMS: No, not -- not right now. As
16 it stands right now the answer is no. We don't
17 have a solution for it right now.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So that does
19 bring a question that's kind of popped in my
20 head a couple of times.

21 You've revised your budget since we're
22 looking at what was submitted on your
23 application --

24 MR. SIMS: A few lines and I can tell you
25 what they are.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and I started to say
2 because I'm sitting here now thinking, "Okay.
3 A few lines in the budget, then why don't we
4 have a copy of a modified budget?"

5 And so -- and maybe I'm the only one that
6 has that question, but now that -- now that
7 that's come up three different times, what
8 we -- I would like to know, yes, what line
9 items have been modified and how does that look
10 like in our bottom line?

11 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

12 So as they -- actually increased the
13 bottom line. So the dean of -- I mean the
14 business manager has been eliminated, so that
15 puts 35,000 back into the budget.

16 The transportation has been eliminated, so
17 that puts 30,000 back in the budget. That
18 30,000 was reallocated to food services, based
19 on our experience right now with Southeast
20 Arkansas. And those are the only changes.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I believe you
22 earlier mentioned the amount going to the CMO
23 for the bookkeeper increased to 40?

24 MR. SIMS: No. No. It didn't increase.
25 No. It was just duplicated on the budget.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Oh, I thought it went
2 up to 40,000?

3 MR. SIMS: Oh, yeah, I'm sorry. It did go
4 up five. You're right. I'm sorry.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So but there
6 will be no transportation then provided to
7 students?

8 MR. SIMS: Not right now.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Parents will be
10 responsible for that?

11 MR. SIMS: Yes. That's correct.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Are there any
13 other items then within any of the other
14 systems that ADE staff have looked at?

15 MR. SIMS: So I would like to know that
16 that put money back in the budget, minus that
17 five.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Hyatt, are
19 there any remaining issues that we need to
20 consider?

21 MS. HYATT: Yes. Just listening to some
22 of the information during the questions
23 session, it sounds like, because teachers
24 during the grievance process are not -- are not
25 really following the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act

1 or the -- the Classified Employees Fair
2 Dismissal Act because the Board is not involved
3 in those -- in those grievance procedures, I
4 believe waivers would necessary to effectuate
5 the goal, but I do want to allow an opportunity
6 for some sort of clarification there, because I
7 may just be a little bit confused.

8 MR. SIMS: So teachers are -- so there are
9 protected class -- classes of teachers that we
10 will definitely acknowledge, that there are
11 protected classes that we would have to have a,
12 you know, more conversation about.

13 Teachers do go through a -- an evaluation
14 documentation cycle throughout the year, so
15 even though -- so it's not just we can just
16 fire you at will, like, that's not the spirit
17 of it.

18 Again I'll go back to when you look at
19 traditional charter school structures, that the
20 principal has the autonomy to make hiring
21 decisions and make firing decisions and if --
22 if any one of those firing decisions would
23 prove themselves to be potentially
24 controversial, then that principal does go to
25 the Board for -- for guidance. But in terms of

1 in the spirit of providing -- giving the
2 principal autonomy to make a decision about his
3 or her staff without having any undue influence
4 from the Board, that's very important.

5 So, you know, we're not -- we're not
6 looking to violate any kind of, you know, human
7 resources laws or hearing laws. And so
8 whatever we need to do to, you know, to make
9 you feel more comfortable with it we will, but
10 I want to explain to you the spirit behind the
11 structure.

12 MS. HYATT: And I thank you for the
13 explanation, but I do think that the waivers
14 would be necessary to effectuate that
15 because -- and -- and a lot of the charter
16 schools, and especially applicants we saw this
17 year, requested waivers of these sections
18 because it does allow for decision making at
19 the building level. And -- and so based on
20 what you're saying, I do think that those
21 waivers are necessary in order to accomplish
22 those goals; and that would be 6-17-1501 and
23 6-17-1701 et seq. on both.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And -- and I
25 want to interject here that I'm starting to

1 find it a little disconcerting that we're
2 starting to add some pretty major waivers to
3 this application at this time without us having
4 time to look at it, and budget adjustments
5 without us having time to look at it.

6 I know we've spent a lot of time and had a
7 lot of questions and there are a lot of
8 positive things that we've heard, but -- and
9 I'll open that up to any comments from my
10 Panel, if the Panel is not uncomfortable then
11 we can discuss that. But I just, once we get
12 to this point and start adding all of that
13 without having a little bit of time in advance,
14 I get concerned on exactly what it is we are
15 waiving.

16 DR. OWOH: I agree. I've -- I've started
17 to -- well, not started, but those were my
18 sentiments as well, that since there are some
19 major changes or some new developments or
20 subtractions, some additions, that I would -- I
21 need more time to review the information.
22 And -- and having it today or -- and not having
23 some information today, it just -- it's a
24 concern for me moving forward, to move forward
25 with it; so --

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And we do have
2 options in our decision phase as far as
3 approving, denying or, you know, tabling the
4 matter, if there are just some -- some things.

5 Dr. Hernandez?

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: So I can tell you, you
7 know, going into the presentation it felt, you
8 know, really good or excited, I guess, about
9 the model. I think that that -- you know, I
10 think that it's something that is much needed.
11 I know the former mayor that spoke, it's
12 something that I think is very much needed.
13 But as we've kind of gone through the process,
14 you know, biggest concerns for me are -- are
15 that, you know, not fully understanding what
16 it's going to take to actually make this work
17 as far as through all the legal type things,
18 including the waivers; and just changes that
19 we've kind of gone through on the fly, knowing
20 that you're going to be based somewhere else
21 and kind of a worry about oversight, and it
22 seems that that might have been one of the
23 issues with, you know, one of the other former
24 charters in Denver.

25 So just kind of overall that feeling has

1 kind of dissipated to more of concern about is
2 this quite ready to be -- to move forward.

3 So with that being said, I do have a
4 motion whenever we're ready for that.

5 MR. WILSON: Question of the Chair.

6 Madam Chairman, would it be out of order,
7 assuming that the votes are there, to table the
8 matter for 30 days to firm up some of the
9 questions, particularly the governance question
10 and -- and the autonomy of the principal and
11 whether that needs a waiver. Seems to me that
12 that might be a possibility.

13 Is it -- I guess my question is, is that
14 out of order, to table to --

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And I think one of
16 our -- Ms. Hyatt can confirm that, you know,
17 one of our options is that we can take the
18 matter under advisement and table it until a
19 future meeting and provide some direction.

20 MS. HYATT: That's correct. So it allows
21 you to defer to vote if you would like in order
22 to allow the charter school to receive some
23 technical assistance from the Department in
24 time to correct any deficiencies in their
25 application.

1 That's 623.7 in the rules, so that is an
2 option.

3 I do think, just based on my conversations
4 with Dr. Boyd, that it would need to be
5 sometime soon in order to -- in order that it
6 doesn't push the timeline back too far in terms
7 of them having enough time to get everything to
8 open.

9 So just keep that in mind when you decide
10 when you would like to hear it again.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

12 MR. SIMS: And then may I say that I --
13 the issues that you have concerns with are, you
14 know, from our part, you know, easy -- easily
15 addressed. I mean we could provide the
16 documents and we are willing to have a great
17 relationship with those in that office, I
18 think, and I think we can get you what you
19 need.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez,
21 you indicated you had a motion.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: I have a comment first.

23 You know, if you don't pay attention to
24 history we're prone to repeat it. And that --
25 that's my concern. I'm more along the lines

1 of -- of denying it for now and then let them
2 come back.

3 I want to see how Southeast High School --
4 Southeast Preparatory High School is doing. It
5 just opened.

6 You know, when I -- when I look at the
7 data right now, with -- everything is in line
8 with what happened in Denver.

9 Let's -- I'm more in line to say let's
10 give Southeast Preparatory High School -- I
11 think it's going to do great, I want it to do
12 great. And I like the model that you're
13 bringing to -- to Pine Bluff also. But there
14 are some things that, you know, that there are
15 some concerns, and I just think giving it a
16 year to see, get this school up and running,
17 have a good successful year, and then come back
18 again and let's have all of these details
19 worked out.

20 We want you to be successful because it's
21 about the kids, but right now, I don't think in
22 good faith that, you know, at least I'm not at
23 that point yet. Uh-huh.

24 So I guess what I'm saying is I'm -- I'm
25 more for denial for now instead of a table to

1 kind of force the issue.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I think we're
3 at a point now where we -- we are ready for a
4 motion. And we've heard, kind of, the -- the
5 thoughts and concerns of the Panel. So at this
6 time I'll accept a motion.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: I'll make a motion to deny
8 the application.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: I second.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I have a motion and a
11 second to deny the application. All those in
12 favor, say, "Aye."

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Aye.

14 DR. OWOH: Aye.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: Aye.

16 DR. PFEFFER: Opposed?

17 MR. WILSON: No.

18 DR. KREMERS: No.

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. The motion
20 passes to deny the application of the
21 Sims-Fayola International Academy, and I would
22 ask that our Panel record their votes for the
23 record.

24 MR. SIMS: All right. Am I done?

25 Thanks.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We'll give you feedback
2 in just a moment.

3 MR. SIMS: Oh, okay.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

5 Okay. The -- the vote was three to two to
6 deny the application.

7 Dr. Hernandez, you made the motion.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for -- or made the
9 motion. I have concerns with the budget
10 changes, additional requests for waivers, and
11 governance issue as outlined during the
12 hearing; however, I do think the model does
13 show promise given the right oversight and
14 planning.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

16 DR. KREMERS: I voted against the motion
17 with really preference for tabling, just to
18 allow more time to clarify governance and
19 waiver requests.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh?

21 DR. OWOH: I voted against the
22 application. I had several concerns about the
23 support for teachers and leaders, and that the
24 fact that the current application outlined
25 mirrors the -- the previous school, and there

1 has not or was not any mention of remedies or
2 improvements to address those previous
3 challenges.

4 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams?

5 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion, and
6 there are a couple of concerns, including
7 governance and the capacity to manage multiple
8 schools. Given time I believe the concerns can
9 be addressed and the model can be successful.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And, Mr. Wilson?

11 MR. WILSON: I voted against the motion.
12 I would -- would have preferred to table the
13 application for 30 days to allow for some
14 clarification and substantiation on a couple of
15 the points that the Panel raised, governance in
16 particular.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So hopefully
18 the -- the feedback has been helpful for you.
19 And we do appreciate your time and the effort
20 you've put into this. And thank you for being
21 here today.

22 MR. SIMS: All right. Thank you. Thank
23 you.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. At this time
25 it's 11:15. We do have lunch but not until

1 11:45. We can take a break and go ahead and
2 hear the next application or we can break now
3 for, you know, a little more extended time and
4 come back and hear the next application after
5 lunch. What would the Panel prefer to do?

6 DR. WILLIAMS: I'm flexible. I know I
7 need a break now though.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes. We definitely
9 need to take a break. Just how long of a break
10 do we want to take?

11 DR. KREMERS: Quick break.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Would y'all like to do
13 a quick break and then keep going? Okay.
14 Let's take about a five minute break and then
15 we'll come in and begin with our final
16 application today.

17 (WHEREUPON, a break was held from
18 11:15 a.m. to 11:21 a.m.)

19 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Excuse me for
20 just a minute.

21 We are going to go ahead and change the
22 plans and we're going to take a break until
23 12:15 -- excuse me -- yes, 12:15, and we will
24 come back at 12:15 and hear the third
25 application.

1 (WHEREUPON, a break was held from
2 11:22 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.)

3 A-3: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
4 APPLICATION: SUGARLOAF VALLEY ACADEMY

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Good afternoon,
6 everyone. Welcome back to the hearing.

7 And we're going to go ahead and begin with
8 our final applicant today, which is a hearing
9 of the Open-Enrollment Public Charter School
10 application for Sugarloaf Valley Academy.

11 And, Dr. Boyd, if you will introduce us
12 and we will get started.

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

14 Hearing of Open-Enrollment Public Charter
15 School application for Sugarloaf Valley
16 Academy. Sugarloaf Valley Academy is a
17 proposed Open-Enrollment Public Charter School
18 to be located within the Hackett School
19 District. The sponsoring entity is Sugarloaf
20 Valley Educational Foundation. The applicant
21 is requesting to serve students in grades K-12
22 with a maximum enrollment of 300 beginning in
23 the 2019-2020 school year. The applicant has
24 notified affected districts of the proposed
25 public charter school.

1 ADE staff has reviewed the application,
2 and concerns were shared with the applicant for
3 response. The application, the ADE evaluation,
4 and the applicant's response are included for
5 the Charter Authorization Panel.

6 And before we get started I just would
7 like to say that Sugarloaf, the applicant, did
8 submit a revised budget. There was an error on
9 my part in not getting it on your addenda, so
10 we're getting copies being made for it and we
11 will have those for you. And I apologize for
12 that discrepancy.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Well, at this
14 time will all representatives of Sugarloaf
15 Valley Academy, and anyone speaking in
16 opposition, please stand to receive the oath.

17 Okay. If you will raise your right hand.

18 (WHEREUPON, the witnesses were sworn the
19 by Chairman.)

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

21 And if the presenter or presenters want to
22 go ahead and come on up to the microphone, if
23 you will state your name and title for the
24 record, you will be recognized.

25 MR. HARRIS: Good morning.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And you do have 20
2 minutes for your presentation.

3 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Is that after I
4 introduce myself or does it start now?

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You can go ahead. I
6 won't give you -- go ahead and introduce
7 yourself.

8 MR. HARRIS: I'm an old pastor and I might
9 start preaching and run out of time.

10 My name is John Harris. I'm going to be
11 the School Administrator for Sugarloaf Valley
12 Academy. And I would like to thank Mrs. Boyd,
13 Dr. Boyd and Dr. Perry, or Virginia Perry for
14 their help, and a lot of people around ADE
15 because I called several different people in
16 preparing for this, so anyway, I want to thank
17 them.

18 And I would like to introduce the folks
19 that we have, and I would use clicker, I
20 suppose, so in support today for us.

21 Mr. Harbottle is actively involved with
22 our releasing objectives with the City of
23 Hartford, and Mr. Ray in the Hackett School
24 District, he has been a big help for us in the
25 formation of our Board of Directors and the

1 construction of our bylaws of governance. He
2 keeps us focused with no side bars, usually, so
3 I appreciate his help for us. Ms. Barnes is
4 our media and advertising person. She has been
5 interviewed by Channel 5 in Fort Smith and the
6 Fort Smith Times Record, who also attended some
7 of our planning meetings.

8 The resident press, news on Facebook, who
9 was invited to cover our public meeting and
10 attended that in February, Ms. Barnes published
11 the required public notices, the charter
12 planning updates in the paper. She also
13 arranged meetings with the annual Hartford
14 School Alumni Association and the Hartford City
15 Hall and other public forum events in and
16 around Hartford about the charter school.

17 Ms. Radley has created and posted most of
18 the announcements in the area about our charter
19 school meetings, created our financial accounts
20 at the local bank, helped to create our bylaw
21 structure. She's kept us focused on the needs
22 we have going into our operations. She was a
23 member of the Hartford Firemen First Responder
24 Team and will help us put out fires or injuries
25 we may have at the school as well, and she's

1 also the mayor of Hartford.

2 Mrs. Hudgens, many years of experience
3 with the U.S. Postal Service and as secretary
4 in many public organizations and will be able
5 to aid our charter school in keeping our public
6 meeting records. She's also valuable -- has
7 valuable experience as a former PTO president.

8 Mr. Hudgens, we also have Mrs. Hudgens'
9 son on board to help with legal advice. His
10 services will be valuable to us as we move
11 forward, if approved for our charter.

12 My connection to Hartford was through my
13 job at ADA as a school improvement specialist
14 many years ago. And because my wife was
15 employed there for ten years as a teacher,
16 counselor, and elementary assistant principal,
17 we -- she -- I retired last year, she retired
18 last year, and now I work for her most of the
19 time.

20 But anyway I -- we enjoyed that retirement
21 for a short period and then we become involved
22 with the charter school.

23 I consider us an opportunity. I believe
24 real accountability starts with education, with
25 the parents and the students that -- that deal

1 with that educational success and failure as
2 they go through.

3 We have -- Sugarloaf Valley Academy offers
4 another choice, another opportunity, another
5 way of doing things, another learning style,
6 just another opportunity. And we are small
7 town America. We live -- Hartford sits along
8 the Oklahoma border in western Arkansas. There
9 are only about 700 people in the town of
10 Hartford, in and around the town.

11 Hartford was unable to maintain the
12 minimum number of students needed by the State
13 Education Department requirements, but with all
14 of that being said, there is, like, 22
15 communities that live in the Sugarloaf Valley,
16 that reside in the Sugarloaf Valley, and there
17 is about 23,500 people in those communities in
18 that area.

19 At our required public meeting in February
20 in the middle of a rain storm that actually
21 shut down roads to come out of the town, at
22 that meeting we had over 61 -- we had 61 people
23 attend the meeting that night. We had 800 that
24 live viewed the meeting on Resident Press on
25 Facebook. And then we had five public

1 meetings, total public meetings held by our
2 launch team, and we had over 175 who signed the
3 attendance sheets.

4 We have many letters of support from
5 families, community, business, and political
6 leaders. One of them is here today. And
7 probably everyone -- someone from every one of
8 these communities attended our meetings there
9 in Hartford. There is concern and people have
10 been giving as well. If only a few had shown
11 interest we wouldn't be here today, but we had
12 a lot of interest. But we have had people
13 donate five and \$10 from a lot of different,
14 just different individuals and people for our
15 effort to apply. Some donated several hundred
16 dollars, some -- a couple donated a thousand
17 dollars, we had one donate \$10,000 to help in
18 our effort as far as a charter school and its
19 approval by this committee.

20 So we have the support of a lot of people
21 down in the Sugarloaf Valley that would like to
22 see our charter.

23 Our mission -- really this speaks to the
24 Sugarloaf Valley mission is to create a culture
25 that is safe to be a learner, with rigor and

1 high expectations so that our students find
2 success in college and careers and life.

3 So the things we do, the people we hire,
4 and the routines and the schedules we put in
5 place, the time we spend in professional
6 development and using the technology and
7 software we purchase, and the facilities we
8 reside in are intentionally targeted to hit the
9 goals we have at Sugarloaf Valley Academy.

10 One of the pillars of our school will be
11 character building, it's one of our foundation
12 pieces. And we have chosen as our support
13 piece the Great Expectations Program. And the
14 reason I choose Great Expectations Program is
15 when I was superintendent in Oklahoma, we
16 introduced that into one of our schools there,
17 and I have experience as far as its -- its
18 ability to decrease bullying, to be proactive
19 discipline instead of reactive discipline. All
20 of those different things give the students
21 under the belief that all students can learn,
22 and GE Methodology focuses on the basic tenets
23 of building student self-esteem and fostering a
24 climate of mutual respect in students.

25 Educators are trained in the importance of

1 teacher attitude and responsibility and
2 knowledge and skill. And these tenets for the
3 students and the teachers are taught in 17
4 classroom principles throughout. And it has to
5 have -- you can have any kind of process and
6 practice, but you have to have the strategies
7 to put it into place. So the strategies for
8 implementing this character building program
9 is, and the lesson plans, which will include
10 character building modeling activities for
11 teachers to use every day in the classroom,
12 because these practices are teacher lead and
13 teacher taught in the classroom. It's a
14 curriculum piece that we have as far as our
15 intervention strategies.

16 Professional development will be embedded
17 with support from software and Great
18 Expectations specialists. Students will take
19 responsibility of the culture by performing
20 tasks in the daily operation of the classroom
21 and learning routines and rituals. Most will
22 have jobs to do inside the classroom.

23 Modeling and implementation is throughout
24 the school, it's not just in the classroom. We
25 want it in the cafeteria, we want it on the

1 playground, even on the bus after school.

2 Interim and year end goals are established
3 in the program so it's measurable, it's
4 improvable, it's accountable to the Board of
5 Directors.

6 Student and parent surveys will be given
7 for perceptual data of the program as well
8 throughout the year.

9 We also want -- we also want organized
10 rigor, we want a highly challenging educational
11 experience for the students.

12 Two of the technologies that we've chosen,
13 two of the support technologies is BYOC Plus
14 Software, which aligns the curriculum and
15 pacing to Arkansas Learning Standards. It adds
16 a resource base to support instruction and
17 curriculum and it provides supporting
18 technology to our pre and post-assessments.

19 Southwest Co-op carries some of the
20 professional development for BYOC Plus. Build
21 Your Own Curriculum is what that means.

22 The software also has a parent
23 communication and reporting piece that helps us
24 with our parental engagement focus. We also
25 have chosen Renaissance Star 360 as a

1 comprehensive preK-12 interim form of
2 assessment suite and has -- uses State specific
3 learning standards for reading, math, and early
4 literacy. It provides in the moment data for
5 us to be able to identify weaknesses and sets
6 reteaching opportunities for us and goals for
7 mastery.

8 We also -- we'll also create a PLC support
9 that will meet each week to engage in our
10 lesson planning and differentiation of
11 instruction, and our personal learning plan
12 implementation.

13 We will probably use the Dufour model
14 because it's more student centered, approach
15 uses four essential questions, and also is
16 more, I guess, efficacy with the teachers.

17 The School Improvement Council that we --
18 we created will collect and disaggregate the
19 data to make collect -- collaborative decisions
20 concerning the important -- or improvement of
21 educational processes and best practices.

22 All of the information in the data will be
23 used, we will make live data, we'll make it
24 data that we can use to make decisions.

25 The educational need for the charter in

1 our geographical area, Hackett and Mansfield
2 and Greenwood all are contiguous boundaries in
3 western Arkansas, are the gaps among the
4 economically disadvantaged -- disadvantaged and
5 students with disabilities, subpopulations in
6 relation to the other tested subpopulations.

7 Our interim and our State goals require
8 that the educational programs in our school
9 provide additional learning and reteaching
10 activities to -- activities to support the
11 needs of challenged students. We also have
12 incorporated local goals to progress monitor
13 student performance towards proficiency and
14 projected proficiency.

15 Sugar Valley -- Sugarloaf Valley Academy
16 has also created goals for parental engagement
17 and for creating a positive school culture.
18 The tools we'll use for that, professional
19 development, software and technical support,
20 PLCs to organize our resources, strong
21 collaborative and distributive leadership by
22 the school improvement counselor, because it
23 takes everybody in, from the classroom on up,
24 and transparency and accountability to the
25 Board of Directors will be what we will use to

1 be able to progress the school in that area.

2 One of the jobs we had as school
3 improvement was to see what interventions were
4 being done for the students who were basic and
5 below proficient, and I put that statement up
6 there, "If I'm a fourth grader," and it used to
7 be below proficient, "and I am in need of
8 support, how is my day going to be different
9 from someone who is ready or exceeding?" And
10 that's a question that needs to be answered.
11 Because you see, if your progress, your -- if
12 your -- and when we're in school improvement,
13 if you're below proficient and not exceeding in
14 third grade and fourth grade, and pretty soon
15 it's almost impossible to become exceeding or
16 proficient in the upper grades.

17 So that's one reason we developed these
18 personalized learning plans. A bit more
19 prescriptive than some of them are defined as.
20 It will provide the student an up-to-date
21 record of where they are. And they do have buy
22 into it. Research says that students are more
23 motivated to learn and they will achieve more
24 in school and feel a stronger sense of
25 ownership if they have some connection to their

1 learning goals, and that's exactly what we want
2 to accomplish there.

3 Technology integration, we believe
4 actually in full integration of use of
5 computers and social media platforms and
6 networks all through the classrooms and the
7 management of our school as well. We want
8 technology to be second nature in the
9 classroom, for them to be able to use it, to
10 measure and report our program effectiveness,
11 and to communicate with our patrons and
12 community.

13 Differentiated instruction is more than
14 giving them handouts, it's more than a package
15 of worksheets. It tailors instruction to meet
16 individual needs. Differentiation may amend or
17 adjust content or process or an assessment, and
18 even the learning environment to improvement
19 student's -- improve student performance, and
20 that's very similar to what ALE attempts to do
21 in their process.

22 When it goes beyond the classroom we will
23 provide recommended interventions, time and
24 resources to support the student and the
25 teacher in the tier two and tier three

1 activities.

2 To give you an idea, in August of 2019, if
3 approved, when we open school that morning,
4 that will be our current reality. And all of
5 the things that we have in our plans and all of
6 the work that we have done are involved in
7 those -- are set in those goals. That's our
8 mission statement. Everything in our plan is
9 our mission statement. To reach where we want
10 to be, the vision, which is success at college,
11 career, and community environment --
12 environment. So our vision, minus our current
13 reality is our needs assessment. And
14 everything that we do and everything that we
15 have in place will be geared toward that
16 opening day and preparing for that opening day
17 in August of 2019.

18 I really can't get away from this model
19 because I've used it so much in school
20 improvement. We used it in the Indistar
21 Planning Phases when we were bringing that into
22 the state. But the theory of action here, this
23 logic model, there is not a quick fix to school
24 improvement; there is not a quick fix to a
25 student who is three -- three grade levels

1 behind; there is not a quick fix. You do --
2 you bring them forward as fast as you can, it's
3 a continuous process that you go through for
4 sustained school improvement.

5 Lagging indicators, as far as what you
6 assess, you've got the trend data that you use
7 to where the students are. This is based on
8 that. Leading indicators, which is -- are
9 predictive data that we use, will allow us to
10 adjust in the moment and allow a real time data
11 for student attendance.

12 I mean, if I have an example to give you,
13 there was one instance where we had some sixth
14 graders who were below -- not -- below -- they
15 were below proficient, and they were tardy 30
16 times in a semester. That was almost every day
17 and they were eighth graders, seventh and
18 eighth graders. And it wasn't the student's
19 fault, it was the parent's fault for getting
20 them to school.

21 So that really caused piece in there --
22 the student was trying as hard as they can, but
23 they were missing 15 to 20 minutes of math. In
24 fact, we changed the schedule to where we put
25 the heavier math back behind and put something,

1 a lighter subject in the first hour to help
2 improve that situation.

3 Those type of things are the real data
4 that we want to look at and the leading
5 indicators that we have.

6 Money. In the budget, if we start in
7 2019-'20, we will have just over a million
8 dollars. That's a lot of money to be monitored
9 and wisely spent. And the reason for our
10 contract with the State Department is we -- we
11 want to do two things. The students that we
12 get, we want to improve them, that's our job.
13 And then we want our money to be spent wisely
14 and logically, and we can have information.

15 And state and federal programs, if we look
16 at the financial side of school improvement,
17 which we will get Title I money and the
18 different state programs money. On the
19 financial source, the program will mean source
20 of funds. And most federal and state money are
21 earmarked for specific purposes, but one of our
22 major jobs in our charter contract is to spend
23 this money wisely and monitor to -- monitor its
24 effectiveness. And my job as administrator of
25 the school will be able to -- will be one of

1 those jobs, to watch that.

2 So you look at the benefit and cost of
3 each one of those jobs that we have. So there
4 are three guiding questions to ask the school
5 or the district concerning the benefit cost.
6 And you ask them, it's pretty simple, is what
7 we're doing working? Is it working? And we're
8 spending money on it.

9 The second question is, if it's working,
10 can we make it better? Because that's what we
11 want to do as a -- as a -- for the students and
12 for the school. And if it's not working, can
13 we get it working? And if we can't get it
14 working, why are we spending money on it? And
15 that's some of the questions that we want to
16 look at.

17 You can -- when I was superintendent in
18 Oklahoma, I had a salesman come by and talk me
19 into buying a software program that I thought
20 my teachers would love. So we put it in the
21 school and I -- after nine weeks, I looked at
22 how well it was doing, and I had two teachers
23 doing it and the others were thinking about it.

24 So if you're not careful, pretty soon
25 you've got all of these programs -- when I was

1 in school improvement you've got all of these
2 different things that you're shooting at kids
3 as far as the programs, and some of them are
4 working, some of them they have stopped
5 working, and so you need to monitor that, and
6 that's what we intend to do at our school, to
7 make sure that we spend our money correctly.

8 Every process has a practice, and then out
9 of that practice you get your performance.

10 In that process and to practice, you're
11 processing to practice, that's a part of the
12 implementation. It takes time sometimes to
13 implement things, three to five years or
14 whatever it is, but there is a process to it in
15 its implementation. And then the practice, you
16 look at the fidelity of it; how well is it
17 doing, how well is the fidelity over time, and
18 then the impact that you have. Even in
19 after-school programs or whatever, what
20 performance or what impact are you having on
21 the student performance. And that's what you
22 look at as far as gauging, you're doing your
23 program evaluation.

24 So we created a school, Sugarloaf Valley
25 Academy School Improvement Council.

1 Let me see if I missed one. I guess I --

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And your 20
3 minutes is up at this time. There will be an
4 additional five minutes if you or anyone
5 else --

6 MR. HARRIS: Okay.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- if you would like to
8 continue the presentation or if anyone else
9 would like to speak, but we need to see if
10 there is anyone here to speak in opposition
11 first.

12 MR. HARRIS: I think that's -- I think
13 that will be okay.

14 We have one of the representatives from
15 the state here to speak for us.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we have an
17 additional five minutes, if there is someone
18 else who would like to speak on behalf of the
19 school.

20 MR. HARRIS: Okay. What do I need to do?

21 MR. RICHMOND: Thank you for taking a few
22 minutes to be able to listen into me for about
23 five minutes.

24 First of all, let me tell you why I'm not
25 here, and that is because there is something

1 wrong with the Hackett school system.

2 The superintendent over there at the
3 Hackett school system has a very challenging
4 job. He has got Fort Smith school systems
5 north of him, he's got Greenwood east of him,
6 and then he's got Mansfield south of him. He's
7 done an outstanding job with that school
8 system, trying to deal with those challenges
9 that come from all those people surrounding
10 him. And it's a good school. I've been there,
11 I've seen it. It's a really good school and I
12 appreciate what he's done and what his teachers
13 do there.

14 But this is why I am here. I spent 22
15 years in the United States Marine Corps as an
16 infantry officer. When I retired I taught --
17 actually I was an administrator and I coached
18 football at a place called Hargrave Military
19 Academy in Chatham, Virginia. What I saw there
20 was what happens when students -- you reach
21 students that otherwise are having problems.

22 We had football players, post-graduate
23 football players that come in there and played
24 college football that the first time they ever
25 realized that having an education was important

1 was when some university coach at Georgia,
2 Alabama, somewhere else said, "Son, I can't
3 help you. Your SATs, your ACTs, whatever it
4 was, wasn't good enough." Those kids suddenly
5 had a goal and they bought into it, they bought
6 into it and in one year they learned everything
7 that they probably should have learned over the
8 previous four.

9 The two years that I was there, out of the
10 almost 90 kids, we only had one kid that had to
11 go on to junior college because he was so far
12 behind. Now I take a look at that and then I
13 consider what is being proposed here.

14 The socioeconomic situation that we have
15 there in our area around Mansfield, Hartford,
16 part of Hackett, that's a very challenging
17 thing to do. And I say that not simply because
18 I happen to be the district, you know, state
19 representative for that district, I say it
20 because when I come home, I taught school in
21 Mansfield and I coached football there as well,
22 and I taught at alternative school, and I saw
23 what happened in that, when you lose these kids
24 before you even get a chance, and that seemed
25 to be the issue. And some of it is because of

1 parents and some of it is just, you know,
2 because of the kids themselves or whatever it
3 might be, and the things that I tried to do to
4 get them to buy into it, to take part of this
5 and say, this is part of my education. You
6 know, I'll have to say minimum success. I've
7 actually -- I've bumped into some of those kids
8 over the years and they are not in prison so I
9 feel pretty good about that portion of it, that
10 there was a little bit of success.

11 But I think the program that we have here,
12 and why I'm up here speaking for it, is that
13 it's an opportunity to get in and be proactive
14 with some children that are in a similar type
15 of economic social situation.

16 And I don't think that's going to hurt
17 Hackett. I think actually it will help Hackett
18 in the long run, because these children will go
19 out at some point and probably go to Hackett
20 Schools. And these kids, instead of being at
21 alternative school at Hackett, in my opinion
22 they will have an excellent chance to be
23 leading academically and some other things at
24 Hackett as well.

25 And so that's why I'm here today to say

1 maybe this is an excellent opportunity to see
2 how this works and whether or not we can take
3 care of children, because ultimately that's
4 what it's about is to education those children.

5 Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you,
7 Representative Richmond. And we appreciate you
8 being here.

9 Mr. Harris, we'll go ahead and -- and let
10 you finish up with that five minutes if you
11 want.

12 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Thank you. I
13 appreciate that.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I know you had a few
15 more things to say, unless there is somebody
16 else here that wants to speak or that you were
17 wanting to speak as well.

18 MR. HARRIS: This group here, I'll do all
19 the talking.

20 DR. PFEFFER: Okay. All right.

21 MR. HARRIS: They do a lot of talking at
22 the meetings.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: I'll let you finish up
24 with your five minutes then.

25 MR. HARRIS: The School Improvement

1 Council, its main job is to make that cost
2 benefit analysis of how well this program is
3 doing. It also gives us opportunity for the
4 school improvement side to make decision making
5 coming out of the classroom. We've got to move
6 it out of the classroom into the boardroom in
7 actuality, because where the rubber hits the
8 road, it's in the classroom. You can make all
9 the decisions you want to, but if it doesn't
10 get in there where -- closest to the child,
11 then that's where a lot of that -- the barriers
12 and the decision making stops and so on, and so
13 we want that part.

14 There will be monthly meetings with the
15 SVA Board and -- and the council will report
16 out what's going on in the school and how well
17 the school is doing. And then over the course
18 of the year it gives us now an idea as a
19 collaborative team what the school is -- is --
20 the health of the school and what the school
21 needs going into the succeeding years.

22 So you have decision making both in the
23 school and the district. Sometimes there is a
24 disconnect in that, but we want this to be to
25 where all of us make a decision, especially for

1 the kids.

2 Everything we're going to do -- actually
3 the valid assessments and things that we do
4 with data is geared toward helping the children
5 in the school and that's what we want to do.

6 And that's it for me. Okay.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So thank you for
8 your presentation. And if you will stay up
9 here --

10 MR. HARRIS: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- we're going to look
12 at any issues that were unresolved at the time
13 of the application.

14 And Dr. Boyd will walk through those
15 questions and then Ms. Hyatt will go through
16 the legal review, which will be questions
17 around the waivers. And if there is any
18 questions that the Panel has around those
19 subjects, we'll go ahead and ask those and then
20 we'll move into the application.

21 MR. HARRIS: Can I get a drink?

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: You sure can. Yes.

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

24 Before we started the presentation,
25 you-all received a copy of the goals for 11th

1 and 12th grade. It should be in your chair or
2 on top of your computer. So that's taken care
3 of. As far as receipt of them, we just got
4 them today so they haven't been reviewed very
5 closely but they are there.

6 With the schedule of courses offered, in
7 the presentation there was a slide on courses
8 offered.

9 From my review, the only things that
10 remain to be unaddressed are when the unit of
11 CPR is going to be provided prior to
12 graduation, and also a unit of dating violence
13 awareness prior to graduation.

14 MR. HARRIS: Okay. I -- I'm sorry, I had
15 that -- it's not on this. It's not on the
16 PowerPoint.

17 DR. BOYD: Could you go back to the --
18 we'll pull it up for you.

19 MR. HARRIS: Okay. I have that in the --

20 DR. BOYD: Yeah. Maybe I just didn't see
21 it.

22 MR. HARRIS: Yeah. It's there.

23 DR. BOYD: I believe it's Slide 17 out of
24 18.

25 MR. HARRIS: It is.

1 DR. BOYD: Oh, I see it. It's under
2 health and P.E. I can see it now. It says --
3 includes First Aid and CPR and then it says --

4 MR. HARRIS: Oh, I see it.

5 DR. BOYD: It's highlighted in yellow. It
6 says --

7 MR. HARRIS: I thought I highlighted it.

8 DR. BOYD: Sorry. I just missed it.

9 Okay. And then in regards to -- we had a
10 discussion about the nurse, and you know the
11 nurse -- well, the nurse over the health
12 program has to be a registered nurse, and in
13 the original budget it was listed as an LPN.

14 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

15 DR. BOYD: And so we just noted that there
16 may need to be an increase in salary due to the
17 change in credentials.

18 Also, in reviewing the budget and looking
19 at the nurse, it says it was a half-time nurse
20 and that the salary was about \$20,000.

21 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

22 DR. BOYD: And my question is, is that
23 \$20,000 for half time or is it \$10,000 for half
24 time? Do you understand my question?

25 MR. HARRIS: It would -- it would be half

1 day.

2 When I looked at the funding of the LPN,
3 and we have talked to several retired RNs that
4 would do -- that would do our State required
5 health care planning for us.

6 But, anyway, I -- I looked at several
7 different districts and that was about the --
8 for an LPN, that was about the going rate as
9 far as their salary, so -- as I remember it.

10 DR. BOYD: And you could see it's on the
11 second page of the budget, you will see under
12 health services.

13 MR. HARRIS: Let me look.

14 DR. BOYD: So it would need to be
15 increased --

16 MR. HARRIS: Oh, I see, yes.

17 DR. BOYD: I would -- I would assume it
18 would need to be increased going from an LPN to
19 an RN in order to meet the requirements.

20 MR. HARRIS: That -- that -- I mean we
21 have additional money in the budget, so we
22 would be able to do that. And we have some
23 money that was donated that we haven't included
24 in the budget as well; so -- but we did contact
25 an RN to do the legal requirements for this.

1 DR. BOYD: Uh-huh. So just for
2 clarification, a school or district could use
3 an LPN to provide services in a school, but the
4 entire health program has to be overseen by an
5 RN, so just a clarification for you-all.

6 MR. HARRIS: Yes, and that person is
7 willing to do that for us by contract.

8 DR. BOYD: Do you have any questions about
9 these, the list of concerns that are addressed
10 here?

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: No.

12 MS. HYATT: The applicant actually
13 provided additional information that I do
14 believe Dr. Boyd emailed to you sometime
15 earlier this week that cleared up a lot of the
16 issues. So in the condensed, kind of, waiver
17 table that was provided to you, most of the
18 issues have been resolved because of the
19 additional information that was provided, so
20 there are just some few outstanding things to
21 go over.

22 The first one I want to mention is on
23 Board of Directors, where we've clarified
24 almost all of the issues there. I just wanted
25 to say that they would need a waiver of

1 6-13-612(c) as well. And that's one that has
2 been overlooked by a lot, and that is just that
3 if a board member is convicted of a felony, it
4 creates a vacancy on the Board. And subsection
5 (c) requires that the vacancy be filled in the
6 manner provided by 613 and 611. So in order to
7 effectuate the waiver, you need a waiver of
8 612(c).

9 MR. HARRIS: That wouldn't be a problem at
10 all.

11 MS. HYATT: Okay. And you did confirm on
12 No. 3 that are you seeking a waiver of the
13 Personnel Policy Committee so I'm good there.

14 On No. 4, Alternative Learning
15 Environments, it's just some additional waivers
16 that are needed. It is 6-15-1005(b)(5), which
17 is to have an ALE program, and
18 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(1) which is placement in an
19 alternative learning environment, and Section 4
20 of the ADE Rules Governing the Distribution of
21 Special Needs Funds, so those three would just
22 need to be added.

23 MR. HARRIS: Okay. That's no problem.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay. And on No. 5 we've
25 actually resolved that.

1 I had two that came up during the
2 presentation, I just wanted to double-check.
3 The applicant has not requested of any waivers
4 of licensure for teachers or administrators,
5 and I just wanted to have you confirm that you
6 didn't intend to seek any waivers of licensure
7 for teachers or administrators?

8 MR. HARRIS: No. We wanted all of our
9 teachers to be credentialed and certified. I
10 mean, I think we need that, so -- so fine.

11 MS. HYATT: Okay. And then I did notice,
12 since they are kind of rolling, they are
13 starting at a K-5 and then ending up at a K-12,
14 I do think they will need a three-year waiver
15 for the 5-8 curriculum, just since they won't
16 be offering all of those grades, and that's at
17 1-A.1.2 of the standards. Because it's for a
18 5-8, the first year they are only up to five,
19 six, and seven, and so I think they had need a
20 three-year waiver of that and until they get up
21 to 8th grade and then they will be meeting the
22 needs of that. So three years of 1-A.1.2?

23 MR. HARRIS: Yes. That's good. Thanks.

24 MS. HYATT: Okay. So that revolves any
25 remaining legal issues. So unless there are

1 any questions --

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Any questions
3 related to these waivers from the legal review?

4 DR. KREMERS: I do have one.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

6 DR. KREMERS: Just for my learning,
7 please. There is a place in the budget for
8 development of G.T. -- a G.T. Program for year
9 one and two.

10 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

11 DR. KREMERS: And there is no waivers for
12 that. Is that because G.T. will be offered,
13 you're starting year three?

14 MR. HARRIS: Now say that one more time.

15 DR. KREMERS: Okay. In the budget the
16 gifted and talented program fiscally there is a
17 line item for development of a G.T. program --

18 MR. HARRIS: Yeah.

19 DR. KREMERS: -- year one year two. So if
20 you're in development, are you offering it
21 while you're developing it year one, year two?

22 MR. HARRIS: Well, it could be. I wanted
23 to put the thousand dollars in there so there
24 would be some money for materials and things
25 that we're going to do within the classroom and

1 so on, so that's why that money is sitting in
2 there, just for funding some of those purposes
3 that we wanted to have in there.

4 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

5 MR. HARRIS: Does that make sense?

6 MS. HYATT: And on No. 6 on the chart,
7 they do have a waiver of gifted and talented
8 that they requested, and I didn't have any
9 issues on it so I didn't mention it, but to
10 follow the traditional gifted and talented
11 program standards. So any -- I believe in
12 their application, they are going to be
13 providing --

14 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

15 MS. HYATT: -- some services to gifted and
16 talented students, just not in the traditional
17 method.

18 DR. KREMERS: Got it. Thank you for
19 clarifying.

20 MR. HARRIS: That's right.

21 Yes. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So we can move
23 now to questions around the application that
24 Panel members may have encountered when
25 reading, so we'll -- let's start with

1 Mr. Wilson this time. Did you have any
2 questions on the application?

3 MR. WILSON: I don't have any at this
4 point. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez?

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: Just kind of have just
7 kind of a general overall arching question is
8 that, you know, looking at some of the
9 districts that were -- that were mentioned
10 earlier by Representative Richmond, you know,
11 are good school districts in that area, and
12 knowing that just recently with the Hartford
13 campus closing, I think I'm trying to get to
14 the -- the why and the need of the school.
15 Because a lot of things that were presented, I
16 mean, do -- obviously you have a lot of
17 experience in running a school, so if the -- if
18 the goal is to -- to open up a school in the
19 area, that's one thing; but if the school -- if
20 the goal is to be innovative, then what does it
21 bring to the table as far as enhancing
22 education? That's the question that I still
23 have.

24 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so I think my overall

1 question is why this school, why right now?

2 MR. HARRIS: Well, I think that there is a
3 need. And just per the data, there is a need
4 for addressing the -- the students and with
5 economically disadvantaged students in the area
6 and the special ed students in the area. We're
7 not going to be a large school, by any means.
8 We have the ability to provide character
9 education, which I think is a plus for any kids
10 in the area. There is a place -- you know, we
11 have three foundational things, one is
12 character education. We want to bring the
13 students to a place to where there is some
14 self-esteem, there is some mutual respect, and
15 we talked about that in our plan, but also we
16 want to bring in the parental engagement,
17 because my experience in school -- school
18 improvement has been that oftentimes we've done
19 really good as school districts and schools as
20 providing parental engagement, one said we do a
21 great job doing spaghetti suppers and things
22 like that. But there is a lot of parents that
23 didn't finish high school that are on the lower
24 socioeconomic scale to where they are
25 intimidated, and we want to create a culture in

1 the school, a climate in the school to where
2 they feel like they are very welcome at our
3 school, we want to -- and the students, if they
4 see the improvement in the students, I really
5 believe that we will increase parental
6 engagement beyond just the -- I mean we --
7 we're going to require three parent-teacher
8 conferences and a closing year end conference
9 as well. We are going to require some parent
10 participation even on our school improvement
11 team. We want two parents on the school
12 improvement team, so we want to invite them in
13 and make them a part of our culture.

14 Because I'm telling you, in my experience
15 as a superintendent and principal and so on,
16 the closer you can have that union with the
17 parents and the closer you can build that
18 relationship with students the better off the
19 learning goes in the school and you don't have
20 all of these, these them and us issues going on
21 in the school. And that's what the I really
22 like about this program that we have is it
23 gives us an opportunity and I like the -- I
24 like the accountability piece. I like the
25 accountability that we're going to use the

1 data, real time data to see what's working and
2 what's not -- not working so we can change it
3 if it occurs in there.

4 So I think in -- in where we are, in that
5 part of Arkansas, there is 22 little
6 communities there in that part, and most of the
7 communities are economically depressed. And
8 it's not the Fayetteville of Arkansas, I mean
9 it's not those other areas, so I think there is
10 a place for us. I think that the parents need
11 it. I think the students need it. I think the
12 schools around it, it's just like he said, I
13 think the schools around us, they will benefit
14 from it as well. That's just my thinking.

15 Thank you for asking that.

16 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh, do you have a
17 question?

18 DR. OWOH: Yes. I do.

19 You talked about the need of the
20 community, of the area. And so in reference to
21 educators and you mentioned that you-all will
22 seek to hire licensed educators. So if you can
23 kind of share with us your process for
24 recruitment and support and development. I did
25 note that you have professional development

1 earmarked in the budget but what are some of
2 the innovative ways that you are looking at for
3 recruitment of teachers and then how would you
4 provide that ongoing -- ongoing support and
5 development for your teachers and leaders?

6 MR. HARRIS: Well, we had several that
7 were not -- did not make the transition from
8 Hartford to Hackett, and so in our area right
9 now we have a lot of elementary school teachers
10 that are looking for jobs. But we will
11 advertise the normal way, but a lot of it is --
12 is they have -- we've had them come to our
13 meetings and say, you know, we would like to be
14 in that environment. So I think that just the
15 fact that -- that it's something different,
16 it's something that -- that they can get
17 involved in, because in the area down there --
18 there is a lot of people live in the area, but
19 as far as doing the education, we can -- we can
20 advertise. I think we -- I believe we can get
21 them in that way. And I also think just the
22 word of mouth. And, of course, I -- I'm
23 experienced with a lot of teachers down there,
24 there is a lot of different places that would
25 like to be in that type of environment.

1 DR. OWOH: Well, have you taken a look at
2 how competitive your salary schedule --

3 MR. HARRIS: Yes, I have.

4 DR. OWOH: -- is to the surrounding
5 digits -- I mean districts?

6 MR. HARRIS: I looked at -- yes. We have
7 22 districts in the Western Co-op down there,
8 and I tried to put our minimum salary in the
9 middle. We're similar to Hackett, similar to
10 all of the schools around that area.

11 Greenwood is a little above us, Fort Smith
12 is above us, but they have the large districts
13 and they have a lot of tax base and so on like
14 that, so they -- but we -- we put ourselves in
15 the middle. We don't want to be at the lowest.
16 Some of them are at the very low state minimum,
17 we're in the middle. So I feel comfortable
18 with attracting teachers just because they are
19 going to get the same pay as some of the
20 surrounding schools.

21 DR. OWOH: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams?

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. So you are looking to
24 open up at K-5 the first year and eventually
25 growing to extending all the way through K-12.

1 Where exactly -- I was looking at a map here.

2 Where exactly would you-all be located?

3 MR. HARRIS: In Hartford.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: In Hartford?

5 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Now, is that the
7 school that just consolidated or --

8 MR. HARRIS: Yes. It is. Yes.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Uh-huh.

10 I want to just make sure I'm tracking this
11 the right way. I want to follow up with
12 Dr. Hernandez's line of questioning a little
13 bit now.

14 So this is not -- I only know one way to
15 conversate and that is to conversate fairly
16 directly.

17 This is not an end around for
18 consolidation of the Hartford School District.
19 Is it?

20 MR. HARRIS: No.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

22 MR. HARRIS: I -- well, I don't have the
23 bible, but no, it's not.

24 And the reason that we believe that the
25 school will be successful, and it's not -- I

1 mean it's great to have a school in Hartford.
2 I mean they lost their school and I'm not
3 denying that.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah.

5 MR. HARRIS: That's -- we -- we
6 encountered that in Arkansas, and even working
7 for ADE, it's a tough time for a community to
8 lose that, but it's an open-enrollment charter
9 and we are able to pull students from different
10 areas into the area. And it's that whole
11 Sugarloaf Valley area is what we want to
12 address, all of the students that live in that
13 area.

14 It's not -- no, it's not an end around.
15 We want to do something for the students that I
16 think we can help with this program. It's all
17 based on the -- the philosophy of our program
18 to where I think that we can do something good
19 for the communities there. And I know it's --
20 it's coming at this time, but we start next
21 year. And probably the students that are going
22 to Hartford are going to -- I mean Hackett are
23 going to stay at Hackett. I mean it's not --
24 we're beyond the part to where we're going to
25 pull students, maybe, maybe some, I don't know.

1 But most of it is going to be in the areas
2 where they -- they believe that we can help
3 them.

4 We're going to do a lot of advertising.
5 We're going to do a lot of pushing to tell them
6 what we have to offer, because I think what we
7 have to offer is something important to them,
8 to the families, to the students themselves.
9 And I really believe that we can meet our goals
10 and -- and meet -- meet the needs of the
11 students, and that's where it is. I mean
12 I'm -- I'm retired but --

13 DR. WILLIAMS: So, absolutely there, and
14 what you're saying makes sense.

15 But, you know, what's going to be
16 different -- I'm familiar with the Great
17 Expectations model.

18 MR. HARRIS: Yeah.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, absolutely. So it's
20 great for elementary school.

21 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Even for
23 kindergarten, even for elementary, and even
24 matriculating up through middle school, junior
25 high, and high school, what's going to be

1 different about this school than I guess it
2 would be Hackett is the school that's serving
3 that area.

4 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Yeah.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: What's going to be the
6 different between what you're proposing here
7 and what's currently going on?

8 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Beyond the -- the
9 character education piece --

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

11 MR. HARRIS: -- we also have a
12 professional learning plan, that is different
13 than the ALP. I remember the ALPs that they
14 have, they would be prescriptive and you have
15 students and we would go check them with
16 standards of assurance and different things
17 like this. This is going to be a lot more
18 intensive than that and more prescriptive
19 because we're going to look at the data and use
20 those and create an improvement plan for each
21 student. It's -- it's similar to a school
22 improvement school, so we're going to use those
23 PLPs every day and the PLCs and the different
24 teachers and all of those are going to be
25 combined to track those.

1 Right now we're planning three-week
2 interim assessments to see how well they are
3 improving on those PLPs, and then if it needs
4 reteaching -- I think sometimes we lose a lot
5 of students because they don't ever go back and
6 reteach what they taught, because if the
7 student doesn't get it the first time or they
8 do not get it the second time, what do you do.
9 So if you look at -- if you look at the model
10 where you do those interventions in the PLC, we
11 would go back and do more intensive
12 interventions for that, so I think that's going
13 to be different than a lot of schools that I've
14 seen personally.

15 And then more of the parental engagement.
16 I think more of the parental engagement to
17 where we have -- we have a parent engagement
18 teacher organization to where we are going to
19 really color in their flavor and put them in
20 some positions to where they can make decisions
21 about the school too. We invite more parental
22 engagement. I think that's the key. I think
23 parental engagement is the key, so I've been
24 preached that all my life, but go ahead.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: So given all that then, are

1 your expectations then that the performance of
2 the students here would be different, as in
3 better than the performance for the students in
4 the current schools in the area?

5 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

7 MR. HARRIS: Yes, I do.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: All right. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Kremers?

10 DR. KREMERS: Do you have a plan for any
11 type of cross professional development, since
12 your school would be within the same district
13 with Hackett? Any thoughts about any
14 professional development opportunities within
15 the district?

16 MR. HARRIS: Yes. Well, I want that.
17 I've known Mr. Ray for several years, worked
18 with him in school improvement processes. I
19 know the superintendent over at Mansfield, I've
20 worked with him quite often, and when I was
21 stationed out at the co-op, at the Western
22 Co-op I met with him a lot, so they are friends
23 of mine. I consider them friends of mine. I
24 know them, I've worked with them in school
25 improvement. I would like that community of --

1 of learning to go on with all of these. Really
2 the Mansfield and Hackett are really the
3 closest to us. Greenwood is kind of out there
4 a ways and so on.

5 But I think that we could, if we form a
6 triumphant down here for the kids' sake, for
7 the kids' sake, get past personalities and get
8 past all of that, because really when it's all
9 said and done, if we don't improve -- that's
10 our contract with you. I wouldn't have signed
11 the thing if I didn't think we could do it. I
12 mean, I'll be honest with you. And with the
13 group that we have here, they are passionate
14 about it. Passionate.

15 So I think that we could get -- I think we
16 can all go together. I mean, our board
17 president is working with Mr. Ray as far as
18 facilities there in the old Hartford District.
19 We had the City give us a medical building in
20 the city that we could refurbish for a dollar a
21 year. So we have those type of things going
22 for us. So if we can work together, I -- I
23 really believe we can, I don't think any
24 thought against anybody, you know what I'm say;
25 so --

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: There were a couple of
2 questions that -- in looking through the
3 application. So one line of questioning
4 relates to meeting the Right to Read Act. And
5 with you starting out at the elementary level
6 with those early grades, you're going to have a
7 lot of professional development requirements
8 for those teachers.

9 Also just in the application, a lack of
10 clarity in terms of the -- the reading
11 curriculum, making sure that you have a plan
12 for having a -- having a dyslexia program,
13 making sure that there is a curriculum for
14 teaching reading, how students are going to
15 learn to decode. So I think just there --
16 there is not a lot of clarity there. And when
17 you have a -- an approach where teachers are
18 going to be building their own curriculum --

19 MR. HARRIS: Well --

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- then I think -- I
21 think we need to -- yes, if you could talk
22 through some of those things for me.

23 MR. HARRIS: Very good.

24 Yes, well, the western -- we look to ADE
25 for a lot of help, a lot of specialists, we

1 look to Western Co-op, they have a lot of
2 reading specialists, reading specialists at the
3 co-op, so we're going to, when we get our
4 school improvement specialist in and our
5 reading person and instructional person, we
6 will work to get that all in place for us.

7 BYOC curriculum gives us -- gives us the
8 resources and things to augment, you know, what
9 the different things that are required. So we
10 would use that for that, with the assessments
11 and so on. But I will have a curriculum
12 instructional person in the school when we get
13 approved, and they will line that up.

14 We're looking for a literacy specialist,
15 someone, an administrator or someone for our
16 school improvement person to do -- really work
17 with the PLCs and do those things.

18 So I'll leave it at that because I think
19 that would be the best thing because I don't -- I
20 put that in there just because that is our
21 focus, but in all of that is that -- that meat
22 that you're talking about that needs to be
23 completed, and we will do that with our school
24 improvement person.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So -- so that role

1 would fall to your half-time school improvement
2 specialist is what you would say?

3 MR. HARRIS: Yes, sir. Yes, ma'am, it
4 sure will.

5 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Panel,
6 additional questions from the application?

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: So the number that you
8 have starting out is 100, 100 students in the
9 first year.

10 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so how -- how
12 confident that you'll meet that mark, and then
13 what -- do you feel like the school would be
14 financially solvent if you started to drift
15 below that?

16 Because a hundred students in a school
17 starting up is not, you know, not very many.
18 And so I'm just, you know, looking at your
19 budget, there is kind of a razor thin margin on
20 what you're planning, proposing, staffing, how
21 to staff and running it.

22 You know, so that part of it is just what
23 are the -- what are the likelihoods of hitting
24 those numbers and then what is the plan if you
25 don't?

1 MR. HARRIS: Well, we looked at that,
2 and -- and we're hoping for sure to get the
3 hundred or more if we have to -- but we can't
4 first year so we're kind of -- but we've -- we
5 estimated that about 65 students is as low as
6 we would go and we would have to combine
7 classes and things like that.

8 With 100 that we have in place -- and it
9 would be viable, we would be able to keep all
10 of our mechanisms in place as far as the school
11 improvement piece and all those different
12 things. We would combine classes, well, with
13 less students you would able to do that more so
14 than not.

15 But as it is right now, we would -- we
16 would try to start -- we would try to do school
17 at 65 students if we didn't make the number.
18 The 100 students would -- I think we're
19 adequate enough. There is some leeway built
20 into the budget, it's figured at 90 percent of
21 what we would get, so there is budget and Title
22 I money and SLA money and different places
23 there. I didn't put in special ed money and I
24 didn't put in the other money, the Title V
25 money that we would get for a rural school and

1 different things like that.

2 So when I turned it in, I said, what would
3 you do if you didn't have the school or the
4 students show up? I said -- I figured all the
5 difference and I put that equation in our -- in
6 that, those numbers in our application, and 65
7 students, I believe, is what we would want to
8 have to start with.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: So, you know, I've grew up
10 in Logan County over at Paris and I was the
11 principal over at Western Yell and we went to
12 Hartford a lot and Hackett and played them in
13 sports, and so I'm familiar with the area.

14 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I know a lot of the
16 language and things that we heard today, you
17 know, language is important.

18 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: You know, very important
20 to parents and things like that when we're
21 making school decisions. And so a lot of
22 things really felt like, you know, more about
23 school improvement and less about enhancing
24 education or the educational opportunities.
25 And so, you know, in the presentation there

1 wasn't lot of things that -- you know, what
2 else on top -- I can go to Hackett, I can go
3 get these educational things, I can get
4 character type education and stuff.

5 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: So -- and so I just --
7 that -- that -- the feel to it just feels like
8 it's, you know, almost like you're going to get
9 the barebones when you come to us. And so I
10 just wonder about the marketing and the
11 messaging that just really feels -- may not
12 seem to be attractive to parents and so that's
13 just kind of my, I guess, comment.

14 I don't know if there is a question in
15 there but that's just kind of the feel I get
16 and I just have some concerns about being able
17 to attract people other than, you know, maybe
18 people that feel like, hey, there is a school
19 in Hartford and it's kind of resurrecting
20 that -- that old -- old district.

21 MR. HARRIS: Yeah, and I understand that.
22 And really the concentration has been on --
23 on -- you get kind of like tunnel vision on the
24 students that are needing the help and you kind
25 of forget about, you know, just the everyday

1 student that's going to be going to school
2 there and that's not left behind. The
3 concentration here has been more on -- on we're
4 going to deal with those economically
5 disadvantaged students and so on like that.
6 But the school is going to have all the
7 accouterments of language and science and math
8 and all of those kinds of things, we're going
9 to work to put that in place, all of the
10 curriculum, all of the things that we need to
11 do that.

12 It is -- and you hear the school
13 improvement piece because I feel like that --
14 that type of student, you know, the students in
15 need and so on, that's probably my school
16 improvement background. But the school is
17 going to be able to educate every student. Any
18 student that walks in that door, whether it's
19 special ed or any student, will have the best
20 education they can get and they will have the
21 materials an different that they need to have.
22 We will have that.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Can I follow up on -- I
24 want to kind of follow up on that just a
25 second.

1 MR. HARRIS: Okay.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: As I -- you know, when I
3 look at your numbers and I keep coming back to
4 this, so I was just doing some checking here.
5 But when Hartford closed K-12 they had 228
6 students.

7 MR. HARRIS: That's right.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: And you're projecting
9 100 -- let me call back up my numbers here.

10 MR. HARRIS: The first year, yeah, 100.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, 100 K-5 alone. They
12 had 228 from K-12. And, you know, one of the
13 comments that the superintendent made, they had
14 reached a point where it was costing more to
15 operate the school with that enrollment. I
16 don't see you-all getting around that. I guess
17 I don't see the 300 students K-12 eventually,
18 and they went down with 228, so just a comment
19 on that. I'm trying to just, you know, make a
20 rational decision here.

21 MR. HARRIS: Okay. There is a little bit
22 of difference in us, and in fact our budget.
23 We -- we do have waivers and -- and we will
24 save some money on our budget just because we
25 will be small. But it also -- the

1 open-enrollment charter opens the door for us
2 to pull from other areas that they were not
3 able to.

4 There is not a lot of schools, I don't
5 believe, that advertise and really worked. I
6 know -- I know Hackett has been advertising for
7 people on Channel 5 and different things down
8 there. But we're going to try -- we're going
9 to try to blitz Facebook, every media, social
10 media that we can. And we want the hundred
11 number, we want to get that hundred number, and
12 so we're going to work very hard to do that.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. What about
14 transportation? So are y'all providing
15 transportation?

16 MR. HARRIS: We have a -- we have a bus.
17 Yes, we will. We have money for a bus in the
18 budget.

19 We -- we're going to have a half-time bus
20 driver for not only to pick up students but
21 also for activities.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I was just
23 wondering, one -- one bus. You know that's
24 kind of a rural --

25 MR. HARRIS: That's true.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: I used to drive a bus for
2 Arkadelphia. My route was 36 miles long in the
3 morning and the afternoon, so that's --

4 MR. HARRIS: Yeah. And I drove one for a
5 church one time, you know, but it's like --
6 it's like this. My wife and I are youth
7 pastors, as old as we are, we are youth
8 pastors.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. So will one bus get
10 it, I guess is my question.

11 MR. HARRIS: If you have a church bus,
12 you're going to have more kids at church than
13 you are without one. And I believe the bus, if
14 we can afford two, we'll get two, because that
15 gives the ability of parents -- I think there
16 is a lot of barriers in public schools because
17 economically disadvantaged, parents even if
18 they have an after-school program, they can't
19 afford it -- and if you're not doing buses to
20 keep them there, it's a barrier. So I would
21 love three buses.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah.

23 MR. HARRIS: But this first year -- now, I
24 mean, I'm kind of like you looking at it
25 myself.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

2 MR. HARRIS: You're looking at that and
3 all of a sudden now we're here in March and we
4 have the first enrollment, if we have a
5 hundred, praise the Lord; but if we don't we're
6 going to have to work more and more, and that's
7 what I'm talking about there.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

9 MR. HARRIS: We want to try to get as much
10 transportation because that helps.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, sure. Sure. Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Do you have a follow up
13 to Dr. Hernandez?

14 DR. OWOH: Yeah. Quick follow up with the
15 enrollment number. You said you could function
16 with 65 --

17 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

18 DR. OWOH: -- by combining classes?

19 MR. HARRIS: Yeah.

20 DR. OWOH: Can you kind of expound on how
21 you would combine those classes, considering
22 that you're recruiting the students who
23 possibly have some academic challenges, and so
24 if you're going to combine them, what would
25 that look like in that setting?

1 MR. HARRIS: I think it would still be
2 under 15 students per classroom if it's K-1, 2,
3 3, 4, 5, I still think that you would have the
4 ability to do the program.

5 I mean we've had a lot of conversations
6 about this as far as what we want to do with
7 character education, what we'll do with PLPs
8 and different things.

9 I think the numbers would still be able
10 to -- for you to be viable as that piece of --
11 of educating -- giving the students an
12 education that would move them forward on
13 that -- even on that level. You get below that
14 and then, you know, you're starting having to
15 do some things.

16 The last thing we would do is cut staff.
17 We would cut everything else that we could, and
18 the programs that we have in place.

19 So you look at that and it's -- it's a
20 descending --

21 DR. OWOH: Uh-huh.

22 MR. HARRIS: -- value, and so the lower
23 that you get on students, the more that you
24 need to really be cost effective on it.

25 But our main concern is -- is the

1 betterment of the students, if the school is
2 built for the sake of the students and not for
3 the sake of the adults; and so whatever the
4 school can do without, we want the students to
5 have -- so I'm just saying --

6 DR. OWOH: So you mentioned combining
7 classes.

8 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

9 DR. OWOH: So what would that look like?
10 You how do you envision that working?

11 MR. HARRIS: Well, K-1, 2, 3, 4, 5 first
12 year. And so if you look at that relative to
13 65 students or 60 students, where ever that
14 hits, I think it would still be viable for us
15 to do what we want to do. Just like the
16 hundred would be if we had that and kept all of
17 the teachers.

18 We looked at both ends of that. We want
19 the school, we want more than 65 students, we
20 would like more than 100 but we wanted to stay
21 within reason because you are the ones that
22 approve us. And if we put 300 out there, well,
23 there is no way that 300 -- you know what I'm
24 saying.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Right.

1 MR. HARRIS: So 100 is reasonable because
2 of the open enrollment, it's reasonable for us.
3 65 is reasonable because I really believe that
4 we keep the integrity of the school in that
5 number. The more buses we can afford, you
6 know, but I'm just saying we'll do whatever we
7 can to help the kids down there.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Mr. Hernandez, did you
9 have additional?

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: Only this last question.
11 I notice I didn't see a lot in the
12 presentation, but I noticed in the schedule it
13 had listed athletics. So what's the -- what
14 are the plans around that?

15 MR. HARRIS: Well, if we succeed in
16 getting 300 and we're K-12, we'll be able to do
17 that.

18 The P.E. in the elementary, we'll have the
19 P.E. in the elementary and so on like that.
20 And if there is -- there is a lot of intramural
21 athletics too in that area down there so we
22 will be able to do that. We will do, in K-5
23 this first year, we will do the P.E. and so on.

24 We wanted -- we would like to -- would
25 love to have a sports team.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So I think we've
2 gone through and addressed questions from the
3 application standpoint. Are there remaining --

4 DR. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

5 MS. McLAUGHLIN: -- remaining other
6 issues?

7 DR. BOYD: I need a clarification on the
8 goal sheet that was passed out, the 11th and
9 12th grade. On the second goal, I think
10 it's -- it's just a clarification, it says 12th
11 grade graduation rate. And then the assessment
12 instrument in the second column appears to be
13 off.

14 I'm assuming that that's just supposed to
15 say state calculated graduation rate?

16 MR. HARRIS: My mistake.

17 DR. BOYD: Okay. I just wanted to clear
18 that up.

19 MR. HARRIS: That's my mistake.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And a question I had,
21 and I'm not sure, it may be down in the waiver
22 section and I just didn't see it, but will they
23 need a waiver from the 38 required units up
24 until the time that they have implemented the
25 9-12, and do they already have that?

1 MS. HYATT: So we actually covered that
2 during the -- that was the one that I picked up
3 on during his presentation, it's 1-A.1.2, just
4 5-8 curriculum for three years I think is all
5 they will need a waiver of, since when they
6 move into high school it's all at once, so they
7 won't offer 9-12 so they won't need a waiver,
8 and then when they do offer it, they will be
9 offering it in all grades.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All of them at once?

11 MS. HYATT: Yes, ma'am.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So that -- that makes
13 sense.

14 Okay. So as we go on through and maybe
15 pick up on a few more questions, do -- with any
16 of our systems, are there remaining issues or
17 questions that maybe didn't get addressed?

18 It looks like we do have one from our
19 fiscal support.

20 We'll need every to state their name and
21 title for the record.

22 MS. QAZI: Saliha Qazi, Program Fiscal
23 Manager.

24 One thing that I noticed in the budget was
25 their federal funding. They have budgeted

1 60,000 in Title I, around \$66,000. And then in
2 the expenditure they only budgeted 32,000. And
3 federal funding is reimbursed based on the
4 expenditures that are reported in the system,
5 so they would have to balance that out, that
6 would increase their ending bottom number.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: I just have a follow up to
8 that. Ms. Qazi, this may be kind of a follow
9 up. So that's -- the 60 -- that was something
10 I didn't notice in the original budget, about
11 having the 60 in Title I. Is that -- for the
12 number of students, that being 100 students, is
13 60,000 a reasonable revenue stream?

14 MS. QAZI: So that's -- that's why we
15 don't recommend the schools to include federal
16 funding in their initial budget, is because the
17 formula to calculate federal funding, whether
18 it's Title I, Title II, or Title VI is based
19 upon the federal funds that ADE receives and
20 how it's allocated through several districts.

21 So initially when we had that
22 conversation, the first budget as you can see
23 has the zero line item. That -- that was my
24 recommendation to excluded that, but since they
25 have such low number in enrollment they had to

1 include that amount.

2 So -- so there is no -- no way I can tell
3 you the calculation is accurate or not.

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: Because it seemed, one, it
5 was high, normally we don't see that budgeted
6 as a revenue line item.

7 Okay. Thank you.

8 MS. QAZI: Uh-huh.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. But before you
10 leave, so -- and so the Title I was included in
11 the budget that we got today --

12 MR. HARRIS: Uh-huh.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- but it was not in
14 the original budget that we looked at; right?

15 MS. QAZI: Yes.

16 MR. HARRIS: Yeah.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Is there
18 anything else then from the fiscal operations?

19 MS. QAZI: That's all.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. That's helpful.
21 Thank you.

22 Okay. On the student support from special
23 education, in -- in looking at that, no
24 concerns emerged, or child nutrition?

25 Okay. I think we covered facilities and

1 transportation, family and community
2 engagement, you talked about that quite a bit,
3 and we've gone through most of these other
4 system things.

5 So are there any remaining questions from
6 the Panel? Or any remaining issues, Dr. Boyd
7 or Ms. Hyatt, that you can think of?

8 Okay. So I think we have all of the
9 information and have heard the -- the
10 presentation. So if there isn't any more
11 discussion at this time, I would entertain a
12 motion.

13 MR. WILSON: I move the approval of the
14 application.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion
16 to approve the application.

17 Okay. There is no second. The motion
18 dies for lack of a second.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: I move that we deny the
20 application.

21 DR. OWOH: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion
23 and a second to deny the application. All
24 those in favor, say, "Aye."

25 PANEL MEMBERS: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Opposed?

2 MR. WILSON: No.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. That motion
4 carries. The motion -- or the motion carries
5 to deny the application. We will take a few
6 minutes to record our responses and the
7 votes --

8 MR. HARRIS: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: -- and then give you
10 some feedback.

11 MR. HARRIS: All right.

12 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. We will go ahead
13 and state our reasons.

14 So, Dr. Hernandez, do you want to start?

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yes. I voted for the
16 motion. I just have concerns about the lack of
17 need that was identified by the applicant for
18 the charter and also the viability of the
19 charter.

20 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Kremers?

21 DR. KREMERS: I voted in support to deny
22 the application; concerns about small
23 enrollment, fiscal viability, and the ability
24 to provide services beyond what can be provided
25 through the existing -- existing district

1 configuration.

2 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh?

3 DR. OWOH: I voted to -- in agreement with
4 the motion, based upon the application
5 presentation there is not -- or did not seem to
6 be a significant need for the school in the
7 community. There is also concerns about the
8 enrollment numbers, also lacked innovation that
9 would be provided to the students.

10 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Dr. Williams?

11 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion. I
12 have concerns about the school enrolling enough
13 students to be financially viable, also a need,
14 a significant need has not been identified that
15 differentiates it from the current offerings in
16 the area.

17 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson?

18 MR. WILSON: I voted -- I voted against
19 the motion. I felt there was demonstrated
20 considerable community support, which makes me
21 a little more optimistic that the numbers --
22 student numbers will be there.

23 It sounds like you-all collaborated quite
24 a bit with other districts in the areas as well
25 as some hometown people. But I don't disagree

1 again that the financial aspect is a close
2 call.

3 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. That is the end
4 of our action item. And I hope that our
5 feedback has been helpful.

6 MR. HARRIS: It has.

7 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: We do appreciate you
8 for being here and appreciate your presentation
9 and the time you've taken.

10 MR. HARRIS: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Boyd, I
12 understand you would like to review the agenda
13 for our next meeting and make sure that we all
14 have the correct dates and understanding of
15 what -- what's going to be coming up after
16 this.

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

18 So you have a meeting scheduled for
19 September, and currently all that, hopefully
20 we, will have on the addenda will be the
21 transition of getting charter school the new --
22 waivers of the new standards, of the current
23 standards.

24 Also I just sent you an email minutes ago
25 about -- with the attached list of renewals.

1 And so I just wanted to revisit that with
2 you-all. These will be applications that you
3 will see in December, and so I just wanted to
4 make you aware of those and would like for you
5 to consider scheduling some visits to these
6 schools before December.

7 Last year we all did a great job on making
8 sure that one of you had been to each of the
9 schools on the list, and I think that really
10 helped with the process for renewals.

11 Ms. Newton has expressed that she would
12 like to go to the school in Warren. And
13 Dr. Williams has noted that if there were any
14 schools in the northwest Arkansas area, he
15 would be happy to go to those. So I think that
16 would be the Pea Ridge Manufacturing and
17 Business Academy.

18 So I don't expect you to decide today on
19 what you're going to visit, which ones you're
20 going to visit, but I just wanted to make sure
21 that was on your radar.

22 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And again, the
23 renewals are December?

24 DR. BOYD: That's correct.

25 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And are we planning two

1 days --

2 DR. BOYD: Two days.

3 DR. PFEFFER: -- for the renewals?

4 DR. BOYD: That's correct.

5 You will hear open-enrollments on one day
6 and then district conversions on the next day.

7 And you'll see to have listed the
8 individual campuses, but for the Pine Bluff
9 Lighthouse Academy, they are actually together,
10 so there is two different schools under that
11 one charter but they are actually located
12 together, so the list looks like there is one
13 more renewal than there is.

14 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay.

15 DR. BOYD: Do you have any questions about
16 that?

17 MR. WILSON: Madam Chairman, could you
18 send us the list again?

19 Maybe you've already sent it and I haven't
20 seen it.

21 DR. BOYD: I just sent it about five
22 minutes ago, so you should have it now. I know
23 how emails can get lost.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: So you have two -- I'm
25 looking at the list now. The top list, are

1 these all -- all of these are renewals?

2 DR. BOYD: Renewals for open-enrollment,
3 and then the bottom is the district
4 conversions.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. That -- I wanted to
6 know what was the difference there.

7 DR. BOYD: Yes, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: And then the Charter
9 Office will be then in contact with us about
10 kind of assigning out schools to visit between
11 now and then.

12 DR. BOYD: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Is that the way you
14 want to handle that?

15 DR. BOYD: Yes. If you want to let us
16 know what schools you want to go to then we'll
17 schedule a day for you and schedule those
18 visits for you. And you guys, I mean multiple,
19 more than one person could go to a school.
20 It's just if you go to the school on the same
21 day we just have to put out a press release; so
22 that could happen, it doesn't have to happen,
23 it's just a note.

24 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. And I want to
25 make sure that we tell you how much we

1 appreciate you and all the work that you do
2 with charters. Don't know for sure by
3 September how much transition will happen, but
4 we all are very appreciative of the work that
5 you've done, I know your office is, and we're
6 proud of you to keep working in your new
7 capacity and know that we'll probably still
8 have a lot of questions. But we really do
9 appreciate you, and I wanted to make sure that
10 that was on the record.

11 DR. BOYD: Thank you. And I appreciate
12 it.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely.

14 DR. BOYD: Thank you.

15 And, of course, I wouldn't be able to do
16 anything without my team, so I really
17 appreciate their support.

18 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Yes.

19 DR. BOYD: So I'm here to -- I'm a public
20 servant in my heart so I'm here to serve
21 continually, just hopefully I won't be at the
22 microphone as much.

23 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: All right. Are
24 there -- is there anything else we need to
25 discuss then today?

1 MS. BARNES: Uh-huh. Can I speak?

2 I'm the Launch Director for our charter
3 school. And the main thing that we were
4 pushing, and Mr. Harris didn't touch on it
5 much, is the individualized lesson plans. We
6 had so many parents that really jumped when
7 they heard that their child was going to be --
8 have individualized learning plan for each
9 student.

10 And when we asked to combine the classes,
11 we have so many retired educators, several that
12 was wanting to give their time to come and
13 help, so I don't know if y'all had considered
14 that or not even though you already voted.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. So -- and I -- I
16 think I may have something that will make you
17 feel a little bit better too. That when --
18 during the last legislative session, our
19 State's Accountability Legislation was updated
20 and we now have where every student will have a
21 student success plan. And the training is
22 starting this fall for educators in the
23 professional development about what those
24 student success plans should entail. So every
25 student at least by 8th grade, and we know so

1 many schools are going to implement this
2 earlier on, but at least by 8th grade there
3 will be a student success plan that will
4 really, truly outline all of the elements that
5 a student is going to need in progressing
6 through their high school all the way through,
7 so that -- that there truly is a plan that's
8 going to encompass more than just classes that
9 they take, but look at their strengths, look at
10 the areas of interest, look at all the
11 opportunities, that will involve the parents
12 and the students at the school. So --

13 MS. BARNES: That's important. Real
14 important, yes.

15 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: So we are excited and
16 hopefully that will help you-all know that your
17 vision is shared by us and we want that for all
18 of our students.

19 So thank you-all for being here.

20 MS. BARNES: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. If there is not
22 anything else, I will accept a motion to
23 adjourn.

24 DR. OWOH: So moved.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Second.

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CHAIRMAN PFEFFER: Okay. Motion and
second. All those in favor.

PANEL MEMBERS: Aye.

DR. PFEFFER: Thank you for your hard
work.

(WHEREUPON, at 1:38 p.m., the
above-entitled proceedings were concluded.)

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1 EXHIBITS FOR AGENDA ITEM A-1

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