

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

August 16, 2017

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

August 16, 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
#4 CAPITOL MALL
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201

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A-2: PROLIFIC LEARNING ARTS

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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EXHIBIT TWO (2)

Email from Carl Nappa/Vatterott College to Edmond Davis (08/15/17)

A-3: WEINER ACADEMY

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

House Bill 1902

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

Letter to ADE from Kathi Turner/Career and Technical Education (08/11/17)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Good morning. Okay.
Ladies and Gentlemen, the August 16, 2017 meeting of the Charter Authorizing Panel is called to order. I would like to welcome everyone to the ADE Auditorium. At this time if you could please silence all of your electronic devices.

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 Act 462, and in an effort to increase representation from multiple stakeholder groups, Commissioner Key named seven members to the Charter Authorizing Panel on August 3, 2017.

I'd like to introduce you to the Panel at this time. I am Ivy Pfeffer, Chair of the Panel. We 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 from August

1 11, 2004 to June 30, 2011; and Toyce Newton, former
2 state Board of Education member from August 18, 2009
3 to June 30, 2016.

4 As my -- or, as Chair my goal is to facilitate a
5 fair and responsible hearing. I will request that
6 each person speaking please state your name and title
7 for the record. I will ask that you continue to
8 speak clearly into the microphone for the benefit of
9 the Panel, the audience and the viewing audience.
10 The entire meeting is being live-streamed and
11 recorded. Ms. Sharon Hill, our court reporter will
12 be providing a transcript of the meeting and it will
13 be posted on the ADE website.

14 Okay. I think we are ready to begin with our
15 action agenda.

16 If we could, Ms. Davis, do you want to just walk
17 us through the process again, the hearing process,
18 voting process, and how the Panel will report to the
19 State Board for consideration of review or not to
20 review any decisions made today?

21 MS. DAVIS: Good morning. Jennifer Davis, Staff
22 Attorney for the Department. The procedures that
23 you're going to follow today will be that all persons
24 wishing to provide any testimony to you will need to
25 be sworn in, with the exception of attorneys. The

1 applicant will then have 20 minutes to make its
2 presentation to you, followed by any opposition which
3 will have 20 minutes collectively to state their
4 argument to you. After that the applicant will have
5 an additional five minutes for any rebuttal and
6 closing remarks. At that point you can either ask
7 questions of the applicant, you can ask questions of
8 the Department staff, of me, or anyone who you think
9 may have answers to the questions that you have. You
10 can then either take the matter under advisement or
11 choose to vote today. If you vote today, you will
12 have a Google document that you can mark down your
13 reasons for your vote, so that way the applicant will
14 know. Then those votes will all go to the State
15 Board for either a review or not review.

16 One thing I want to remind you is that anything
17 that differs from their written materials that the
18 applicant either states or agrees to in their
19 presentation would become part of any charter that
20 you grant. It's somewhat of a contract negotiation.

21 And also because the law limits the number of
22 charters that can be approved at any time, anything
23 -- any charter application that you approve today,
24 much like yesterday, will be approved on a
25 conditional basis. Right now there are only five

1 slots available for the 2017-18 school year, so all
2 votes for approval are conditional until tomorrow.
3 If there are less than five, then those become
4 approved. If there are more than five, then the
5 panel members will be asked to rank their choices to
6 determine which five go for approval.

7 Do you have any questions?

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Panel, any questions?

9 Okay. Thank you, Ms. Davis.

10 A-1: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

11 APPLICATION: NUBRIDGE CHARTER SCHOOL, PINE BLUFF, AR

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: The Nubridge application
13 has been withdrawn.

14 A-2: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

15 APPLICATION: PROLIFIC LEARNING ARTS ACADEMY, LITTLE ROCK, AR

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So we will move on to the
17 second item on the action agenda, which is the
18 Hearing of Open-Enrollment Public Charter School
19 Application for Prolific Learning Arts Academy, for
20 Little Rock, Arkansas. Ms. Perry, you are
21 recognized.

22 MS. PERRY: Good morning. Virginia Perry, ADE
23 Charter Unit Program Advisor. Prolific Learning Arts
24 Academy is a proposed open-enrollment public charter
25 school to be located within the Little Rock School

1 District. The sponsoring entity is Aviate Through
2 Knowledge, Inc. The applicant is requesting to serve
3 students in grades 9 through 12 with a maximum
4 enrollment of 400 beginning in the 18-19 school year.
5 The applicant has notified affected districts of the
6 proposed public charter school.

7 The primary presenter today for Prolific Arts
8 Academy is Edmond Davis, the PLAA executive director.
9 He will be joined as needed by Major Carl Minden,
10 Pulaski County Sheriff Department; Annie Abrams,
11 lifetime educator and supporter; Frank Bateman, PLAA
12 school board member and CFO; Tina Adams, PLAA school
13 board member and marketing; Ella Sergeant, former
14 principal; O'Mont Wiley, PLAA school board member,
15 community outreach and recruitment; Dr. Stephens W.
16 Christian, senior pastor, BBWF; and Cortney Pitts, a
17 mother.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Ms.
19 Perry.

20 Will all representatives from Prolific Learning
21 Arts Academy and anyone speaking in opposition please
22 stand to receive the oath? Okay. Do you swear or
23 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
24 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
25 truth?

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(ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And, Mr. Davis, you are recognized to begin the presentation. We'll have 20 minutes for your presentation and -- okay, thank you.

MR. DAVIS: Good morning, everyone. Again, my name is Edmond Davis and I'm elated to be before you as the first ambassador to Prolific Learning Arts Academy, aka PLAA. I want to give an opening disclaimer before we go any further, and that reads: This hearing is for educational high school options in Southwest Little Rock. We are requesting listening ears and open minds as we represent the under-represented in 72209, especially the scholastic pipeline that affects this Zip Code and area code.

Prolific Learning Arts Academy -- of course as Ms. Perry mentioned we have a sponsoring entity which is ATK, Incorporated. So of course PLAA, the short acronym is -- PLAA is the short acronym for Prolific Learning Arts Academy.

Our mission: Prolific Learning Arts Academy is committed to empowering learners to become prolific leaders through high quality educational standards, the arts, and real-world best practices of the 21st century.

1 Our vision: PLAA will become a world-class open-
2 enrollment public charter high school that
3 strategically employs integrated arts, parental
4 initiatives and social responsibility into the
5 curriculum to increase student achievement. And
6 that's what we're all about, to increase student
7 achievement moving forward for the 21st century.

8 Here is an image of the people who will hold me
9 accountable for what I do, the decisions that I make
10 and for what I emulate. So of course, as you can
11 see, there's much diversity amongst our board. Okay.
12 It's not just educational diversity; there's ethnic
13 diversity, there's intergenerational diversity. And
14 so we're all about diversity when it comes to
15 learning and when it comes to teaching at Prolific
16 Learning Arts Academy.

17 Here's the proposed location of PLAA. Of
18 course, for those who don't know the major arteries
19 in Southwest Little Rock is at Geyer Springs and
20 Baseline. We know there's a Kroger-mart right there
21 at that intersection. Behind that Kroger-mart
22 there's the ATA building and that is the actual place
23 where we're going to have Prolific Learning Arts
24 Academy. It has 36,000 square feet, more than enough
25 that will facilitate learning there for our prolific

1 leaders and future learners.

2 The need for PLAA in Southwest Little Rock -- of
3 course, historically speaking, the district started I
4 think in February 1869 and the first high school in
5 Southwest Little Rock was Mabelvale High School. And
6 of course the second one was McClellan in 1966. Now
7 between that time period there hadn't been many but
8 one high school in Southwest Little Rock. But we all
9 know, mathematically speaking, there's about 23-ish
10 thousand students in the Little Rock School District.
11 Out of that 23,000, there's about 6,000 high-
12 schoolers out of that. Okay. There's one high
13 school in Southwest Little Rock, which is McClellan,
14 which has about 846 students. There's a big
15 disparity right there that no one likes to draw the
16 attention to. Out of 50,000 people who live in
17 Southwest Little Rock, 72209, according to Max
18 Spriggs, the captain of Little Rock Police Force,
19 over in the Southwest Division, those numbers. But
20 you have only about 800 or so students out of 50,000
21 that attend one high school, and so PLAA is here to
22 address those concerns.

23 Of course, here's some percentages of some high
24 school dropout rates throughout the nation and my
25 source here is from DiscovertheNetworks.org. And

1 three women that stick out to me are actually noted
2 on here for saying a few things. But there's a quote
3 here directly from Nancy Pelosi, former Speaker of
4 the House, and she says, quote, "It's better to
5 invest upfront than to invest more as a result of our
6 neglect." Okay. Now getting back to that last
7 slide, what I failed to mention before I want you all
8 to write down "benign neglect." To the people to my
9 left, to the people to my right, write down the term
10 "benign neglect." I want you all with your
11 Smartphone's to look up the term "benign neglect."
12 Okay. So moving up to this stat right here, again,
13 what Marian Wright is saying -- and of course we all
14 know what she's known for, and of course Maxine
15 Waters what she's all known for -- "It's better to
16 invest upfront as a result of our neglect." Okay.
17 So we're going to get back to that a little bit
18 later.

19 According to the Arkansas Division of Youth
20 Services, black youth make up 19% of the state's
21 youth population but nearly represents 60% of people
22 who are being incarcerated or locking up kids. And
23 my source here is directly from Shackled Potential:
24 The Road to Lockup Starts in Public Schools. So
25 that's an issue that PLAA is going to be addressing

1 moving forward, granted the opportunity to serve the
2 underserved moving forward.

3 Here's a stat that I got from KATV. It was
4 posted. Everyone knows about this, with the
5 increased rates of homicides here in the city of
6 Little Rock. Of course, when you look at
7 geographically speaking right there, we all know
8 geographically that's 72209. So that indicates that
9 the highest crime rate is actually not in Southwest
10 Little Rock; it's actually centered in downtown.
11 Okay. So PLAA will help curtail and help minimize
12 those limits with that -- when you have less people
13 walking the streets, high-schoolers in particular,
14 9th grade through 12th grade. They'll be in the
15 classrooms and you'll see less high-schoolers walking
16 down Baseline, walking down Geyer Springs during
17 school hours. Okay. We're going to help curtail
18 that moving forward.

19 Now, how will PLAA stand out, you say? PLAA's
20 programmatic features -- okay, PLAA will be the first
21 -- and I repeat, the first STEAM -- okay, the first
22 STEAM high school in 72209. All right. I want you
23 all to take note of that. PLAA will be the first,
24 okay, STEAM high school in 72209. That's one of the
25 reasons that makes us so unique.

1 Here's some of the learning environments that we
2 have bulleted up here for Prolific Learning Arts
3 Academy. We will embrace the concept of proven
4 educational approaches. Of course, the integrated
5 arts, that's real big in what we do. And there's a
6 couple of other things that we're going to be talking
7 about as we address the disadvantaged populations,
8 not just in 72209; we're going to focus on them, but
9 we're not going to discriminate against anyone who
10 wants to go to Prolific Learning Arts Academy moving
11 forward.

12 Of course, you have in front of you some 3D
13 glasses. I'm going to ask if all the board members
14 will put on those 3D glasses please. All right.
15 We'll give y'all a minute and let that marinate; put
16 those 3D glasses on, of course. Yes, put them on
17 real quick. Okay. Now 3D means what? 3D means data
18 driven decisions. Y'all can hash-tag that right now.
19 Data driven decisions moving forward. Okay? Write
20 that down. Let it be known on this day that you know
21 that 3D has a new meaning now, data driven decisions.
22 Okay. We took data from the U.S. Department of
23 Education that said last year that 6.7% -- 7.6% of
24 bachelor's degrees in math and in sciences for
25 African Americans were earned. Note that number is

1 miniscule, it's real low. And so we're taking that
2 data, okay -- PLAA, we're taking data like that and
3 that's why we're trying to open up this open-
4 enrollment public nontraditional high school in
5 Southwest Little Rock; we want to help curtail some
6 of those numbers moving forward. So that data is
7 going to drive our decisions moving forward, so
8 that's why we have 3D moving forward. Okay.

9 Here we go, introducing 21st century STEAM-
10 Americans. I need everybody to say STEAM-American.
11 I want y'all to say it a little bit louder, STEAM-
12 American. Okay. Now that's the new term again;
13 hash-tag that, STEAM-American. We all know STEAM
14 means science, technology, arts and mathematics.
15 These are superheroes for the 21st century. We all
16 know what Drew Brees said, the Hall of Fame
17 quarterback; we all know what LeBron James said. Now
18 you'll know what Ed Davis says representing PLAA,
19 representing our school here. Of course, these
20 STEAM-Americans, for those who don't know, Moon-girl
21 she's of course real big with math, if you've read
22 about Moon-girl. Also, the new -- and I repeat, the
23 new Riri Williams, she's the iron woman. Okay. Of
24 course, she's a young lady. And then of course Miles
25 Morales, he's a multi-ethnic African American/

1 Spanish American superhero who plays Spiderman now.
2 He's a 21st century Spiderman. Guess what his major
3 is at Eastern State University? Engineering. Okay.
4 So these are all STEAM-American superheroes moving
5 forward that nobody likes to talk about, but we're
6 going to talk about them here moving forward. Okay.

7 Now what comes to mind when you see this image?
8 Now put your 3D glasses back on. Y'all forgot, we're
9 not done with y'all. Put those 3D glasses back on.
10 Right, right. Okay. This image right here we all
11 know from what movie?

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Curves.

13 MR. DAVIS: Yes. He said Curves. It was Hidden
14 Figures, but Curves though. Okay. So, again, the
15 movie Hidden Figures we all know that's Mirian Dunn,
16 I believe, played by Taraji P. Henson. Okay. But
17 more importantly, with that image tells us yes, NASA,
18 yes, Langley. All right. But more importantly, you
19 have a lady in the center surrounded by European
20 American males with the ties on. Those are all
21 STEAM-Americans. Okay. We just gave you that and
22 what that meant, STEAM-Americans. PLAA is going to
23 be talking about what that means. These STEAM-
24 Americans -- and this is supposed to be a movie that
25 was talking about feats at NASA with African American

1 women 60 years ago. NASA is full of STEAM-Americans
2 and so is Langley. So, again, this image shows you a
3 lot of different things.

4 When you look at the data here, this is from the
5 University of Florida, my statutory down at the bottom
6 for those -- my background is in history, so we have
7 to have data moving these decisions moving forward.
8 It says 3.7 million unfilled jobs in the U.S. in
9 STEAM filled jobs. Of course, that's the issue. At
10 PLAA we intend on filling out some of those jobs with
11 some of the learners that we have coming down the
12 educational pipeline in 72209. Okay. Of course,
13 PLAA plans to implement the aerospace engineering and
14 engineering and design and development. That's one
15 of the things for those who know my background, my
16 first book was written about the Tuskegi airmen in
17 2012. Of course, many research days at Tuskegi
18 University, at the Library of Congress, at Maxwell
19 Air Force Base. I'm a vice commander with the 314
20 Airlift Wing at the Little Rock Air Force Base, so we
21 know a little bit about engineering and we know
22 that's integral moving forward. Okay.

23 Now how else will PLAA stand out? PLAA will
24 infuse the arts into its curriculum by using the A+
25 Model program. Now what are the A+ Model schools

1 moving forward? We all know in 1995 it started in
2 North Carolina. Of course, now it's in 38 states I
3 do believe. You can check -- you can Google that and
4 check out the data on that. Okay. But the A+
5 essentials is something that's integral and it's
6 growing strong. Of course, the A+ bind together by
7 their common commitment to facilitate a common set of
8 foundational commitments, known as the A+ Essentials.
9 I won't go reading it into verbatim what they say.
10 Of course, there's arts in the beginning and climate
11 at the end.

12 PLAA will align its curriculum with Arkansas
13 frameworks and Common Core. That's essential moving
14 forward. To be in education and the educational
15 ranks you need to know these types of things moving
16 forward. So PLAA will definitely be receptive to
17 that.

18 How else will PLAA stand out, you say? Respond-
19 I-bility -- of course social responsibility. All
20 right. For those that don't know, you can check out
21 the stats on Respond-I-bility. It's something that
22 we created a long time ago, I would say three years
23 ago rather, and we had it at Covenant Keepers Charter
24 School. It was an effective program there. I gave
25 this presentation from the elementary level all the

1 way up to the high school level and at the collegiate
2 level. So it's very important and it teaches young
3 people, Dr. Pfeffer, how to respond responsibly to
4 law enforcement and authorities. Too often we don't
5 see a lot of programs in schools where there is --
6 with the 9th graders or the 12th graders or at the
7 collegiate level that show young people -- not just
8 young people, but baby boomers as well and people of
9 my generation, Generation X, and even millennials.
10 But we're talking about Generation Z learners, how to
11 respond responsibly to law enforcement and
12 authorities. And so we have a program in place that
13 addresses that with the Respond-I-bility piece moving
14 forward. Okay.

15 We want to go to YouTube and show that video
16 right there.

17 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Whereupon, a video was
18 shown, which may be viewed on the ADE website.)

19 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you very much. That's
20 just -- there's plenty of literature out there about
21 the Respond-I-bility program and how it has affected
22 junior high school, of course college students, and
23 also high school students moving forward. Okay. Of
24 course, the next stuff here of course, that's just
25 some students at Camden's SAU Tech with a Respond-I-

1 bility shirt.

2 How else will PLAA stand out? Okay. What kind
3 of pie do y'all like, Board? Who likes peach pie?
4 Anybody like peach pie? What about cobbler? He
5 likes cobbler. Okay. What about Mr. Mike Wilson,
6 what kind of pie do you like, sir?

7 MR. WILSON: Every kind.

8 MR. DAVIS: Every kind of pie. I like that.
9 Okay. So here it is right here -- Ed Davis, I like
10 sweet potato pie. Okay. So we've got, you know --
11 it smells real good but I won't eat it right now.
12 Okay. Because pie means something different to PLAA.
13 P.I.E. means Parental Involvement Education. Repeat
14 after me: Parental Involvement Education. That's
15 what P.I.E. means at Prolific Learning Arts Academy.
16 So when you get your piece of pie it's a lot of
17 nourishment. Okay. So, again, moving forward when
18 you have your pie this parental involvement involves
19 a lot of things. More importantly the person that
20 helped start this after which we fashioned this was
21 Dr. Joyce Epstein. And Joyce Epstein shares
22 frameworks sets. Out of these frameworks sets,
23 there's about six of them. I won't go over each and
24 every one of them verbatim, but it says right here,
25 if you look at the screen, number one is Parenting,

1 number two is Communications, number three is
2 Volunteering. That's going to come back, y'all --
3 volunteering. Of course, the next one here Learning
4 at Home, Decision-Making -- we all know that's
5 definitely important -- and Collaborating within the
6 Community. These are all part of Epstein's
7 frameworks that's going to be in our P.I.E. piece at
8 Prolific Learning Arts Academy. So when it comes to
9 P.I.E., you think about these things moving forward.

10 Of course, this is some data right here from the
11 National Educational Longitudinal Study on PTA and
12 other things by Richard Kahlenberg. Of course, it
13 talks about getting back to what Epstein says; this
14 reinforces what she said about volunteering in the
15 classroom and serving on school committees, okay,
16 whether you're a parent or a guardian, okay, or a
17 step-parent, what-have-you. It's all important to
18 have these things. Okay.

19 This is another 3D issue with data driven
20 decisions that we use to help compensate what Dr.
21 Epstein said involved with our P.I.E. Okay.

22 Now the Coleman Report, for those who don't know
23 about the Coleman Report, okay, it says there the
24 Coleman Report found that differences in families
25 were overwhelmingly more important than the

1 differences in the schools the children attended.
2 And of course the last 50 years, it says, through
3 today, studies have found the same result.
4 Children's families have the biggest influence
5 overall, okay, when it comes to academic excellence
6 moving forward. So the Coleman Report, you can
7 Google that and see the recent data under the Coleman
8 Report using our 3D, our data driven decisions for
9 Prolific Learning Arts Academy. Okay.

10 What happens when parents are proactively
11 involved in their child's education? Of course, if
12 you see Dr. Cynthia Fuselier, what she says up here,
13 it talks about how school success is very important;
14 of course the student's IQ. Your parents' support is
15 more important than the student's IQ, economic
16 status, or school setting. So we have to be mindful
17 of that moving forward and what Dr. Cynthia said.
18 Okay.

19 For those who know John Kasich, former Governor
20 of Ohio, he ran against Donald Trump, 45. Of course,
21 we all know he on the Republican ticket said a lot of
22 things. But what stood out to me as a dad, he had
23 this National Parental Involvement Day. Of course we
24 will integrate that at Prolific Learning Arts
25 Academy. Given the opportunity to be excellent, we

1 will definitely execute with this right here. We
2 won't have a National Day of course with PLAA, but in
3 our academic days on campus we will have our parents
4 involved heavily on a daily basis, okay, moving
5 forward.

6 Now for of course English for Speakers of Other
7 Languages (ESOL), of course we will have educators in
8 place that will help facilitate professional
9 development for our PLAA educators and faculty moving
10 forward.

11 Now how again will PLAA stand out, you say?
12 Check this out. Who saw Greenleaf? Who knows about
13 Greenleaf? Okay, Greenleaf. Okay, I've got a hand
14 up here. All right. What about Night at the Museum,
15 anybody like that, Night at the Museum? Okay. What
16 about Bodyguard. Okay, put your hands up if you've
17 seen Bodyguard. What about New Jack City? You know
18 Ralph back there, okay. So, again, New Jack City is
19 the one that I like. But again this man in the
20 middle right here his name is Wilbur Cobb. Okay.
21 He's in his 80s now. He's a good friend of mine and
22 he's a social activist now. He's out in the
23 California part. We have a video here, but due to
24 some technical malfunctions we weren't able to show
25 the full video of it. Of course he's real good

1 friends with Michael Moore and Stephen King and those
2 guys. But again this is a message from Bill Cobb,
3 and what he just said was he said that "Please
4 support Prolific Learning Arts Academy," in this
5 video. It's about a minute and 17 seconds, so we'll
6 be sensitive to the time here. But again Bill Cobb
7 is one of our advisors to the board. He's not a
8 board member; he's an advisor to the board moving
9 forward. Okay. So we'll go ahead and activate that.
10 Along with Bill Cobb we have another guy who's
11 another thespian and that's James Lewis. We all know
12 him locally as Little JJ. He starred with Queen
13 Latifah in Beauty Shop. He's also from Nickelodeon's
14 Just Jordan. He was a student of mine years ago. Of
15 course he's doing some other good things now. But he
16 speaks up for Prolific Learning Arts Academy and of
17 course him and Bill Cobb, these thespians are on the
18 same page as our board of directors as we move
19 forward.

20 As far as the recruitment plan is concerned, we
21 have a number of things that are systemic in place,
22 research-based, and we will utilize a blend of DNA in
23 terms of communicating via social media. Okay. For
24 those of you who haven't saw my Facebook page, I need
25 not to explain further any more about that. That's

1 what I do for a living. I communicate with people,
2 we recruit people, whether it's at the collegiate
3 level. In this case we're talking about for PLAA.
4 That's what we do, and we're going to keep doing
5 that. Of course under the recruitment plan
6 continued, it says of course we'll have many things
7 in operation. We're going to of course garner public
8 interest and support for the school, utilizing a
9 combination of public materials and housing multiple
10 public open-house meetings and things in that regard.
11 I think we'll have it on tap, I think that's safe to
12 say.

13 Now PLAA's classroom environment, I want you to
14 look at this image here. Okay. Look to the right;
15 of course that's what we look like as far as 21st
16 century. That's what our grandparents had back in
17 the 1950s and 1940s. Okay. But again it says 21st
18 century classroom but 21st century learners. Okay.
19 How do you expect to excel in academics with 20th
20 century education for 21st century learners? So of
21 course we have to use that moving forward.

22 Do we all learn the same way?

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Davis --

24 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- your 20 minutes is up.

1 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So at this time is there
3 anyone here to speak in opposition?

4 Okay. I don't see anyone here, so we can go
5 ahead and go with your additional five minutes --

6 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- if you'd like to do
8 that at this time. Or is there someone else who's
9 going to be speaking?

10 MR. DAVIS: Well, does the protocol allow me to
11 close out with a closing summary?

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes. Well, you have an
13 additional five minutes at this time.

14 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But that will be the end
16 of the presentation.

17 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So there's five additional
19 minutes for you all.

20 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

22 MR. DAVIS: All right. Well, I advocate and
23 challenge everyone to think about the existence of
24 Prolific Learning Arts Academy. It's something
25 that's innovative, it's different, and, you know, I

1 think it's something that's needed when you look at
2 the data moving forward, especially in 72209. As a
3 history guy, I look at the history and I say, well,
4 this is something that's never been done before and I
5 think it should be something that we should pay a
6 little bit more attention to and better serve the
7 underserved in that part of town. But not just that
8 part of town, anyone around.

9 And we definitely want to collaborate with the
10 school districts that are affected by the possible
11 200 students that come the first year at Prolific
12 Learning Arts Academy. We're all about
13 collaboration, not competition. Okay. It's my job
14 as executive director to see to that and to see that
15 we do it in an effective and professional and legal
16 manner. Okay.

17 And I really want to say thank you for giving me
18 the opportunity to speak before you, because I know
19 you didn't have to. And I want to thank my board of
20 directors because without them this wouldn't be
21 possible. Well, even before them I'd like to thank
22 God first and foremost and my family and my wife for
23 having my back and supporting me during this
24 endeavor. I would like to thank the supporters that
25 are to my left and to my right, also Bill Cobb, the

1 actor in Hollywood who's supportive of this endeavor.
2 We also would like to thank Tommy Norman and Annie
3 Abrams and of course French Hill, who is not here but
4 he supports this school, and Chloe out of his office
5 -- they're supporters of Prolific Learning Arts
6 Academy -- and anyone who promotes education. You
7 know I'm definitely a pro-learning brethren. Okay.
8 We don't want the educational system to get in the
9 way of learning. You know, of course in the words of
10 the man who died 40 years ago today, Elvis Presley,
11 thank you, thank you very much. Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you very much for
13 your presentation. There's still a little over three
14 minutes left if there -- is anyone else from the
15 school who would like to present at this time?

16 MS. ADAMS: Hello. I'm Tina Adams. I'm in the
17 marketing -- I'm doing the marketing for the school.
18 And I just want to say that I am very glad to be a
19 part of this board and be a part of this game-
20 changing movement that we're starting with PLAA,
21 Prolific Learning Arts Academy. As a personal
22 testimony, I support it because when I was in high
23 school I wasn't really interested in school that much
24 because I wasn't engaged. It wasn't until I got into
25 the speech and drama club where I began to speak and

1 do oratory contests and sing, and I'm a singer. So
2 then I became much more interested in school. And so
3 with this curriculum that's going to be art infused I
4 know that we're going to reach so many underserved
5 and disadvantaged students.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you. Yes, just
7 please state your name for the record and you are
8 recognized.

9 MS. SERGEANT: Good morning. My name is Ella
10 Sergeant and I'm from the Little Rock area. I would
11 just like to say that I have had a lot of experience
12 with Southwest Little Rock since being here in the
13 state. And what I see in Little Rock is the need for
14 PLAA Academy. I have seen young people where they
15 feel as though they have no place to go, no safe
16 grounds during the day. I've seen them walk the
17 streets in Southwest Little Rock. And we also know
18 that there is a good school that's serving Southwest
19 Little Rock now, and that's McClellan. And I've also
20 known the administrators at McClellan and I've worked
21 with them in the past. And I know that there's a
22 need that we need some more support in Southwest
23 Little Rock for our young people. I am an advocate
24 of parents, I'm an advocate of the community, I'm an
25 advocate for anyone that wants to serve children.

1 And I do see the dedication and I see the commitment
2 from our board and also from Mr. Edmond Davis. And I
3 think that if we select to have this school in
4 Southwest that we will do the best that we can to
5 serve those clients that's in Southwest. We will not
6 let the community down. We will do what we say we're
7 going to do. We will graduate those young people in
8 Southwest Little Rock like they should graduate. And
9 also STEM, get those skills that they need to become
10 employees of the next century. Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

12 MS. ABRAMS: I'm Annie Abrams, 85. I'm a
13 futurist. Number one is that I believe in data and I
14 believe in data that is validated by data. The
15 University of Arkansas at Little Rock, that has an
16 Institute of Race and Ethnicity, they have done a
17 study. And one of the things that's important is
18 that they did it for Pulaski County, and this school
19 will be in the place where we have the highest
20 concentration of ethnicity as it relates to
21 Hispanics. And so we have an institution that
22 devotes itself to data-based planning. And I wanted
23 you to know that as a board member I know -- and as a
24 retired educator, as a fifth generation Arkansan --
25 this is needed for the 21st century. Thank you very

1 much.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Ms.
3 Abrams.

4 We are out of time for the presentation. So at
5 this time we will go to the Panel to start asking
6 questions. So, Panel, you may ask questions of the
7 various school members; we also have ADE staff here,
8 if you should need their assistance with questions.
9 So we -- do you want to start us off today? We're
10 glad you're here with us.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Well, thank you. I'm kind of
12 new. It's been awhile since I've been up here. I
13 was looking for the little button. It's on, it stays
14 on. Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes, as long as you're in
16 the microphone. If not, they'll wave at you from the
17 back.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: First of all, Mr. Davis,
19 excellent presentation. I really appreciate it. Two
20 quick questions for you. The first, I'm familiar
21 with A+ Learning and I like the STEM model, I like
22 the P.I.E., I like the Responsibility. The key piece
23 now, that's a whole lot to be going on in a school.
24 Can you -- so when I look at all the different
25 programs here, my biggest concern is teaching and

1 learning. Is that going to happen within the
2 framework of the Arkansas curriculum? There's -- you
3 can do so much that you may miss the student
4 achievement piece to this. Can you address the
5 student achievement piece? That's question number
6 one.

7 The follow-up question also would be ATK, who
8 are they? You know, what I mean is what makes up ATK
9 and what role will they play in supporting -- being a
10 sponsor is one thing, but that sponsor has to have
11 the wherewithal to be a sponsor. So either/or you
12 want to take those.

13 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Well, I'll go ahead and
14 address it with my board having my back. I'll
15 address --

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

17 MR. DAVIS: -- the ATK initiative, that part
18 first. Aviate Through Knowledge, Incorporated is the
19 -- of course, like you said, sir, the sponsoring
20 entity behind it. We have a board on top of our
21 board to help make sure things fall into place. They
22 are big on recruiting as well support from many
23 different aspects. ATK has been in existence for
24 about almost seven years now and they're responsible
25 for a number of nonprofit items here in the city of

1 Little Rock and beyond. The Respond-I-bility piece
2 started from Aviate Through Knowledge, Incorporated.
3 And so of course they're going to be the ones not
4 dictating or policing or having any direct input at
5 the school; the school leaders will be there in place
6 doing that. But they'll be in the background
7 communicating with the school board members. And so
8 of course the school board members in the Prolific --
9 the school board members of Prolific Learning Arts
10 Academy and ATK's board members, the sponsoring
11 board, have a great relationship and they want to
12 maintain that relationship moving forward. And so we
13 don't see any issues nowhere in the future about any
14 big concerns about that moving forward.

15 Now the other question was --

16 DR. WILLIAMS: It was really just along the
17 lines of the curriculum.

18 MR. DAVIS: The curriculum.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: You know, there's a lot of
20 different programs -- I heard A+ Learning, the STEM
21 -- the STEAM program itself, the Respond-I-bility
22 program, the P.I.E.; there's a lot of different
23 things going on and they're all good. That's a
24 given. I didn't hear a whole lot about what the kids
25 will learn --

1 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: -- from a curriculum standpoint,
3 the achievement piece.

4 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Of course they're required to
5 have 38 credits, 38 hours. And of course ADE
6 standards, we're going to follow those ADE standards
7 moving forward, just the same as the public schools
8 because this is a public school, sir. So of course
9 we're going to fall in alignment with what's required
10 there with the 38 hours and with teaching and
11 learning.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I notice you had about a
13 2% academic growth. I may be off, or someone from
14 the ADE can help me if I missed that, but that seemed
15 rather low expectations of academic growth.

16 MR. DAVIS: You said 2% growth?

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I was looking at one of
18 the forms here.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I think it's listed on the
20 goals section.

21 MR. DAVIS: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Page -- well, I didn't
23 write down the page number.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Let me see if I can get back to
25 it.

1 DR. OWOH: It's 14 and 15.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. What is that percentage
3 there?

4 DR. OWOH: Two-percent.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. It mentions 2% growth.
6 And, you know, that may be a realistic expectation of
7 what you all hope to achieve. I would just kind of
8 encourage you all, you know, to consider being a
9 little bit more ambitious --

10 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: -- by having higher expectations
12 --

13 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

14 DR. WILLIAMS: -- of the kids than the 2%
15 growth.

16 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. I'm very, very confident,
17 maybe too confident. But yes, sir.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

20 DR. OWOH: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good
21 morning, Mr. Davis.

22 MR. DAVIS: Good morning, sir.

23 DR. OWOH: My first question is a clarifying
24 question. On your page 2 of the application you have
25 a student enrollment cap at 200. But right

1 underneath there the fifth year -- well, the years
2 preceding the first year it maxes at 400. So are you
3 seeking approval for 200 or the 400?

4 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. Thank you for bringing
5 that up. We're seeking 200 year-one. I did see --
6 it was somewhere published -- I don't know if it was
7 last week or the week before, I received a letter
8 from the ADE and I saw that and I addressed it to my
9 board, and that was an oversight somewhere. I don't
10 know, not to point any fingers. But we're looking at
11 year-one 200 students and of course increase in
12 increments after that. But, yes, sir, year-one 200
13 students, that's what we're projecting.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I'm sorry to
15 interrupt, but if I could follow-up -- will you be
16 implementing grades 9 through 12 --

17 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- all next year? So
19 you're looking at grades 9 through 12 starting with
20 200 students and then just increasing students. But
21 you would have all grades initially?

22 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am, Dr. Pfeffer.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

24 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

25 DR. OWOH: Thank you. My second question is in

1 line with Dr. Williams; it's about the achievement
2 piece. What progress monitoring tool or approach
3 will you use to insure that students are mastering
4 skills quarterly or throughout the school year
5 progressing?

6 MR. DAVIS: Okay. I would like to ask -- let's
7 see here -- my president to come on up, Ms. Sergeant.

8 MS. SERGEANT: Yes, sir. We are quite aware
9 that for a successful school we have to have
10 monitoring and we have to have a success rate and we
11 have to have most of all students that want to learn.
12 With our monitoring process we will use what is
13 standard within the state of Arkansas, with
14 monitoring through data, through our counselor's
15 office, as well. We have counselors that will
16 constantly monitor; our teachers will monitor
17 success; and then we will also disseminate that data
18 within all staff members within PLAA Academy.

19 DR. OWOH: Thank you. What type of data will
20 you be using to monitor?

21 MS. SERGEANT: Attendance, daily attendance,
22 test scores; teachers' lesson plans is also a part of
23 monitoring for success; teacher retention, we will
24 use that data; we will use surveys from our
25 community; we will have online surveys; we will do

1 what we have to do to meet those standards for the
2 Arkansas Department of Education for reporting
3 periods.

4 DR. OWOH: Okay. Thank you. Next question, if
5 I can Madam Chair?

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes.

7 DR. OWOH: We know based on the data that
8 there's a literacy deficit. Most of our students
9 throughout central Arkansas have a lack of literacy
10 skills. How will PLAA address those literacy
11 deficits when the students enter 9th grade at PLAA?

12 MR. DAVIS: There's a big deficit there. And of
13 course we have a number of reading programs in place
14 and we have to find literature that they're attracted
15 to. A lot of times -- and this is not to step on
16 anyone's toes in no fashion -- to have things that
17 they want to read. You know, students are reading,
18 Doctor; they are, whether it's text messaging or
19 something, you know, with their literature. They are
20 reading; they're not reading some of the things that
21 we want to read. And so I think that needs to be
22 addressed and I will see to it that those things are
23 addressed.

24 I want to call up -- let me see here -- who can
25 I call up here -- Mrs. Davis, will you come on up and

1 talk about that, about the --

2 MRS. DAVIS: Hello. Monica Davis here. And,
3 yes, sir, the literacy deficits are definitely
4 something that is needed to be addressed in that Zip
5 Code. One thing that I know that we will use is the
6 ACT Aspire assessments, the performance learning
7 descriptors, to make sure that our students are
8 meeting their targeted benchmark. And so we will use
9 a variety of assessments in order to reach the
10 learning goals and for -- did you say literacy?
11 That's pretty much what we do in literacy. We use
12 the ACT teacher generated assessments. We also use
13 -- if you want to get really technical, we have what
14 we call -- let's see -- the -- let's see -- well,
15 that's -- just different types of -- different --
16 whatever like our president said, whatever the state
17 is using at the time. Because different schools
18 adopt a different -- they adopt different curriculum
19 or assessment guides. So whatever the state or
20 whatever the school -- that the school comes into
21 agreement with, that's what we'll use to make sure
22 our students are college and career ready, to make
23 sure that they're reaching their benchmark.

24 That 2% that we have, it's because our students
25 are really low. We've looked at the test scores. I

1 mean the math scores, they're really low. So we
2 didn't want to set a really, really high standard in
3 which they couldn't obtain. But we can always go
4 back and look at our plans and our ACSIP plans and
5 change those goals to make sure that we are
6 addressing the needs of those learners as we make
7 progress. And so just excited and want to do the
8 best job that -- and provide support to the board the
9 best that we have in our ability.

10 DR. OWOH: Okay. One last question --

11 MRS. DAVIS: Yes.

12 DR. OWOH: -- about educator support and
13 development. What would be your process or plan to
14 support the educators in the classroom so that they
15 provide the most effective instruction to the
16 students?

17 MRS. DAVIS: Yes. Oh, you go it? Okay.

18 MS. SERGEANT: Teacher support is one of the
19 greatest drivers in education today. If you have
20 happy teachers, you have happy students. If you have
21 happy students, you're going to have happy parents.
22 And what we want in Southwest Little Rock, we want
23 happy parents and we want a happy community. We want
24 to see Southwest City where they're smiling and
25 they're dropping off their children to the PLAA

1 Academy, the children are walking to the PLAA
2 Academy, and they want to be there and they are
3 excited. So we will have an embedded curriculum that
4 we will address every student that walks into PLAA
5 Academy on a daily basis. We will have programs such
6 as Drop Everything and Read. Right now I run a
7 summer literacy program for children 6 to 11. And
8 our children in my summer program, they want to come.
9 The parents say they're excited about coming on a
10 daily basis. They wake up and say, "I want to go, I
11 want to go, I'm ready to go." They're up in the car.
12 They come there and they get a balanced education.
13 We embrace the whole child and we will do the same
14 thing at the PLAA Academy. We are committed as a
15 board to educate the whole child and that is covering
16 literacy, covering math, covering activities that we
17 call Electives, in addition to giving them those
18 science classes they need, those art classes they
19 need, those drama classes they need. But most of all
20 we want to have that P.I.E. in place too, because we
21 know that if we have that P.I.E. in place that
22 education -- educating those parents that we're going
23 to have happy students because their parents are
24 going to be happy about bringing them to PLAA
25 Academy.

1 And we're asking you all today to just trust us
2 that we will do the right thing in Southwest Little
3 Rock. We promise not to let you down. Thank you.

4 DR. OWOH: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: Good morning. Oh, go ahead.

7 I'm sorry.

8 MS. ABRAMS: We talk about data, data, data.
9 Data will determine the future. In 2020, we will
10 have the census report that will give us 10 years of
11 where we have come from and we will be able to
12 project. The 2020 census will deal with the
13 population that will be available for this school in
14 Southwest Little Rock, we feel certain.

15 The second thing is under Chapter one, which the
16 State Department of Education is aware of how
17 remediation has always been addressed, and we know
18 that the data from the 20 -- from the previous census
19 told us how many people were poverty areas, how many
20 were bilingual, and how many of the population was
21 citizens. The immigration piece has to be taken into
22 consideration as to how Southwest Little Rock's
23 population will be reflected. One thing that you
24 know is that the change in population of this country
25 and this world is changing. We know that there was a

1 time that the only language that was almost assured
2 was the English language. As the population will
3 change after the 2020, I think that this school
4 particularly is addressing the populations of this
5 city, this state, and the world as a minority group.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez, do you want
7 to go to your questions?

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. I've got a few questions.
9 I know in your waivers you rescinded your waiver for
10 guidance services, but I didn't see a salary or
11 anything in there for -- to pay for guidance
12 services. So could you talk about how you're
13 planning on addressing that?

14 MR. DAVIS: Say that one more time, Dr.
15 Hernandez.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: The guidance counselors, school
17 counselors, there's a -- you did have a waiver from
18 that but it had been rescinded, so therefore you'll
19 have to provide counseling services. So I just had
20 -- there's not a line item in there, a budgeted line
21 item to pay for that. So the question is: how do you
22 plan to address that?

23 MR. DAVIS: We are going to -- I think my board
24 can also speak to this, about having facilitators in
25 place that could be able to counsel the learners.

1 I've seen that be quite effective at other
2 institutions. I think at Premier they have it there
3 to where the educators, the teacher in classrooms
4 also play a role as counselors.

5 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. And I just -- I think
6 they are able to do some of that stuff because they
7 do have that waiver. And so I guess what I'm trying
8 to figure out is you rescinded that, so that means
9 you have to follow the guidelines of counseling. And
10 so it's just a question of how you plan on either --
11 is it something you do want to try to go for the
12 waiver with some rationale why you're wanting to do
13 that, or do you have some -- are you going to revise
14 your budget to show that you're going to have to hire
15 a counselor basically?

16 MR. DAVIS: Okay. We're going to revise the
17 budget, sir.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. The next one that -- in
19 your -- and I -- Ms. Smith or somebody from the
20 Charter Office may have to -- I've got two different
21 budgets; one of them reflects -- I think the revised
22 budget doesn't reflect any line items for
23 substitutes. And one of the previous budgets it
24 showed contracting out for a sub. And so just a
25 question about if you're contracting out your

1 substitutes or are you planning on -- not planning on
2 having any substitutes this year?

3 MR. DAVIS: Right. One second, Dr. Hernandez.
4 Counted as professional services, Dr. Hernandez.

5 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. And the -- I saw the
6 lease agreement for the facility there. Is there
7 going to be any cost associated with getting that
8 building ready to open the school? Are you going to
9 have to do any kind of construction or anything on
10 that building?

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. When we toured it the
12 first time, and the second time, the sprinkler system
13 needs some modifications. So we don't have that
14 budget yet in place, I don't think, for the sprinkler
15 system. But that's the only concern. It's a light
16 concern but it was a concern that we're going to have
17 to address that, so we can follow back up with that.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: That's something that you guys
19 are going to have to pay for or is that something the
20 owner is going to take care of?

21 MR. DAVIS: I believe that comes out of our PLAA
22 -- I think that comes out of school. We'll be able
23 to address that.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. The last question I had
25 is in your -- also in your budget it reflected a

1 revenue stream -- and I know we got a letter here
2 that talks about a potential infusion from the Walton
3 Family grant; I know that hasn't been -- doesn't seem
4 like that's been secured yet. Is that accurate?

5 MR. DAVIS: That's accurate, sir.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. And just, you know, a
7 concern if that wasn't -- you know, right now,
8 according to your budget, you're reflecting about
9 \$148,000 carryover. And so if you take that \$375,000
10 that you have there, then that's a problem.

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: And so that's just, you know,
13 just to note that concern.

14 MR. DAVIS: We spoke with Ms. Smith, Kathy
15 Smith. I believe I sent the email and it should be
16 circulating.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: We've got it.

18 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: I just --

20 MR. DAVIS: We're real -- how can I say it --
21 real confident at this point about -- you know -- had
22 we -- we're confident here, if we make it through
23 this stage here, that we'll be able to get those
24 funds in place and from other supporters as well.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

1 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And just a couple of
3 follow-up questions on the budget. I was looking at
4 the A+ school model that there is a yearly cost with
5 that. It looks like the first year it would be maybe
6 a little over \$50,000. Is that reflected in your
7 budget?

8 MR. DAVIS: Yes. Yes, it is.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: That is reflected. Okay.

10 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. That was one
12 question I had. And I'm going to go ahead and let
13 the other panel members ask questions now. Ms.
14 Turner.

15 MS. TURNER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like
16 some conversation about the career and technical
17 programs that you've said you would offer in your
18 curriculum. Could you just give me a general
19 statement about what you chose or -- I have what you
20 chose, but why you chose those and what your plan is
21 there?

22 MR. DAVIS: Sure. I'll have one of my -- my
23 curriculum specialist come on up and speak to that.
24 Ms. Newton [sic], could you repeat the question one
25 more time?

1 MR. TURNER: Yes. I would like some information
2 about the career and technical programs -- I have the
3 programs that you've chosen -- why you've chosen the
4 ones. In statements you've said that students would
5 be college and career ready, and I'd like to know
6 what steps you're going to do to insure that students
7 are career ready, but basically on the curriculum why
8 these particular classes were chosen.

9 MS. SERGEANT: The classes were chosen to align
10 with the Arkansas curriculum and what is being
11 presently offered throughout competitive programming
12 within the city and within Arkansas. Career
13 readiness occurs across the board in all classes.
14 All classes should have a career embedded unit, a
15 career embedded instruction taking place within every
16 classroom, as well as the counselors will be very,
17 very heavily involved in career readiness with the
18 students. Students should have transition plans. I
19 know right now, presently, we just have them in
20 special need programs and with special students. But
21 we will have a transitional plan for every student
22 starting in the 9th grade. In 9th grade they will
23 have -- they will take certain components; 10th grade
24 they will take certain components; 11th grade they
25 will take certain components; and then by the time

1 they graduate 12th grade they will have completed
2 their transition plan. Their transition plan will
3 include their goals, their objectives, their
4 aspirations, and it will also include visiting
5 colleges and universities, especially within
6 Arkansas. We need to increase our Arkansas college
7 enrollment. Right now I know -- I'm aware that
8 community colleges are joining four-year
9 institutions, such as Philander Smith College, such
10 as University of Arkansas at Little Rock, such as
11 Fayetteville, and they're offering programs now where
12 they are accepting our high school students if we can
13 prepare them to come. They have all levels. I know
14 the University of Central Arkansas has levels where
15 they will assist us while they're in high school with
16 career readiness.

17 So I hope this satisfies your question and gives
18 you the confidence that we are going to prepare these
19 young people for their various careers. And we're
20 not going to discourage them from going out-of-state,
21 if they want to go. But we want to keep them in
22 Arkansas, where we're educating them and we're
23 preparing them for Arkansas growth. Thank you.

24 MS. TURNER: Okay. I still have a couple of
25 questions, if you don't mind. And an example is in

1 career orientation, that's actually an 8th grade
2 class and you've listed it in the 9th grade here as a
3 full unit and that's a half-unit credit. So on your
4 building trades, medical professions, family and
5 consumer, agri, these classes -- are you looking at
6 teaching one class in each of those areas? I just
7 need some clarification.

8 MS. SERGEANT: Well, I know that we're looking
9 at flexibility, especially our first year. We have
10 teachers out there that have dual certifications and
11 we will seek out those teachers that can do those
12 various areas for us as needed. They can be a
13 semester course, they can be same thing as a half-
14 year course, they can be a year course. So we will
15 have the rotation.

16 MS. TURNER: Okay. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner, if I may, in
18 looking at their planned course offerings, are you
19 concerned that they don't -- they're not necessarily
20 listing the correct courses that would fulfill the
21 required units?

22 MS. TURNER: That's correct. And that they're
23 not listing -- yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And I had some
25 questions about that as well. I saw Mr. Causbie from

1 our Standards of Accreditation. I don't know if
2 you've had time to look through this very closely.
3 But I have some of the same questions about whether
4 or not that what they had listed, if there may be
5 some concerns about that and if they fully understand
6 what would need to be offered to make sure that we
7 have all that covered. So, Mr. Causbie, do you have
8 any thoughts? Oh, and if you've not been sworn --
9 have you been sworn in?

10 MR. CAUSBIE: No, I have not.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Let's do that
12 really quickly please. Okay. And I should know how
13 to do this but I get nervous. Do you swear or affirm
14 that the testimony you're about to give shall be the
15 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

16 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

18 MR. CAUSBIE: My name is Roy Causbie, with the
19 Standards Unit. Yes, there are some concerns. First
20 of all, there are 38 required units that must be
21 offered and then for high school graduates obviously
22 they have to have at least a minimum of 22 credits to
23 graduate. So I'm looking at a couple of classes
24 here. One was mentioned about career orientation;
25 that is an 8th grade class. Also coding is a 7th and

1 8th grade class. So as far as meeting those
2 requirements, those are at the lower grades below the
3 9th grade.

4 Bear with me just a minute.

5 I also noticed on the math --

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I also have a question
7 about the pre-Algebra.

8 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes. Pre-Algebra is generally in
9 the 8th grade -- is generally an 8th grade class.
10 Let me get to that area there.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yeah. I'm looking at page
12 18 on the application itself.

13 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes. Currently, they have Algebra
14 I, Algebra II, geometry and pre-calculus. As far as
15 the standards are concerned that would meet four of
16 the six math courses, because we're talking AP
17 calculus; that's an AP class which is not one of the
18 six, and the pre-Algebra would not be one of the six.
19 So they would need two more courses under the 400,000
20 course codes to meet the requirements for
21 mathematics.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And in the science
23 were they -- the social studies -- also the social
24 studies.

25 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes. On social studies I believe

1 they have economics under career, so that can be
2 under career. But as far as social studies is
3 concerned it looks like we have American History,
4 World History, Arkansas History as a half-a-credit,
5 African American History and then civics. So, that
6 would be one, two, three-and-a-half. So I think Hip-
7 Hop History, I'm not sure that's a required course,
8 but we know they have to have at least four full
9 units of social studies. Now economics could be
10 moved over to social studies; that's a possibility.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And then the
12 science, they have five courses listed but one of
13 those is STEAM projects. So would that have to --
14 would that have to have a, you know, course approval
15 in order for it to count?

16 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So --

18 MR. CAUSBIE: Course approval or choose one of
19 the other --

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Other already approved --

21 MR. CAUSBIE: -- science courses that are
22 available.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

24 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes, ma'am.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MR. CAUSBIE: And on the English I also noticed
2 they have oral communication one full credit and
3 drama one full credit. Well, basically those are
4 half-a-credit each and also journalism is required to
5 be one of the six.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So just overall in terms
7 of their plan here, they have several deficits --

8 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- in this part that would
10 have to be addressed?

11 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes, ma'am. That's correct.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Thank you.

13 MR. CAUSBIE: You're welcome.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Did that answer your
15 question?

16 MR. CAUSBIE: Did that answer your questions?

17 MS. TURNER: Yes, thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner, did you have
19 any more for now?

20 MS. TURNER: No other questions at this time.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Ms. Newton?

22 MS. NEWTON: Yes. My questions -- my question
23 is around the accreditation or lack of accreditation
24 or the waiver requested for accreditation,
25 specifically teacher, principal, and library media

1 specialist.

2 MS. SERGEANT: The library media specialist
3 would be a point-five, which means they will be there
4 part-time, certain days of the week to fulfill our
5 requirements on that. So if we have to get a waiver
6 for a full-time library media specialist we would be
7 prepared to do that as well.

8 And addressing those curriculum requirements, as
9 you probably heard, some of these areas we're
10 offering more courses than what's required. We have
11 more courses --

12 MS. NEWTON: I'm sorry; maybe I wasn't clear.

13 MS. SERGEANT: Sure.

14 MS. NEWTON: Accreditation.

15 MS. SERGEANT: To address accreditation --

16 MS. NEWTON: Yes.

17 MS. SERGEANT: -- among our meeting the state
18 requirements for graduation or teacher --

19 MS. NEWTON: Qualifications.

20 MS. SERGEANT: Okay, qualifications overall?

21 MS. NEWTON: For these positions.

22 MS. SERGEANT: Okay. The principal will be
23 fully Arkansas certified as a principal, building
24 level administrator. Our teachers, nontraditional
25 teachers, absolutely. That's what I was looking --

1 so nontraditional teachers, teachers that have
2 probably been in -- of course have college degrees
3 but they will be going into the fast-track of getting
4 a master's degree and special education or meeting
5 those other teacher requirements that I know that so
6 many of our finest teachers are going into. I have
7 two children myself and one is a LSU psychology major
8 and now she is a full-blown certified educator.

9 MR. DAVIS: And, you know, the principal may not
10 be certified; it depends.

11 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson, do you have
13 any questions at this time?

14 MR. WILSON: Just a couple, briefly. You all
15 have done an excellent job and covered several of the
16 ones that I wanted to mention or inquire about. Mr.
17 Davis, tell me more about ATK. Is it a charter
18 management organization that sponsors other charter
19 schools in other places?

20 MR. DAVIS: No, sir. It's a nonprofit
21 organization, 501(c)(3) education or entity, about
22 seven years old, but we don't sponsor any other
23 charter organizations. We're not part of a
24 conglomerate or anything as such. It's just with
25 Prolific -- sorry; it's just with Prolific Learning

1 Arts Academy.

2 MR. WILSON: All right. You had a public
3 hearing in connection with your application for a
4 charter. Tell me about who appeared at that public
5 hearing, what the outcome of it was --

6 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

7 MR. WILSON: -- the results of it were.

8 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. The public hearing I
9 believe was the 23rd of March, earlier this year,
10 this past spring. And we had a conglomerate of
11 community investors were there and we talked about
12 the need for educational options in Southwest Little
13 Rock, the history behind the lack thereof as far as
14 at the high school level; we talked about PLAA being
15 a pipeline between Cloverdale Middle School,
16 Mabelvale Middle School, Covenant Keepers Middle
17 School, and other middle school entities in that part
18 of town. And so at this meeting we also had a number
19 of people express some like concerns about this
20 different educational entity in 72209. But I think
21 for the most part it was embraced and several of
22 those peoples are here with us today, sir. This open
23 hearing lasted about an hour-and-a-half and it
24 garnered some attention of some politicians and
25 they've come to see the side that we see with the

1 board of directors for Prolific Learning Arts
2 Academy. And we had some students there who
3 expressed their disinterest in attending the proposed
4 Southwest High School that's going to be built later
5 on. And so, of course, we told them this would be
6 not in competition but just an option for people who
7 don't want to attend the mega high school moving
8 forward. And so this open hearing was very needed,
9 it was helpful, and it drove us to better make some
10 decisions here moving forward.

11 MR. WILSON: How many parents appeared?

12 MR. DAVIS: I would say we had -- I don't have
13 those numbers in front of me. I can check back with
14 our data to see before --

15 MR. WILSON: Just a guesstimate.

16 MR. DAVIS: Guesstimate? Maybe 20; 20 parents.

17 MR. WILSON: As a result of that public hearing
18 and as a result of all of the efforts, the sincere
19 efforts that you all -- your group has made, have you
20 expressed your needs to the Little Rock School
21 District, Mr. Poore? Have you collaborated with the
22 Little Rock District in trying to create a better
23 learning environment for the kids in your area? Have
24 you communicated with Little Rock District?

25 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir, on a good level with

1 Superintendent Poore. We have each other's cell
2 phone numbers, we've talked several times in person
3 and via text message. I think we could do a better
4 job moving forward for the communicating, but -- and
5 that's what we expect and that's what we intend on
6 doing moving forward by working together to help suit
7 the needs of all learners, not just the 72209 -- but,
8 you know, in that area right there. So we'll do a
9 better job of that and we're going to continue to do
10 that. Yes, sir.

11 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Panel Members, do
13 you have some additional questions you want to ask?

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Talk to me a little bit
15 about your student population. I know you said
16 you're going to be in Southwest Little Rock.

17 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Are you just recruiting generally
19 in Southwest Arkansas or -- I mean Southwest Little
20 Rock, or are you looking for a Covenant Keepers or
21 other schools to be your feeders to the high school?
22 Tell me a little bit about your student population.
23 I know the young lady mentioned that she's in charge
24 of marketing. Are you looking for a specific
25 demographic or is it just come-one come-all?

1 MR. DAVIS: It's open door, open enrollment,
2 come as you are. Our target, you know, for the
3 genesis of it has been 72209. But if someone wants
4 to come from Benton or Bryant or even Cabot, if they
5 have, you know, a parent that wants to drive his or
6 her, you know, child to Prolific Learning Arts
7 Academy, we will have open doors as long as we have
8 enough space for them.

9 As far as the people in 72209, we know most of
10 the people living in that Zip Code are minorities of
11 color. And so, you know, of course most of the
12 students may be those persons that reside in that
13 area. Instead of having zoning concerns and having
14 students go to J.A. Fair and Central when they can
15 have another high school to attend to outside of the
16 McClellan area.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: So your recruitment is going to
18 be focused on that Zip Code area?

19 MR. DAVIS: Not just that but -- yes, sir, that
20 recruitment area. Yes, sir, Dr. Williams.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

22 DR. OWOH: Mr. Davis, in your application you
23 have an extensive description on your ELL or ESL
24 program, but in your budget there's not any funds
25 allocated. Will you explain how you will meet the

1 needs of your ELL students without a budget item?

2 MR. DAVIS: Give me one second. Is that the old
3 budget or -- there was two budgets submitted. There
4 should be an updated version.

5 DR. OWOH: It's the one that's in your --

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yeah, I noticed the same
7 thing, so --

8 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

9 DR. OWOH: But you can expound upon it, if it's
10 --

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes, sir. Give me one second.

12 MS. SERGEANT: We will have a career specialist
13 in the area of ELL that will also be a point-five.
14 That person would go into the classrooms and serve as
15 paras with the ELL population as needed. A lot of
16 our of-color are Hispanic community in Southwest
17 Little Rock. A large majority of them speak English.
18 The main communication piece will come in when we are
19 communicating with the parents. But a large majority
20 of the English Language Learners in the Little Rock
21 area they are very, very astute at speaking and
22 understanding and doing class-work that's English,
23 and that is the goal of the United States of America,
24 is for our ELL learners to become -- they're very,
25 very understanding in the English language. So that

1 will also cover our ELL studies.

2 DR. OWOH: And this is for Mr. Davis. Dr.
3 Hernandez did inform me of a line item of \$24,000 on
4 the updated budget. But do you think that's enough
5 to support the population in the geographical area?

6 MR. DAVIS: First year, yes, sir.

7 DR. OWOH: Okay. All right. The next question
8 -- oh, I'm sorry.

9 MS. SERGEANT: That will also give us the funds
10 that's needed to print materials in other languages
11 also that would be going home to the parents. That
12 would be in the communication piece as well.

13 DR. OWOH: So it would not cover the teacher or
14 educator --

15 MS. SERGEANT: It will cover the point-five.

16 DR. OWOH: Okay. All right. My additional
17 question then is in line with that and secondary to
18 Ms. Newton's question about the license, licensure.
19 Is there a plan for your non-licensed educators to
20 obtain an actual licensure or license, or not? Is
21 there a plan?

22 MS. SERGEANT: Absolutely. That will -- that is
23 and will be a part of the plan for the hiring
24 process. They will have to enroll and track it.

25 DR. OWOH: Is there a timeline? Have you

1 planned for a timeline for that?

2 MR. DAVIS: At this moment we don't have a
3 timeline but we'll make some adjustments to that,
4 sir.

5 DR. OWOH: Okay. I have a question about the
6 waiver. Are we going to --

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We'll go to waivers in
8 just a minute. So we'll finish up with some of these
9 more general questions first. Do you have any --
10 okay.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: This may be for Ms. Davis, and
12 this goes back to something I think Dr. Williams
13 asked earlier about their goals being set at that 2%
14 over the three-year -- I think it was three-year
15 period. I know they said they would work on that,
16 but my understanding is is that if we were to approve
17 this application we approve it as-is and that would
18 be the goals that they would be measured on in the
19 future. And so during this we would have to come to
20 some kind of understanding of what these goals would
21 be acceptable for us to be able to approve it.
22 Otherwise, we'd be locked into that 2%. Is that
23 correct?

24 MS. DAVIS: That is correct. The applicant can
25 modify that today if they choose to, to increase that

1 or to make it more, you know, palatable to you in
2 order to approve the application, which that would
3 become part of it. But otherwise, that would be
4 correct.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And to follow-up on that,
6 those goals based on ACT Aspire alone may not
7 necessarily align with the new accountability system.
8 So those progress towards long-term goals may look a
9 little bit different, and so I think the application
10 would definitely need to have either goals based on
11 additional measures or those goals -- I think that
12 definitely these goals could be problematic --

13 MS. DAVIS: Right.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- as they are currently.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: Sorry; I didn't speak in the
16 mic. I said so my question is do we want to continue
17 on with questions or do we want to spend time trying
18 to negotiate that out, or what?

19 MS. NEWTON: I don't have any questions.

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Well, I think Dr.
22 Hernandez' question is with regards to the goals,
23 with us having these concerns, if these concerns --
24 do we want them to work with us at this time to
25 modify some goals or, you know, just knowing that if

1 these goals are as they are that's what would be part
2 of the application, if it were approved?

3 DR. WILLIAMS: For me, the goals that they set
4 is unacceptable.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: So either we modify -- I've
7 always been fairly open and upfront about what I
8 think. Where I'm at now, the goals is unacceptable;
9 two, the academic achievement and the overall
10 curriculum for me is not where it needs to be right
11 now. So it's more to me than the goals. And I
12 struggle with this but, you know, I have to do what I
13 think is right for kids. Where I'm struggling is
14 that there is a need for a school in the location.
15 There is -- I'm there. But it has to be of a quality
16 for the kids who will attend. The academic
17 achievement goals for me are just unacceptable;
18 they're too low. I need to know that when kids go
19 into this school, when they come out -- they can have
20 all these other things but teaching and learning has
21 to take place. That's rule number one. I am not
22 sure I'm seeing that with the overall curriculum.
23 There's just a lot of uncertainty. So that's just
24 kind of where I'm at. So it's either -- I guess
25 right now I'm almost of the mind to -- I wish we

1 could get them some help to just look at the back
2 office, the curriculum infrastructure, but right now
3 they're just not there for me.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Davis --

5 MS. NEWTON: Ms. Chairman, what I wonder going
6 forward with the committee -- not this particular
7 applicant -- is whether or not that's something we
8 want to do is negotiate what is stated in the
9 application. I think it could become problematic at
10 some period because adjustments could be made on the
11 spot based on comments. I don't know -- and that
12 could be -- I don't know what the duty of this panel
13 is relative to that particular situation arising
14 again.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I think that -- and I
16 know Ms. Davis and Ms. Boyd could help us out. The
17 Panel having some leeway to negotiate with the
18 schools, sometimes it's a matter of just clarifying
19 or -- for example, yesterday just insuring on one of
20 the waivers we gave that there were some parameters
21 around the waiver. But I think what -- where we are
22 right now at this point, trying to require someone to
23 come up with new goals on the spot is unrealistic;
24 and therefore, you know, I think we're at a point now
25 where we might need to talk about what could be our

1 next steps if we feel like we're at a point that, you
2 know, where we -- to go on with the questioning, if
3 we've got something that's a glaring issue for the
4 members to keep going. So, Ms. Davis, can you help
5 me please?

6 MS. DAVIS: I'll try. One of the things that
7 you could do -- and, you know, if there are merits to
8 the school and you feel like that, you know, it's
9 something that you do want to continue to move
10 forward rather than them coming back to apply, you
11 could offer -- I mean, it would be an approval but it
12 would be conditioned on them coming back in a certain
13 timeframe, whether it's six months, come back in
14 January or something like that before their open-
15 enrollment period would start with new goals, with
16 new achievement data to present to you. And if you
17 are satisfied with that, then that could go forward
18 and would become part of the charter that you would
19 previously grant -- excuse me -- or, you know, if you
20 were unhappy with it you could work with them some
21 more. But that would also give the school itself
22 time to further develop; it would give them time to
23 seek resources from ADE or somewhere else. That is
24 an option for you as well. I know that we have
25 extended some leeway with goals in the past, but I

1 think those might have been for already existing
2 charters. But if you do see merit in the application
3 and you feel like you want to go forward, that is
4 always an option. And it would be that if you are
5 unhappy like in January that you could go ahead and
6 revoke any charter before students had been assigned
7 to it or money had been given and things of that
8 nature.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But that would be leaving
10 quite a bit of uncertainty?

11 MS. DAVIS: It would.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And also with the fact
13 that we have potentially more charter applications
14 than slots for approval that would tie -- that would
15 also -- could be problematic in addition?

16 MS. DAVIS: Right. And that could end up being
17 one of your many factors in your decision for
18 ranking.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And there are also
20 some things, additional things that I think we would
21 need to find out before we would take that step on
22 waiting.

23 Mr. Wilson, you had asked a little bit ago about
24 the collaboration and cooperation. And as I was
25 listening to the presentation, Mr. Davis, I kept -- I

1 agree with -- someone made the statement there were
2 so many good things in that presentation, and the
3 Respond-I-bility, the A+ schools, the P.I.E., the --
4 you know -- so many of those things. And I guess I
5 just wonder with the possibility of a new high school
6 in Southwest Little Rock that has the potential to
7 bring, you know, a great academic learning space for
8 students if there's not a really good opportunity for
9 collaboration like we've not seen maybe in terms of
10 bringing together all these great things that are
11 being talked about here today with a new facility so
12 that -- you know, within even the traditional realm.

13 So I know we've talked a little bit about the
14 partnership and you indicated that you and Mr. Poore
15 do have a good relationship and so I just think it's
16 worth a mention that there could be a really good
17 partnership created from what we've heard today and
18 know it's being planned for the future.

19 So I think some of the other things that I saw
20 in the -- or had questions about were the child
21 nutrition program, whether or not you were
22 participating in the National School Lunch Program,
23 and whether or not the allocation for child nutrition
24 was adequate. And I also may have missed it, but I
25 wasn't sure about your transportation plans. So if

1 you want to give us a couple of things there that
2 might complete most of our questions.

3 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am. We have a plan set up
4 to work with the City of Little Rock to have public
5 transportation, bus passes for all students. And of
6 course there's a carpooling system we are aware of;
7 you know, working on that as well for students to be
8 there safe and -- those were the two things with the
9 carpooling. And of course this is year-one. We
10 would -- we have something to set up to have buses
11 set up in the future, possibly year-two.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So the
13 transportation cost then for the city transportation,
14 is that included in the budget?

15 MR. DAVIS: It was included. Yes, ma'am.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So that would be
17 adequate for that?

18 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: The carpooling would be
20 parent -- parent carpooling?

21 MR. DAVIS: Parent carpooling. Yes, ma'am.
22 Part of the education initiative.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: The initiative. Okay.
24 And then on your plan for food services, I did -- I
25 do think I saw in the budget a salary?

1 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And participation
3 in the National School Lunch Program?

4 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Were there any --
6 the amount of the salary that's budgeted here, it's
7 -- it is -- I think it was a pretty low salary. So I
8 didn't know whether or not that was going to be an
9 adequate salary for the job that would be -- okay.
10 And I had seen it in one and then not seen it in
11 another, so --

12 MR. DAVIS: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- could you confirm what
14 the plan is?

15 MR. DAVIS: Okay. We'll be making adjustments
16 to that, Dr. Pfeffer.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So I know earlier
18 we were talking about the budget and the
19 sustainability, you know, of what's budgeted and
20 whether or not a grant would come to fruition. So --

21 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I think that is all
23 of my questions for now. Do any of you have any
24 additional at this time?

25 Okay. Before that, Ms. Davis, we haven't gone

1 through waivers and any remaining issues. Do we need
2 to -- so if we have someone here that's ready to make
3 a motion do we need to go ahead and go through the
4 remaining issues and then also look to see if there's
5 any additional public comment?

6 MS. DAVIS: I would -- it's up to you whether or
7 not you want to see remaining issues. Just remember
8 that if there are remaining issues and you choose to
9 grant a charter then those are going to kind of be
10 outstanding. But whether or not you want to do this
11 is up to you. But I would defer and have any public
12 comment that may be here to be made first.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Well,
14 let's make sure whether any remaining issues that
15 needed to be resolved with regards to waivers.

16 MS. DAVIS: I just needed the applicant to
17 confirm they did request a waiver of Teacher
18 Licensure. I just needed them to confirm that they
19 were aware that you still must comply with the
20 Arkansas Qualified Teaching Standards.

21 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. DAVIS: Okay. I had questions -- I mean,
23 some of these are just more questions for them. But
24 I did have questions about why they wanted to waive
25 6-15-201(1) regarding the supplementary educational

1 opportunities waiver. I had questions about that
2 one, about why that was necessary.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Can you respond to
4 that? Do you know which waiver she's referring to?

5 MR. DAVIS: No.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I think it's on page --

7 MR. DAVIS: It's on page --

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yeah.

9 MR. DAVIS: Okay. Supplemental education
10 services, transparency act -- okay. I'm going to
11 defer to one of my board members to come up.

12 MS. DAVIS: And if it helps the board, just so
13 you know, this waiver has never been granted before
14 to anyone.

15 MR. DAVIS: Yes, we would like to revoke that
16 one, Dr. Pfeffer.

17 MS. DAVIS: Okay. The applicant, they've
18 confirmed that they're going to rescind that waiver.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: They're rescinding that
20 waiver. Okay.

21 MS. DAVIS: And that was it.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So that takes care
23 of then any remaining issues with the waivers. So,
24 Ms. Davis, do we have someone -- anybody signed up
25 for public comment that has not had a chance? Yes,

1 okay. Okay, Mr. Poore, you are recognized.

2 SUPT. POORE: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And, Ms. Davis, is there a
4 time on the public comment?

5 MS. DAVIS: Three minutes.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Three minutes. Okay. All
7 right. Thank you. Okay. You are recognized.

8 SUPT. POORE: Do I need to be sworn in or --

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Oh, you do. You do need
10 to be sworn in. Thank you, sir.

11 SUPT. POORE: I'm getting good at this.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You are, yes, better than
13 I am. Okay. Do you swear or affirm that the
14 testimony you're about to give shall be the truth,
15 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

16 SUPT. POORE: I do.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

18 SUPT. POORE: Am I at a three-minute thing, just
19 so I can frame my comments?

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes, there's three
21 minutes. Yes.

22 SUPT. POORE: Okay. You know, first off, I
23 appreciate the questions that were asked by the
24 Charter Panel today because I've been able to hear
25 and participate as you've asked those questions. I

1 got in on the tail-end of Mr. Davis and his team's
2 presentation, so I missed several things. But
3 through your questions I think you're addressing many
4 of the things that I had as things that I would ask
5 you to give consideration to. Being a high school is
6 a complex beast; it is a complex thing. And I think
7 through your level of questions I'm sure Mr. Davis
8 and his team are recognizing that.

9 Just three points that I look at: first off, you
10 know, the range of meeting needs, students' needs are
11 pretty dramatic, especially in a setting where we do
12 have students that have some challenging academic
13 needs.

14 Second, the combination of STEM in arts is an
15 awesome delivery, but at the same time trying to
16 deliver the basics of education and trying to make
17 all that work and at the same time, at least if I
18 understand it right, that they're trying to have 200
19 students 9 through 12, so you actually spread
20 yourself out in terms of the delivery 9 through 12.
21 Now if that adjustment were to occur to be just 9th
22 graders or 9th and 10th and build out, now you have a
23 better chance of building that academic plan.

24 The final thing is with ELA students. I agree
25 with what the individual from Prolific Learning --

1 I'm sorry, I don't know your name but -- Ms.
2 Sergeant, I apologize -- you know, you want students
3 to be able to speak well. But as we all know in the
4 world of testing with ELA students there's a whole
5 other level of things that you have to do to build
6 their skill-set up. And so that's another complexity
7 in terms of being a high school and working with that
8 type of student.

9 The only other thing that I will mention as a
10 part of this is that one of the things that I will
11 share as an opportunity to get out in public is
12 McClellan did go up in seven of the nine tested areas
13 last year and had one area that was flat. Fair went
14 up in six of the ten tested area. Both of those
15 schools were taken off academic watch last year, so
16 they are headed in the right direction. And then
17 with the combination of the new high school hopefully
18 moving into the Southwest that will enhance and
19 create a better instructional model for us as the
20 Little Rock School District.

21 Finally, the feeder patterns at Cloverdale,
22 Mabelvale and Henderson, with the data that I
23 presented yesterday -- and, Dr. Williams, I don't
24 know if you received that but we can get you a copy
25 of that.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Please do.

2 SUPT. POORE: I would share that those three
3 middle school feeder schools also are on an increase.
4 So I want to -- I would share that there are several
5 people that I have deep respect for on the list of
6 folks that are trying to support this. It's just --
7 it's a very, very complex issue when you think about
8 high school and trying to create all the -- meet all
9 the expectations that are a part of that form of
10 delivery. And I appreciate your time this morning.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Poore, just -- and I
12 know you said you didn't get to hear all of the
13 presentation. But just since you're here, I know
14 with the high school and the challenges of, like you
15 said, any high school it's really different when
16 you're looking at the complexity of the curriculum,
17 the needs of students preparing, you know, really
18 getting into their career pathways and future plans.
19 Do you see that there is an opportunity with some of
20 the ideas that they have proposed -- or would there
21 be an opportunity for you-all to sit down and to talk
22 about if these are things that might need to be
23 integrated if they're not already in place within
24 high schools in the district?

25 SUPT. POORE: Absolutely. And the areas of

1 performing arts and STEM in particular really lend
2 itself well to community partnerships, which we
3 obviously -- we're trying to do that everywhere that
4 we can. And we'd be more than willing to work with
5 this group on helping us think through some of those
6 things as we move forward. That school does not open
7 till 2020; that's probably another challenge
8 potentially of just -- you know -- you look at the
9 student numbers for their campus and what the impact
10 might be of, quote, a bright, new, shiny building
11 that is going to be a wonderful opportunity for the
12 students in Southwest.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you. Any other
14 questions?

15 SUPT. POORE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

17 Okay. So, Panel, we're here at a decision time.
18 Ms. Davis, I do want to clarify -- a few minutes ago,
19 your -- what I had understood you to say is that we
20 could approve, disapprove; if we wanted to make
21 approval conditional on some changes, you know,
22 that's an option but that would still be
23 conditionally approving the application. Is there an
24 option to -- for this charter to be able to make any
25 modifications and come back at a later time? Or I

1 know there's always the timelines when you get
2 especially into new charters.

3 MS. DAVIS: Sure. The applicant would, if not
4 approved today, would have to reapply next year
5 during the cycle. But, you know, one of the reasons
6 why you have the Google doc is you can say
7 specifically what reasons for your votes, so that way
8 the applicant would have those, and that way they
9 could continue to work on that and the feedback given
10 at this time to reapply. They could always come back
11 if approved though and modify certain things as well.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So, Panel, do you
13 understand your options?

14 Okay. So at this time I would accept a motion
15 regarding the request for the Prolific Learning Arts
16 Academy.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: I make a motion to deny the
18 application.

19 DR. OWOH: Second.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion and
21 a second to deny the request for the application.

22 All those in favor?

23 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Opposed?

25 Okay. The motion has passed.

1 Mr. Davis, I'm sorry that the application has
2 been denied. But if you'll give us just a minute
3 we'll record those votes and the reasons and give you
4 some feedback.

5 MR. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

7 [A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Hernandez.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. I voted for the motion.
10 While the applicant has some very good ideas and I do
11 think there's a need, I think the application is
12 incomplete from an academic and financial
13 perspective. Just comments I've seen, "Arts changes
14 the lives of kids," and I suggest they stick with
15 this idea and work to solidify their plan.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

17 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the denial. And no
18 clear plan, justification or explanation to address
19 academic, financial and achievement concerns.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

21 DR. OWOH: I voted for the motion because the
22 application did have some innovative instructional
23 initiatives that I think will better serve our
24 students and that population, geographical; however,
25 it does lack several key student support services

1 that are essential to student success.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

3 MS. TURNER: I voted for the motion. Applicant
4 did not provide necessary details in curriculum,
5 staff development, staff certification -- I'm sorry
6 -- and the budget items clearly.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Williams.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I have questions around the
9 achievement. The student achievement goal of an
10 increase of 2% per year is too low. There are
11 several unanswered questions around the curriculum.
12 Also having a student population of 200 in grades 9
13 through 12 is a concern. That is 50 students per
14 grade; that may cause some problems around offering
15 curriculum.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

17 MR. WILSON: I simply -- I voted for the motion.
18 Simply too many unanswered questions, but that's
19 without criticizing the effort and sincerity and the
20 passion of the presenters. I hope that they will
21 continue their efforts in all the ways that they
22 suggest. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Davis and all
24 of you who are here, we do appreciate you and hope
25 that these -- that this feedback is helpful. And we

1 did enjoy the presentation and the ideas. I would
2 encourage you to continue the conversation. Thank
3 you very much.

4 At this time let's take a 10-minute break.
5 Let's come back at 10:30 and we'll move to the next
6 application.

7 (BREAK: 10:17-10:30 a.m.)

8 A-3: APPLICATION OF OPEN ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL:
9 WEINER ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, WEINER, AR

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay, Panel, are we --
11 yes, we're all back. Thank you, everyone, for being
12 here for our hearing on the open-enrollment public
13 charter application for Weiner Academy of Agriculture
14 and Technology, in Weiner, Arkansas.

15 Before we begin with this item we would like to
16 acknowledge our elected officials who are here. I
17 know that we have Representative Mary Bentley and
18 Representative Dwight Tosh here. Have I missed
19 anybody? Okay. And so I would invite our
20 Representatives to the podium if they would like to
21 address the audience at this time.

22 Good morning.

23 REPRESENTATIVE TOSH: Good morning. Thank you,
24 and thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.
25 It was about a year ago that I stood here and asked

1 you to award another school district in my district a
2 program, and I want to thank you for doing that.
3 That was the Harrisburg School District, and I
4 appreciate it.

5 I stand before you again today; I have another
6 school district in my district that I would like to
7 speak for, that's the Weiner Elementary School there.
8 And as you know without me telling this board, you're
9 well aware of the fact that several years ago we had
10 a law in place where if the attendance at a school
11 fell below 350 that that school had to be
12 consolidated. And of course when that law was passed
13 I was not serving as a legislator at that time, nor
14 was Representative Bentley, but -- so when we went
15 into office and we were elected we changed the
16 wording of that law. That law was pretty ironclad at
17 that time and there were no safety-nets. So when we
18 presented the new legislation the school that we used
19 for an example of an injustice that had occurred to a
20 great school all throughout the House and in our
21 presentations was the Weiner School. It was
22 financially strong, academically strong, and they
23 were very competitive in sports. It was just kind of
24 the ideal school, but they had fallen below the 350,
25 but there was not really a safety-net to be able to

1 take care of them. But we changed legislation the
2 2015 legislation to be able to correct that so that
3 an injustice like that to a school that met these
4 kind of standards could not occur again. Of course,
5 there was no way for us to go back and correct what
6 had happened to Weiner. But today we have the
7 opportunity to take a wrong and to make it right.
8 We're able to give a school in this community back
9 their school and it's setting in the perfect location
10 I mean for an agricultural school; you know, we're a
11 county, that's what we're noted for is agriculture.
12 And it's in a great location, and, you know, not too
13 far from Newport-ASU, also just down the road from
14 Arkansas State University. And where it's at now --
15 and I appreciate Harrisburg; when this school had to
16 close due to the consolidation it was Harrisburg and
17 Mr. Sample and them that stepped up and they took
18 Weiner because they had no place to go. But today
19 they have an opportunity -- we have an opportunity,
20 and this board does, to say, Okay, let's give that
21 community and let's give the citizens of that
22 community, let's give them their school back and
23 let's make this right. And because we've got
24 students there now that are traveling sometimes an
25 hour-and-a-half to two hours on buses in the morning

1 to get to school; the same thing in the afternoon.
2 And if they're driving to another school they may be
3 driving 15 to 25 miles. So I just want to stand
4 before you today and tell you -- I know you're going
5 to hear a lot of other presentations today about this
6 school and some about the academics and so-forth as
7 to what this school will bring to that community.
8 But I just wanted to give you a little backdrop as to
9 what had happened and kind of what had happened to
10 this community. And I can assure you I would
11 appreciate a favorable vote. And, like I said, it
12 was just an injustice that occurred to a great school
13 and I believe we have the opportunity at this time to
14 take that wrong, as I said earlier, to make it right.
15 And I would appreciate your favorable consideration.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you, Representative.
18 You're recognized.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BENTLEY: First I want to say
20 thank you for not allowing this to come out of their
21 time because as a politician I like to talk. So,
22 thank you for giving me a little bit of leeway on
23 that. I appreciate that, and I appreciate your board
24 and I appreciate what you're doing, because I'm
25 really excited -- real excited about education in

1 Arkansas, the opportunities that we have now. We're
2 working out of the box. We have people being so
3 flexible and for the first time I really think we're
4 putting students first, and that's exactly what this
5 is with this program is really putting students in
6 that area first.

7 In 2015, along with Senator Gary Stubblefield I
8 sponsored legislation that would allow for Schools of
9 Agricultural Studies in Arkansas. That went to the
10 floor of the House, it passed with 84 votes. Our
11 House of Legislators is very much behind the school
12 of agricultural studies because we know agriculture
13 is huge in Arkansas. Half of our jobs are from
14 agriculture in Arkansas, and it's booming. To me,
15 it's a bright spot for jobs in Arkansas, is
16 agriculture. So I'm really excited in pushing this
17 to begin with. When we were in the room with the
18 Governor and he was signing this piece of legislation
19 into law the folks from Weiner were there and the
20 Governor was there and it was 100% support of that.
21 He said, "Guys, we have some things that we need to
22 work on," but he went ahead and put his signature on
23 there in support of this legislation.

24 When we get to the rules part with the
25 Department of Education and the Career Ed., there's

1 just really no way with that legislation to make the
2 rules work. As much as we try -- we tried for two
3 years to make it work; just did not happen. So I
4 finally realized, Senator Stubblefield and I, that we
5 were going to have to redraft some legislation and
6 come back in 2017 and correct the wrongs that were
7 there to make sure that we could make it work. So we
8 worked with Career Ed., we worked with the Department
9 of Education, with the Governor's office, with Sarah
10 Moore, and we just got together with Jennifer here,
11 and we got legislation passed. It once again went to
12 the floor of the House and of the Senate and had
13 overwhelming support for this legislation. So I'm
14 real excited. To me, this is the end of a five-year
15 journey that I've been working on to get schools of
16 agricultural studies in Arkansas. And we do have
17 other schools that are doing things, but this is
18 unique, this is new. This is so exciting. I read
19 the plan and I just about -- I almost cried, it was
20 just so exciting to me to see all that they had
21 planned, the exciting things for our students with
22 broadband, with businesses there bringing in their
23 equipment and their time. To me, that's the most
24 important, that local businesses are willing to give
25 their time and effort to these students to make them

1 succeed in agriculture. I know they have spoken with
2 Wes Ward, our Secretary of Agriculture, numerous
3 times and he is in 100% support of the school as
4 well.

5 So I want you guys to know that there is a great
6 history behind this school, that we are really
7 excited. And there are people across the nation --
8 not just here in Arkansas, but there are people
9 across the nation looking to see what's going to
10 happen here in Weiner with this great school of
11 agriculture, because it's really a start. Right now
12 we have lots of schools that are in two-year
13 universities where they're getting the technical
14 support now, but we're going to bring it right on
15 campus to these students. And as to why, as I said
16 these students are already traveling an hour-and-a-
17 half to school; I don't want them to have to travel
18 an hour-and-a-half to school and then travel again to
19 another two-year university to get this technical
20 support. They'll be able to get it right when they
21 get there on campus and have amazing folks there
22 onboard to help.

23 So I just want to tell you guys thank you so
24 much for all that you're doing here today. Thank you
25 for giving schools of agriculture a chance to blossom

1 and to bloom in our state. I am really excited about
2 this. The legislature is 100% behind this, as is the
3 Governor and Secretary of Agriculture. And I know
4 that you're going to hear some negative folks from
5 some public school superintendents that are here that
6 are opposed to charter schools, and we know that they
7 are and we understand why, because of funding. But
8 we're at a point in Arkansas that we're putting kids
9 first and we're putting education first and we're
10 putting ingenuity and technology first. And I am
11 really excited to see this school be a bright light
12 for our state, and I'd appreciate a good vote today.
13 Thank y'all very much.

14 Do you have any questions for me before I should
15 leave at all?

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any questions,
17 Panel?

18 DR. WILLIAMS: I seem to always have a question.
19 And just for my clarification --

20 REPRESENTATIVE BENTLEY: There's always one in a
21 crowd that has a question.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: This is my first time on the
23 Panel. I hear the reference to an agricultural law
24 for the school --

25 REPRESENTATIVE BENTLEY: Uh-huh.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: -- which is fine. How does that
2 fit with the charter? It sounds like there's two
3 separate pieces in which the school could be
4 established, I guess.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes. And, Dr. Williams, I
6 think Ms. Davis can address that part there. Very
7 good question.

8 MS. DAVIS: Hi. Okay. So the charter -- the
9 School for Agricultural Studies is available to any
10 open-enrollment charter school. Either they can
11 request it during their application time, which is
12 what they are planning on doing today, or they -- an
13 open school already can request an amendment to their
14 charter. It's also available to district conversion
15 charter schools. They can request to be designated
16 by -- as -- by this board as a School for
17 Agricultural Studies. To do that they must include a
18 review of their agricultural plan from the Department
19 of Career Education, which I do believe was included
20 and sent out as additional material to you. One of
21 the things about this, you know, schools can offer
22 agricultural programming, but they cannot have this
23 specific designation unless it's granted by you. Now
24 for the applicant today it would be a two-fold; you
25 would need to vote whether or not to approve their

1 charter, because if you don't have a charter school
2 then you don't have a School for Agricultural
3 Studies.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: That's what I needed --

5 MS. DAVIS: So the first vote would be to
6 approve or deny their school. And if you choose to
7 approve, then you would choose to approve whether or
8 not they get that designation. And I will go make
9 copies of the law for you just so you'll have it.
10 But one of the things to consider is that the law
11 does allow after a few years the school to petition
12 for detachment. It doesn't mean that they are
13 required to be granted detachment, but they can
14 petition a charter school. So there is a little bit
15 more implication that is involved in a School for
16 Agricultural Studies, rather than just giving them
17 simply the name. So I will get copies of the law to
18 you before the end of the presentation for you to
19 review as well. It's a fairly short law. But most
20 importantly is their application, because if they
21 don't have a school then you don't have an ag-school.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Got it. Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BENTLEY: I'd like to just
24 briefly say I hope that you guys are taking the time
25 to read the letters that were sent with this school,

1 because the overwhelming community support from
2 industries is outstanding. And those people have
3 been there with Weiner for five years. It's not just
4 that they didn't come onboard; it's been proven over
5 time that they're going to stick with this and they
6 have the commitment and the ingenuity to make this
7 happen. So thank y'all very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

9 Okay. So at this time, Ms. Perry, you are
10 recognized to get us started with the Hearing for the
11 Open-Enrollment Public Charter School Application,
12 Weiner Academy of Agriculture and Technology.

13 MS. PERRY: Weiner Academy of Agriculture and
14 Technology is a proposed open-enrollment public
15 charter school to be located within the Harrisburg
16 School District. The sponsoring entity is ASSET
17 Foundation. The applicant is requesting to serve
18 students in grades K-12 with a maximum enrollment of
19 400 beginning in the 18-19 school year. The
20 applicant has notified affected districts of this
21 proposed public charter school.

22 The primary presenter today for Weiner Academy
23 of Agriculture and Technology is Dr. Karen Ballard,
24 who is a professor with the University of Arkansas
25 System, Division of Agriculture and Cooperative

1 Extension Services. Additional individuals that
2 might also present or have -- be able to address
3 questions are Representative Dwight Tosh,
4 Representative Mary Bentley, Mr. Kevin McGilton, Ms.
5 Greta Greeno, Ms. Mary Norris, and Mr. Radius Baker.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So at this time we
7 are ready to hear the proposal from the school. So
8 if I could have the members of the school and anyone
9 who will be speaking in support or opposition of the
10 school to go ahead and stand to be sworn in. Okay.
11 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're
12 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth,
13 and nothing but the truth?

14 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

16 And I believe that we will start with Dr. Karen
17 Ballard. Is that correct?

18 MS. GREENO: I'm Greta Greeno, president of
19 ASSET Foundation, which is the sponsoring entity for
20 the school.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

22 MS. GREENO: And I just -- I want to thank you,
23 Madam Chair and this Panel. We're excited to be
24 presenting before this newly formed and distinguished
25 panel and we just appreciate this opportunity.

1 One thing that I wanted to do first is we have
2 submitted some additional documentation, a budget,
3 and I just want to request that you would authorize
4 that. And Mr. Radius Baker is going to explain our
5 request.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And if you'll state
7 your name for the record, you're recognized.

8 MR. BAKER: Okay. I'm Radius Baker and I get to
9 come up here and tell you how sorry I am for the
10 budget proposal that I gave y'all Thursday; it was
11 incomplete, and I apologize for that. We have made
12 some corrections on it. And then as I looked at the
13 corrections we saw on the last page, on line 116,
14 that we failed to put our lease purchase in there for
15 \$24,000. So we added that in pen, I think, and it's
16 -- would change the bottom-line on line 126 to
17 \$2,556.72. I apologize for my blunder; please
18 forgive me.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

20 Okay. And if you'll state your name you'll be
21 recognized.

22 MS. GREENO: I'm sorry; before we get started,
23 before Ms. Ballard gets started, we have Mr. Kevin
24 McGilton from Riceland Foods. He is here in support
25 of -- from the agricultural business industry. We've

1 been working with them for over two years. And he
2 wants to just say -- make a few comments here on
3 behalf of Riceland Foods.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I do want to make sure
5 everyone is clear though we are -- this is part of
6 the 20 minute presentation. Okay.

7 MR. MCGILTON: Thank you. My name is Kevin
8 McGilton; I'm vice president of Government Affairs
9 for Riceland Foods. I want to speak today in support
10 of the Weiner Academy of Agriculture and Technology.
11 The bottom line is, is we have an employment crisis
12 in east Arkansas when it comes to farming and food
13 manufacturing. The average age of Arkansas farmers
14 is 58.2 years and it's climbing every year.
15 Technology is taking over farm production from
16 onboard GPS navigation systems to programmable seed
17 planters. Arkansas needs young people interested in
18 farming and prepared to use today's technology and
19 tomorrow's technology. The need is so great that in
20 2016 the USDA granted a firm in East Arkansas
21 \$481,000 to try to recruit new farmers. In the rice
22 milling process today we don't need strong backs
23 stacking bags of rice; we need technicians that run
24 the robotics that stack the rice. Modern day rice
25 mills aren't run by pulleys and switches anymore;

1 they're run by computers and programmable systems.
2 On any given day in Stuttgart, at Riceland, we have
3 40 to 50 job openings that we can't find qualified
4 applicants. And for the past two years we've hosted
5 Congressman Rick Crawford's STEM tour of East
6 Arkansas for high school guidance counselors, two-
7 year and four-year college counselors, so they
8 understand the need that we have and the type of jobs
9 that we have open in East Arkansas. We think it's
10 important to educate the children of East Arkansas in
11 the opportunities that they have because we find it
12 very hard to bring people in from the outside that
13 will stay in East Arkansas long-term. We believe
14 children educated and have lived in East Arkansas
15 will stay in these opportunities. And personally, as
16 a graduate of Hamburg High School I was exposed to
17 agriculture at a young age. And as a past president
18 of Future Farmers of America I can truly tell you
19 that exposure to agriculture at an early age plants a
20 seed for agriculture for a lifetime. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

22 DR. BALLARD: Good morning. I'm Karen Ballard;
23 I am the professor of Program Evaluation for the
24 University of Arkansas System, Division of
25 Agriculture. In that capacity I work with all four

1 program areas within the Division of Agriculture,
2 including Family and Consumer Science, Community and
3 Economic Development, Ag and Natural Resources, and
4 Youth Development -- 4H Youth Development. I've
5 worked with the Department of Education in one
6 capacity or another for 19 years. I've been a
7 recipient of the Comprehensive School Health grants,
8 Drug-Free Schools and Communities programs, and I'm
9 currently an approved in-service trainer for teachers
10 in Arkansas.

11 First and foremost, this is about the
12 scholarship of engagement. It's not about the past;
13 it's about a phoenix rising from the dust. It's
14 about better, it's about more, it's about relevant,
15 it's about kids.

16 I'm going to be talking fast because I've got a
17 lot to say -- and I don't usually use notes, but I'm
18 going to use them today.

19 There's a story here. Despite all the rhetoric
20 in our -- in the educational circles -- and I've sat
21 on many boards and commissions and advisory
22 committees -- Arkansas' student interest in
23 performance in STEM has been flat for sometime and
24 their interest in agricultural and other biological
25 sciences is appalling. In politics it's been stated

1 that all you need to do is follow the money; the same
2 can be said for education. Most schools in Northeast
3 Arkansas provide stipends for all kinds of coaches --
4 athletic coaches, that is. You don't see stipends
5 for science coaches or science fair coordinators.
6 No, that's borne on the backs of those teachers and
7 that's had an affect. The Academy proposes to
8 provide stipends for science fair coordinators with
9 opportunities for awards for members. This is one
10 really small detail in our proposal, but it's
11 significant.

12 Curiosity is at the core of scientific discovery
13 and just learning in general. Every day, Academy
14 students will be asked, "What do you see?" Now I'd
15 like you to look at this slide and I would -- this is
16 our laboratory; this is what our kids will see. I'd
17 like to take a moment and ask you what do you see.
18 What do you see? As an instructor, I would ask my
19 class, "What do we know for sure?" It's a rice
20 field, but there are lots of variables to explore --
21 soil nutrients, temperature, water quality and
22 quantity, radiant exposure, three forms of matter;
23 science with a context, a meaning, a history, and a
24 future for our kids.

25 As a full partner in the development of this

1 proposal for the Academy, I led the team in the
2 evaluation of student needs and the potential student
3 pool. I drew a circle around Weiner, and utilizing
4 ADE report card data examined how our kids are doing.
5 I'll ask you again as you look at that slide, What do
6 you see? As a person who has spent my entire career
7 focused on responding to the needs of high-risk youth
8 and adults, education, leadership, program
9 development and evaluation, the data speaks volumes
10 to me. I was in despair when I actually saw that.
11 That's why I'm here today. In a review of 13 area
12 schools surrounding Weiner, 10 are Needs Improvement
13 and one is Needs Improvement/Focus. This is
14 systematic educational failure. These students are
15 capable of learning. I will not accept that they're
16 not. The definition of insanity is doing the same
17 thing and expecting different results. This is
18 insanity.

19 We likewise examined the locations of current
20 open and conversion charter schools for parents with
21 children attending low-performing schools. Sometimes
22 a picture is worth a thousand words. What do you
23 see? Do you see that there's rare opportunity to
24 participate in an open-enrollment charter for any kid
25 in the Delta? Certainly not for kids in our area.

1 Fundamental change is what drives innovation,
2 not tinkering around the edges. The lack of an open-
3 enrollment charter option for parents -- and as a
4 parent, to me it's glaring -- the Academy will
5 provide fundamental and bold change with partners
6 that are at the table today -- not philosophically,
7 not potentially; they're here today.

8 STEM identifies underserved learners as
9 minority, low-income, and first generation college.
10 This is the Delta. The rates, the numbers are
11 staggering -- and I'm all about the numbers; I'm an
12 evaluator. Poinsett County exceeds the state poverty
13 rate with 24% of individuals and families living in
14 poverty. The percentage of Poinsett County residents
15 with a bachelor's degree or higher is only 8.4%,
16 compared to 21.1% across Arkansas. How long can
17 failing schools be rewarded, guys? The price to
18 Delta students is staggering.

19 It's likewise an important question, Who cares?
20 Who cares if Northeast Arkansas schools don't even
21 sponsor science fairs anymore? As a little girl
22 growing up in the Delta, I didn't have a choice about
23 whether or not I was an active learner. From the 7th
24 through the 12th grades I was expected to conduct
25 research and produce a science project. Why is that

1 important? Well, I'm the face representing those
2 kids today. I'm the first person who ever graduated
3 from college on either side of my family, ever. My
4 graduation was the first college campus that my
5 father or my mother ever walked on. I didn't get a
6 campus tour. That's not what got me there. I was
7 expected to show up at science fairs and other kinds
8 of student engagement activities and look at
9 professors in the eye and say, "This is what I
10 think." I was given an opportunity to belong, not
11 just drive-thru. There's a difference. All of the
12 contemporary educational research shouts to the value
13 of problem-solving, critical thinking, planning,
14 organization, literature review, data collection,
15 technical writing, analysis, and communication of
16 ideas. It's intervention rather than remediation.
17 You can't talk a kid into understanding and learning
18 those skills. They have to live it. We have lost
19 this opportunity for generations of kids in the
20 Delta.

21 So how do we take that bold step away from
22 students as passive learners? Our professional
23 learning community will be facilitated through
24 teacher-led leadership teams supported through a
25 learning management system that not only provides

1 accountability, which is critical for student
2 learning, but also provides a roadmap for
3 individualization of learning. Fundamental change
4 and innovation always involves people on the fringe.
5 We've got a lot of people on the fringe. That's
6 where diverse partnerships come in. It's also
7 involves tearing down educational silos. How many
8 generations will be sacrificed at the foot of failing
9 instructional methods and districts that do not
10 perform? I have -- we have set high goals for these
11 kids and we provide parents with viable options to
12 these low-performing schools. Parents in the Delta
13 deserve a choice. I had a choice when I was a parent
14 in the Little Rock area and my child rode a bus for
15 an hour-and-a-half each way to get to a STEM-oriented
16 high school, and it was the best thing that he ever
17 did.

18 Katrina Adams, the director of the Planning
19 Science Program, the national program, with the
20 Botanical Society of America is excited about this.
21 It's going to be a hopeful partner in this, which is
22 amazing. There's no school in Arkansas that is
23 partnered with this group.

24 The proposed academy enrollment is 125, which is
25 totally feasible within the current identified

1 student area. As of last week, Trish Wilcox with the
2 Department of Education confirmed that the area
3 schools identified above that surround Weiner have
4 438 students currently being home-schooled. It is
5 our hope that many of the parents who have lost
6 confidence in public education and turned to home-
7 schooling in this area will find a place in the
8 Academy. We also seek to be a school of choice for
9 parents and students who deserve and desire a
10 rigorous STEM-focused education and have developed a
11 marketing plan to insure that parents receive that
12 opportunity and have access to it. Agriculture and
13 technology is a context for learning. It provides a
14 valuable link between parents and their children.

15 The vision matters. For many people,
16 agriculture is largely understood; it's antiquated.
17 There is a major disconnect. The Academy will
18 rapidly move students and their parents from a dated
19 view of agriculture to a realistic first-hand
20 experience with the science and technology that
21 undergirds and supports Arkansas' biggest industry.
22 Discussions with agricultural business, government,
23 and Higher Education, all of who are at the table
24 here, have identified a significant and compelling
25 need to -- for an evolved workforce, not mechanics

1 but kids who have the capacity to understand the big
2 picture. This includes bioscience, technology
3 transfer, the management of big data, chemistry, and
4 biology. For Arkansas students graduating from the
5 Academy of Agriculture and Technology, doors will
6 open for them before and after they leave high
7 school.

8 From virtual synchronized classrooms to custom
9 curriculum and individualized instruction to teacher
10 training and development, multiple resources are
11 literally laying on the table and waiting to be
12 picked up. What you see on the screen is not -- it's
13 what we have produced. The Division of Agriculture
14 engaged students in STEM-focused schools. Most of
15 the schools in the Delta, we work with 65 schools in
16 41 counties -- and do you know, most of them are not
17 in the Delta? Do you know what the schools are?
18 They're Central High School, they're Pulaski Academy,
19 they're Haas Hall, they're Alpena High School,
20 they're Alma High School, they're South Side in Fort
21 Smith, they're Westside in Northwest -- in Northeast
22 Arkansas. There are a few, but most of the schools
23 in the Delta do not provide. Even when it's free and
24 readily available and produced specifically for
25 Arkansas kids, they don't even pick it up off the

1 table.

2 With a blended learning strategy students will
3 have expanded curriculum choices and advance at their
4 own individualized pace. Concurrent and college
5 credit will be available. And I want to point out
6 it's a resource that we are committed to developing,
7 not as a pay-as-you-play option, but that's readily
8 available free to kids. And I'm here to tell you
9 today I'm a volunteer for resource development. The
10 money will be there.

11 Teachers as chief learning officers will provide
12 a key resource connection for student improvement to
13 provide leadership. Teachers are key, engaged
14 teachers, teachers who grasp the excitement of the
15 opportunities and the intrigue of this field.
16 Science matters. It mattered in the 1920s with our
17 dust bowl. You know, I went through an entire
18 education and I never knew that scientists -- Dr.
19 George Washington Carver is the scientist that is
20 credited for breathing life back into southern
21 agriculture. I always thought he just grew peanuts.
22 That's how limited my understanding was of the
23 science behind agriculture. He actually discovered
24 that legumes, peanuts which is one but also soybeans,
25 actually has a component that facilitates nitrogen

1 fixation back into the soil. Mono-cropping, the
2 cropping of just cotton throughout the south,
3 stripped the soil of those -- of that nitrogen, and
4 so it was a dust bowl. George Washington Carver
5 changed that through science. Our kids need to see
6 what they can do as well. They can have a change.
7 They can make an incredible difference.

8 The Academy will enlarge the vision and world of
9 Delta students through strategically accessing and
10 collaborating with statewide national partners. Now
11 I just want to say here, it's one thing to say,
12 "Well, I'll support the vision of kids." But if
13 you're growing up in poverty what is your vision?
14 It's our responsibility as educators to create that
15 vision, to say, "Look, look at this, look at this;
16 what do you see?" We'll be challenging students to
17 step up, no doubt about it, but we're going to be
18 stepping up as well.

19 There are big issues surrounding students in the
20 Delta. Everyone cares about something, from
21 renewable fuels in response to the depletion of
22 fossil fuels, to energy and the development of
23 drones. Students will discover an amazing array of
24 issues that challenge them, that tug at their hearts,
25 that inspire them. In my first job out of college,

1 working with alcoholics, a colleague told me, "Oh,
2 don't worry about, you know, all the failure. You've
3 got to remember one thing, Karen; you can't lead a
4 horse to water and make them drink." My mentor
5 pulled me aside and said, "Karen, they may be right,
6 you can't pull -- lead a horse to water and make them
7 drink, but it's our job to make them thirsty." And I
8 think that lesson -- it has always stayed with me all
9 my life. It's our job to make kids thirsty, and I
10 believe we can.

11 Arkansas agriculture is a major player in
12 addressing world hunger. Most people in Arkansas
13 don't even know that. From soybean, which is a
14 complete protein, to bio-fortified food products,
15 including golden rice, a variety that includes beta
16 carotene -- rice is the food source for over half of
17 the world's population. This variety can prevent the
18 current death rate of over 670,000 kids a year in
19 developing countries. It's our job to help the
20 children in the Delta region gain price of place to
21 see a rice field and never see it in the same light;
22 to understand that there's a face attached to that
23 rice and that they can be a part of sustaining that;
24 they can play a pivotal role.

25 Students will be included in the discussion of

1 some of the biggest challenges of their generation
2 today, to be a part of a public policy debate in the
3 bigger world in which they live. With fewer farms,
4 fewer acres in cultivation, and more people to feed,
5 it's estimated by World Health Organization 2050,
6 nine billion. The science becomes personal. We want
7 to make it personal. I've found through my work with
8 the Living Science Challenge, which I direct at the
9 Division of Agriculture, that students are motivated
10 by real issues. Providing context and meaning to
11 abstract science and math will be a core
12 instructional goal.

13 The values and vision of the Academy is also to
14 facilitate student service to others through service
15 learning. From gleaning that is a practice as old as
16 time and biblical to the USDA nutrition program it is
17 a core value of the agricultural community; the
18 inclusion of financial literacy curriculum for the
19 students -- a curriculum, not a talk. We'll directly
20 address the cycle of poverty pervasive in the Delta.

21 The driving Academy strategy is facilitated
22 through meaningful partnerships to enrich
23 instructional resources, student support, and student
24 achievement through blended instructional designs
25 statewide, national professional learning communities

1 that we have commitments from. Individual learning
2 plans, parents as partners, project-based learning,
3 applied research infrastructure, scaffolding, and
4 diverse curriculum supported through Virtual
5 Arkansas, Khan Academy, the Arkansas School for the
6 Math and Sciences, the Arkansas Division of
7 Agriculture, mentorships through Planting Science,
8 ASU --

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Ballard, I'm sorry,
10 but the 20 minutes is up at this time.

11 DR. BALLARD: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But you will have an
13 additional five minutes if you -- do you want to just
14 finish up your thought there on the presentation?

15 DR. BALLARD: I've got a long list; I'll just
16 tell you that. And I will close because my time is
17 up --

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

19 DR. BALLARD: -- and I think I'll be able to
20 address the other things in my -- the five minutes.
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And we
23 do have the copy of the presentation, I believe, that
24 we've been able to look at that.

25 DR. BALLARD: Okay.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So, thank you.

2 Okay. So at this time I think we have
3 opposition and we have 20 minutes for the opposition
4 to speak. And if you will come to the podium and
5 state your name for the record, you are -- you will
6 be recognized.

7 SUPT. SAMPLE: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Madam
8 Chair; thank you, Panel. I'm Danny Sample,
9 superintendent of Harrisburg School District. I'll
10 start by saying you received some information from
11 us; I'm sure you probably already have it. It's just
12 basically some generic information of uses we have
13 with the -- at the Weiner campus with the old Weiner
14 High School. So those are just some things in front
15 of you. The other thing is, Harrisburg School
16 District came to this Panel, with different faces, of
17 course, about a year ago and applied and was granted
18 a conversion charter for our high school. That
19 conversion charter, along with our award-winning two
20 elementary schools -- one happens to be in Weiner,
21 which is a Blue Ribbon school -- our middle school,
22 high school and elementary school on the Harrisburg
23 campus. We are very -- we offer a very diversified
24 curriculum. That curriculum is approved by the State
25 and we believe in successes for all students. We

1 have a young man that's still with us in high school
2 that scored a perfect ACT score this year. Also, we
3 have some very challenged handicapped children that
4 if they could pick a pencil up that will be the most
5 successful thing they do the rest of their lives. We
6 work in a diversified school district. We work with
7 diversified students, and we challenge all of them
8 and we pride ourselves with the results of successes
9 of each one of those babies have.

10 With that said, I do want to say that our school
11 district is at this time losing students the last
12 three years. So I will somewhat agree with
13 Representative Bentley. I'm not opposed to the
14 charter concept, but as a superintendent I would
15 oppose any school, whether it's an open-enrollment
16 charter, private, or a home-school, or anything in
17 between, that challenges the integrity of my school
18 district or any school district within this state by
19 reducing the funding that we need to spend on
20 insuring success for students.

21 At this time I'm going to turn it over to our
22 district attorney, Mr. Don Mixon, and that would --
23 will conclude our presentation, Madam Chair. Thank
24 you.

25 MR. MIXON: Dr. Pfeffer and Panel Members, I'm

1 Don Mixon; I represent the Harrisburg district. We
2 also have two other districts who are also clients.
3 Newport district is represented by their
4 superintendent here today, as is Jackson County
5 School District.

6 Let me say one thing in opposition to what
7 you've heard. None of these districts oppose the
8 idea of charter schools and we are not here opposing
9 the idea of charter schools. A lot can be learned by
10 public schools from charters. What we are opposing
11 is the particular application before you, and that is
12 opposed because of the immediate conflict that it
13 creates with the existing school district, with
14 Harrisburg. Harrisburg has an agriculture program.
15 It has an agriculture program which is being
16 increased; a new teacher has come in. They want to
17 work in agriculture and they have a lot of students
18 who come off the farm to go to school. They are
19 concerned about what this will do to their
20 agriculture program to put a school that advertises
21 itself as an agricultural school nearby.

22 They also have concerns about the desire in the
23 application to take the -- to take over the existing
24 Harrisburg High School building, or what was the --
25 excuse me -- the Weiner High School building. That

1 building is being used by Harrisburg. It is used for
2 peewee basketball; it is used for -- some for
3 required storage that they have no other place for;
4 it also sits within 150 feet of the elementary
5 cafeteria area, which is used for both cafeterias or
6 food service, as well as a creative class time in the
7 mornings. I mention that because that's a part of
8 the Act 542.

9 When Harrisburg consolidated with Weiner they
10 did so at the direction of the legislature and then
11 ultimately the State Department. That consolidation
12 was expensive. There was some state money involved
13 that helped. That state money is finished. They
14 still have that expense of carrying that out. They
15 have taken that seriously and attempted to be a good
16 neighbor with the Weiner community. They have --
17 they kept the high school for a period of time and it
18 wasn't economically feasible. They have kept the
19 elementary school. The mascot for the Weiner
20 Elementary School is the Cardinals, which is the
21 mascot that Weiner used. They've tried to -- they
22 have a Weiner native, who is the principal there, and
23 they have tried to keep a good relationship there and
24 keep good facilities.

25 The information that you saw about -- that you

1 heard from Dr. Ballard about schools, I certainly
2 would invite her to take the time to visit Harrisburg
3 and she'll see a lot of the things that she described
4 in Harrisburg.

5 I also would invite you, as you look at the new
6 budget which I think was just handed out today --
7 look at the zeroes that you see in a variety of areas
8 for that budget. And then if we boil that down, I
9 think it fits into certain areas. Money is an area
10 that you see -- that's a concern here, and
11 facilities. Weiner High School has no desire to give
12 up that high school building; the Harrisburg District
13 has no desire to give up that high school building.
14 They need it and they have further plans in the
15 future for it. You'll see that on what Mr. Sample
16 gave you.

17 Transportation is a serious issue. I don't
18 believe that you would find any of the three
19 superintendents here that would say that they're able
20 to fit in helping with transportation to transport
21 students to Weiner under the funds that they have.

22 There is a real concern about what I would call,
23 for lack of a better word, some special services,
24 special education, ELL, dyslexia services. None of
25 these are covered in a way that seems to help these

1 children. Special education is a matter that's dear
2 to the Harrisburg heart through Mr. Sample, as you
3 heard him mention. They have kept -- for a small
4 school district we don't see this that much in our
5 part of the state -- but they have kept their own
6 special education supervisor because they want to run
7 a key program, a good program for these children.
8 But that also means that they know the variety of
9 children that you get at a high school.

10 The Weiner -- and I think I've covered this and
11 I'm trying to make sure I get through everything --
12 we believe that a material negative impact will occur
13 to Harrisburg if this is granted, and its maintenance
14 of its elementary school may be affected as money
15 becomes affected. They can only keep that distant
16 school so long as their money allows them to do so,
17 but they're committed to continuing to try.

18 The information that you were given about home-
19 school students, we saw the various districts that
20 were listed there, but that's over a broad area. I
21 can tell you in Jonesboro, where I'm from, we have a
22 large number of home-school students. I don't know
23 that you can rely upon home-school students to change
24 their mind and say, "No, but I want to go to the agri
25 school at Weiner," and certainly not coming from

1 Jonesboro.

2 And, lastly, I just want to say that our firm --
3 I've been involved in education for 41 years,
4 representing districts, being on a school board. Now
5 it's almost exclusively a practice of our firm. We
6 see districts from the -- represent districts from
7 the Mississippi River to Lake Norfolk, and from the
8 Missouri line to the Arkansas prairie. There are
9 many schools in the situation as Weiner was. There
10 are many small schools that no longer exist. We
11 know, if you go back to the first part of the last
12 century, there were something like 4,000 school
13 districts at the beginning of the 20th century, in
14 Arkansas. By the end of that century we had
15 somewhere between 300 and 400. We know that that was
16 a route that was taken. I'm not here to speak about
17 consolidation, but I'm just saying there are a lot of
18 schools over there -- I'm sure that Mr. Shannon from
19 Jackson County would be concerned if this is granted
20 that Swifton might come forward and want to say, "We
21 want to go back and recreate our district as an
22 agricultural school." Same kind of demographics.

23 So I think this is a very serious matter and I
24 believe that if you do as you have done in the past,
25 as you did earlier this morning, and on your prior

1 ones that you may have considered, as you focus on
2 the students and whether or not the services needed
3 for students in the state of Arkansas, as mandated,
4 or as you believe should not be waived, can those
5 things be granted or afforded by the people running
6 Weiner? I don't believe that the application shows
7 that. And the one thing I'd like -- last thing --
8 the very last thing I'd like to mention is mental
9 health services are a growing factor in our --
10 certainly in our part of the state and the school
11 districts that we see. I'm sure they're a factor all
12 over the state, but I know -- the ones I know about
13 they're a strong factor. And schools go more and
14 more to allowing those mental health services to come
15 into the school. For example, Harrisburg contracts
16 with a nonprofit company to come in and see the
17 students under a system whereby no one can be charged
18 if they can't afford it or if Medicaid won't pay for
19 it. But they have to see the kid. And there are a
20 number of schools in our part of the state who are
21 going to that system. Harrisburg is onboard, one of
22 the first ones to be onboard, and it's a statewide
23 nonprofit. Nothing like that is provided by Weiner.
24 One -- I believe they listed one person for special
25 education on this budget that they handed out. There

1 are a variety of diverse students in our schools
2 today, and we hope you'll keep that variety and that
3 diversity in mind as you look at this application.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

6 Is there anyone else wishing to speak in
7 opposition?

8 Okay. So the school now has a chance to
9 continue. You have an additional five minutes.

10 DR. BALLARD: I want to first thank the three
11 superintendents and their attorney who made the trip
12 down to oppose this. I take it as a compliment that
13 they think this proposal is viable. It's actually
14 quite a compliment.

15 In all due respect, student learning is non-
16 negotiable. I've been told when someone says it's
17 nothing personal that it's all personal. And when
18 it's not about the money it's always about the money.

19 During my education I had a lot of people who
20 gave me a shot. These kids deserve a shot. The
21 collaboration and resources provided through this
22 school will be unprecedented in the Delta. You heard
23 from one of the executives from Riceland.

24 Agriculture is a 14 billion dollar industry. Do you
25 think they might donate to this school? I mean, come

1 on. It's like it's there. We just don't have a
2 school. They can't donate to what is not. The
3 average expenditure, the last I saw from your ADE
4 data, for students this last year was over the state
5 average; it was about \$11,600 per student. There's a
6 point where you're throwing good money after bad.
7 The student achievement -- actually by ADE standards
8 this school should be in academic distress; it's just
9 that the ADE suspended that assignment. Come on.

10 I have -- with all due respect to the attorney,
11 he made other comments in the Jonesboro Sun which is
12 very helpful for public trust. In the interview with
13 the Jonesboro Sun, Greta Greeno said, "The foundation
14 would like to have an amiable relationship with the
15 school districts." Nixon said, "While the charter
16 school proponents and the school district working
17 together is ideal," he's not sure it's possible. "I
18 don't" -- his quote is, "I don't think there's any
19 love lost from people over there." Is that the best
20 our kids can get from us? Leadership matters.
21 That's not leadership. That's trashing people. That
22 is literally turning resources away from a student
23 and parent population that deserves better.

24 The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest
25 youth development organization in the United States.

1 We have over 100 years developing research-based
2 curriculum and applied instruction, in everything
3 from parenting to financial literacy to stress
4 management to nutrition education. We deliver
5 entrepreneurship camps. I was just at the FFA, the
6 Career Education in-service, in partnership with
7 them, teaching their agri teachers who to infuse the
8 science and work with the science teachers in
9 reverse. We are here now wanting to take a historic
10 step. Chicago, Illinois has a school of agriculture.
11 What if? You know, there are times in every one of
12 our career that we -- we have to take a risk, but we
13 know that this has such potential to make such a
14 difference. I'll tell you, at 62, this is the
15 biggest thing I've ever worked on. It shows the most
16 promise of anything I've ever been involved in, and
17 I've been involved with some amazing things.

18 We had -- and it's in your slide show -- we did
19 a virtual field trip for the Arkansas kids. We had
20 65 schools, 1600 students participating. And just
21 because we asked, Trent Smith, the director of the
22 Veggie Project for NASA, was one of our co-
23 presenters. I was at the Career Education in-service
24 and the student assistant came up to me afterwards,
25 and I was talking to the teachers about that, and she

1 said, "Dr. Ballard, I was -- I participated in that
2 live virtual field trip with y'all and NASA, and it
3 was amazing. I'm getting ready to enroll at ASU and
4 my major is agronomy." That just made my day.

5 So this is not a pipe dream, but this proposal
6 does have an elephant in the living room, and the
7 elephant is established school districts that don't
8 want to share; they don't want to comply with Act 308
9 to give public charter schools access to unused and
10 underutilized school facilities. We want to be a
11 good partner. We will share with these schools.
12 We'll have a lot to share. So if I might be bold, I
13 would say that it's time that we don't ask taxpayers
14 to pay for a school building twice. Really? Timing
15 is everything. And the Harrisburg school board met
16 two nights ago to discuss utilization of those
17 facilities. It's amazing. And I can fully I think
18 confirm that we will allow sharing of those
19 facilities. I personally will commit to buying a
20 shop to put the maintenance equipment in, if that's
21 what it takes to open this school back up to kids.

22 So this proposal is all about kids. It's about
23 bringing diverse partners together, 14 billion
24 dollars of industry, focusing on science, integrating
25 -- fulfilling the Perkins Act which says that

1 agricultural education should be integrated with
2 science and math. It's a natural so kids can
3 understand and when they're looking at that field
4 they see the aquifer and they calculate how fast it's
5 dropping. And they look at sustainability, just like
6 George Washington Carver did. It is possible. It's
7 only limited by adults, our inability to work
8 together, our self interests before kids. How can
9 anybody be against this, with Riceland, with the vice
10 president of the Division of Agriculture sitting here
11 at the table? "I'm here. We're here saying we're
12 full in." This is not a support letter; this is what
13 full-in looks like. And I'm saying that I was not
14 asked to do a support letter; I was asked to develop
15 a strategy. There's a huge difference.

16 It's an honor to be here before you. I think I
17 heard a beeper go off.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes, ma'am.

19 DR. BALLARD: And I think I've said everything
20 I'd like to say. Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Dr.
22 Ballard. And just as a point of clarification for
23 the Panel, something was mentioned about a school in
24 academic distress; this is not -- we did not have
25 this school in academic distress. So this

1 application is not related to that. I just wanted to
2 make sure that was clarified. Okay. Thank you.

3 Ms. Davis.

4 MS. DAVIS: Before you go into questions I was
5 just going to pass out the law regarding agricultural
6 -- the School for Agricultural Studies. And if you
7 have any questions, just let me know.

8 (WHEREUPON, House Bill 1902 was marked as A-3
9 Exhibit One (1) and entered into evidence.)

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And, Ms. Davis,
11 before we start with questions, are there any other
12 clarifications that need to be made?

13 MS. DAVIS: No. I just wanted to make sure and
14 clarify that, you know, a School for Agricultural
15 Studies, the pertinent part of this law is on page 3,
16 is when the new part starts. But it is still an
17 open-enrollment charter school that must comply with
18 all the same, you know, curriculum and all the same
19 guidance that all the other school districts, all the
20 other district conversions, and all the other open
21 enrollment schools must comply with. It is just an
22 additional designation. So even if a school didn't
23 have that designation they would still be operating
24 as a charter school. So I just wanted to make sure
25 that that kind of clarification -- that line there.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So our first task then is
2 to go through and make a determination whether or not
3 to approve the application for the charter. Is that
4 correct?

5 MS. DAVIS: Absolutely.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So with
7 that, Panel, we can now move to questions. And, Dr.
8 Williams, do you want to begin again?

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you. You know, as I
10 listened here I'm trying to connect the dots here.
11 My first question, the ASSET Foundation, I'd like to
12 learn a little bit more about what that is. And why
13 this school instead of working with some of the other
14 schools that's in the area?

15 MS. GREENO: Yes. ASSET Foundation was formed
16 as a 501(c)(3) organization in support of this
17 school. Actually, we had tried -- I had tried
18 personally with other members of the community to
19 work with the Harrisburg School District as an
20 alternative to closing the Weiner High School in
21 2013. We had worked with them prior to that and
22 tried to suggest that we, you know, we could do this
23 as a conversion charter school. And I went before
24 the school board on two separate occasions and each
25 time I was met with no comment and no action taken.

1 I went before the board one last time before they
2 came -- made the vote whether or not to close the
3 high school and suggested that we could do this --
4 that we were -- we had the support. We had already
5 initiated these connections with the agricultural
6 businesses and that we were willing to get behind
7 this and make this work. And we, you know, we had
8 all of this momentum behind us, and if they would
9 operate -- let us operate as a School of Innovation
10 rather than closing the high school. And, again,
11 they made no comment and took no action.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. So the
13 foundation -- correct me if I don't get this right.
14 The foundation was established specifically in
15 support of this school?

16 MS. GREENO: Yes. We have applied for our
17 501(c)(3) status. We have not been approved yet.

18 DR. WILLIAMS. When I was reviewing it, it just
19 looked like this part of the university's initiative
20 in some way. It is not. Okay. Just some of the
21 letterhead stuff kind of threw me off there.

22 MS. GREENO: Yes.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Another question, who's going to
24 be running the school? I mean, do you have a
25 principal in mind?

1 MS. GREENO: We have Mr. Radius Baker will be
2 out superintendent. And so from that point we will,
3 you know --

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I was kind of looking to
5 hear more about the actual -- I'm kind of basic again
6 -- the teaching and learning aspect of the
7 curriculum. Excellent presentation, but it was kind
8 of flying at 30,000.

9 MS. GREENO: Yeah.

10 DR. WILLIAMS: I want to know what are the
11 teachers going to be teaching; is it going to be the
12 required curriculum by the state? Just some of the
13 basics.

14 MS. GREENO: Okay. Dr. Ballard.

15 DR. BALLARD: And I acknowledge it was flying at
16 30,000 feet. And I think that's one of the things
17 with so many partners that it's been very engaging in
18 a different kind of dynamic. We decided that we
19 wanted the Smart Core because there are scholarships
20 that are available to Arkansas students only if they
21 have access to that rigorous curriculum. We actually
22 have in our proposal 80 courses in our curriculum to
23 be folded in over three years. We have a blended
24 learning strategy, so that means that we will have
25 synchronous through Virtual Arkansas, asynchronous

1 distance education which can be at their own pace,
2 through vetted vendors, and teachers and facilitators
3 for those so that we can -- we have an expansive
4 curriculum. But also core curriculum is integrated
5 across the key subject areas. So it's a blended
6 learning environment. It's a learning environment
7 that allows students to have a huge capacity for
8 enrichment. And also focused learning. We expect
9 that we're going to -- based on the data, the ADE
10 data, we're going to do -- collect extensive
11 benchmark data, baseline data on all the students
12 coming in. And we expect the individualized learning
13 plans will be very different from each other and
14 we're poised to respond to that.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Just one quick follow-up.
16 What role will you be playing with the school?

17 DR. BALLARD: I was offered a board -- a role on
18 the board, but I felt like my role would be more
19 important -- I've been designated officially as
20 liaison from the Division of Agriculture to support
21 the school.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

23 DR. BALLARD: Before that I volunteered my time.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And something that you
25 asked that I wanted to follow-up on, this will be 7-

1 12, grades 7-12 first year?

2 DR. BALLARD: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Is that correct?

4 DR. BALLARD: That's correct.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And you mentioned
6 courses being blended in, but at the same time you
7 would need to offer the full 38 required courses --

8 DR. BALLARD: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- from the very beginning
10 --

11 DR. BALLARD: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- even if additional
13 courses would be added later. Okay.

14 DR. BALLARD: Yes, absolutely.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I just wanted to clarify
16 that. Okay.

17 DR. BALLARD: We have -- through the work I've
18 done for the last four or five years with the Soybean
19 Science Challenge -- we actually are college faculty
20 from all across the state which has been facilitated
21 through Zoom, through distance mediums. We
22 anticipate that the college faculty will actually be
23 doing teaching as well. One of the slides you saw is
24 Dr. Ken Porth, who is a plant pathologist who
25 actually is involved in GMO research. He's mentoring

1 one of my students right now. So the access to these
2 faculty -- you know -- faculty are busy, they do
3 research, and that linkage has to be there and it's
4 got to be there formally. And so I'm going to play
5 that role to make sure that I work on resource
6 development and curriculum.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

8 DR. OWOH: Thank you, Madam Chair. Question --
9 the first question I have is about your special
10 education services. I did note in your description
11 that you will offer a full continuum of services.

12 DR. BALLARD: Uh-huh.

13 DR. OWOH: But in your budget you've only
14 allocated one special education teacher, one
15 allocation, and then of course no supplies or
16 materials line items. So what type of services will
17 you provide in order to meet all needs of your
18 students with special needs?

19 DR. BALLARD: First of all, I'd just say it's a
20 conservative budget. We did not put -- I mean I know
21 that Ms. Greeno has talked with the Walton Family
22 Foundation, but we didn't put that in there because
23 we wanted it to really be a solid. So it's a
24 conservative start-up budget. And that -- until we
25 really know what student needs are, until we assess

1 student needs -- assessments shouldn't be based on a
2 record; the assessments should be based on actually
3 that learning team really looking at what we offer
4 and how that can best meet the needs of that student.
5 Personally, as an educator I won't go on a record; I
6 want to do our own assessment, and that will be
7 scaled up based on needs. I mean there's no doubt
8 about that. This is a big issue for me. I'm
9 currently working on a national study on
10 accessibility, actually digital accessibility, and
11 we're not doing real well in education with that.
12 And so I'm fully committed with this and I have a
13 national partner I'm working with who is an advocacy
14 group for persons with disabilities. So I have some
15 special resources and some special -- my heart is in
16 this place very closely. So it's a scaled budget;
17 it's not -- I don't know if that's enough or not. I
18 just know that's a starting point.

19 DR. OWOH: Okay. And it leads to my secondary
20 question, which considering this charter proposal
21 will be comprised of 7 through 12, and I'm sure that
22 you've reviewed possible feeder schools that are --
23 of the students who will feed into the charter. So
24 in light of that has there been any consideration for
25 your ELL population -- I know the percentages are

1 low, 1% to 2% in the area -- but also your GT
2 students and your special education students? And
3 what -- if there has been consideration, why are
4 those considerations not reflected in your budget for
5 this start-up year? Because I'm concerned that with
6 GT students those are students with special needs as
7 well and it's important that those needs are met and
8 they're challenged from the very beginning of their
9 career, educational career in 7th grade. So if you
10 can expound on those three areas. Thank you.

11 DR. BALLARD: This June I was an invited
12 presenter with some of our scientists to the
13 Governor's School for the first time. It's historic
14 for the Division of Ag. And we were invited by the
15 director of the Gifted and Talented program who said
16 these kids need to be a part of this. I believe that
17 this curriculum as it stands is going to feed that --
18 provide an incredible challenge to these kids to have
19 applied research, to be able to partner with real
20 researchers doing research across the state, not just
21 on one campus but five campuses -- six campuses with
22 ASU. So I believe that's already pretty much there.
23 But because of the ability to do student assessment,
24 you know, the sky is the limit. I'm working with one
25 15-year old student at Pulaski County right now that

1 worked with CARTI to radiate soybeans to determine if
2 the ozone layer had affected the growth at different
3 plant stages. These kids pick this up and it's
4 amazing. It is amazing what you see. It is beyond
5 my wildest expectations.

6 So the gifted kids will pick this up and it's
7 just a matter of us. And what I told the student --
8 I was talking to him yesterday -- is, "You tell me
9 what kind of scientist you want and we're going to
10 Zoom with him. You're going to have that mentor."
11 And he's going to have that mentor. So I work with
12 1200 scientists and educators. A lot of people don't
13 realize the size and scope of the Division of
14 Agriculture. That's a lot of resources. And I have
15 not had a one of them turn me down. I've been doing
16 this five years now. I had a call from a school who
17 was doing research that said, "How do our students
18 get soybeans?" Well, I never thought about that, and
19 I work with farmers, but it's hard -- you can't just
20 go in the store and buy soybeans. So our soybean
21 research lab now online provides a soy store, a seed
22 store and teachers -- classroom teachers, science
23 teachers, and ag teachers and students can order from
24 three varieties: non-GMO, provincial, and Round-Up
25 Ready, and a food grade soybean, and up to three

1 different categories, at no cost. And all that came
2 from is one school teacher calling me and saying,
3 "How do I get seeds for my kids?" This is what --
4 that's what is so exciting to me about the
5 partnership with the Division of Ag is our resources
6 are deep and wide. And there's a win for us too
7 because we want young minds, diverse young minds
8 across this state. We don't want these holes in
9 these educational systems, for kids are not following
10 science. They think science is boring; they don't
11 see the relation to their life. And so one of the
12 ways that we -- we've done this with the Soybean
13 Science Challenge, and to do it with your Gifted and
14 Talented is every kid -- we have a belief that every
15 kid cares about something. Every kid cares about
16 something. So we approached just soybeans from a
17 standpoint of why is it important to Arkansas; we
18 created original videos. It's important to relate to
19 place. We did it from food, so how soy is used in
20 food, because some kids care about that; that's just
21 kind of their interest level. Feed, animal feed,
22 animal physiology, and fill. So those kids are
23 inclined to engineering; they see their place. And
24 then consumerism and consumer acceptability of
25 products, marketing and communication. Every kid

1 cares about something. One kid that I worked with
2 from Central High School called me -- I give these
3 kids my phone number -- and said, "Dr. Ballard, my
4 dad and I were watching Ted Talks," so obviously a
5 Gifted and Talented student. She said, "You know, I
6 heard this talk and I want to study the influence of
7 soy isoflavones on angiogenesis as a preventative
8 factor in cancer. And I said, "Well, Amera, if you
9 will email me that I will help you, but I don't have
10 a clue what you just said." So my challenge in
11 working with Gifted and Talented is they're much more
12 gifted and talented than I am. But that's why I'm
13 very honored that Dr. Cartwright has made me liaison,
14 because I work across the division, so I know -- I
15 developed the accountability system for the Division
16 of Agriculture about 10 years ago. I know them all.
17 And we went into a database management system so that
18 we could scale and evaluate all of our programs, so I
19 know most of them.

20 DR. OWOH: And I appreciate that information and
21 I may -- and I apologize, and I may have missed it.
22 But your special education services, with the one
23 special education --

24 DR. BALLARD: It's a scale. It's a model to
25 scale. So I don't -- my answer is I don't know if

1 that's enough. It will be dependent on the students
2 that enroll in the school and our assessment. But I
3 will guarantee you that their needs will be met. I
4 mean it's just what's the scale. And I think -- you
5 know, I looked at -- studied some of the other
6 charter schools that have opened, their budgets and
7 things like that, and saw that that was a similar
8 struggle is how do you scale it, to make sure you
9 cover the needs adequately and actually see the
10 needs. I mean we want to impact every child, not
11 just Gifted and Talented children, and I think we
12 can. We have -- you know -- the whole concept is
13 tactile learning. We've got a 16 acre field that a
14 farmer has donated. They're not making Northeast
15 Arkansas farmland anymore, and it's pretty -- that's
16 a pretty valuable donation, a very generous donation.
17 We will have the kids in those fields doing research,
18 watching different practices, talking about soil. I
19 mean it's tactile and there's just -- it takes you to
20 a different level. Whether you're a child with
21 learning needs or learning struggles or whether
22 you're advanced, it brings it to life. And so I
23 believe that's going to impact -- at least the
24 research shows that does impact it across the
25 spectrum. I'm very excited about that.

1 And also students as mentors to other students
2 -- in order to contribute you've got to have the
3 character to contribute. You've got to put self
4 above others. And often we don't -- we -- in our
5 speed to achieve we lose that. And so that's -- I
6 see the mentoring component of this on all different
7 levels is very important to that.

8 DR. OWOH: Okay. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: Good morning. Questions about
11 your -- I noticed in the budget there's not anything
12 reflected for counseling or nurses. There's some
13 mention of a clinic that you're working with. So can
14 you tell me a little bit about what your plan is for
15 counseling? Because I know that that waiver was
16 rescinded. So how do you plan on addressing that?

17 DR. BALLARD: I'm going to defer to our waiver
18 and budget -- even though I'd like to answer it,
19 because I do have a background in counseling, but
20 that's really not my job.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Please state your name for
22 the record, and you're recognized.

23 MS. NORRIS: My name is Mary Norris. Okay.
24 What we are looking at on the medical is outsourcing
25 to the medical -- Access Medical Clinic there in

1 Weiner. They're just probably a half-a-mile or less
2 from us, and they have agreed to be on call with us
3 and work with us. They'll dispense meds and be
4 available any time we need them.

5 And the other one you asked about was --

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: The counseling.

7 MS. NORRIS: The counseling, we have decided
8 that the first couple of years we're probably -- we
9 ran our budget so tight that we might not be able to
10 employ a full-time counselor, but we would have to
11 outsource that also, looking at somebody like
12 Families, Inc. or such. We really think with our
13 curriculum as oriented at both ends of the spectrum
14 and all through those things that the educational
15 part will be covered there. We do know there can be
16 some mental issues and things, and with that we would
17 have to outsource.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: Ms. Davis, did you want to
19 clarify something for us?

20 MS. DAVIS: Yes. It's not on that, but since
21 you are looking at the budget I haven't seen it and I
22 wouldn't understand it anyways. But on their waiver
23 sheets, on page 11, their waiver for school lunch,
24 they did tell me beforehand that they were rescinding
25 that waiver. So I'm not sure if that is reflected in

1 their new budget or not. They're also rescinding
2 their waiver request for construction standards. And
3 let me just -- there was one more. They're waiving
4 their request for a waiver of the superintendent
5 licensure requirements. And then also, on page 9,
6 Arkansas Code 6-17-209, under Personnel Policies,
7 that only relates to school districts and it's in
8 regards to consolidation, so it really doesn't apply
9 to them. But the school lunch, I just wanted you to
10 know so if you're looking at their budget that may be
11 something to consider.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: All right. The next couple of
13 things -- this one is just --

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez, can I stop
15 for just a second?

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yes, go ahead.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Norris, you did
18 mention though when he was asking you about the
19 guidance services if you did have to outsource that
20 -- I'm not seeing anything in this revised budget.
21 So if it was needing to be outsourced -- y'all
22 correct me if I'm wrong -- I guess that would be a
23 question -- if you're saying you're going to be
24 outsourcing but it's not in the budget, and if
25 there's only \$2,000 left in the budget, it doesn't

1 leave a lot of room.

2 MS. NORRIS: I was going to say that \$2,000
3 probably should've been put on purchase services, so
4 --

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And so the school
6 would be actually then revising the budget even
7 further?

8 MS. NORRIS: Let me check with Mr. Baker please.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

10 MS. NORRIS: According to Mr. Baker, there are a
11 lot of grants and such that are available out there
12 and we're going to be looking for grants in any area
13 we can find. We know there are funds out there in
14 different categories and we will be looking there.
15 Like Dr. Ballard said, we did bare-bones, the budget.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right. And just to make sure --
17 and I know we probably can go back through the waiver
18 portion a little bit later. I just want to make sure
19 we're clear -- is that if you're not getting a waiver
20 from the counseling portion of that, then you'll be
21 responsible as a school to provide those services,
22 according to the standards. So that's just -- I know
23 y'all are rescinding waivers but that's something to
24 think about as we're going through that.

25 A couple of other things -- and these are just

1 things to point out that you may -- you guys may want
2 to look at as you're thinking about revising your
3 budget. But in your NSLA revenue calculation, the
4 way you have that set up is your -- the way it's
5 calculated showing revenue is inaccurate. When
6 you're reflecting 125 of your students receiving NSLA
7 funding, then if all 125 of your kids were receiving
8 NSL it would be at that highest level of over 90%.
9 Based on some numbers I've seen, and specifically the
10 Harrisburg, I know they're probably a CEP or
11 Provision 2, that they're -- that may not become
12 reality, so that's something to consider.

13 The other thing is in your substitute list --
14 and this may be a place for you to find some revenue
15 -- but you have about 350 days set aside for
16 substitutes, which that averaged about a little over
17 30 days per teacher. So that seems like a high end
18 there.

19 And then on your fringe benefits, I know we try
20 to recommend about a 28% and y'all have it budgeted
21 at 24, so -- and the reason I'm bringing some of
22 those up is it just -- I know with your new revised
23 budget, you know, it reflects that you have about a
24 \$2,000 carryover, so almost a break-even. And so
25 anything that shows up that's problematic could be a

1 problem for the school.

2 MS. NORRIS: I will state there will be some
3 additional income for us the first year because there
4 will be a crop on the 16 acres that the school will
5 garner income from. And that will be a little
6 additional funding, but we didn't include it because
7 it's not in stone.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right. There were some things
9 on the revenue side that I had -- if you could just
10 tell me a little bit more about those. They were --
11 under Other Sources of Revenue, there was several
12 things listed: plant science, career development, ag
13 power, ag business, and animal science. Just a
14 little bit about those revenue streams?

15 MS. NORRIS: Which one of you is going to handle
16 this?

17 MR. BAKER: This is strictly a -- and I've got
18 to find it, but this is strictly some information
19 that I got from some individuals who has give me what
20 they would do on plant science, what the grants would
21 be on career development with 20 students and
22 whatever. And so what I did is tried to get a medium
23 and put those figures in there as far as -- and this
24 would be a grant for those particular ones.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: So are these sheets -- the lady

1 a while ago, Ms. Norris, used the term "set in
2 stone." So are these set in stone grants or these
3 are things that you hope to get?

4 MR. BAKER: We hope we get. The grant -- right
5 now it's hard to get any grant when you're not a
6 school.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: Right. I understand.

8 MR. BAKER: Yeah.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: And then probably the last
10 question I've got, and I'll stop asking questions,
11 but help me understand. I know there's been some
12 question about the facility and I know there's some
13 obvious apprehension about the high school and things
14 like that, so -- and you've added a line item of
15 \$24,000 in rent or lease. So what is the plan for
16 the facility?

17 MR. BAKER: We have a person that has a facility
18 that he did business out of and he has moved away,
19 and so he is charging \$2,000 a month on rent. And
20 what we will have to do -- and, again, we will have
21 to get funding for that as well -- but we have to --
22 we will have to renovate that particular facility to
23 make sure that it houses students and gives them the
24 best educational opportunity that they can have.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

1 MR. BAKER: Yes, sir.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

3 MS. TURNER: Thank you. My questions go along
4 with what I saw on the revenue, which were those
5 grants, and I think he's explained that. But as we
6 move from there to curriculum I have questions about
7 -- and someone -- ADE may want to answer this, but in
8 your science curriculum you're listing computerized
9 business applications, digital video production,
10 computerized accounting. So my question is, is that
11 correct as far as being in the science curriculum?
12 You know, I'm understanding those are career and
13 technical programs but yet they're listed in the
14 science curriculum. So I'm just wanting some
15 clarification there, if I can get that. Yes, sir.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Causbie, if you could
17 identify yourself.

18 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes. Roy Causbie with Standards.
19 Looking over this with science -- it's required to
20 have five science courses. In looking over this what
21 I see that's listed that would meet the five offered
22 courses would be biology, physical science,
23 chemistry, and physics. Also, computer science and
24 mathematics I believe would meet that requirement.
25 So, those five would meet the requirement for the

1 science. A lot of those other classes you're looking
2 at are strictly computer science classes, the new
3 ones that are there, so I'm not so sure those would
4 need to be under the science curriculum per se. I'm
5 just looking and seeing they do have at least five
6 classes that meet the requirements to offer.

7 MS. TURNER: Thank you. So that sends me to my
8 next question then. Under career and technical
9 education courses, which it says nine units, those
10 are all in agriculture education. Is that the plan
11 of the -- for this application?

12 DR. BALLARD: I see that as being integrative.
13 I mean it will be in the agriculture education
14 department, but those will be integrated education.
15 There will be science and agriculture teachers
16 teaching that, and also utilizing research college
17 faculty and planning science instructors.

18 MS. TURNER: So your nine units of career and
19 technical education usually are in three different
20 occupational areas --

21 DR. BALLARD: Uh-huh.

22 MS. TURNER: -- and so you have them in
23 agriculture.

24 DR. BALLARD: Uh-huh.

25 MS. TURNER: And back in under the science part

1 you have them in -- you have computerized business
2 applications and accounting.

3 DR. BALLARD: Uh-huh.

4 MS. TURNER: So would those be another area of
5 career and technical education?

6 DR. BALLARD: They could be. They could be
7 considered. I would say this curriculum is a hybrid,
8 I mean because we looked at Career Education
9 standards, we looked at ADE Smart Core standards; we
10 also looked at the national CASE curriculum standards
11 and resources that are available; we looked at
12 Planning Science resources. So we really did look at
13 integrating a lot of that.

14 MS. TURNER: Okay. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So, Ms. Turner -- and I
16 guess this is a question -- would they need then a
17 waiver from those curriculum requirements for career
18 and technical education to not be offering the three
19 different occupational areas?

20 MS. TURNER: Right.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Is that what you would see
22 as needed?

23 MS. TURNER: Yes, I would say that.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

25 DR. BALLARD: And we -- that's my focus by

1 design. It's -- this is a focus school of
2 agriculture and technology, so that's why you see all
3 of that.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So is that included
5 as a waiver? Is that something that can be --

6 MS. BOYD: Alexandra Boyd, Director of Charter
7 Schools. So the waivers that have to be granted by
8 the Career Education, you guys cannot grant those
9 waivers. So they have to get the school first and
10 then apply to Career Education for those waivers. So
11 I know it's a little different --

12 MS. TURNER: Okay. That makes sense.

13 MS. BOYD: -- because Ms. Turner is on the Panel
14 now.

15 MS. TURNER: Yes. Yeah.

16 MS. BOYD: But you guys can't grant those
17 waivers.

18 DR. HERNANDEZ: I thought Ms. Turner would be
19 the sole authority to be able to do that.

20 MS. BOYD: I'm sure Ms. Turner is glad that
21 there's a Panel over there that makes decisions as a
22 group as well.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. No. And I had just
24 forgotten that. Thank you, Ms. Boyd.

25 All right. Ms. Newton.

1 MS. NEWTON: My first question is how would the
2 services to students with dyslexia be covered?

3 MS. NORRIS: We will outsource on that. There
4 are people in our community and in surrounding areas
5 that have that training and we will outsource for
6 dyslexia specialists, if needed. Yes.

7 MS. NEWTON: Concurrent credit is something that
8 you mentioned in the application. How would that be
9 funded?

10 DR. BALLARD: That would be something that we
11 would ask the ASSET Foundation to raise funds on.
12 There's also -- there actually -- like the South --
13 like when I work with universities across the state,
14 with high schools, some universities often seek and
15 receive federal grants in particular that provides
16 for low income students the ability to enroll in
17 college credit with no cost. And I've reviewed that
18 with universities now and Southeast Arkansas
19 Community College, they do have that program. I
20 didn't review every university in the state just
21 because of time limitations, but I wanted to make
22 sure that was still available, and it is still
23 available. It's just a matter of us doing the due-
24 diligence and finding those resources for students so
25 that they can have that available at no cost.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And if I may follow-up on
2 that, Dr. Ballard, will the school be teaching any
3 concurrent credit courses in the core academic areas
4 on the campus of the school by the teachers? And the
5 reason I'm asking is because Act 1118 then would
6 require the school to pay for the first six hours, I
7 Believe, of concurrent credit for those students. So
8 that again goes into planned course offerings and
9 opportunities for those students that may not be
10 reflected in the budget. So those are some
11 considerations.

12 DR. BALLARD: Yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I don't know whether
14 that's part of the curriculum plan or not.

15 DR. BALLARD: It is, and particularly with the
16 opportunities to co-teach with university faculty;
17 not just one, but multiple in specific science areas.
18 So to have a plant pathologist co-teach modules and
19 then to have entomologists co-teach modules -- I mean
20 it's a rich opportunity for these kids. So it would
21 probably be multiple instructors, but, yes. And that
22 would be -- that is not in the current budget but
23 that would be something that we'd ask the ASSET
24 Foundation, once that's set up, to fund.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Additional questions?

1 MS. NEWTON: Yeah. One other question. How
2 much or what percentage of your budget reflects
3 grants that have not been funded?

4 DR. BALLARD: Just the Career Ed. We've
5 actually -- like I said before, we've had to talk
6 with the family -- the Walton Family Foundation.
7 I've done research on a USDA NIFA grant that is just
8 focused on curriculum development and it's just for
9 this. And this probably is in response to the career
10 crisis there is across the country for students not
11 going into the STEM areas. And I've reviewed -- they
12 awarded this year about 60 grants. I reviewed every
13 one of the applications, were right in line, and I
14 think with Arkansas being a major agricultural
15 producer in 20 of the top commodities that we would
16 be in very good stead; and particularly with the
17 partnerships at the table, with the Division, with
18 ASU, with the major industries that we would be
19 reviewed favorably.

20 And I would say that's one of the ways that I
21 intend to help. In my career I've been the principal
22 investigator and the lead author in over 21 million
23 dollars worth of grants, state, federal, and
24 foundation grants. And so that's one thing that I
25 will do for this school.

1 MS. NEWTON: Just a follow-up question: is there
2 any way for you to address the development of this
3 School of Agriculture -- which I think is a novel
4 idea and certainly has applications across much of
5 our state since we're rural in nature -- that could
6 look at the realistic possibility that the grants may
7 not be funded? I know the assumption and your
8 history suggests that. But is there any way for us
9 to be able to analyze a budget that takes into
10 account --

11 DR. BALLARD: No.

12 MS. NEWTON: -- 50% of the grants not funded, or
13 75%, or if you only have 10% when the school starts?
14 That's a concern for me, is that so much of this is
15 -- it's not vague in terms of the individuals that
16 you choose to approach and their likelihood of
17 funding, but the possibility that the climate could
18 change and the philanthropy or --

19 DR. BALLARD: Sure. Absolutely.

20 MS. NEWTON: -- state or federal government, and
21 taking those -- you know, it's so heavily built on
22 possibilities.

23 DR. BALLARD: Yeah. And things do change. I
24 mean that's the world we live in. I would say that,
25 you know, the income was limited; the grant income in

1 the budget was limited to the Career Ed., because
2 we've had discussions with them. They'd sent us
3 spreadsheets and what the requirements were and we
4 felt that that was probably a viable resource. We
5 did not include the -- and Greta Greeno, I'd ask her
6 to speak because I didn't speak -- but we've had
7 other people that have talked to us that, you know,
8 are basically just waiting till we become a school.
9 I mean, people can't commit, you know, financial
10 resources by and large if you don't exist. So it is
11 -- in doing a budget it is -- but we've tried to not
12 include most of those discussions.

13 MS. NEWTON: And I understand that and I think
14 that's -- the counter-side of that is maybe looking
15 at a budget that would look at per-student funding.
16 You know, in terms of you can't commit what you don't
17 have, there's a possibility that you may or may not.
18 And that's what I'm saying, you know, being able to
19 look at what we can do with per-student funding in
20 addition to --

21 DR. BALLARD: Okay.

22 MS. NEWTON: And that's -- those are the two
23 things that I'd like to see.

24 DR. BALLARD: Okay. That makes sense.

25 MS. GREENO: I think it might be appropriate

1 just to go ahead and state that there are -- we were
2 very careful not to overstate our funding in our
3 budget. And -- but there are vast resources for
4 funding, which we will pursue once we are approved.
5 We have a foundation and ASSET Foundation's sole
6 purpose is going to be to promote this school and to
7 develop resources and fund-raise and apply for the
8 grants that it will take to make this school, you
9 know, viable.

10 Weiner has a reputation for supporting student
11 education. When Weiner Elementary School was
12 approved as a School of Innovation, the school needed
13 to raise \$80,000 the first year in order to provide
14 one-to-one technology for every student and support
15 enriched curriculum activities that were not to be
16 provided by the school district. They did not raise
17 \$80,000; they raised \$117,000 that first year. This
18 is a community that is in support of student
19 education.

20 ASSET Foundation will seek additional funding.
21 Ms. Ballard already mentioned the NIFA, which we feel
22 like for the curriculum development -- we believe
23 that that would probably help us with the CASE
24 Curriculum training that we would like to use. Also,
25 USDA Rural Community Development Community Facilities

1 Direct Loan and Grant program is an option, something
2 that we would like to develop. USDA Farm-to-School
3 Grant, USDA Summer Food Service program, and general
4 USDA Youth Resources. Arkansas has commodity boards
5 that annually invest in promotion, education, and
6 research. The Soybean Science Challenge is an
7 example of farmer investments and science education
8 and totaling over \$240,000 in the last four years.
9 These are just some of the sources that we are
10 looking at. And I did speak with Ms. Kathy Smith
11 last week and, you know, was told that once a charter
12 is approved then they can receive an application for
13 their start-up grant funding, which would -- you know
14 -- upon our approval we would do. There is also
15 additional funding through APSRC for which we may
16 become eligible. So there are a vast amount of
17 resources that, you know, we intend to pursue.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton, did you have
19 anything to follow-up?

20 MS. NEWTON: No.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Mr. Wilson,
22 questions?

23 MR. WILSON: Dr. Ballard, the application
24 mentions the CASE curriculum, C-A-S-E. I'm not --
25 I'm stupid; I'm not familiar with that. Can you tell

1 me what it is?

2 DR. BALLARD: That's the national agricultural
3 educators' curriculum. It's a national standardized
4 curriculum that -- there was -- the national ag. --
5 and there's experts in this room, much greater than
6 -- much more articulate than I. I've had several
7 discussions with our national curriculum director
8 because I had to learn about this too. This was not
9 something I was familiar with. But there was concern
10 nationally that the agricultural curriculum was not
11 rigorous enough and that they needed to have very
12 fully vetted, very comprehensive learning goals,
13 objectives, resources, monitoring student progress,
14 testing, so they have a full -- they have developed
15 curriculum. Their curriculum is not fully developed
16 but they've got a compliment of about six courses
17 now. They train -- you certify -- schools train
18 their educational instructors, agricultural
19 instructors to be CASE certified. We have a CASE
20 certified representative at ASU and one at
21 Russellville, at Arkansas Tech University. We
22 actually are a training site; Arkansas is a training
23 site, and there was a training this summer. We have
24 very few agricultural instructors in the state that
25 are CASE certified. But that's something we want to

1 do. It's a high standard. We want to work with the
2 Career Ed. and agriculture folks there, as well as
3 the national CASE curriculum team, to look at
4 utilizing their resources. And it costs about --
5 anywhere from \$2700 to \$3200 to receive the training
6 for -- per educator to be certified.

7 MR. WILSON: Well, it has to do with Career
8 Education as opposed to calculus or something?

9 DR. BALLARD: It's not -- it's science; most of
10 it's science-focused, like agronomy, plant
11 physiology. It really seems -- this is my opinion --
12 it looks very science-focused. And, again, the
13 Perkins Act purpose is to do that, to integrate
14 agricultural education with science and math. And so
15 it kind of fulfills that. It's kind of a support
16 system for states to have these resources for
17 teachers. It is expensive and a lot -- most Arkansas
18 schools don't have certified teachers, but we want to
19 have certified teachers.

20 MR. WILSON: Thank you. That's all.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Kind of going along the
22 line of training for teachers, I didn't notice in the
23 budget where anything has been budgeted for
24 professional development. Is that correct?

25 DR. BALLARD: We have a general category called

1 Curriculum Resources. So a lot of that, the
2 instructional resources -- the thing that I think is
3 different about our proposal is that -- about five
4 years ago I did a national review of all curriculum
5 in the country for -- to support my work with the
6 Soybean Science Challenge. Because I thought, you
7 know, we need to have education for kids in our
8 science classes, and I know it's out there; I just
9 need to find it and repurpose it and be -- provide
10 that mechanism to get it to them. Well, I was wrong.
11 There's a lot of agricultural curriculum for grades
12 pre-K to 6th grade, a little bit for 7th and 8th; not
13 so much, particularly online that's available 24/7
14 for blended learning. So that's why we developed
15 online education. We have an online in-service
16 training program for teachers that's certified by the
17 state, and we also have a six-hour course for kids
18 grades 9 through 12. We do have a pretty extensive I
19 think teacher in-service plan in there and it
20 includes a teacher boot-camp. Because to have a real
21 learning environment that we're talking about,
22 everybody has got to be on the same page and
23 everybody has got to -- not everybody has been
24 trained in experiential learning, has the tools and
25 resources. And so our training plan for our

1 instructors is very extensive.

2 I would also say that this is also going to be
3 supported by the Division of Ag. I have Dr. Laura
4 Hendricks here with me at the back, who her -- she is
5 a certified financial planner. Her expertise is in
6 financial literacy, and she is a trained facilitator,
7 and she's actually going to come at no cost and
8 facilitate our meetings, as soon as we're approved by
9 the board, with the group. Because we said we'd do
10 that, we would come back around, and we would -- this
11 has to be a school of the people; it's got to be of
12 the people. It can't be us having a schedule and you
13 just fit. It's got to be what are your needs, what
14 are the things that will engage you.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes. And I would agree
16 wholeheartedly with everything you've just said. I
17 just know that that is not always free and at no
18 cost. Have you had conversations about being
19 connected to an educational service cooperative or
20 something where there are opportunities? Okay.

21 MS. NORRIS: Yes. With Mr. Manning, over at the
22 Crowley's Ridge Co-op, there have been discussions.
23 We also have it in the budget template, it's under
24 Revenues, for the professional development for the
25 teachers in there. So there is -- it is in that.

1 It's under Revenues. And you're saying where is the
2 expense? Am I understanding you correctly? It will
3 be in the different areas with the teachers, some of
4 the expenses there. And like we said, we have talked
5 with the Co-op and we'll be working with them,
6 sending teachers there, and bringing in resources.

7 DR. BALLARD: You know, extension has extensive
8 experiential educators. We have licensed certified
9 experiential educators that work at our 4H camp.
10 That's what they -- and they work with corporations.
11 Most of the major central Arkansas corporations go
12 out there for leadership training. And we have all
13 that at our ACCESS and we have commitments from our
14 institution. The other thing I would say is I try to
15 go out and be with teachers and see what -- you know
16 -- and go to the in-services related to this. And
17 about three weeks ago I actually drove through
18 Harrisburg and went to Judd Hill Research Center and
19 it was a USDA Future Scientists training. Now this
20 is a training -- they brought in a master facilitator
21 educator from Texas A&M and they had local
22 researchers doing training with these teachers.
23 These teachers -- there was no cost to the school at
24 all. The teachers actually got a stipend to attend
25 because USDA has such a priority to develop

1 scientists. And each teacher that participated got a
2 free microscope for her -- for their lab. Okay. The
3 class capacity was 25. You want to guess how many
4 teachers we had? It was delivered right in the midst
5 of the Delta, 15 miles from Harrisburg. We had five.
6 We had capacity for 25 that could've taken
7 microscopes back to their class. In addition to
8 this, this master educator has made a commitment to
9 go back to every classroom and teach an entire
10 compliment of classes for every teacher that
11 attended, to support and develop them.

12 We are leaving resources on the table, massive
13 resources. So I mean I'm aware of a lot of those
14 resources. I was dismayed that the Delta teachers
15 didn't show up. We had one from North Arkansas.
16 That's a -- it's a travesty.

17 So there are resources. It's a matter of
18 looking at them and utilizing them, and I think that
19 the Division of Ag will be very helpful with this.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

21 MS. NORRIS: If you look on line 36, Supplies
22 and Materials, we have \$150,000 in professional
23 development, would be included in that.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Yeah, line 36,
25 under Regular Classroom Instruction.

1 Okay. I have a couple of other clarifying and
2 then I'll go back around to the Panel, if they have
3 any additional. In the original application that I
4 read -- and I know there have been changes -- there
5 was not -- it was stated that the school would not
6 participate in the National School Lunch Program or
7 the Federal School Lunch Program; that the school
8 would rely on local donations and students bringing
9 their lunch to school. It does seem now that there
10 is a plan to contract with a vendor and have school
11 lunches. Can someone confirm that? And then also
12 describe who will be the person in charge at the
13 school overseeing the local food service?

14 DR. BALLARD: In the letter that Greta Greeno
15 sent to the Harrisburg school board she asked for
16 consideration for facilities, transportation, and
17 food service. There is an operating cafeteria on the
18 Weiner campus.

19 I just have to say that we plan for the best --
20 hope for the best and plan for the worst. It's going
21 to be really interesting to work with kids and help
22 them understand the importance of reducing their
23 carbon footprint on this earth during their lifetime
24 when we have buses running to Weiner from Harrisburg
25 every school day and we have a cafeteria and we're

1 going to do parallel food service. So I would just
2 say that we have -- we hope, with the help -- and
3 it's going to take -- we probably need a mediator
4 because I don't think the adults are going to step
5 up. But that's not okay. I mean we're here today to
6 say we can be better than this; we can do it a
7 different way. It's not that we can't, but should
8 we. This could be a very important case regarding
9 charter schools, the future of charter schools in
10 this state, about school districts respecting the law
11 that legislators obviously have had to pass to start
12 this discussion. But at some point we've got to quit
13 talking and actually do the right thing for kids. If
14 we've got a food -- an operating food service
15 facility on-site why can we not purchase services
16 from them? If we've got a school building that has
17 only been used for maintenance equipment -- and only
18 two nights ago there were other plans developed --
19 why do the taxpayers have to pay for it twice? I
20 mean this is the stuff of 60 Minutes. I think we can
21 do better. I just know it. I really know that this
22 is so outrageous, that we can do better. But it's
23 going to take your leadership. Honestly, it's going
24 to take ADE staff, who are probably tired of us
25 calling but who have always been nice and helpful and

1 resourceful for us. But I think it's going to -- our
2 partnership is going to have to broaden to not just
3 have ADE as advisors but ADE helping negotiate this
4 for the kids.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So the facility right now
6 that you're considering, you would be relying on
7 contracting with a vendor who could bring in meals
8 that were already ready. You're not planning on
9 having that, so -- but there would still need to be
10 someone who was responsible for the local food
11 services there.

12 DR. BALLARD: Uh-huh. (Nodding head up and
13 down.)

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I'm going to go
15 ahead and go back to the Panel. I think we have some
16 additional questions.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. You made a comment about,
18 you know, about the "school of the people."

19 DR. BALLARD: Uh-huh.

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. Which brings me to your
21 board members. I understand the ASSET Foundation is
22 appointing the board members.

23 DR. BALLARD: Uh-huh.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Who appoints the members of the
25 ASSET Foundation? And what is the criteria that the

1 ASSET Foundation is using to select board members?

2 DR. BALLARD: I'll defer that to Ms. Greeno.

3 MS. GREENO: The ASSET Foundation board was
4 formed by a demand for change. And it was formed by
5 a group of people that looked at leadership qualities
6 and accomplishments in the members that, you know,
7 that we have selected, that have a vision that can --
8 that have -- the vision that we see for what this
9 school can be and what it can do for these students
10 in Northeast Arkansas. And we just formed a board
11 and we elected officers and we just began that way.
12 It was not appointed, but it was a board that was
13 formed out of the desire to see this change in our
14 area.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: The follow-up to that is what's
16 your criteria that the ASSET Foundation board is
17 using to select your local board?

18 MS. GREENO: We have looked for leadership
19 qualities. There are members on this board who have
20 had prior school board service and we try to get a
21 diverse group. We have some people who are farmers;
22 we have a person that is -- I think I described his
23 criteria in -- where's our Career Ed. stuff? But he
24 is an owner and operator of an Eagle Seed company
25 there in Weiner and he has a diverse background and

1 extensive connections with agriculture and he's with
2 the universities and he develops soybean genetics.
3 So, you know, we have several with agricultural
4 backgrounds and with other diverse backgrounds also.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: If they have kids attending
6 school, parents, if they want to be on the board what
7 would be their process?

8 MS. GREENO: They would need to -- yeah, they
9 would need to make a -- or ask and say, you know, "I
10 would like to be a part of this board," and the ASSET
11 Foundation would look at that.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: I just wondered whether there is
13 a -- right now I didn't see it; it looks like it's
14 kind of a closed process. But is there a formal way
15 that a period can apply to be considered to be on the
16 board?

17 MS. GREENO: I don't know that we have a formal
18 way right now, but I think that would be something
19 that we would want to adopt, that, you know, if there
20 is interest then, you know, we would certainly
21 welcome, you know, anyone that has the vision and
22 wants to help us promote this school, that we would
23 like to, you know, consider that.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. One other
25 follow-up here. You know, there's something here

1 that's kind of on my mind here, and Lord knows I tend
2 to talk too much every now and then. It's really the
3 university's agri division involved in all of this.
4 I'm -- for some reason I guess I'm kind of struggling
5 with that a little bit. I think the services should
6 be made available to all schools, especially from a
7 state university, and not so much focused on just one
8 school. I don't know the relevance that has in this
9 situation, but it is something that just kind of --
10 it's just kind of gnawing at me a little bit. I
11 think what you're doing with the university system is
12 doing -- the agri system is doing I think is
13 commendable. I mean we need this. But at the same
14 time it really comes across as are we doing it for
15 the right reason, is kind of where I'm -- that's kind
16 of hanging out there for me a little bit.

17 DR. BALLARD: It's a great question and I
18 actually thought about sharing this story, but I will
19 now because you're asking exactly the right question.
20 Greta asked me about three weeks ago -- I've known
21 Greta since we were 12 years old. We've gone -- I
22 don't live in Weiner. This is not -- I'm not -- my
23 skin is not in this game because I want my kids to go
24 there. My kids are gone. My grandkids -- well, I'll
25 probably never have any. But I'm not living up there

1 anymore. I was working with the Northeast Arkansas
2 Science Fair. I've worked with them for five years.
3 I've worked with every science fair in the state.
4 And for the last couple of years I've just -- you
5 know, I've been concerned at the declining
6 scholarship of these students in Northeast Arkansas.
7 When I was a student we had the science fairs in the
8 field house. This year we had it in the Ring Center
9 in a couple of small rooms, and the scholarship was
10 troubling. I met with two judges and the fair
11 director and said -- and a teacher from up there, and
12 I said, "There's something bad wrong here." Number
13 one, schools aren't participating anymore. The --
14 just -- the fair director is doing a great job; Dr.
15 Tilmon is amazing, works very hard. ASU has done a
16 great job. And he said, "They're just -- these
17 schools up here just don't care anymore. They're
18 just not supporting their students to do this." So I
19 had a couple of people with me, one from the research
20 center in Northeast Arkansas, and he said, "Well,
21 I'll do this and I'll do that; you know, we can setup
22 field trials for these kids and we can do that." I
23 was like, "Okay, I appreciate that and we'll get back
24 to that." And I drove through Weiner, going back to
25 Little Rock, and I had already arranged to have lunch

1 in the gas station with Greta. And I told her how
2 discouraged I was and something had to happen up
3 there. And she said, "We've just decided to form an
4 agricultural charter school." I said, "Really?" And
5 she said, "Yeah." I think that our services are
6 available to every school, but they're marginalized
7 in many schools. They're not seen as important.
8 They're something that are accessed often after the
9 tests are done; they're not mainstream. We need --
10 just like the School of Science and Math and the
11 Arts; sometimes you need synergy, you need to focus
12 to bring these resources together in a way that's
13 unique that builds capacity, not just for this one
14 school. I see this building capacity for schools
15 across the state. The last five years that's exactly
16 what I've done; I've offered at no cost all these
17 educational resources. I just put 300 science fair
18 guides in the Osceola School District because the
19 teachers asked for them, \$25 apiece; no cost. I have
20 found that I can probably draw you a map of the
21 schools that care about STEM in this state because of
22 this. And I'm really excited for Osceola that
23 they've stepped up. It's a process and I think it
24 sometimes requires -- and I understand that when the
25 School of Math and Science and Arts was developed

1 there was also this concern expressed, and I think
2 it's a legitimate concern. It's not about
3 favoritism; it's about having synergy and then
4 letting that build around -- it will give us the
5 ability to build capacity and products and curriculum
6 in a different way and provide some educational
7 enrichment in a place in the state that -- all you
8 have to do is look at your data, the ADE data. And I
9 chose not to quote scores this morning. I probably
10 -- my whole pool table at home is full, filled with
11 -- covered with ADE data. But it's not about the
12 past; it's going forward. So how do we fix this?
13 How do we build synergy? That's what a charter
14 school is for. A charter -- one of the founding
15 values of a charter school, from what I -- my study,
16 was to bring competition even into the public arena.
17 I mean we've read a lot about The Delta School, I
18 have; I've not been over there and seen it. It's a
19 private school. Well, people who can't afford
20 private school should have a choice too that's
21 connected to the roots of that area, that provides
22 enhanced and rich education. But no one school
23 district alone could do it. I mean this is kind of
24 what we've talked about and I've talked about with --
25 sitting around the Department of Education. What we

1 need is Higher Ed. to come together with local
2 parents, with business and industry. This is it.
3 This is what it looks like. It's a little messy.
4 What I don't want is I don't want it to come in and
5 say, "This is exactly how we're going to do
6 everything," because that's what in strategic
7 planning is always the big mistake, is you've got all
8 the answers. We don't have all the answers.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Just a follow-up question
10 and then I'll be done. Well, two. One, you
11 mentioned The Delta School. What's the name --

12 DR. BALLARD: It's called The Delta School. I
13 hadn't heard about it until about six months ago.

14 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I just hadn't heard about
15 it before; that's all.

16 The other piece, you all mentioned the students
17 doing research, which is a good thing. How do you
18 get them to the level in which they can do the
19 research? You're talking about grades 7 through 12.
20 So I'm back to that basic curriculum again.

21 DR. BALLARD: Oh, yeah.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I mean we're -- the
23 research piece here means you're going to have to
24 take them a little ways to get them there. So what's
25 the plan there?

1 DR. BALLARD: The soybeans -- and I reference
2 that because that's the framework I've worked from
3 that's brought me to this moment, actually. The
4 Soybean Science Challenge began by asking teachers,
5 "What do you need to do this," not from Higher Ed.
6 deciding. I have too many friends who are teachers
7 that would kick my butt if I did -- if I acted in
8 that way. So teachers have been key advisors from
9 the beginning. One of the things they told us this
10 year was, "We need a research guide for these kids
11 that breaks it down, that makes it understandable,"
12 and that's what I've just described to you that we
13 just -- we're in the process of delivering 300 to
14 Osceola right now. It's like a 70-page research --
15 it's a journal, it's written as a journal. There's a
16 picture of it in one of the slides that you have.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. And what grade level is
18 the guide --

19 DR. BALLARD: 9 through 12. See, actually,
20 first it was developed for 9 through 12, but it could
21 go 7 through 12.

22 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

23 DR. BALLARD: It's written to -- I'm sorry; this
24 is it. And we developed this, this year, and
25 distributing it this year. We've distributed it at

1 the Career Ed. training. We've distributed it at
2 teacher training this summer.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: And it's based on the -- and it's
4 built off the required curriculum?

5 DR. BALLARD: Uh-huh. It's Next -- it's aligned
6 with Next Generation science standards.

7 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

8 DR. BALLARD: So it takes kids -- it's a
9 journey, so it frames research as a journey. So
10 here's where you start, a journey of a thousand miles
11 begins with a single step. So they go through and
12 follow this and then they actually fill this out.
13 It's just a guide. So what is it that you're
14 interested in? You know, that's -- every kid can
15 answer that question. So taking a research method
16 and breaking it down to questions that every kid can
17 answer. Every kid can follow this trail. I don't
18 take credit for this. Teachers said this is what we
19 needed to do, and we just -- the Soybean Farmers of
20 Arkansas paid for this.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Uh-huh. All right. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh, any remaining --

23 DR. OWOH: No.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez?

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: I do have a question. I see

1 that you have 10 teachers, grades 7 through 12. And
2 so in offering all this stuff, I know there was some
3 mention of Virtual Arkansas. And so in order to
4 accomplish the 38 credits in addition to what you're
5 doing, how do you see that -- how do you see that
6 working? With 10 teachers, how -- with 10 teachers,
7 how much is Virtual Arkansas going to be used?

8 DR. BALLARD: It depends on -- you know -- when
9 we do our recruitment, the recruitment, the initial
10 recruitment period end is the end of March. And
11 incorporated in that will be an interest inventory.
12 When you're offering -- you can -- you know -- we --
13 in this day and time we should be able to offer --
14 any school should be able to offer a rich curriculum
15 if they use blended learning. I think it's from then
16 that we go and look at what the kids say they -- you
17 know -- we've got the core courses that have to be
18 taught, but we really are approaching this that we're
19 not going to build a schedule and make kids fit.
20 We're going to find out what our -- the kids that are
21 coming, what they need and build a schedule from
22 there. We know we're going to deliver the core. We
23 know that there will -- the core instructional areas
24 of English, math, science, agricultural science,
25 social studies, those will all be covered. And I

1 think those -- the extra positions will be based on
2 what is it that we're going to deliver this year.

3 DR. HERNANDEZ: So would it be accurate that you
4 have probably a heavy dependence in the early years
5 on virtual learning, blended learning online?

6 DR. BALLARD: I don't think so. I really don't.
7 I think it's -- I think we're going to have a blend
8 of virtual, asynchronous, and facilitated -- with
9 facilitated teachers, facilitator teachers, and
10 direct instruction. And I think what we will do is
11 have much more joint instruction. So with the use of
12 Zoom, which the Division of Ag and Department of
13 Education have approved it -- we use that every day.
14 We use it for everything from teacher interviews to
15 deliver of training and instruction. So I think
16 there will be -- if there was one thing that I would
17 say is that there will be much more dual teaching
18 through this partnership.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: Just one more question. The
20 transportation, I know you have two buses. Are those
21 things that you still have to purchase or you have
22 the buses? And how do you --

23 DR. BALLARD: We don't have the buses.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: What does your transportation
25 program look like?

1 DR. BALLARD: We know what we'd like it to look
2 like, but I won't go there yet.

3 MR. BAKER: We don't have the buses presently.
4 And what we'll do is get with the companies that
5 sells used buses and we'll try to purchase those, and
6 we think we can purchase two buses for \$50,000,
7 somewhere along there. They won't be nice and new
8 and everything, but they'll be hopefully safe and get
9 kids transported.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: How much -- do you think there
11 will be a heavy reliance on transportation or do you
12 think a lot of kids will be dropped off? Is that --

13 MR. BAKER: I can only address what I think, and
14 I think there will be -- the older kids, I think
15 they'll -- a lot of them will transport themselves.
16 But I think there will be -- I think the younger
17 grades, there will be some heavy transportation
18 needs.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And can I follow-up on the
21 transportation? In the application it's stated that
22 the success would rely on other districts. Do you
23 have a commitment from the other districts as far as
24 their cooperation in maybe getting students to
25 certain drop-off of pick-up points? Do we have that

1 --

2 MR. BAKER: No, ma'am.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We don't have that
4 cooperation yet?

5 MR. BAKER: No, ma'am.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

7 MS. NORRIS: We don't have that yet. But when
8 we had the Weiner High School there in the Weiner
9 School District we had drop-off points along the way.
10 There was one at Midway, there was one at Grubbs,
11 there was one at Cash, where we picked -- our buses
12 picked up students. The parents brought them to
13 there, they boarded the bus, rode in to our district.
14 And we're thinking we will have some of those points
15 again.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

17 Did you have a follow-up to that?

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, just a follow-up to that.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

20 DR. WILLIAMS: Your feeder system then, is the
21 Weiner Elementary School still in existence?

22 MS. NORRIS: Yes, it is a part of the Harrisburg
23 School District.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: So where do you expect the -- so
25 you're just looking for kids to just come from other

1 districts? I just -- as I think through this, you
2 have the elementary school there that would be part
3 of the Harrisburg School District.

4 MS. NORRIS: Uh-huh.

5 DR. WILLIAMS: What's your plan as a feeder
6 system for --

7 MS. NORRIS: There are several home-school kids
8 in our area and in the surrounding areas and we think
9 we will draw several of those, because several of
10 them have chosen to go there because they weren't
11 happy where they wound up at. And so we are thinking
12 --

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

14 MS. NORRIS: -- we'll draw several of those, and
15 we think there'll be a few that will come --

16 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay.

17 MS. NORRIS: -- from the other surrounding
18 districts.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Other questions?

21 MS. NEWTON: I have a question for ADE staff.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

23 MS. NEWTON: And I'm wondering legally the
24 obligation of the State as it involves the Arkansas
25 Department of Education around the special ed.

1 population, in terms of, well, you know, not having a
2 concrete plan in place, teachers and interventions.
3 So I'm wondering, you know, that may not be a
4 negotiable item. So I ask that question of staff to
5 be -- to inform us about our obligation to make sure
6 that that's covered.

7 MS. DAVIS: Okay. Special education services
8 cannot be waived. That's just period, not
9 negotiable. But if there's anything else that you
10 have that's specific --

11 MS. NEWTON: It's not the waiver as much as it's
12 not specific in terms of the special education, ELL,
13 GT, ALE, and just that whole gamut of services that
14 are specialized, and I think probably regulated by
15 statute and laws, and our ability to be able to have
16 that nuance at some point or -- you know, our plan is
17 to -- as opposed to having a concrete plan. So what
18 is our obligation as the Charter Authorizing Panel to
19 insure that those things are in place? And we can't,
20 you know, say specific, you know, but they're --
21 that's my question.

22 MS. DAVIS: Okay. Well, we're in luck today
23 because Courtney Salas-Ford is here and she is our
24 special education expert. So I'm going to defer to
25 her.

1 MS. SALAS-FORD: Thank you. Courtney Salas-
2 Ford, Deputy General Counsel for the Department. The
3 State and all of our public schools, including
4 charter schools, have an obligation to meet special
5 ed. requirements, as well as the ELL requirements as
6 of day-one. And so the fact that they may not have
7 services or staff in place on the first day that
8 students arrive is a valid concern. If the State --
9 they would be subject to all the same monitoring that
10 all of our public schools are, and so if the State is
11 aware that any school is not meeting those
12 obligations it's our responsibility then to step in
13 and make sure that those needs are met.

14 MS. NORRIS: May I address on that? We do have
15 plans to have a special ed. teacher from the very
16 beginning. So, on the special ed. we will have that
17 in place. We felt like the Gifted and Talented would
18 be served through the curriculum with our extensive
19 -- when we look at the students and work from
20 individualized plans it will working it for them.
21 ELL you've addressed. We don't have currently any
22 students in our area that are not English language
23 speaking students. We have some that have some
24 heritage that is Spanish and when they go home they
25 speak Spanish. But overall, we don't have any in our

1 area.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And can I make a
3 clarifying point there on the EL students? Because I
4 do have the statistics for the surrounding area; it
5 can be as high as 6% in Jonesboro and as low as 1% at
6 Harrisburg. But you still have the requirement to
7 identify and screen and then provide the appropriate
8 services to insure that any student who may be there
9 would have access to a full curriculum.

10 MS. NORRIS: We would be very open to doing
11 that.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. To go back to the
13 special ed., if they have a special education teacher
14 on staff day-one what would be beyond that that the
15 school would have to have? I mean, that may not be a
16 good question. I know our concerns are coming from
17 there have been several things alluded to -- for
18 example, support for children with dyslexia, the
19 guidance support -- not guidance necessarily --
20 counseling support, all of that being outsourced, but
21 not being included in the budget. So I think all of
22 that together goes to Ms. Newton's concerns.

23 MS. SALAS-FORD: Right. So under IDEA all
24 public schools would have to offer a certified
25 special ed. teacher and any related services that a

1 student needed. That could include occupational
2 therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, mental
3 health counseling, behavioral therapy, assistive
4 technology services. Again, so just any type of
5 related service. That's not an exhaustive list.
6 Then you have the continuum of special ed. placement;
7 so a self-contained classroom, a resource classroom,
8 or a co-teaching classroom. So like any school you
9 have to be prepared for the students that you're
10 going to receive. But like any other school district
11 you don't always know that you're going to get those
12 students; they could move into your district at any
13 time. But you need to have the resources and the
14 ability, should you get one of those students, to be
15 able to supply that full continuum of need.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So based on the data in
17 the surrounding schools that are within a 25-mile
18 radius, the data at the lowest end would be 10%
19 identified as special education students and at the
20 high end you have a 17%. The others are about 12 and
21 13 percent identified, so --

22 MS. SALAS-FORD: Right. So again -- and then
23 you have class size restrictions on special ed. So I
24 think I heard you say you have one special ed.
25 teacher. So if that was a self-contained classroom

1 there could only be 15 students in that classroom.
2 If it's resource it's a little bit more than that.
3 So again it all depends on what their population is
4 going to include as to what their needs would be.
5 But they would need to at least have the ability to
6 have that in place immediately.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Just a lot of unknowns,
8 aren't there?

9 MS. SALAS-FORD: Correct.

10 MS. NORRIS: May I interject on that, that we
11 have an enrollment period from November through
12 March. So by the end of March we're going to know
13 what our population looks like and what our needs
14 are, and then we will meet those.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Panel Members, do you have
16 additional questions?

17 Okay. So at this time let's go through the
18 waivers.

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

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton has asked for a
21 five-minute break. Would that be all right with the
22 Panel? We'll do that. Okay. Let's do a five-minute
23 break. We'll come back at 10-to-1:00. We'll go
24 through the waivers and move on.

25 (BREAK: 12:43 - 12:50 p.m.)

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We're going to
2 come on back to the meeting. I know it's been a long
3 morning and we appreciate you-all for being patient
4 with us while we go through this process. I know
5 it's -- we're going through it very detailed, but we
6 really do care about the work, we care about these
7 applications, and we know the time and effort you put
8 into coming here, and we want to acknowledge that.
9 So thank you again for your indulgence with our
10 break.

11 So let's continue on. I think we were getting
12 ready to look at the waivers specifically and just go
13 through and determine exactly which waivers the
14 school is seeking and see if there are any
15 clarifications or changes.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: All right. Just going through
17 the waivers, Ms. Davis, I think we -- two-fold, we
18 need to clarify what waivers that they are asking for
19 and then also making sure it's clear what the budget
20 impact is going to be based on some of these being
21 rescinded.

22 I know there was one on salary compensation. It
23 may be that there's not -- have they not asked for
24 enough waivers? Is there more they need to ask for
25 or rescind?

1 MS. DAVIS: No. Actually, that was my fault for
2 not turning it green. I said that they needed only
3 sections 4 through 8 of the rules, and they did in
4 their --

5 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

6 MS. DAVIS: -- review say that. So that was my
7 error. So that one is okay on my end.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

9 MS. DAVIS: And that happened on one other one.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: If I miss one, let me know. But
11 guidance counseling, I know it is green but that's
12 because they've rescinded their waiver for guidance
13 counseling. I know it talks about instead asking for
14 a waiver concerning student services. So what
15 exactly are they trying to do there?

16 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So that one, there are no
17 remaining issues because they did just change that.
18 From my understanding of this -- and the applicant
19 may want to clarify that -- but they plan on
20 providing the services, just not necessarily in the
21 way that's currently prescribed by law. So, you
22 know, whether it's having a licensed counselor, they
23 may have somebody that's outsourced or those kinds of
24 things like that. So they are providing the
25 services; it's just the mechanism in which they're

1 doing it.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. So when they don't have a
3 line item for guidance counselors as a staff member
4 it may be that they can -- through Purchase Services
5 they can -- they're going to utilize outside services
6 for that?

7 MS. DAVIS: Right.

8 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

9 MS. DAVIS: Because as I say, they still have to
10 provide those services to the students.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. They've asked for
12 sufficient waivers to be able to do that?

13 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: Effectuate I guess is what's --

15 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- the good word to use.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And is there money
18 included in the budget or is that coming -- I think
19 earlier we were unclear as to whether or not that had
20 been budgeted.

21 MS. DAVIS: And I'm checking on that.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: Same -- and some of these I know
23 that are green, that's why I'm asking. Is it because
24 the school nurse --

25 MS. DAVIS: Okay. We don't -- real quickly, we

1 don't believe that that is budgeted.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. The school nurse, there
3 is -- they're planning to use outside services. Is
4 that -- are they able to do that based on rescinding
5 this?

6 MS. DAVIS: Well, they also say that they're
7 going to have a licensed nurse that comes in. So if
8 they have a nurse that's there on-campus, whether
9 it's a contracted service but they're still on-campus
10 daily, then they would still be able to do this. Now
11 if they weren't going to have that, and use outside
12 services as necessary or go to the clinic and things
13 like that, then they would need waivers. So
14 oftentimes, people don't have a nurse necessarily on-
15 staff but it is a contract service, so they
16 essentially have the nurse on-campus as if they were
17 staff. They're just not paid from like a salary out
18 of the school.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFR: But in their budget on
20 Health Services it looks -- and from what they
21 explained, it looks like they're budgeting for --
22 enough for each student should they have to go to the
23 clinic. Because it looks like \$10 -- I would assume
24 it would be kind of a \$10 co-pay, would've been what
25 the arrangement had been made with the healthcare

1 provider.

2 MS. DAVIS: Right.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So --

4 MS. DAVIS: If they are only going to do going
5 to the clinic in lieu of having a nurse on staff,
6 then they will need waivers. But they also say
7 they're going to have a nurse to come and do things.
8 So if the nurse is going to be there daily, and then
9 use the clinic for things that maybe are outside the
10 scope of practice for the LPN or something like that,
11 that's going to be kind of additional services.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So we need them to
13 clarify; correct?

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: We need some clarification from
15 the applicant. So are you going to have a nurse
16 that's coming on campus or --

17 MS. NORRIS: Yes. The nurse from Access Medical
18 Clinic is going to come daily and administer
19 medications and will meet any needs that we have.
20 And if there's anything larger than just something
21 like that we will transport to the medical center
22 where they will be cared for.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And the nurse is going to
24 do that for \$1,780?

25 MS. NORRIS: I think if you look in there it's

1 -- I think it's -- isn't it on there twice? Access
2 Medical Clinic gave us the figures.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I'm just not seeing
4 it on the budgeting paperwork. If you could guide me
5 --

6 MS. NORRIS: All right. It is, yes, on line 75,
7 total of health services is \$3,560.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So these are different.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: So is the \$1700 basically the
10 cost for the person that you're going to pay to come
11 on campus, and then the \$1780, the second part of
12 that is if they go to the clinic?

13 MS. NORRIS: I think that is correct. I'm
14 unsure. I didn't negotiate this contract.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. All right.

16 MS. DAVIS: I think my question would be, is the
17 nurse going to only come on campus like once a day
18 for medication dispensing or how is that going to
19 work? Or would there not be a nurse provided
20 otherwise, except for medication time?

21 MS. NORRIS: That is our plan that she will come
22 on and we won't know until we get our student
23 population whether we're going to need her down there
24 once or twice a day to administer medicines. And
25 then, like I said, then if we need more services,

1 greater services we'll have to work with them.

2 DR. HERNANDEZ: So your position is is that
3 you're going to be compliant with the nurse
4 requirements on campus based on your population and
5 you'll work out the budget part later on?

6 MS. NORRIS: Yes, sir.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: Is that accurate? Okay.

8 MS. NORRIS: Yes. Jennifer?

9 MS. DAVIS: No, I'm sorry. I just want to make
10 -- because they said they were going to have the
11 nurse come either once or twice a day just to
12 administer medication, which will in fact not meet
13 the nurse requirement by having on-campus. So I'm
14 just not sure --

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: But they have to meet -- I guess
16 what I'm asking is, according to what they're not
17 asking for in the waivers they have to meet the
18 requirements of -- whatever they are?

19 MS. DAVIS: Right.

20 MS. NORRIS: So we -- so what if -- am I
21 understanding you that we do need to ask for a waiver
22 on the school nurse?

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: Ms. Davis, help me with that
24 because you -- they did ask for it, but then they
25 rescinded it.

1 MS. DAVIS: Right. And so that's what I'm
2 saying. I'm just -- okay. Other charter schools
3 that we have, a lot of them do have waivers of school
4 nurse. But it's not because they're not providing
5 full-time nursing services to the students; it's the
6 method in which they're providing them, whether they
7 contract with the nurse or they may have, you know,
8 one, you know, RN and then one LPN or how they're
9 doing it. But they are still providing nursing
10 services. So that's why I'm just not sure. Are they
11 going to have daily full-time 8:00 to 4:00 or
12 whatever hours of the school nursing services, or
13 will it be drop-in services for medication only? If
14 they're not going to have nursing services at all,
15 other than medication, then yes they need the waiver
16 because they need the nurse.

17 MS. NORRIS: We need to ask for the waiver,
18 please.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So you are asking for that
20 waiver?

21 MS. NORRIS: Yes, ma'am.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

23 MS. GREENO: I want to clarify something, if I
24 can, with the board about the medical services. The
25 contract that we're negotiating with them, the \$3560

1 is only for the nurse to come to the school every day
2 to dispense medications and such. If we take a
3 student to the clinic for, you know, if someone is
4 sick or something like that, then that will be an
5 additional, you know, expense. That will be a charge
6 to, you know, either the Medicaid or student's
7 personal insurance. And if there are students that,
8 you know, of course are not able to pay that, we will
9 work with them for that and the ASSET Foundation
10 would take care of those expenses. So --

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: All right. The next one is
12 Gifted and Talented. Ms. Davis, is there still an
13 issue with that one?

14 MS. DAVIS: No. That was the other one that I
15 did not mark as not being correct. It's done. That
16 one is resolved. They did request what they needed.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: And then alternative learning
18 environment, I didn't see anything that they planned
19 on having one.

20 MS. DAVIS: Right. I just didn't have any idea
21 what their rationale originally was, and then when I
22 asked for additional rationale they gave me
23 information about their professional learning
24 communities, and I just wasn't sure how that
25 addressed their need for needing the waiver of ALE.

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: Can the applicant expound on --
2 expand on what they plan? Is there a plan for ALE or
3 not having ALE? I just need some clarification on
4 that, alternative learning environment.

5 MR. BAKER: Again, there is a plan for ALE if
6 one is needed. Once we get the number of students
7 and see exactly where the students -- what their
8 needs are. And what we're planning on doing is hire
9 -- of course, ALE has to be a certified person, and
10 we're going through the Department to try to get the
11 grant for the ALE person and put them -- and you can
12 have a pullout system for ALE or you can have a full-
13 time. So that's what we're looking at. But we're
14 going to apply for an ALE grant through the
15 Department.

16 DR. HERNANDEZ: So, but you are -- you did ask
17 for the waiver; it's not --

18 MR. BAKER: Yes.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: Based on what you said, you're
20 just not required to have one. So we're just trying
21 to make sure that you are planning not to have on.

22 MR. BAKER: Right. Right. If we get the waiver
23 we're not going to have one either.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

25 MR. BAKER: Yeah.

1 DR. HERNANDEZ: Ms. Davis, personnel policies,
2 that's one that they don't have to have because
3 they're not a district. Is that --

4 MS. DAVIS: No. Only 6-17-209. The rest of
5 them they are still requesting waivers of, which I
6 don't have any issues.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. But they are -- they
8 rescinded those?

9 MS. DAVIS: Just the one waiver, 6-17-209.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: I know we covered school lunch
11 but --

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: The waiver, yeah.

13 MS. DAVIS: They rescinded that.

14 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. And then the construction
15 standards you said they did rescind --

16 MS. DAVIS: That is correct.

17 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- that one? But they still
18 have the one for facilities. And I'm assuming with
19 their new rental space it can be -- there's no
20 requirements on that?

21 MS. DAVIS: Well, I mean there's obviously the,
22 you know, warm, safe and dry requirements that, you
23 know, they can't put kids in there. But there are
24 provisions in there for, when lease services, that
25 the owner -- you know, like oftentimes, you know,

1 charters can't modify those lease services, and so
2 that's why that waiver is requested.

3 DR. HERNANDEZ: They do have sufficient waivers
4 to be able to do that now?

5 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And this doesn't
8 fall under the waivers, but it is something that I
9 needed to go back -- and if Mr. Causbie is here,
10 address the high school courses just to make sure
11 that what they have proposed here -- realizing that
12 the Career Ed. may still need to provide a waiver,
13 but with the other high school courses here meet
14 Standard of Accreditation requirements.

15 MR. CAUSBIE: Okay. Roy Causbie with Standards
16 again. Looking at -- first of all, I want to address
17 the 8th grade if I may please.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Uh-huh.

19 MR. CAUSBIE: Looking at that it's not very
20 detailed but would just be a reminder that Health and
21 PE is required for 7th and 8th graders, and then,
22 depending on if they get waivers or not from Career
23 Ed., keyboarding and career orientation. And what
24 we're aware of now, the new coding class is required
25 for 8th graders this year, and then music is also

1 required. So I was looking through that, through
2 their classes that's listed here and did not see
3 those specifically listed for 7th and 8th grade.

4 High school, I notice that they plan to offer
5 visual art for half-a-credit. Well, the requirement
6 is that that is to be offered for a full year -- for
7 a full credit instead of half-a-credit. Mathematics,
8 six units have to be offered and the ones that are
9 listed right now, currently that would be one class
10 short, one unit short. Also, really more
11 clarification on the choir and instrumental music
12 that's needed in the high school 9 through 12.
13 Social studies, I noticed that civics was listed for
14 a full year; that is a half-a-credit now. So with
15 civics, American History, and World History that's a
16 total of two-and-a-half credits and there's four
17 credits that must be offered there. And with the
18 math credit, I already talked about the math credits;
19 one other issue on the math credits is offering
20 Algebra I in the 8th grade, that would need a course
21 approval for students to receive credit in the 8th
22 grade for math. So those are the issues I could see
23 with the curriculum at this time.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So we probably need
25 the applicant to respond because that's quite a list

1 of --

2 MR. CAUSBIE: Yes, it is.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- changes that would need
4 to be made to course offerings.

5 MR. CAUSBIE: Correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

7 DR. BALLARD: We will comply with all those
8 requirements. Again, I think because of our hybrid
9 curriculum, we're offering 80 courses. So I would
10 want to work with the ADE staff to look at that and
11 -- because it is our intent to offer all of that.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

13 Okay. So we've gone through a pretty exhaustive
14 list and I think there have been several things said
15 here that probably have gotten -- got us all to
16 really thinking about things. I'm from Northeast
17 Arkansas; I know the communities that are represented
18 here today and the surrounding areas. So I know this
19 can be difficult and I know it's difficult when you
20 -- you have people who all want the same thing and
21 that's what's best for kids, but we don't always see
22 how to get there in the same way. And so I know that
23 that can be frustrating and I know everyone on this
24 Panel wants to have the best opportunity for kids,
25 but we also have a responsibility to really

1 thoroughly evaluate things and make some decisions on
2 the feasibility of that.

3 I think, Dr. Hernandez, you had a couple of
4 additional questions you wanted to ask before we do
5 our consideration.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: Maybe a comment or a question --
7 and a question. Yeah, it seemed very exciting to me
8 that there's this real emphasis on trying to build
9 something out of nothing and, you know, the passion
10 that these folks have been bringing many years is I
11 think -- it's great. And I think that -- you know, I
12 would be excited to be an administrator in that area.
13 What brings me I guess some concern and what my
14 question leads to, I know there are some
15 representatives from the other districts,
16 specifically the Harrisburg superintendent, if he's
17 still here, if he would indulge me asking a question.
18 You know, I could see this as being a great
19 opportunity for collaboration with business
20 industries, colleges, and multiple districts to make
21 this potentially a program that thrives in
22 collaboration. And so my question to you is: do you
23 think along those terms or do you see opportunities
24 in the future where this could prove to being a
25 successful model in working with your school

1 district?

2 SUPT. SAMPLE: Yes, sir. And in fact the
3 Harrisburg High School is now a conversion charter.
4 We have multiple partners included directed at
5 technology workforce -- workforce technology,
6 agriculture, and respective fields, Dr. Hernandez,
7 within the present agriculture programs. We utilize
8 professionals to come in, such as Advanced Welding,
9 and show real life techniques to our students, and we
10 even offer credit for that unit that those
11 professionals will come in and teach. We have
12 partners of local farmers that our students go out
13 and shadow for a unit, whether it's how to get along,
14 how to pay your bills, the finance part, the actual
15 growing part, who grows for seed now that the local
16 farmers cannot, and et cetera. So that collaboration
17 is with the partners of our conversion charter. We
18 dip that down at Weiner Elementary School, that we
19 have -- and like I said before, it's a school of
20 innovation; it was one of the first. We were also
21 recognized as a Blue Ribbon school with partners
22 available that we partner with through the elementary
23 school. And each morning we start off with a 30-
24 minute culture lesson that that elementary school
25 teachers throughout the day that relates to that

1 culture.

2 So I don't know if I'm answering your question
3 or not. I think most of what we've heard today are
4 great ideas, but I also believe that the schools
5 across the state and the one at Harrisburg, one at
6 Tuckerman, and Newport, since we're represented
7 today, we already have those programs in place. Some
8 of the actual landowners and -- are land owning and
9 developing that land and profiting from the sale of
10 the production of the produce of the harvest. Maybe
11 we don't have that; we don't stretch that far. I
12 know my neighbor and friend Newport has two -- has a
13 two-teacher agriculture program. To say that or to
14 state that those types of programs within a certain
15 mile radius are weak is, you know, up for debate; you
16 know, I don't want to say argument, but up for
17 debate. The programs that we have in the conversion
18 charter are new to us now, so our success -- I can't
19 stand here and say that they've been successful, but
20 I do know that with the partners that we have and the
21 ones that we are gaining that we're looking for
22 success in that area. Now we're 9-12, so we're not
23 7-12, which is what this school is requesting.

24 Did I answer anything?

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: I think you did. Thank you.

1 MR. SAMPLE: Thank you, sir.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Well, and I would -- I
3 guess I would follow-up, and I think maybe what
4 several of us are thinking -- you know -- is there a
5 possibility for the expansion of these ideas within
6 our schools in the region, so that if there -- if
7 there isn't a capacity for something separate, you
8 know, can we grow out more opportunities because of
9 the dedication and passion for expanded opportunities
10 within this? I don't know. That's just -- that may
11 be more of a -- something to think about.

12 MR. SAMPLE: Sure we can.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I guess it just --
14 just sitting here listening, not having been involved
15 in the conversation, it just seems that there are
16 probably some missed opportunities that, you know,
17 maybe if things had been a little different we might
18 not be in exact -- this exact same place. But I know
19 that happens all the time, so --

20 MR. SAMPLE: Yeah. And it happens, you know,
21 with consolidation. And I am saying sure, sure it
22 can happen, and I'm speaking for all high schools
23 across the state. We're always looking for ways to
24 expand. We're always looking for ways to diverse the
25 curriculum whether it's on a state level or a local

1 level. And, Dr. Pfeffer, you know, with your
2 question, I don't think that -- I don't think there's
3 a high school in the state that will say, "No, we're
4 not willing to expand." But we are, and we take
5 these ideas and I'm sure if we delved deep enough
6 into the idea of this open enrollment charter, of
7 where it came from, we would be quite surprised where
8 it came from for the total idea. So in our situation
9 at Harrisburg, with -- on the agricultural stage,
10 yes, we have made numerous contacts. One of the
11 professor's name today was actually partnering with
12 us at Harrisburg, and also with the University of
13 Nebraska, Arkansas State University, University of
14 Illinois on trying to form a partnership to do some
15 research because corn had become a more stable
16 product in our state. That fell through. It fell
17 though on the Higher Ed. end because that's where the
18 funding was coming through.

19 So those ideas are great, you know, and I
20 applaud anyone for looking that far. I mean I
21 actually -- we have talked to Brazil and Chile where
22 agri-tech and aquaculture started. So those things
23 that in our area of the state, which you're familiar
24 with, are very -- are very important and we become
25 excited when we have those discussions.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And I
2 do think Ms. Turner has a question now, so --

3 MS. TURNER: More of a comment. I too am from
4 that region and have worked in those schools, the
5 schools that are represented here today, as well as
6 many other schools through the co-op. Working with
7 Career and Technical Ed., this is an area that we
8 want to promote and grow and try to expand all of our
9 career and technical programs to move them to being
10 more responsive to the local industry. So Northeast
11 Arkansas has a rich history of the agriculture
12 industries, and what you all could do, if you all
13 could get together and work together, is just
14 unlimited with the possibilities that you have with
15 the agriculture industry and with the success in your
16 local schools and your local communities. And
17 Department of Career Ed. would love to work with you
18 and help you promote that. I want to see that region
19 grow and prosper as much as anyone.

20 MR. SAMPLE: Thank you.

21 MR. MIXON: Dr. Pfeffer, Don Mixon again. Dr.
22 Bennett from Newport can speak to that as well, about
23 what's going on with ASU-Newport if you --

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Bennett, yes,
25 go ahead.

1 SUPT. BENNETT: I'm not sworn in. Do I need to
2 be sworn in?

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You do. Yes, give me my
4 scrip here just to make sure I don't say it wrong.
5 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony that you're
6 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
7 nothing but the truth?

8 SUPT. BENNETT: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

10 SUPT. BENNETT: My school board has three
11 members who are farmers, very productive farmers.
12 And about a year ago our board president -- his name
13 is Dennis Haigwood -- he got together a group of
14 people, including legislators, people from the
15 Department of Education, people from Arkansas State
16 University, with the idea that we need to address
17 some of the same issues that you were talking about
18 here today, and particularly precision agriculture.
19 And so through the workings of all these meetings
20 that we had Arkansas State University now has asked
21 for it to be a pilot agriculture school and has been
22 approved for that and will be beginning portions I
23 think this Fall. And the whole idea is a two-year
24 program for these students to go through to learn
25 more about precision ag and then either go to work or

1 go on to further their education. So there's a lot
2 of partnerships there. And I know Riceland was here;
3 they were at the table too. A lot of the farming
4 people were there. So we're doing a lot of things.
5 We're trying to reach out. And my school particular,
6 we are a school of innovation. We have added a
7 second teacher. We're the first school in the state
8 that was approved to offer a precision ag course. So
9 we're looking at those things and we have many
10 partners. Again, Riceland Foods, Helena Chemical,
11 John Deere Tractor, they all bring things to our
12 school and allow our students to see those pieces of
13 equipment or that technology so that we can apply
14 that to our students. So we are trying to move
15 forward. The technology, all of our students have
16 iPads, the latest version that Apple just rolled out.
17 We have two learning management systems. Through our
18 school of innovation it allows us the flexibility to
19 go out to the college. Prior to this opportunity our
20 kids could take those concurrent credits but there
21 was not enough time in the day for them to actually
22 take everything that was offered to them. Through
23 the opportunity and through our innovation now these
24 kids have opportunity; if they want to work fast
25 enough and be diligent, they can actually graduate

1 with a master's -- an associate's degree by the time
2 they graduate from high school. So that's the
3 flexibility we're looking for. Yes. And again I
4 applaud -- everyone that has sat here today has been
5 very positive about helping kids and I certainly
6 applaud that. But, yes, public schools are trying
7 very hard. We also do an internship. We place
8 interns at these agriculture facilities in our
9 community every year. So we are reaching out and we
10 have a lot of partners. So that being said, yes,
11 we're trying very hard and I think we have something
12 to offer our kids.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you.

14 So, Panel, I think we have all the information
15 before us.

16 And at this time, Ms. Davis, is there anything
17 else remaining that we need to look at?

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

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So, and is there
20 anyone that had signed up for public comment that
21 didn't get a chance?

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

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. So we
24 can either -- in our decision we can either make a
25 decision to approve, disapprove or take the matter

1 under advisement until a future meeting. Just --
2 okay. So with that being said, at this time I will
3 accept a motion regarding the request for Weiner
4 Academy of Agriculture and Technology.

5 MS. NEWTON: Madam Chair, I make the motion not
6 to approve the application.

7 DR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We have a motion to
9 not approve the application and a second.

10 All those in favor?

11 (MAJORITY CHORUS OF AYES)

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Opposed?

13 MR. WILSON: No.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. The motion has
15 passed, and we had one no vote. So the motion was to
16 not approve the application, so the application has
17 been denied.

18 If you will record your vote on the voting sheet
19 and record your reason for the vote, we will offer
20 some feedback to the school.

21 [A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE]

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So the motion was
23 made and was accepted to deny the application.

24 Dr. Hernandez. I'm sorry, I didn't realize -- I
25 thought you were finished. Okay. I'll go on.

1 Ms. Newton, would you --

2 MS. NEWTON: Yes. I voted for the motion and my
3 reason being too many impactful variables around
4 funds for operation of the charter and student
5 support services.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh.

7 DR. OWOH: I voted for the denial of -- or for
8 the motion. I felt that the educational plan
9 application has -- is an innovative plan or approach
10 to student focused learning environment and the
11 workforce needs or demands for the community.
12 However, it is lacking some very key student services
13 and budget line items that would support a viable
14 student instructional environment.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

16 MS. TURNER: I voted for the motion. Many vital
17 issues were not addressed in the application and it
18 would be difficult to provide the implementation of
19 these required services to support student success.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. The
22 application has several deficiencies that need to be
23 addressed in terms of student support services and
24 budgeting. However, I do think the concept is very
25 good and should be pursued after more planning and

1 collaboration.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

3 DR. WILLIAMS: I voted to support the motion. I
4 like the agriculture and technology approach to
5 learning. This is an example of place-based
6 learning. The concerns: a number of unanswered
7 questions and lack of clarity around the learning
8 environment.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Mr. Wilson.

10 MR. WILSON: I voted against the motion. I
11 support the innovative approach of the applicants and
12 appreciate the work that's been done collaboratively
13 by both the applicants and the opposition or opposing
14 school districts. I think that's really an editorial
15 comment, but I think it's a really good thing.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you for your
17 comment.

18 To all of you who are here and to the school,
19 hopefully this feedback is helpful. And I think
20 everyone echoes that this is a good idea; this is a
21 good plan for Arkansas schools if we can modify it so
22 that there aren't the uncertainties with the other
23 areas. So please reach out to the Department in the
24 future so that we can continue to assist. So we
25 appreciate you being here.

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Ms. Boyd and Ms. Davis, that's the last item on our agenda today, I believe. Is there anything remaining that we need to discuss?

MS. BOYD: No, ma'am. We'll start tomorrow at 8:30. Tomorrow you'll be hearing three applications and two amendment requests.

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

MR. WILSON: So moved.

DR. OWOH: Second.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Everybody in favor. We will adjourn till 8:30 in the morning.

(The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.)

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A-2: PROLIFIC LEARNING

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-2: PROLIFIC LEARNING

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

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A-3: WEINER

EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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A-3: WEINER

EXHIBIT TWO (2)

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