

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

August 17, 2017

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

August 17, 2017
8:30 A.M.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

DR. IVY PFEFFER	Chairperson/Deputy Commissioner
DR. JEREMY OWOH	ADE Asst. Commissioner/ Educator Effectiveness
DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ	State Supt./Office of Coordinated Support and Service
MS. KATHI TURNER	Deputy Director/Career & Technical Ed./Ark. Dept. of Career Ed.
MR. MIKE WILSON	Attorney & Education Advocate
MS. TOYCE NEWTON	Past State Board of Ed. Member
DR. NACCAMAN WILLIAMS	Past State Board of Ed. Member

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. JENNIFER DAVIS	ADE Staff Attorney
MS. COURTNEY SALAS-FORD	ADE Deputy General Counsel

ALSO APPEARING:

MS. ALEXANDRA BOYD	Public School Program Coordinator
MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN	Public School Program Advisor
MS. VIRGINIA PERRY	Public School Program Advisor
MR. FREDDIE SCOTT	Learning Services Operations Mgr.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. The August 17, 2017 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is called to order. I'd like to welcome everyone to the ADE Auditorium. At this time please silence all electronic devices.

We at this time want to introduce you to the Panel. The Charter Authorizing Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision, and revocation of charters. Recently passed Act 462 of 2017 allows for individuals outside the Department to serve on the Panel. In accordance with the Act, and in an effort to increase representation from multiple stakeholder groups, Commissioner Key named seven members to the Charter Authorizing Panel on August 3rd. I am Ivy Pfeffer, ADE Deputy Commission and chair of the Panel. We also have Dr. Jeremy Owoh, ADE Assistant Commissioner for Educator Effectiveness; Dr. Mike Hernandez, State Superintendent for the Office of Coordinated Support and Service; Kathi Turner, Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education at the Arkansas Department of Career Education; Mike Wilson, education advocate and attorney in Jacksonville; Dr. Naccaman Williams, former State Board of Education member; and Toyce Newton, former State Board of

1 Education member.

2 As chair my goal is to facilitate a fair and
3 responsible hearing. I will request that each person
4 speaking please state your name and title for the
5 record. I will ask that you continue to speak
6 clearly into the microphone for the benefit of the
7 Panel, the audience, and the viewing audience. This
8 entire meeting is being live-streamed and recorded,
9 so it's very important that we are on record for the
10 live-streaming. Ms. Sharon Hill, the court reporter,
11 will be providing a transcript of the meeting and it
12 will be posted on the ADE website.

13 So at this time I think we are ready to move
14 forward with our action agenda.

15 Ms. Davis, would you go over the hearing process
16 today, the voting process, and the process of how the
17 Charter Authorizing Panel will report to the State
18 Board decisions made today?

19 MS. DAVIS: Good morning. Jennifer Davis, Staff
20 Attorney for the Department. The procedures -- is
21 this on?

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I don't think so. Is her
23 microphone -- do we need --

24 Okay. Go ahead.

25 MS. DAVIS: All right. We'll start over.

1 Jennifer Davis, Staff Attorney for the Department.
2 The procedures that you're going to follow today will
3 be the same as you've done this week. But it will be
4 all persons wishing to provide testimony to you
5 today, with the exception of attorneys, will need to
6 be sworn in. The applicant will have 20 minutes to
7 make its presentation to you, followed by 20 minutes
8 for any opposition; that 20 minutes is collectively.
9 And then the applicant will have an additional 5
10 minutes rebuttal time. You may extend any of that
11 time as you feel as a board is necessary. You can
12 then ask any questions of the Department, of the
13 applicant, of anyone you feel that may have answers
14 to the questions that you have. At that point in
15 time you can either take the matter under advisement
16 or you may vote on it today. If you vote on it
17 today, you will have a Google doc that you can list
18 the reasons for your vote, so that way the applicant
19 and the State Board will know.

20 The last two days any approvals granted were
21 conditional due to the number of charter slots
22 available. However, based on the number of
23 applicants that have been approved, which is two, and
24 the number of applicants you have today, that is not
25 going to be an issue. The two that you've already

1 approved are now no longer conditional; they are
2 approved pending State Board, and the same for those
3 today.

4 Do you have any questions?

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Ms.
6 Davis.

7 A-1: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
8 APPLICATION: SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL, PINE
9 BLUFF, AR

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We're now ready for item 1
11 on our agenda, which is the Hearing of Open-
12 Enrollment Public Charter School Application,
13 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High School in Pine
14 Bluff, Arkansas. Ms. Perry, you are recognized.

15 MS. PERRY: Good morning. Virginia Perry, ADE
16 Charter Unit. Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High
17 School is a proposed open enrollment public charter
18 school to be located within the Pine Bluff School
19 District. The sponsoring entity is Southeast
20 Arkansas Preparatory High School, Inc. The applicant
21 is requesting to serve students in grades 9 through
22 12 with a maximum enrollment of 220 beginning in the
23 18-19 school year. The applicant has notified
24 affected districts of this proposed public charter
25 school.

1 And the speakers today for Southeast will be Pat
2 Hart, school board president, and Dedrick Sims,
3 consultant.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will all
5 representatives from the Southeast Arkansas
6 Preparatory High School and anyone speaking in
7 opposition please stand to receive the oath? Okay.
8 If you'll raise your right hand. Do you swear or
9 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
10 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
11 truth?

12 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.
14 Okay. So at this time we will hear from the
15 charter school and you will have 20 minutes for your
16 presentation.

17 MS. HART: Hi, my name is Pat Hart and it's my
18 honor to be president of the board of directors of
19 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High School. And I
20 would like to begin by thanking you for this
21 opportunity and thanking an awesome board of very
22 busy and committed people who have made a herculean
23 effort to be here today. A few of us are missing but
24 they all tried very hard and I so appreciate them.

25 I am actually holding in my hand today a copy of

1 the Pine Bluff Commercial dated one week ago today.
2 I'm sure all of you have heard of the Go Forward
3 initiative in Pine Bluff. A tax has actually been
4 passed in an attempt to revitalize a city that has
5 been somewhat on the decline, and that's public
6 knowledge.

7 I wanted to read just very briefly a couple of
8 things that were expressed during some listening
9 events last week in our city. A man who moved away
10 from Pine Bluff in 1990 but still has a vested
11 interest in our city was sharing some concerns, and
12 he said, "Another thing that's big on my list from
13 moving so many times is school systems; education is
14 key." Then Caleb McMahan, who is actually director
15 of Economic Development for Jefferson County, he said
16 that in his interactions with businesses looking to
17 relocate to Pine Bluff he's been led to believe that
18 improving the school systems should be the top
19 priority and he reaffirmed education is number one.
20 It is for that reason that we are here today. We
21 have no intention to undermine any efforts that are
22 in progress, but believe so completely that providing
23 a choice that is relevant and will open the doors of
24 opportunity to careers for our young people is key
25 for our city. We believe that a STEM school with

1 emphasis on project-based learning, with recognition
2 of the importance of character education can make a
3 positive difference. We understand completely the
4 responsibility and the task that achieving success
5 places before us. We know that we have to maximize
6 leadership on all levels, that we need instruction
7 but instruction with accountability and frequent
8 assessment so that we know where our students are.
9 We understand the importance of culture, especially
10 in a city that has somewhat of a negative image, and
11 we believe that morale and efforts toward retention
12 can make a difference. We understand the importance
13 of linking arms with the other educational
14 facilities, with the businesses, with the
15 opportunities that do exist in Pine Bluff to make a
16 difference is key, as well. And we know that
17 structure and importance and operations with
18 integrity must be a part. We are committed. This
19 board is committed. We understand the importance of
20 that and we're excited today to share what we believe
21 is going to make a difference in the educational
22 system in Pine Bluff. Thank you so much.

23 MR. SIMS: Dedrick Sims; I'm the CEO of Sims-
24 Fayola Foundation and the lead consultant for
25 Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High School board of

1 directors. I'm going to go through our presentation
2 that you have there.

3 Here's our mission. Our mission is clearly
4 stated in our application, so I won't re-read that
5 for the sake of time. And our board of directors are
6 here, and all of our board of directors are here
7 minus two -- three -- minus three. So a relevant
8 model for Pine Bluff, as Pat so eloquently stated
9 that there's a connection between the school and the
10 direction that the city is going in. It's imperative
11 that we have parallel efforts with the city in order
12 to have -- to create a pipeline of potential workers,
13 career, but also to make the education very relevant.
14 As a career educator myself for over 20 years I do
15 understand that there's a disconnect sometimes
16 between what's taught actually in the school and what
17 kids actually face when they walk outside the door.
18 So our STEM-based program is saying that we are
19 building a bridge between those two so that the
20 education is relevant, students can be engaged, and
21 they can walk out the door and be effective
22 immediately.

23 I want to read a letter, a quick statement from
24 one of our board members who are not here; it's the
25 former Mayor, Debe Hollingsworth, who's very familiar

1 with the Pine Bluff Forward project, as well as the
2 school. "Workforce development is a critical
3 component in relation to economic development, as you
4 know. The pipeline for skilled labor within our
5 state and nation is declining. In order for a city,
6 county or state to compete in a global marketplace
7 and entice manufacturers to invest and relocate
8 within the locale many factors are considered, such
9 as investments, incentives, quality of life, quality
10 of place, and the existence of a quality pool of
11 skilled workers. During my tenure as Mayor of Pine
12 Bluff from 2013 to 2016, we were fortunate to have
13 four major manufacturing companies to locate and
14 invest within our community. The city leaders took
15 note as we witnessed those manufacturers fulfill
16 full-time positions with candidates based upon their
17 STEM-focused education. In closing, I recall what
18 Governor Beebe stated to me, 'Until Pine Bluff helps
19 itself no one expects help from others.' So timing
20 is everything and I believe the timing is right for
21 Pine Bluff to offer an integrative STEM approach with
22 a project-based focus learning experience. As a
23 result I see it will help with meeting the demand for
24 critical thinking skilled worker, which is required
25 in today's global society." I don't think there's

1 anyone more qualified to have this positive of being
2 -- taking into consideration the seat that she sat in
3 and understanding where Pine Bluff was, where Pine
4 Bluff is going, and how this school ties itself into
5 that work.

6 Our model -- co-ed public school; we're hoping
7 to max out at 220 students 9 through 12; the academic
8 focus will be college prep using an integrated STEM
9 approach; instruction delivery: direct instruction --
10 but also what's key to our model is project-based
11 learning, hands-on learning, and that's particularly
12 important for young men. If you look at all the
13 education statistics and we desegregate the data, it
14 will show that even in the best schools boys are
15 behind. This was taken into consideration not only
16 the gap for STEM-based careers in terms of minority
17 workforce girls, but also the way that we deliver
18 instruction and create the learning environment that
19 would be conducive for young men. So we're also
20 saying that we are able to not only raise the
21 academic outcome of students who enter our school,
22 but also take into consideration one subpopulation
23 that's not really accounted for in state assessments,
24 and that's boys. Delivery of instruction: project
25 based learning, movement based learning. And we also

1 are offering STEM internships, data-driven
2 instruction for how we operate, and also an extended
3 day.

4 Here's our beliefs, and I'm not going to read
5 them all, only the ones that kind of highlight it, is
6 that we believe that all students can thrive in an
7 intellectually challenging environment, no matter if
8 they're gifted or if they have an IEP or if they come
9 from a home-schooling situation or if they've come
10 from a previous ALE. We believe that all kids can
11 learn in a challenging environment. They could learn
12 before they came to us and so clearly they have the
13 cognitive capacity to engage in information. We
14 understand the relevance of academic work and the
15 links between the schoolwork and the real world. As
16 an educator that has been the disconnect. How many
17 times -- you know, for any educators on the Panel,
18 how many times have you sat in classrooms and the kid
19 asks this one question, "How is this going to matter
20 to me when I finish?" Right? And so we're saying
21 that this matters because the projects that you are
22 engaged in are real world projects that's
23 collaborated, evaluated, and responded to by industry
24 leaders in the community. So they see the relevance
25 immediately as to why they need to engage in trig or

1 in algebra or those subjects that are abstract in
2 that way. The last thing is that we believe that
3 students learn best when given meaningful application
4 to learn and that's what -- that's where the projects
5 and also the STEM focus base comes into play.

6 Here are our goals. We want to increase the
7 number of students at proficiency or above on the
8 state exam by 15% each year. Now we know that our
9 application said that we're looking at 5% increments,
10 and I'll explain why that is during the Q-and-A. But
11 our internal goal is to move kids 15% as a cohort in
12 math and reading and those subjects that are tested.
13 We also want to move them a year-and-a-half to two
14 years in reading and also in math, and we have
15 assessments and assessment frequency to take care of
16 that or to monitor that, at least. And we want to
17 send a hundred percent of our scholars to college
18 without the need for remediation. It just -- it
19 pains us to have kids to go to college, to pay for
20 something they should've gotten in high school. And
21 so that means that we have to have those practices
22 and procedures in place, instruction in place to make
23 sure that we're not only monitoring what they need to
24 graduate from high school but also those college
25 readiness standards that ACT puts out and say that

1 "here's the gap, here's the usual gap between where a
2 kid finishes high school and where they actually go
3 to, go to college."

4 Key features of our program -- integrated STEM
5 approach, we talked about that; STEM internships;
6 project-based; blended learning for those of you who
7 are a fan of blended learning (Khan Academy) -- not
8 only do we have a teacher in front of them but
9 there's also some technology based aspects of the
10 program that allow us to meet kids where they are;
11 data-drive instruction; college prep program. This
12 is not a dumbed-down curriculum at all. And what's
13 more important -- or what's as important is culture.
14 We've always said that culture trumps strategy any
15 day. If culture is not where it needs to be, it
16 doesn't matter what you want to do. So we're saying
17 that we're going to have a restorative justice or
18 restorative mediation as a way to manage students.
19 Warrior culture week -- that's a dedicated week set
20 out before school starts in order to bring kiddos in
21 and families in and teach them about our culture, so
22 that once school starts day-one we're starting with
23 academics and not having to focus on culture as much;
24 so we're being proactive about that. Dedicated time
25 to focus on character development, doing our advisory

1 times; school-wide community meetings to celebrate
2 not only students but also teachers -- I think it's
3 important that students see teachers still growing
4 and still learning and being model students
5 themselves. And 200 minutes of additional time and
6 support in reading and mathematics weekly. That's an
7 error; it's actually 160 minutes.

8 So here's the need; right? So if you look at
9 the districts that are surrounding us, looking at
10 Dollarway, Watson Chapel and White Hall, in some key
11 areas dealing with African American students,
12 Caucasian, economically disadvantaged, we're
13 targeting the Pine Bluff School District, and the I
14 think the numbers bear out why. The Pine Bluff
15 School District just needs some help. Again, there's
16 no blame; we're not trying to, you know, place blame
17 on Pine Bluff High School. But we're looking at
18 facts and the facts say that some additional supports
19 need to be offered to the families of Pine Bluff, and
20 so those numbers bear that out.

21 Why STEM? Three things: jobs -- right; we
22 talked about the economy in Pine Bluff, we're talking
23 about where jobs are going nationwide. We want to
24 prepare our students to walk out of the door to be
25 employable immediately. Jobs, relevance -- we think

1 that project-based learning and STEM, as we said
2 earlier, lend itself to answering that question,
3 "Why? Why do I have to learn this? Why is this
4 important?" Because they're engaged in projects and
5 engaged with industry professionals that will tell
6 them immediately why that's important. And also
7 opportunity -- we know that there's a gap between the
8 number of minorities and particularly women in the
9 STEM fields. So we're saying that this educational
10 approach will directly address that gap.

11 Now why project-based learning? More effective
12 than traditional instruction for knowledge
13 application. It's better than having someone sit in
14 front of you and spray-and-pray, "I'm going to tell
15 you and I hope you get it." Right? But if you are
16 actually applying what you learn then you actually
17 have a better chance of retaining the information.
18 It's more effective than traditional instruction
19 because students are better able to integrate and
20 explain concepts. Neither one of us wakes up every
21 morning and operates in one subject space. We don't
22 get in the car and say, "Okay, I'm going to do math
23 today. I want to go cook and it's all going to be
24 about science." Things are integrated and project-
25 based learning and STEM-based learning allows

1 students to operate in a space to where things are
2 actually integrated. It improves students' retention
3 of time because they're actually doing it. In my
4 mind I want to say this quote of, you know, I think
5 90% -- if I remember 5% of what you say but 90% of
6 what I do -- I can't remember the quote, so I'm not
7 going to jumble it up -- but what I will say is that
8 if I do something, I get it. If I'm able to break
9 things apart and put it back together, I understand
10 how they work and I'll be able to understand those
11 micro-components of how things work as well.

12 Effectively, with lower achieving students -- and
13 this is important because even kiddos who may have a
14 hard time processing things cognitively can have an
15 easier time when they're actually physically
16 interacting with things. And so while they may not
17 be able to explain some of the concepts, they can
18 demonstrate mastery through performance.

19 Academic supports -- we said it, 160 minutes of
20 dedicated time for additional reading and math. We
21 know that that's important. It's super important in
22 STEM, so we're offering that additional time to our
23 kiddos. Mandatory summer school for those who don't
24 meet their NWEA RIT score goals. Now here's why
25 that's important, because not only are we measuring

1 our kids against themselves and locally; the NWEA
2 MAPS assessment allows us to assess where kids are on
3 a national scale and their grade level. So not only
4 are we saying that we're moving kids within the state
5 but we are also making them competitive for if they
6 go outside the state for jobs we know that we're
7 preparing them for that too. And also re-teach time
8 and assessment after interim assessments -- as an
9 educator, we know sometimes we'll teach a unit, give
10 a test, and then we'll move on and the kids who don't
11 get it, you know, they're handicapped moving forward
12 because they don't understand the basic concepts.
13 One of the beautiful things about being a charter
14 school is that we're able to structure our time and
15 calendar so that we are able to reassess and capture
16 those students that we know fall between those
17 cracks.

18 Real Time Data -- here's the thing about us: we
19 will know where our students are at all times because
20 of this, our formative and frequent assessments.
21 Before school -- before kiddos get -- come to school,
22 during that Warrior Week that will have assessments
23 in reading, math, writing, and science so that we can
24 get a barometer as to where they are and we can start
25 creating individual learning plans. Now, IEPs for

1 special education students by individual learning
2 plans so that we can identify kids who may need some
3 additional supports. We're going to do six interim
4 exams with analysis and re-teach days. Every six
5 weeks kiddos will have what we call an interim exam
6 and on that interim exam they will be assessed on the
7 pacing guide or the standards, the Power standards
8 that the teachers actually create in moving forward.
9 This is how we will know where each one of our kids
10 are, because every six weeks we know. So by the time
11 the state test comes at the end we're not hoping --
12 we're not hoping and guessing; we know exactly where
13 our kids are going to be with a degree of certainty
14 and we know who those kids are that we need to put
15 extra emphasis on, because we've done this all year
16 and not just waiting till the end of the year to be
17 done. Teacher assessments are not disjointed from
18 formative assessments. Teacher assessments are no
19 disjointed from what the state assessment could look
20 like. Right. Winter growth -- so we're going to go
21 in the summertime, we're going to do a six -- six
22 times during the year; we're going to take the NWEA
23 again in the winter to see where they are. This
24 allows us to revise and take a look at our curriculum
25 and also the way we're delivering it. And then also

1 the end-of-the-year -- those who don't meet those RIT
2 goals by the end of the year will be required to go
3 to summer school.

4 I'll give you a quick example: if I'm a kiddo,
5 Dedrick Sims. I take the math; my score is 541, but
6 I'm supposed to be is 641. I now have a plan that
7 will allow me to get to 641 based on the deficits
8 that the assessment told me. I take the test again
9 in the winter. Am I closer to, you know, 641? If
10 yes, we're moving in the right direction; if not,
11 we'll take a look at the curriculum and the way we're
12 delivering it. And I take that test again at the end
13 of the year after the state assessment. If I'm not
14 there, I go to summer school for those areas that are
15 deficient. So as you can see, we're closing those
16 gaps and making sure that we have those kids.

17 Parent involvement is super important to us,
18 super important; tons and tons of research that talks
19 about how parent involvement is an advantage. School
20 Advisory Council, this is SAC. I want to clear up
21 something. In the application you'll see SAC and
22 you'll see PAC. They're actually the same thing. So
23 School Advisory Council, that's a council that's
24 actually commissioned or -- like I say, I say
25 commissioned -- by the board. It's sort of that

1 subcommittee that works directly with the principal,
2 led by parents but also includes students -- I mean
3 also includes administrators and community members,
4 and this is the board's eyes into the school and also
5 a way for parents to actually participate in
6 meaningful things like budgets, like the Title 1 part
7 -- the parent Title 1 part of the budget, as well as
8 curriculum design. And also hiring and we can talk
9 about that as well. The Warrior parent association,
10 that's our, you know, PTSO, fundraisers, keep parents
11 involved, parent-to-parent night. And also monthly
12 family nights, we think that's important. How many
13 schools -- and I know growing up, you know, I didn't
14 have nights where my parents were able to come to
15 school to learn what Ms. Vanhoos, my English teacher,
16 was teaching me, and how to help me. Right? Or to
17 learn, you know, what -- I forget his name -- he
18 taught chemistry at Watson Chapel -- but what he was
19 teaching us. Parents today feel so disenfranchised
20 and helpless when kids come home and they have
21 subjects and asking questions about things that the
22 parents themselves never even took.

23 Warrior Culture -- we talked about how culture
24 is super important; more corrective than reflective
25 -- and reflective than punitive. Now we're not naïve

1 to think that this approach is going to change things
2 overnight, because kiddos come to us with habits that
3 have been formed over years. But what we're saying
4 is that if we can slow down and stop trying to
5 quickly suspend them or expel them and contribute to
6 the school-to-prison pipeline and get kids to start
7 thinking about their actions -- and here's what's
8 important about that: people care less about rules
9 than they do about relationships, and so the
10 restorative justice, restorative practice models say
11 that we value the relationship; we value the impact
12 my decision has made upon the relationship and the
13 culture. So that's how we are interacting with our
14 kiddos in that way.

15 Classrooms named after international and local
16 universities -- so no longer will it be "Ms. Smith's
17 class come to the cafeteria" or "Ms. Johnson's class
18 come to the cafeteria;" it's going to be "Harvard,
19 would you please come to the cafeteria," "UAPB, will
20 you please come to the cafeteria." This is the way
21 for us to introduce the college-going culture to
22 students every day. And as a part of advisory
23 they'll actually learn about those universities.

24 Character Lunches -- once or twice a week the
25 principal or the designee will give -- will stand in

1 front of students while they're eating and they will
2 give character lunches based on the core values of
3 the school. Really two things: one, being very
4 intentional about the culture, being proactive, and
5 keeping it in front of them instead of a one-touch in
6 the summer. But also teaching our kids how to have
7 working lunches, teaching them how to sit, have a
8 lunch, and actually pay attention.

9 Cultural and student celebrations -- we
10 celebrate all cultures, all students during our
11 celebration time. And a uniform dress code.

12 Now we're a high school, so we're got to prepare
13 our kids to go to the next step. Right? College
14 Prep -- we're requiring two ACT exams required for
15 graduation. That way kids see it and they see it
16 again. If you look at -- I don't know if you guys
17 have kids who have gone to college and taken the ACT.
18 It normally takes about two or three times before
19 they get the score that you want. And so we're
20 actually being there with them and saying, "Look. To
21 graduate from our program we need you to take two
22 ACTs that we will help facilitate." Two college
23 visits are required for graduation. Instruction
24 aligned to college readiness standards. And so as I
25 said before, sometimes students can graduate from

1 high school with a 3.0 but it's really a 2.0 when
2 they go to school because they don't have the pre-
3 requisite college skills and the college classes that
4 they need. While they may have satisfied high school
5 requirements, there's tons of research that show
6 there's a gap between high school exit requirements
7 and what is required to be successful in college.
8 We're taking that into consideration with our
9 planning. Not only are we aligning our instruction
10 to the Arkansas frameworks, but also the college
11 readiness standards.

12 That's it. Questions? I did it.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Great timing. You will
14 have an additional five minutes. We do need to see
15 though right now if there is anyone here to speak in
16 opposition --

17 MR. SIMS: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- of this application.

19 MS. DAVIS: I don't have anybody.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We don't have anybody
21 listed.

22 Okay. All right. So you have an additional
23 five minutes if you'd like to address the Panel, if
24 there's someone else who would like to, and then we
25 can proceed with questions.

1 MR. SIMS: I'd like to cover that last slide, if
2 I could.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Sure. Sure, go ahead.

4 MR. SIMS: I've got to pull it back up. Yeah.
5 So ACT Aspire assessments are administered, and I
6 think -- here's what's important, this last piece,
7 and this is part of what our counselor is going to
8 do, is have students and families understand the
9 protocol for college visits. We want to give them
10 application assistance, essay assistance, and
11 advisory for juniors and seniors. And here's what
12 that looks like: we'll start in the 11th grade with
13 students already crafting what their essay is going
14 to be. So throughout the 11th grade and throughout
15 the 12th grade they're going to have revisions,
16 revisions about, you know, looking at that essay.
17 That's one of the critical things when you're getting
18 into college. We're not leaving it up to chance;
19 we're helping kids, hand-in-hand, walking them
20 through, you know, through the process. And family
21 assistance with the selection process; so we're not
22 just handing kids off to post-secondary
23 opportunities, we're walking with them throughout
24 their time at Southeast Arkansas Preparatory High
25 School.

1 So I just wanted to make sure I got that in.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

3 MR. SIMS: Thanks.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Is there anyone else who
5 would like to speak about the charter before we start
6 with questions from the Panel?

7 MS. HART: I just want to -- Pat Hart again. I
8 just wanted to affirm the passion that we feel. I
9 think sometimes when a charter comes into a district
10 the impression is a bit negative and it's not our
11 intention to be negative about anything we're doing;
12 it's our commitment to work with those who are in
13 place and already doing their best. There are some
14 challenges in our city and we don't think challenges
15 close doors. We think they're opportunities for us
16 to employ some of the strategies that we have
17 identified as successful based on research, not on
18 supposition, based on schools that are doing it and
19 doing it well. We believe that in order to step into
20 the future we need to take advantage of those things.
21 I cannot say enough -- the commitment of the board,
22 the caliber of people who are involved -- I wish I
23 had an opportunity to actually let each of them speak
24 to you. But let me just say to you Dr. Joanna
25 Edwards, who is -- oh, my goodness -- educator

1 extraordinaire, retired most recently, sort of, from
2 UAPB; Linda Callaway, teacher, master teacher level,
3 somewhat retired; Cardell Meadows, who has banking
4 history, right now an instructor in accounting and
5 business matters -- he's our finance guru and we like
6 him, he's tight; Charles Anderson who is the
7 construction guru who owns his own company, has our
8 business expertise covered; Alex Guynn, lawyer,
9 judge, gives us legal ideas; you've already heard a
10 statement from Debe Hollingsworth, the former Mayor;
11 we also have a pastor of a very respected local
12 church. I can't begin to tell you the caliber of the
13 people that are involved. We think that speaks well
14 for our passion and our commitment. I think I forgot
15 somebody in that list. Yes, Michel Gutman, who is
16 out-of-state and is -- has managed several
17 businesses, very recently Sissy's Log Cabin, and now
18 he travels the state helping jewelry stores. So a
19 board that is to be proud of, a passion that is
20 undeniable, and a commitment that will see us
21 through. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

23 Okay. Panel, at this time I think we are ready
24 for questions. And so, Ms. Newton, do you want to
25 start with questions?

1 MS. NEWTON: Sure. I'm looking at the
2 enrollment target, but also today we'll hear from
3 another request for a charter in Pine Bluff. So what
4 do you anticipate the challenges will be for
5 recruitment or marketing? And is the 220 the number
6 of students necessary to meet the demands of your
7 budget? And so if you fall short or looking at
8 competition -- certainly competition -- and Pine
9 Bluff Schools is going to do what they can do to
10 maintain their students. So what challenges do you
11 anticipate around enrollment of competition in the
12 event that another charter -- in the event that
13 you're approved and in the event that another charter
14 is also approved?

15 MR. SIMS: Thank you for that question.
16 Enrollment is touch for any charter school and they
17 won't tell you any different; it's always a
18 challenge. Trying to break the mindset of going to a
19 traditional school where you're kind of zoned or
20 district bound to having a choice to kind of go
21 another place is always difficult, no matter where
22 you are. So I think some of it will just be, you
23 know, normal challenges of enrollment in terms of
24 being able to go out into the community and explain
25 our model, explain why it's advantageous for them to

1 come to our school. Maybe in our case a little bit
2 transportation, a little bit, just in case they
3 decide to come from White Hall or Dollarway, some of
4 the extending areas. But we can put some things in
5 place there just in case; temporary MOU with the city
6 transportation department to design some bus routes
7 through public transit for some of those kiddos if we
8 have enough from that area.

9 Marketing-wise, you know, Ms. Newton, we're
10 excited about it. I think we feel really good about
11 our program. We're the only program of our type in
12 Pine Bluff. We have some very exciting partnerships
13 blooming between UAPB and SEARK and some other
14 industries there that will allow -- that will help us
15 to market the relevance of what we do and to get the
16 kids excited about getting outside the classroom and
17 doing things outside of just, you know, getting
18 instruction and taking assessments. One of the
19 things that we think is, you know, an advantage to us
20 is that our disposition towards ground level
21 marketing; we plan to establish relationships with
22 the surrounding districts. And, you know, and this
23 may sound kind of counterintuitive but we're going to
24 go to those districts and talk to their middle
25 schools, or ask to talk to their middle schools, just

1 to present us as an option. Now no district wants to
2 give their kids up, but I think that there are
3 districts that struggle with certain kids and those
4 struggling kids actually are to the detriment of
5 those districts in terms of numbers. And so we have
6 a school, an option, where students who are more
7 science inclined, project-based inclined, boys maybe
8 -- we have an option for them and we're asking the
9 districts to consider that.

10 And, lastly, this school will take the place of
11 another school which is Ridgeway Christian School.
12 And so there's an inherent student body there that's
13 really interested in enrolling in our school. So we
14 feel pretty good about our chances of getting our
15 enrollment.

16 But to answer your final question, 187 is the
17 number that our budget absolutely needs. So even if
18 we fall short of 220 we have a contingency plan.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And, Mr. Sims, you are
20 proposing to open a 9-12 high school; correct?

21 MR. SIMS: Correct.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And will you open with all
23 grades initially?

24 MR. SIMS: We will.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Is that the plan?

1 MR. SIMS: We will.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. And
3 then I think our next application is for a K-5
4 elementary. Okay. All right. Thank you for that
5 clarification.

6 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Do you have
8 additional questions, Ms. Newton? Anything --

9 MS. NEWTON: I do, but I can wait.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Do you
11 -- Dr. Williams, did you want to go ahead and ask a
12 question? You had the microphone, so --

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. I was just
14 always ready.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: That's great.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. A couple of quick
17 questions. One, you said -- you were talking about
18 160 minutes of daily instruction in reading and math.
19 That's quite a bit of time, which is good, but how is
20 that going to fit into a regular day?

21 MR. SIMS: See, we're proposing that we are an
22 extended day. The first hour of every day is what we
23 call our advisory period or enrichment time. During
24 that time Monday through Thursday we'll take 40
25 minutes of that time to focus on differentiated math

1 and differentiated reading. So you take 40 times 4
2 days is 160 minutes. So that's --

3 DR. WILLIAMS: So it's 160 a week?

4 MR. SIMS: Yeah, a week.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: It said daily on the -- on your
6 slide.

7 MR. SIMS: Did it?

8 DR. WILLIAMS: At least I thought it did. I
9 mean --

10 MR. SIMS: I don't know. But it's a week.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: But if it's a week that makes --
12 that answers my question.

13 MR. SIMS: It's a week.

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Good deal. All right.
15 And the other question, this was just a technical
16 question. On page 16 I was looking at the lease and
17 is it \$10,000 for the first year and then \$30,000 for
18 the second year?

19 MS. HART: Let me correct that. I think that
20 maybe in one of our responses to the original charter
21 that that was corrected. We already have a
22 relationship established with the Public Educational
23 Endowment Board who actually have control of that
24 facility. And as a concession to us, which we
25 appreciate very much, there is a lease agreement of

1 \$10.00 for the first year, \$30,000 for the second
2 year, and strong motivation for us to purchase. I
3 mean we get all kinds of concessions, including a
4 lease that applies toward purchase.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: Well, I thought -- it read ten
6 but it didn't have that K after it and then it jumped
7 from \$10.00 to \$10K.

8 MS. HART: Ten dollars. Yes.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: And that was just a little
10 confusing.

11 MS. HART: Thank God for \$10.00 for year-one.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Right. Okay. Good deal. All
13 right. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes, Dr. Hernandez.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: I just had a follow-up. The
16 extended day part of that, I know in your budget
17 right now it talks about your teachers at \$34K. Is
18 that including the extended day part or would there
19 be additional compensation for those extended days?

20 MR. SIMS: No, that's including the extended day
21 part.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

23 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: All right.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: I have one follow-up on that.

1 You talked about kids going to summer school, which
2 is great. I like the idea of kids not needing to be
3 remediated. That's really a big issue throughout the
4 whole state of Arkansas. But if you're talking about
5 going to summer school how is that going to be paid
6 for?

7 MR. SIMS: So it's actually -- so part of the
8 summer school -- excuse me -- summer school is
9 largely based on blended learning, and so we have the
10 Khan Academy program, Star Compass. So that takes a
11 minimal actual people involved to being part of that
12 because it's differentiated. If you remember, I said
13 they take the NWEA MAPS.

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Right.

15 MR. SIMS: The NWEA MAPS identifies individual
16 areas that they're deficient in and need some
17 support. Those things are plugged into the programs
18 and they create lessons and assessments for those
19 students. And so you don't -- whereas you would
20 have, you know, three or four teachers normally, you
21 could have one teacher and an aid to support that, so
22 minimal dollars in summer school.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: All right. Thank you.

24 MR. SIMS: Thanks.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And your extended day --

1 so how many hours a day is your school day?

2 MR. SIMS: So we're looking at going from 8:00
3 to 4:00.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay, 8:00 to 4:00. And
5 how many student contact days?

6 MR. SIMS: It's on the calendar; I'm sorry.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Is it 185?

8 MR. SIMS: 185.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And so I think
10 along with their questions, is that considered then
11 in the budget?

12 MR. SIMS: It is.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: With the extended day and
14 extended school year?

15 MR. SIMS: It is.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Did you have any
17 other follow-up for that? Were you -- did you have a
18 follow-up to questions about the --

19 MS. NEWTON: No. Actually it's about waivers
20 and I think we may talk about those.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh, do you
22 have some questions?

23 DR. OWOH: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Madam Chair.
24 A quick question about your educator support and
25 development. You in your presentation -- during your

1 presentation and application you talk about
2 addressing the need of unique students and
3 challenging students from the other school districts.
4 What type of support and ongoing professional
5 development will you offer your educators to meet
6 those needs of those students?

7 MR. SIMS: So let me make sure I understand. Do
8 you want me to talk specifically about students that
9 may come in behind challenged; right?

10 DR. OWOH: Well, this question is about the
11 educators --

12 MR. SIMS: Right, right. About the PD to
13 support them in order to serve those students?

14 DR. OWOH: Yes, sir.

15 MR. SIMS: Right. Okay. So one of the things
16 that we have built into our program are more
17 professional development days than surrounding
18 districts. Our teachers actually come in prior to
19 school starting as well, and that's built into the
20 budget, and they get professional development on the
21 systems that we are going to employ. Every week
22 there is a half-day for students and the other half
23 of the day is dedicated to professional development
24 for stu -- I mean for teachers to get support in our
25 programs. And then we also have those re-teach days.

1 So the way that works is that during the assessment
2 week students will take assessments three days out of
3 the week. At the end of that assessment period we
4 have what we call a -- we have data analysis; that's
5 a day. During that analysis the teachers spend all
6 day looking at the data, looking at where kids fell
7 below a 70% threshold on any particular standard,
8 redesigning re-teach plans, consulting with the
9 principal or instructional coach to take a look at
10 that to say, "Okay, that's a good approach. That's
11 different than what we did before. How about trying
12 this model or this method, you know, instead of that?
13 Here's some additional supports we can bring in for
14 kids who fell really, really below." And those kids,
15 you know, are normally kids who have IEPs or have
16 some sort of -- need some support. It's another
17 collaborative process in restructuring those re-teach
18 days. At the end of that students are again
19 presented with their data. There's a protocol that
20 they go through that talks about "this is why I think
21 I did well," "this is why I think I didn't do well,"
22 "here's the supports that I think I need." That's
23 matched. And then for the first two days of the
24 following week those teachers actually roll out that
25 re-teach plan and then reassess those kids. Those

1 kiddos who still fall below that 70% threshold are
2 then pulled out during the week and worked with with
3 our aids and other instructors. In relationship to
4 special education and any potential ELL learners, we
5 are aware and will take advantage of the resources
6 that are located here at the Arkansas Department of
7 Education and their special education unit. We've
8 had conversations with them about what supports they
9 can offer teachers.

10 Also, I think this is a great opportunity for us
11 to find ways to collaborate with surrounding
12 districts, if possible, to add some additional
13 resources and supports.

14 Overall, we'll value being proactive and really
15 kind of overextend our-self for professional
16 development and support of our teachers. What I can
17 tell you is that the professional development is
18 going to be limited to the areas that fit our school.
19 Like we're not trying to be everything to everybody.
20 You know we will focus on project-based learning,
21 STEM, you know, English Language Learners, if we need
22 -- if we have that population, making sure that our
23 teachers are well versed in the RTI process and
24 understand how to help the kids no matter where they
25 are on the learning continuum.

1 DR. OWOH: You mentioned systems that the
2 teachers would use. Have you all already determined
3 the systems that the teachers or educators would use
4 to enter their data or --

5 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So we're following the Driven
6 by Data model by Paul Bambrick, and there's a number
7 of ways that you can catch that data. You can use
8 Excel spreadsheets to catch that data. A platform
9 that we're considered called Compass Learning is one
10 that we can use as well; Odyssey. So the way that
11 works is that -- say for instance the teacher is
12 grading a paper or we get a paper from, you know, Mr.
13 Smith; right? The teacher then scans that and it
14 automatically populates the program. So they're
15 building a profile for not only the student but also
16 the class. So teachers can actually start to analyze
17 that data even before the data days so that we've
18 identified some potential things that we want to take
19 a look at.

20 DR. OWOH: And will that particular system -- or
21 those systems generate your interim assessments that
22 you mentioned that will take place every six weeks?

23 MR. SIMS: So they could generate the interim
24 assessments, but I think there also needs to be a
25 personal touch from the teachers as well. Part of

1 the time -- so part of that re-teach day or the data
2 analysis day is for teachers to also plan the next
3 units of instruction. And so operating on the
4 backwards design philosophy where they're actually
5 designing the assessment first and then planning
6 backwards, that's the way that, you know, that
7 process is going to happen.

8 DR. OWOH: Okay. And you mentioned your ELL
9 students and your gifted and talented students. In
10 your budget -- and I know that you submitted a waiver
11 for gifted and talented, but I'm more interested in
12 the support systems that you have for your gifted and
13 talented students and ELL students. How will you
14 support those individual needs of gifted and
15 talented? Being a 9th grade through 12th grade
16 institution you'll probably inherit some students who
17 already have those needs and have a prior history of
18 receiving those additional services as gifted
19 students, special ed., and ELL. But those -- the
20 only line item in your budget for your ELL students
21 with supplies is for \$5,000, but zero for gifted and
22 talented. So if you could kind of expound on how you
23 will meet those needs for those individual students?

24 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So when you take a look at
25 traditional education and GT, students with GT are

1 pulled out to get what we call alternate or
2 alternative or extended learning opportunities to
3 meet them at their cognitive level. We think that
4 our program, which is project-based learning, STEM-
5 based, already collaborating with industry, allows us
6 to ratchet up the learning experience for those
7 students. If you look at page 28 in our application
8 -- I'm not sure if it's the same in yours -- but on
9 page 28 it talks about that. It says that our
10 alternative challenge is for reading and writing;
11 they're routinely offered as a part of our learning
12 experience. The students may also choose to go the
13 Honors route and they also may choose to extend their
14 project in a way that allows them to include more
15 rigor into that. That's on page 28 of the
16 application; I think that's the one that was on GT.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Sims, can I ask a
18 question on the waivers? Okay, never-mind. I had
19 not seen that you had asked for a waiver from the GT.
20 Okay. I think it's in a different place.

21 MR. SIMS: Page 49.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Sorry to interrupt.

23 MR. SIMS: That's okay. And can I say also
24 that, you know, we will have a -- we're proposing to
25 have a really solid relationship with, you know,

1 SEARK and University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff. Those
2 relationships will also fit and allow GT students to
3 expand their learning opportunities. Our model is
4 such that we just don't believe in tracking; right?
5 We think that if here's an educational learning
6 experience that's good for most kids to get them
7 ready to be -- it should be good for all kids. And
8 it's incumbent on us to create the structures and the
9 learning experiences to meet those kiddos where they
10 are, not track them into something that's either
11 lower or super-higher to create these social gaps
12 that we've seen in schools. So, therefore, our
13 learning platform is such that it could catch those
14 students who are below. As indicated, some of our --
15 as reflected in some of our goals, the 5% increase,
16 but really we want 15%, and then we have those aids
17 and those supports and those mandatory times for
18 kiddos who may fall behind. But also, you think
19 about it, if you have a kid who's engaged in say
20 building a, you know, a rocket launch or a rocket
21 projector, the opportunities to extend that at an
22 advanced level is so much greater than having a kid
23 to, say, go through a trigonometry lesson and, oh, by
24 the way, do, you know, two more pages of this
25 application stuff. When you look at a textbook or

1 any curriculum, an extended learning opportunity for
2 kiddos who may be at an advanced cognitive level is
3 mainly application. Well, our whole program is
4 application. Our whole program is project-based
5 learning and building things. So we think that we
6 capture those students, no matter where they are on
7 that continuum.

8 DR. OWOH: Yeah. And I definitely understand
9 the importance of not tracking students. But my
10 concern is making sure that all students -- if we're
11 -- you know, most educators know that when you have a
12 classroom of students you have a variety of learning
13 styles and levels within the classroom.

14 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

15 DR. OWOH: And so my concern was making sure
16 that your advanced students, who are advanced when
17 you receive them, if you move forward with your
18 charter, that their needs are being met just like
19 your lower level students' needs are being met as
20 well. And considering I did not see any support
21 items in your proposal, that was concerning.

22 One last point for ELL, your English Language
23 Learner program -- ELL is outdated and is not a
24 screener; it wasn't a screener. So I would
25 definitely recommend that if we -- if you move

1 forward that that training is definitely offered to
2 whoever will provide those services to your ELL
3 students, because now it's ELPA21.

4 MR. SIMS: Yeah, 21.

5 DR. OWOH: This will be the first year for the
6 screener.

7 MR. SIMS: Okay. Thank you.

8 DR. OWOH: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams, I'll let you
10 go ahead.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. I'm more than
12 willing to wait my turn. But, Madam Chairman, thank
13 you.

14 First of all, just a comment and then I want to
15 follow-up here. But, first of all, I like the idea
16 of the Go Forward initiative. I've been kind of
17 monitoring that in the newspaper and so-forth. And I
18 think if you -- I do a little work in community
19 development over the years. If you intend to change
20 the community, education is such a huge piece of
21 doing that. Companies, no matter where you are, if
22 you want certain companies to locate there they've
23 got to feel comfortable about where their kids are
24 going to go to school. Otherwise, I've watched other
25 communities where they maybe brought a company in and

1 all the execs were willing to drive 50 to 60 miles to
2 live somewhere else. So education is a key piece, so
3 I commend you all for looking at that.

4 We talked a little bit about the remediation and
5 extended time, extended day, and the number of hours
6 you're going to put into remediation. And also I
7 heard you mention the Honors programs also. One, who
8 do you project -- what do you project your student
9 population to look like? And how do you plan on
10 doing both ends of the spectrum?

11 MR. SIMS: For --

12 DR. WILLIAMS: For your students. On one hand I
13 hear you talking about the Honors program; on the
14 other end you're talking about the remediation
15 program. A lot of schools tend to have one focus or
16 the other, and it looks like you all are --

17 MR. SIMS: And that's a shame.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, yeah, that's --

19 MR. SIMS: That's where you leave kids out.

20 Yeah.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: It depends on where you're
22 located. But I want to know how you all are going to
23 address that?

24 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So we're projecting our
25 student population to look very similar to Pine Bluff

1 School District. That's the district that we want to
2 locate in and that's where we'll heavily recruit in.
3 So all of our projections, funding projections, as
4 well as student population projections are based on
5 what the Pine Bluff School District looks like.

6 Now that doesn't mean that we didn't peak over
7 at White Hall, peak at, you know, Watson Chapel, and
8 peak at Dollarway, but we had the focus on one.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Right.

10 MR. SIMS: And in terms of -- so that's what we
11 think our student population demographic is going to
12 look like from free and reduced lunch as well. And
13 as I stated earlier, if I'm understanding what you're
14 saying on each end of the spectrum, we think that our
15 program will capture both of those kind of students,
16 students who need that extra support. When you look
17 at the Pine Bluff School District, I mean they have
18 like a SPED population that's coming in of maybe 16%
19 or 17%; GT is -- actually it's not that much. Right?
20 And so we think that because of the way that we're
21 educating kids that we can both capture them at both
22 ends of the spectrum, primarily through -- I wanted
23 to say earlier -- well, differentiated instruction
24 through blended learning, through technology. You
25 can have -- you know, when I taught I had 30 kids,

1 right, in the classroom. And back then blended
2 learning wasn't as popular as it is now. But now you
3 can have 30 kids in a class, if that's what you want
4 to have, and 10 can be working on one thing as it
5 relates to whatever that standard is, 10 could be on
6 another one, and 10 could be somewhere else, and you
7 can have them in groups using technology, using
8 computers, using tailor-made instruction that meet
9 them where they are at a reading level, at a
10 cognitive processing level, but they're all still
11 focused on this one standard. Right? So at the end
12 of the day, whatever the objective is can be achieved
13 by all three groups. That's the beauty of
14 technology. And so that's part of what we're doing.
15 You can look in the budget; you'll see we budgeted
16 for 200 computers to make sure every kid has one.

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

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

19 MS. TURNER: Good morning.

20 MR. SIMS: Good morning.

21 MS. TURNER: I have a question about your
22 curriculum that you plan to offer. Because you are
23 STEM based I'd like to know about your career and
24 technical programs, why particularly that these were
25 chosen in the photography, travel and tourism,

1 housing and design areas. You have JROTC, Med Pro,
2 some banking entrepreneurship, and business courses.
3 So how were those chosen and why were those
4 particular classes chosen?

5 MR. SIMS: So some of those classes were chosen
6 kind of based on the culture of the city a little
7 bit. But if you look down to Other Courses, where
8 you see 4.5 units required, you'll see more of the
9 STEM based ones, the robotics, the software coding,
10 the graphic design, the engineering design
11 principles. Those things lend itself directly to our
12 approach of STEM. The other courses, while we know
13 that we need to have some career and technical
14 education opportunities, those are negotiable. And
15 so as families and kids start to enroll, if we see
16 that we need to move from photography to something
17 else then we have the ability to negotiate that
18 within the courses that are supposed to be allowed
19 within the Arkansas graduation requirements.

20 MS. TURNER: Okay. Coming from Department of
21 Career Ed., I value those courses as career and
22 technical with the software coding; some of those
23 coding classes are career tech; robotics and the
24 engineering, the Project Lead the Way are career and
25 technical ed. So that's why I was wondering why

1 other courses were chosen when you actually have that
2 STEM focus.

3 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

4 MS. TURNER: So, thank you.

5 MR. SIMS: Yeah. Hold on one second; someone
6 else wants to --

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I need to -- I
8 wanted to clarify too for my understanding. So, Ms.
9 Turner, in these courses that are listed here do they
10 -- would they need to have some additional waivers
11 from Department of Career Ed. in terms of meeting the
12 career pathway requirements?

13 MS. TURNER: I think they may in some of those
14 other courses. I think they're probably on the right
15 track; it's just the way it's listed may be a problem
16 because our courses -- we do want them to have a
17 program of study and not -- your school not just to
18 offer a lot of different courses but actually have
19 pathways for students. And you have some of those
20 listed under Other Courses that would actually be
21 under career and technical.

22 MR. SIMS: And then part of the internship
23 experience they would have to actually declare a
24 pathway. Right? So then they'll be more focused, so
25 --

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. If you will state
2 your name for the record, you're recognized.

3 MS. CALLAWAY: Linda Callaway, board of
4 directors with Southeast Arkansas High School. My
5 concern here is that -- that is my desire also, just
6 like you have stated. Now this is negotiable; we can
7 change those. And let me mention an example of
8 something that I'm talking about right now. While I
9 was employed by the Pine Bluff School District I had
10 a wonderful opportunity to supervise and instruct a
11 child -- occupational child career guidance
12 management program, just like you are talking about.
13 This experience that my students had I would like our
14 students to have the same experience at SAP High
15 School. First of all, the program was exclusively
16 12th graders because they had three prior courses
17 that led up to this main course. It was career
18 focused. Most of the students in this program had a
19 career focus of being a pediatrician, pediatric
20 nurse, or a childcare worker or early childhood
21 teacher. We also partnered with a K-5 school and
22 each one of the students had a supervising teacher
23 and then they had a little class they called their
24 individual class, as well as they graduated with 60
25 hours toward a CDA and a certification in childcare

1 guidance management that gave them a certification in
2 early childhood training. They could take this and
3 when those students left that school they could work,
4 most of them -- I had eight students at one time
5 working at a daycare at the University of Arkansas in
6 Fayetteville, working their way through college.
7 These are the same type of experiences that we want
8 for our students at Southeast Arkansas Preparatory
9 Academy. Those courses are negotiable because I can
10 see where we can change and add personal and family
11 financing, we can add leadership service, and all the
12 other many, many sources that are offered through
13 career technical education. These students had many
14 wonderful opportunities to develop standards, and one
15 standard actually said that the students would
16 present a lesson plan for children in different age
17 groups to include art, language, math, music, and
18 physical education. See, this is STEM-based
19 learning. The students therefore have to do an
20 inquiry-based research and investigative skills,
21 cognitive skills, learning styles, how to write a
22 lesson plan. And not only -- when they did this,
23 they finished, they actually taught the lesson in
24 front of their supervising teacher and they were
25 evaluated. Now if you look at this, they are doing

1 what professionals in their fields do, and that's the
2 point that we're getting at. And those types of
3 programs as long as I am on the board they will
4 definitely be offered. So there is no need to have a
5 concern about that. Thank you.

6 MS. TURNER: Thank you. My only concern is that
7 you have so many different courses listed instead of
8 it being in a focused area but you've explained that
9 it would be. So thank you for those answers.

10 MR. SIMS: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And while we're talking
12 about the courses could Mr. Causbie -- could you just
13 give us a rundown as to the other courses that they
14 have listed, whether or not they would be in
15 compliance with standards and -- because high school
16 -- designing the courses and pathways and
17 opportunities for high school can get to be very
18 difficult.

19 MR. CAUSBIE: Roy Causbie with Standards. Good
20 morning. Just reviewing this real quickly, going to
21 career and technical, I was just observing that too.
22 And my observation on that was they had the areas
23 listed, it just didn't have specific courses. So
24 that was just an area of concern for my part.

25 Currently they have a botany class listed as a

1 semester class, and if they would want to teach that
2 class they would need to obtain a course approval for
3 that science class. Also listed in human anatomy
4 and physiology; now the way I'm looking at the way
5 they have it listed here, it says it's a semester
6 course. That is a full year course. So that would
7 need to be offered for a full year instead of a
8 semester.

9 I did not see anywhere anything mentioned about
10 instrumental music. That is one of the ones required
11 to be offered also. Vocal music I did see, but not
12 instrumental music. Spanish is mentioned. Just
13 again for clarification, you have to offer two years
14 of Spanish, understanding when they open up but they
15 may have a student come in that's already had Spanish
16 I, so you would need to offer Spanish II.

17 The next thing is really more of a
18 clarification. They do have transitional math
19 listed, and it says 9th grade; that's generally for
20 11th and 12th graders as they move along in their
21 math courses. So just be sure that we do understand
22 that that course is more of a higher level course,
23 11th and 12th grade, instead of for a 9th grade
24 class.

25 So that's what I noticed going through the

1 courses for the curriculum.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So there are
3 several issues then with the planned course offerings
4 --

5 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- so we would definitely
7 need to consider whether or not, you know, the school
8 could go back and make those adjustments?

9 MR. CAUSBIE: To be addressed, yes, ma'am.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So, Mr. Sims, to
11 follow-up I'm looking on the schedule of courses
12 offered, there is a -- you've got in your music and
13 -- regarding the music, that replaces advanced music
14 with instrumental music and offer it at each grade
15 level?

16 MR. SIMS: Right.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Is that -- so if --

18 MR. SIMS: That would still address that.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

20 MR. SIMS: And, yeah --

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So that could be -- you go
22 ahead. You go ahead and explain.

23 MR. SIMS: No, I was going to say not to
24 necessarily address that, but what I can say is that,
25 you know, we are willing and able to make any changes

1 that we need to make in the course offerings. I
2 mean, we have a year to do so. So we will not -- the
3 things that you had talked about will not affect the
4 integrity of our program.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Do you have
6 questions?

7 MR. WILSON: Thank you. Mr. Sims, I was
8 gratified to see in your application that you propose
9 home visits for all the students attending the
10 school. To me, that is the single most important
11 thing you can do to insure the success of your
12 proposal. I've seen it firsthand. Tell me more
13 about how those home visits would be done and by whom
14 and how you propose to make that work.

15 MR. SIMS: Thank you for that question. I'm
16 glad that you appreciate that. I think that's an
17 undervalued and utilized part of traditional public
18 education. And I don't think it's because teachers
19 and principals don't want to; I just think that the
20 way the box is built, constraining time, limited PD,
21 you know, not able to control your schedule just
22 prevents people who want to do it from doing it.
23 Since we have the luxury of creating the school and
24 being able to make that a priority, part of the way
25 that the -- or the way that the home visits will be

1 implemented is through -- and I told you at the
2 beginning of the year teachers come in prior to
3 students and go through some professional
4 development. During that time we will have an
5 enrollment list of kiddos who are going to be in our
6 school. We will then make phone calls, schedule
7 visits with those students, and actually go to their
8 homes and meet them and talk about our program, talk
9 about our expectations, find out what their
10 expectations are; so at the beginning of the year.
11 Also, throughout the year there are a number of
12 professional development days that are built in for
13 teachers. We'll use that time as well to strike out
14 in teams and go and visit students who we didn't
15 capture at the beginning of the year, and we'll do
16 that all the way through Christmas. But it's
17 definitely a priority. I'll tell you why: it gives
18 teachers and administrators power when you can have a
19 conversation with a kid who may have stepped outside
20 of expectations and you can say, "Look, I know your
21 mom or your dad, you know, would be disappointed in
22 this." Or, "I know what your mom and dad wants for
23 you. I've seen where you live. I've seen how your
24 brothers and sisters look up to you." I know the
25 goals of those parts of education that are not

1 captured on any standardized test, but reflect itself
2 in student achievement and engagement in the
3 classroom and also on standardized assessments. So
4 that's a priority for us and we're building it in at
5 the beginning and throughout the year.

6 MR. WILSON: Well, let me assure you -- and you
7 already know this -- there's not a single thing you
8 can do that's more important to engage the parents
9 than those home visits. It's hard work, it's hard on
10 teachers, I'm sure; it takes time, but it's very
11 worthwhile. It's most worthwhile thing I think you
12 can do to insure your success.

13 MR. SIMS: It pays dividends in the classroom.
14 When a kid knows that you know their parents or
15 you've met them, there's a pause before any adverse
16 action. I've seen it happen.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez, do you have
18 questions?

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: I do. I just want to verify,
20 you mentioned earlier about transportation. You
21 don't currently have anything budgeted for that, but
22 you talked about a partnership. Is that something
23 that you would have to pay for or is that something
24 you're hoping to --

25 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So we figure that if we have

1 to engage in that relationship with the Department of
2 Education it will cost us Seventy-Nine Twenty, Seven
3 Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty bucks (\$7,920). And
4 we're currently lining up some private funders for
5 that.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. The next thing is -- just
7 two things I wanted to point out in your budget.
8 One, the NSLA amounts --

9 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- are budgeted incorrectly
11 based on the numbers that you have.

12 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: They're basically higher amounts
14 than should be there. And then also a question about
15 subs; there wasn't anything budgeted for substitutes.

16 MR. SIMS: So on the NSLA, there was an error in
17 understanding how the program works. When we put the
18 number in we knew -- so since there's a drop-down
19 menu that says 60, 70, 80, 90, we assumed that if you
20 click the 70 one that the formula would be such that
21 it will adjust it.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right.

23 MR. SIMS: Well, it did adjust it based on the
24 numbers but we didn't know that it did not adjust on
25 the 220.

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: And it may be that -- and this
2 may be for our Charter Office -- is that it's been
3 pretty consistent I think through applications that
4 you guys aren't the only one that did that.

5 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: So that may be an internal
7 process we need to work on. Okay.

8 MR. SIMS: Okay.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: Subs, I think --

10 MR. SIMS: Subs, right. So, again, this is my
11 educator hat; subs can sometimes put a wrench in
12 culture a bit, right, to say the least. Students,
13 when they know a sub is coming, I think sometimes get
14 out of control. The way that we're going to schedule
15 our teachers and then the number of aids we have, and
16 even some of the teachers that we have, will allow us
17 to cover classes and maintain the culture of our
18 school which is very important. And if we have to go
19 out, if there's some reason why, you know, 10
20 teachers are out, then we'll definitely, you know,
21 look for options to do so and we have a budget -- we
22 have some, you know, extra money in our budget to
23 cover that. But our primary focus is to make -- is
24 to be able to cover our own classes and I think we're
25 small enough to do that.

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I do commend you for that
2 approach. I know some districts have looked at doing
3 that just simply for the reasons you've mentioned as
4 not -- as kind of having substitutes and moving
5 around teachers on-hand. So I think that would be a
6 good approach.

7 You didn't ask -- I haven't seen a waiver from
8 ALE and you don't have anything budgeted for that.
9 Do you have a plan for that or --

10 MR. SIMS: I'm sorry?

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: Alternative Learning
12 Environment.

13 MR. SIMS: Yes. So ALE -- so as I mentioned
14 earlier, we think that learning experience is
15 designed such that it will capture students who are
16 normally assigned to ALE. Let me go to that page and
17 refer to that. We did address that. I'm a boy, so I
18 don't have tabs. I'm sorry. ALE, Health Services,
19 GT -- I just had it. Here it is. Here it is.

20 So, one, when you go to an ALE environment, you
21 know, it has smaller classes, more hands-on approach,
22 extended time; it's also dealing with behavior in a
23 way as well. We feel like that's already built into
24 our program, you know, through our Tier 1 -- I mean
25 through our Tier 2 supports in terms of small groups,

1 small class sizes, spending extra time using the
2 blended learning model that actually meets those
3 students where they are so they don't have to go to
4 an ALE environment. Again, I mentioned earlier that
5 one of the benefits of project-based learning is that
6 even with students who have -- you know, who
7 struggle, this is an opportunity for them to
8 demonstrate mastery, you know. And also for English
9 Language Learners who may have to have a language
10 barrier, this also allows them to show mastery, even
11 considering what their difficulties are. So we're
12 saying that we have a program to address, again, both
13 gifted and students who may qualify naturally under
14 ALE.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. I guess that may be a
16 question for Ms. Davis. Do they need a waiver or is
17 that adequate for what they're --

18 MR. SIMS: I think we did request that.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: I'm not seeing it. And unless
20 it's in a new section, I haven't seen -- is there a
21 formal request for an ALE waiver?

22 MS. DAVIS: Not that I'm aware of.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So based on his
24 description of what they would do, do they need that
25 waiver?

1 MS. DAVIS: Can I look at the --

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Sure.

3 MS. DAVIS: -- the rules and the law, and I'll
4 get back with you in just one second.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. No problem.

6 Do you want to continue?

7 MS. NEWTON: While we're waiting, I have a
8 question maybe he can -- or a concern. I want to
9 express my concern -- I think you addressed all the
10 pivotal areas as relates to, you know, there may
11 still be some questions that relate to academics.
12 I'm gravely concerned about transportation. That's
13 right there with academics as far as I'm concerned,
14 because unless students are able to get there then --
15 so that's a big piece for me of the puzzle that's
16 missing in terms of how this will work. I know you
17 mentioned that you're lining up sponsors, but somehow
18 that just doesn't cause me to feel confident that as
19 critical as that piece is that it's something that is
20 thought out and that you have a comprehensive plan
21 for transportation.

22 MR. SIMS: Let me address that a little more in-
23 depth. So we do now plan to offer buses and
24 transportation services, but we do realize that there
25 are some students who could potentially come from

1 across town. Now Pine Bluff is not really that
2 large. When you look at the school that's there now
3 -- I'm sorry, say it again?

4 MS. NEWTON: I'm sorry; I was just saying
5 compared to Crossett it is.

6 MR. SIMS: Oh. Well, yeah, you're right, you're
7 right, you're right; point taken. When you look at
8 the school that has been there, you know, for over a
9 decade with an enrollment of about 600 students, 600
10 and something students, those students come from all
11 over Pine Bluff, and they don't offer transportation.
12 And so we're saying that this school has been there,
13 been established, been in existence -- well, the
14 location has been in existence for a number of years
15 and has amassed a top enrollment of 700 or 800
16 students without offering transportation. So we're
17 saying that we -- I think we can logically assume or
18 wisely assume or confidently assume that we will have
19 -- that we could have that same type of
20 transportation. But we're also considering kids who
21 may come from somewhere else and this is where this
22 proposed MOU from the transportation department from
23 the city -- because we've thought about that. And
24 we're saying that maybe kids will want to come from
25 White Hall, how do we -- you know -- how do we

1 address that if they don't have transportation to get
2 there.

3 Now if this school at Ridgeway in the past
4 would've had trouble with kids getting there then I
5 think we would've considered that a lot easier. But
6 it's not a far-out location considering Pine Bluff is
7 growing that way and a lot of the major shopping
8 areas that parents have to come to anyway are out
9 that way -- Wal-Mart, the Chili's, and so-on and so-
10 forth, and it's five minutes from there.

11 MS. NEWTON: So you're assuming that the same
12 student population will make up your population; is
13 that reasonable to expect that the private school
14 would be the feeder for -- the private school
15 students would be the feeder, that expectation?

16 MR. SIMS: So we are assuming and having
17 conversations with the K-8 portion of the school that
18 this high school is essentially located right down
19 the street is an option as well; so the 8th graders
20 that are coming over, absolutely. And then if you
21 look at the student population of the school already,
22 I mean they already represent Pine Bluff; they
23 represent where kids are in Pine Bluff, so -- and
24 they're able to make it there.

25 MS. NEWTON: I had one other question about the

1 5% and the 15%.

2 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

3 MS. NEWTON: What's success? You know, how --
4 if this application moves forward and is ultimately
5 granted by the State Board of Ed., what would be the
6 anticipated measure of success for student
7 achievement?

8 MR. SIMS: So as I stated earlier, you know, our
9 internal goals are 15%. We want kids to move at a
10 15% clip per year. But we also understand there's
11 some noise in the equation in that, you know, you
12 have -- you know, we're assuming -- the school is
13 assuming a population that comes from a district
14 that's already struggling. So we're taking the
15 numbers at face value that this is where kids are;
16 right. It's a new program approach in terms of STEM
17 and project-based learning solely, so there's a
18 training part for teachers to be able to adapt that
19 model. And so we're not so naïve to go in and say
20 30% of kids are going to move. I think that's a
21 current concern or a topic of conversation for ADE
22 itself over the years of how do we actually measure
23 realistically what growth is. So for us we're saying
24 15% internally, but we also put 5% in there at least
25 for the first year to re-evaluate after the first

1 year to make sure that we're not shooting our-self in
2 the foot and make sure that we can evaluate our kids
3 and evaluate our systems to make sure that we're able
4 to meet those goals. Now given where those kids --
5 given where kids are coming into the school, looking
6 at the Pine Bluff data, a 5% increase while small is
7 still significant for them when you look at growth.
8 And so if we figure out after the last two -- I mean
9 after a year that, hey, we can -- we've shown that we
10 can grow 10%, we've shown we can grow 15%, and our
11 systems support that, then we'll increase that
12 measure; we'll increase that goal.

13 You know, one of the mistakes, you know, Ms.
14 Newton, that I think schools get into is over-
15 projecting. And, you know, these kiddos have been,
16 you know, not doing well; the district has, you know,
17 been not doing well for a number of years. And so we
18 don't want to come in and say, "Hey, we're the silver
19 bullet and we're going to move them at 50% clips."
20 Like, that's unrealistic and I think unwise for us to
21 do so. I know the number looks low, but you can rest
22 assured that our expectations are very high.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Davis, do you have
24 information? Thank you.

25 MS. DAVIS: Well, in typical -- you're fine --

1 in typical legal fashion we're going to say that this
2 is a gray area. I'm not sure that necessarily they
3 could get the ALE funding because of how they would
4 be doing it, but I'm not saying that they can't
5 actually address the needs of their students that
6 way. So I would recommend that they go ahead and get
7 the waiver and then if they are approved and
8 operating we can always go in as the Charter Unit and
9 the Legal; we can work with them to determine if they
10 really need it or if not. So I would just kind of
11 err on the side of caution to insure that they are
12 meeting those needs and get the waiver, which would
13 be a waiver of Arkansas Code 6-42-109, 6-20-
14 2208(c)(6), Section 4 of the ADE Rules Governing
15 Distribution of Student Special Needs Funding, and
16 Section 19.03 of the Standards for Accreditation. So
17 I would just err on the side of caution and advise
18 them to request that.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Sims?

20 MS. DAVIS: Did you get all that down?

21 MR. SIMS: [laughing]

22 MS. DAVIS: You can just say you confirm you
23 want to ask -- you want to request those waivers.

24 MR. SIMS: Yes, I confirm I want to request
25 those waivers.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Yes, Dr. Hernandez,
2 let's continue.

3 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you for that. I
4 just had a question about -- I know we talked a
5 little bit about the lease earlier. So there's -- it
6 sounds like there's going to be a pretty close
7 partnership with -- is it the Ridgeway Christian
8 School or --

9 MR. SIMS: No. It's the Pine Bluff Education
10 Endowment. No, it's not Ridgeway at all.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. So you talked about a
12 feeder pattern or potential school. Is that the
13 Ridgeway Christian School that you're hoping to get
14 kids from?

15 MR. SIMS: Well, that's part of -- I mean that's
16 an obvious recruiting spot.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: So I'm just trying to, I think,
18 picture this. So there's a high school currently for
19 Ridgeway. Is it closing?

20 MR. SIMS: Yes.

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. And so you guys will open
22 up as --

23 MR. SIMS: Yes.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- the 9-12 --

25 MR. SIMS: Yes.

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- portion of that?

2 MR. SIMS: Yes.

3 DR. HERNANDEZ: But they're not in the same
4 building --

5 MR. SIMS: Not at all.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- with K-8; just down the
7 street or --

8 MR. SIMS: Not at all.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

10 DR. WILLIAMS: I'd like to follow-up. Matter of
11 fact, I made pretty much the same note, only mine was
12 more along the lines -- what are the demographics of
13 that school that you're hoping to -- on one hand we
14 understand that the population of students would be
15 all of Pine Bluff.

16 MS. HART: Absolutely.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: But you are looking to have maybe
18 -- I'm just going to say a significant portion of the
19 students from the private school?

20 MS. HART: Maybe.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Maybe. Okay.

22 MS. HART: Let me clarify. First of all, I have
23 been aware of Ridgeway's development of the
24 objectives of that school. One of the downsides and
25 concerns of the founding -- actually a church founded

1 that. One of the downsides is that you have to
2 charge curriculum for a private school and it by its
3 nature eliminates students who would desire to come.
4 And that has always been a concern. It is true that
5 some students from Ridgeway are likely to apply; it
6 is not our intention to automatically have that be
7 the next step for Ridgeway to the exclusion of other
8 students. Obviously with a lottery that's not going
9 to happen anyway if enrollment applications are such
10 that a lottery is required. It's our hope to do what
11 I said in my opening statement, to provide a viable
12 choice option. Pine Bluff has seen too many things
13 promised and not enough things delivered. A lot of
14 people have great ideas, but the follow-through has
15 got to be there. So Ridgeway is not quite as large
16 as Dedrick said it is; that's one factor. But I
17 think that there will be some students that are
18 interested, but I think the appeal will be broad and
19 across the board. Ridgeway is a very diverse school,
20 as is the church that backs it; so I can speak to
21 that because it's my church. So it will not
22 negatively or adversely affect anything that has to
23 do with race or ethnicity, anything that appears or
24 smacks of exclusive ideas. So I don't think that
25 will be a problem at all, and I say that with all

1 sincerity.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Well, thank you; that's
3 exactly what my concern was around. Uh-huh.

4 And also just a comment. I appreciate the fact
5 that you all are looking to -- you know -- we talked
6 about the Go Forward initiative and I echo that
7 whatever you do you have to be good at it. I mean,
8 you can't have something else to come in and not be
9 successful.

10 MS. HART: That's right.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Do you have additional --
12 Dr. Hernandez, did you have anything?

13 Okay. I have a couple of questions. I wanted
14 to address the budget for your child nutrition. You
15 had I think \$50,000 budgeted and for the number of
16 kids you are projecting I think that only comes out
17 to about \$20, \$25, and \$1.50 per meal per day, and
18 that's one meal. So can you describe what you all
19 are planning in terms of your food service program?

20 MR. SIMS: So we -- this number was projected
21 kind of based on the history of the high school now,
22 also in consultation with the existing vendor. So
23 the way school -- the way the food service program
24 will work is that we'll contract with outside
25 services and they will bring the food in and serve

1 it, break it down, and the whole nine -- while we
2 need to bid this out further, bid it out, the number
3 came from just historical data of what kids were --
4 of what the school had been charged over the years.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And to clarify, you're
6 talking about the existing private school?

7 MR. SIMS: Yeah. Yes. Yes, the existing high
8 school. So we considered, okay, let's take a look at
9 that vendor and see with this number of students,
10 looking at the 70% of -- so not 220, but 70% which is
11 like 180 -- 180 kids, what would serving 180 kids a
12 day for the number of days that we're in school cost.
13 And so this is the number that we got back.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Do you know if they are
15 currently serving -- like are they serving just one
16 meal a day? Are they --

17 MR. SIMS: Just one meal a day. And this is one
18 meal a day.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And that many kids are
20 actually eating that, the foods that are served, or
21 is there a significant portion of students that bring
22 their own lunch?

23 MR. SIMS: This is based on the numbers that --
24 of kids who are actually eating.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Well, I just think though

1 if you go back and really think about the cost, you
2 know, how much it would cost to be able to serve
3 students, unless I'm mistaken that's going to be a
4 very low amount per day. And if it's only going to
5 cover the cost of one meal per day at about \$1.50, I
6 don't know that you're going to be able to feed very
7 many students for very long with that budgeted
8 amount. And with you only having about, you know,
9 \$30,000 built in as extra in your budget, if you were
10 to have to supplement that, plus you talked about
11 supplementing with subs if necessary, you don't have
12 a very large cushion there.

13 MR. SIMS: So one of the ways -- and we thought
14 about that and it's just not reflected, you know. We
15 continued to process that even after we turned it in.
16 Some other contingencies that we could do is I know
17 we have two special education teachers that are built
18 into the budget. So, one of the considerations is to
19 not hire the SPED teacher. That plus will give us
20 back about \$42,000. Those 21 teachers and two aids
21 -- some of those teachers could actually wait as well
22 if we need to find additional monies. Now what we
23 also know is that built into this budget are not
24 Title dollars; child nutrition dollars are not built
25 into this; SPED education is not built into this. So

1 we submitted a budget that didn't have those numbers.
2 So we are -- so it doesn't scare us that the budget
3 is super-tight and that maybe some things, like you
4 talked about, in SPED to where we need to get to
5 because we have some contingencies planned and we
6 know there's some additional dollars that are
7 actually coming in.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez, you go
9 ahead.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: So just to clarify, I think the
11 number is what you're talking about spending out of
12 district funds. And so if I -- I may have thought I
13 heard you correctly, you're planning on participating
14 in the child nutrition program to like receive
15 reimbursable meals --

16 MR. SIMS: Yes.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- and things like that? Okay.
18 I think that helps.

19 MR. SIMS: Okay.

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: Because that does make more
21 sense. I think we were assuming you weren't
22 participating in the child nutrition program, so that
23 does help.

24 MR. SIMS: Okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And you may have stated

1 this at the very beginning, but I didn't capture it.
2 Mr. Sims, what will be your role in the school once
3 it gets started?

4 MR. SIMS: Consultant.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You'll be the consultant.
6 Okay.

7 MR. SIMS: And we're providing the professional
8 development around the STEM, around the project-based
9 learning, and all the systems -- the data-driven
10 systems. So, the consultant in that regard.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Does somebody else
12 want to follow-up?

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: The consulting group, is that
14 just a -- is that -- so are you from -- probably you
15 don't have to answer this, but are you from Arkansas?
16 Is that -- or are you from somewhere else? I think
17 you're listed as Colorado.

18 MR. SIMS: So I live in Denver, but I grew up in
19 Pine Bluff.

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so you work for an
21 organization that's going to be consulting directly
22 with this school as it gets started?

23 MR. SIMS: Yes.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

25 MR. SIMS: Yes.

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: Now is that contracted work, is
2 that reflected in the budget somewhere?

3 MR. SIMS: It is.

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

5 MR. SIMS: It's in the budget. It's under --
6 and, again, I need tabs. Here it is. It is under
7 page -- so line item 27 under the Expenditures,
8 Purchase Services, Global Student Achievement, Staff
9 Development, Consultants for those two years.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. SIMS: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And one of the other
13 things, as you were talking I had made note of the
14 number of staff that you were -- that you have in
15 here, the 21 staff members, for budgeting. You know,
16 starting up a high school with grades 9 through 12
17 all at once, lots of courses, lots of variances, you
18 know, as you have students what is your -- was there
19 consideration into adding grades incrementally as you
20 open to help in terms of staffing? Was there
21 consideration in -- as you have students apply, you
22 know, depending on -- do you anticipate having
23 varying numbers with grades? You know, it's just
24 operating a high school can be very different and I
25 was just wondering in terms of, you know, was there

1 consideration as to why we want to go ahead and open
2 the whole thing all at once.

3 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So we did consider that and,
4 you know, we know that most elementary and middle
5 school models do open up one grade at a time and move
6 on. But we also know that, you know, once Ridgeway
7 closes you're going to have 9th through 12th grade
8 kids displaced and they're going to have to make an
9 option to go back into a system with numbers that are
10 not favorable. We still believe that in a small
11 school environment that we still can offer a better
12 or a different option. So we chose to go 9-12 --

13 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Mr. Sims was handed a
14 bottle of water.)

15 MR. SIMS: Thank you. We chose to -- I
16 appreciate that. We chose to go 9-12, one, for that
17 reason. You know, we just didn't want to have kids
18 out there.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And how many kids
20 currently attend the school?

21 MR. SIMS: About 400 is where it's maxed out at.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And your maximum
23 enrollment would be 220?

24 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right.

1 MR. SIMS: 120 is the high school portion.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So the current high
3 school is about 120?

4 MR. SIMS: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

6 MR. SIMS: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right.

8 Panel, do you have additional questions?

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Just tell me a little bit
10 about the consulting services, your organization.
11 You're coming in -- and I would ask this of any; I
12 tend to ask what role does the supporting
13 organization have in this? And you're going to
14 provide consulting services; you're based out of
15 Denver. Could you just tell me a little bit about
16 your organization and a little bit about the
17 experience you have in doing this type of work?

18 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So the organization is called
19 the Sims Fayola Foundation. I'm actually the CEO and
20 the founder of the organization. We specialize in a
21 couple of things: one, all things boys. Right? So
22 we open charter schools around the country. We work
23 with other groups to do this work. We've opened a
24 school ourselves. And we have consultants that have
25 opened schools, worked as school administrators.

1 We're working currently now in Texas, here in
2 Arkansas, Colorado, Detroit, as well as D.C. doing
3 very similar work. We support 17 schools in Atlanta
4 right now for Atlanta Public Schools, helping them
5 with their CEIS grants to improve the outcomes of
6 their young men and girls of color who are
7 struggling. We, all of us, have about seven years of
8 experience between being educators and being
9 education administrators. And, again, we've opened
10 schools, so we understand this process very well.
11 And so because we worked hand-in-hand with this board
12 to develop this STEM model we, you know, were asked
13 to come in and make sure that it's successful, not
14 only designing it but -- not just handing it off and
15 say, "Hey, good luck with that," but coming in and
16 making sure that we can provide all the curriculum
17 development support for the STEM, for the embedded
18 curriculum, the PD, the whole nine.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Good. Do you consider
20 yourself a CMO or just --

21 MR. SIMS: No.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: -- contracted services?

23 MR. SIMS: Contracted services.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. That's fine. I just
25 wanted to make sure you had some experience in doing

1 this.

2 MR. SIMS: Absolutely.

3 MS. NEWTON: Is there a contract? Do you have a
4 contract? Do you have set out the number of days,
5 you know, that you're going to be available, the
6 number of hours equivalent? That was one of the
7 questions.

8 MR. SIMS: Between us and them?

9 MS. NEWTON: What's your organization, again?

10 MR. SIMS: Sims Fayola Foundation.

11 MS. NEWTON: Sims --

12 MR. SIMS: Fayola, F-a-y-o-l-a, Foundation. So
13 your question is do we --

14 MS. NEWTON: My question is the level of
15 services that you will provide, you know, as a
16 startup.

17 MR. SIMS: Yeah.

18 MS. NEWTON: And sometimes with budgets we have
19 a budget justification for the amount to outline the
20 number of hours and the number of visits and things
21 like that. So, is that something that you can give
22 us an idea of what the school's expectation would be
23 in terms of you being involved directly?

24 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So summer professional
25 development, we will be there for those two weeks

1 during the summertime to make sure that we help with
2 the on-boarding of the teachers, the professional
3 development delivery, and also the Warrior Culture
4 Week. Also, at different times throughout the year
5 -- we haven't established the exact dates right now
6 because we've got to make sure the calendar is
7 approved. But at different times throughout the year
8 we will be on-site doing evaluations around
9 curriculum, operations, board development and
10 support, and also community relations and student
11 discipline. We have a rubric that we use that's very
12 similar to the state audits to take -- where we're
13 looking at those entire systems, and then, again, in
14 the end as well. We also help with hiring as well,
15 to make sure that we have quality candidates that go
16 through the hiring process. And then that cycle will
17 repeat the next year with some adjustments because we
18 assume at that point there are some systems that will
19 already be in place which we'll reflect that as a
20 reduction in that contract cost the second year.

21 So I don't have a calendar I can give you. I
22 don't have a calendar to say we're going to be here
23 October 31st and January --

24 MS. NEWTON: No, I understand that. But the
25 expectation or breakdown in terms of units or hours

1 or investment, because that could be two visits or it
2 could be 12, do you have an idea of what level of
3 support? And your explanations have fallen in line
4 with the application and the expectation, but the
5 level of support is what would be my concern from the
6 Foundation; not from you specifically, but to have an
7 idea of what your expertise would -- how it would be
8 used to support and strengthen the school and having
9 an idea of how much of that is available would answer
10 some questions for me. It may not be of concern to
11 another panel member.

12 MR. SIMS: Yeah. So we don't have that spelled
13 out to that amount of detail yet. But I can
14 definitely get it to you.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Panel, additional
16 questions?

17 MS. NEWTON: The waivers.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: The waivers. Okay. Let's
19 move to waivers and make sure we -- no, I think
20 that's good because the sheet I studied I think has
21 some additional waivers that were added. So, yes, if
22 we could go through and make sure we're all clear on
23 what waivers have been requested and that are needed.
24 So, Ms. Davis, can you help us with that?

25 MS. DAVIS: I can. And there may be some that

1 I'm not aware of. So, on the waivers --

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: What should we be looking
3 at? I mean the initial legal comment page, is that
4 --

5 MS. DAVIS: Yes, this should be the one. And I
6 did not have any outstanding waivers on that. So
7 unless they provided some additional documentation
8 that I didn't get -- I don't think they did -- so
9 this should be it, with the exception of ALE which
10 they did request.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Good.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: Just on the rubric part also it
13 looks like there was -- Gifted and Talented was added
14 and I don't think we went over that, and I don't
15 think there's any other issues. But that's the only
16 new one that I saw that wasn't on the original.

17 MS. DAVIS: I'm sorry; which one was it?

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: Gifted and Talented. I know we
19 talked about that earlier.

20 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: But that was on -- and it's on
22 the rubric page.

23 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: So I don't think there's any
25 other questions about waivers.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Newton, did you
2 have any?

3 MS. NEWTON: Nurse.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Now in --
5 there is a budget line item for \$12,000, something
6 like that, for a nurse.

7 MS. NEWTON: Okay. That's adjusted, because I
8 had seen -- okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I did the same thing.
10 Initially I thought there was nothing budgeted, so --

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: (inaudible)

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Do what?

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: They do have a waiver for that.
14 They are requesting that waiver.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And so that is a
16 waiver that's being requested?

17 MS. DAVIS: Right. And they did confirm that
18 they are still supplying those services to students,
19 just not hiring on staff a full-time nurse. That's
20 why they needed the waiver.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Any
22 additional questions, Panel?

23 Ms. Davis, any remaining --

24 MS. DAVIS: I just had one thing. Earlier, when
25 you were asking about the budget they said if

1 necessary to go with some cost-cutting measures that
2 they could cut a special education teacher. I just
3 need them to confirm that they must have a licensed
4 special education teacher and that is not something
5 that can be waived or licensed.

6 MR. SIMS: Yes.

7 MS. HART: Yes.

8 MS. DAVIS: Okay. I just --

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I think they had budgeted
10 for two.

11 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I think their thought was
13 if they didn't need both. Am I correct?

14 MS. DAVIS: Okay. All I did was hear "we can do
15 away with a special education teacher." So I just
16 wanted to make sure that we were all clear on that,
17 so --

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Very good. Thank you.

19 Okay. Is there anybody additional that has
20 signed up for public comment, Ms. Davis? I know we
21 didn't have any opposition earlier.

22 MS. DAVIS: (Shaking head from side to side.)

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So,
24 Panel, at this time we can consider whether to
25 approve, disapprove, or take the matter under

1 advisement until a future meeting. So I would be
2 ready for a motion. Okay, Mr. Wilson.

3 MR. WILSON: I would move the approval of the
4 application.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I have a motion to
6 approve.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And a second.

9 All in favor say "aye."

10 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

12 Okay. Congratulations. Your application has
13 been approved.

14 Panel Members, if you will go to the document
15 and record the reasons for your vote we'll provide
16 some public comment on that.

17 MS. DAVIS: Was Dr. Hernandez the second?

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez seconded.

19 MS. DAVIS: Okay. I was making sure.

20 MR. SIMS: Thank you. Thank you so much.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: If you want to wait just a
22 minute you can hear their feedback.

23 MR. SIMS: Okay.

24 [A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I think someone

1 deleted Dr. Owoh's comments, so we've giving him a
2 couple of extra minutes here. We sound like a bunch
3 of kids, "Not me, I didn't do it." Yes, these Google
4 docs are wonderful but --

5 DR. HERNANDEZ: Freshman hazing, we're hazing
6 him.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yeah. In the wrong hands
8 they can be a problem.

9 Okay. So let's go through and give some
10 feedback. Dr. Hernandez.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. The
12 application and presentation seemed thorough and
13 supports a need in this area for grades 9-12. There
14 also seems to be some background in running a school
15 by the people involved.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

17 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the application and my
18 reason I noted though some concerns remain, overall
19 the application serves to meet the needs of the
20 students in the Pine Bluff district. Concerns noted
21 should be followed by ADE staff and noted to the
22 Department of Education Board in their review.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

24 DR. OWOH: I voted for the motion. I felt that
25 the education plan that was presented was informative

1 and did address the academic and behavior needs of
2 the community. I do hope that the school will
3 address all student needs with the required student
4 services per ADE rules and laws.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

6 MS. TURNER: I voted for the application. There
7 are concerns that remain toward the curriculum and
8 hope the organization will work with Arkansas
9 Department of Career Education to align specific
10 programs of study to expand opportunities for
11 students in Pine Bluff.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Although there are still some
14 concerns, and my concern is just around the
15 execution. I think you have a good plan but this
16 comes down to execution. I believe they are meeting
17 a need to provide learning opportunities for all
18 students, both high achievers and those that may need
19 remediation. I really like the idea of the goal of
20 kids graduating and not needing to be remediated in
21 order to go to college. And I also like the STEM
22 model.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And Mr. Wilson.

24 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I was
25 impressed with the community support and effort and

1 the program was well explained, as many of you
2 educators have already noted. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Thank you,
4 Ms. Hart, Mr. Sims, and those of you who were here.
5 I hope that you will follow-up where there were
6 concerns, definitely with the courses and the ACE
7 issues there. But congratulations and thank you very
8 much for your work.

9 Okay. Panel, let's take a break. We will
10 reconvene at 10:30 for our next agenda items.

11 (BREAK: 10:16 - 10:30 A.M.)

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay, Panel. Ms. Davis --
13 check. Sounds like we're back online. Can you hear
14 me? Okay.

15 Okay. I think we are about ready to get -- to
16 reconvene.

17 A-2: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
18 APPLICATION: FRIENDSHIP ASPIRE ACADEMY AT LITTLE ROCK -- LITTLE
19 ROCK, AR

20 A-3: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
21 APPLICATION: FRIENDSHIP ASPIRE ACADEMY AT PINE BLUFF - PINE
22 BLUFF, AR

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Moving forward, we
24 actually it looks like have items 2 and 3 together,
25 coming up together next on the agenda. So before --

1 Ms. Perry, before you begin -- Ms. Davis, do you want
2 to visit with us to talk about hearing both of these
3 applications together and kind of go back over for
4 the board how we might want to handle this?

5 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So the procedures you'll
6 follow will be the same that you just followed this
7 morning. Because they will be giving one
8 presentation, they are requesting two separate
9 schools, not a license or anything like that; they
10 are two separate charters that may or may not be
11 approved. So you can ask questions for either one
12 charter; you can take your questions separately if
13 that, you know, makes you feel better. It's really
14 up to you to decide. But I would advise that you
15 have separate votes.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So we'll be hearing
17 one presentation but at voting time we will vote on
18 the charters separately?

19 MS. DAVIS: I would recommend that. Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And in terms of our
21 questions -- so, first of all, on the presentation
22 will there be -- since they're just doing the one
23 presentation will they follow the same procedural
24 guidelines?

25 MS. BOYD: So prior to the -- Alexandra Boyd,

1 Director of Charter Schools. Prior to this meeting
2 we worked with the applicant and together we decided
3 on amended hearing procedures. So instead of having
4 -- you hearing two separate 20-minute presentations
5 you're going to hear one 30-minute presentation. So
6 for these applications, they're sponsored by the same
7 management organization, so a lot of the programming
8 and details of that nature will be the same. Some of
9 it will vary because of one will be located in Little
10 Rock and one will be located in Pine Bluff. And so
11 that's what the extra 10 minutes is, is to make those
12 distinguishes where they need to be made. And then
13 opposition, you'll have 40 whole minutes because we
14 can't make an agreement with the public whether or
15 not they want to oppose. So 20 minutes for one
16 application, 20 minutes for the other, should it be
17 needed. And then, as Jennifer said, your questions
18 can be specific to particular applications or the
19 management company in general, however you want to
20 take that. And then we have provided two voting
21 sheets for you to make a decision on one charter and
22 the other.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So, Panel -- if the Panel
24 has questions that would be specific to one location
25 or the other we would just specify that at the time

1 of questioning. Is that correct?

2 MS. BOYD: (Nodding head up and down.)

3 MS. DAVIS: (Nodding head up and down.)

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Panel, do you -- is
5 there any discussion before we get started or anybody
6 that would have any concerns about handling this in
7 this manner?

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: This may be a premature
9 question. But as far as their -- I know one of these
10 is set to open a year later. So if we approve, does
11 their five-year approval start today? So do they
12 basically lose a year?

13 MS. BOYD: Yes. Essentially they'll add --
14 they'll have an additional year for planning, but
15 that means that they'll have -- they'll essentially
16 lose a year of data evidence so-to-speak when it
17 comes time for renewal.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: I just wanted to make sure the
19 applicant understood that, so --

20 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh. Yeah, the contract will
21 start -- it will be the same five years.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So to be clear, we
24 will have 30 minutes then for the presentation and
25 then 20 for opposition -- I mean 40 for opposition;

1 correct?

2 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So at
4 this time let's move forward with the hearing of two
5 open-enrollment public charter school applications,
6 Friendship Aspire Academy at Little Rock and Pine
7 Bluff. Ms. Perry, you are recognized.

8 MS. PERRY: Virginia Perry, ADE Charter Unit.
9 Friendship Aspire Academy/Little Rock is a proposed
10 open enrollment public charter school to be located
11 within the Little Rock School District. Friendship
12 Aspire Academy/Pine Bluff is a proposed open
13 enrollment public charter school to be located within
14 the Pine Bluff School District.

15 The sponsoring entity for both is Friendship
16 Education Foundation. The applicant is requesting --
17 I'm sorry -- for Friendship Aspire/Pine Bluff the
18 applicant is requesting to serve students in grades K
19 through 5 with a maximum enrollment of 480 beginning
20 in the 18-19 school year. For Friendship Aspire/
21 Little Rock the applicant is requesting to serve
22 students in grades K through 5 with a maximum
23 enrollment of 600 beginning in the 18-19 school year.
24 The applicant has notified affected districts of both
25 proposed public charter schools.

1 The primary presenter for Friendship Aspire
2 Academy/Little Rock and Pine Bluff is Mr. Joe Harris,
3 the national executive director. He may be joined
4 for questions by Donald Hense, founder/chairman FEF,
5 CEO; Patricia Brantley, FPCS CEO; Brian Beck, FPCS
6 School Leader; Joe Kenney, founding member; Melissa
7 Fox, founding member; and Roman Mitchell, founding
8 member.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will all
10 representatives from Friendship Aspire Academy and
11 anyone speaking in opposition please stand to receive
12 the oath? And if you will raise your right hand. Do
13 you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about
14 to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and
15 nothing but the truth?

16 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

18 We can begin now with the presentation by the
19 school. If you will state your name and title for
20 the record, you are recognized.

21 MR. HARRIS: My name is Joe Harris and I'm the
22 national executive director for Friendship Education
23 Foundation, as well as one of the founding members of
24 Friendship Arkansas.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MR. HARRIS: Before I go into my presentation
2 today, I'd like to just introduce some of the other
3 individuals that are going to be speaking today and
4 their respective roles. I have with me Patricia
5 Brantley, who is the chief operating -- chief
6 executive officer for Friendship Public Charter
7 School. Brian Beck is our FEF School Leader; Brian
8 will be covering the education curriculum design,
9 academic program, school leader, and staff
10 professional development questions. Joe Kenney, who
11 is also one of our founding members, will address
12 issues of finance, facilities, and CMO agreement.
13 Melissa Fox will handle budgeting, finance, and
14 staffing. And then we have Roman Mitchell, who will
15 address issues of community engagement, parent
16 support, and operations. Of course we have in our
17 gallery members from APSRC, as well as Bill
18 Pendergist who's a realtor representing property we
19 intend to purchase in Pine Bluff. And then we have a
20 representative from Teach for America, one of our
21 strategic partners.

22 I think everyone has had an opportunity to -- am
23 I set up for -- ready? Okay.

24 Our mission is very clear. The mission of
25 Friendship Arkansas is to provide a world-class

1 education that motivates students to achieve high
2 academic standards, enjoy learning and develop as
3 ethical, literate, well-rounded and self-sufficient
4 citizens who contribute actively to their community.

5 We did this mission more than 20 years ago, but
6 it is an organic mission in that we anticipate
7 getting the input from local Arkansas stakeholders,
8 parents, and the children, in insuring that our
9 mission meets the needs in those cities. Our vision
10 for our schools, students in Arkansas particularly,
11 is to achieve a high level of academic and
12 developmental success, create a rigorous instruction
13 and research based curriculum that engages students
14 to excel and enjoy learning. We will cultivate and
15 support a team of highly qualified school leaders and
16 staff, and engage parents and the community in
17 overall success of its -- of our kids.

18 A quick overview -- I think everyone -- just to
19 be clear, we're intending today to present the
20 opening of two liberal arts K through 5 grade
21 elementary schools that are mirror images in terms of
22 design and function in the separate cities, one
23 school in Pine Bluff and a second in Little Rock.
24 We're taking a staggered approach to our schools,
25 intending to open our Pine Bluff school in 2018-2019

1 and Little Rock in school year 2018-2019. Further
2 along in the presentation I will talk about the
3 importance of our staggered approach. You will see
4 in our enrollment that we intend to take a slow and
5 steady approach to enrollment, beginning in Pine
6 Bluff with 160 students. And you'll see we grow
7 incrementally 80 kids per grade level, for a total of
8 480 kids in the school year 22-23. In Little Rock
9 we're going to -- we believe that we can have -- in
10 2019-20 start with 200 kids and grow incrementally
11 100 within five years, getting to 600 students.

12 In Pine Bluff, when you talk -- when we talk
13 about our location and our enrollment boundaries, we
14 have looked at purchasing the First Christian Church
15 of Pine Bluff, in the Pine Bluff School District,
16 covering Zip Codes 71601 and 71603. The church
17 selection is located at 1311 South Hazel Street.
18 When we talk about facilities I will outline why we
19 chose that school and its benefits.

20 In Little Rock we've not yet selected a site but
21 what we have done is decided we will focus our
22 efforts in Southwest Little Rock within the
23 boundaries of the Little Rock School District. No
24 school site has been selected, but we intend to serve
25 Zip Codes 72211, 72209, 72204.

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Friendship is number one.

The Friendship model -- you will hear later from the Chief Executive CEO about the Friendship model. But I just wanted to let the group know that we've been doing this since 1977. Friendship got its name and its mission is really driven by the work of Friendship House Association, which was a 100-year old child development and social service agency serving poor families in underserved areas in Southeast Washington DC. Our current population, we serve each day over 5,000 students on 12 different campuses. Our demographics of our students really mirror the student population in both Pine Bluff and Little Rock. For us around 94% of our students are African American, 99% are on free or reduced lunch, and 14% are special ed. with IEPs. One of the things that is to be recognized or underscored is that we do our best to insure that our administration and our staff mirror the student population we serve, largely the African American. Friendship System employs over 800 employees. In 2014, we recognized the importance and based on the number of strategic partners we established the Friendship Education Foundation, which is a nonprofit charter management organization. And I want to make a pause and make a distinction.

1 You will hear in the charter world CMOs and EMOs.
2 EMOs are typically for-profit but CMOs are
3 nonprofits, and Friendship Education Foundation is a
4 CMO designed specifically to promote the Friendship
5 school model, nationally and in underserved
6 communities.

7 What makes our schools special? A number of
8 things: strong academic support and culture of
9 achievement; emphasis on college completion. Before
10 I get there I want to pause. How many of us remember
11 being asked, "What do you want to be when you grow
12 up?" We believe that it's never too early to get our
13 kids thinking about a college education. So when you
14 look at our school design for our K through 5 you
15 will see it focuses on getting our kids to begin
16 thinking about not just graduating high school but
17 going to college and then getting through college.
18 Some of the other features I think you will see, we
19 really place a premium on technology as well as
20 enrichment and afterschool activities that are driven
21 by the interests of our kids. You'll hear more at
22 the conclusion about the track record and success of
23 Friendship. But as I said, we have a 20-year record
24 in operating high-performing schools. Washington DC
25 has a tier system and of our 11 schools in Washington

1 we've established four Tier 1 schools, with Tier 3
2 being the lowest. None of our schools, I'm really
3 proud to report, have never been at that Tier 3 level
4 and none of our schools have been in risk of having
5 challenges with our charter.

6 We operate -- and you'll hear us talk to some
7 degree about our schools in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
8 We serve and have schools in both urban and rural
9 areas, so we think we have a real good sense of the
10 needs for how to operate schools in both of those
11 areas. Our founder, Donald Hense, and who
12 unfortunately can't be here today, was inducted as --
13 in 2011 as one of the National Charter Schools Hall
14 of Fame. Mr. Hense is recognized nationally and has
15 received a number of prestigious awards, one of which
16 by his alma mater Morehouse College, their highest
17 honor of the Bennie Award for Service. Also that
18 year Stevie Wonder got the award as well.

19 Closing the achievement gap -- Friendship is
20 really proud of its ability to really offer a high-
21 quality school focused on academic achievement. As
22 you can see, we've increased the proficiency rate in
23 tested grades at each of its 12 schools. We've met
24 90% of our early childhood pre-K targets, as well as
25 100% of our -- the kids that we serve in our pre-K to

1 5 significantly outperform neighboring school
2 districts serving a similar population. We've
3 demonstrated high and improving student retention
4 rates, averaging 87.5%, and in Arkansas we expect our
5 kids to -- we expect a 90% retention rate. And we'll
6 talk about how we go about doing that. But based on
7 our experience we're confident that we will be able
8 to reach that number.

9 Again, we focus on college and we look at taking
10 our kids -- graduating our kids, as well as getting
11 them to and through college. We have a 91% cohort
12 graduation rate at the high school level, 100%
13 graduates are accepted into college, and 81% are
14 enrolled in college on time. Across all of our
15 schools we have an 89% retention rate. You'll hear
16 me talk a little bit more about our teacher training
17 and professional development later in the
18 presentation. But I'd just like to underscore one of
19 the things that we're really proud of is our ability
20 to retain teachers.

21 We expect to move students in Arkansas to
22 proficiency in reading within three years of entering
23 the elementary grades and as having each school, as
24 we've done so in our DC and Baltimore schools. Our
25 Baton Rouge school is a high school, grades 9 to 12.

1 Another child reading. We love our kids
2 reading.

3 Why Friendship in Arkansas? And this is
4 important for us. We thought about a number of
5 things when looking at wanting to move into the
6 Arkansas market. I think nationally -- everyone in
7 here I'm sure loves Arkansas. There is a reputation
8 across nationally of how important Arkansas has been
9 to not just education but also education for
10 minorities, so being here would be an honor.

11 Friendship in Arkansas -- we're here and
12 committed to being in Arkansas for the long-haul.
13 Our models are pre-K through 12. It is our larger
14 goal to insure that our model moves progressive and
15 we are here and committed to being in Arkansas for
16 the long-haul.

17 I know that the issue of collaboration is really
18 important and it's important to the success of our
19 overall school. We are building a model that we
20 intend to become a permanent asset in the education
21 and community landscape, but we know we can't do that
22 in a vacuum. We intend to establish collaborations
23 with the school district, other schools, as well as
24 community stakeholders, be it business, businesses,
25 and be it other parents. We'll do that as we've done

1 in other schools. As an example, we have a very
2 strong relationship with the Baltimore City School
3 District, so much so that our school leaders have
4 participated in the district's teacher learning
5 program, presenting at that program as well as
6 providing materials on the teacher learning program
7 that they went through.

8 And again I'd just like to underscore Why
9 Friendship in Pine Bluff and Little Rock is that we
10 see the students and the need in both Pine Bluff and
11 Little Rock to be very similar to the Friendship
12 experience. Friendship takes on the hard job. We're
13 not -- we don't steer away from areas that are easy.
14 Our schools -- all of our schools are located in
15 distressed areas and what we've found and what we
16 believe we have is a formula for showing academic
17 growth and really transforming a neighborhood and the
18 community. The statistics of Pine Bluff, I'm sure
19 that each of you have kind of heard through the other
20 hearing some of the demographics about those
21 respective cities. One of the things I'd just like
22 to underscore is that we recognize in Little Rock
23 that the school district has made gains. We know
24 that they've made gains in ELA, in math; however,
25 what we do know is both of those gains are still

1 below the state average. We believe that having a
2 Friendship school will help both of the districts as
3 we build that collaborative to build in that area.

4 One of the things that you'll see -- and again
5 you're going to hear me talk about it at different
6 points -- is our collaboration model. We believe
7 that the Friendship pre-K/5 program will be a
8 collaborative partner that will provide kids that are
9 academically ready and have an established culture
10 for success for our feeder schools at the middle
11 school and high school level. And we recognized that
12 that's a challenge for our students at those grades.
13 So we will work with district schools and other
14 charters that are middle school and high school to
15 insure the overall success and long-term success of
16 Friendship's model.

17 When we talk about Friendship's education model,
18 you'll see that it is child-focused liberal arts
19 education. We offer smaller schools. We create a
20 student centered learning environment where the
21 education and activities are driven by the student in
22 both the classroom and the students take ownership in
23 classroom functionality. When we get to further
24 discussion around our curriculum and alignment, what
25 you will see is that we place high precedent on

1 insuring that our academics and curriculum is aligned
2 with Arkansas framework.

3 Our academic goals -- our academic goals are
4 going to be to replace -- replicate the highly
5 successful Friendship community school model. This
6 model brings program -- proven best practices in
7 elementary instruction and curriculum, staff
8 development and training techniques to Arkansas.

9 We look to move Friendship Arkansas students to
10 proficiency in reading within three years of entering
11 a Friendship elementary school. We will develop core
12 offerings for all grades in ELA, math, social
13 studies, science, foreign languages, and foundational
14 skills in science, arts, technology, Arkansas
15 history, and the humanities aligned with Arkansas
16 curriculum standards. Our academic goals include
17 creating a school culture that supports our mission,
18 academic goals, and meets the needs and interests of
19 our students. We intend to increase the number of
20 in-seat school days through an extended school day
21 and school year, a school year that will start at
22 7:30 a.m. and end from 4:00 to 6:00 for 190-plus days
23 during the school year. We will equip all of our
24 classrooms with state-of-the-art technology, white
25 boards, and Chromebooks.

1 Our curriculum and education program -- and bear
2 with me, I want to get down into the weeds of this
3 because I know it's so important. We focus on the
4 whole child. Our teachers receive training in
5 differentiated learning approach with variations in
6 learning plans for children with different learning
7 styles and needs. Our teachers are trained in a
8 "backward design" model with the end-goal -- end
9 academic goal and needs of our students at the
10 forefront.

11 Our curriculum framework is based on a solid
12 foundation of core academic subjects (reading, math
13 and science) and art, music, health, PE, and Arkansas
14 history. We expose our kids to extended learning and
15 believe that they should see education and be a part
16 of a global world. Our college level exposure
17 connection, which in our application we recognize
18 that there was an error that talks about college
19 readiness; but what we see is that our kids should be
20 connected in thinking about college as early as
21 possible. Our 4th graders will begin a series of
22 college connecting activities. We believe, again,
23 that it's never too early to begin thinking about
24 college.

25 How our curriculum will be created and aligned

1 to Arkansas Curriculum Framework -- one, the
2 foundation and the School Leader will be responsible
3 for the alignment process during the start-up phase.
4 FEF and the School Leader will work collaboratively
5 with our partners, the Wiley College, as well as the
6 Arkansas Public School Resource Center to crosswalk
7 the final curriculum adopted by FEF and ensure
8 alignment to the Arkansas Curriculum Framework. Each
9 curriculum resource will undergo a backwards design
10 process. The curriculum's support team will consist
11 of FEF School Leaders, teachers, and our strategic
12 academic partners. The curriculum team will review
13 the strengths and weaknesses of our curriculum
14 alignment to Arkansas curriculum frameworks, as
15 recommended -- and recommend additional aligned
16 supplemental resources that strengthen the FEF
17 curriculum in both Pine Bluff and Little Rock. Our
18 teachers will have a clear understanding of where the
19 standards -- what are the standards and how they are
20 within -- implemented within the curriculum.

21 Our curriculum and education program -- the
22 curriculum materials that we currently use are Wits
23 and Wisdom for ELA and it's supplemented by Guiding
24 Reading and phonics and phonemic awareness; Eureka
25 Math, Zula for Science programs, Alive!/TCI for

1 social studies. And just a special note, we decided
2 to use the curriculum and curriculum materials
3 adopted by Friendship Public Charter School in the
4 school year 2016.

5 The assessment instruments for measuring
6 performance -- you see our goals for each grade level
7 in the core areas. We will use assessment tools that
8 -- for our K through 2 will include DIBELS and state
9 assessment tools; for our other grades we will use
10 NWEA MAP, ACT, and state assessments; in science we
11 will use the ACT and state. Our PBIS goal, we will
12 use as an assessment of that suspension and expulsion
13 rates. We anticipate having on average, depending on
14 the core area, 80% growth in reading for our K, 50%
15 growth in reading for 3rd and 5th grade, English 80
16 -- to exceed 80%, math 50%, and in science to show an
17 upward growth in year five. We believe that our PSIB
18 [sic] will be lower than the district. And you'll
19 see our timeline that we believe we can attain and
20 reach our goals.

21 How will we evaluate the effectiveness of our
22 curriculum? We will use assessment tools that
23 measure academic performance against student progress
24 and the school and state learning standards. Our
25 goals for reading and math proficiency: student

1 attendance and promotion and stakeholder
2 satisfaction, to include parent and community
3 involvement will be one of our basic indicators of
4 success. We expect ongoing changes in state and
5 national assessments for K through 5 students over 5
6 years at the time of renewal. So we will make
7 adjustments to our curriculum during the five years
8 and are prepared to do it after. We're confident
9 that our students will exceed state and surrounding
10 school districts who attend Friendship schools for
11 two or more years. We're committed to looking at the
12 individual -- looking at individual school data
13 compared to state assessments in each area assessed
14 by grade level -- aggregate grade level. We will use
15 data in making curriculum and -- or instructional
16 changes.

17 How will we serve students with special needs?
18 We will approach serving students with special needs
19 by first aligning our special needs program with the
20 least restrictive environment requirements under the
21 Disabilities Education Employment [sic] Act. We will
22 establish a student support team at each school that
23 will be responsible for developing a comprehensive
24 special education action plan at the school. You'll
25 hear later about the process for developing that, the

1 role of the team; it will be presented by Mr. Brian
2 Beck. But as part of our student -- our special
3 needs program, we will provide ongoing student data
4 that is collected, along with teachers' observations,
5 school SPED staff, we'll develop our IEPs.

6 Our capacity to serve students with special
7 needs -- our support for special needs will be based
8 on the -- at the onset of our application submission.
9 And what I mean there is we will be prepared on the
10 first day of school to offer special education
11 services. We will design our staffing model based on
12 the need. There will be at Pine Bluff one special
13 education teacher, but based on the enrollment rate
14 in Little Rock we will begin with two special ed.
15 teachers. Both will be full-time employees, and we
16 will do that first day of school and in our design --
17 in our budget you'll see that; it's included in year-
18 one and year-two budgets.

19 Additional services we're really proud of is
20 that we will offer a Gifted and Talented program,
21 adaptive PE and other special and unique needs will
22 have the necessary resources provided to support
23 students once the need is identified.

24 We've learned through experience that it's best
25 to build schools based on a slow growth model, one,

1 because it allows you to insure that your mission is
2 carried out, that the mission and the culture is
3 established at the school, and also to be a measured
4 approach. That's the best way to manage resources
5 and operational and staff.

6 Student recruitment and admissions -- we will
7 recruit our students using a cross variety of
8 vehicles. One will be a mass media campaign across
9 radio, television, print newspaper, and social media.
10 We will establish community partnerships with local
11 -- I guess I've got five minutes to keep it going.
12 You will hear more about the day in the life of a
13 school, but essentially our school begins at 7:00 and
14 ends at 6:00 p.m. Our student/teacher -- our school
15 leader will participate in the Fellows program, a
16 fellowship program through the APSRC. We have
17 identified a School Leader for our school in Pine
18 Bluff and we're confident we'll have that person on-
19 board within 30 days. The role of the school
20 principal is to lead the day-to-day activities,
21 oversee the budget and report directly to the
22 principal.

23 Our teacher recruitment and PD training really
24 is focused on the teacher and they will provide -- be
25 provided extensive PD over the course of the year.

1 Our board structure is very traditional. We plan on
2 establishing one more that will oversee the
3 governance of both schools. On each board will be
4 two representatives from each school. One will be a
5 parent representative and the other one will be a
6 community stakeholder. When you look at our
7 organizational chart you'll see that the governing
8 board insures the operation of all of our schools.
9 They will manage the CMO contract, as well as the
10 work of the school principal.

11 Our start-up plan -- we've been doing this for
12 over 20 years. We've started schools from the ground
13 up. We're confident that we will build a process
14 that will insure the overall success of our school.

15 As I said earlier, we have selected a site in
16 Pine Bluff. If you look at the aerial view, you'll
17 see that includes -- it sits on 4.3 acres and
18 includes three existing buildings, one of which that
19 has 10 classrooms, an auditorium/classroom. And it's
20 located in a community south of Pine Bluff that --
21 where there is single-family homes as well as
22 homeowners. So we're confident that it'll be a good
23 place to recruit and be a success.

24 In your budget projections you'll see that we
25 anticipate ending with a surplus in each of our five

1 years. That ranges from 5% -- 4% is the lowest, in
2 Little Rock, to 10%. And we have experience in
3 really managing school budgets, raising resources,
4 and insuring the overall financial readiness.

5 In conclusion, I think we talked about the fact
6 that we're asking this body to vote on each
7 application separately. We're taking a standard
8 approach to opening our schools based on the fact
9 that what we know about opening schools. It is our
10 commitment, long-term commitment to Arkansas; we hope
11 that this body sees the benefit of a staggered
12 approach. Little Rock is very unique from Pine
13 Bluff. Having the additional time will allow us to
14 insure that we have a facility acquired, as well as
15 renovated. I think none of us want to see -- and
16 what we've learned is you don't want kids on the
17 first day of school walking into a building that is
18 still under renovation. So the additional time will
19 allow us to not only insure that our facility is
20 ready for our students, but it will also allow us
21 additional engagement time.

22 That concludes my presentation. I'd like to
23 thank this body for its time.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you very
25 much. And I actually have about three minutes left,

1 if anybody else wants to add any comments.

2 All right. Is there anyone here to speak in
3 opposition?

4 MS. BOYD: Dr. Pfeffer, in Michael Poore's
5 absence he sent a letter to be read aloud to the
6 Panel in opposition of the Little Rock application.
7 If it's okay with you, I'll read that now.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Yes.

9 MS. BOYD: Okay. "I apologize that I cannot
10 attend in person. I hope you understand the respect
11 I have for the committee and its work, but holding
12 these meetings on the first week of school is next to
13 impossible to schedule. My hope is my appearance at
14 the last two days of hearings shows my sincerity in
15 being a part of your process. It is also my hope
16 that the materials I presented Tuesday will again be
17 reviewed as you discuss the Friendship application.
18 As I stated on Tuesday, Little Rock has too many
19 elementary seats available already. Besides the
20 Little Rock Public School seats you have charter
21 school seats that have already been approved by the
22 State, you have private school options, and you have
23 intra-district choice options all available to
24 families.

25 "A recent study delivered to the State Board of

1 Education this month suggested a study be done to
2 determine community needs before any further charter
3 expansion was granted. I think this is a wise
4 counsel -- I think this is wise counsel and I hope
5 this recommendation factors into your decision-making
6 today. Please also review a document that I have --
7 that I provided Tuesday that shares how many children
8 each board zone now serves. Board Zones 1, 2, 3, 6
9 and 7 have all lost significant amounts of students
10 from 2000 to 2015. This loss of students is not just
11 Little Rock Public School students; this reflects the
12 number of students lost and who are served in public
13 schools, charter schools, private schools, and home
14 schools.

15 "I also would like to reiterate my comments from
16 both Tuesday and Wednesday and share that the Little
17 Rock School District is on the move and that our
18 recent state assessment scores will be very positive.
19 The Friendship application shares that Stephens
20 Elementary is underperforming. My hope is that you
21 will look at the achievement scores I presented on
22 Tuesday. Stephens Elementary went up in 11 of 15
23 tested categories. Additionally, Stephens has been
24 innovative with the bank program at the school with
25 support from First Security Bank. The bank allows

1 students to understand personal finance, as well as
2 understanding the performance and -- understanding
3 that performance and accomplishments lead to real
4 incentives or bonuses.

5 "I look at each of the items that this charter
6 presents as unique and believe that the Little Rock
7 School District, Stephens Elementary, and multiple
8 other Little Rock School District elementary schools
9 meet these exact deliveries and targets.

10 "Finally, I would like to bring up several
11 questions that I believe the Panel should explore as
12 you review the Friendship application. One, where
13 will this school be located? I'm challenged to think
14 we would approve a charter without a specified
15 location. Two, what plans does Friendship have for
16 transportation? This is critical for economically
17 challenged families. If they have a plan for
18 transportation, do they have a financial plan to
19 cover this cost? Three, how many actual families
20 attended their event last spring to determine and
21 generate interest in this charter? According to my
22 review, they only had seven families. Four, the
23 Panel has done a thorough review of the waivers and I
24 hope that line of questioning continues today, as I
25 am challenged by several waiver requests.

1 "In conclusion, I would like to ask that the
2 Panel at least delay this recommendation since
3 Friendship does not plan to serve students until
4 2019-2020. Have this application reapply next year;
5 let's see the impact of other already approved
6 charter expansions and let's also see how Little Rock
7 School District is serving our own students and
8 families." Sincerely, Michael Poore, Little Rock
9 School District.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you, Ms. Boyd.

11 Is there anyone else signed up to speak in
12 opposition?

13 MS. DAVIS: No.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. No. All right.
15 Thank you.

16 The school has an additional five minutes, if
17 you have anything additional to present, or anyone
18 else would like to present.

19 MR. HARRIS: Sure. We would both like to
20 respond to the opposition of Superintendent Poore and
21 also acknowledge that we intend to build a
22 collaborative relationship with Superintendent
23 Robinson in Pine Bluff. Just to kind of address some
24 of the concerns of Superintendent Poore, we have a --
25 we recognize through our research there's additional

1 need in both Pine Bluff and Little Rock. And
2 specifically the Little Rock School District we know
3 has made some gains in particular areas from the
4 latest ESEA report. However, in areas like math
5 where Arkansas has shown a 20% increase from school
6 year 2015 to 2016, in ELA moving in 2016 from 35% to
7 37.8%, and last year. However, it's 40 -- the state
8 average is 48%. In math they've had gains going from
9 20% to 34.65%, which we applaud them because that was
10 significant gains; however, the state gain level is
11 43%. We believe the current situation in Little Rock
12 allows for additional gains and that is our goal.

13 With respect to wraparound services in our
14 community model, we believe that our community school
15 approach will greatly benefit the -- not only Little
16 Rock School District but also the parents and
17 students. Our community school model really
18 reinforces the fact that our school buildings are
19 open beyond just school days and they serve as a
20 community resource where high school students can
21 prepare for the SAT. The seniors program is open to
22 seniors and it also encourages employment and skills
23 training. We've created what we believe is a really
24 community school model and it will benefit Little
25 Rock.

1 When we talk about the delayed impact of our
2 opening, I hope it's very clear to this board that
3 our vision and commitment to Arkansas is really based
4 on long-term. We've been doing this for 20 years.
5 We understand that the scale of operating just one
6 school in Pine Bluff will not position us for overall
7 success. So as you evaluate our charter, in both
8 Little Rock and Pine Bluff, that you understand that
9 our staggered approach is deliberate and methodical
10 with the intent of looking at our role and our
11 success in Little Rock long-term.

12 I'd also like to mention that there are several
13 things that have transpired. One, I think you all
14 have a copy of the letter of support from the
15 Lieutenant Governor, Tim Griffin. He is in support
16 of our approach, not just for our school in Pine
17 Bluff but also the approval of our school in Little
18 Rock.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I did make a mistake.
20 You do have -- you have an additional five minutes.

21 MR. HARRIS: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So I apologize for that,
23 if you want to go ahead.

24 MR. HARRIS: Okay. The issue of transportation,
25 I know in observing other hearing I know that the

1 issue of transportation has come up. We intend to
2 offer transportations at both -- transportation at
3 both of our schools. You will see within our budget
4 that we are providing for transportation in both of
5 our schools. One of our strategic partners has
6 experience in contracting and also providing
7 transportation services.

8 If we could, I'd like to kind of turn the
9 rebuttal process over to Patricia Brantley, the CEO,
10 and she can talk a little bit more about the model
11 and the importance.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Brantley, if
13 you'll just state your name for the record, you're
14 recognized.

15 MS. BRANTLEY: Certainly. Patricia Brantley,
16 Chief Executive Officer for Friendship Public Charter
17 School. First, let me thank you for having us here
18 today. I'm going to underscore much of what you
19 already heard and talk a little about our history and
20 our commitment to Arkansas.

21 As you know, Friendship in DC is a charter
22 network that launched the Friendship Education
23 Foundation to explore and address education needs in
24 communities like Pine Bluff and Little Rock. My
25 history with Friendship is long. Friendship is 20

1 years old this year, and I was with the founding
2 group about 22, 23 years ago when the idea for
3 Friendship Schools was born. At that time we were
4 responding to parents and families and community
5 members who wanted to see a school that would meet
6 their students' academic needs, but that would also
7 address social and emotional needs while being
8 reflective of the community where the school would be
9 located.

10 So at our founding we penned a tag line and it
11 was community vision, world-class education. Twenty
12 years later we still strive to deliver a high-quality
13 education that reflects the community's vision and
14 provides wraparound services needed for student
15 success. I often say that our work must be equal
16 parts academic instruction and character building.

17 Through our morning meetings we engage students
18 in exploration of values and positive action every
19 day, with wraparound services that include social
20 work, mental health services and teacher training on
21 meeting social and emotion needs. And we also have
22 an approach to restorative justice that focuses on
23 maximizing inclusion in the classroom versus
24 exclusion from the classroom.

25 I hear the question of why Arkansas, why Little

1 Rock, why Pine Bluff, and I'd like to address that.
2 For more than three years the Friendship founder has
3 been exploring what we can do for families in other
4 communities and he was asked specifically to look at
5 Arkansas and Pine Bluff. And so what we've done --
6 and Little Rock -- is that we've come in and we've
7 had visitors come to our schools in DC that are from
8 these communities. Those visitors have said, you
9 know, "We have great needs and our students seem
10 similar, low-income, minority, too often reaching the
11 upper grades already years behind." Now we know that
12 all communities are not the same and that students
13 are individuals, even when they share similar
14 demographics. So we spent three years learning and
15 understanding what the needs are here.

16 We chose Pine Bluff and Little Rock because we
17 believe that we can have the greatest impact in those
18 cities. We chose elementary because we know that
19 middle and high schools report that they are getting
20 students who are grade levels behind. We also chose
21 elementary because Friendship's model has produced
22 high-performing elementary schools. We will create
23 the same success here. We will work using community
24 members to help us refine our model for the delivery
25 that's here. We started managing and growing schools

1 in high-need communities in Washington DC and
2 Baltimore, Maryland, and in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
3 Friendship Aspire will apply our best practices from
4 those experiences to the unique needs that are here.
5 Thank you for your time.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You have about a minute
7 left, if you'd like to finish up.

8 MR. HARRIS: Sure. There are a couple of things
9 I forgot to respond to Superintendent Poore's
10 question regarding the -- well, I did talk about
11 facilities in Little Rock. The fact that what we've
12 done related to looking at Facilities, we toured
13 three schools -- I'm sorry -- two abandoned schools
14 in Little Rock, as well as one school that was a
15 former training center. So we've already done the
16 work of beginning to look for a facility. In doing
17 so, and understanding the geographic and the greatest
18 need, we've made a decision that we will focus our
19 efforts on looking at the Southwest side of Little
20 Rock. So we acknowledge and appreciate the
21 Superintendent's concern about facilities, but we
22 think that through our staggered model having
23 additional time will allow us to find an appropriate
24 facility. In a perfect world, we would like to begin
25 to look at a school facility, closed or renovated

1 school. We have experience in doing just that. Of
2 our nine schools, seven of them were former vacant
3 schools. We renovated them and they were operational
4 and ready for our schools within the first day of
5 school. We've built schools from the ground up.
6 Friendship has a number of strategies in place for
7 financing. We have longstanding partners that are --

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Harris, I think the
9 time is up.

10 MR. HARRIS: Oh.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So I appreciate that and
12 I'm sure we'll continue the line of questioning, so
13 you'll have additional time --

14 MR. HARRIS: All right. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- to respond.

16 Okay. So, Panel, at this time let's go ahead
17 and start with some questions. Mr. Wilson, we had
18 you last earlier, so do you want to start us off?

19 MR. WILSON: I'm not offended, Madam Chairman.

20 Mr. Harris, you mentioned in your statement just
21 now your intention or desire to engage in --

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Can you put -- can you
23 talk into the mic? Because we're not hearing your
24 question.

25 MR. WILSON: -- engage in collaboration with

1 Little Rock School District. Can you elaborate on
2 that a little more? What might be some of the areas
3 that you might consider?

4 MR. HARRIS: Sure.

5 MR. WILSON: How do you plan to approach that?

6 MR. HARRIS: Okay. We have an example of that
7 which I'd like to share. We understand that the
8 collaborative model is very important for the overall
9 success, not just for our school but also in moving
10 the academic and goals for kids in the area. That
11 partnership with the school district is very
12 important to us. We have two examples of where that
13 has been successful; one is in Baltimore. Our school
14 there, two elementary schools, we were approached by
15 the Baltimore School District to really help them
16 answer a question of how do they serve special needs
17 students. We had a larger number of special needs
18 students in both of our schools. What they -- what
19 was established as that partnership was part of our
20 model, which is looking at a process of identifying
21 students with special needs as early as possible and
22 then developing an individual special ed. program for
23 them. That was -- program was so successful it was
24 adopted by the district itself. We have an ongoing
25 relationship with our school district in Baton Rouge.

1 They come to us to talk about some of the things that
2 you will hear later on around wraparound services.

3 One of the things most people don't think about
4 is sports programs. We place a premium on sports
5 programs. The Baton Rouge School District has its
6 own football, basketball program but what we've been
7 able to do is work with them to build a charter
8 school network to participate in the athletic
9 programs.

10 So working with school districts is very
11 important. We do comparative data. We share best
12 practices and really work with school districts to
13 really reach the same goal. We view school districts
14 as -- not as competition but as another kind of
15 partner in education.

16 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Do you have a question,
18 Ms. Newton, at this time?

19 MS. NEWTON: I was just wondering if you'd
20 explain again the rationale of approving both
21 applications at the same time in different cities,
22 with the start date. So does it -- I just want to,
23 you know, understand that, having that just waiting,
24 sitting waiting, as opposed to maybe being able to
25 demonstrate how well things start up in Pine Bluff

1 and it's more impetus for us to look at that as an
2 example of Little Rock. So what's the rationale
3 behind doing the two at the same time?

4 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Our rationale is based on 20
5 years experience in operating charter schools. Our
6 first charter was granted in 1997, and we opened up
7 three schools in one school year. It allows for an
8 economy of scale; it allows for sharing resources; it
9 also allows for synergy between the staff, the
10 community. It is our intent again to make a long-
11 term commitment to the students of Arkansas. In
12 doing so we recognize in our model one school would
13 not be the most efficient way. We believe that
14 opening two schools on a staggered model will be the
15 best key to success. We have experience doing it.
16 And we believe staggering and starting the Little
17 Rock school a year later will allow for greater
18 community engagement, developing and fine-tuning
19 those collaborative partnerships, as well as a
20 formula for overall success.

21 MS. BOYD: I'd just like to make the Panel
22 aware, the way that the law is written there is no
23 way for them to apply for both of these schools under
24 one application. So they had to submit two separate
25 applications since the schools were in different

1 localities. So that's just a point of logistics I
2 want to make sure that you understand.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

4 Okay. Yes, Ms. Turner.

5 MS. TURNER: I had noticed in the application,
6 and Mr. Poore brought it up also, about the low
7 attendance at the public hearing, both in Pine Bluff
8 and Little Rock. So would you address that for me,
9 what you think that means to you and what that says?

10 MR. HARRIS: Okay. What it says to us is that
11 we need to do more community outreach. When you look
12 at our model and our plan for our start-up you'll see
13 it requires and calls for an extensive community
14 engagement strategy. We recognize that, you know,
15 we're an out-of-state vendor bringing in a new model,
16 so we will do our best to insure that there's greater
17 community support. We're building our board, which
18 we also will -- to create a local board that will
19 also insure greater community engagement. When we
20 had our public hearings we went through the process
21 of public notification, as well as holding those
22 hearings at a convenient time in a convenient place.
23 While our attendance in Pine Bluff is not something
24 that really marks what we were attempting to do, we
25 did have an opportunity to tour the immediate

1 neighborhood and the recreation center and talk to
2 some of the parents that actually come there for the
3 sports program, about what they need. So we learned
4 a lot, more so than having the opportunity to talk to
5 parents. In Little Rock you'll see that we held not
6 only one hearing but we held two at a library. And
7 what we learned is how important that community
8 resource of a library is to a community. That is
9 part and parcel why we decided to look at the
10 Southwest community, because there are those
11 community assets. So we recognize the importance of
12 community engagement and the community engagement
13 strategy will be one of the important elements of our
14 planning and start-up.

15 MS. TURNER: And would you tell me again -- and
16 I could look it up, but what is your anticipated
17 enrollment the first year in Pine Bluff?

18 MR. HARRIS: Sure. In Pine Bluff it is 180
19 students.

20 MS. TURNER: Okay.

21 MR. HARRIS: I'm sorry; 160. And we intend to
22 grow by 80 students.

23 MS. TURNER: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Yes, sir.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I tell you what, this is a

1 pretty good application here and I have a whole lot
2 of detailed questions to ask. I always -- I'm
3 interested in the student learning and it looks like
4 you all have a pretty good track record. I mean you
5 mentioned cities such as Baton Rouge, DC, Baltimore,
6 and I'm probably missing a city or two. Could you
7 comment on how successful you've been in those
8 cities? And when a school has not been as successful
9 as you had hoped what have you done?

10 MR. HARRIS: Okay. I'd like to defer that
11 response to Brian or Pat Brantley.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And, again, please
13 state names and titles for record and then you'll be
14 recognized.

15 MS. BRANTLEY: Patricia Brantley, Chief
16 Executive Officer of Friendship Public Charter
17 School.

18 MR. BECK: Brian Beck, School Leader.

19 MS. BRANTLEY: In Washington DC, we started, as
20 was said, with elementary schools, moved to middle,
21 and then high school. And we had a very clean record
22 of success for those schools outperforming their
23 district counterparts and also growing students at a
24 faster rate, particularly at the middle and high
25 school where students were coming in from all over

1 the district and not necessarily from just our feeder
2 schools. About four years in we -- to being founded
3 -- five years into being founded the first charter
4 school in the district was being revoked and we were
5 asked by the families and the board of that school
6 that was losing this charter to take it over. And so
7 we went in expecting to apply our Friendship model to
8 this new school that we hadn't founded, that was
9 already operating with all the students where they
10 are; we attempted to keep every student that was
11 there. And I would say the first two years we didn't
12 find the initial success that we had in the schools
13 we had started from the ground up. And so we
14 completely revamped our model. We doubled the amount
15 of supports that we sent to the school, adding
16 reading specialists and math specialists. In
17 addition to our teachers, we brought master teachers
18 from our other campuses to go into the school and we
19 had to do a leadership change. We also implemented a
20 cycle of data review, adding a half-day of
21 professional development every week to the school.
22 And what we saw is that that school went from single
23 digits of proficiency to over two years to being a
24 Tier 1 campus. But it was definitely a learning
25 curve for us, but I do think that we did learn and we

1 were able to make changes.

2 MR. BECK: Yeah. With Baltimore, it's a high
3 school. Lessons learned -- as we went through the
4 process we realized that, you know, there was just a
5 level of rigor that needed to exist to establish a
6 different foundation.

7 In some cases you go in these scenarios and
8 people don't believe that those students can go to
9 college. We went out and got a college partner. And
10 in bringing that college partner in we actually
11 started getting students transferring in from private
12 schools and select colleges that were within the
13 district. Our enrollment has grown by about 100 more
14 students than when we started out, which was we
15 originally were at about 369; we're currently
16 enrolled at 330 -- at 430, excuse me.

17 Additionally, with some of those changes what we
18 saw was a great jump in our overall performance. In
19 year-three we actually outpaced everyone and had the
20 largest amount of gains in the state of Louisiana,
21 boasting at 42% growth in that year. And so we could
22 be expected to continue that same trajectory.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

25 DR. OWOH: Thank you, Madam Chair. First, a

1 comment: I think your special education, based on
2 your application and your presentation, you have an
3 extensive amount of services that you're going to --
4 or that you plan to provide your students with
5 special needs. And I also noted the fact that the
6 inclusion of all the stakeholders throughout the
7 process of referral and support during that. My
8 question is: I noted that you have two teachers
9 earmarked for providing both inclusion and resource
10 services. Why two? Do you think that will be
11 adequate enough to -- and with my knowledge of the
12 number of special education students in the Little
13 Rock area I'm interested in knowing why the limited
14 support for special education, but an extensive
15 program.

16 MR. HARRIS: Okay. If you'll hold on, I think
17 Brian would be the best person.

18 MR. BECK: Right. So the starting point is
19 based on the average percentage of special education
20 students within that region that we'll be serving,
21 but that's simply the starting point. We employ a
22 traditional special education action plan process.
23 What that entails is at the very beginning, from the
24 onset of the first application, our special education
25 team, the FEF support team are all doing evaluations

1 within that. In the event that we identify students
2 that have dyslexia and need additional services, and
3 Talented and Gifted students, 504 plan students, then
4 we're able to have an educated conversation around
5 what adjustments need to be made. So additionally
6 we've already incorporated some consulting funds as
7 well, and so some of those things will be
8 streamlined. Also, as we get to those numbers we
9 also know that some of the IDEA funds will also flow.
10 So there will be -- they will be appropriated in the
11 right categories to insure that we meet all the needs
12 of every single student that we serve.

13 DR. OWOH: Okay. Thank you. And I'm glad you
14 mentioned Talented and Gifted because I noted that
15 you presented or Mr. Harris presented a pretty
16 impressive Gifted and Talented program. But in your
17 budget there's not a salary for a personnel member,
18 nor a line item for materials and supplies. So if
19 you can expound on how you're going to --

20 MR. BECK: Right. So, again, so when we look at
21 how we do the action planning process we then would
22 just have to readjust some of those resources to make
23 sure that happens. So it may not start in year-one.
24 We may not have the students that are ready for it,
25 which means we will then accrue for it, knowing that

1 that's the direction that we're going to go. In all
2 of our schools, when you talk about maintaining the
3 level of rigor, that is the goal, that we expect to
4 really have a Talented and Gifted level curriculum
5 that pushes every student to the highest level of
6 performance.

7 DR. OWOH: All right. And just for my
8 clarification, you said it may not take place year-
9 one?

10 MR. BECK: Right. So as we identify what the
11 needs are of our student, but in the model because of
12 the level of rigor and the training that we have for
13 our students really I mean the approach is that every
14 single student is getting pushed to the highest level
15 of performance. So being Talented and Gifted is the
16 goal. Being higher than your average proficiency
17 level is the overall goal.

18 DR. OWOH: So will there be -- during the year-
19 one will there be an identification process --

20 MR. BECK: Yes, sir.

21 DR. OWOH: -- and a referral process?

22 MR. BECK: Yes, sir.

23 DR. OWOH: Okay.

24 MR. BECK: Yes, sir. And through the Triple-S-T
25 process we will be referring students as well, so

1 they may not be identified on the front-end as
2 Talented and Gifted. But with the Triple-S-T process
3 that we have in the school teachers and those team
4 members make recommendations that we need to have
5 these students on a Talented and Gifted pathway.

6 DR. OWOH: Okay. Because I'm concerned today
7 that, you know, you may have some students who may
8 transfer in --

9 MR. BECK: Yes, sir.

10 DR. OWOH: -- who have been identified as Gifted
11 and Talented. But if you are not providing services
12 year-one then they would not receive those services.

13 MR. BECK: So if they're identified, just like
14 any other student, through the action planning
15 process -- if they're identified, we will be sure
16 that they get services.

17 MR. HARRIS: And just to echo this, we will be
18 offering Gifted and Talented services within our
19 school in year-one, both of our schools.

20 DR. OWOH: Okay. And then my last question at
21 this time is about your English Language Learners.
22 For Little Rock, I know we have a nice percentage of
23 students who are in need of services but there's not
24 a clear plan identified or outlined in your
25 application, nor is there a budget item for support

1 for your English Language Learners. So I'm
2 interested in knowing how year-one -- day-one how you
3 will meet those needs of those particular students?

4 MR. BECK: Year-one, if we're -- year-one if ESS
5 are identified first, when we do have an additional
6 bucket in our consultancy funds, then those funds
7 will be immediately redirected to insure that we can
8 provided the necessary support to service those
9 students.

10 DR. OWOH: And what's the budget line for those?
11 Because I thought it was \$15,000, but --

12 MS. FOX: Fifteen Thousand. I'm sorry; which
13 budget line?

14 DR. OWOH: Well --

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Can you please state your
16 name and position?

17 MS. FOX: I'm sorry. Melissa Fox; I'm the
18 director of finance.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You're recognized.

20 DR. OWOH: Thank you. He was mentioning the
21 consulting fee or funds that would be available, and
22 so I thought I read \$15,000. Is that the only budget
23 line item for --

24 MS. FOX: For the SPED services, yes; that is
25 the only allocation on that section. However, during

1 our budgeting process what we do is we budget very
2 low classrooms for teachers. As you see, it's lower
3 than 20 kids per class, which gives them the autonomy
4 when we meet with the school leader each month on
5 that budgeting process to take those -- if we need to
6 reallocate a position we keep it open until we know
7 where to fill that. And if it needs to be a Gifted
8 and Talented or if it needs to be an additional SPED
9 position, we also budget those contingency funds to
10 have that -- to be able to move the budget around in
11 that way.

12 DR. OWOH: Okay. Thank you. That's all.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: Very good, thorough application
15 and presentation. I just had a couple of questions.
16 And I know having many years of experience in this
17 there's a -- I'm just curious about the 23% in the
18 fringe benefits. Is that pretty standard that you've
19 seen? I know we typically talk a lot about 28%, but
20 you may have better experience with that being a
21 solid number for you guys. So, just curious about
22 that.

23 MR. HARRIS: I'm sorry. I hate to ask, could
24 you repeat the question? I heard the first part.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: In your budget it refers to, on

1 salaries, your calculation for fringe benefits uses
2 23%, and we usually look at 28%. But I do know that
3 you guys have experience with that, so is that a
4 pretty standard rate for you guys?

5 MS. FOX: Yes. During -- when we budgeted for
6 the benefits it's pretty much we looked at our trends
7 in other schools, the participation in our medical.
8 We do offer full medical benefits and on average it's
9 about 75% participation, so we budgeted those
10 numbers. We do a 403(b) plan for the retirement, so
11 -- and part of that where they match it. But even
12 though we offer it, many -- most of our employees
13 unfortunately don't enroll in it, but we did factor
14 in 50% participation in that. But based on all of
15 our historical data we looked at our average. And,
16 of course, the social security and Medicare and
17 unemployment and all of that was factored in there.
18 The workers' comp though is in on a different line
19 item within the budget. It's in the Other Than
20 Personnel, so -- because that's not part of the
21 benefits section.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: And the other question was -- I
23 know you don't have a facility identified in Little
24 Rock, but in Pine Bluff the facility that you guys --
25 I just want to make sure I'm clear. Y'all are

1 working on -- is it a lease, a purchase, and is there
2 going to be renovation costs associated with that?
3 And kind of a little bit more about that.

4 MS. FOX: Yes.

5 MR. KENNEY: Joe Kenney, Chief Financial Officer
6 for the Friendship Education Foundation.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You are recognized. Yes.

8 MR. KENNEY: Yes. So Friendship, I was on
9 Friendship's original start-up team 20 years ago in
10 Washington DC, along with Ms. Brantley. And over
11 that -- over those past 20 years Friendship has
12 extensive experience in acquiring, renovating and
13 building new schools; has done over 100 million
14 dollars of bond financing to finance new campuses and
15 renovations. We are -- we've identified the site in
16 Pine Bluff. We have a commitment from a national
17 nonprofit charter school facilities development
18 organization called Charter Schools Development
19 Corporation to fund up to 5 million potentially of
20 acquisition and renovations in Arkansas. We are in
21 negotiation for the acquisition of the site that's
22 been identified in our application. It's a good
23 site, in good condition, and has sufficient
24 classrooms to accommodate us. We do have a budget
25 for some year-one improvements that would be included

1 in the financing that we would secure to acquire and
2 renovate the facility.

3 DR. HERNANDEZ: So that line item in there
4 that's for facilities would be -- I'm trying to say
5 this accurately. So the CMO will be responsible for
6 renovations and those things, and then the school
7 will actually pay that back as part of their lease?

8 MR. KENNEY: The number that's in the budget for
9 -- is based on the debt service using a conservative
10 interest rate and amortization schedule. We hope to
11 secure -- you know -- that was a conservative number;
12 we hope to secure more cost effective facility
13 financing potentially through the education equity
14 fund that is a program administered by Civic Builders
15 with Walton grant funding. And we hope to apply to
16 them; that would make it less expensive. But the
17 assumption in there is conservative.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. KENNEY: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Harris, I have
21 a couple of questions. You clarified that
22 transportation -- you all did have a plan for
23 transportation --

24 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- within your

1 applications. And I found it in the budget a minute
2 ago; now I can't. But could you just describe what
3 the transportation plan is for each -- for Little
4 Rock and for Pine Bluff?

5 MR. HARRIS: Okay. We intend -- anticipate
6 hiring a driver as well as purchasing a vehicle based
7 on scale and based on need. It could be a contracted
8 service, but our larger goal is to provide those
9 services, both a driver and a vehicle.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And so do you feel
11 you have adequately budgeted for that?

12 MR. HARRIS: I believe we have. I think in
13 year-one we have around \$54,000 and then in year-two
14 that goes up to \$86,000.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Yes, do you want to
16 add to that?

17 MR. KENNEY: Yes. And we have compared that to
18 what other schools have -- other charter schools have
19 spent on transportation in the state and we feel like
20 on a per-student basis we have been conservative in
21 the way we budgeted it. We have experienced leasing
22 buses and employing drivers ourselves, as well as
23 contracting with transportation providers.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. On your curriculum
25 -- and, Mr. Harris, in your presentation you referred

1 to Arkansas curriculum frameworks. But in your --
2 what you have in your applications and your different
3 materials outline all of them in the rationale --
4 well, not all of them -- but most of them in the
5 rationale you have listed the alignment to Common
6 Core standards. And I need to point out and just
7 have you all affirm that you realize that Arkansas'
8 academic standards have been -- we now have new
9 Arkansas academic standards in English Language Arts
10 and we have new standards in science. So, all the
11 materials would need to be reviewed to realign with
12 Arkansas academic standards.

13 MR. HARRIS: Okay. We acknowledge and recognize
14 that.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And then my last
16 question -- on the Little Rock facility, what would
17 be -- and I know it can't be an exact answer, but
18 what would you anticipate as far as a timeline for
19 acquiring a facility in Little Rock?

20 MR. HARRIS: Okay. If we go back to -- Joe, I
21 don't know if you want to speak to the other schools
22 and the timeline?

23 MR. KENNEY: Upon approval, we would immediately
24 start a search process. It's a little bit difficult
25 to secure a space for two years out because the owner

1 may -- unless it's vacant the owner may or may not
2 want to hold it for that long. But we would seek to
3 identify it by the end of this calendar year and
4 secure it by March or April of 2018. And we would
5 immediately notify the ADE in the event we do
6 identify and secure a facility.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

8 Panel Members, do you have any additional
9 questions before we start looking at specific
10 waivers? Yes, sir.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, just one more question.
12 When you were introducing people you made note of
13 Teach for America. What role do they have with you?
14 I haven't heard any reference to them throughout this
15 process, other than the introduction.

16 MR. HARRIS: Okay. I will allow -- Brian will
17 talk about that. But we've had a longstanding
18 relationship with Teach for America since they began
19 in '87 -- '86. We've had a longstanding relationship
20 and we intend to continue that relationship here in
21 Pine Bluff and Little Rock.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: And so what role will they be
23 playing?

24 MR. BECK: So one of our goals is to insure that
25 we hire all certified staff. Teach for America has a

1 wonderful training module, and so in advance we're
2 able to notify them of some of the potential
3 positions that we may have those gaps because we
4 don't find them in the local area. And so in an
5 effort to stay true to our commitment that is one of
6 our partners that will insure that we have certified
7 teachers in each of the core areas.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Are you all ready
10 to start looking at waivers?

11 All right. Ms. Davis, are the waivers the same
12 for both applications? Are there any differences at
13 all?

14 MS. DAVIS: They're the same.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: They're the same. Okay.

16 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Let me get to the correct
18 -- were there any of the waivers you all had -- I
19 think there was one on here that had a waiver request
20 that came in after the initial review on the class
21 size and teaching load. And I wanted to be clear
22 that I understood not exceeding 20 in kindergarten
23 and 25 in all other grades, except that the school
24 may adjust the class size by 10% within exceeding the
25 charter. Can you explain like exactly what that

1 would mean, or the -- yes, Mr. Harris -- or someone?
2 Mr. Walter. And I'm looking at, on page 4, the legal
3 review sheet, but you may have it elsewhere.

4 MR. WALTER: Yes, I have it. I believe -- and
5 I'll -- I'm sorry; Tripp Walter, Staff Attorney,
6 Arkansas Public School Resource Center. And I'll
7 defer to Mr. Harris, if need be. But I think the
8 intent there was recognition of the standard class
9 size and teaching load and the waiver request is for
10 the flexibility on an as-needed or if-needed basis to
11 exceed the standards in those limits and those areas
12 by up to 10%.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But it's not adjusting
14 like the number per grade or the overall cap; it's
15 just within a class time if numbers fluctuated just
16 in scheduling students throughout the day. Is that
17 correct?

18 MR. WALTER: Yes, ma'am.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

20 MR. WALTER: As to the class size and the --
21 right. And that was the attempt I think of the third
22 sentence in there that it wasn't an attempt to
23 indicate that it was going to be somehow viewed as
24 enrollment cap adjustment.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And I could've

1 probably read closer. So, thank you for clarifying
2 that for me.

3 MR. WALTER: Yes, ma'am. No problem.

4 MS. DAVIS: And I just want to remind the
5 applicant -- need them to confirm that the special
6 education classroom sizes are not included in that.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Are you --

8 MR. HARRIS: Oh, go ahead.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes.

10 MR. WALTER: Since I'm already talking about
11 waivers, I'll go ahead on behalf of Friendship and
12 confirm that Friendship realizes that special
13 education class sizes are not included in that waiver
14 and will comply with all requirements as to special
15 education sizes.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Davis, it seems
17 like all the rest were pretty much straightforward
18 and had already been taken care of?

19 MS. DAVIS: Well, there were several waivers
20 that actually came in after the initial review.
21 Everything after that had come in after the review,
22 so there are questions on the ALE and Gifted and
23 Talented.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So I need to stop
25 for just a minute and know if I'm looking at the

1 correct document, because we're looking at the legal
2 review. So when you say there were several that came
3 in after, where should we be looking?

4 MS. DAVIS: It's on the legal review. Just
5 normally when we put together the legal reviews we
6 send it back to the applicant and they get an
7 opportunity to respond. It was during their response
8 to our initial review that they asked for additional
9 waivers, so we did not go back to the applicant again
10 for a response.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

12 MS. DAVIS: So those are the issues that I still
13 have remaining.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And that would be
15 on the ALE and Gifted and Talented?

16 MS. DAVIS: Under this section they asked for a
17 waiver of 6-42-101 et seq. They only need 6-42-109
18 in order to effectuate that; not the entire section.
19 And then also on 6-20-2208 I believe there's a typo
20 there and I just need them to confirm that what
21 they're really asking for is 6-20-2208(c)(6).

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Are there any
23 questions there or is that acceptable to the
24 applicant?

25 MR. WALTER: That's acceptable. And what Mr.

1 Harris did -- and I don't know if it's been
2 transmitted to you -- is early Monday he forwarded
3 some additional information to Ms. Boyd, an updated
4 copy of the presentation, which you saw this morning
5 -- earlier this morning, and also information that
6 hopefully resolved the unresolved issues noted by the
7 Department, both within the main part of the
8 application and the areas under the waivers that Ms.
9 Davis mentioned.

10 So long story short on the waivers, yes, we
11 agree to amend the waiver request to just 6-42-109
12 and to correct the incorrect reference from 6-20-
13 2208(I) (6) to 6-20-2208(c) (6).

14 We also made one other comment as to the
15 personnel policies, wishing to add a request for a
16 waiver of 6-17-208 which concerns grievance
17 procedures.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So it sounds like they
19 have reviewed the personnel policies waiver. And was
20 there anything else you needed them to consider?

21 MS. DAVIS: Well, I didn't get their update, so
22 that's why I did not have that information already.
23 The only thing I would suggest on the personnel
24 policies to make it cleaner is they did not ask for
25 anything regarding the classified personnel policies.

1 I don't know if that's something they need. But also
2 where they have 6-17-201, they have 203, 205, and
3 they're adding 208, I would just ask for 201 et seq.
4 to cover that entire section just to make it a little
5 bit cleaner.

6 MR. WALTER: And on behalf of Friendship we'll
7 agree to the change in the 6-17-201 et seq. section.
8 And if we may amend at this time our request to
9 include the classified personnel policy waiver, as
10 Ms. Davis mentioned.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any questions?

12 MS. DAVIS: I don't have any.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any remaining
14 issues then?

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

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Okay. So,
17 Panel, at this time we are going to consider the
18 application separately for the process of making a
19 motion or approving, denying or taking the matters
20 under advisement.

21 MOTION & VOTE RE: FRIENDSHIP ASPIRE ACADEMY/LITTLE ROCK

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So at this time let's
23 start with the -- let me look and see which one was
24 listed first in the agenda. Okay. So, item number 2
25 on the agenda was Friendship Aspire Academy at Little

1 Rock. So at this time I will accept a motion for the
2 Friendship Aspire Academy at Little Rock.

3 MS. NEWTON: Madam Chair, I move approval.

4 MR. WILSON: I second.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and
6 a second to approve this application.

7 All in favor say "aye."

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

10 Okay. Congratulations. Your application for
11 Friendship Aspire Academy at Little Rock has been
12 approved.

13 And we will -- should we go ahead and do our
14 voting sheets on this first before we move on?

15 Okay. So let's go in and record responses on
16 the voting sheets.

17 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. They
20 have a very thorough application. The organization
21 has a long history of success.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

23 MS. NEWTON: I also voted for the motion. The
24 comprehensive proposal addresses needs, issues and
25 challenges adequately, and experience is definitely a

1 plus.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

3 DR. OWOH: I voted for. Extensive -- because of
4 the extensive educational plan and the fact that
5 there are contingency plans to meet the needs of
6 potential students, so --

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Turner.

8 MS. TURNER: I voted for the application. It is
9 a thorough application. I do have concerns of public
10 support and student enrollment, so perhaps you can do
11 more --

12 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

13 MS. TURNER: -- outreach as you indicated you
14 would do.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

16 DR. WILLIAMS: I voted for the motion.
17 Comprehensive education plan, excellent experience,
18 provides an excellent educational option. I just
19 encourage more community outreach. And as a sidebar
20 note, when we were talking about Teach for America,
21 there's another program here in Arkansas that's
22 producing teachers through an alternative program
23 called Arkansas Teacher Corp. It just might be
24 something that you all look at for teachers.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Mr. Wilson.

1 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. And I
2 expressed that the applicant has a good and
3 impressive track record. And I'm particularly
4 interested in its willingness to collaborate with
5 Little Rock School District --

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

7 MR. WILSON: -- where appropriate.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Panel.

9 MOTION & VOTE RE: FRIENDSHIP ASPIRE ACADEMY/PINE BLUFF

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And so now let's go on to
11 the decision-making for Action Item 3, which is for
12 the Friendship Aspire Academy at Pine Bluff. So at
13 this time I would accept a motion.

14 DR. OWOH: Madam Chair, I move that we approve
15 the application for Friendship Aspire Academy at Pine
16 Bluff.

17 MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. So I have a
19 motion to approve the Friendship Aspire Academy at
20 Pine Bluff, and a second.

21 All in favor say "aye."

22 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

24 Okay. Congratulations.

25 MR. HARRIS: Oh, thank you, guys.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: This one has been approved
2 as well. Okay.

3 MR. HARRIS: We're so excited to become a
4 partner in Arkansas.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We're going to go ahead
6 and record those responses, maybe a little bit
7 different feedback. So we'll -- if you'll give us
8 just a minute to do that we'll go on record with our
9 rationale for voting.

10 MR. HARRIS: Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And some of these panel
12 members may be hungry, so they may get this one done
13 a little quicker with copying and pasting, but we'll
14 see.

15 MR. HARRIS: Lunch on me.

16 [LAUGHTER]

17 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. Again,
20 they have a very thorough application and the
21 organization has a long history of success.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

23 MS. NEWTON: I voted for. And I noted the
24 comprehensive plan taking into account the specific
25 needs of students and community in the Pine Bluff

1 community.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh.

3 DR. OWOH: I voted for, made the motion for the
4 approval because of the extensive educational plan as
5 well as the contingency plans to make -- to insure
6 the needs of the students are met, so --

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Turner.

8 MS. TURNER: I voted for the application. It is
9 a thorough application. And, once again, I do have
10 concerns for you to reach out to public support and
11 student enrollment.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Again, a comprehensive education
14 plan; excellent experience; provides an excellent
15 educational option. I believe it fills a void there
16 with the other school that's closing in Pine Bluff.
17 And also I would encourage more community outreach.
18 Uh-huh.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Mr. Wilson.

20 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. Again, the
21 applicant's track record was very impression.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Panel.
23 And we're going to take a break at this time.

24 So congratulations --

25 MR. HARRIS: Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- and we thank you for
2 being here and all the work that you've done in these
3 applications, and best of luck.

4 MR. HARRIS: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So, okay. Okay. We
6 should have lunch in 201A. Do you think 30 minutes?

7 DR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We're going to reconvene
9 at 12:30 for the last two items. They're both
10 amendment requests.

11 (LUNCH BREAK: 12:00-12:41 p.m.)

12 A-4: REQUEST FOR OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
13 OZARK MONTESSORI ACADEMY

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay, everybody. Welcome
15 back after -- for the afternoon session. At this
16 time we'll resume with our agenda and item number 4
17 on the agenda is a hearing for the Request for Open-
18 Enrollment Charter School Amendment, Ozark Montessori
19 Academy. Ms. Perry, you're recognized.

20 MS. PERRY: On October 16, 2014, the Charter
21 Authorizing Panel approved the application for Ozark
22 Montessori Academy. The charter is approved to serve
23 students in grades K through 8 with a maximum
24 enrollment of 280. Representatives of Ozark
25 Montessori Academy are appearing before the Charter

1 Authorizing Panel to request an amendment to the
2 current charter. The presenter today is Dr.
3 Christine Silano.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will all
5 representatives from Ozark Montessori Academy please
6 stand to receive the oath? Okay. Do you swear or
7 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
8 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
9 truth?

10 DR. SILANO: I do.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you. And you are
12 recognized. You have 20 minutes to present your
13 amendment request.

14 DR. SILANO: Good afternoon. At the time of our
15 charter application, our original charter application
16 of 2015-2016, we had stated that we would have an
17 extended calendar of 10 extra days in the school
18 year, a 188 days. And this was not written in our
19 charter application but it was stated to this Panel,
20 so it is my understanding that that is part of our
21 charter at this point. The reason it was I would say
22 informally a part of our charter was because I felt
23 as the founder that our staff and our students needed
24 additional time, additional instructional time to
25 adjust to the Montessori method. We started with 140

1 students our first year and probably less than 5% of
2 those had any Montessori experience. If you're
3 familiar at all with the Montessori curriculum, it is
4 very much student-led, very much hands-on, and there
5 are classroom procedures and processes and a lot of
6 responsibility placed on the children that they
7 cannot learn overnight. It's an extensive amount of
8 time required just to prepare them to function in a
9 Montessori classroom. So my concern in our first
10 years of operation was that all of the time it would
11 take preparing students to function in the classroom
12 would actually take away from the core instruction,
13 so I added those 10 extra days to the calendar, and
14 our stakeholders understood the importance of that.
15 We also had 188 days last year as well.

16 However, this extended calendar became
17 problematic in some ways. For one, we have -- our
18 teachers have summer-long trainings; not every
19 summer, but during their certification process they
20 may be out of state for one or two summers [sic]
21 eight weeks at a time. This means that they leave
22 the first week in June and get back into the state
23 the first week in August. So this was very difficult
24 for our staff to come into an extended calendar when
25 they were also training all summer. It was also

1 problematic because there was not a lot of -- there
2 was a lot of confusion with the parents as far as not
3 bringing their kids to school. As much as we tried
4 to communicate through newsletters and text messages
5 and every way we could think of, emails, there was
6 still a number of families who brought their kids to
7 school when the other district started. So getting
8 them to come a week early maybe was difficult. At
9 the end of the year, when the other districts were
10 getting out of school there were many of our families
11 just went ahead and pulled their kids. And so I
12 didn't feel a lot of staff and parent support.

13 I do think there was a real value to having that
14 extended calendar the first two years; however, our
15 request was to change it for this year.

16 I do need to apologize to this Panel; I
17 should've been here in the spring to do this. As I
18 said, because it wasn't formally written into my
19 charter I didn't realize I would need permission.
20 But I did come across a rule somewhere along the way
21 that said if there's a change, a significant change
22 in instructional time that that would have to be
23 approved by the Panel. And so our families have not
24 received an official academic calendar yet. We have
25 an unofficial calendar, which you see attached on the

1 second page of the handout, that we're going by
2 internally. And we did give the parents a list of
3 important dates for the first two months of school,
4 but we have not released this calendar pending the
5 approval of this Panel.

6 I'm open for questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Dr.
8 Silano.

9 Ms. Davis, is there anyone signed up in
10 opposition?

11 MS. DAVIS: (shaking head from side to side.)

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No. Okay.

13 And you would have an additional five minutes,
14 but if you're ready for questions we can go ahead and
15 do that.

16 DR. SILANO: I'm ready.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

18 DR. SILANO: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Thank you.

20 So, Panel, we'll start with questions. Dr.
21 Owoh, do you want to begin?

22 DR. OWOH: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. A
23 quick question about -- I guess the start of school,
24 so you've already started school?

25 DR. SILANO: Yes, sir.

1 DR. OWOH: So which schedule, school day
2 schedule and calendar are you currently working
3 under?

4 DR. SILANO: We went ahead and started with this
5 regular school day, which would coincide with the
6 other districts, with the understanding on our board
7 and our staff, and even our families, that if this
8 panel did not approve the change of calendar we would
9 have to add days back into the calendar.

10 DR. OWOH: Okay. And then I noticed on your
11 rationale about the PLC meetings, can you kind of
12 share how your PLCs operate?

13 DR. SILANO: Yes. Well, that is part of the
14 second request more.

15 DR. OWOH: Okay.

16 DR. SILANO: Yeah. So this is just the -- do
17 you want me to go ahead and present both at the same
18 time? I just thought I'd take questions on the first
19 item first. I'm sorry.

20 DR. OWOH: That's fine.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes. Hold on for just a
22 moment.

23 Yeah. If you want to go ahead -- so I'm just
24 sitting here looking, you have two requests here --

25 DR. SILANO: Right.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- for us. I mean, I'm --
2 let her go ahead and we can go ahead and address both
3 of those. Yes.

4 DR. SILANO: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes, if that's okay with
6 the Panel.

7 DR. SILANO: Yes. All right. Our second
8 request is to reduce our extended school day. Again,
9 there has been a lack of support from parents and
10 staff. Now in my mind, once again, I was very much
11 concerned that when I wrote the charter that the
12 Montessori method be implemented with fidelity. And
13 one of the key components of a Montessori classroom
14 is a three-hour uninterrupted work cycle. And so my
15 big concern was my Montessori teachers, many of them
16 coming from private schools, many of them going to
17 trainings that are focused on private schools, this
18 new element of accountability, test preparation,
19 Common Core. I was concerned that by adding that
20 into the mix with our core instruction that it would
21 take away from the Montessori method, and so I
22 recommended to our stakeholders that we have an
23 extended day. And, again, it was not written into
24 the charter but it was something that I as the
25 founder felt was an important component, with my

1 background in public schools that I knew this would
2 be a big part of what we needed to do was to prepare
3 our students for Common Core, college and career
4 readiness. And so we did have the extended day. We
5 did incorporate some more traditional instructional
6 methods because the Montessori method is a three-year
7 instructional cycle. So what you see in the Common
8 Core for grade 4, grade 5, grade 6 -- some of our
9 students might not receive that instruction until the
10 third year of the rotation. But of course, as we
11 know, with accountability and the standards such as
12 they are we needed to prepare those students with
13 additional instruction to what they were getting in
14 the Montessori instructional cycle. And so that's
15 why I came upon the extended day.

16 I had also read some of the research about
17 students' different demographics benefitting from an
18 extended day, and so that was part of my thinking as
19 well. However, now being in our third year we have
20 incorporated -- through the teachers' hard work
21 they've incorporated the Common Core standards.
22 There's been a lot of curriculum alignment work done;
23 we've incorporated any computer skills that the
24 students require into our Montessori work cycle.
25 "Work cycle" is what we call our three-hour block

1 where it's all integrated learning and they work for
2 three hours straight. So there are computers in the
3 classroom that the students can use to prepare for
4 standardized testing.

5 So, however -- and there were complaints. I
6 have to say there were complaints, lack of support
7 from parents and some staff in regards to what was
8 perceived to be a long day, a tiresome day. And so
9 there was that as well. But I was inspired by
10 another school -- or other schools who have used
11 tutoring very successfully and I saw this as an
12 opportunity that we could make everybody happy,
13 myself included, help student achievement by, yes,
14 shortening our day to a regular day for the students,
15 but keeping the longer day for the teachers,
16 incorporated a tutoring program that is school-wide.
17 And so all of our teachers would, as you see on the
18 third page -- and I just gave you an example of two
19 different teacher schedules from elementary, and you
20 see at the end of the day, when the students leave at
21 3:00, our teachers are assigned to two tutoring days
22 each week where they'll work with the students who
23 really need the extra attention the most. And so we
24 think this will be a great supplement to the student
25 services we already offer in ESL, in SPED, in 504, in

1 dyslexia intervention, et cetera, et cetera. This
2 tutoring will just be one more opportunity to help
3 students get on track and -- but it also allows our
4 staff to meet in those PLCs. Now we've been doing
5 PLCs all along; however, another component of
6 Montessori is that every classroom has a full-time
7 assistant. Because all of the instruction is either
8 one-on-one or in small groups, you always need two
9 adults in the classroom. So under our old model all
10 of the planning periods were kind of scattered all
11 around and so our teachers weren't able to often meet
12 with their assistants, their paraprofessionals, to work on
13 lesson planning. So we just see this model as a way
14 for the whole staff to get engaged in PLC, not just
15 the lead teachers, and to allow everyone to have
16 regular staff meetings within the school day. And
17 then give our students who are in need of
18 remediation, as many students as possible -- right
19 now we have on our tutoring list probably 60
20 students. We want to run 60 at a time through the
21 tutoring program.

22 And that's the end of that presentation. I'm
23 open for questions.

24 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Panel Member Mike
25 Wilson left the meeting.)

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Do you -- did you
2 want to follow-up with yours and then we'll let Dr.
3 Hernandez?

4 DR. OWOH: Thank you. So which -- with your PLC
5 -- in reference to your PLC model, is there a certain
6 model that you utilize? And based on your current
7 schedule that you presented, PLCs only take place
8 once a week. Is that correct? So I guess that's two
9 questions for you.

10 DR. SILANO: Well, I'm terrible with names and
11 I've been to PLC trainings several times, so you
12 would think I would know the names of the authors.
13 But I've been to the PLC trainings that most public
14 school districts, both through Bentonville and
15 Springdale when I worked in those districts. My
16 staff -- I've not -- we've not been able to get the
17 training for them because we have so many other
18 trainings that we need to do. But we do -- it is a
19 data-driven instruction model where teachers look at
20 data together; they pull apart the data; they look at
21 where, you know, the needs are. And we've had our
22 staff -- because our instructional method is, you
23 know, quite, you know, nontraditional they actually
24 create lessons that correspond to whatever the skills
25 are needed by the students. So we have level PLCs.

1 Our levels are primary, which is actually ages 3 to 6
2 -- we partner with preschool; lower elementary,
3 grades 1, 2 and 3 -- those teachers meet in a PLC;
4 grades 4, 5 and 6 meet in PLC; and grades 7 and 8.
5 So we have those four different levels going on. We
6 also have a leadership PLC which is a representative
7 from each level meeting with the administration twice
8 monthly. And then we have administrative PLC. So
9 everyone is focused on data-driven instruction.

10 And what was the -- did you have another
11 question? Did I hit --

12 DR. OWOH: You did.

13 DR. SILANO: Okay. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: Good afternoon. I had a
16 question about the -- I know I've seen your request
17 and some of the thoughts behind it. I'm curious
18 about the thought process in trying to limit some of
19 this time and interaction with kids based on looking
20 at some -- the recent test scores that accompanied
21 with the application. It seemed that performance was
22 well behind the state in a lot of areas. And so just
23 help me think through the logic of trying to take
24 opportunities maybe away from kids, where you have
25 that. And then maybe you've shown some gains this

1 year, in past assessment data, but just help me with
2 a little bit of that.

3 DR. SILANO: Sure. Absolutely. Yes, and we did
4 show some gains this year across-the-board. So
5 here's the thinking: for one thing, it's a struggle
6 for Montessorians because, as I said, it's a three-
7 year curriculum cycle and most of the instruction is
8 hands-on, and so it is conceptual understandings as
9 opposed to abstract on-paper. For example, in math,
10 paper -- pencil and paper math we don't even
11 introduce until the 3rd grade for the most part. Now
12 we have -- again, in concession to state standardized
13 testing we have had to supplement our instruction
14 with some traditional instruction to provide that
15 abstract learning, but this is a problem across the
16 country. Research -- and I'm talking about
17 Montessori public schools across the country --
18 because, you know, the research shows that, yes, our
19 students, our Montessori students will perform lower
20 on standardized testing in the younger years. Our
21 students are doing algebraic concepts, geometry
22 concepts, multiplying, dividing, fractions, long
23 division with, you know, ten different digits, all
24 hands-on using instructional materials. But asking
25 them to do those same things on paper is something

1 else. So, but the research shows that by the time
2 they hit the middle grades they actually outperform
3 traditional students. And so it's a sales process to
4 sell to parents and to educators like your-self to
5 understand how our program works. Now we know we
6 have a five-year charter, so waiting six years for
7 kids to show the benefits of Montessori is not
8 realistic, it's not pragmatic in our situation. But
9 we believe that this model will actually help us with
10 our achievement scores in the sense that we can
11 target -- during this tutoring time we can target
12 those students who are not performing at grade level.
13 Because, as we all know as educators, by the end of
14 the day students are tired; it's not the best
15 learning time if they're in big groups. But by
16 allowing those students who are on target to head
17 home and just then focusing, bearing down on the
18 students who need it most for that extra tutoring
19 time we think will actually be more beneficial to
20 students than keeping everyone together after 3:00.

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: I know you're planning on
22 implementing this schedule this year. As far as the
23 personnel costs and things like that, is there also
24 an intention to reduce contracts with your folks for
25 not offering the extended day or extended time?

1 DR. SILANO: No, sir.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: So contracts will stay the same?

3 DR. SILANO: Right.

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: So this isn't a financial issue
5 for you guys; it's just --

6 DR. SILANO: No, sir.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

8 DR. SILANO: No.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

10 MS. NEWTON: I have a question or comment.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

12 MS. NEWTON: I remember when the application was
13 presented for approval and I heard you mention the
14 overall fidelity of the Montessori method. So it
15 sounds to me like you're getting away from that.
16 While it may not have been in the charter, it was one
17 of the things that you spoke about when you
18 introduced the concept about the extended day. So it
19 seems that as unusual as the Montessori method is and
20 the need for it to be effective and the fidelity
21 includes all the things that you're asking to remove.
22 So it just -- it seems like it's a variation to the
23 point that it takes away from the initial concept of
24 Montessori and how it impacts students and how
25 families -- I think they bought into the concept, and

1 I remember that. That was your statement that they
2 bought into the concept --

3 DR. SILANO: Uh-huh.

4 MS. NEWTON: -- whole and, you know, not in
5 part. So it bothers me about the fidelity of it
6 being Montessori if in fact it's no longer that
7 completely. So that would be my concern. I
8 understand, you know, the challenges that you face,
9 but at the same time the extended day and the
10 extended year were much a part of what was I guess
11 attractive enough that it was approved. So I don't
12 know if there's an answer to that question; I don't
13 even know if that's a question.

14 DR. SILANO: All right. I can address that too.
15 Yes. Yeah, I understand and I thought I might hear a
16 question like that, so I do have a response to that.
17 Well, first of all, you know, this request in part is
18 driven by staff request and I consider my staff to be
19 the Montessori experts. I haven't done that 16-week
20 training myself. I went to three weeks of
21 administrative training and I had to end it due to
22 other, you know, school responsibilities; I didn't
23 make it the whole six weeks. But I looked to my
24 staff and we now have a Montessorian principal as
25 well who is our curriculum director. And one of the

1 probably primary components of Montessori -- and I
2 don't know if I stressed that enough initially -- is
3 honoring the whole child. And so a big part of our
4 curriculum is, you know, back to Maslow's Hierarchy
5 of Needs; you know, the children's physical needs,
6 their emotional needs, and that kind of thing. And
7 so it is the consensus of my experts, my Montessori
8 staff, that the day is too long for the children and
9 that to just push them in the name of adding more
10 instruction was not furthering -- keeping the child
11 at the center. So that's a big part of it.

12 The other aspect, as I addressed with I think
13 Mr. Hernandez, is that over time our staff has been
14 working together in PLCs, in curriculum alignment
15 work. We have taken some of these standards, along
16 with the standards that our students are required to
17 learn, and incorporated them using Montessori
18 materials. So our teachers have actually created
19 lessons. Part of what Montessori teachers do when
20 they go to their trainings is they learn to create
21 their own lessons. Once they understand how the
22 Montessori lesson -- of course, we have our
23 traditional ones that were designed by Marie
24 Montessori. But, you know, for example, economics is
25 not really stressed in the Montessori method the way

1 it is now in standards. And so our teachers have
2 created hands-on lessons that address the economics,
3 whereas in the initial year we maybe would've used
4 worksheets or whatever and brought in extra things.
5 But over time these lessons take time to build, and
6 so our teachers feel that they've built them.

7 The other -- there's also the aspect of
8 computers. Obviously, computers were not around
9 during Dr. Montessori's time period but the computer
10 skills are so vital to our students' college and
11 career success. We have in Montessori -- well, you
12 have it in the ADE standards as well -- but practical
13 living skills. That is a huge part of the core
14 instruction for Montessori is that students learn
15 skills that are going to help them to be successful
16 as adults. And so we consider computer skills as
17 part of that practical living, and so computers are a
18 part of the classroom and we use a, you know,
19 international technology standards aligned curriculum
20 that's in the Montessori classroom during the work
21 cycle. So as students are free to choose -- you know
22 -- they create their own schedules starting in 1st
23 grade with the teachers' guidance, and they know that
24 they need to spend a few hours a week on that
25 computer. And so we believe that we're being -- you

1 know, we have been loyal to the Montessori method in
2 the ways that we've incorporated these needs into the
3 regular work cycle. So that's the thinking behind
4 that. I hope that answers your question.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Other questions?

6 And, Dr. Silano, I think probably part of this
7 is the timing of the request and being a request not
8 only to amend your school year calendar but also your
9 school day calendar. So, you know, when you have a
10 lot of that and trying to look at it and think
11 through what was the original application, what was
12 your --

13 DR. SILANO: Sure.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You know, and so I think
15 just that's causing some pause here from some of the
16 panel members.

17 DR. SILANO: Absolutely.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: In the daily schedule,
19 when you look -- when you -- the work cycle, could
20 you remind us what the -- when the schedule shows
21 work cycle, what does that mean?

22 DR. SILANO: So that's the core curriculum and
23 that's an uninterrupted three-hour block. So in the
24 Montessori method what she found, what she taught is
25 that children should not be interrupted. We believe

1 that our students in traditional education get
2 interrupted by bells and schedules constantly
3 throughout the day and that interrupts the natural
4 learning cycle. And so by giving them that three
5 hours of uninterrupted time children -- if a child
6 wants to work on math, they're very engaged in math
7 and they want to work on their math lesson for two or
8 three hours, the teachers are trained not to
9 interrupt that child during that work cycle. If the
10 child needs assistance, they can ask for assistance.
11 But once they've been trained in how to do a lesson
12 the teacher and the assistant teacher may peak over
13 their shoulder occasionally to make sure that they're
14 doing the lesson correctly, but the lessons are self-
15 correcting. So if a child -- now almost like a
16 puzzle; you can tell when the pieces don't fit. And
17 so during that three hours children can choose to
18 work on some of their language and social studies. A
19 lot of that is integrated. A lot of their math and
20 sciences are integrated. They have research that
21 they can do. And so at the beginning of the week or
22 sometime during the week the child puts together
23 their own schedule of, you know, what they know they
24 need to work on that week and then whenever they
25 finish a lesson they go to the teacher, the teacher

1 checks it off. But it's amazing to watch children;
2 they're almost like little college students at the
3 library working on all their lessons during that
4 time. And if a child, you know, falls behind in a
5 certain area then the teacher, of course, can
6 intervene and guide them into what area they need to
7 be working on.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And on the schedule
9 -- so, on the schedule you do have six hours of
10 instructional time planned.

11 DR. SILANO: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Is that correct?

13 DR. SILANO: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. In this schedule
15 here --

16 DR. SILANO: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- it will be six hours of
18 instructional time. And so then the last hour of the
19 day is either tutoring taking place two days a week,
20 and then the other three days are the adult
21 interactions?

22 DR. SILANO: Right.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So -- and of that would
24 you tell us what the plan day, what that would
25 entail?

1 DR. SILANO: That's additional planning time to
2 insure that the teachers get their state required
3 planning time. So that's for lesson planning,
4 building lessons, grading papers, that kind of thing.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And going back to
6 the salary, your teachers would just be working --
7 having the 178 student contact days and the two days
8 for parent-teacher conferences then. Is that
9 correct?

10 DR. SILANO: Right.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And then additional
12 professional development?

13 DR. SILANO: Yes. So the teacher's contract is
14 188 days.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: One eighty-eight?

16 DR. SILANO: I believe so. Ten days more than
17 the students.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Are there parent-
19 teacher -- and that may be something as part of the
20 charter. Was that waived or do they still do the two
21 required parent-teacher conference days? Okay.

22 DR. SILANO: Yeah. We do -- we do parent-
23 teacher conferences.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I'm just trying to
25 determine what -- if this is granted, what does the

1 instructional day look like and how many days during
2 the instructional year would teachers basically be
3 working. What would -- and do you do a contract with
4 them? Is that --

5 DR. SILANO: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

7 DR. SILANO: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So how many days would be
9 on their contract?

10 DR. SILANO: One hundred and eighty-eight. But
11 that would include parent conference time as well.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So is the parent
13 conference time done outside of the student contact
14 days?

15 DR. SILANO: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Because typically
17 teachers are under a 190-day contract.

18 DR. SILANO: Oh, is that right?

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: In terms of state required
20 -- state requirement. So if Ms. Davis can check that
21 --

22 DR. SILANO: Okay. I was not aware of that, but
23 we can adjust that if we need to.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Panel Members, other
25 thoughts or discussion?

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Just a thought. I was sitting
2 here reflecting a little bit. In October of last
3 year I was actually in Denver as part of a group
4 visiting a Montessori school and some of these issues
5 are very similar, especially when it goes to the
6 length of the day. Matter of fact, some of the
7 younger kids at that site were actually even -- were
8 picked up around noon and sometimes a little bit --
9 the 1:00 or 2:00 timeframe for the younger kids. So
10 I think what you're -- I'm not surprised that you've
11 had to come back, especially -- my kids went to
12 school in the Springdale School District and it's --
13 other than the School of Innovation that they've come
14 up with, which is really a great school there, it's
15 kind of a traditional model. And I could see where
16 the parents are going to just kind of align with what
17 they've been used to.

18 DR. SILANO: Yes. And we have several families
19 who still have children in the regular school
20 districts and so, you know, it was a hardship for
21 them to keep their kids at our school for longer
22 periods.

23 CHIARPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Davis, do you have an
24 answer?

25 MS. DAVIS: They do not have that waiver.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So just making sure
2 that I'm not saying something incorrect, how many
3 days if -- how many days should they -- if they were
4 to be granted this and not have their additional
5 days, they would have 178 days of student contact
6 days, is what they're requesting. You're still
7 wanting the 10 days for professional development;
8 you're not waiving that. Correct?

9 DR. SILANO: Correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But also two days of
11 parent-teacher conferences would need to be there;
12 correct?

13 DR. SILANO: So 190. We can correct that.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I'm asking just to
15 make sure because if -- I'm trying to make sure how
16 many days we're asking for, what are we --

17 DR. SILANO: So 178 student days --

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Walter had a question,
19 quizzed look on his face.

20 DR. SILANO: Well, if I'm understanding right,
21 178 student days, 10 professional development days,
22 and two teacher conference days.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: That is what a traditional
24 school follows --

25 DR. SILANO: Okay.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- unless there is a
2 waiver from anything else.

3 DR. SILANO: Well, we've absolutely been doing
4 that and then some, but we can get that on paper.
5 We're having to make some corrections to some of our
6 contracts anyway, so we can fix that.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So we would be in
8 agreement that they would basically be contracting
9 teachers for 190 days, as outlined?

10 DR. SILANO: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Okay. Any
12 additional questions from the Panel? Comments?

13 Yes.

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: This isn't really a question;
15 it's just maybe a comment. I am concerned about the
16 reducing contact with students and why -- and this is
17 specifically -- I know you mentioned that you've made
18 some gains this year. But just judging from the area
19 from which the charter is located and looking at the
20 current -- this most recent assessment, unless I'm
21 off in calculations I'm seeing about a -- over the
22 grade levels about -- almost a 30% difference below
23 the state average in math specifically.

24 DR. SILANO: Yes.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so, you know, that gives me

1 a lot of concern. And not to say that we're -- I
2 know we're not here to talk about that, but you do
3 have a timeline coming up with the renewal of this
4 charter.

5 DR. SILANO: Yes.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so as you're making this
7 decision to reduce contact time, you know, that's
8 going to be something when you do come back for
9 renewal that -- you know -- unless there's some good
10 improvement that may be problematic for you. So I
11 just want to state that.

12 DR. SILANO: Yeah. Absolutely. Math is our --
13 last year we did a big focus on literacy and I think
14 we saw some gains from that. This year we're going
15 to be doubling down on math. And, again, I don't
16 really see this as a reduction in contact time for
17 the students who need the extra help with the
18 tutoring program. All of our teachers are aware that
19 they're working till 4:00 every day and part of that
20 goal is to increase student achievement. So we are
21 working on curriculum for that. We've hired a half-
22 time instructional facilitator to help with that. I
23 believe with the PLCs our data-driven instruction is
24 going to improve with that. So this is all part of a
25 big plan to increase student achievement.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any additional
2 comments or questions?

3 Okay. Ms. Davis, are there any remaining issues
4 that we need to consider?

5 MS. DAVIS: No.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So, Panel, at this
7 time we can make a decision either to approve their
8 amendment request, to deny their request, or to take
9 the matter under advisement until a later time. So,
10 I will entertain a motion.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: I move that we accept their
12 amendment request.

13 DR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I have a motion and a
15 second.

16 All those in favor say "aye."

17 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Opposed?

19 DR. OWOH: Nay.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And we have one
21 opposed. Yet, the motion does pass though to approve
22 the amendment request.

23 So, Panel Members, please take a minute to
24 record your responses. And, Dr. Silano, we'll have
25 some feedback for you.

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(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez.

DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. I approved it based on timing and actions already taken by the school, but I have strong reservations about the academic impact on students.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

MS. NEWTON: I approved it but also have -- felt the need to allow time for evaluation of the impact on the students.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

DR. OWOH: I voted against it because I feel like that the very essence of charter schools are to create or develop innovative approaches to meet the needs of students. And when you take those innovative approaches away you are left with traditional methods and I think that that's not the direction to go, so --

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Turner.

MS. TURNER: I voted for the motion to allow the request, but I have concerns on the impact on student achievement.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

DR. WILLIAMS: Although there's concern around student achievement, the concern is not out of line

1 with the Montessori model given the length of time
2 this school has been in existence. Given the
3 rationale, the request to reduce extended calendar to
4 traditional calendar and to reduce extended day to
5 traditional day makes sense.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And, Dr. Silano, I
7 would encourage you to stay in close communication
8 with the Department any time there are questions that
9 come up because these negotiations really are
10 important and we have to make sure that, you know, we
11 did follow-through with everything. So we do want to
12 really watch, you know, any changes that we approve
13 and how they impact student achievement. So I do
14 know at renewal time we will want to revisit the
15 whole conversation. So just please stay engaged with
16 us and if you need any information, have any doubts
17 or questions, please, please let us know. Okay?

18 DR. SILANO: Absolutely. Thank you so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

20 And Ms. Boyd.

21 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want
22 to make sure that Dr. Silano is aware that she should
23 not distribute this new schedule and plan to parents
24 until it has been approved by the State Board.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Definitely. Very good

1 observation. Thank you.

2 Okay. Is everybody okay to move on to the last
3 item on our agenda today?

4 A-5: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT:
5 SPRINGDALE SCHOOL OF INNOVATION, SPRINGDALE, AR

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So we are now ready
7 for Action Agenda 5, the Request for the District
8 Conversion Charter School Amendment for Springdale
9 School of Innovation in Springdale. Ms. McLaughlin,
10 you are recognized.

11 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good
12 afternoon. On December 10, 2015, the State Board of
13 Education approved the district conversion charter
14 application for Springdale School of Innovation, in
15 Springdale. On May 25, 2016, the State Board
16 approved the charter's request to partner with an
17 outside provider. The charter is approved to serve
18 students in grades K-12 with a maximum enrollment of
19 2,000 students. Representatives of Springdale School
20 of Innovation are appearing before the Panel to
21 request amendments to the current charter. The
22 school presenters here today are Dr. Megan Slocum,
23 Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and
24 Instruction, and Kendra Clay, Student, Personnel and
25 Legal Services Director.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

2 DR. SLOCUM: Hello.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Good afternoon.

4 DR. SLOCUM: Good afternoon.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. So we will
6 need you to be sworn in -- okay -- and if there's
7 anyone here speaking in opposition. Do you swear or
8 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
9 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
10 truth?

11 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And
13 will you present both of your requests at the same
14 time?

15 DR. SLOCUM: If that's good with you, Madam
16 Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. I think that
18 would be best. Thank you. So, 20 minutes.

19 DR. SLOCUM: And I also have Ms. Kendra Clay
20 here with me, who is our Staff Attorney who did not
21 have to be sworn in because she operates under that
22 oath as well. Thanks, Madam Chair.

23 So we're going to talk to you about the School
24 of Innovation and two changes that we're proposing to
25 the School of Innovation that, frankly, have been

1 driven by parent requests and parent demand, and then
2 some changes in terms of community changes that have
3 happened.

4 And so I want to just start with a video, if we
5 can, Ms. Friedman, just to give you an idea of what
6 the School of Innovation is about.

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

9 DR. SLOCUM: And so the things that we're
10 talking about making changes on are not necessarily
11 the application in how we're doing the curriculum
12 instruction model in that school, but primarily we
13 were pushed by parents and community members to
14 consider adding students at a younger age. And so in
15 our initial application we had an on-boarding process
16 because we wanted to do this process with fidelity
17 and we wanted to take our time in doing the process
18 of on-boarding new students into the model. So we
19 had a really structured plan and process. And what
20 we heard back from parents is, "Well, we want our
21 kids to be able to go there also." And so that
22 conversation came through multiple conversations with
23 business, community leaders, and parents who had
24 students who were already in the system and who had
25 students that were approaching that particular age.

1 So our solution to that was to look at adding 7th
2 grade. And at the time of the year that that
3 happened Charter Panel meetings were ending at that
4 time, and so we approached the State Board of
5 Education for a piece of Duck tape, if you will, to
6 get us through to the point where we could get to the
7 part of appearing before the Authorizing Panel, which
8 is what we're doing here today.

9 So we're ultimately asking for two different
10 things, and Ms. Clay is going to talk with you about
11 that in more depth. And one of those things includes
12 a name change. And so as the school has continued to
13 develop and unfold and become, you know, kind of a
14 life of its own, we were approached and had
15 conversations with Tyson Corporation. And pictured
16 here is Mr. John Tyson and his brother, who passed
17 away, Don. He wanted to name the school after him
18 and asked if that would be something that we could --
19 would consider. And so on February 9, 2017 we were
20 pleased to have all of the executive members of the
21 Tyson board, along with the Governor who joined us,
22 to help dedicate the building and officially name it
23 the Don Tyson School of Innovation.

24 And so I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Clay and
25 she's going to talk with you about grading structure.

1 MS. CLAY: Good afternoon. I'm Kendra Clay; I'm
2 the director of Student and Legal Services for the
3 Springdale School District. It's good to see a lot
4 of familiar faces here today. On paper this request
5 may seem a bit odd because we did come in June and
6 ask the State Board for an Act 1240 waiver to add 7th
7 grade to the School of Innovation this year. What we
8 wanted to do, and in talking with ADE staff were
9 encouraged to do, is to clean up the charter on the
10 charter end so that we wouldn't have a waiver over
11 here that affected the charter and then our charter
12 that had a different set of waivers.

13 So that's why we're here today is to effectively
14 remove the waiver that the State Board granted us.
15 We told them that we would allow that waiver to
16 sunset, in the event that you all approve that. The
17 request is actually for K-12 expansion. You'll see
18 on the next slide that in our 2015 application the
19 Charter Panel already approved going to K-12, but in
20 that application you're required to say what that
21 expansion will look like. You'll see the proposed
22 timeline there. At this point we would like the
23 flexibility from you all to say, "Okay, you're
24 approved K-12; you listen to your staff, you listen
25 to your community, you make the decision at what

1 point that expansion takes place, rather than
2 following this timeline." So the programming has
3 already been approved. It's just an acceleration
4 basically of the timeline -- and not even that; you
5 know, at this point there are not plans to put a
6 kindergarten at the School of Innovation, but it
7 allows the district that flexibility to -- when we
8 hear that that's needed, we can look at that and we
9 can proceed with that without having to come to you
10 and to the State Board and go through that process.

11 DR. SLOCUM: So one of the things that we did is
12 after we -- after hearing the feedback we wanted to
13 have some meetings with parents. We wanted to hear
14 directly from them in a more organized fashion, if we
15 were to move forward with this, what would their
16 level of interest be. And so we had them fill out an
17 interest survey to say, "Yes, I'd like for my child
18 to either -- either they're an existing student in
19 our district," meaning they're going to one of our 31
20 schools and they'd like to opt to be transferred over
21 to this school, "or they're a student outside of our
22 district." So we held two parent meetings -- one was
23 at the beginning of June and one was at the end of
24 June -- to just say what's your -- who would like to
25 come. And so we had 130 parents attend the meetings

1 and then we ended up with having 70 students in 7th
2 grade who were interested in signing up to actually
3 begin this academic year. And so we currently have
4 -- based on the approval that we received from the
5 State Board of Education we have 7th graders who
6 started on Monday at the School of Innovation. And,
7 you know, we're just beginning that process, so it's
8 really exciting.

9 The other thing that we wanted to show you is a
10 video. One of the things that we really try to do in
11 messaging in our district is to talk about the
12 process of the communication between teachers and
13 students and I think that this video just really
14 captures what the mantra and learning is all about in
15 Springdale, which is All Means All.

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

18 DR. SLOCUM: And you can see after it was over
19 they were like, "You didn't tell us that we were
20 doing this." So obviously the teachers didn't know
21 that that was going to happen. But it captures the
22 moment. I think it captures the point in time of
23 what the mantra is and the mission is in Springdale,
24 which is All Means All. And Dr. Rollins' favorite
25 saying is, "Whether you're across the ocean or

1 whether you're across the street, we educate you."
2 We don't care where you're from; we want you to be a
3 contributing member of society -- certainly in
4 Springdale, but even abroad.

5 So ultimately what we are asking is for a K-12
6 grade expansion to be able to apply that as
7 necessary. I will assure you that that will not be
8 done with -- in a haphazard way. It will be very
9 thoughtfully planned. Curriculum has to be created
10 every time a grade is expanded or added, and we take
11 our existing Springdale curriculum and we rework it
12 in a very different way for the school. So it's a
13 ton of man hours to be able to do that, and so that's
14 not something that we can just do flying by the seat
15 of our pants. It's a lot of planning and
16 preparation.

17 The immediate plans, as I discussed, would be
18 for 7th grade to be added to the Don Tyson School of
19 Innovation for this academic year. And then also we
20 would like to seek approval to officially change our
21 name on the charter application to the Don Tyson
22 School of Innovation.

23 So unless Ms. Clay has something else, we would
24 like to yield our time back to the Panel.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any -- yeah, hang

1 on just a minute; I'm sorry. We are I think ready
2 for questions. There's no one in opposition, is
3 there? Tons of opposition, after the video I'm sure,
4 so -- yeah.

5 DR. SLOCUM: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I had people telling me
7 not to cry and I'm like, "Too late."

8 DR. SLOCUM: It's a tear-jerker.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes. Okay. So questions
10 from panel members?

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chairman. First
12 of all, complete disclosure: my kids went to
13 Springdale from kindergarten through high school. I
14 think it was Tyson Elementary, Tyson Middle,
15 Southwest Junior High, and then Har-Ber. So we were
16 kind of all over the town there.

17 I think naming it after Don, to me that's just a
18 slam-dunk; it's well deserved, what they've done for
19 Springdale and so-forth. Adding the 7th grade makes
20 perfect sense. I do have a concern about going down
21 to 12, from starting from kindergarten. You know,
22 you said you wouldn't do it haphazardly, and I
23 support that but I don't have a vision for that.
24 Seventh grade is a natural fit. But the elementary
25 school being part of the School of Innovation, that's

1 something I just need to have a better handle on
2 what's the vision. So it's almost like, you know,
3 you want us to approve it but yet, there's nothing
4 there to really support that on what that would look
5 like.

6 DR. SLOCUM: Sure.

7 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

8 DR. SLOCUM: Sure. Maybe I can help speak to
9 that.

10 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

11 DR. SLOCUM: So one of the things is obviously
12 we would never put a five-year old with an 18- or 17-
13 year old. There's got to be some stretch. But you
14 yourself as a parent have experienced the way that we
15 pattern schools and children in the upper grades move
16 every two years. And so there's some question and
17 research and study out there about do -- when you
18 transition to another school, even in the same
19 district, can there be gaps or overlaps that are
20 inadvertently being created. And so the idea is this
21 Phase 1 has been built and constructed, so it's the
22 front-end of the building that you saw in the video,
23 and then it's got a wing that's over here. The
24 second phase is about to begin construction and that
25 is going to be on this side of that wing. And so

1 what it would feel like is you would have a -- back
2 to the days of that one-room schoolhouse idea with --
3 we would have wings that would separate those grade
4 levels if we opted to go down to kindergarten. Right
5 now we feel like that the way that we're approaching
6 it -- we began with 8th grade and then are
7 transitioning up, and then the idea is to now add 7th
8 grade and see what is the model appropriate for. And
9 the model is not for every student and it's not for
10 every grade level. We don't quite know what that
11 looks like. The thing that Ms. Clay mentioned that I
12 think that we're ultimately seeking is, if that
13 proves necessary or if that is what we are hearing
14 from community members or if that is what the second
15 phase actually takes shape -- because how we outfit a
16 kindergarten classroom looks very different than how
17 we outfit a space for a secondary student. All of
18 those questions are still there. But our ultimate
19 goal is to -- if the demand is there and if parents
20 would like their child to have experience with the
21 School of Innovation we want to be able to offer it
22 to them.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Slocum, if I could
24 clarify, you are already approved though. Correct?

25 DR. SLOCUM: Yes. We're already approved for a

1 K-12. What our issue is is the timing that Ms. Clay
2 had -- I don't know if I can go back to that, Ms.
3 Friedman.

4 MS. CLAY: The kindergarten would start in 1920,
5 is what the current approval is for.

6 DR. SLOCUM: Yeah.

7 MS. CLAY: So this request would just be to move
8 that up if it fit within --

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. So I'm sure that the State
10 Board at least -- hopefully the State Board in their
11 wisdom in approving this that you all did give them
12 an idea of what the curriculum would look like?

13 DR. SLOCUM: Yes.

14 DR. WILLIAMS: And so that's really my concern.
15 What would the curriculum look like? I mean, are we
16 talking just taking an elementary school and just
17 putting it on the same campus, you know, which is
18 fine. But are you looking for the School of
19 Innovation -- I know the curriculum at the School of
20 Innovation is really different from Springdale High
21 and Har-Ber High. That's what makes it so unique to
22 me. So when you talk about the elementary school, is
23 it going to be different from the other 19 --
24 approximately 20 elementary schools in Springdale?

25 DR. SLOCUM: Yes. Yes, sir. So it is -- what

1 we do is we've worked for the last four years to
2 build out curriculum in our district. We've built
3 that out in the four main content areas and we've
4 built it out preschool through 12th grade. And so
5 for each time we've implemented and levelized a new
6 grade we've taken the existing curriculum that we
7 have in Springdale that's on the website -- we take
8 that and then we modify it and create projects and
9 experiences from that curriculum. So it's still
10 based on Arkansas state standards; we're still
11 following the guidelines for standards and assurance.
12 But it is coupling that experience in a very
13 different way so that students are able to obtain
14 credits at a different pace and they're able to have
15 different types of experiences. And I could take you
16 -- I don't know if Ms. Friedman would allow me, but I
17 can take you to our website if you'd like to look at
18 our curriculum so you can kind of have a -- get a
19 feel for what it looks like.

20 Ms. Friedman, it's www.Sdale.org.

21 And then in the upper right corner there's
22 curriculum and when you click on that link, which is
23 open to anyone in the state -- we have 65 districts
24 in the state and outside of the state and some
25 outside of the country that use our curriculum. We

1 don't charge anything for it; it's up there for
2 anyone to be able to access and use. When you go to
3 that page it's broken into those curriculum content
4 areas.

5 And then, Ms. Friedman, if you'll just click on
6 Literacy so I can show kind of the breakdown.

7 What we did is we took all of the standards that
8 are on the table, and this was driven by teachers
9 going through those standards and making
10 determinations on what needed to be grouped together.
11 So we took the content standards as a whole and we
12 said from those content standards what are the
13 absolute non-negotiables, what are the big rocks that
14 we must insure that a child knows at this particular
15 level at this particular age. And then from that we
16 deduced smaller areas that we could begin to build
17 lessons back towards. So it's that understanding by
18 design model and it's that backward mapping approach
19 to where you have your end in mind and then you start
20 to reach and move forward toward the goal.

21 And so you could -- you want to try 8th grade
22 first quarter?

23 You can see there's a year-at-a-glance, so we
24 give you a wide breadth view. And then this is
25 broken into several stages, which is on the

1 Understanding by Design research framework that says,
2 you know, what would you like students to be able to
3 do, what would you like them to know, what are those
4 essential questions that have to be included in the
5 lesson, and then we take it forward and do strands.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Quick question.

7 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, sir.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Sorry for interrupting. But for
9 -- my key concern is for elementary. How will the
10 elementary portion of the School of Innovation differ
11 from the current elementary? If there's no
12 difference, that's fine, from the other schools in
13 Springdale. But I was just trying to, you know,
14 determine -- the upper -- the secondary piece is so
15 different; it's great. I mean it's truly a different
16 option. On the elementary side, is it different from
17 the other elementary schools in Springdale?

18 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, sir. It will be taking the
19 same approach like we've taken with secondary, taking
20 the existing standards that we have.

21 And, Ms. Friedman, you can click on Second Grade
22 for that matter. I was just trying to give you an
23 idea of the framework. This framework is consistent,
24 just so you know, over all content areas that
25 Understanding by Design framework is place. What you

1 will see in this type of elementary school would be,
2 again, the compilation of the standards that are
3 there. This has a video that's included that you can
4 -- that teachers can watch in terms of as they're
5 implementing those, and you can scroll on down and
6 you'll see how those break out. But it's a cross-
7 curricular experience. It would look very similar in
8 terms of what we do in secondary where it's not
9 courses in isolation; however, there's a cross-
10 banding that occurs. And so what I was explaining to
11 Madam Chair was if you have those areas that are
12 already built out, you have to go back as teachers in
13 that setting and you have to reframe all of those in
14 a completely different context. So the student is
15 still getting the standard needs met and they're
16 having the understanding, but they're applying it in
17 a very different way, which is what differs it from a
18 traditional elementary or a traditional high school.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. That's what I needed to
20 know. Thank you.

21 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, sir.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No questions? Okay.

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: So in the current building, if
24 y'all were to build out, say, needing to do
25 kindergarten next year or first grade or whatever, is

1 that building in a place where you'd have to do lots
2 of renovation or is it ready to go and expand --

3 DR. SLOCUM: This is --

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- in that building?

5 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, sir. This is all new
6 construction. So the Phase 1 is complete; the center
7 section is done. We finished the gymnasium area, and
8 then this space too is the next component and part.
9 So part of the conversation that would drive that
10 conversation as to whether we're ready for
11 kindergarten yet would be the application of is the
12 building finished; the other is do we have the
13 curriculum ready, which is -- which was, I think, Dr.
14 Williams' point is do we have that together. And if
15 you ask me today do we have that together, no, sir.
16 We have 7th through 11th and we are -- we're about
17 halfway through 12th grade, but we have so many
18 students who are at so many different points, which
19 is the point of the program; you have to build it in
20 a very different way once you get to that end. So
21 we're going to get there. It's just it's going to be
22 a slower process.

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right. And my understanding,
24 y'all had some I will say more growth than expected
25 in this year, so there may be some --

1 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, sir.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- needing to do this in a
3 fairly quickly manner?

4 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. So that's --
5 that unexpected growth has -- although very welcome,
6 we just finished an elementary school that is now
7 over -- going to be over capacity. So we're going to
8 have to navigate through that as a district and then
9 see how that impacts ultimately what the School of
10 Innovation will be.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: What are the elementary schools
12 over there?

13 DR. SLOCUM: What elementary schools are over
14 there?

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

16 DR. SLOCUM: Sonora Elementary.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

18 DR. SLOCUM: It's located out on Hilton Road,
19 across the street from Lakeside --

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, I know where it's located.
21 So just the name -- I know Sonora is out there.

22 DR. SLOCUM: Turnbow.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Turnbow.

24 DR. SLOCUM: Park. You've got several
25 elementaries that are around there. We are now

1 evaluating the scope and scheme of the district.
2 It's in the shape -- the district lines are in the
3 shape similar to a Chevy chevron shape. And so we're
4 isolating what particular areas, where do we have
5 land; if we don't have any land, do we need to
6 purchase land. And that will then dictate if we have
7 to do an elementary school, in addition to the
8 conversation we're having here, because that growth
9 in terms of space --

10 DR. WILLIAMS: But this elementary school would
11 be on the Innovation's campus?

12 DR. SLOCUM: It would be part of Phase 2 --

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Two. Yeah.

14 DR. SLOCUM: -- of the actual structural
15 building --

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

17 DR. SLOCUM: -- that's in place. Yes, sir.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Slocum, do you all
20 have all of the waivers you would need if you were to
21 add several elementary grades?

22 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So that's already
24 been considered?

25 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And you would still
2 be keeping your enrollment number the same, your
3 total enrollment cap and everything, which is --

4 DR. SLOCUM: (Nodding head up and down.)

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So just moving up the
6 timeline and flexibility to add whatever of those
7 earlier grades at whatever time?

8 DR. SLOCUM: (Nodding head up and down.)

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

10 DR. SLOCUM: Yes, ma'am.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Anybody have any
12 additional questions or comments?

13 Okay. Then if there's nothing else, Ms. Davis
14 --

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

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- then I think we can
17 entertain a motion.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: So moved.

19 DR. OWOH: Second.

20 MS. NEWTON: Second.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Motion and second
22 -- all those -- to approve the application.

23 All those in favor?

24 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Opposed?

1 Okay. Congratulations.

2 DR. SLOCUM: Thank you very much. We appreciate
3 it.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And we will type in some
5 feedback and share that with you in a moment.

6 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. I said
9 this is a great program that seems to have widespread
10 interest. It will be interesting to see what
11 innovations come out of the elementary component.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

13 MS. NEWTON: I voted for. And I said it's the
14 logical progression for the future of students and
15 their needs.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

17 DR. OWOH: I said the School of Innovation
18 continues to provide an innovative way to student
19 learning and it continues to meet the growing demands
20 of today's workforce.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

22 MS. TURNER: Very good presentation and I fully
23 support the district's plan for expansion to other
24 grades.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Dr. Williams.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Changing the name, recognizing an
2 individual that has made a significant contribution
3 to Springdale. The adding of the elementary
4 component is a natural next-step. It will be
5 interesting to see what the curriculum -- the final
6 curriculum will look like.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And
8 congratulations. And I do also want to note that
9 Springdale continues to be recognized at a national
10 level for their innovations and focus on personalized
11 learning for students. So I think this is an example
12 of that. So, thank you all very much.

13 DR. SLOCUM: Thank you.

14 FINAL BUSINESS

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Boyd, we have
16 reached the end of our Action Agenda; is that
17 correct?

18 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Is there anything else
20 that we need to discuss today?

21 MS. BOYD: No, ma'am.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And I know we have
23 a scheduled date for September.

24 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Can you tell us a little

1 bit about what that is? And then I think Dr.
2 Hernandez had a couple of questions.

3 MS. BOYD: Right. So there's nothing on that
4 agenda.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

6 MS. BOYD: We haven't received any requests for
7 any schools to be heard on that agenda. So I don't
8 anticipate us actually needing to have that meeting,
9 I mean unless you guys want to have a work session or
10 something like that.

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

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I think that was my question
13 for the Panel, but I know Ms. Newton shook her head.
14 I know with several folks being new and going through
15 this process over these last three days, is there any
16 interest in having a time where we can talk about
17 modifications to the process or the order in which
18 you receive documents or anything like that? Or do
19 you feel like y'all are veterans and ready to go?

20 MS. NEWTON: What's the date again?

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: September --

22 MS. BOYD: 20th, I believe.

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: Sometime in September.

24 MS. BOYD: The 20th. September 20th is a
25 Wednesday.

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: So that was just a question.
2 Otherwise, I mean, I'm fine with not meeting.

3 DR. OWOH: I definitely welcome that
4 opportunity, but of course I'm here, so --

5 MS. NEWTON: And I do also. The 20th is the
6 date that I have -- it's a travel date for me.

7 MS. BOYD: I will say this though, you guys are
8 scheduled in October to hear district conversion
9 applications and charter school amendment requests.
10 You have -- is it three days we have scheduled, or
11 two? Two, we have two scheduled for October. We
12 only have one district conversion application on the
13 table. So we could have a work session that first
14 day, and then I anticipate that we'd be able to
15 handle all agenda items on the second day or we could
16 have it the first half of the first day or, you know,
17 something like that. And I think we'd be able to
18 address all the agenda items during -- if we did
19 that, since there's only one application.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So would you all want to
21 do -- in the October, would you want to have a work
22 session that morning and then begin -- we have --
23 tell me again what we have for October; one --

24 MS. BOYD: We have district conversion
25 applications and charter school amendment requests,

1 which are not -- which the due-date for those has not
2 come yet; it won't come until September. So I can't
3 tell you how many amendment requests you'll have or
4 what the nature of those requests will be. But I do
5 know we've only received one district conversion
6 application. Those usually take about 90 minutes to
7 hear.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So would you suggest, if
9 we did that, do the work session in the morning and
10 the district conversion in the afternoon, and then
11 hear the amendments the next day? Is that what you
12 would -- what you were thinking?

13 MS. BOYD: That sounds possible. Yeah, that
14 sounds appropriate.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So why don't we --

16 MS. NEWTON: Well, let me ask.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

18 MS. NEWTON: Dr. Williams and I are the only
19 ones probably traveling. So could we do it maybe the
20 evening before, if it filled up?

21 MS. BOYD: I'm sorry; I didn't hear.

22 MS. NEWTON: You know, we usually start at 8:30.

23 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh.

24 MS. NEWTON: But I'm saying if the slots filled
25 up for the two days could we look at the evening

1 before?

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We can, if Ms. Boyd feels
3 like it would take more than two days.

4 MS. NEWTON: But otherwise, the morning of would
5 be great.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

7 DR. WILLIAMS: I like that.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

9 MS. BOYD: I can tell you in September -- I
10 believe it might be like the 13th -- exactly how many
11 amendment requests we'll have. So -- but, yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So we will not have a
13 September meeting; correct?

14 MS. BOYD: That's what you guys just decided.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Nothing in September.
16 We'll plan the two days in October, unless it seems
17 that we're going to need an additional time for the
18 work session. And the work session basically will be
19 just kind of going back through all the documents,
20 the process, making sure we have all the information
21 that we would need prior to.

22 MS. BOYD: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And any questions that you
24 might have in advance Ms. Boyd's office would be
25 happy to work with you. And then also if people

1 thought of things for the work session --

2 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- did you want them to
4 email that to you?

5 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am. Just don't email each
6 other, but just email me directly or someone on my
7 team directly. We'll know by September 13th how many
8 amendment requests and the nature of those amendment
9 requests. So we will go ahead and tentatively say
10 that we want to do a work session in the morning,
11 hear district conversions in the afternoon, and then
12 amendment requests the next day. And if that needs
13 to be changed, then we can address that after the
14 13th.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Now --

16 MS. NEWTON: When you say don't email each
17 other, are we under FOI?

18 MS. BOYD: Yes. Everything you do related to
19 this panel is FOI-able. Uh-huh. And so you emailing
20 each other violates the meeting -- public meeting
21 laws, so -- but you emailing me does not. But
22 everything you do email me is FOI-able.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And, Ms. Boyd, now I have
24 October 18, 19 and 20.

25 MS. BOYD: Yes.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So you do think it
2 will take three days?

3 MS. BOYD: I don't think it will take three
4 days.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You don't think it will
6 take three days. Okay. But you want us to have
7 three days on our calendar right now and you will let
8 us know if that needs to change, or are you saying --

9 MS. BOYD: I think we can go ahead and trim it
10 down to two days, if you want to do that. So it's
11 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday -- I'm sorry --
12 Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. So do y'all want to
13 do Wednesday and Thursday or Thursday and Friday?

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

15 MS. BOYD: Wednesday and Thursday?

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yeah, cut off the Friday I
17 think is the response.

18 MS. BOYD: Yeah, let's do Wednesday and
19 Thursday. When we set up that -- see, you can never
20 predict how many applications are going to come in.
21 Last year we had seven district conversion
22 applications and a number of amendment requests and
23 we needed three days. And this year we don't.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: I just do want to say -- I just
25 thank Ms. Boyd -- how well they've helped me kind of

1 onboard learn the system. I didn't make that first
2 day, but she's been in contact with me just to kind
3 of walk me through the process. So she's been very
4 helpful.

5 MS. BOYD: Well, thank you. We have a great
6 team, great support here at the Department, and I
7 just can't say enough about my team and how much we
8 appreciate you guys doing the hard work. You have to
9 make the decisions; we're just here to support you in
10 that any way we can.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Well, we appreciate you
12 and your team and Ms. Davis and all the other ADE
13 staff who spend time with us here. It really is
14 helpful.

15 So if there's nothing further, I will accept a
16 motion to adjourn.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: So moved.

18 DR. OWOH: Second.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I was getting worried.
20 All those in favor?

21 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

23

24 (The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.)

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EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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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 August 17, 2017, 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: September 3, 2017.

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

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