

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

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*December 19, 2018*

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

DECEMBER 19, 2018  
8:30 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ	Acting Chairperson ADE State Superintendent
MR. MIKE WILSON	Attorney & Education Advocate
MS. TOYCE NEWTON	Past State Board of Ed. Member
DR. NACCAMAN WILLIAMS	Past State Board of Ed. Member
MR. GREG ROGERS	ADE Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal and Admin. Services
DR. ANGELA KREMERS	Deputy Director - Career & Technical Education/ Ark. Dept. of Career Ed.

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. MARY CLAIRE HYATT	ADE Specialist
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ALSO APPEARING:

DR. ALEXANDRA BOYD	Asst. to Director - Public School Accountability
MR. REGINALD BALLARD	Public School Program Coordinator
MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN	Public School Program Advisor

LOCATION:

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

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EXHIBIT TWO (2)

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EXHIBIT THREE (3)

Beating the Odds: Math ACT Aspire, 2017 Report

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We'll go ahead and call the meeting to order, Ladies and Gentlemen. The December 19, 2018 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is called to order. I would like to welcome everyone to the ADE Auditorium. Please silence all electronic devices.

I would like to introduce the Panel. The Charter Authorizing Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision, and revocation of charters. Recently passed Act 462 of 2017 allows individuals outside the Department to serve on the Panel. In accordance with Act 462, and in an effort to increase representation for multiple stakeholder groups, Commissioner Key has named seven members to the Charter Authorizing Panel:

- Dr. Ivy Pfeffer, ADE Deputy Commissioner;
- Greg Rogers, ADE Assistant Commissioner for Fiscal and Administrative Services;
- Dr. Mike Hernandez, State Superintendent for Office of Coordinated Support and Service;
- Dr. Angela Kremers, Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education at the Arkansas Department of Career Education;
- Mike Wilson, education advocate and attorney in

1 Jacksonville;

2 Dr. Naccaman Williams, former State Board of  
3 Education member from August 11, 2004, to June 30,  
4 2011;

5 Toyce Newton, former State Board of Education  
6 member from August 18, 2009, to June 30, 2016.

7 As Acting Chair today, my goal is to facilitate  
8 a fair and responsible hearing. I will request that  
9 each person speaking please state your name and title  
10 for the record. I will ask that you continue to  
11 speak clearly into the microphone for the benefit of  
12 the Panel, the audience, and the viewing audience.

13 The entire meeting is being livestreamed and  
14 recorded. Ms. Sharon Hill, the court reporter, will  
15 be providing a transcript of the meeting and it will  
16 be posted to the ADE website.

17 A-1: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL:  
18 FOUNTAIN LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL COBRA DIGITAL PREP ACADEMY

19 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We will now move into our  
20 action agenda. Mr. Ballard, you are recognized.

21 MR. BALLARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Reginald  
22 Ballard, Arkansas Department of Education.

23 Our first action on the agenda is a request for  
24 District Conversion Charter School Renewal for  
25 Fountain Lake Middle School Cobra Digital Prep

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Academy.

On January 16, 2014, the Charter Authorizing Panel approved the application for Fountain Lake Middle School Cobra Digital Prep Academy. The charter is approved to serve students in grades 5-8 with a maximum enrollment of 500. The representatives of Fountain Lake Middle School Cobra Digital Prep Academy are appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel to request renewal of their current charter.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. And, Ms. Hyatt, if you would, just review the process for us today.

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

So everyone, with the exception of the attorneys representing the applicants, who plan to speak or provide testimony to you today need to be sworn before they speak.

The charter schools will have 20 minutes to present their application for renewal; anyone who is opposed to the application will share 20 minutes subsequently; and then the applicant will have an additional 5 minutes for any rebuttal. Of course, you have the option to extend time as you see necessary. And following the rebuttal time you have

1 the option to ask questions and have any remaining  
2 discussion before you take whatever action you choose  
3 to take.

4 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

5 Will all representatives of the charter and  
6 those speaking in opposition please rise and raise  
7 your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the  
8 testimony you're about to give will be the truth, the  
9 whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

10 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

12 Representatives of Fountain Lake Middle School,  
13 if you would, you have 20 minutes to start your  
14 presentation.

15 SUPT. MURPHY: Good morning. First and  
16 foremost, I would like to thank you for giving us the  
17 opportunity here to present today. My name is Dr.  
18 Michael Murphy. I've served 32 years in education,  
19 the past 17 years at a district level. And I am very  
20 honored today to kind of describe to you the vision  
21 of learning for the Fountain Lake School District.  
22 I've been blessed with the opportunity to lead the  
23 Fountain Lake School District for the past two-and-a-  
24 half years.

25 And so what I'm going to describe to you is the

1 journey that the district has taken over the last 10  
2 years, in which it started with an engagement process  
3 of the community, students, and administrative  
4 leaders to try to formulate a very student-centered  
5 approach to education. And so with that, the overall  
6 mission of the district is for the Fountain Lake  
7 School District join with the community to inspire,  
8 motivate, and prepare every student to be a  
9 competent, productive, knowledgeable, goal-oriented  
10 citizen. And our vision in that regard, to follow  
11 with the mission, is supporting every student every  
12 day for success. As educators, we know the  
13 challenges that we face providing services to  
14 individual students.

15 Today, we are going to describe to you the  
16 approaches that have been utilized and we seek the  
17 continuation of waivers and flexibility to design the  
18 student learning environment that we feel best serves  
19 our community.

20 It's my privilege today to introduce our  
21 building principal who has served in this capacity  
22 the past nine years and has led the middle school to  
23 where it is today in this renewal process. That  
24 individual is Mr. Frank Janaskie, and I'm going to  
25 turn the podium over to him.



1                   MR. JANASKIE: Good morning. First, I thank you  
2 for the opportunity for us to share our success story  
3 over the last four-and-a-half years. We've done a  
4 lot of great work with our kids, our teachers, and  
5 our staff, and our parents. So we're very pleased  
6 and very proud of what we've been able to accomplish  
7 over the last four-and-a-half years.

8                   The mission of Fountain Lake Middle School is to  
9 provide our students with the knowledge and skills in  
10 preparation for high school, college, and career  
11 readiness. Our motto of the district, "Preparing  
12 every student every day" -- and when you walk into  
13 our building you're going to see those words that  
14 simply say "Every Student Every Day," because that's  
15 the mission for us. We're here to work for all of  
16 our kids, regardless of where they're coming from,  
17 academic ability -- because what we're looking for is  
18 to see some success so that when our kids walk out of  
19 the middle school in the 8th grade they know they  
20 have the chance to do high school better, make some  
21 career plans. Because we started those career plans  
22 back in the 5th grade and that's probably one of the  
23 most unique parts of what we're going to do.

24                   So, a little bit about the district itself. We  
25 are just to the northeast of Hot Springs. We call

1 ourselves kind of a bedroom community. We don't have  
2 any real -- we'll call it industry, per se, Hot  
3 Springs being very much into tourism. Most of the  
4 industry is outside of our district. We do have a  
5 very large retirement community with Hot Springs  
6 Village. The district serves approximately 1300,  
7 1400 students. Currently, my enrollment is probably  
8 right around 417 students grades 5-12 -- 5-8.

9 We serve a population that's approximately 52%  
10 to 57% free and reduced. That percentage would  
11 probably increase just a little bit if I could get  
12 all of my kids to remember to bring those papers back  
13 in. If you've been dealing with school districts,  
14 then you understand that problem as well. Our goal  
15 is to serve all of our students.

16 When we started down this path four-and-a-half  
17 years ago, we were looking to do school differently.  
18 Because of your opportunity and chance, we've been  
19 trying to make that a reality.

20 So the design for Fountain Lake Middle School,  
21 we want our kids to be on track for college and  
22 career readiness when they leave the 8th grade. We  
23 want them to have an opportunity to receive high  
24 school credit in middle school. We want them to have  
25 exposure to a variety of professions. We want them

1 to have chances to excel in STEM, fine arts,  
2 accelerated academics. We want to prepare them for  
3 the soft skills; so we have them participate in  
4 character education. We want them to demonstrate and  
5 apply and engage in 21st century skills. We're not  
6 talking about 21st century skills -- and people are  
7 still saying, "Hey, we have to get our kids ready for  
8 the 21st century." I've got news for you: it's  
9 almost 2019; we're in the 21st century. Hopefully at  
10 this point in time we'll begin to figure out what are  
11 they going to need in the middle part of the century.  
12 Experience. Extended learning time through project-  
13 based classes -- now you're also going to hear me  
14 refer to them as experience-based classes. So I  
15 don't want to confuse you if I'm going in two  
16 different directions, but experience-based and  
17 project-based, in my world, is the same thing because  
18 it's hands-on. It's an opportunity for you to  
19 succeed and it's also an opportunity for you to fail  
20 and then figure out why you failed. And that's  
21 usually one of the greatest things I get to hear some  
22 of my kids talk about -- and you'll see some of those  
23 in our presentation. And, of course, personalized  
24 learning.

25 As you look at our school data, it's going to

1 reflect some of our goals. Our goals were to meet  
2 and exceed the state average -- math performance --  
3 and you're going to see it's four levels at this  
4 point in time. The bottom end is the PARCC  
5 assessments and top three are our ACT Aspire. And  
6 this is going to be our comparison building-wide.  
7 These are our ELA performance -- once again, PARCC on  
8 the bottom. And the reason that you don't see  
9 anything at the top is those numbers haven't been  
10 released yet, and I can't pull -- you can see that  
11 ELA based on Aspire. And then, our reading goals.  
12 You know, through the -- there was some hard work of  
13 our teachers, our students, and our community. Our  
14 school has earned a rating of B. I think we're  
15 somewhere about just under a point-and-a-half to two  
16 points from that A -- and just like you, I want an A,  
17 you know. It becomes that competitive nature. But  
18 we're doing great things in our school. We see what  
19 we're doing. And I follow cohort groups from  
20 beginning to end, I'm watching growth; I'm watching  
21 our students grow from the time that they started in  
22 the 5th grade till the time that they exit.

23 These are some of our MAP data from NWEA that  
24 measures annual progress. The yellow is beginning  
25 with the fall and then our test in the spring. And

1 as you look at some of this information -- once  
2 again, here's reading -- you're going, "hmmm,  
3 interesting that you have a digression of the  
4 starting." But we've also included more students in  
5 our school coming in. But, once again, we're also  
6 working on that goal of growth -- what can we do to  
7 get kids to grow and be prepared when they walk out  
8 our door.

9 In the 8th grade I probably am serving half of  
10 my students in Algebra I, and so a class of about 100  
11 to 110 kids. Half of those students are prepared and  
12 ready to take Algebra I, and they're being  
13 successful. We believe part of that is also through  
14 that aspect of what we do with hands-on learning and  
15 the communication, of being able to talk to kids  
16 about reality. Okay. Being able to use those real-  
17 world projects to full term.

18 We started this journey with the ability to  
19 teach the soft skills necessary for students to be  
20 successful. In the folder you're going to see kids  
21 collaborating together. Now they're kind of  
22 intrigued about what's going on, but they're not  
23 arguing; they're collaborating. They're talking with  
24 each other and trying to figure out -- and the solar  
25 system is all around and why there's heat coming out

1 of that light.

2 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Janaskie --

3 MR. JANASKIE: Yes, sir.

4 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: -- could you get a little  
5 closer to the mic --

6 MR. JANASKIE: I'm sorry about that.

7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: -- for the audience? Thank  
8 you.

9 MR. JANASKIE: I'm used to talking loud, so --

10 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah.

11 MR. JANASKIE: That's all right.

12 AUDIO TECH: When he drops his voice down, it's  
13 very hard to hear.

14 MR. JANASKIE: I understand.

15 We provide a time for students to work in a  
16 digital world. We provided a one-to-one ChromeBook  
17 for our students in grades 5-8. Our district has  
18 spent resources on making sure that our kids have  
19 access to the internet without dropping. Our kids  
20 are prepared to take MAP tests online. Our kids have  
21 been prepared to take the ACT Aspire online. Our  
22 kids have skills that are preparing them for 21st  
23 century jobs.

24 We are having communication with parents and  
25 students and stakeholders about the jobs that are

1 going to happen. Now, if you have a 5th grader or  
2 you've got a grandson or a granddaughter, every 5th  
3 grader, who happens to be somewhere between the age  
4 of 9 and 10, this time of the year it's -- well, I  
5 want to be an NBA basketball star. Okay. Two months  
6 ago, it was "I want to be an NFL star" -- okay -- or  
7 a cheerleader. So we're trying to have a  
8 communication with our kids, "Hey, what are you  
9 interested in?" "Well, I like" -- and we go from  
10 there. If you're able to get a 5th grader to kind of  
11 say "Well, you know, I'd like to be a football  
12 player," okay, that's not out of the realm of  
13 possibility; I don't care if you're only, you know,  
14 three feet tall. "I want to be a fireman," "I want  
15 to be a lawyer," "I want to be a nurse," "I want to  
16 be an engineer," "I want to be a tattoo artist" --  
17 well, those are all great careers and you're giving  
18 us lots of ideas, because then we're going to try to  
19 go find those careers to bring in and have those  
20 conversations with kids; "I'm going to tell you about  
21 the jobs that I do and we're going to let you ask  
22 some questions" -- what does it take to be that  
23 position? What does it take to be a police officer?  
24 What does it take to be an engineer? What does it  
25 take to be a doctor? What does it take to be a

1 construction worker? We've created an advisory class  
2 built on the habits of Stephen Covey's Seven -- the  
3 Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teams. Each day our  
4 kids start off with a 20-minute class and we talk  
5 about goal-setting; we talk about ways to be  
6 proactive; we talk about ways to be collaborative  
7 with each other; we talk about soft skills and how  
8 you need to interact with each other and with adults  
9 or kids or community members; how do you need to  
10 present yourself if I bring in a guest speaker who  
11 can stand on stage and tell you a little bit about  
12 the careers that you're going to think about. We do  
13 synergy assemblies to look at student data, student  
14 performance, and these are guided by our students  
15 themselves. Every student is being given the  
16 opportunity to lead and present. That to us was one  
17 of the important factors, having that oral  
18 communication as a factor for all the kids leaving  
19 the middle school; that was a half-credit that they  
20 got to have on their high school transcript.

21 During our advisory, we also have conversations  
22 about what interests do you have, where do you want  
23 to go. Maybe you've already started a conversation  
24 at home about being in college. Maybe you've already  
25 started a conversation about working for dad or mom



1 or following in their footsteps. We're trying to get  
2 students to tell us a little bit about where they're  
3 trying to go. And, once again, I get -- a 5th  
4 grader's plan is much different than an 8th grader's  
5 plan -- but it's so much better to walk out of the  
6 middle school in the 8th grade and have a plan. I've  
7 looked at way too many kids in 9th and 10th and 11th  
8 grade who still don't have a plan. So we're trying  
9 to give them a thought, a plan, those skills to be  
10 proactive, to begin with the end in mind -- and, of  
11 course, to win -- have that win-win.

12 So why do we want to continue and why do we want  
13 to make our school better? So we want that  
14 flexibility to continue to do what we've done over  
15 the past four-and-a-half years. We want to be able  
16 to expose kids to career orientation, to offer them  
17 the ability to have a better life. We want them to  
18 have that ability to work together, work  
19 collaboratively.

20 Our schedule allows our kids to do things a  
21 little differently -- the 20 minutes in the morning  
22 with advisory every day; we've built in an  
23 intervention time into our day. We're looking at  
24 trying to figure out a way to strengthen kids who  
25 have it and yet, build the gaps for those kids who do

1 not. We're looking for the flexibility to continue  
2 those 21st century skills by embedding keyboarding  
3 into our classes instead of a standalone class.  
4 Those are very important to us.

5 We'd like to be able to continue the flexibility  
6 to incorporate an individualized success plan.

7 During this advisory our students have been  
8 creating a portfolio, and this portfolio is designed  
9 to follow you all the way through the middle school  
10 and into high school. We started off using Google  
11 Sites. We struggled for quite a while trying to get  
12 it developed, kind of look like what we wanted to.  
13 We've done some experimenting and some research. We  
14 found a site called See Saw. So right now our  
15 students are all putting material into what they call  
16 their See Saw account. And by material I'm talking  
17 about whether it's artwork or work they're doing in a  
18 project class or work that they're doing as just  
19 homework, good work, bad work -- but it also includes  
20 those grades. Because twice a year we're going to  
21 sit down and we're going to have the student-led  
22 conference. So we're going to invite you to come  
23 into the school and, instead of that typical parent-  
24 teacher conference, we're going to have a student-led  
25 conference. So with those habits in mind, we're

1 going to sit down and say, "These are my goals at the  
2 beginning of the year; this is where I'm at." So  
3 you're having this conversation with an adult. Right  
4 now, I've probably got about 50% of my parents coming  
5 out to see their kids -- and if the kids -- or the  
6 parents don't make it, we'll get an adult there --  
7 I'll show up, another teacher will show up, Dr.  
8 Murphy will come in and sit and be the adult -- just  
9 so that kid can present where they're at, what  
10 they've done, and then you get to say, "Well, what do  
11 you want to do from here?" And then we roll with  
12 that. We see the benefit of our kids going through  
13 these habits, being able to lead, being able to talk  
14 about their own data.

15 So there's the waivers that we've asked for in  
16 the past and would like to continue with.

17 These are some of the classes that we've been  
18 able to offer through these last four-and-a-half  
19 years. Some of them are through Project Lead the  
20 Way, some of them were designed by teachers. And we  
21 trained our teachers through East Corp. East came to  
22 our school and taught our teachers how to be  
23 facilitators instead of just teachers. Now a lot of  
24 times if you've been a teacher it's very hard to give  
25 a kid the opportunity to screw something up, the

1 ability to hand a 5th grader a scalpel and say,  
2 "Here's a brain; you get to dissect this." And they  
3 are all excited, regardless of whatever smell is  
4 coming off that brain; they're going ugh with one  
5 hand and cutting in the other. When you look at them  
6 and you've explained to them about gears and wheels,  
7 and you say, "Hey, I need this gear to make this car  
8 go" -- okay -- and 15, 20 minutes later they're still  
9 scratching their head but they have poked, prodded,  
10 tried to figure out why this gear doesn't turn this  
11 wheel. It's really cool to watch. We have given the  
12 kids the ability to say, "Hey, what other courses  
13 would you be interested in?" So as you're looking on  
14 here -- jazz band. So our 6th graders start band --  
15 our students start band in the 6th grade. So some  
16 7th and 8th graders said, "Well, we'd like to see  
17 about maybe a jazz band." One of the band directors  
18 said, "Okay." So based on their student voice, we  
19 created the jazz group. The service projects classes  
20 were also requested by those students. Service  
21 project classes have a variety of kids who are  
22 looking for ways to improve other organizations.  
23 I've had kids want to raise money for the Humane  
24 Society; I've had kids who wished to go to one of the  
25 nursing homes to present Christmas cards or Christmas

1 gifts. The teacher gives them the latitude to think  
2 of the project, lay it out, figure out if there's any  
3 cost involved, then they have to do the presentation  
4 before they can do anything else. Our kids are  
5 thinking, our kids are creating, and our kids are  
6 doing.

7 So that was one of the things that we were  
8 talking about, innovation. We're talking about  
9 middle school kids. We're talking about kids who are  
10 9 and 10, anywhere between 13 and 15 years old.  
11 We're giving them a chance to experience learning in  
12 a whole new way.

13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Janaskie --

14 MR. JANASKIE: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: -- you have two minutes  
16 remaining.

17 MR. JANASKIE: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: But you'll have an  
19 additional 5 minutes after that --

20 MR. JANASKIE: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: -- unless there's any  
22 opposition.

23 MR. JANASKIE: All right. Well, now you're  
24 going to get to watch a little bit about our school,  
25 which is always much easier to do if you're looking

1 at it. The pictures were taken by some of my digital  
2 photography students. Some of the other material was  
3 caught off of our news broadcasting team. Best way  
4 to do it is just sit back and watch.

5 (WHEREUPON, a video was shown, which may be  
6 viewed on the ADE website.)

7 MR. JANASKIE: Much of what you've seen is what  
8 we've produced for our kids for a showcase, and those  
9 showcases have occurred at the end of each of the  
10 years of our charter. So we invited our parents, our  
11 community to come to the school to see what our kids  
12 are doing on a daily basis.

13 Again, thank you for the opportunity to share  
14 this success story. Thank you for the opportunity to  
15 work at doing school differently. And I'll be honest  
16 with you, my kids wouldn't know what to do if this  
17 isn't what school looks like for us. It would be  
18 like going back in time. And I think all they want  
19 to do is go forward. So, thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Janaskie.

21 Ms. McLaughlin, is there anybody here to speak  
22 in opposition?

23 MS. McLAUGHLIN: No, there's not.

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So I think you've  
25 got an additional two minutes or so, if you need to

1 close out anything --

2 MR. JANASKIE: No, sir.

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: -- or if you're ready for  
4 questions.

5 MR. JANASKIE: We can take questions.

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. So we'll  
7 start over here with Dr. Kremers, if you have  
8 questions for the applicant.

9 DR. KREMERS: No specific questions. I would  
10 just like to comment. I visited Fountain Lake Middle  
11 School -- and thank you for the tour and for further  
12 information about how you've kind of rearranged the  
13 day and the schedule and the waivers and why you are  
14 requesting those that you are requesting, wanting to  
15 embed some of the classes that are some of the  
16 required courses and kind of the rationale for that.  
17 So, thank you for all the explanations. You have  
18 great things happening, and especially the  
19 incorporation of technology into all of the different  
20 projects and courses that the students are doing. So  
21 just my appreciation for my time there and good  
22 things that I saw.

23 MR. JANASKIE: Well, thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Dr. Williams.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Just looking at your

1 scores, they're good. Okay.

2 MR. JANASKIE: Thank you.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: And looking at all the career  
4 exploration and opportunities that you-all are  
5 providing for your kids, how are you doing all that,  
6 maintaining the high academic achievement level? We  
7 see a lot of schools that are struggling that come  
8 before us. So what's the mix here? You're creating  
9 all these opportunities for kids in various areas --  
10 and yet, you're maintaining a fairly high level of  
11 academic achievement.

12 MR. JANASKIE: Our -- I'll be honest with you,  
13 it's -- we have great teachers who have bought into  
14 this. So it's not just creating these project  
15 classes; it's also about taking those projects and  
16 tying them to what they do in a core class; it's  
17 learning how to do the research; it's learning --  
18 because when you're talking about creating some of  
19 these classes or doing a broadcasting class, you have  
20 to read and write and research and -- you know, and  
21 then stand there and present with a camera in front  
22 of you.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. That's good.

24 MR. JANASKIE: You know, teachers buy in and  
25 kids have bought in and so have their parents.



1 DR. WILLIAMS: So all these career exploration  
2 opportunities are all embedded with the core  
3 curriculum basically?

4 MR. JANASKIE: Yes, sir. And then the other way  
5 is through these intervention and enrichment classes.  
6 We're looking for gaps. We're trying to figure out  
7 where your weaknesses and strengths are. So if  
8 you've got it, you're on grade level and you're doing  
9 it, I'm going to figure out a way I can enrich you.  
10 And I want to make sure that what you're doing is the  
11 next level. If you're struggling with reading, then  
12 I'm going to go down there and we're going to figure  
13 out how we can help you.

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Good deal. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Mr. Rogers.

16 MR. ROGERS: I don't have any.

17 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Ms. Newton.

18 MS. NEWTON: I do have a question. And I  
19 commend you on the work that you've done. I think  
20 you have really shown that this model is adaptive and  
21 is working.

22 What's your greatest challenge? In all the  
23 success that you've enjoyed and the scores -- but  
24 what's your challenge as it relates to the charter?  
25 What would you like to have happen or what would you

1 never do again?

2 MR. JANASKIE: I would tell you that probably  
3 our -- when we stood here and did this originally we  
4 were looking -- because we were missing 20%. Okay.  
5 We had 80% of our kids, according to ACTAAP, you  
6 know, ready to go. But what about the 20%? Because  
7 we say it's about all kids. So I'm still working on  
8 the "all" part. But when you watch that video you're  
9 not going to tell me which ones are my average  
10 everyday kids, you can't tell me which ones are my GT  
11 kids or my special ed. population, because every kid  
12 was involved. Every kid is doing. And that's  
13 probably the greatest thing we can -- I can tell you.  
14 But I'm still looking for "all."

15 MS. NEWTON: Are there any challenges around  
16 parental involvement?

17 MR. JANASKIE: No, ma'am. I mean, when the  
18 parents are there to visit and they are able to see  
19 -- a lot of it is, "Hey, you know, I use this program  
20 for work." One of our architecture classes is using  
21 a CAD program and the dad is sitting there going,  
22 "Yeah, I use this on a daily basis." And so there's  
23 relationships between what the kids are doing in  
24 school now, not just English, math, science -- but  
25 there's that correlation. And they get it. So they

1 understand what we're trying to accomplish. And  
2 those kids may not be having the questions about  
3 careers and those plans, but they're getting that  
4 when they walk out. They're very glad that we're  
5 asking these questions now to 5th and 6th and 7th  
6 graders.

7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Wilson.

8 MR. WILSON: I would guess that your retention  
9 of your teachers is good. Am I correct in that?

10 MR. JANASKIE: Yes, sir.

11 MR. WILSON: Are you able --

12 MR. JANASKIE: For the most part.

13 MR. WILSON: -- to keep those good teachers from  
14 year to year and have them come back?

15 MR. JANASKIE: Yes, sir. I mean, probably like  
16 most districts, I think I've replaced maybe two  
17 teachers last year, one of them through retirement --  
18 well, actually three -- two to retirement and one who  
19 decided to go to a different district. But it does  
20 take training back on our part, especially with some  
21 of those Project Lead the Way classes. But when  
22 we're interviewing, we're having those conversations  
23 too, because we lay it on the line and say, you know,  
24 "We are -- we try to do school differently and are  
25 you willing to go and be trained on how to do this."

1           And, yes.

2           MR. WILSON: And one other question. Do you  
3           have some way for -- or do you have some opinion of  
4           how your middle school kids do in high school, in the  
5           remaining years in the district?

6           MR. JANASKIE: I don't have a way to track that  
7           information. I do know that those kids do come back  
8           and visit us and they're very happy with the fact  
9           that they've had the opportunities that they've had.  
10          A year passed when we did -- our conversion high  
11          school came in and became Fountain Lake Charter High  
12          School. So they're also looking at doing the school  
13          differently for them and giving those kids  
14          opportunities. Yes, sir.

15          MR. WILSON: I didn't know that. Thank you.

16          MR. JANASKIE: Okay.

17          SUPT. MURPHY: I might add something that kind  
18          of I've observed in terms of statistical data  
19          regarding that is we're starting to see an increase  
20          trend of -- the ACT composite has not moved  
21          dramatically yet academically, but we have definitely  
22          seen a percentage of students that are career  
23          completers. It has increased by well over 20%. So  
24          we're getting a lot more students prepared for the  
25          workforce because they're getting into tighter paths

1 and taking advantage of National Park and the  
2 project-based programs we have also at the high  
3 school. So that would be an additional response to  
4 the impact of the middle school.

5 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. I just had a  
6 question around goals just to make sure we're clear.  
7 So the goals that you had last year were -- there was  
8 -- make sure I'm correct on this -- there were six  
9 goals.

10 MR. JANASKIE: We added a component with science  
11 --

12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay.

13 MR. JANASKIE: -- because that was one of them  
14 we were lacking. And when we originally wrote the  
15 goals there wasn't anything for science.

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. And so your -- but  
17 there's basically the science related goal and then  
18 there is --

19 MR. JANASKIE: English and math.

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Okay.

21 MR. JANASKIE: Okay. And then there's also that  
22 personalized learning, the character ed. that we make  
23 sure we're trying to keep our kids attached to our  
24 advisory program and setting those career paths.

25 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So just the response was

1 that you're keeping your goals 1 through 4; you're  
2 taking away goal 5, and then keeping -- 6 is now  
3 going to read --

4 MR. JANASKIE: Yes, sir.

5 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay.

6 MR. JANASKIE: Because we got rid of the old  
7 end-of-course algebra.

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And this is more just a --  
9 the goal, I guess, on a lot of these is achievement  
10 levels, is to better than state average. Is that  
11 something that you guys may look at in the future to  
12 say, you know, not necessarily we want to do better  
13 than state average but we want to do better than  
14 ourselves --

15 MR. JANASKIE: Right.

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: -- and continue to grow?  
17 And so I do -- I see the growth things related to  
18 NWEA. But that may just be something to consider in  
19 the future.

20 Other -- is there other questions by the Panel  
21 Members before I get into the waiver part of this?

22 Okay. So just to -- I know we've got some  
23 questions lingering around waivers. There's one  
24 specific to Gifted and Talented. I just want to make  
25 sure -- Ms. Hyatt, if you'll come up and just help us

1 walk through this to make sure they've got the  
2 appropriate requests related to these waivers.

3 MS. HYATT: Sure. Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas  
4 Department of Education. There are a few outstanding  
5 issues on the legal review, but I don't -- they're  
6 easy fixes.

7 So on number 4, which is the Gifted and Talented  
8 Program, they do need a waiver of the rules governing  
9 Gifted and Talented program approval standards, and  
10 they didn't request that waiver. So in order to  
11 fully effectuate it they'll need to confirm that they  
12 want to seek that waiver now.

13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We need some --

14 MR. WALTER: Good morning, Panel. Tripp Walter,  
15 Arkansas Public School Resource Center, on behalf of  
16 the applicant. I would confirm that a waiver of the  
17 GT rules is requested.

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Then, moving to  
19 Teacher Licensure.

20 MS. HYATT: Yes. On number 6, Teacher  
21 Licensure, they did ask for a waiver of the rules  
22 governing Educator Licensure. If they are having  
23 unlicensed teachers teach, they do not need a waiver  
24 of that provision; if they have licensed teachers  
25 teaching outside of their licensure area, they only

1 need a waiver of Section 7 of those rules -- but they  
2 don't need a waiver of the entire rule. So just  
3 clarifying whether or not they need a waiver of  
4 Section 7.

5 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So --

6 MR. WALTER: I would clarify that the Fountain  
7 Lake would like a waiver of just Section 7 -- pardon  
8 me -- the ADE rules governing Teacher Licensure.

9 MS. HYATT: Okay. And the last little thing is  
10 on number 7, which is under Additional Comments -- so  
11 during the standards transition process, which I'm  
12 sure you guys are really familiar with now, we mapped  
13 Fountain Lake over to a waiver under the new  
14 standards of Section 1(a)(5)(2), which is the  
15 requirement that you do six hours a day, 30 hours a  
16 week. That wasn't included in their renewal  
17 application, and so I need to know (1) do they intend  
18 to keep that, and if they do then there's an Arkansas  
19 code provision that goes hand-in-hand that they'll  
20 need, which is 6-16-102.

21 MR. WALTER: The applicant would request the  
22 addition of both of the waivers that Ms. Hyatt --  
23 pardon me -- Ms. Hyatt stated.

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay.

25 MS. HYATT: And that is all of the legal



1 concerns.

2 Oh, thank you. Okay.

3 Back on Teacher Licensure -- and this was  
4 completely my error -- the applicant originally asked  
5 for 6-15-1004, and in my review I told them that I  
6 thought they only needed the (a) part of that, which  
7 is why their response says they just want (a). When  
8 I looked at it again, they actually do need a waiver  
9 of the entire code section. And so Tripp and I had  
10 talked about that, but I forgot to mention it here.  
11 So just verifying that it is the entire code section,  
12 not just subsection (a)? And I apologize for the  
13 error.

14 MR. WALTER: And the applicant would verify the  
15 request of waiver of the entire 6-15-1004.

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Panel, you've heard  
17 the request modifications in terms of the waivers.  
18 Are there any other questions for the applicant or  
19 any discussion amongst panel members?

20 All right. Hearing none, I will accept a  
21 motion.

22 DR. KREMERS: I move to approve renewal.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Second.

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We have a motion to  
25 approve the renewal, and a second.

1 Any discussion?

2 All those in favor say "aye."

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any opposed?

5 Hearing none, motion passes.

6 Thank y'all.

7 SUPT. MURPHY: Thank you.

8 MR. JANASKIE: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Ready to move  
10 on to number two?

11 All right.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: We're typing in our --

13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Oh, yes. Sorry. I'm  
14 messing up over here.

15 Representatives of Fountain Lake, Dr. Murphy, we  
16 do have to let you know our reasons for voting. So I  
17 do apologize.

18 [A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

19 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Dr. Kremers.

20 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the motion.  
21 School leadership are showing strong academic gains  
22 and I'm just supportive of the innovation that  
23 they're showing.

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Dr. Williams.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion based on the

1 success of the programs, both academically and career  
2 exploration.

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Mr. Rogers.

4 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion because I  
5 don't have any concern with the charter school at  
6 this time.

7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Ms. Newton.

8 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the amendment -- I mean  
9 -- yeah, for the amendment of the charter, and the  
10 reason being consistent progress and strong academic  
11 performance.

12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

13 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion to approve  
14 the renewal. And I am very impressed with the  
15 academic performance that you all emphasized.

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

17 SUPT. MURPHY: Thank you.

18 A-2: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL:  
19 WARREN MIDDLE SCHOOL

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Moving on to  
21 our second action agenda item, Request for District  
22 Conversion Charter School Renewal: Warren Middle  
23 School -- Mr. Ballard, you are recognized.

24 MR. BALLARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Reginald  
25 Ballard, Arkansas Department of Education.

1                   On January 16, 2014, the Charter Authorizing  
2 Panel approved the application for Warren Middle  
3 School. The charter is approved to serve students in  
4 grades 6-8 with a maximum enrollment of 450.  
5 Representatives of Warren Middle School are appearing  
6 before the Charter Authorizing Panel to request  
7 renewal of their current charter.

8                   CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So all  
9 representatives of the charter and anyone speaking in  
10 opposition, please stand to receive the oath. All  
11 right. If you would, raise your right hand. Do you  
12 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to  
13 give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing  
14 but the truth?

15                   (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

16                   CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you.  
17 School presenters, you have 20 minutes. You may  
18 begin your presentation.

19                   SUPT. CORNISH: Good morning and thanks for  
20 allowing us the opportunity to stand before you in  
21 hopes to renew the Warren Middle School charter. At  
22 this time I will introduce the staff members that  
23 have joined us today. I have Ms. Rhonda Williams,  
24 who is our School Improvement Specialist; Ms. Tiffany  
25 Gathen, Warren High School Principal; Ms. Kathy

1           Cornish, Warren Middle School Principal; Ms. Carla  
2           Wardlaw, Assistant Superintendent. I'm Bryan  
3           Cornish, Superintendent of the Warren School  
4           District. I'm currently in my second year.

5                   I'm going to start off by looking at these  
6           slides. You can tell that Warren Middle School is a  
7           very diverse school. We have 36% African American,  
8           25% Hispanic, and 38% Caucasian. I also want to run  
9           some numbers by you that's just in our district.  
10          We're at 23.9% Hispanic, 33.5% African American, and  
11          41.7% Caucasian. As you can see, through this  
12          diversity the Warren School District and Warren  
13          Middle School has no option but to be diverse in our  
14          learning. In order to reach the needs of all of  
15          these learners we've got to have different approaches  
16          to different cultures and the different learning  
17          needs of all of the different cultures that we deal  
18          with throughout the day.

19                   Seven years ago, Warren School District made a  
20          commitment to become a district conversion charter  
21          school. We believed then, and we still believe now,  
22          that students learn in different ways and students  
23          learn in different timeframes. We know we're not  
24          where we'd like to be at this time, but through this  
25          presentation we feel that we now have a systematic

1 process in place that aligns our curriculum K-12  
2 where our curriculum is actually student-focused and  
3 we're serving the social and emotional needs of all  
4 the learners at Warren Middle School.

5 We've recently implemented a personalized  
6 learning team that consists of K-12 teachers, to  
7 align what we're doing in our district and also help  
8 build the culture within our school, as well as the  
9 unity with our school district by aligning our  
10 curriculum K-12 and having that personalized learning  
11 team come onboard. And that consists of teachers  
12 from kindergarten through 12th grade.

13 As the presentation is presented, I hope you  
14 will see that through our charter we are able to  
15 offer our learners an education that is truly  
16 student-focused.

17 MS. CORNISH: The mission from Warren Middle  
18 School is aligned to the mission statement that you  
19 see on the screen for Warren School District. Our  
20 goal is to create that learning environment that  
21 gives our kids the necessary skills to be productive  
22 as learners and as citizens. And it's our moral  
23 purpose to meet the needs of all of our students in  
24 providing them with a personalized learning  
25 opportunity.

1 MS. GATHEN: We are committed to do whatever it  
2 takes to teach students the necessary --

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: If y'all would, just  
4 identify yourselves. Sorry.

5 MS. GATHEN: Tiffany Gathen, Warren High School  
6 Principal.

7 We are committed to do whatever it takes to  
8 teach students the necessary skills for a productive  
9 life. Our focus is to meet each student where they  
10 are in their learning and insure they have mastered  
11 the skills necessary for a productive life. We have  
12 established a profile for graduates for the Warren  
13 School District. Our focus is to have our students  
14 graduate from Warren High School with the skills  
15 necessary to be solution managers, effective  
16 communicators and collaborators, responsible  
17 citizens, and lifelong learners.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Rhonda Williams, School  
19 Improvement Specialist.

20 The components of personalized learning are  
21 standard-driven curriculum, instructional design,  
22 timely assessment system and feedback, learner-  
23 centered instruction, data-driven for continuous  
24 improvement, reporting and recording, and  
25 communication.

1           This is our model that we use to implement  
2 personalized learning. We feel that this has unified  
3 our district K-12. We started at the bottom, which  
4 was our school culture, in our district. This  
5 involved things like our mission statement, our  
6 vision, our code of conduct, our standard operating  
7 procedures, and our habits of work. We wanted to  
8 have a growth mindset district-wide.

9           The next thing that we did was identify our  
10 essential supporting and enduring standards. We  
11 wanted to know -- the students to know what they had  
12 to do to master a goal and how they had to do that.

13           We also -- the next one was we wanted to create  
14 a scoring guide, teacher scope and sequence, and  
15 yearlong pathways. This created transparency within  
16 our district.

17           We also are working toward a guaranteed and  
18 viable curriculum district-wide. We did this through  
19 creating units that are -- that drive whole group  
20 instruction and small group instruction.

21           We've created progression levels. The  
22 progression levels are leveled by basic all the way  
23 to application.

24           We also created pre-assessments, formative  
25 assessments, and summative assessments. This lets us



1 know where our learners are in their learning.

2 Recording and reporting -- this includes data  
3 walls, progression levels, yearlong pathways,  
4 progress reports, report cards, reporting in HAC and  
5 TAC. This is all to have student ownership and  
6 transparency in learning.

7 This model, again, has unified our district K-12  
8 and it's student-focused and transparent.

9 The research that we used was Delivering on a  
10 Promise, High-Reliability Schools, Formative  
11 Assessments and Standards-Based Grading, and The New  
12 Art and Science of Teaching.

13 MS. CORNISH: Okay. And I'm Kathy Cornish,  
14 Principal at Warren Middle School.

15 What personalized learning looks like at Warren  
16 Middle School, and all of our schools, is that  
17 students are given a progression level. First, they  
18 have a yearlong pathway, that you will see in the  
19 middle of the screen -- that is on the walls in every  
20 classroom -- that aligns what each student must be  
21 able to progress through to finish that pathway for  
22 the year. And in the top right corner are learner  
23 pathways, that you will see in our video in a moment  
24 a student explain how they know where they are in  
25 their learning and what they have to do to reach

1 mastery of their learning goals. Also, in the bottom  
2 right is another example of a pathway. Students are  
3 able to reassess and retest on skills. You will hear  
4 students talk about that in just a moment. And also  
5 in the top right and in the middle of the screen --  
6 top left, excuse me -- is data walls where students  
7 are tracking their progress.

8 Okay. And our video --

9 (WHEREUPON, a video was shown, which may be  
10 viewed on the ADE website.)

11 MS. CORNISH: And I hope you can see from the  
12 video that learning and teaching has transformed in  
13 our district and in our school. And that has taken  
14 time to develop and to change mindsets and to change  
15 what teachers were used to doing every day in a  
16 traditional model.

17 And with that, when we talk about -- we went to  
18 the approach of really wanting to focus on our  
19 academics at first, our first year. And we had a  
20 backup and realized there's a lot of culture-building  
21 in this whole process too. And so not only do we now  
22 have a system built that honors the academic needs of  
23 students, but also the social and emotional needs.  
24 We have built around our vision competencies to help  
25 students be respectful, accountable, ready to learn

1 and engage, and what that looks like in each area of  
2 the building. And from there that went to kids can  
3 earn points toward that and earn t-shirts and  
4 different rewards for their behaviors. And you also  
5 see standard operating procedures of how we do  
6 business in the school every day in order for  
7 students to be ready to have ownership of their  
8 learning.

9 We started the second breakfast program about  
10 four years ago, and it has tripled the number of  
11 students eating breakfast at school every day.

12 We have community service projects, which our  
13 parental involvement team heads up. And our soup  
14 kitchen is one of the largest community service  
15 projects our students do. They go on Friday once a  
16 month, prepare the food; Saturday they finish cooking  
17 it and take it out to the disabled and elderly  
18 community members.

19 And so with that, in personalized learning  
20 embedded into our units is opportunities for blended  
21 learning. Personalized learning at Warren Middle  
22 School and in the district is not about putting a  
23 student on a computer and saying, "Your learning is  
24 personalized." This is only used if they need extra  
25 practice and if they are able to work ahead, if they

1 can get some pre-knowledge going through the blended  
2 learning.

3 Our goals that we set in our original charter --  
4 at that point in time we kind of were going in, I  
5 think, blindly, because there was not a playbook for  
6 us to go by. And when we set some of these goals and  
7 we started working the personalized learning system  
8 we found quickly that some of them did not align.  
9 This goal was originally set with the PARCC  
10 assessment in mind. And when that -- as our  
11 assessments changed, our focus kind of changed. And  
12 so to kind of keep with this, we felt like we  
13 partially met it because our students are still in  
14 growth on their MAP and ACT Aspire assessments. But  
15 also on the 8th grade component of the ACT Aspire,  
16 they give a national career and readiness  
17 certificate, where students would score on that. And  
18 we are showing over the course of the years that our  
19 students are making growth toward being career-ready.

20 In addition to showing growth on our ACT Aspire,  
21 our weighted achievement scores and our -- where  
22 students are exceeding and ready on the ACT Aspire  
23 are not where we want them to be, and we recognize  
24 that that is our reading levels that our students are  
25 struggling with. And I'll talk about in a few

1 minutes what components we have put in place and have  
2 shown great increase this year. But we are showing  
3 growth. Over the last three years we've been  
4 recognized by the Office of Educational Policy that  
5 we've done Beating the Odds in Southeast Arkansas.  
6 We were down for growth for our ELA, math, and  
7 reading over the last three years, and also high  
8 growth in reading and math. So we are proud of that.  
9 We know we are moving the mark and moving our  
10 students in all of our sub-pops. Our growth was  
11 above the 80th score, right there, within the 80  
12 points. So we are -- know we're making growth, but  
13 we know we've still got some work to do.

14 And reading levels, if you looked at our ESSA  
15 report, is what we feel is our root cause. This year  
16 we started -- we hired a reading strategist. We  
17 don't want to call it interventions; it's about  
18 giving kids new strategies for them to work toward  
19 improving their reading. And since implementing that  
20 in August, we've had a 45% increase in our reading  
21 levels and 10% more students are reading on grade  
22 level. So we feel like now that we have our  
23 curriculum really strong, now we're focusing on  
24 different instructional strategies and learning  
25 strategies to help close that achievement gap that we

1 have in reading.

2 But on MAP, we do use that as a measurement tool  
3 of the number of students reading -- meeting their  
4 learning goals or growth goals for MAP. They have  
5 met that in the math, and we are increasing gradually  
6 the number of reading that are meeting that number of  
7 reaching their growth goals. Compass Odyssey ended  
8 up moving to another platform and we opted not to go  
9 back with Compass Odyssey because at that point in  
10 time it was really just being used as an intervention  
11 tool and not really being used to help progress  
12 monitor student learning.

13 And then social and emotional -- I think this is  
14 one of our greatest achievements, is that since  
15 implementing the rare chart with the social  
16 competencies and working with our students on the  
17 social and emotional development, we've had a 65%  
18 decrease in office referrals over the last four  
19 years.

20 To help us align -- and we have a lot of -- we  
21 went to a High-Reliability School Summit this summer  
22 and noticed how to help ourselves move forward in  
23 truly building our personalized learning systems,  
24 where students can move throughout as they need to  
25 different grade levels. And within that we felt like

1 we have started self-assessing ourselves. And in  
2 there, we have a lot of different components at  
3 Levels 1, 2 and 3, which are foundational, in order  
4 to get to a truly personalized learning system. And  
5 we are realigning some of our structures to reach  
6 that level.

7 And so to realign our goals for the -- what  
8 we're asking, if our charter is renewed, is to  
9 realign some of our goals -- of course, keeping our  
10 MAP goals, because that is something that we feel  
11 like has been successful in helping us progress  
12 monitor our students. But also it's moving the  
13 number of students -- we have a -- are doing well in  
14 our high growth quadrant on our ESSA report, but not  
15 in the high achievement. And so our focus is to  
16 increase those numbers of student in the high  
17 achievement status to go to the higher quadrant by 2%  
18 annually.

19 And then, of course, increase our student  
20 engagement, which is through the ESSA report, by two  
21 points each year and decrease the number of office  
22 referrals also by 2% each year.

23 And increase our students on grade level by 2%  
24 annually, which we feel like we are on a great track  
25 to reaching that already this year as one of our

1 school improvement goals.

2 And then, again, creating that personalized  
3 learning, moving learners to reach the profile of our  
4 graduates that Ms. Gathen had talked about earlier.

5 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: You do have a few more  
6 minutes, if you need additional time -- or if not,  
7 we'll check --

8 Is there any opposition, Ms. McLaughlin? Is  
9 there anybody here to speak in opposition?

10 MS. McLAUGHLIN: We're checking right now.

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay.

12 [A MOMENT OF SILENCE}

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

14 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Not seeing any, you  
15 do have an additional five minutes, if there's  
16 anything --

17 SUPT. CORNISH: I do want to add -- that video  
18 that you just watched, those learners that are in  
19 that video, this is all they know. They started this  
20 process in kindergarten and they're now in the 8th  
21 grade. And this is the only educational system that  
22 they are accustomed to. They really don't understand  
23 a percentage scoring system of 70% or 80%. They're  
24 about the 4-3-2 and about being able to re-teach and  
25 re-assess if they don't do well on an assessment. So



1 I wanted to point that out as well that the group  
2 that we originally started with, that was some of  
3 those kids there. Thank you.

4 MS. NEWTON: If I may speak now, if that's  
5 appropriate?

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes, ma'am.

7 MS. NEWTON: Because I visited the school and  
8 initially I chose to go to Warren because it was  
9 closer to where I live. I'm so glad I had the  
10 opportunity to come. I was here on the Board when  
11 Mr. Tolbert and the group from Warren came and they  
12 had been -- they had given a lot of thought in terms  
13 of what they wanted to do, had visited another state,  
14 maybe --

15 SUPT. CORNISH: California.

16 MS. NEWTON: California. Everything they've  
17 said is evident in the practices of the school. It's  
18 really a paradigm shift in culture, school culture,  
19 and I was very impressed. Ms. Cornish and I visited  
20 before we got started, and I thought, well, we'll  
21 see. And consistently young people were able to  
22 articulate what they were doing, why they were doing  
23 it, why it made sense to them, where they were, where  
24 they needed help, where they needed to go back and  
25 re-think some things. And it was a logical approach

1 and a practical approach that impressed me, because  
2 they knew what they were doing and why they were  
3 doing it, as opposed to this is what the teacher  
4 said. So they could go and chart their learning. I  
5 was very intentional in talking to different young  
6 people there. There's a high population of Hispanic  
7 young people and families in the Warren area because  
8 of the farming, the agriculture there, and equally a  
9 high number of African American young people. But  
10 without exception -- and I mean it's really -- I knew  
11 you guys couldn't have staged this -- but without  
12 exception each individual at each classroom was able  
13 to give you a report of their progress, why I'm doing  
14 what I'm doing, the fact that I can go back and re-  
15 test because this is not a skill that I'm necessarily  
16 competent in, and why it made sense -- and even to  
17 the point of talking about how their parents  
18 understood what they were doing, what their needs  
19 were, and how they were -- so they own it, and I  
20 guess it's because it started in kindergarten. But  
21 it's really, again, a paradigm shift in terms of how  
22 education is approached. And I can see certainly  
23 there's room for improvement in terms of score, but  
24 this is something that I think is new and innovative.  
25 You said you don't have a playbook, but I think

1           you're writing it as you go along and it's going to  
2           be helpful to other districts. But the school  
3           culture -- and I'm a social worker by nature, so I  
4           look at the nuances around how kids feel, how they  
5           act, how teachers respond. And even the social  
6           aspect of the school in terms of behavior -- you say  
7           your reduction in discipline was 65%; I can see it  
8           because I would stop and talk to young people and ask  
9           what are their expectations, how are you expected to  
10          behave, and what happens, and what's their  
11          relationship to you and how you impact your peers.  
12          So they've taken on the ownership of the education  
13          piece and the social aspect of their behavior and how  
14          it relates to overall learning. The teachers are  
15          enthusiastic. The new teachers and the seasoned  
16          teachers have the same enthusiasm, and that's  
17          different from what we see sometimes.

18                 So I'm impressed with the charter performance  
19                 and the energy of the staff and the administration.

20                 MS. CORNISH: Thank you.

21                 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Mr. Wilson, do  
22                 you have any questions for the applicant?

23                 MR. WILSON: I think not, Mr. Chairman. But Ms.  
24                 Newton's comments are a good example of why it's so  
25                 important for several of us, if we can, visit the

1 school. That makes a world of difference, and our  
2 comments make a world of difference too.

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Rogers?

4 MR. ROGERS: No, I don't have any.

5 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Dr. Williams?

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Uh-huh. You know, just  
7 given the fact -- what caught my attention -- this is  
8 good, but what caught my attention was your comment  
9 that this is all the students know, which is a good  
10 thing for them to know. Can you just give me a brief  
11 comparison between what it used to be as to what this  
12 program is doing now?

13 MS. CORNISH: And I think before it was the  
14 teacher knew what they were going to teach and they  
15 knew it was just by a traditional "this is my lesson  
16 plan book, I'm going to come in, I'm going to put my  
17 objective on the board, let's -- I'm going to get up  
18 here and teach, and then you're going to take the  
19 assessment in a week."

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Right.

21 MS. CORNISH: "And you're going to be given a  
22 grade, and that's going to be it. And then I'm going  
23 to move on to my next unit."

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Right.

25 MS. CORNISH: And it's just not like that

1           any more. And when you really think -- because I was  
2           on the beginning when we started kindergarten and  
3           first grade.

4           DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Uh-huh.

5           MS. CORNISH: And I transitioned to the middle  
6           school about four years ago. It is just a shift in  
7           how everybody views teaching and learning. It's  
8           almost like when we were talking to some students  
9           before and we were talking about, "Well, you know,  
10          some other schools don't do it like this." They go,  
11          "What? Why? How do they not? How does a kid not  
12          know what they're coming to the classroom and  
13          learning?" You know, they know what they have to do.  
14          They don't understand that in some classrooms that  
15          that doesn't happen, and they don't understand that  
16          they don't get a re-teach or a re-assess. And the  
17          great thing about it is when our progression levels  
18          are levelized that our students have, their test is  
19          levelized. So I mess up just on the Level 3  
20          question, that's all I get a re-teach and re-assess  
21          on.

22          DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

23          MS. CORNISH: It's not -- you know, it's not I'm  
24          given a 60 and I move on. And we spent the last  
25          three days of this week of students being able to go,

1 "Okay, I have a two-five right now on an assessment;  
2 I want to go back and re-try. I want to go back and  
3 re-work on that and come back and bring my grade up."

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

5 MS. CORNISH: And you have parents now calling,  
6 saying, "Hey, I notice that they have this. What day  
7 are they re-teaching and re-assessing?"

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Well --

9 MS. NEWTON: One of the things -- excuse me --  
10 one of the things I noticed that the student can't  
11 just decide tomorrow I'll re-test. They have to  
12 demonstrate that they've made an effort to be able to  
13 master the subject matter. So it's not like, "Well,  
14 I didn't study and I'll do better," or "I didn't  
15 sleep" or whatever. But they have to prove that they  
16 can master. I mean, not prove, but they have to  
17 demonstrate the things that they've done to go back  
18 and justify or deserve a chance to re-take it.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: That's good; when I listened to  
20 the students was good -- but the teachers sold me --  
21 you know, just the whole classroom management. We  
22 talk a lot about the lack of some districts not being  
23 able to find good teachers or keep good teachers and  
24 so-forth. But when you've got a veteran teacher to  
25 say "this has helped me become a better teacher,"

1 that says a whole lot. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Dr. Kremers.

3 DR. KREMERS: Two comments and one question.

4 One comment is just the congratulations that  
5 even though there is the D you can see the growth  
6 happening -- and I'm glad you're receiving the  
7 recognition from I believe it's -- is it U of A  
8 Education Policy?

9 MS. CORNISH: Yes, ma'am.

10 DR. KREMERS: So congratulations on the growth  
11 that you are achieving.

12 Also on the career readiness certificates, I'm  
13 glad to see that you're focusing on that, the career  
14 readiness curriculum. Are you doing the certificates  
15 as a piece of that? And is that through WorkKeys  
16 2.0?

17 SUPT. CORNISH: At the high school we do it  
18 through our vocational school, through SEACBEC.

19 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

20 SUPT. CORNISH: Yes, ma'am.

21 DR. KREMERS: Not at the middle school level?  
22 So the career readiness is --

23 MS. CORNISH: We have a career development class  
24 at middle school. And one component that our  
25 parental involvement team -- they host a career talk,

1 where students can put in different careers that  
2 they're interested in and we'll have community  
3 members come in and do a luncheon talk with our  
4 students to start building that interest in different  
5 careers.

6 DR. KREMERS: Okay. That's great.

7 With the high growth, and then knowing that you  
8 want to move towards the high achievement as the next  
9 step, kind of from what you're doing -- and then  
10 what's the main strategies that you feel are going to  
11 help get you over the hump for the achievement piece  
12 following the growth?

13 MS. CORNISH: A lot is looking at our  
14 instructional practices, what type of strategies are  
15 we using in the classrooms in order to reach the  
16 rigor that we need to; are we exposing our students  
17 to those level rigor questions that they need to be  
18 exposed to on our assessments; and then really  
19 changing the mindset if a student is behind, saying  
20 "you're going to go to intervention; now let's give  
21 you some new strategies; let's try some new  
22 strategies that are -- that can help you grow and  
23 help you get to that high achievement." So really  
24 focusing, again, on shifting some of our  
25 instructional practices and the strategies that we're



1 giving students.

2 DR. KREMERS: That's great. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So I also did have  
4 the opportunity to come visit your school, and it's  
5 not the first time I've been there to see what you  
6 guys do. I thoroughly believe that you guys are on  
7 the right track in what you're doing.

8 I think there were some ah-ha moments this  
9 summer when you did -- I was in attendance with you  
10 guys at the High Reliability Summit, in Austin. And  
11 you'd made the comments that, you know, you jumped  
12 right into probably a Level 5 type work, not making  
13 sure that, you know, the other levels were  
14 stabilized.

15 And so it's very evident, you know, when you're  
16 in any of the classrooms and checking out the  
17 buildings that you're seeing, you know, that you do  
18 have that culture where, you know, people will know  
19 what they're supposed to be doing, they know how to  
20 do it, how to accomplish the work. You know, there  
21 clearly is an instructional framework of how those  
22 things are going on. And then in terms of  
23 curriculum, you have that stuff laid out for people  
24 to do. You know, there is -- you know, we've seen  
25 some little dips in test scores. And like we talked

1 about on the visit, it's just, you know, when you  
2 talk about big changes to what are you going to do to  
3 change to show improvement, you know, in my mind the  
4 answer to that is, you know, we're not going to make  
5 any major changes; we're just going to go back and  
6 look, you know, where we're missing it in terms of  
7 culture, what are we doing in our instructional  
8 framework that we need to refine and get better at.  
9 And then in terms of curriculum, you know, do we have  
10 the right curriculum at the right time at that right  
11 level for that student. So it's just basically doing  
12 what you're doing and just constantly going back and  
13 refining your practices. And I know you guys are in  
14 the process of doing that and hope that that's going  
15 to pay dividends this year.

16 So, are there any impediments or anything else  
17 that you feel like is a challenge for you this year  
18 that you're seeing that, you know, may be a barrier  
19 to that work?

20 SUPT. CORNISH: No, sir. I don't see a  
21 challenge at all. What I -- we're constantly using  
22 the plan to check/adjust. And, you know, we're --  
23 our teacher retention at Warren Middle School has not  
24 been -- what do you -- how many 1240s?

25 MS. CORNISH: Two.

1 SUPT. CORNISH: Two 1240s. I think she had --  
2 she replaced two teachers last year. So the  
3 retention at Warren Middle School is not an issue.  
4 We're constantly meeting and looking at where we can  
5 get better at what we're doing, as you just said.  
6 Instead of trying to reinvent the wheel again, let's  
7 just get better at what we're doing, because we truly  
8 believe that this is what's best for kids in the  
9 Warren School District.

10 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And, you know, the other  
11 thing that I -- you've talked about -- I think kind  
12 of touched on it, but just to also kind of reiterate  
13 or bring out is that, you know, when those students  
14 are sitting down doing their work they have I guess  
15 what you refer to as a proficient scale. But it  
16 doesn't just stop at proficiency; it says, hey, if  
17 you're a student and you're doing work and you want  
18 to go above and beyond, here's what that next higher  
19 level of work looks like. And I think that's  
20 important to make sure that you're, you know, trying  
21 to get that rigor in there for kids and kids just  
22 aren't left to do what they -- just to get that bare  
23 minimum, I guess. So I think that's a great  
24 approach.

25 Any other questions from Panel Members before we

1 go into waiver issues or any issues with the  
2 application?

3 Okay. So we do have one question on the  
4 application itself as a remaining concern, and it  
5 refers to whether or not you guys had met Goal 1.  
6 And so I don't know if we can have a representative  
7 from Charter Office -- or, Ms. Hyatt, if that's one  
8 of your listed concerns that we still have?

9 DR. BOYD: Good morning. Alexandra Boyd, Public  
10 School Accountability.

11 I believe for this item we've got feedback on  
12 the goal, on Goal Number 1, but we never got specific  
13 feedback from the applicant about whether they felt  
14 that they met the goal or not. So I think we were  
15 just looking for a little bit more of a direct  
16 response from the applicant.

17 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Now if you could  
18 just speak to your Goal 1 and how you feel like  
19 you've met that goal?

20 MS. CORNISH: On Goal 1, that was aligned to  
21 college and career readiness. And that was one of  
22 the first slides that we put up. Can I go back and  
23 look?

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes.

25 MS. CORNISH: And when we first looked at that

1 goal, one of it was aligned to the PARCC assessment  
2 when it talked -- gave feedback back on the college  
3 and career readiness. And so as we transformed into  
4 different state assessments, we feel like we may have  
5 partially met this one when we look at -- like I said  
6 earlier, the ACT National Career Readiness  
7 Certificate that -- they report out for 8th grade on  
8 your ACT Aspire report. Whereas we have increased  
9 the number of students moving up to that gold level,  
10 which is what you want each year. And in addition,  
11 we do feel like on our MAP assessment that our  
12 students are reaching proficiencies on the standards  
13 that they need to, according to their growth goals.

14 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. Any  
15 questions on that one?

16 Okay. We will move on to the waivers. I think  
17 there was just one issue related to transcripts. Ms.  
18 Hyatt, if you can help us with that one?

19 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas  
20 Department of Education.

21 On the legal review, if you'll look at number  
22 10, so they had a waiver of the law about  
23 transcripts. Mostly, the law is related to providing  
24 electronic copies of transcripts and stuff like that.  
25 I just felt like, based on what they put on their

1 legal review, the waiver wasn't necessary. But  
2 really wanted to give them an opportunity to provide  
3 some additional information because it may be  
4 necessary, and I just didn't get that from the legal  
5 review.

6 MS. CORNISH: And I do believe on the original  
7 it was we were sending out standards-based reporting,  
8 report card, where it didn't have a letter grade  
9 assigned to it. In the course of our endeavor, our  
10 parents -- when we first started at middle school,  
11 our parents were really new to the system. It wasn't  
12 like in elementary where they had been through the  
13 process -- or like the students we have now that have  
14 been through the process of personalized learning and  
15 standards-based grading. They were new to it and did  
16 not really care for just a check-off sheet or saying  
17 "I've mastered this." They more really wanted a  
18 letter grade at some point. So that's where we went  
19 through the process with -- and researching through  
20 Marzano's standards-based and formative assessment  
21 and found a conversion chart that would convert over  
22 just for the unit assessment to where we could report  
23 out to a A, B, C or D on the report card for our  
24 parents. Because they wanted to know, "Do I take  
25 them out for ice cream or do I spank them?" And so

1 with that, our transcripts now have a A, B, C or D.  
2 But as we move up the high reliability schools model  
3 and you get to Level 5, it will -- they do advocate  
4 for a standards-based type, competency-based type  
5 report card. In the event when we get to that level  
6 we will go back to possibly needing to report out on  
7 transcripts on a competency-based report card. So  
8 that's why we looked at possibly keeping that one in  
9 there.

10 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So right now you do  
11 have the ability to do an electronic transcript as-is  
12 --

13 MS. CORNISH: Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: -- but you want to maintain  
15 the flexibility for the future?

16 MS. CORNISH: And right -- well, we will be able  
17 to, even doing electronic transcripts. So we may not  
18 need it because now eSchool does allow you to create  
19 competency-based report cards, because we do for our  
20 elementary school.

21 MS. HYATT: And I don't think, based on my  
22 reading of the law, that anything in there prohibits  
23 them from doing an alternative grading scale. It  
24 just has requirements that there be an electronic  
25 transcript be submitted to like the Department of

1 Higher Ed. or upon request in an electronic format.  
2 And it's my understanding that you're now able to do  
3 that, even with an alternative grading scale, in the  
4 method that the Department has. So that's kind of --  
5 because it doesn't talk about grading scales and  
6 having any of those requirements in this law. So  
7 that's kind of where my confusion was.

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So is it that if you -- you  
9 know, it could go either way. Because I guess that  
10 you're saying in the future there may be an issue,  
11 but in that event you could come back and say, "Hey,  
12 the system is not able to do this anymore; we need to  
13 seek this waiver?"

14 MS. CORNISH: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So I guess it's kind of up  
16 to you how you want to -- want it to move forward.

17 MR. WALTER: Okay. Based on Warren  
18 administration's comments, then we will not ask to  
19 have that waiver renewed. But as has been suggested,  
20 if there is a need in the future, then the District  
21 will come back and ask for the waiver again or  
22 whatever is appropriate and necessary to help them do  
23 what they need to do.

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. Not  
25 seeing any other questions on the waivers, is there



1 any other questions by Panel Members?

2 Not seeing any, I will -- you've heard the  
3 matter and the request for the renewal. So I will  
4 entertain a motion.

5 MS. NEWTON: I'd like to make a motion. I move  
6 that we approve the application for renewal for the  
7 Warren School District's charter -- conversion  
8 charter.

9 DR. KREMERS: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We have a first and  
11 a second to renew the charter.

12 Any discussion?

13 MR. ROGERS: Yes. I know that they asked for  
14 five years on there. And just -- and I've heard  
15 everybody say, or not -- and this is really tough,  
16 because I'm not trying to be against the school or  
17 what y'all are doing there. But when looking at the  
18 ESSA scores you did drop a grade level. Your reading  
19 scores did go down from last year to this year. So  
20 I'm just -- I'm not against what they're trying to  
21 do, but I'm against the five years. I would rather  
22 see a three-year renewal to allow them to keep doing  
23 what they're doing, but also to make sure that there  
24 is the growth and there is the achievement that  
25 they're trying to achieve at that school.

1 MS. NEWTON: I stick with my motion, with the  
2 expectation that the school accountability and other  
3 departments within the Division would monitor that  
4 and as always, the avenue to bring a charter back  
5 before the Board of Ed. for review. And so I would  
6 -- my motion would remain for the renewal for the  
7 requested five years.

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We have still a  
9 motion and a second.

10 Any other further discussion before I call for  
11 the vote?

12 All right. Not hearing any, all those in favor  
13 say aye.

14 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any opposed?

16 MR. ROGERS: No.

17 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We have -- motion  
18 passes to approve.

19 If you would, give us a minute -- we're going to  
20 capture our responses here to give you a little bit  
21 of feedback.

22 SUPT. CORNISH: Yes, sir.

23 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We'll start over  
25 with Dr. Kremers.

1 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the motion to  
2 renew. The evidence of growth in student achievement  
3 is one of the primary reasons for renewal.

4 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Dr. Williams.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: You move quicker than I can type.

6 I support the motion based on the current  
7 approach of personalized learning, supporting both  
8 the kids and the teachers.

9 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Mr. Rogers.

10 MR. ROGERS: Like I said earlier, I'm not voting  
11 against the school or what they're trying to do. It  
12 was just against the five-year renewal. That's the  
13 only thing.

14 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Ms. Newton.

15 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the charter because I  
16 feel they're effectively meeting the challenges and  
17 needs of students and teachers.

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Mr. Wilson.

19 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I'm  
20 impressed with the growth and the academic  
21 achievement as Dr. Kremers pointed out.

22 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Mr. Cornish, you  
23 heard the feedback. We appreciate your being here  
24 today and thank you for you and your team.

25 SUPT. CORNISH: Thank you all. Thank you.

1 Appreciate it.

2 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. We'll take a --  
3 let's take a 10-minute break and then we'll come back  
4 at -- what would that be -- 10:08.

5 (BREAK: 9:58 - 10:11 A.M.)

6 A-3: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL:  
7 ACADEMIES OF WEST MEMPHIS

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We'll go ahead and  
9 continue the meeting. Next on our agenda is a  
10 Request for District Conversion Charter School  
11 Renewal, Academies of West Memphis.

12 Mr. Ballard, you're recognized.

13 MR. BALLARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Reginald  
14 Ballard, Arkansas Department of Education.

15 On January 16, 2014, the Charter Authorizing  
16 Panel approved the application for the Academies of  
17 West Memphis. The charter approved to serve -- the  
18 charter is approved to serve students in grades 10-12  
19 with a maximum enrollment of 1300. Representatives  
20 of the Academies of West Memphis are appearing before  
21 the Charter Authorizing Panel to request renewal of  
22 the current charter.

23 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. Make  
24 sure I'm following my script right -- okay. Would  
25 the members -- those that are here to speak on behalf

1 of the application and those that are here to speak  
2 in opposition please right to be -- to take the oath?  
3 Okay. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony  
4 you're about to give will be the truth, the whole  
5 truth and nothing but the truth?

6 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

8 All right. Presenters for the application, you  
9 have 20 minutes to present. You may begin.

10 SUPT. COLLINS: Good morning. Five years ago,  
11 we stood in this very room -- it looked a little bit  
12 different than it does today -- and we were the first  
13 school district in the history of the state of  
14 Arkansas to gain approval for an open enrollment  
15 conversion charter school, to partner with the  
16 community college, to expand -- the whole purpose was  
17 to expand career and technical opportunities for our  
18 children.

19 I would like to think over five years -- after  
20 five years and over 60 visits from other educational  
21 entities in the state of Arkansas, state of  
22 Tennessee, and the state of Mississippi coming to see  
23 our place and try to replicate our model and what  
24 we've done, the testimony that you will hear today  
25 from our team it has all been worth it.

1 I like to say we were career and technical  
2 focused when career and tech wasn't cool. With  
3 everyone trying to come up with a new way to count to  
4 five, we shifted our focus about five years ago  
5 essentially out of heartbreak, out of necessity, and  
6 out of realism. When your community is left at the  
7 altar not once, but twice by Toyota for a super-sight  
8 selection you have two choices: you can either accept  
9 it and bury your head in the sand, or you can do  
10 something about it. We chose the latter. We didn't  
11 know then what we know now, that competing for  
12 economic development requires more than having a  
13 mega-sight that's shovel ready. These companies are  
14 starving for a highly skilled and motivated  
15 workforce. They have internal metrics that they  
16 sometimes won't share with communities or with school  
17 districts. We have the benefit of having our local  
18 economic development director serving on our school  
19 board. Potential for growth, adult literacy rates,  
20 median household income, how many people own a car,  
21 how many homes have two or more children, what are  
22 the retail trends. Many prospective companies are  
23 home-based abroad, not even here in the United  
24 States. Oftentimes, these folks know more good and  
25 bad about our communities than we know about

1 ourselves.

2 We know that a higher skill-set equals a better  
3 opportunity for a better job and over the course of a  
4 working lifetime more financial gain. Skills, jobs,  
5 money, all equal a thriving economy.

6 What we've attempted to do with our model is to  
7 see the need and spark the desire. Along the way,  
8 we've seen growth in our numbers and interests.  
9 We've seen an increased motivation to read, and an  
10 increased motivation to even read better. We are  
11 upgrading efficiencies and serving a broader region  
12 regarding career and technical education development.  
13 When you live in the shadows of Memphis, Tennessee,  
14 we're really serving more than just our community; we  
15 are serving a regional development approach. That is  
16 the true scope of our work at the Academies of West  
17 Memphis. The burning question from all industry:  
18 where will the workforce come from and how do we get  
19 them trained?

20 Ultimately, when this is all said and done, what  
21 we want folks to say is we made a difference in  
22 someone else's life; we did something that mattered,  
23 and contributed with a servant's heart. Giving kids  
24 a better chance and unfair advantage in life -- is  
25 what we like to say in West Memphis -- in life, in

1 skills, certificates, job training, and  
2 opportunities, not just a diploma in a sleeve.

3 That's our story. That's our charge. That's  
4 our mission. We hope that you see it the same way  
5 and grant us reauthorization to continue the great  
6 work in the Delta Region of the state of Arkansas.

7 At this time I'm going to turn it over to Mr.  
8 Gary Jackson. He serves as our high school  
9 principal.

10 MR. JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. Collins.

11 We are a regional model due to proximity, being  
12 next to a large metropolitan area, our connection  
13 with ASU Mid-South, the industry that serves in the  
14 area where our kids work -- and we're trying to  
15 produce the skills that they need to get those jobs.  
16 No one else in our region, and I'm not sure even in  
17 the state of Arkansas, has the ability to replicate  
18 what we're doing in West Memphis from a career and  
19 technical, also aligned with our community college  
20 for concurrent credit -- and those students can  
21 overlap at the same time so we can concurrent and do  
22 technical at the same time.

23 We have approximately 1100 students. We're 100%  
24 free and reduced. It's all about college and career  
25 pathways. As Mr. Collins said, what advantages can



1 we give our students when they leave our building --  
2 that's all we're looking for is an unfair advantage  
3 for our students.

4 What does a day-in-the-life look to a student,  
5 like, when they come to the Academies of West  
6 Memphis? If I arrive at school -- we're an eight-  
7 period-a-day school. We have students who arrive at  
8 8:00 in the morning. There's three opportunities  
9 during our school-day, three different transitions: a  
10 first and second period transition, a third/fourth  
11 period transition, and a sixth and seventh period  
12 transition. Our students have the opportunity to  
13 transition twice a day to the community college. If  
14 I come to school first period and I go out there, I'm  
15 out there for a 90-minute block. A student gets on  
16 the bus and in seven minutes they're sitting in a  
17 college classroom, whether he is taking concurrent  
18 credit or they're sitting in a technical course for  
19 diesel mechanic, hospitality, or welding. If they're  
20 there for a second period, they're out there all  
21 morning. They stay there the third -- the second  
22 exchange, which is third and fourth period. Then  
23 they will transition back to the high school and take  
24 their math and literacy classes there. So it's  
25 interchangeable. We send about 550 to 600 kids a

1 day, each day, to the community college, and  
2 transition from our building to theirs, and by  
3 proximity they can be in that classroom where there's  
4 not that much loss of downtime, maybe a couple of  
5 minutes.

6 Our preparation for our students before they  
7 come to the Academies of West Memphis -- we introduce  
8 the model to them in 8th grade. They get an  
9 opportunity to visit ASU Mid-South. They get to go  
10 out and put their hands on the toys. They see the  
11 welder, we have welding simulators. They see the  
12 hospitality room, the big trucks, diesel mechanics.  
13 We live at the crossroads of America. We live by the  
14 Mississippi River; we have FedEx; you look at I-40  
15 and I-55 North, the number of trucks that go through  
16 there -- the opportunities and employment  
17 opportunities that are needed in this area -- we're  
18 trying to produce those skilled students to be able  
19 to fill those.

20 In the 9th grade we continue with an academy  
21 showcase where they're actually on campus and they're  
22 looking again. In the spring semester, our sophomore  
23 counselor will go out and we start sharing with them  
24 the opportunities of class scheduling and asking them  
25 to try to look at a four- or five-point focus of what

1           it is that they want to do. Sometimes it's difficult  
2           to get a 9th grade student to understand what they're  
3           doing. I know if you have a child that goes to  
4           college, sometimes they're not sure. But we want to  
5           expose our kids to as many opportunities. It's just  
6           as important to find out what they don't want to do  
7           as it is what they do want to do.

8                       Once we get that, we look at the pathways. We  
9           start talking about opportunities, how we can get  
10          them there; is this a path that they want to  
11          navigate, not one that we provide for them -- but  
12          what is it that you want to do.

13                      Before a student steps on the campus at the  
14          Academies of West Memphis, we know our kids. Number  
15          one, we look at their summative ACT Aspire interim  
16          scores. We have their ELA data, where they read. We  
17          understand their DRA scores, what grade level that  
18          they read on. We have their STAR reading scores and  
19          their STAR math scores. So when the students hit the  
20          ground the very first day, our teachers are not  
21          reaching and grasping to identify where their  
22          students are. They understand where the learning  
23          takes place and tries to tie that in to make sure  
24          that learning is relevant. Sometimes we have to  
25          spiral backwards and reach to where our kids area,

1 and that's okay.

2 When you look at the remediation opportunities  
3 that we have at the Academies of West Memphis before  
4 they reach our campus again, number one, we do have a  
5 literacy problem in eastern Arkansas and we've  
6 addressed that with Critical Reading one and Critical  
7 Reading Two. We stood at the high school and  
8 continued to complain about kids coming to us and  
9 they weren't college or career ready or they didn't  
10 read on level, or we could do something about it. We  
11 chose the latter. We implemented Critical Reading  
12 One. The second year we added a second Critical  
13 Reading teacher for Critical Reading Two, and we're  
14 getting ready to enter a third Critical Reading  
15 because we're pushing Critical Reading One down to  
16 our junior highs to address the literacy rates before  
17 our students have an opportunity to come to the  
18 Academies.

19 We also understand that foundational math skills  
20 are not where they need to be when they come to the  
21 10th grade. Remember, we are a 10-12 building. Our  
22 students are taking their algebra courses in 9th  
23 grade and so when they come to us we understand where  
24 their scores are. We just can't start with Algebra  
25 II right where they are; we have to spiral back to

1 where they are. So they have an Algebra II class and  
2 an ACT math that touches on those foundational skills  
3 while they're taking those concurrently.

4 We tutor before school from 7:00 to 8:00, and  
5 after school from 3:45 to 5:45, on Saturdays from  
6 8:00 in the morning till 3:30 in the afternoon, and  
7 on Sunday afternoon from 1:00 to 5:00. Any time on a  
8 Saturday you can see up to 250, 300 kids coming in to  
9 receive tutoring -- and, yes, on Sundays they come in  
10 as well. Our teachers, our focus, our building and  
11 district leadership team are constantly meeting to  
12 try to remove the deficiencies and the barriers that  
13 keep our kids from being successful, as far as  
14 reading, because it was the area that crosses every  
15 area that we go to.

16 We also re-teach and re-test. When a student  
17 does not have success, we go back, spiral back, go  
18 over the essential skills again, and talk to our  
19 students and make sure that they fill those  
20 deficiencies. We re-test -- don't like to average  
21 those scores in. That student scored well enough to  
22 move on and we move forward.

23 The last one -- if a student does fail a class,  
24 we do not wait for summer school. We have a credit  
25 recovery lab. We incorporate that into their

1 schedule at that time, right there, and we start  
2 recovering that class immediately. We do that  
3 through a web-based program with Edgenuity.

4 Our partnership with Arkansas State Mid-South is  
5 very unique. As we said, our kids can be on their  
6 campus in seven minutes, in a classroom. There's not  
7 much down-time. We have weekly attendance reports.  
8 As you know, we transition our kids out by buses, but  
9 we also give the kids the liberty, if they drive,  
10 that they can drive to college campus. Sometimes in  
11 seven minutes a lot of things can happen. So it's a  
12 weekly monitoring system that we have on attendance  
13 between the Academies and ASU Mid-South. We get a  
14 weekly grade report, just as we do -- that we send  
15 out to our teachers, and our parents when they look  
16 on HAC, with the Home Access Center, where parents  
17 can look at those grades as well. We monitor and we  
18 evaluate and we modify and we change. We do not wait  
19 five to six weeks before the problem occurs and then  
20 try to address it at the end of the nine weeks or  
21 semester.

22 We have three career coaches that work and are  
23 liaisons between the Academies of West Memphis and  
24 ASU Mid-South. They constantly monitor student  
25 success, attendance, their grades. Any issues that

1 may go on with a high school student, they're the  
2 liaison between the Academies administration and ASU  
3 Mid-South, and also between the Academies students  
4 and ASU Mid-South as well.

5 When you look at our enrollment, in the last  
6 four years we've had 2,674 kids that were enrolled, a  
7 yearly average of 668 kids either going over and  
8 completing for a concurrent credit or in career and  
9 technical classes. Our general education -- our  
10 four-year total is 403; the yearly average is 101.  
11 Certificates of proficiency and technical programs,  
12 which means they are ready to enter the workforce  
13 right now, in a four-year we've had 467; we average  
14 117 per year with a certificate. And big buzzword  
15 we're hearing now is making sure that those are  
16 industry recognized certificates, so when our kids go  
17 out we do have that unfair advantage.

18 Credits earned through the career and technical  
19 programs and general education through the Academies  
20 of West Memphis and ASU Mid-South are, four-year  
21 total, 16,764; an average of 4,491 per year. That's  
22 impressive.

23 Some of the stories -- someone always asks,  
24 "Those are cool classes. What's going on? What are  
25 some of your kids doing?" In the last couple of

1 years, we've had Jeremy Page, who left our aviation  
2 program, who is now in California, working with the  
3 FedEx family. Summer Abrams, one of our first female  
4 diesel mechanics, who realized that she could assist  
5 her family by being a mechanic and working on that,  
6 and also realizes by the money that she's earning  
7 that she can go back to school and provide for  
8 herself and maybe not have to take out a student  
9 loan; who's not only providing for her family, but  
10 she's taking care of herself.

11 Last week we bumped into Nick Thornton, who is  
12 out of our welding program. Nick works with CoBuilt  
13 out of Memphis -- a student who didn't want to have  
14 anything to do with education. You see him in Wal-  
15 Mart, he's successful now; he's a welder and a  
16 fitter. He's making \$25.00 an hour with a  
17 certificate earned through the Academies of West  
18 Memphis and ASU Mid-South.

19 There are many other stories of kids coming  
20 through. What we're looking for is to make sure that  
21 we help students navigate a path in which they  
22 choose, and that is very important.

23 The physical changes in our building that's made  
24 it attractive for our students -- we've updated the  
25 lighting, ceilings, painted the classrooms, hallways.



1           It's a very prideful place. We've had several  
2           members also visit our school as well. We've  
3           restructured the business classes that we offered at  
4           our school. We were still offering classes that were  
5           probably taught when some of you were in high school.  
6           And so instead of asking the very smart people and  
7           the adults in our building, we asked our kids, "What  
8           is it that you want to do?" We realized that our  
9           kids and what they want to do now is something with a  
10          screen, because they're not teenagers, they're  
11          screen-agers, and if it doesn't involve a screen,  
12          they're probably not interested.

13                 When we started looking and we took into account  
14          what our students said, we still offered the  
15          continuance of accounting, blueprint, computer  
16          business applications, computer science coding, cyber  
17          security, supply chain management, legal aspects,  
18          robotics, social media, supply change management. We  
19          also incorporated, through some of the waivers that  
20          we had earlier with our criminal justice system,  
21          foundations of the law. Our criminal justice teacher  
22          is a 29-year member of the Memphis Homicide Division.  
23          He understands. Our kids will go around campus and  
24          we have crime scenes on our campus that our kids will  
25          photograph, look at, detail it, come back and try to

1 determine what took place at that crime scene.  
2 That's a bell-ringer. Our kids love it. It's such a  
3 great class. Our teachers sit in on that class.

4 Our service industry -- obviously, we're right  
5 next to Memphis, a lot of nice restaurants there --  
6 food safety; family and consumer science, addressing  
7 those. Also with our partnership our kids are  
8 cooking and learning. One of the classes we'll be  
9 looking to put in is Forensic Food, understanding how  
10 to mix the spices and going through all that.

11 And then last, but not least, the military with  
12 our Junior ROTC program, which provides many  
13 opportunities for our kids through the ROTC program.

14 At the Academies of West Memphis, I want to  
15 point out to you we recognize we have a D on our  
16 school report card, just as you did. We look at we  
17 have three junior highs to feed our building. One of  
18 our buildings that sends kids to us college and  
19 career ready at 33%, one is at 9%, and one is 7% that  
20 they're ready. That's what we get.

21 Students are on our campus for 534 days during  
22 their high school career. Our score is based on 153  
23 of those days. We own that score, we don't run from  
24 that score, we're addressing the issues, but we also  
25 understand this: that student is going to have to

1 walk out of our building and there's not another  
2 building they're going to walk into; there must be  
3 something in their toolkit that we're preparing them  
4 for. So that is one datapoint, that when we go back  
5 and we look at what we're doing -- I want to point  
6 your attention to 2016-17 value-added growth at 82.5%  
7 and then the 17-18 we're at 80.67. We're also  
8 recognized in the top 10 by the Office of Educational  
9 Policy by the University of Arkansas being a top 10  
10 in the state for growth in poverty schools. Our  
11 special education growth, which has also been a focus  
12 -- because the real reason has been this: when a  
13 student graduates from high school there is no  
14 special ed. line; there is no 504 area -- and we've  
15 addressed those areas with those students as well,  
16 trying to provide skills and opportunities to prepare  
17 them as well when they reach the workforce.

18 In 2017, our SPED weighted achievement score was  
19 7.35; the following year you see it was 14.13 -- a  
20 focus of bringing those kids in, teaching those  
21 skills that they need that they can be self-  
22 sufficient on their own. Our graduation rates were  
23 going up in 2017. Our four-year cohort was 85.31.  
24 Our five-year cohort was 87.28. And the 2018, again,  
25 our four-year was 86.31 and 88.51.

1           We are a regional hub in our area, providing  
2           skills for our kids through career and technical and  
3           also addressing concurrent and students who want to  
4           go to college, and both of those can be married.  
5           It's important to understand that our kids can  
6           crisscross those two programs. You're not tagged  
7           into one program.

8           We're not just a high school offering cool  
9           classes; we're a high school that's offering kids  
10          cool opportunities for careers once they leave our  
11          building. Thank you.

12          CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Thank you.

13          You have two additional minutes, but then you'll  
14          get an additional five minutes after that. Do you  
15          need to -- any additional time you need right now?

16          MR. JACKSON: No, sir.

17          CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Anybody speaking in  
18          opposition to the application?

19          MS. McLAUGHLIN: No.

20          CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Not seeing any,  
21          you do have an additional five minutes if you wish to  
22          use that.

23          MR. JACKSON: (Shaking head from side to side.)

24          CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. We'll move into  
25          questions. We'll start over with Mr. Wilson.

1 MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm gratified to see  
2 Mr. Jackson, Ms. Wagner, and some of the folks --  
3 other folks I met during my visit over there in the  
4 summertime. I was galled that West Memphis came over  
5 to Jacksonville and beat us the following week, but  
6 I'll get over that.

7 As I mentioned with respect to Ms. Newton's  
8 comments a while ago, a visit to the school tells you  
9 an awful lot, and I learned an awful lot from the  
10 folks there at the Academies of West Memphis. It was  
11 a real good experience for me; I'm not sure it was  
12 for them. But still, I was very impressed with the  
13 work that goes on there, the collaboration between  
14 ASU there in West Memphis and the charter school.  
15 That's a huge plus in my mind.

16 I visited briefly with the instructor there in  
17 the cyber security program and that was hugely  
18 informative. As it happened, our own -- my own local  
19 school district is beginning a cyber security program  
20 and talking Mr. Jackson and his folks into coming  
21 over there and exporting the knowledge that you-all  
22 have gained there in that program out of your  
23 district into ours. And that was really a good  
24 thing.

25 That's a lot of editorial comment, but the main

1 thing I'm impressed with in your presentation and in  
2 your work is the growth. That speaks volumes to me.  
3 And so that's not much of a question, I guess,  
4 but that's my thought and my comment about that  
5 visit.

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. Ms.  
7 Newton, questions?

8 MS. NEWTON: No.

9 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Rogers?

10 MR. ROGERS: I'm not going to wait like I did on  
11 the last one. So you addressed it before the drop in  
12 the grade score. And then really when I was looking  
13 at it, when I was studying the ESSA scores, the drop  
14 in your reading scores -- that really concerned me.  
15 In '17 it was 30.86, and then '18 it dropped to  
16 19.74. So if you could just talk to me a little  
17 about that and how you're going to address that,  
18 because that's -- you know, if you're not reading at  
19 grade level, then all the other great things that  
20 you're trying to do you're going to continue to  
21 struggle to do. So if you'd just talk to me a little  
22 bit --

23 MR. JACKSON: Absolutely. I believe it was two  
24 years ago, Mr. Collins?

25 MR. COLLINS: Yes.

1           MR. JACKSON: Two years ago, when we sat down as  
2 a district we had the impression that our kids were  
3 readers, that we were on-level readers. We collected  
4 data and we had every administrator in our district,  
5 every literacy coach in our district, assistant  
6 superintendents -- every person that made a decision,  
7 whether spending money or where we were spending our  
8 money, was in that same classroom. At that time we  
9 had eight elementaries, three junior highs, and one  
10 high school sitting in the same classroom. And we  
11 put the data on the wall and we peeled it back by  
12 grade level, and what we thought and what was  
13 actually going on were two different things. We were  
14 making some decisions based on what we thought,  
15 instead of what the data was. And when we appeared  
16 and we looked and we saw that our children were  
17 reading below grade level, we started addressed at  
18 that time. We have DRA tested approximately 4,000-  
19 plus students in our district now to understand where  
20 every kid is on their reading level and addressing  
21 that every day. We're not waiting for elementary  
22 teachers to do that. At the secondary level, when we  
23 become content heavy, we've also got to be reading  
24 coaches as well, and we're addressing that every day  
25 in our class with our Critical One, Critical Two.

1 We've pushed that down to the junior high; they're  
2 addressing it as well. And we're looking for  
3 Critical Three. We can't allow a six-year window of  
4 kids to come through and we're waiting on someone to  
5 address the problem for us.

6 MR. ROGERS: And can I ask one more?

7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes.

8 MR. ROGERS: And then when you were talking  
9 about the career planning for students with  
10 disabilities, could you expand on that just a little  
11 bit?

12 MR. JACKSON: I know that we use the  
13 rehabilitation services --

14 MS. BURNETT: CDTI.

15 MR. JACKSON: I'm sorry -- CDTI, okay, and we  
16 use those. And I know that several of our students  
17 have gone through those services after they've left  
18 the Academy and also being served while they're on  
19 our campus. It's beneficial. I think it's directed  
20 toward that to best serve them.

21 SUPT. COLLINS: Can I add one comment to that?

22 I think the variety --

23 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: If you would, just into the  
24 microphone because we have live-stream. Thank you.

25 SUPT. COLLINS: I think -- to add to the special



1 need conversation, I think you have to look at that  
2 on an individual basis. Are we talking about  
3 severely self-contained children with -- that are  
4 nonverbal, low-functioning, that need assistance all  
5 day long? Or are we talking about the child that's  
6 just right under the bubble from being in mainstream?  
7 There's two totally different avenues of services for  
8 those children, and you run the spectrum of folks in  
9 between. We can show you testimony that -- we've had  
10 welders that lay their head down in geometry class  
11 and fall asleep and slobber on the desk. But you put  
12 them in a welding hat -- a welding class and you give  
13 them a skill and a trade and they can go out and  
14 within three years gross \$80,000, because that's what  
15 they're good at.

16 So I think you have to look at that on an  
17 individual basis as you go and address that as it  
18 comes up, because there's a variety of needs when we  
19 talk special needs kids and that subpopulation.

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Dr. Williams?

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Great program. My only concern  
22 as I was listening is, along the lines with Mr.  
23 Rogers, was just the overall D grade. What was the  
24 -- and this may be someone from the Department can  
25 help here. What was your previous score before this

1 year? It looks like you all have -- I was concerned  
2 about the reading scores. Matter of fact, I even  
3 made a note that you all are working on both the  
4 reading and the math piece.

5 MR. ROGERS: It was a C last year.

6 MR. JACKSON: It was a C last year.

7 MS. HARDIN: It was 1.9 for this year.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So you're in the  
9 neighborhood; you're hanging out with Mr. Rogers  
10 there.

11 Okay. All right then. That was really my  
12 concern. I just wanted to make sure -- I think it's  
13 the right program. I understand about Toyota when  
14 they first came over and they left and so-forth. So  
15 I think this is the right program. It's a great  
16 opportunity for students to go both tracks. Matter  
17 of fact, when you were talking about the career  
18 technical piece -- I was going to ask you about the  
19 college prep and then the next thing you talked about  
20 that piece also. So I guess all that said and done  
21 then, I don't have any questions.

22 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Dr. Kremers?

23 DR. KREMERS: Just a few comments. Of course,  
24 with Career and Technical Education, I'm pleased at  
25 the focus for that, because there are so many avenues

1 for students to achieve success. And I think it's  
2 really evident and I'm glad you spoke about students  
3 with disabilities, because in many of the ESSA  
4 reports we see there's not a lot of growth for the  
5 subpopulations of those with disabilities. So it's  
6 exciting to see that that is a place where many  
7 students can have achievement and growth. So  
8 hopefully the achievement piece will come further,  
9 but at least we're seeing growth in that area through  
10 your program, which is wonderful.

11 I'm also glad you talked about the graduation  
12 rates by subpopulation because that's another area  
13 that is showing students are finding success through  
14 being able to do other pathways besides college focus  
15 necessarily -- and not that all students may not  
16 choose that path, but it's helping those to find  
17 success that may or may not choose that as their  
18 path.

19 I also am concerned about the reading levels.  
20 And so would you just talk -- have somebody from your  
21 group come, just explain a little bit more about what  
22 the strategies are again --

23 MR. JACKSON: Absolutely.

24 DR. KREMERS: -- to improve reading from here  
25 forward?

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MR. JACKSON: Absolutely.

MS. HARDIN: Hello. I'm Shelly Hardin. I'm the literacy coach at the Academies of West Memphis.

We do -- obviously, we recognize we have an extreme literacy issue. Our students are reading below grade level K-12. I mean, we start out behind and we spend 13 years trying to get them as far as we can. We have basically completely revamped the literacy program across our entire district, K-12, over the last three years. We started REAL training for all of our teachers K-12. We have a timeline where everyone will be trained. We've gone through the Literacy Lab program with Ken Stematis, where we focus on students' -- pairing students' independent choices with what we -- with our expectations. We've implemented our critical reading programs in our secondary schools, starting in junior high with DRA -- all of our students in junior high, 100%. We start with STAR scores and move to DRA tests, the Developmental Reading Assessment. And based on those scores they then enter into -- I don't like to call it a remediation program because it's so skill specific. Like we -- in those critical reading classes, they are broken down specifically into the skills that the students are going to need. They're

1 going to have vocabulary, they're going to have  
2 etymology, they're going to have reading aloud,  
3 they're going to have choral reading, they're going  
4 to have independent reading, and they're going to  
5 have comprehension skill strategies. And so we start  
6 that in junior high and then move that up into the  
7 high school with the students who still need it to  
8 try to meet 100% of those students' needs. And our  
9 data -- there is actually a sheet in the appendix of  
10 our charter that our teachers use to track, and you  
11 can see some of those students make three-plus years  
12 growth with their reading in just a year of a  
13 critical reading class. We just did our midyear  
14 assessment with our critical reading teachers. And I  
15 think we had three students in the whole program that  
16 maintained their reading level and everyone else had  
17 grown one, two or three or more reading levels,  
18 according to the DRA assessment.

19 So we're addressing those as best we can. We've  
20 revamped our writing curriculum and just -- we look  
21 at every area every year, every minute just about to  
22 do what we can. The teachers come together and talk  
23 about individual students and what their needs are.  
24 And it's just -- we're tackling it, but it's a big  
25 thing to tackle.

1 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.

2 MR. JACKSON: Can I add one thing to that?

3 DR. KREMERS: Yes. And then I have --

4 MR. JACKSON: Another -- Ms. Burnett, our  
5 sophomore counselor, she's here today. When our  
6 counselors meet the parents, when they come over for  
7 orientation their 10th grade year and they see that  
8 critical reading on their class, they're concerned  
9 about is that a special education class. And, no,  
10 it's not; it's an intervention class. And so they  
11 have questions about it. We will not -- excuse me --  
12 we will not allow a student to come out of that class  
13 unless that parent has come to speak to me directly  
14 about why they want their child out of that class.  
15 And the reason for that is we have a short window --  
16 as we said, 500-plus days -- till that kid is going  
17 to leave the building. And so when we're talking to  
18 that parent we explain to them that "this is not an  
19 opinion, this is not what some teacher thinks; based  
20 on the data our decision is that your child is three  
21 grade levels behind. In three years, your child is  
22 going to be looking at applying for scholarships to  
23 get out of here and it would be very beneficial if we  
24 could improve their grade levels." And when they see  
25 it from that standpoint, they're placed in that class

1 along with their 10th grade English class  
2 concurrently at the same time -- two different  
3 classrooms though.

4 DR. KREMERS: And then just another question.  
5 There's one piece of data that concerns me as far as  
6 -- not really a concern, but just observation about  
7 the concurrent credit. I'm worried about  
8 subpopulations in that number because overall there's  
9 only 23% of your students that are ACT ready, but 55  
10 -- 56% are receiving concurrent credit. And to get  
11 concurrent credit usually you have to meet the  
12 minimum ACT requirements, so it's your higher  
13 performing students that are able to get the  
14 concurrent credits. So knowing that, for  
15 subpopulations or students that may struggle with the  
16 academic piece are you also in addition offering the  
17 credentials, like career credentials? So are they  
18 taking their certification test as far as they're  
19 welding certified or they have a career credential so  
20 that they have equal opportunity to be employed if  
21 they're not meeting the ACT and current pathway  
22 options?

23 SUPT. COLLINS: I'll say -- and I think we made  
24 reference to that in the packet that Ms. Hardin  
25 delivered. She'll answer that question.

1 MR. JACKSON: Yes. Yes.

2 DR. KREMERS: The packet addresses the  
3 completers. The completer is usually a series of  
4 classes. And I know it says it's the -- it talks  
5 about the career ready certificate, but that's not a  
6 credential for an industry, if that makes sense.  
7 Being career ready is different than the actual --  
8 like the welding TIG/MIG certification, those types  
9 -- so I'm kind of specifically asking --

10 MR. JACKSON: I know that when our students like  
11 leave our welding program it's industry recognized.  
12 Our kids are ready to go.

13 DR. KREMERS: Okay.

14 MR. JACKSON: And it was along the same lines of  
15 our -- I'd made mention about our CNA, when our  
16 students came out of that. We just got information  
17 this past week that 100% of our kids that were in  
18 that program passed the assessment to move on. So  
19 they are workforce career ready. And we're trying to  
20 drive for that. That's that unfair advantage that we  
21 like to talk about that may make our kids stand out  
22 versus another kid from somewhere else.

23 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Just a few things.  
25 One, I think you should be commended on the fact that



1           you guys are doing something about reading. You  
2           know, a lot of people, like you mentioned, you don't  
3           have time to wait until the elementary fixes things  
4           or the middle school fixes things. And so to do  
5           something where you're taking Critical Reading One,  
6           which could take place -- take the place of an  
7           English Language Arts class, instead of doing that  
8           alone you're doing that with English Language Arts.  
9           So I think that's a great step.

10                   A question is: in knowing that those kids are  
11           grade levels behind and doing critical reading, what  
12           kind of training -- you know, we're really pushing  
13           the Science of Reading and the RISE initiative that's  
14           kind of moving its way up there. And so have your  
15           teachers been trained or is there plans to make sure  
16           that that training gets done to where they're  
17           attacking that problem?

18                   SUPT. COLLINS: We're -- I'll address that from  
19           a systems standpoint. We have cohorted out our --  
20           so-to-speak our staff members. And we were told by  
21           the Department West Memphis School District had more  
22           faculty trained in the RISE initiative than any other  
23           school district in the entire state of Arkansas.  
24           We've also run parallel with Lucy Calkins' work and  
25           we've sent our instructional coaches to their

1 training to come back, and we've kind of adopted that  
2 as our guide and model as far as the writing side as  
3 well. And then we do -- we work with two outside  
4 consultants on literacy. We're trying to tackle it  
5 from every possible angle.

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Great. Thank you.

7 And I just want to make sure I'm reading the  
8 chart right and then just a curiosity question. When  
9 it gives the total combined Academy students enrolled  
10 in technical programs just in that last year -- and  
11 you may have mentioned it, I just missed it -- what  
12 are y'all seeing as the reason for the numbers going  
13 slightly down?

14 MR. JACKSON: Well, earlier in the presentation  
15 we talked about we did a student audit on our class  
16 -- on our campus as well, and we were offering  
17 classes that our kids didn't want to take. And so  
18 when we revamped what we're doing in our business  
19 department, especially with our cyber security, web  
20 design and things like that, kids were staying on our  
21 campus taking those classes as well. So it does  
22 fluctuate a little bit from that standpoint.

23 SUPT. COLLINS: There's also a variety of  
24 factors. Higher Ed. faces budget cuts just like we  
25 do -- and once they face budget cuts the quickest way

1 to start, you know, getting to the bottom line is  
2 personnel or programs. And so when they start  
3 eliminating programs or they're eliminating the  
4 personnel that can teach the programs, then that has  
5 a trickle-down effect on our kids as well. And so  
6 some of that is based on the amount of dollars funded  
7 for higher ed. programs.

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. All right. Any  
9 other questions from Panel Members?

10 All right. Not seeing any, I didn't see any  
11 issues related to the application. I did see one  
12 related to a waiver request, the first one being  
13 Class Size and Teaching Load.

14 Ms. Hyatt, if you could -- did I pull up the  
15 wrong one? No, I see one related to that.

16 MR. ROGERS: I saw it; it's red.

17 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Make sure I wasn't  
18 seeing things.

19 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas  
20 Department of Education.

21 All of the waiver issues have been resolved. On  
22 Class Size and Teaching Load, I did say they might  
23 need that additional waiver. But if you look up at  
24 their response, that was added in. They do request  
25 that waiver. I think that the responses just got

1 pasted in a little bit out of order.

2 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Gotcha.

3 MS. HYATT: So we have no remaining legal issues  
4 or anything on the legal review.

5 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So any further  
6 questions on the application or the waiver request?

7 Okay. You've heard the presentation and the  
8 answers to questions. So I will entertain a motion.

9 MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman, I move the approval  
10 of the application.

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: A motion. Do we have a  
12 second?

13 MS. NEWTON: Second.

14 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We have a motion and a  
15 second.

16 Any discussion?

17 MR. ROGERS: Just for consistency -- just along  
18 the lines I was saying last time, it's not that I  
19 think that they're not trying to do some great things  
20 and are doing some great things. But when you have  
21 on time credits at 94% but your reading score is at  
22 19%, and you drop a letter grade, just along the same  
23 lines with the last one I would've rather seen the  
24 motion for three years than five.

25 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Kind of along those lines,

1 I think there's really good things happening; there  
2 is some growth. There's a long way to go. And I  
3 think it wouldn't hurt to consider the three years  
4 versus five, just to make sure in that time -- I know  
5 we can call them back any time, but that would really  
6 make it a little cleaner on monitoring and following  
7 and approval at renewal --

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay.

9 DR. KREMERS: -- to consider.

10 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Any other  
11 further discussion?

12 Mr. Wilson, you've heard -- we do have the  
13 motion and a second on the table. We can go ahead  
14 and vote on that motion or if you would want to  
15 modify it at this time?

16 MR. WILSON: I'd prefer to stand on the five-  
17 year.

18 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So we have a motion  
19 and a second.

20 We've had discussion. I'll call for the vote.  
21 All those in favor say "aye."

22 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

23 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any opposed?

24 MR. ROGERS: No.

25 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So --

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, did you have an  
2 abstention?

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes.

4 Dr. Kremers, did you vote on that?

5 Let's just do a roll-call. That would be  
6 cleaner.

7 All right. So on the motion to approve the  
8 five-year renewal, we'll do a roll-call.

9 Dr. Kremers.

10 DR. KREMERS: Aye.

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Dr. Williams.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Mr. Rogers.

14 MR. ROGERS: No.

15 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Ms. Newton.

16 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: And Mr. Wilson.

18 MR. WILSON: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Motion passes  
20 4-1.

21 If you would -- are we missing something, Ms.  
22 Boyd? Oh. So we do have to take some notes to give  
23 you feedback on our responses, so if you'll just give  
24 us a minute and we'll provide that feedback to you.

25 DR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, while we're waiting on

1           that feedback, I'd like to take a minute just to  
2           share my bias about this application, now that you've  
3           voted on it. So I'm from West Memphis -- Go, Blue  
4           Devils. But one thing I do want to highlight and get  
5           on the record is that West Memphis started working  
6           with us on this application about a year before it  
7           was due. And that is something that I think the  
8           Charter Unit really appreciates. We had discussions  
9           about what their current goals were and what future  
10          goals should look like. We met over the phone, we  
11          met via Zoom, and we met in person on at least three  
12          occasions, probably more. So that was one reason why  
13          you didn't see any remaining concerns with this  
14          application, because we had ample time to work  
15          everything out and kind of run through what would  
16          look best and what would work best for students at  
17          the Academies of West Memphis. So I just wanted to  
18          share my appreciation for their work with the Charter  
19          Unit on that.

20                   CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay.

21                   DR. WILLIAMS: I'm glad you waited till we  
22          voted.

23                   CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yeah.

24                   All right. Mr. Wilson.

25                   MR. WILSON: My vote was based primarily upon my

1 visit over there and the growth that is being and has  
2 been done.

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Ms. Newton.

4 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion. And the  
5 explanation is industry and career readiness are  
6 strengths of the program.

7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Mr. Rogers.

8 MR. ROGERS: I voted against it; not against the  
9 school or what they're trying to accomplish, but  
10 given the reading scores and the on-time credit and  
11 just the drop in letter grade I would've been more  
12 comfortable with three years.

13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Mr. Williams.

14 DR. WILLIAMS: I support the motion to renew. I  
15 believe the academic and career tech approach is the  
16 right approach for their area. There is a concern  
17 regarding the letter grade and the math and reading  
18 scores.

19 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Ms. -- Dr.  
20 Kremers.

21 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the motion for  
22 renewal. There is still significant work to be done  
23 toward reading achievement. But the focus on career  
24 readiness and preparation is strong, and success with  
25 the subpopulations is evident.



1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. So congratulations  
2 on the renewal and go forth and continue the good  
3 work. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. So I'm -- are  
5 y'all okay to move on to the next one?

6 A-4: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:  
7 CROSS COUNTY NEW TECH HIGH SCHOOL

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. I see our next  
9 item on the agenda is Request for -- I want to make  
10 sure I understand this right. Is this a renewal, Mr.  
11 Ballard, or is this an amendment request?

12 MS. McLAUGHLIN: It's an amendment request.

13 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. On the -- okay. So  
14 we do have an amendment request for Cross County New  
15 Tech High School. Ms. McLaughlin, you are  
16 recognized.

17 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Kelly McLaughlin,  
18 ADE Charter School Office.

19 On January 14, 2011, the Charter Authorizing  
20 Panel approved the application for Cross County New  
21 Tech High School. The charter is approved to serve  
22 students in grade 7-12 with a maximum enrollment of  
23 500. We do have representatives of the Cross County  
24 New Tech High School appearing before you today to  
25 request an amendment of their current charter. You

1 will want to swear in Steven Prince, high school  
2 principal, and Dr. Matt McClure, chief learning  
3 officer.

4 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

5 Ms. Hyatt, same procedures as far as -- just  
6 like a regular hearing, is that correct?

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

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Those  
9 representatives for the charter application or any --  
10 those speaking in opposition, if you would rise and  
11 raise your right hand. All right. Do you swear or  
12 affirm that the testimony you're about to give will  
13 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the  
14 truth?

15 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Thank you.

17 Presenters, you have 20 minutes to start your  
18 presentation. You may begin.

19 MR. PRINCE: Stephen Prince, the high school  
20 principal at Cross County High School, a New Tech  
21 school.

22 Before I begin on the amendment that we're  
23 requesting, I want to share some great news with you  
24 all. It's been a little while since we've had to  
25 come present to the Panel. With our recent success,

1 I want to share a few datapoints with you.

2 When we received our ESSA report back, we were  
3 quite pleased with our growth. We went up in every  
4 area. In reading we increased by 10.25 percentage  
5 points; in math, 11.75 percentage points; in English,  
6 6.75; and in science, 8. So we were very pleased  
7 with that, and that is attributed to the hard work of  
8 our teachers in our building -- or in the building.

9 We also received a C rating and we were less  
10 than 1% from a B on that. So we are going to work  
11 really hard this year to try to get that B rating.  
12 We'd be happy with an A too, obviously, but we'll  
13 take that B too. But we also exceeded the state  
14 average on our overall ESSA Index, our evaluated  
15 growth and our achievement. So we are very pleased  
16 with that successful year and we hope to have another  
17 year just like that.

18 I want to also talk a little bit about our  
19 college and career access program. The last year  
20 graduating seniors, we had a 74% college-going rate  
21 with those students. We also -- which also exceeds  
22 the Arkansas average of 49% and the national average  
23 of 69%. And we also had a 92.68 grad rate, which  
24 again one of our goals is to exceed the state  
25 average, and we did do that. And we also exceeded

1 the national average, and we hope to continue that  
2 momentum as well.

3 We also were recognized by the OEP office, the  
4 Office of -- the OEP office for our growth at the  
5 high school. We were number one in the northeast  
6 region for our ELA growth, number three in Arkansas  
7 for our overall growth, and number four in Arkansas  
8 for our ELA growth. So we are very happy for the  
9 successful year we had and the recognition that we  
10 were given for that. And we're going to keep at it  
11 and hopefully see more next year.

12 So to get into the amendment that I'm  
13 requesting, it is for our Library Media Center and  
14 Library Media Specialist. We currently have waivers  
15 for Licensure and Library Media, but when we did the  
16 transition from the old standards to the new  
17 standards we realized there were a few things we  
18 needed to tweak with that and add some -- request  
19 some different waivers to make sure that we could  
20 still do what we needed to do. So we do have a  
21 traditional school library -- I want to make sure I  
22 clarify that -- and we will continue to have a school  
23 library. We have a very nice library with space for  
24 our students, lots of volumes, digital and print  
25 volumes, resources for our students. But we're

1 asking for waivers for -- when we think about the  
2 licensure part, we've been using the Teacher  
3 Licensure waiver for our Library Media Specialist.  
4 And we also are requesting a waiver in terms of who  
5 we label and who we see as our Library Media  
6 Specialist. The way we have been doing it is it's  
7 been an administrator that's been the Library Media  
8 Specialist, to oversee the functioning of the  
9 library, and we have a library aid that is trained in  
10 everything in the library to make sure that the  
11 library runs day-to-day for our students and our  
12 students have everything they need and request for  
13 the library and for that. We also have one-to-one  
14 technology, so our students have access outside of  
15 the library media center to digital resources,  
16 research materials. Of course, the instruction of  
17 the classroom lends itself to make sure that our  
18 teachers are also teaching those library -- those  
19 skills that you would normally see a Library Media  
20 Specialist teach in the library.

21 So we're asking for the waivers for the codes 6-  
22 25-104 and 6-25-103 for the Library Media Specialist  
23 and how we code them and actually having one. We're  
24 asking that we not have to identify a specific  
25 Library Media Specialist and that I or another

1 administrator designee can be the overseer and not  
2 have to put that in eSchool as a Library Media  
3 Specialist, but still oversee that program and make  
4 sure that the students in the library have all the  
5 materials, resources they need. You know, that will  
6 still be the -- what we do, the goal.

7 And we're also asking for the Standards of  
8 Accreditation to make sure all that kind of meshes  
9 together for the Library Media Specialist and the  
10 media center for student support. And, of course,  
11 that does talk a little bit about licensure and then  
12 what the requirements are for the Library Media  
13 Specialist and the duties of the Library Media  
14 Specialist and the duties of what they call a Library  
15 Clerk, I believe. And I think that's it.

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Is there any other  
17 additional information you guys have right now?

18 MR. PRINCE: No.

19 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Ms. McLaughlin.

20 MS. McLAUGHLIN: I'm sorry. I wanted to make a  
21 clarification that there was a typo on the request  
22 that stated 6-24-104, but the statute is really 6-25-  
23 104, as Mr. Prince just alluded to.

24 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: 6-27?

25 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Five.

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: 25-104.

2 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Uh-huh.

3 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: So on our list here the  
4 waiver request says 6-24-104 and 6-25-103.

5 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Yes. And it should be 6-25 --

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: 104.

7 MS. McLAUGHLIN: -- 104. Yes, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. Is there  
9 anyone here to speak in opposition, Ms. McLaughlin?

10 MS. McLAUGHLIN: No, there is not.

11 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. You have  
12 additional time, if you need it.

13 MR. PRINCE: I don't think so.

14 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right. We will  
15 turn over to Panel questions.

16 DR. KREMERS: This is just for the staff that  
17 reviews waivers. Does this one come up very often?

18 MS. HYATT: Mary Claire Hyatt, Arkansas  
19 Department of Education.

20 Most open enrollment charters have this waiver.  
21 In terms of district conversions it's not as  
22 frequent, but there are district conversions that  
23 have it. It's a really common waiver in terms of  
24 charters and district conversions.

25 DR. KREMERS: Okay. Thank you.

1                   And I visited Cross County in the past and the  
2                   library was something that the school is very proud  
3                   of.

4                   MR. PRINCE:   Yes.

5                   DR. KREMERS:   And I can say it's a great  
6                   resource.  So will they be -- you said they will be  
7                   labeled as the Library Media Specialist?

8                   MR. PRINCE:   No.  So currently the way we've  
9                   done it is either myself, assistant principal, or  
10                  another administrator is labeled as a Library Media  
11                  Specialist, and then we have our aid that runs  
12                  everything, the day-to-day operations.  And we make  
13                  sure that as -- that labeled Library Media Specialist  
14                  that they have everything they need -- the training,  
15                  the resources, the funding -- and all of that is  
16                  allocated for that.  I'm just asking that instead of  
17                  putting it in eSchool, when they ask for the Library  
18                  Media Specialist, who's that halftime Library Media  
19                  Specialist, I'm asking not to have to do that.  And I  
20                  think we need these waivers as part of that.

21                  DR. KREMERS:   Thank you.

22                  CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:  Can I ask just a  
23                  clarification?  And this may be for our Charter  
24                  Office or for the applicant, but -- so basically  
25                  you're not going to change the operation of what



1           you're doing now; it's just been determined to  
2           continue to operate that way you need this waiver?

3           MR. PRINCE:   Yes.

4           CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:   Okay.

5           MR. PRINCE:   Yeah, we won't change anything.  If  
6           anything, we'll improve it, you know, as we go  
7           through the years as needed.

8           CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:   Okay.  I see Ms. Hyatt  
9           walking up.

10          MS. HYATT:   The reason that you're hearing this  
11          request is, as with a lot of schools when we did that  
12          waiver transition from the old standards to the new,  
13          things that were not fully effectuated were kind of  
14          brought to light.  And so in talking with other  
15          schools -- and you've heard requests because of the  
16          same reason before.  We tried to review all the  
17          waivers and make sure they were fully effectuated.  
18          And so it's not that their program is changing; it's  
19          just they were missing a couple of the pieces they  
20          need in order to do what they're already doing.

21          CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:   Gotcha.  Okay.

22          Dr. Williams?

23          DR. WILLIAMS:   I have no questions.

24          CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ:   Mr. Rogers?

25          MR. ROGERS:   No.

1 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Ms. Newton? Mr. --

2 Okay. Not seeing any other questions, I think  
3 we've had issues addressed. I will entertain a  
4 motion.

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

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. We have a motion and  
8 a second to approve the amendment request.

9 Any discussion?

10 Not seeing any, all those in favor say "aye."

11 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any opposed?

13 Motion passes.

14 Thank you for coming. I got me a Dr. McClure  
15 going on here, so --

16 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Chairman Hernandez was  
17 indicting his beard.)

18 DR. McCLURE: I said you've got to work on  
19 yours.

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I know. I need to work on  
21 mine.

22 All right. Well, thank y'all.

23 Okay. I don't see anything further on our  
24 agenda. Is there anything else?

25 Oh, do we need to do our -- yeah, sorry. I was

1 trying to get us out of here. Let us get our  
2 reasons. We'll start with Dr. Kremers.

3 DR. KREMERS: I voted to approve the amendment  
4 request to facilitate the transition for the new  
5 standards.

6 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Dr. Williams.

7 DR. WILLIAMS: Well, I actually like that, the  
8 rationale there. I support the amendment request.  
9 Basically I have no concerns.

10 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Mr. Rogers.

11 MR. ROGERS: I voted for it. I had no concerns.

12 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Ms. Newton.

13 MS. NEWTON: I voted to approve the waiver  
14 request. It's a practical adjustment of waivers to  
15 meet program needs.

16 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Mr. Wilson.

17 MR. WILSON: I voted for the request for the  
18 same reasons as Ms. Newton; it's a practical solution  
19 to be added.

20 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

21 We are now done. Thank you.

22 Okay. I'm not seeing anything else in the  
23 agenda, Mr. Ballard. Is that correct?

24 MR. BALLARD: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. Any news or

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anything we need to know about before next meeting?

DR. BOYD: No.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: All right. I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. WILSON: So moved.

DR. KREMERS: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: We've got a motion and a second to adjourn.

All those in favor say "aye."

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Any opposed?

MR. WILSON: Merry Christmas.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Merry Christmas. We're adjourned.

(The meeting was concluded at 11:06 a.m.)

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A-3: ACADEMIES OF WEST MEMPHIS

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

## C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS     )  
   ) ss.  
 COUNTY OF SALINE     )

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas State Department of Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on December 19, 2018, that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have no contract with any parties within this action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial agency, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties to the action.

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: January 3, 2019.

---

SHARON K. HILL, CCR  
 Certified Court Reporter  
 Certificate No. 670

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