

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

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*December 20, 2017*

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

December 20, 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/<br>Educator Effectiveness                  |
| DR. MIKE HERNANDEZ    | State Supt./Office of Coordinated<br>Support and Service           |
| MS. KATHI TURNER      | Deputy Director/Career & Technical<br>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. VIRGINIA PERRY | Public School Program Advisor     |
| MR. FREDDIE SCOTT  | Learning Services Operations Mgr. |

LOCATION:

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality  
- Auditorium  
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North Little Rock, AR 72118

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I just want to say good morning and at this time we will call this meeting to order. I want to invite you all here to this facility. At this time, would you please make sure that you silence all of your electronic devices? And we'll go ahead and move forward.

I want to begin by introducing the Panel. The Charter Authorizing Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision and revocation of charters. Act 462 of 2017 allows for individuals outside the Department to serve on the Charter Panel. In order to meet requirements of this act and to increase representation on the Panel from local stakeholder groups, Commissioner Key has appointed seven members to the Charter Authorizing Panel, and this panel began its work together in August of this year. I'm Ivy Pfeffer, chair of the Panel; we also have Dr. Jeremy Owoh, who's an ADE Assistant Commissioner for Educator Effectiveness; Dr. Mike Hernandez, who is a State Superintendent for the Office of Coordinated Support and Services; Kathi Turner, Deputy Director for Career and Technical Education, Department of Career Ed.; Mike Wilson, who is an education advocate and attorney in Jacksonville -- there's Mr.

1 Wilson; Dr. Naccaman Williams, who's a former State  
2 Board of Education member; and we also have Toyce  
3 Newton, who is a former State Board of Education  
4 member.

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

14 CHAIR'S REPORT

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So the first item on the  
16 agenda is a Chair Report and -- I believe that's  
17 correct. Is it? Yes, the Chair Report. And we have  
18 an update over the last couple of months. The  
19 Charter Unit and ADE Legal team have been working  
20 with our Division of Facilities and Transportation,  
21 and working to develop a Statement of Assurance so  
22 that charters will have a more streamlined way of  
23 reporting that they are meeting all safety  
24 requirements. We think this will be a positive thing  
25 where charters will be able to have more streamlined

1 reporting and alleviate concerns and questions. So  
2 we'll be reaching out to charters over the next  
3 couple of months to help them understand what those  
4 reporting requirements are and the timeline for doing  
5 that. And we know that all school leaders hold  
6 safety as such an important responsibility, so we  
7 feel like this has been a really good collaborative  
8 endeavor and we're looking forward to getting this  
9 implemented.

10 So that's all that I have to share, but I think  
11 maybe we have some team members who might like to  
12 start off the meeting sharing a few things that  
13 they've done over the last month. I know we've had  
14 several members visiting charters. So at this time  
15 if I have any panel members who would like to share  
16 anything -- we can start down here with Dr. Williams,  
17 if you'd like to share anything or you may wait and  
18 do it at a later time.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Later time, please.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

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

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner?

23 MS. TURNER: Yes, thank you. I had the  
24 privilege of visiting the Blytheville New Tech  
25 charter school a couple of months ago. And being

1 from northeast Arkansas and working in northeast  
2 Arkansas for a number of years I have been on the  
3 Blytheville campus multiple times over the last 25 to  
4 30 years. And I was pleasantly pleased to visit the  
5 Blytheville campus and to see the difference in the  
6 high school. The climate and the culture, the  
7 students, it was very refreshing to see the changes  
8 that have been made. And I appreciate the  
9 administration of Blytheville. Thank you for making  
10 changes to meet the needs of students and not giving  
11 up on our students there. So I wanted to report to  
12 the Panel that it was just very refreshing to be on  
13 that campus. So, thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you, Ms. Turner.  
15 Do we have any others?

16 DR. OWOH: Thanks, Madam Chair. I had the  
17 privilege over the last month, month-and-a-half to  
18 visit about three charter schools -- Premier High  
19 School, Covenant Keepers, and Lisa Academy North.  
20 And as Ms. Turner noted, I too was very pleased to  
21 see several student-focused initiatives, educational  
22 settings. Lisa Academy was the most recent -- Lisa  
23 Academy North was the most recent school that I  
24 visited, and to see the hands-on learning experiences  
25 that our students are able to experience was very

1 encouraging for me as we move forward with just  
2 innovative teaching and instructional techniques and  
3 innovations for our students. The students were  
4 excited, most of the students. Two students actually  
5 gave the tour at Lisa Academy and they noted that  
6 they've had experience in both settings, charter  
7 school and public school, and that they realized that  
8 all settings are not for every student and that they  
9 were excited and honored to be able to -- or happy to  
10 be able to be in the school environment that was  
11 conducive to their learning styles; very hands-on.  
12 One class was preparing for a CTE competition where  
13 they're going to -- they're building a car and going  
14 to drive it from Texas to California, and they were  
15 actually -- the teacher was facilitating that  
16 experience, but the students were spending class time  
17 during the day and after school and on the weekends  
18 and they were excited about that; and preparing, I  
19 think, for -- there's a STEM festival coming up in  
20 the spring, and so other schools -- other students  
21 were preparing for that. So to see those engaging  
22 activities that are being provided for our students  
23 was very beneficial to me. And there were other  
24 opportunities and situations like that that I saw at  
25 Premier High School and Covenant Keepers. So as we



1 talk about those schools I'll share additional  
2 information.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Do you want to go ahead?

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: Sure.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: I had the opportunity to go  
7 visit Washington Academy over in Texarkana, and was  
8 shown around by Mr. Taylor over there. And, you  
9 know, I had a good opportunity to look around the  
10 campus, which they have a very, very nice facility  
11 for grades 9 through 12 where they offer kind of a  
12 personalized learning alternative environment for  
13 their students. And I really, you know, commend them  
14 on the approach they've taken, being very unique.  
15 And most times attracting teachers to that  
16 environment may be tough, but they've taken it upon  
17 themselves to do things like, you know, find ways to  
18 increase contract days, increase pay, and at the same  
19 time kind of stepped out there as a conversion  
20 charter and even have the waiver from Fair Teacher  
21 Dismissal. And so that created an environment where  
22 it's more application-driven where people -- teachers  
23 want to be there, students want to be there. And one  
24 of the things that I thought was neat is that, you  
25 know, they had kids that come there because they want

1 to graduate early. And I know Mr. Taylor shared with  
2 me that they had a kid that actually made a 36 on  
3 ACT, which I think, you know, that's kind of  
4 outstanding for a school like that. So I just want  
5 to share that. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. And I know  
7 we'll have multiple opportunities for sharing out  
8 things. But it's always good when we can be in  
9 schools, when we can see firsthand different  
10 experiences, and it helps us to have a deeper  
11 understanding and appreciation of how different  
12 educational needs can be met in different ways, so --  
13 and it's also nice to start off these hearings on --  
14 with positive notes. I know sometimes when you come  
15 before a panel like this you may feel like you're  
16 being grilled or, you know, it can be maybe not quite  
17 such a pleasant experience. And we want you to know  
18 that we do appreciate the efforts and when we ask  
19 tough questions it's because we want to make sure  
20 that you're considering everything, because we know  
21 the challenges that are out there for our students.  
22 We know you want the best for kids too, and we just  
23 want to make sure that we're all working together to  
24 have these types of environments where all students  
25 are successful.

1 CONSENT AGENDA

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So at this time we'll go  
3 ahead and move on with the agenda. The next item is  
4 the Consent Agenda. So hopefully you've had the  
5 opportunity to look through that. Is there anything  
6 that anyone wishes to discuss on the Consent Agenda?

7 If not, I will accept a motion on the Consent  
8 Agenda.

9 DR. WILLIAMS: So moved.

10 DR. OWOH: Second.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We have a motion to  
12 approve and it's been seconded.

13 All those in favor?

14 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

16 Okay. Thank you.

17 And I do want to say thank you to Dr. Hernandez;  
18 he did fill in for me at the last charter meeting.  
19 So, thank you. I've heard lots of good things. I  
20 just hope I can live up to it and keep my job as  
21 chair while you're here. We'll see. So I've got  
22 some competition, I'm afraid, here.

23 HEARING PROCEDURES

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So the first item on our  
25 action agenda is a Request for District Conversion

1 Public Charter School Renewal for Blytheville High  
2 School, a New Tech. Before they get started I will  
3 ask our staff attorney, Ms. Jennifer Davis, to  
4 explain the hearing process, the voting process, and  
5 the process that we will go through to hear these  
6 today and what happens next.

7 MS. DAVIS: Hi, good morning. Jennifer Davis,  
8 Staff Attorney for the Department. The procedures,  
9 you will follow the same ones all day today, so  
10 that's a good thing. It will start out that anyone,  
11 other than attorneys, will need to be sworn in. The  
12 applicant will then have 20 minutes to present its  
13 presentation to you regarding its renewal. There  
14 will be 20 minutes collectively for any opposition  
15 against the renewal that there may be, followed by  
16 five minutes additional time for the applicant to  
17 make any last, you know, closing statements to you at  
18 that point. You can ask any questions of the  
19 applicant, of the Department, and you can either  
20 choose to, you know, renew their charter or not.  
21 But, you know, I don't expect that to happen. But  
22 you can choose at that point to vote. If you want to  
23 take it under advisement, you can. The applicant  
24 will need additional information. At that point you  
25 do have a Google doc that's been provided to you that

1           you can make the reasons for your vote, so that way  
2           the applicant and the public is aware of why you  
3           voted the way that you voted. Any questions?

4                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you, Ms. Davis.

5   A-1: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
6   RENEWAL: BLYTHEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - A NEW TECH SCHOOL,  
7   BLYTHEVILLE

8                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Boyd, you are  
9           recognized to introduce us to this first group.

10                  MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Alexandra  
11           Boyd, Director of Charter Schools. On January 14,  
12           2013, the State Board of Education approved the  
13           application for Blytheville High School, A New Tech  
14           School. The charter is approved to serve students in  
15           grades 9-12 with a maximum enrollment of 1,000.  
16           Representatives of the Blytheville High School are  
17           before -- are appearing before the Charter  
18           Authorizing Panel to request a renewal of their  
19           current charter. From Blytheville New Tech we have  
20           Robin Sneed, who is the director of the New Tech  
21           school, and Sally Cooke, who is the director of  
22           Academic Affairs for Blytheville School District.  
23           And just as a reminder this request is for three  
24           years, a three-year renewal.

25                  CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will

1 representatives from Blytheville New Tech High School  
2 and anyone speaking in opposition please stand to  
3 receive the oath? If you'll raise your right hand.  
4 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
5 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth,  
6 and nothing but the truth?

7 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you. And we  
9 will go ahead and get started. The charter school  
10 will have 20 minutes to make their presentation.

11 MS. COOKE: Is it okay if we stand together?

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yes, ma'am. And just  
13 please introduce yourself for the record, your name  
14 and title, and make sure you get as close to that  
15 microphone as possible. It's a little bit hard for  
16 us to hear up here, so --

17 MS. COOKE: I'm Sally Cooke; I'm curriculum  
18 director of School Improvement. I work with the  
19 district and the high school. And --

20 MS. SNEED: I'm Robin Sneed, district New Tech  
21 director.

22 MS. COOKE: Thank you for hearing us today. We  
23 appreciate it. And we were thankful to get through  
24 the rain and get here this morning without any  
25 trouble. First of all, I just want to share our

1 vision and our mission.

2 And I guess, Robin, if you want to click to that

3 --

4 I'm not going to read the whole vision and  
5 mission. But as you can see, the mission for  
6 Blytheville High School, for the New Tech, is all  
7 about kids; it's all about what we have opportunities  
8 to do with our students and the way that we can  
9 encourage our children to move forward. That mission  
10 and then the vision that follows -- we're all  
11 learners. We'll show agency, demonstrate the ability  
12 to communicate, collaborate, think critically, and  
13 transition into the college or career of their  
14 choice. Both of those were built in conjunction with  
15 our district mission and vision, so there's a systems  
16 thinking going on with our high school and our New  
17 Tech school that falls right in line with what we  
18 believe as a district, and the fact that we feel like  
19 all learners have to take responsibility. And with  
20 that we include all learners as us, each individual,  
21 whether we're administrators, students, classroom  
22 teachers; we all have that ownership and that vision.

23 Our core belief, number one, is that our New  
24 Tech strategies must benefit our students. That's  
25 the lens that we have to run everything through. If

1 what we are choosing to do is not going to help our  
2 students, we're probably looking in the wrong  
3 direction.

4 A second part that is critical for us is the  
5 relationships. Relationships are just essential to  
6 being able to reach those students. And for our  
7 students who come mostly from poverty backgrounds,  
8 the relationships that we can build in the  
9 educational setting are critical to them wanting to  
10 be there, for them to be able to believe in  
11 themselves, and for them to understand where it is  
12 that they need to go.

13 Teamwork is another critical aspect and belief  
14 that we have. It's key to collaboration; it's key to  
15 the innovation and creativity. All of those are  
16 standard operating procedures for our school and for  
17 our district.

18 And then the community is a vital partner in our  
19 process. We have really strong community ties  
20 through community stakeholder groups, individuals who  
21 come and tour our buildings, who come and sit and  
22 visit, who walk into our classrooms, who meet with us  
23 as teachers and as leaders in the district. We have  
24 great partnerships with industries and businesses in  
25 our local community and in our county. We have lots



1 of internships and things like that that have been  
2 worked out with many of the industries and  
3 businesses.

4 And then also with education facilities --  
5 Arkansas Northeastern College is right in Blytheville  
6 and we have a wonderful partnership with them, as  
7 well as Arkansas State University where we partner  
8 with them to do a college prep academy and actually  
9 get to graduate our academy students on their campus  
10 with their administrators and have them prepare to  
11 walk out the door with an iPad, preferably with an  
12 offer to go to school at Arkansas State when they  
13 walk out. And so that's something that we benefit  
14 and that's part of our core beliefs.

15 MS. SNEED: The first goal that the Blytheville  
16 High School leadership team chose was our school-wide  
17 focus, which was decided upon by teachers based on  
18 data, which is to improve students' ability to  
19 incorporate textual evidence and written analysis.  
20 We made this our school-wide focus in part because of  
21 the huge focus that writing plays on the ACT Aspire,  
22 which is -- about 38 or 39 percent of the overall  
23 assessment is based on what students can write.

24 Our actions for this goal are looking at student  
25 work protocols. Each of our departments forms a PLC

1 or an instructional team and they bring in --  
2 teachers bring in their work, introduce it, and say,  
3 "This is the prompt and here is what the students  
4 wrote." And the teachers are then provided feedback  
5 from their colleagues on how well the prompt is  
6 written, on specific instructional strategies to move  
7 their students along on our first goal.

8 Each quarter our teachers give three units, pre  
9 and post assessments, which we report to the State in  
10 our 45-day action plan. One of these each quarter is  
11 a written assessment. We also have our New Tech  
12 literacy specialists who come in once or twice a year  
13 to work with our humanities teams.

14 Goal two is overall ELA growth, which is  
15 monitored on the reading and English assessments of  
16 the ACT Aspire. Some actions that we have on this  
17 growth include our accelerated reader and our Drop  
18 Everything and Read program. Currently our students  
19 are reading three times as much as compared to three  
20 years ago. Three years ago our students earned 7,361  
21 points, with an average comprehension of 62%. This  
22 past year that number tripled, more than tripled with  
23 32,000 -- over 32,000 points the last two years, with  
24 an average comprehension of 76.8% on the assessments.  
25 And, again, we have our pre and post assessments and

1 are looking at student work protocol and our cycle of  
2 inquiry.

3 Mathematics growth -- we will monitor growth and  
4 improve student achievement in the area of  
5 mathematics. Again, our actions school-wide are the  
6 common pre and post assessments and looking at  
7 student work. Our students also participate in the  
8 Math Facts program daily.

9 Science growth -- to monitor growth of student  
10 achievement in the area of science. Again, our  
11 actions are very similar. Our teachers are -- our  
12 science teachers are currently early adopting the  
13 NGSS standards and have been diving in to those  
14 standards with experts in the field for the last  
15 year.

16 We have 10 advanced placement courses on our  
17 campus, which I believe is the most of any school in  
18 our county. Sixteen of our teachers are AP certified  
19 teachers, so even -- and these are all in the content  
20 area; so even if students aren't taking an AP class  
21 they are having the benefit of an AP certified  
22 teacher with those strategies in the classroom. Our  
23 AP literature and AP language class, as well as our  
24 AP US History and our AP Government class, students  
25 can opt to take blended credit for those courses and

1 they can get 21 credit hours on our campus without  
2 leaving our campus. This is through our partnership  
3 with Arkansas Northeastern College, which Ms. Cooke  
4 alluded to earlier.

5 Technology, our students -- our school is one-  
6 to-one. Our students are issued computers that they  
7 may take home. Over the last three, four years --  
8 five years, actually -- sorry -- our students -- our  
9 return rate for those computers has been above 98%.  
10 We have on our campus a technology person who comes  
11 in. We have specific technology hours and they're  
12 there to repair the computers quickly so that  
13 students -- or provide a loaner so that students do  
14 not miss instruction time. Because our tech people  
15 can't be with us all the time, they service the  
16 entire district, we are -- we have four students who  
17 are tech interns who can help repair -- make minor  
18 repairs to computers, mouse issues and things like  
19 that when our tech people are not there. And then so  
20 students who damage a computer that cannot pay the  
21 fine for repairing, we have a work-it-off program; we  
22 have students who -- our students can come in and  
23 work for a teacher, filing or wiping down desks,  
24 whatever the teacher needs, and we pay \$10 an hour  
25 towards their fine for working it off.

1           Through our charter -- we became a charter  
2           because of our belief in the New Tech Network and our  
3           partnership with the New Tech Network. The support  
4           we get from these -- from the Network is tremendous.  
5           I'm currently working with three New Tech coaches who  
6           provide me and the district leadership team with a  
7           lot of support around systems thinking. We have --  
8           in addition to that we have leadership summits that  
9           we can attend in the fall and the spring to further  
10          our learning around the concept of deeper learning  
11          and project-based learning. A group of our teachers  
12          each year attends the New Tech annual conference.  
13          This past year I believe there were five people who  
14          actually presented at the conference itself through  
15          an application process.

16                 We also have a variety of virtual learning  
17                 opportunities to learn more about project-based  
18                 learning; one of those is our badging system.  
19                 Through the New Tech Network we have badging  
20                 experiences. We can -- we submit our work, get  
21                 feedback from an expert from the New Tech Network in  
22                 order to improve our processes. We have one teacher  
23                 -- or we have two teachers who are New Tech teacher  
24                 certified; they're New Tech certified teachers. And  
25                 then we have one teacher who was just certified as a

1 New Tech trainer. And then a variety of other  
2 professional learning opportunities.

3 MS. COOKE: If we could back-up to New Tech just  
4 for one moment, one thing I wanted to mention to you  
5 was the fact that with the reflection and the support  
6 that we get from them it falls right in line again  
7 with what we're doing with the Department of Ed. here  
8 and what we're doing in our district, which is just a  
9 whole systems approach. The things that we do at  
10 Blytheville High School New Tech we encompass  
11 throughout the district. And we had an opportunity  
12 last week to have one of the people from the New Tech  
13 Network -- he is the director of District and School  
14 Development nationwide; his name is Mark Morrison --  
15 and he came to visit the school last week. And I  
16 wanted to read you just an excerpt of the email that  
17 he sent us last week after the visit. He says:

18 "Thank you again for sharing the New Tech  
19 implementation learning last week. Blytheville  
20 Schools is clearly an innovative school community and  
21 I appreciate participating in your continued focus on  
22 learning models that insure students graduate career  
23 and college ready. Your team's passion and focus on  
24 school designs and classroom practices that insure  
25 student engagement and achievement are compelling.

1 Great teams trust each other to speak the truth and  
2 think critically about the dilemmas challenging  
3 progress towards their vision for learning. They  
4 problem-solve, monitor and seek clarity on commonly  
5 owned plans for success. They challenge the status  
6 quo and help each other understand new solutions  
7 through effective communication structures. It was  
8 an honor to watch your four -- you four exhibit the  
9 characteristics of a high-functioning team." And I  
10 think that speaks highly of Blytheville High School's  
11 leadership team in a nutshell, that their focus is  
12 all about what can we do to continue to innovate --  
13 but innovate only if it's going to benefit the kids;  
14 not innovation for innovation's sake, not technology  
15 for technology's sake, not New Tech for New Tech's  
16 sake. But what is it that's going to help the kids  
17 in Blytheville, Arkansas, in Mississippi County in  
18 the Delta? And so far these things that we have  
19 done, we're seeing that great success through that.  
20 And I'll let Robin continue sharing a little bit more  
21 about that process.

22 MS. SNEED: One thing that our students and our  
23 parents really love is our learning management system  
24 through the New Tech Network, which is called ECHO.  
25 Through ECHO, the first -- here is a sample agenda.

1 Students can -- or they do hop onto their agenda at  
2 the beginning of class every day and they see what  
3 they're learning. They click on specific assignments  
4 and complete their assignments online. Parents can  
5 see this too; there's a Parent View. For the  
6 administrators, we can see at a glance how our  
7 students are doing on our school-wide learning  
8 outcomes within each particular course. Our school-  
9 wide learning outcomes are knowledge and thinking,  
10 which is the content stuff; written communication,  
11 oral communication, agency and collaboration. At the  
12 bottom, this is a screenshot of our standards tracker  
13 and teachers are -- teachers can see how their  
14 students are doing along the standards; they can see  
15 this activity is aligned to this standard and then  
16 pull up this tracker to see at a glance how their  
17 students are doing, how far -- how many students have  
18 mastered or not mastered, and then they can pare down  
19 and see which students they need to work with more on  
20 those particular standards.

21 MS. COOKE: And just to share just a little bit  
22 more about the student work and the student  
23 accomplishments, in our class of 2017 last year there  
24 were 21 honor graduates; 92 CTE completers; 38 of  
25 those students received industry certification, so



1 they were job ready when they walked out the door; 13  
2 of them had participated as CTE interns throughout  
3 our community with raving reviews from those  
4 businesses. They've asked to have people come back;  
5 once again, they want those students in their  
6 businesses. Fifty-one of those students were offered  
7 scholarships totaling over two million dollars,  
8 including 25 who were the Arkansas Academic Challenge  
9 Scholarship recipients of \$14,000 apiece. And so we  
10 feel like we're providing the background for our  
11 students so they can walk in and get the education  
12 that they want at any college or university around  
13 the state or anywhere else, even outside the state.  
14 And then also just the career end of it, to provide  
15 that opportunity for them so they can walk out and do  
16 that as well.

17 In the class of 2018, so far this class is  
18 following suit and doing well. Forty-six of our  
19 seniors just recently went with one of our New Tech  
20 counselors to an HVCU college fair trip and went to  
21 see 35 different schools, got to meet, visit, talk,  
22 speak to them, and were offered at that point 1.8  
23 million dollars worth of scholarships just based on  
24 where they are now as seniors. And so it's wonderful  
25 that we're able to get them out there in front of

1 places. Not only are we building the dream with them  
2 of where they can go and who they can become, we're  
3 taking them to places so they can see how they can  
4 continue that dream. Many of our students come from  
5 places where they don't have that option.

6 And then, finally, the last slide is just the  
7 other support in general. Our New Tech work is  
8 supported through -- again, I've mentioned this  
9 several times -- the systems work in our district.  
10 They're not in isolation. We wrap around each of the  
11 schools in our district and try to make sure that  
12 these things are happening and we're building a  
13 foundation for Blytheville High School New Tech as a  
14 charter by the things that we're implementing in our  
15 primary, elementary and middle school down below to  
16 make sure that as a charter they are successful in  
17 school when they get to the high school. I think  
18 that's something very key.

19 We've talked a lot about adult work and the  
20 adult work that we're doing. But we really strongly  
21 believe that if we are not preparing, training and  
22 constantly improving as adults then our students  
23 won't have that chance to improve. And so our goal  
24 is that every student -- or every teacher, every  
25 administrator, every adult who works with children is

1 constantly in a learn-and-grow process; and so we  
2 have what we call learn-and-grow opportunities  
3 monthly for principals who gather together across the  
4 entire district, for assistant principals across the  
5 district, instructional facilitators across the  
6 district, and then at the high school the New Tech  
7 teacher leaders have monthly learn-and-grows as well  
8 where they're pulling together. So it's a constant  
9 cycle of everyone wanting to improve. Observation  
10 and feedback is also very critical for us. We're in  
11 and out of classrooms constantly. We want feedback,  
12 not only from the administrators to the teachers, but  
13 from the students. We survey students regularly to  
14 find out what's working for them, what would work  
15 better, if they have suggestions. We have a very,  
16 very strong student voice group on campus that  
17 present and give a lot of information. There is an  
18 SIS on campus for support. And then we're also  
19 working with the SPDG grant through the Department  
20 for RTI and BPIS support so that we're constantly,  
21 again, a wraparound for all of our adult learners.  
22 And through those things is why we feel like we're  
23 making success with our students on campus.

24 So that basically wraps up what we had to share  
25 with you. We're happy to answer any questions, if

1           you have any.

2                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER:   Okay.   Thank you.

3                   Ms. Boyd, is there anyone here to speak in  
4           opposition?

5                   MS. BOYD:   No, ma'am.

6                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER:   Okay.   So you do have an  
7           additional five minutes.   But if you're ready for  
8           questions I think we can go ahead and start there.

9                   MS. COOKE:   We're ready for questions.   That's  
10          fine.

11                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER:   Okay.   All right.

12                   So, Panel, I'll start -- do we have one here?

13                   All right.   Ms. Turner.

14                   MS. TURNER:   I have a couple of questions.   One  
15          is I noticed in your application you're applying for  
16          a three-year renewal.   Some of our other schools are  
17          applying for a five-year renewal.   Can you explain  
18          that to me?

19                   MS. COOKE:   The three-year renewal, we've just  
20          came off of academic distress a couple of years ago.  
21          We are in that process of moving forward.   We wanted  
22          to look at our scores and then re-evaluate again --  
23          it was very important for us to take this in a slow  
24          and steady pace and not just assume that everything  
25          is going to go for five years.   We are always trying

1 to move forward and we don't ever want to get  
2 complacent. And so the three-year for us just felt  
3 like a better choice --

4 MS. TURNER: Okay.

5 MS. COOKE: -- because of that.

6 MS. TURNER: That's good. A couple of other  
7 questions: on your industry certifications was the  
8 career readiness certificate a part of that or do you  
9 use that?

10 MS. COOKE: The career readiness?

11 MS. TURNER: Can you tell me something about the  
12 industry certifications that -- you said you had 38  
13 students that received those.

14 MS. COOKE: They -- we are working with the  
15 career readiness certifications that are the career  
16 industry. We are also working with things like the  
17 OSHA certification specifically. A lot of ours will  
18 walk out with -- they'll go into the industry that's  
19 local and they will tell them what kind of specific  
20 certifications they have to have to work there, and  
21 so our students are getting those specific ones. So  
22 it could be anything from the Microsoft Word, those  
23 kinds of things, to the OSHA safety certifications as  
24 well.

25 MS. TURNER: And one other question: you

1 mentioned your career counselors. I'm just curious,  
2 is that a career counselor or is that one of the  
3 career coaches through that office?

4 MS. COOKE: It's actually a career counselor who  
5 came to us originally as a career coach. But we saw  
6 such a huge benefit in what the State was doing,  
7 offering career coaches, and she came to us through  
8 Arkansas Northeastern College at the beginning. But  
9 we felt like having her fulltime on our campus was  
10 worth hiring her. And we asked for a waiver when we  
11 first began and applied for our charter to have a  
12 counselor who could work in that type of position,  
13 and we've used that waiver well. She works with  
14 every student, starting in 9th grade. And I really  
15 think that the benefit of having her on campus daily  
16 to get to know the needs, the family, the background,  
17 and the desires and dreams of each child has helped  
18 them. Our recent survey, most recent survey of our  
19 students said that overwhelmingly they know so much  
20 more now, by the time they're even a junior, about  
21 what their options are after high school, what their  
22 options are after graduating, and how to apply to  
23 college. A lot of the time students hear about  
24 applying but they don't have anybody to walk them  
25 through that. As a career counselor, she walks them

1 through that process step-by-step. And, again, she  
2 is part of that group that goes out and visits these  
3 colleges with them so they can see face-to-face and  
4 talk to someone on campus who says "this is what you  
5 must do in high school to come here."

6 MS. TURNER: Okay. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez, do you have  
8 questions?

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: I'll wait.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You'll wait?

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Owoh?

13 DR. OWOH: Thank you, Madam Chair.

14 In your application, I noticed that you all are  
15 utilizing Renaissance Learning for a progress  
16 monitoring tool. So my question is: what grade  
17 levels utilize that? How often and what  
18 opportunities do your educators, teachers and  
19 administrators have to review that information, and  
20 how do they implement that?

21 MS. COOKE: Well, we create data walls with that  
22 information, electronic data walls. And our students  
23 actually district-wide, from 3rd grade on up, are  
24 using the Renaissance Learning. And so we're  
25 monitoring that growth and we're monitoring trends in

1           their learning by student groups, grade to grade, so  
2           that we can see where those areas are that we know  
3           that we need to go back in and shore some things up.  
4           At the high school, obviously, all students 9th  
5           through 12th grade use that. They're tested at least  
6           three times a year so that we can see where they are  
7           as they come in. A lot of times that summer slump  
8           happens with students who are not in school over the  
9           summer, and we want to know where they are as they  
10          come into the fall, where they are mid-year, and then  
11          again before they leave. With that, also it helps us  
12          to track them into a critical reading class if they  
13          need extra support. We have a lot of students who  
14          need that additional reading support. But as Robin  
15          pointed out, just the comprehension level going up  
16          78.6% is really a big jump for us and seeing those  
17          gains three years in a row, tripling those results,  
18          has been big. Our students are excited about reading  
19          and I think monitoring it -- having every adult have  
20          access to that is --

21                   Whoops, I think I'm changing the slide there.

22                   I think every student and every teacher having  
23          access to it, it's very much on everybody's mind and  
24          it's important for them to see that how well I can  
25          read, how well I can comprehend is going to help me



1           succeed in life. So it makes it urgent for them.

2           MS. SNEED: For intervention purposes, our  
3 teachers also use the instructional planning reports  
4 that are provided through Ren-Learning so that they  
5 can get individualized instruction on what they need  
6 based on their test results.

7           CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Can I -- I'd like to do a  
8 follow-up with his question, because you're talking  
9 about Renaissance Learning and using an assessment  
10 for progress monitoring. But you also mentioned in  
11 your goals section the use of the ACT Aspire interim  
12 assessments. So what kind of alignment or connection  
13 are you seeing? Because it sounds like with the  
14 Renaissance Learning you may be seeing some growth in  
15 achievement. Are you seeing the same thing in your  
16 ACT Aspire interim assessments, and is that  
17 translating into the summative?

18           MS. SNEED: We currently are not seeing the  
19 growth that we would like to see from interim one to  
20 interim two. But we're also realizing that the  
21 specific standards that are being tested between the  
22 two interims are not necessarily the same.

23           MS. COOKE: When we looked last year, I can tell  
24 you that we did have higher hopes for our summative  
25 than what we saw. On Aspire we saw stronger work

1 through the interims than we did otherwise, and that  
2 was throughout the entire district. So we're  
3 doubling down, we're working back -- looking back at  
4 like depth of knowledge and making sure that what  
5 we're creating in our pre and post assessments that  
6 we're using in class to help structure for the  
7 students, that we're actually getting into those  
8 higher depth of knowledge levels as well. Because we  
9 feel like maybe that was part of our reason that we  
10 didn't see as much growth as we had -- but we are  
11 monitoring that and we do do those reports. We come  
12 -- we have a weekly leadership team meeting at each  
13 school and at the high school they will review that  
14 data as those things come out. They also take it  
15 straight back into the collaborative setting and the  
16 teachers look at it and then go back further with  
17 that to show it to the students so that everybody has  
18 a stake in it.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And I just wanted  
20 to, you know, pull that conversation out because I  
21 think what we're knowing -- or learning is, you know,  
22 there are a lot of local decisions made in terms of  
23 what assessments are being used. But if different  
24 assessments are providing you with different -- or  
25 information that doesn't align, we, you know, always

1 want just to help districts think through, you know,  
2 why might we not be seeing the same things or why are  
3 my results not actually being where we want. So  
4 that's why I wanted to follow-up on that line of  
5 questioning, so --

6 MS. SNEED: In looking at -- in looking at the  
7 scaled score for the ACT -- for the Renaissance  
8 Learning, we do have a scale that tells us that if  
9 they're on this scaled score they should be scoring  
10 ready. And so far, that's been fairly accurate on  
11 the interim assessments. Again, we didn't see the  
12 kind of growth that we wanted to see on the  
13 summative; based on the interim there just wasn't a  
14 grade correlation. But as a leadership team we've  
15 been looking at that and trying to determine why.  
16 And again on the interim assessments you have Level 1  
17 or 1 and 2, but on the summative you have a lot of 2s  
18 and 3s. You don't have any writing on the interims,  
19 which again is part of our reason for that heavy  
20 focus on our writing, because we believe that if we  
21 get our writing up the rest will follow.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

23 DR. HERNANDEZ: My questions kind of revolve  
24 around the goal process. So, you know, I think any  
25 time we're looking at a renewal application we've

1 always got to go back and reflect on what were the  
2 goals that they originally set and did they meet  
3 those. And so looking at a lot of the goals that  
4 were set, you know, you can kind of go down and a lot  
5 of those goals weren't met, as far as what you guys  
6 had said you wanted to do. And I think it's equally  
7 important as we start to renew these things that we  
8 really look at the goals that you're setting going  
9 forward and maybe taking kind of a different  
10 modification on some of your goals; and also  
11 understanding that we've changed, you know, the  
12 testing and what does that really look like. And so  
13 I think just say a concern or question I had -- I'll  
14 just use math specifically -- so your new goals, you  
15 know, it sets it at 25%. And so looking at what the  
16 past was -- I think your most recent was like at  
17 about a 7 or 8 percent. And so to make that big jump  
18 -- and then when I look at your growth part, that  
19 you're saying you're using STAR math, that 50% of  
20 your students will meet growth, to make that big jump  
21 I kind of wonder is that an appropriate goal? And I  
22 don't -- I think we're in that process; it's kind of  
23 one of those things that, maybe even for Ms. Boyd,  
24 you know, before these things come, you know, what is  
25 that process that we kind of work with the districts

1 in their goal-setting process? Because I know you  
2 guys are kind of out there. What should the  
3 appropriate goals be based on, you know, we're moving  
4 to this new ESSA alignment and things like that? And  
5 so how do we make sure that as we're renewing these  
6 applications that we keep that part in mind? Because  
7 I think it kind of puts maybe the district in a  
8 position and us in a position of making decisions for  
9 renewal; is what are good goals, so when we come back  
10 in three years, you know, we don't see, well, they  
11 didn't meet their goals again because they were  
12 either unreasonable goals or, you know -- and so how  
13 do we -- and that's more of a talking thing than it  
14 is probably a question, so --

15 MS. SNEED: Our original goals were basically  
16 set on AMO, like the State AMO -- and of course now  
17 there are no AMOs currently. We again wondered would  
18 a 15% -- you know, a jump from an 8% to a 15% in math  
19 be enough of a goal or should we shoot for higher.  
20 We opted to shoot for higher. Maybe that was a  
21 mistake.

22 MS. BOYD: I just want to add with this  
23 particular application that they're working so  
24 closely with School Improvement. We -- you know, at  
25 one point we all met together in one leadership

1 meeting with everyone from the Blytheville School  
2 District; we had School Improvement there, Special  
3 Ed. was there, I think ForwARd Arkansas was there;  
4 there were a lot of people there, because they have a  
5 lot going on in the district. And so a lot of --  
6 with this particular application a number of their  
7 goals are tied to the larger district plan that has  
8 been developed with the district and School  
9 Improvement and these other operators that they're  
10 working with to improve their district. So with this  
11 particular application, that's just something to keep  
12 in mind. So while it may look like a huge jump, it's  
13 been bounced around a group -- a lot of different  
14 people at the table and plays a part into the overall  
15 district plan; which I think was mentioned earlier in  
16 the PowerPoint is that they're really trying to work  
17 to increase and make sure that their district has  
18 alignment so that when students do get to the New  
19 Tech High School that they're able to be successful  
20 there. And so it is a rigorous goal. I think we  
21 would -- we like to see rigorous goals as opposed to  
22 non-rigorous goals. And when you come in at 8% in  
23 the beginning, you know, it's not a perfect science;  
24 I forgot what the next goal should be. And I'm  
25 comfortable with the fact that they set a higher goal

1 with knowing all of the interventions that are  
2 happening in the district.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So while we're still  
4 talking about goals, I want to just add a couple of  
5 thoughts. When I read through your goals they're  
6 centering around the areas on the state assessment.  
7 And in your presentation -- and I think this is  
8 something unique for high schools -- you know, in  
9 your presentation a lot of what you focused on was  
10 the success of students, with your partnership with  
11 your community college, with student scholarships.  
12 And so I'm wondering whether or not you all thought  
13 about maybe within your goals addressing some things  
14 around graduation, scholarship attainment. You know,  
15 looking back at your ACT scores, your ACT composite  
16 maybe should be higher. You know, if you really --  
17 you may have a lot of students who are being able to  
18 access college; it sounds like your concurrent credit  
19 opportunities allow for a lot of opportunity there.  
20 But when I look at for your AP courses you've got,  
21 you know, just very few students who are scoring a 3,  
22 4 or 5. Your ACT composite is not very high. I'm  
23 wondering if it wouldn't be more appropriate too to  
24 include some of those goals? Because really you  
25 should start seeing that alignment again from ACT

1 Aspire to the ACT to the attainment on those others.  
2 So I don't know whether or not y'all thought about  
3 that. Maybe some thoughts --

4 MS. COOKE: We have actually had conversation  
5 about that, especially around -- like the College  
6 Prep Academy, for instance; that is -- our goal is to  
7 continue to drive students into that College Prep  
8 Academy, which the whole focus there is to increase  
9 ACT scores so that they will have a stronger setting  
10 going in. It's also to provide that taste of what  
11 college looks like, so they understand the  
12 persistence that it's going to take and the kind of  
13 support. And it also wraps around with the families,  
14 because it's important for the families to understand  
15 the persistence, that getting accepted is not the  
16 end-point; that we want to see them getting accepted,  
17 we want to see them actually attending, and then  
18 staying in school and persisting with that degree to  
19 come back out of it again. And I think that's where  
20 our partnership with the colleges that are close to  
21 us has helped us with that. But we have talked about  
22 that. I think we weren't really sure if that was an  
23 acceptable goal or if we felt like we had to go back  
24 to what we did with the State and with School  
25 Improvement and use those academic areas. So that's



1 certainly something we have discussed.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Yeah. Well, and I think  
3 when you are -- you know, in your charter  
4 application, when you are writing in the goals that  
5 represent your school and, you know, the ways you're  
6 going to measure that progress I definitely think  
7 that you don't have to be limited.

8 So I'll go ahead and allow if there are any  
9 other questions. I think Ms. Newton has a question.

10 MS. NEWTON: I have a question and a comment,  
11 kind of all mixed together, I think. Realizing that  
12 the primary goal is educating the students, I think  
13 that --

14 (COURT REPORTER'S NOTE: Ms. Newton turned on  
15 her microphone.)

16 MS. NEWTON: Okay. Realizing that the primary  
17 goal is to educate students, I think there is an  
18 opportunity here to take advantage of maybe some  
19 unintended results or consequences of this by  
20 introducing parents to technology with their  
21 students; I think acknowledging the benefit of having  
22 parents as partners and the necessity to be able to  
23 bring the family along in the learning process and  
24 have the support of the family. So I don't know if  
25 you've given any thought to that, but just as a way

1 to look at youth development, family development, and  
2 around the industry partnerships. I think again  
3 there's an opportunity to address declining  
4 enrollment, out-migration in the city of Blytheville,  
5 and other things that negatively impact it; that  
6 education can't -- you shore up your children with  
7 education but then they leave to go to other areas.

8 So I would just admonish a deliberative attempt  
9 to involve industry and the community in partnerships  
10 that would serve to have everyone come -- become  
11 beneficiaries. So industries are there; if their  
12 employees are leaving, all of it is -- and, you know,  
13 I think too often we put the responsibility for so  
14 much of public schools in being strategic in  
15 enlisting partnerships. But certainly with the  
16 parents, having them to be introduced and use and,  
17 you know, use it in job searches, learn it along with  
18 their children -- and at the same time be able to be  
19 beneficiaries of the whole process -- I think that  
20 would be for the success -- in my view, one of the  
21 successes of the New Tech. Because it just  
22 systemically and holistically, the whole thing about  
23 preparing for New Tech careers, going to college or  
24 post-secondary opportunities is somehow lost or  
25 weakened if we don't involve parents --

1 MS. COOKE: Yes, ma'am.

2 MS. NEWTON: -- and community in that. So, just  
3 a statement and a question or whatever, but just an  
4 admonishment to --

5 MS. COOKE: I think we would completely agree  
6 with you on that. And the wraparound to our families  
7 is really critical, starting with our young children.  
8 And we are working with a grant called Project Launch  
9 to involve our parents, starting at that early age,  
10 from zero on up to 2nd grade. And so we try to begin  
11 to pull them in even then, but at the high school  
12 there are many opportunities that we bring the  
13 parents in to learn right alongside those children.  
14 They're inviting them in on a regular basis.

15 And then also I will say kudos to Arkansas  
16 Northeastern College because they are one of the  
17 strongest areas in our -- in northeast Arkansas for  
18 bringing in adults to certify them in these same  
19 industries. So there's a wonderful opportunity to  
20 reach the parents and the students together through  
21 that, and we're very aware of that and very cognizant  
22 of that; as we meet parents, offering them some of  
23 the same opportunities that our students are being  
24 able to be offered.

25 MS. NEWTON: You mentioned ForwARd Arkansas --

1 MS. COOKE: Yes, ma'am.

2 MS. NEWTON: -- in your conversation. And I  
3 would encourage you to take full benefit of that  
4 effort that combines the resources of the Walton  
5 Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, as well as being  
6 led by the Department of Education to look at those  
7 areas that are their focus areas, and support outside  
8 the classroom being a major piece; you know, the  
9 teacher pipeline piece -- teacher pipeline and pre-K  
10 and all those other things that serve to strengthen.  
11 So there is another tremendous resource for you,  
12 that's available for you, and an opportunity to  
13 develop your program from the ground up by accessing  
14 the services and the resources of the FORWARD  
15 initiative.

16 MS. COOKE: It's a great resource.

17 MS. SNEED: One thing -- just one more comment.  
18 One thing that we realized when our ECHO system went  
19 live was that a lot of parents did not know how to  
20 access it. And so we've had a couple of nights where  
21 we train parents. We've also made -- we have a  
22 tutoring available every Tuesday and Thursday for  
23 students, for two hours each evening. We've invited  
24 parents to come and work with those teachers as well,  
25 so that the teachers can teach parents how to access

1 their students' ECHO pages and show them what they're  
2 seeing there.

3 MS. COOKE: And we were also able to work out a  
4 deal with the local internet provider to offer  
5 internet at a much reduced price to students at  
6 Blytheville High School because they needed that  
7 access for the New Tech. And so that is something  
8 we're trying to work with the entire community to  
9 give them the access to that learning at home.

10 MS. SNEED: I believe it was \$15 a month that we  
11 partnered with them for.

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

14 MR. WILSON: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairman.

15 You all made mention of this, and it may be in  
16 your presentation that I missed. Out of those 2017  
17 graduates, the kids who graduated last year, how many  
18 of them -- or what fraction of them do you think  
19 actually enrolled in college?

20 MS. COOKE: Our career counselor actually tracks  
21 that figure, but I did not bring that with me today.  
22 But that's one of the things that she's working on,  
23 is not just tracking them but staying in  
24 communication with them. Because she's that resource  
25 and has built that relationship with them in a way

1 that even once they leave, if they're finding any  
2 types of trouble or if they're having problems with  
3 persistence she's still that resource; she says, you  
4 know, "You're still my children, even though you  
5 graduate." And so she does have that but, I'm sorry,  
6 I don't have those statistics.

7 MR. WILSON: Do you have a feel for it, a guess  
8 as to --

9 MS. COOKE: I would say --

10 MR. WILSON: I mean you're dealing with a lot of  
11 economically disadvantaged kids, it looks like.

12 MS. COOKE: Right. Quite a few of them have  
13 enrolled at Arkansas Northeastern because it's local.  
14 And we even have partnered with the Project Launch;  
15 in some of the other areas there is a bus that's  
16 running. We don't have public transportation in  
17 Blytheville. There's nothing like that exists. But  
18 there is now a bus that is running through  
19 neighborhoods to pick up not only students, but  
20 students' parents; there are adult students that will  
21 go to the college. And so they're really working to  
22 try to make sure that that opportunity persists for  
23 those students that may have been transported by a  
24 school bus every day K-12 and can't get to the  
25 community college. But I don't know that figure; we

1 can find that out for you though.

2 MR. WILSON: That's okay. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Panel Members, any  
4 additional questions?

5 MS. TURNER: I have one other comment that I  
6 want to take from Ms. Newton's comments and bring  
7 back home to you about that career readiness  
8 certificate. That is an ACT product; it does have  
9 the Work Keys curriculum component with it, and  
10 industry in northeast Arkansas rely on that career  
11 readiness certificate. So I know you had 38 students  
12 -- this is something that I hope you look at more  
13 closely and implement throughout your whole district,  
14 the whole high school because that cannot only  
15 improve your test scores in other areas but that can  
16 give those students that industry connection.  
17 Because your local industries are using that CRC in  
18 the Blytheville/Jonesboro/West Memphis area more than  
19 any other area in the state. And so I just can't say  
20 enough about you all looking at that as a program  
21 that can benefit your students' skills toward the  
22 CRC, but toward their ACT score and improving that as  
23 well. So that's just a thought and a recommendation.

24 MS. COOKE: Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, just mainly a comment.  
2 There were a couple of things that stood out for me,  
3 and they've been addressed. One was why the three --  
4 why three years instead of five on renewal; and as  
5 the discussion has taken place it seems like three is  
6 more appropriate now. And the other, I noticed that  
7 you'd been on academic distress and I was wondering  
8 where School Improvement was in this process; and  
9 when Ms. Boyd came up she addressed that piece of it.

10 You know, for me, no matter, you know,  
11 traditional school, conversion or open-enrollment,  
12 it's the teaching and learning process. And one of  
13 the things that also you-all addressed -- I was  
14 wondering about the math goals. I'm a former math  
15 teacher, so that kind of stood out for me. The  
16 numbers didn't add up for me, looking at the current  
17 improvement and looking at your overall goal along  
18 the same lines. But it sounds like through the  
19 discussion that you-all have a plan to go back and  
20 maybe even take a look at that. I know it's part of  
21 the overall district goal, but if you still don't --  
22 it still may not be reasonable for an individual  
23 school. So, just a thought there.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

25 DR. OWOH: One last question. I noticed that



1           you have some teacher licensure exceptions. And so  
2           considering or in consideration with your academic  
3           distress, or being removed from that, how are you  
4           supporting your educators in the pedagogy so that  
5           they're providing the best instruction for your  
6           students?

7           MS. COOKE: I'm glad you asked that. I meant to  
8           mention that earlier. But one of the reasons that we  
9           asked for those waivers is the high area of teacher  
10          turnover. But at the high school that is not nearly  
11          as much of an issue because of the support that  
12          they've been getting through the New Tech Network.  
13          We are providing -- of course, the mentoring system  
14          has changed this year in the state of Arkansas. But  
15          we provide a buddy teacher; even though they're not  
16          an official mentor, there's someone for every teacher  
17          who's new. I'm project director for the district and  
18          I meet monthly with all of the different teachers K-  
19          12 that are new. We are providing good background,  
20          using TESS; we sit down and look at the different  
21          domains. We walk through scenarios, we talk about  
22          the different parts of that. We also have a  
23          professor from Arkansas State who has come over  
24          voluntarily and sat with our community, some of our  
25          community groups, providing opportunity for students

1 to come in and ask about Praxis exams, giving support  
2 to help them understand what they need to do, how  
3 they need to prepare for those exams. And although  
4 we have those waivers we're encouraging them and  
5 trying to support them in working through an APPEL  
6 program or Arkansas Teacher Corp or something else so  
7 that we can get them licensed. Our goal is to have  
8 them all licensed. But with that three-year novice  
9 teacher, the way it is now, we feel like the support  
10 -- and we've divided it out; we actually have a plan  
11 for the next three years of the types of things we  
12 will provide to them, and that will involve community  
13 support and not just on campus. But we have quite a  
14 few different groups. We have people modeling in  
15 classes. And then she talked about at the high  
16 school -- yes, just the specific content area that  
17 they can get content instruction in. And we're  
18 actually working on a goal -- and it's not come to  
19 fruition yet, but we're working on the goal to maybe  
20 partner with the local college to provide content  
21 support for like the science and the math at the high  
22 school level for students who have come in -- or,  
23 excuse me -- for teachers who have come in and come  
24 out of a different type of degree with that waiver.  
25 Most of them that come in have some sort of biology

1 or something that gives them a strong science or math  
2 background. But those are the two areas we need more  
3 content help with.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And I like hearing  
5 your response on the partnership. I think having the  
6 content -- those that really have some content  
7 knowledge can be very beneficial to those secondary  
8 teachers as they're learning.

9 Okay. I think Dr. Hernandez has a question.

10 DR. HERNANDEZ: One more question. I know  
11 you've mentioned a lot of things that you guys are  
12 doing and obviously you've got the SPDF, you've got  
13 school improvement, you've got ForwARd Arkansas, I  
14 know Leadership Academy is doing some work with you  
15 guys. I mean, so just from a managerial standpoint  
16 how do you guys manage all that to make sure that  
17 you're -- everybody is moving in the right direction  
18 and you're not -- teachers aren't --

19 MS. COOKE: Right.

20 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- being overwhelmed and that  
21 kind of stuff?

22 MS. COOKE: We're very mindful of trying not to  
23 overwhelm the teachers and so we take that burden on  
24 at the district level really to make sure that our  
25 district team has aligned the processes. We meet

1 regularly with each group and try to, as Ms. Boyd  
2 talked about, bring them all together to the table at  
3 the same time. We have drawn outlines of how the  
4 support happens, what it looks like, the umbrella  
5 that each different piece fits. And for three of our  
6 schools that are in Arkansas Leadership Academy the  
7 actual strategic action plans are their plans, and  
8 we've modeled the high school's plan the same way  
9 even though -- because they're with New Tech support  
10 instead of Arkansas Leadership Academy. The reason  
11 that we're not doing both there is because we didn't  
12 want to overwhelm teachers with the process. But all  
13 of the goals are aligned. We don't want them working  
14 separate plans; we don't want them working separate  
15 goals. So these goals that you see -- and the reason  
16 that they're listed more in that way are in line with  
17 what we're doing with the others. And then when we  
18 look at SPDG and sit down we actually have a plan for  
19 every month, from the spring semester, of what we're  
20 going to focus on as a district; again, a systems  
21 approach to supporting the teachers, the adult  
22 learner first, so that they can be a support for the  
23 student learner. And we're very, very mindful of  
24 that and that's -- in fact, that's one thing -- even  
25 as the Department comes in, they walk in the door

1           saying, "We don't want to add something to your  
2           plate. How can we align with what you're already  
3           doing?" And I think every group that we work with  
4           we've made clear that this is an alignment;  
5           everything folds into one report, and then we take  
6           those reports and turn them in as our 45-day report,  
7           the information that we're collecting from everywhere  
8           else.

9           CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. A question that I  
10          have as I'm going through -- and I agree with Dr.  
11          Hernandez, you know, that you've got a lot of  
12          different things that you're doing, but it does sound  
13          like you were very mindful in how you approach the  
14          work. With all of this though, and being a district  
15          conversion charter, in looking kind of back on the  
16          past five years when you -- you know, as you've had  
17          the conversion charter status, and seeing that there  
18          were a lot of cases where your goals weren't being  
19          met, what part of all the work that you're doing --  
20          what could you not do if you didn't have a charter?  
21          Is there anything that you would be prevented from  
22          doing, and how is -- how does having a district  
23          conversion charter status help you -- how does it --  
24          you know, what is the necessity to have that in  
25          moving forward?

1 MS. COOKE: You know, we actually had a lot of  
2 conversation about whether or not the charter was  
3 important, because we do have a lot of alignment; we  
4 do have a lot of support. With the waivers that we  
5 were able to ask for throughout the district,  
6 originally the waivers were a big part of our  
7 charter, of the reason that we wanted the charter.  
8 But at this point we felt like the work that we're  
9 doing and that continued focus, especially the focus  
10 for the next three years, through the charter we felt  
11 like was -- would keep us streamlined with the high  
12 school, because the high school is the one school  
13 that's not an Arkansas Leadership Academy school;  
14 it's the one school that is solely New Tech, all four  
15 grades. And we felt like continuing that charter  
16 would help us continue to support the New Tech  
17 Network in that school. But, quite honestly, there  
18 are a lot of these things that we would probably do  
19 whether we had the charter or not. We just felt like  
20 having that status and continuing with ForwARd would  
21 continue to streamline our goals. I don't know that  
22 there's any one individual thing that I can say that  
23 we would stop doing, because if it's not working and  
24 if it's not working through that lens of supporting  
25 adult learners or student learners we have tried to

1 pare that out already. So we feel like we're pretty  
2 streamlined in where we're working, our focus.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you. Thank you.

4 Okay. Do we have any other questions or can we  
5 move on to looking at -- okay.

6 If we look -- Ms. Davis, I was going to go to  
7 the legal review and any other part to see if we have  
8 any questions or issues or if there's anything on  
9 these as far as the waivers. They -- I think they  
10 said it in their application they were not requesting  
11 any new waivers. And then as far as waivers being  
12 rescinded, I think that was just aligning with  
13 waivers that are no longer needed because of changes  
14 in the law. I think I saw that on that.

15 MS. DAVIS: Yeah, just a clean-up.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Clean-up from  
17 there, so --

18 MS. DAVIS: And I have no other issues.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No other issues. Okay.

20 Ms. Davis, did you want to add anything?

21 MS. BOYD: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I'm sorry; Ms. Boyd.

23 MS. BOYD: That's fine. I just wanted to add  
24 that I think what you said, Dr. Pfeffer, about having  
25 goals tied to high school specific things is a good

1           idea. And I just want to remind the Panel and the  
2           applicants that after hearing your comments today  
3           they can definitely take that back to their  
4           leadership team and develop some new goals, and we  
5           can amend those goals whenever they're appropriate  
6           for the charter.

7           MS. COOKE: Thank you.

8           CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I would also add that  
9           I think in the next few months, when the Department  
10          is able to provide an update on the ESSA, the new  
11          accountability system, I do think it probably would  
12          be appropriate and -- because there will be some  
13          additional information and probably more clarity for  
14          that. So that's something the Panel might want to  
15          consider in a motion, is that there may be an  
16          appropriate time for them to come back and possibly  
17          amend goals.

18          So, okay. Well, if we don't have any remaining  
19          issues or questions at this time I will accept a  
20          motion regarding the Blytheville New Tech application  
21          or any discussion.

22          MS. NEWTON: I move that we approve the renewal  
23          application for the Blytheville charter conversion  
24          for three years, with it specified that they'll come  
25          back in the appropriate period designated by the



1 Department to look at revising their goals -- or  
2 review the revision of their goals and objectives for  
3 their charter.

4 MR. WILSON: Second.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So we have a motion and a  
6 second.

7 And I guess I want to ask, should we go ahead  
8 and specify a time period within the motion, a  
9 specific time period? Okay.

10 MS. BOYD: I wouldn't do that at this point just  
11 because at the Department we can't give specific  
12 clear dates about when things are going to be  
13 updated. And School Improvement is not here and I  
14 want them to be -- to play a role in that. I think  
15 that's important. So I think the way Ms. Newton  
16 stated it seems appropriate.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Ms. Davis, did you  
18 want to add anything?

19 MS. DAVIS: I mean, no. The only thing I would  
20 say is that if you are comfortable with allowing the  
21 Charter Unit to kind of take it upon when they feel  
22 that it's best to provide that information to you,  
23 then you're okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So we have a motion  
25 and a second.

1 All those in favor say "aye."

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

4 Okay. So we do have approval for the renewal,  
5 but the Department will be working with you on a time  
6 period to come back and amend goals. But we  
7 appreciate you being here and the State Board will be  
8 reviewing the Panel's decision at -- we'll be -- what  
9 will be -- the next meeting will be, Ms. Boyd --

10 MS. BOYD: Yeah, it will be at the next meeting.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: The January meeting?

12 MS. BOYD: It will be in January.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: January meeting. Okay. I  
14 forget what month we're in.

15 So, thank you all. Have a Very Merry Christmas  
16 and a safe travels back home.

17 We're going to take a five-minute break to allow  
18 our tech team --

19 Oh, I'm sorry; I forgot we have to record our  
20 votes. So, if you will please go online and record  
21 your vote and state the reason we'll give feedback  
22 for the Blytheville team. Ms. Cooke and Ms. Sneed,  
23 if you want to stay for just a minute we'll give you  
24 feedback.

25 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We'll go ahead.

2 Dr. Hernandez.

3 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. I  
4 believe the school is trying to do everything they  
5 can for kids. But I do have concerns about current  
6 goals and the number of initiatives in the school.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

8 DR. OWOH: I voted for the motion. I feel that  
9 the school has implemented some school-wide  
10 initiatives that will address student needs and  
11 achievement. A three-year renewal timeframe will  
12 allow the school and the district to review  
13 performance goals and provide improvement strategies  
14 that were mentioned.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

16 MS. TURNER: I voted for the motion. This will  
17 allow Blytheville to continue the work that has been  
18 done. And I appreciate the request of the district  
19 for the three-year renewal versus the five.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: The three-year -- I voted for the  
22 motion. The three-year renewal will allow the school  
23 to continue to be part of the New Tech Network and  
24 also to continue their school improvement work.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

1 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion. The  
2 applicants addressed all significant issues and  
3 concerns around the application, specifically  
4 addressing reviewing and adjusting the goals and  
5 objectives with guidance by ADE.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Mr. Wilson.

7 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I was very  
8 impressed with the reading gains, the reading program  
9 that you all discussed, and the community involvement  
10 by New Tech and the city and the district.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you all.

12 And we will not take a five-minute break before  
13 the next group.

14 (BREAK: 9:46 - 9:58 A.M.)

15 A-2: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
16 RENEWAL: MINER ACADEMY, BAUXITE

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Welcome back,  
18 everyone. We'll move to item agenda -- or agenda  
19 item number two. And, Ms. Boyd, you are recognized  
20 to get us started.

21 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. On March 11,  
22 2013, the State Board approved the application for  
23 Miner Academy. The charter is approved to serve  
24 students grades 6-12 with a maximum enrollment of  
25 200. Representatives of the Miner Academy are

1 appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel to  
2 request the renewal of the current charter. This  
3 request is for five years. The first person you'll  
4 hear from today is Joshua Harrison, who is the  
5 principal of the Miner Academy. And then there are  
6 other people from the district here to answer  
7 questions, if you have them.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

9 Will all the representatives from Miner Academy  
10 and anyone speaking in opposition please stand to  
11 receive the oath? If you'll raise your right hand --  
12 do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
13 about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth and  
14 nothing but the truth?

15 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

17 Mr. Harrison, we welcome you to the podium, if  
18 you'll state your name and position for the record.

19 MR. HARRISON: Yes, ma'am.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And the rest of you, if  
21 you want to stand up here or if you want to sit down,  
22 however you want to do that; you can just be  
23 recognized as you come to the podium.

24 MR. HARRISON: All right. Good morning. We  
25 really appreciate you guys having us here again. I

1 look forward to speaking to you and kind of just  
2 sharing a glimpse of what we do at Miner Academy.

3 My name is Joshua Harrison; I'm the principal at  
4 Miner Academy. This is my third year serving as  
5 principal in that position. My team members are, we  
6 have our superintendent, Mr. Donaghey; Ms. Pinkerton  
7 is our director of academics; and Ms. Holt is one of  
8 my multifaceted teachers. I wanted to bring her to  
9 kind of help -- let her give a little bit of her  
10 guidance as well.

11 Miner Academy, we are a district conversion  
12 charter with Bauxite School District. We offer a  
13 personalized education for students in grades 6  
14 through 12 on a campus that's open from -- we open  
15 about 7:15 to 4:00 every day; we're actually open for  
16 11 months of the year. So we -- the only month we're  
17 not -- we're there, but the kids aren't necessarily  
18 there is in July. So we're open 11 months for them.

19 We provide a customizable digital curriculum  
20 using both APEX and Google Classroom, is what we're  
21 using this year. We do some blended learning as well  
22 and that's usually led by one of our four certified  
23 teachers, and we do have three part-time certified  
24 teachers too that come in and give instruction.

25 We offer classes that range from credit recovery

1 for core classes to pre-AP and AP core classes. We  
2 also offer some electives and we do have a special  
3 ed. teacher that actually works with some of our  
4 students. So we have a wide range of students who  
5 attend Miner Academy.

6 Our goal is to meet each of our students where  
7 they are in an effort to walk alongside them,  
8 assisting them in getting them to where they would  
9 like to be. That's our main focus every day.

10 Our mission -- and I don't want to read the  
11 whole mission to you because you guys -- I know you  
12 guys have seen this; you guys can read. But we have  
13 always been to serve every child, every day, and  
14 that's really what our focus is. We want to make  
15 sure that we find out where they're at and we want to  
16 serve them and figure out where they want to go.

17 As far as our mission and our goals, they began  
18 evolving. Whenever the charter first came up -- in  
19 fact, none of us were actually at the district when  
20 the charter -- or was working in Miner Academy when  
21 the charter first came up. They were looking at  
22 scores; they were looking at test scores, and they  
23 wanted to make sure, as this is stated, Miner Academy  
24 -- the charter included 80% of all students were  
25 going to meet proficiency in math and literacy. And

1 we still strive for that. We want 100% to reach  
2 that; we just have to find how to get them to that  
3 point. We began to view success in a variety of  
4 different ways. We've started seeing a different  
5 type of student that comes to Miner Academy. Okay.  
6 We want to make sure that we have flexible learner;  
7 we're individualized; we get to know our students and  
8 find out what's going to help them get to where their  
9 goals eventually will be at; we want to retain  
10 students. We were seeing a lot of students fall by  
11 the wayside. We want to retain these students that  
12 might otherwise drop out.

13 The standardized tests are an important, very  
14 important tool, but we've made a shift in our goals  
15 at Miner Academy. We've put a -- we're starting to  
16 begin to put a greater emphasis on student  
17 attendance. So we saw a lot of students that were  
18 just losing interest and not coming to school, so we  
19 want to focus on student attendance and graduation  
20 rate. We're starting to focus on the whole student,  
21 not just the piece that's for that 45 to 50 minutes  
22 in a class. We're thinking of the whole student,  
23 about their growth as a human-being, as an  
24 individual, and trying to figure out where they would  
25 like to go in the future.



1           We want our environment to be flexible, caring,  
2 non-threatening, and an inspirational place to learn  
3 and grow. We want them to want to come to school,  
4 and we see that our attendance rate has actually  
5 increased quite a bit because of this, because they  
6 feel comfortable coming to our school. Right now we  
7 have about 52 full-time students. We service about  
8 500 kids throughout the day. On a seven-period day  
9 we have roughly about 70 to 80 kids per period that  
10 come down. That's more than our 52 full-time. We  
11 actually offer some electives and some credit  
12 recovery pieces to some of our high school students.  
13 Our students are able to go back and forth because we  
14 are on the campus of our district.

15           Due to our flexibility, we work with each  
16 student to create a learning plan that aids us in  
17 guiding each student towards our ultimate goal of  
18 each student's graduation. The graduation rate in  
19 our district has increased with the inception of  
20 Miner Academy and it's continuing to go up. Just a  
21 few examples, I had a young man last year, he was  
22 driven to go work on the pipelines in Texas. That  
23 was his goal. Well, education -- he thought, I don't  
24 need to graduate; I've already got a job set up for  
25 me. I said, "But, Bradley, you could get this done

1           -- we could get this done; let's figure it out for  
2           you." So we sat down; he had to be done by a certain  
3           time to be able to get down there to get this job.  
4           So we said let's figure out how to do this. We were  
5           able to double-block his English; we were able to do  
6           a few other things with some of his electives. We  
7           got him to graduate by right around March. He was  
8           able to get down there and take this job and he's  
9           been successful -- we allow our students to come back  
10          and walk if they can. So we're always looking at  
11          whatever is best for that student we're going to  
12          figure it out; we're going to individualize it. I  
13          have a young man right now that was in another  
14          district that did not meet graduation requirements of  
15          that district, missed two classes. They said, "Well,  
16          sorry, you'll have to come back next year and take  
17          the whole year just to get those two semester  
18          classes." There's no reason for that. This young  
19          man needs to work. He was not. So he ended up  
20          coming to us and asked if there was something we  
21          could do. We did a board-to-board transfer and that  
22          young man hopefully will be finished in about  
23          February with his classes he needs to. He comes a  
24          couple of hours a day and we were able to give him  
25          the help that he needs.

1           You know, our challenge -- we look at learning  
2           and innovation. We always talk about innovation; we  
3           talk about getting these kids ready and what are we  
4           going to do. They go hand-in-hand. Us, what we  
5           think we did yesterday is not -- no longer going to  
6           be effective. Some of it's effective, but it won't  
7           be sufficient for tomorrow. We're always looking at  
8           increasing what we do and changing and modifying  
9           based on our students. Each student that comes in is  
10          different. We have to get to know that student and  
11          what drives and motivates that student, and that's  
12          our goal. We talk about counselors and guidance  
13          counselors, and that's one reason I brought Ms. Holt  
14          here. Our teachers become mentors and counselors for  
15          our students. They get to know them and find out  
16          what is going to drive that student. We give our  
17          students a lot of choice. As far as education, we  
18          set up APEX to kind of give us a curriculum. We have  
19          certified teachers that are able to guide those --  
20          guide their learning. But we want to make sure that  
21          our students are able to use their strengths to help  
22          them get to where they want to be.

23                 Some of the words that are thrown out for  
24                 today's educational environment -- you know, safety  
25                 is always huge, but one of the things we look at is

1 personal investment. We feel like if we can get the  
2 kids to personally invest in their education, not  
3 just go through the motions -- we tell the kids every  
4 day when they come in a certain class if they're at  
5 the high school, "every day is a day closer to the  
6 end of their school year, till their graduation."  
7 Well, at Miner Academy they have to push that  
8 learning themselves. We want them to be invested in  
9 their learning. We want them to buy into what  
10 they're doing and have some ownership in that; so  
11 their learning doesn't go any further unless they  
12 actually get in and start working towards that  
13 learning, start pushing that goal, start  
14 communicating.

15 We want to make sure things are relevant. We  
16 modify our coursework. We want to make sure that the  
17 strength of each student is shown. I know -- for  
18 example, I actually -- I've got about 120 sections of  
19 classes that I actually teach as well as principal;  
20 I'm athletic director as well. But that's what our  
21 kids need. Our kids need some electives. I'm an art  
22 major, so we're offering some photography; we're  
23 offering some art history. So I want my kids -- I  
24 want them to be able to write, I want them to be able  
25 to create, I want them to be able to make stuff. So

1 if it's a student who's making a video versus writing  
2 a report, that may be appropriate for a specific  
3 project. So we want to give them some options. We  
4 want them to find their strengths and what drives  
5 them. We want them to be excited about learning in  
6 that sense.

7 We want to teach students time management.  
8 That's huge in responsibility, because when it's all  
9 said and done and we put them out in the real world,  
10 we don't want them to fall on their face because  
11 they've never had a chance to fail as far as time  
12 goes, or to succeed, to see what it takes to push  
13 themselves.

14 I think social is huge. We want our kids to  
15 begin to collaborate with one another. You know, Ms.  
16 Pinkerton and I go and speak at a lot of different  
17 things on Google Classroom, some different things  
18 that we do, and we have to collaborate all the time;  
19 we have to figure out what's her strength and what's  
20 my strength, and then what we can best do to kind of  
21 make our presentations the best. We want our kids to  
22 be able to collaborate. If a student is stronger in  
23 math and another one is stronger in literacy, we want  
24 them to be able to collaborate together to become a  
25 better student overall. And they learn a lot more

1 whenever they're starting to teach each other. So we  
2 focus and we push that.

3 We have a lot of group project discussions. We  
4 want to have a positive environment. When I first  
5 came in, kind of the negative connotation was Miner  
6 Academy is a place for bad kids; it is an alternative  
7 environment. I think an alternative environment is a  
8 wonderful thing. I think it's a great thing, it's a  
9 wonderful thing, because that's what our kids -- all  
10 our kids are different. I have a son that's  
11 autistic. He's going to learn different than  
12 everybody else, and that's okay. So I want a teacher  
13 to be willing to find out what's going to drive and  
14 push my son to be the best. So I feel like your  
15 children and the children in our district deserve the  
16 same thing. So we want to make sure we have a  
17 positive environment where we're trying to find what  
18 drives those kids.

19 And like I said earlier, teachers are our  
20 mentors. We talk about teacher as mentors. Teachers  
21 are our mentors. We want to get to know every one of  
22 our students. We want to know something about those  
23 kids. We meet with them, we discuss their goals, we  
24 fill out student action plans on them, and then we go  
25 through student action plans at least quarterly; with

1 the seniors a little bit more often than that because  
2 we've got to make sure they're staying on pace to go.

3 This is one of our actual students. And we had  
4 -- one of our traditional teachers kind of blew a  
5 gasket when she saw this and I had to kind of just  
6 step back and say, "Look, not all education looks the  
7 way it's always looked." Honestly, if I could  
8 probably get the hammock in my office that would be  
9 awesome; I'd love to have a hammock in my office.  
10 She actually has her Chromebook sitting in her lap  
11 and she's sitting there working. We're okay with  
12 allowing our students -- with us being -- we have to  
13 be okay with us being uncomfortable to get the best  
14 out of some of our kids. Before, the kids just were  
15 punished, sent to the office, and a lot of the kids  
16 would start to lose kind of where they're going. So  
17 we have to be okay with being a little bit  
18 uncomfortable. Like I said, learning can be messy  
19 and that's all right.

20 Some of our initiatives that we've began doing,  
21 we have a Saline County summer school program. We  
22 started off with having just a few credit recovery  
23 kids come and do summer school, because we're open in  
24 June. It started off that way. But we decided,  
25 okay, well -- we were trying to send students to

1 Benton and Bryant at first; they were saying, "Sorry,  
2 we don't have any seats." We said, "Let's see what  
3 we can do." So whenever the charter opened we began  
4 having a couple of credit recovery classes. Then we  
5 said, "Well, what about the rest of the surrounding  
6 area?" So now Harmony Grove sends some students. I  
7 had a couple of students -- I had a couple -- a young  
8 lady from Bryant that just said, "Well, I'm an  
9 underclassman; I lost credit because I missed too  
10 many days. I can't get into Bryant summer school;  
11 all they have is seniors." I said, "Well, okay.  
12 Well, why can't we help this young lady?" So she  
13 came and she took a couple of credit recovery classes  
14 during the summer. So we have some certified  
15 teachers that come up during the summer and we have  
16 students come in and we -- this summer we had about  
17 30 for both sessions, so we had 60 kids that came in.  
18 And we were able to help try to keep themselves on  
19 pace to graduate on time or to try to get themselves  
20 caught up. The other thing we're looking at doing --  
21 and we've done this with us -- our student success  
22 plan, we do it with all of our students, kind of  
23 taking that genre from alternative ed. and we do that  
24 with our ALE kids. We have to have our student  
25 success plan. We want to have their goals, what's



1           their short-term goals, what's their long-term goals,  
2           and how can they get there. We decided, why not do  
3           that with all of our kids? So we sat down and  
4           started talking about "what is your long-term goal."  
5           Well, if your long-term goal is to be on the  
6           pipeline, let's figure out the best way to get you  
7           there and what kind of math will you need. So we  
8           want to -- we're going to start doing that district-  
9           wide. Ms. Pinkerton has started to look at doing  
10          that 8th grade up, and so that way we're going to  
11          help develop -- we've helped develop kind of some  
12          Google forms and some spreadsheets so we can actually  
13          start tracking our kids. And they all have CAP  
14          advisers, so that way we can better see the direction  
15          they're going and then we can adjust those; we can  
16          monitor those as we go.

17                 I mean a lot of words that's -- this is just a  
18                 cool slide I made. But a lot of different things  
19                 that we look at, we want to succeed but we also want  
20                 to fail because our kids learn a lot when they fail.  
21                 We want them to try things. We want them to be okay  
22                 with, you know, motivating one another. You know,  
23                 everybody throws out differentiation and innovation,  
24                 and we want to allow our kids to be able to do all  
25                 those things.

1           Some of the elements of a 21st century classroom  
2           -- and I know we were lucky enough to have Ms. Newton  
3           come join us, so she got to walk through and see it.  
4           I was trying to figure out the best way to kind of  
5           explain it. If you guys have been to elementary  
6           school, this is centers; right? And my daughter  
7           comes home from elementary school and she talks about  
8           how much she loves centers and they have all these  
9           different places they go and they learn different  
10          things. And I said, "Why are we not doing something  
11          similar to that with our older kids?" Just because I  
12          have a group of four students who maybe are  
13          discussing something, where they're back at a table  
14          discussing one thing, or I've got a kid over there  
15          quietly sitting in a corner reading or working on an  
16          assignment. So we allow our environment to change  
17          and modify, so the teachers kind of adjust the  
18          environment. We have couches, we have loveseats, we  
19          have regular computers. So like technology-wise,  
20          we're all one-to-one; they all have a device. But we  
21          have Macs, desktop Macs; we have Dells. So we want  
22          to give them everything that they need. So if they  
23          walk into a job and they have to use a specific  
24          device, they've had a chance to put their hands on  
25          every device. We try to have a lot of different

1 software. So they're used to Google Classroom;  
2 they're used to their Google docs; they're used to  
3 Excel; they're used to Word. We want them to be  
4 available to be able to use different things so that  
5 way they're comfortable.

6 Just a few pictures of some of our kids. I mean  
7 how great would it be 20 years ago, when I graduated,  
8 if I could actually sit outside on a nice day and  
9 work. The kids are so much more -- like I said, the  
10 attendance rate has gone up because I think they feel  
11 comfortable coming to school because it's an inviting  
12 environment. They know they're being nurtured, but  
13 they're also able to work comfortably with one  
14 another. The student -- the group at the top was  
15 some seniors last -- these last few months, where  
16 they're actually collaborating with one another.  
17 There's a lot of discussion that goes on. So  
18 sometimes it's social and sometimes we have to be  
19 okay with that. Sometimes it has -- Ms. Holt has a  
20 great English classroom, that we're able to mix  
21 everywhere from pre-AP 10th grade English up to AP;  
22 some senior English and some AP lit and lang. And  
23 the kids are being able to discuss real world things  
24 and they're able to discuss it, to write about it, so  
25 it's not just staying with the curriculum, stick with

1 that curriculum all the way through. It's being able  
2 to use that curriculum, be able to use some real  
3 world things, and to have our kids do real world  
4 projects. Because that's really what the workforce  
5 is going to ask them to do; that's what's going to  
6 happen in college on the next step.

7 Our students apply to attend Miner Academy, so  
8 we have an application process. The students can  
9 apply -- of course, we try to digitize things, so our  
10 students apply through a Google form. So they come  
11 and they apply; we review the application. We very,  
12 very rarely turn down a kid that wants to be at Miner  
13 Academy. The only way we would is if academically  
14 they were struggling to the point to where the high  
15 school principal, middle school principal or myself  
16 -- maybe they've been in a Miner Academy class and  
17 they were not successful; they may have needed a  
18 little bit more structured, rigid environment. So,  
19 but we very, very rarely turn down a kid. We want to  
20 give them that opportunity because -- we have to  
21 really see where they're at and where they want to  
22 go; so we have to adjust, make adjustments for them.  
23 We do have some kids that are referred, either  
24 because they're academically way behind or they're --  
25 we have some behavioral issues. So we do have more

1 of a structured ALE that's within our environment as  
2 well, and so we do have a few of those kids. And  
3 what we try to do with them is we try to build a  
4 transition plan to figure out how to get them from  
5 what they're struggling with to maybe get them back  
6 to where potentially they could be at Miner Academy  
7 to kind of grow, and eventually if they want to go  
8 back into the structured -- the middle school or high  
9 school as well. So we try to build transition plans  
10 with all our kids, whether it's transitioning to  
11 college, transitioning to career, or transitioning  
12 just because they're struggling, trying to find  
13 themselves, back into a regular educational  
14 environment.

15 We do allow our kids -- because we're on the  
16 same campus as our high school we allow our kids to  
17 go back and forth. So if I have a kid that would  
18 like to take a concurrent credit class they have the  
19 opportunity to take comp, to take algebra, you know,  
20 college algebra and stuff through the high school.  
21 So we allow our kids to go up to the high school and  
22 take certain classes, where we don't -- we may not  
23 have that teacher certified to do it. Same thing  
24 where the high school sends some kids down to take  
25 some credit recovery and to take some electives

1 through us, we work hand-in-hand with the high school  
2 to do what's best for those students versus saying,  
3 "No, you're our student, you're on our campus, figure  
4 out -- you take what we offer." We want to make sure  
5 that public school is the best place for that  
6 student, wherever it needs to be, whether it's at  
7 Miner Academy or the high school; we just kind of  
8 have to put our pride aside and do what's best for  
9 that kid. So our kids can participate in athletics,  
10 band, vo-tech. We have a lot of kids that go half-  
11 day vo-tech and they come and they take their core  
12 classes they need to do to graduate, in the afternoon  
13 or the morning, the opposite.

14 You know, I love this slide: To reach students  
15 few are reaching we have to teach in ways that few  
16 are teaching. We have a lot of kids -- and I have  
17 one example I'm going to give you guys real quick --  
18 I had a young man a few years ago. I was assistant  
19 principal at the high school before I took over at  
20 Miner Academy, and I had a young man who was --  
21 behaviorally was very difficult, probably one of the  
22 kids that I saw way too much. So when I first went  
23 to go take over Miner Academy I thought, Great, he's  
24 a senior; he's going to be a senior down there; here  
25 I go again. Well, I went down there and go to

1 realize that this young man, who struggled  
2 academically, and definitely had struggled  
3 behaviorally, once he got down there and had a chance  
4 to say "you're in charge of your own learning" -- you  
5 know, here it is, this is yours, it's on you now,  
6 buddy -- he like took that and ran with it. By the  
7 end of the year -- I mean I know you're not supposed  
8 to play favorites, but he was one of my favorite kids  
9 I was around. And I actually gave him an award as my  
10 Honorary Vice Principal, because I don't have a vice  
11 principal -- but he's my Honorary Vice Principal; he  
12 thought he was anyways, because he was a senior. But  
13 a great young man; he just needed some -- he just  
14 needed to be given some ownership of himself, and at  
15 the time he was just kind of push-push-push until he  
16 finally realized it was about him; he was extremely  
17 successful. His grades weren't -- still weren't As  
18 and Bs, but his grades were a lot better and he was  
19 able to graduate. We were really afraid that he was  
20 going to be "hey, I'm 18, I'm done." And so those  
21 are the kids we're trying to catch. We're trying to  
22 catch those kids before they fall through the crack.

23 We definitely want to create opportunities for  
24 students to not only learn through discovery but  
25 discover more about themselves. We want to find out





1 MR. HARRISON: I can take theirs?

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No, you don't get theirs.

3 MR. HARRISON: I'm just -- I'm just kidding.

4 I'm just kidding.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But I can give you five

6 more minutes.

7 MR. HARRISON: I'm just kidding.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: How about that?

9 MR. HARRISON: I'm just kidding.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: If I can turn this off --

11 well, goodness.

12 Okay. Ms. Boyd, there's no one in opposition?

13 MS. BOYD: No.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We'll go ahead and

15 --

16 MR. HARRISON: Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- allow five more minutes

18 --

19 MR. HARRISON: Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- if you or any of your

21 other team members --

22 MR. HARRISON: I won't take that long. Yes,

23 ma'am.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- want to finish up.

25 MR. HARRISON: All right. And -- but we try to

1 partner with our kids with different places around  
2 the district -- or around our community. Saline  
3 Memorial has been great about doing some ride-alongs  
4 with some kids that are interested in -- and I'll  
5 tell you a little bit more about one of our students  
6 in a few minutes -- that's interested in paramedics  
7 and stuff like that. First Security has been great  
8 to come in and talking to our kids about financial  
9 literacy. So we try to work with our kids through  
10 our CAP, which is our Career Action Plan, with some  
11 of our partnerships that come in.

12 You know, when it's all said and done, it's  
13 really -- it's all about our students; it's all about  
14 these kids and what we can do as educators to help  
15 them be the best that they can be, instead of just  
16 kind of being another student, X-student, Y-student,  
17 Z, coming through our program.

18 Real quick, two stories. I've got this young  
19 man that's in the very back, in the striped shirt.  
20 He came in with zero credits as a junior and came  
21 from a non-accredited home-school program. And they  
22 found out that they weren't -- he didn't have any  
23 credits, he wasn't getting any kind of diploma. He  
24 came into Miner Academy and we were able to work with  
25 the young man; we were able to go above and beyond

1 because we are flexible with our time. He took 12  
2 classes one year, 13 the next. He sat in that chair  
3 and busted it out and we just allowed him to work  
4 through it, work with our teachers when they needed  
5 to to adjust and monitor classes for him. He was  
6 able to graduate. He was such an introverted kid  
7 when he came to Bauxite; he had no friends, very  
8 socially awkward. He's actually teaching kids some  
9 dance moves to get ready for prom, before his senior  
10 prom. He became like the dance king or whatever they  
11 call it at prom. He came back -- he actually showed  
12 up earlier this year, walked in and -- I swear  
13 there's music going in his head because he stepped in  
14 and started dancing in front of several of our  
15 students and my secretary. He just wanted to come by  
16 and say hi to us. Those are the kids that we're so  
17 happy didn't fall through the cracks. This was  
18 actually his coursework going through one semester.  
19 I just wanted to show you, this is -- he was taking  
20 all these things one semester. He just -- we had to  
21 be flexible with him. He was taking a lot of credit  
22 recovery stuff and he was taking a lot of electives  
23 he needed to to graduate.

24 Last story and then I'm going to cut this off --  
25 this young man, named Austin -- really, really great

1 story. Austin was actually awarded the Diamond Award  
2 through Alternative Ed. this past year. Austin was a  
3 young man who kind of had lost his focus and goals,  
4 his drive. He had -- a best friend of his was at his  
5 house, left one night late, they'd been out hunting  
6 -- left one night late, tired, had an accident and  
7 passed away. They couldn't get hold of him. Austin  
8 drove down the road and found the car. He basically  
9 was done, done with everything; didn't want to come  
10 back to school, didn't want to do anything. This was  
11 right before his senior year. The young man who  
12 passed away, his mother is a paramedic and she said,  
13 "Look, I want to help you" -- and this is kind of  
14 where we got our partnership with Saline Memorial.  
15 She was able to get Austin some ride-alongs. She  
16 said, "You can be -- make a difference in the  
17 community, maybe through becoming a paramedic or  
18 something like that, to help make this a positive  
19 story." So we got Austin, we said, "What can we do?"  
20 They said, "We need you to be done by December so you  
21 can start to school." Austin said, "I have a whole  
22 another year of high school." He was going to do  
23 half-days and try to work, because he needed to work  
24 for his family. I said, "I tell you what, let's  
25 figure it out." So we were able to set a schedule

1 up. Austin graduated -- I think we gave him his  
2 diploma in November of that year, and he was able to  
3 go on -- go through school. He's actually now --  
4 he's in -- I forget what branch of the military -- to  
5 help pay for all this, because then it was like,  
6 okay, I've got accepted; how am I going to pay for  
7 it. So he was actually able to get into the  
8 military, so now he's got a goal to be a paramedic to  
9 be able to do something great. So he's just -- he's  
10 a wonderful success story.

11 We've got so many of these that I could share  
12 with you guys. This is what it's about. That's why  
13 our goal has changed from 80%, you know, proficient  
14 to we want a 100% graduation rate. We want them to  
15 not fall through the cracks. We want to make sure  
16 that we find the whole child, because I mean our -- I  
17 mean my last slide is -- that's our goal. Our goal  
18 is to get them right there so we can lead them to  
19 where they're going. And they're super, super  
20 excited whenever we give them that focus and they can  
21 come back and tell us what they're doing. So that's  
22 our goal. That's our goal is to be able to walk  
23 across that football field at the end of the year.

24 And I apologize for going over. I'm just pretty  
25 passionate about our kiddos and what we're doing.

1                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you for your  
2 presentation.

3                   MR. HARRISON: Yes, ma'am.

4                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Panel Members, do we have  
5 any questions?

6                   MS. NEWTON: I would like to make a comment. I  
7 was fortunate enough to visit Miner Academy and visit  
8 Ms. Holt and Mr. Harrison. And I won't go through  
9 the different things that I saw, because basically  
10 he's given a summary -- not a summary, but he's given  
11 an explanation of what goes on there. And what I saw  
12 more than anything else that the folks at Bauxite had  
13 done is that they had created a culture of learning  
14 that serves to address the learning styles of  
15 different young people that likely would not have  
16 been still in school had that environment not been  
17 created. When you walk in, as a seasoned individual  
18 -- my niece told me not to say I'm old; I'm seasoned  
19 -- but as a seasoned individual who's accustomed to  
20 seeing children learning in rows and in order, I was  
21 a little taken aback at first about just the -- what  
22 appeared to be the casualness of the environment. So  
23 I was intend on exploring with the students and  
24 really asking some pointed questions about "what are  
25 you doing, what are your goals, how far are you

1 along, is this learning style" -- only to be -- and I  
2 know -- I know, you know, we stage stuff; we say,  
3 "This lady is coming, so act nice." But -- and I  
4 know to an extent you don't have to tell the kids  
5 that. But clearly it was not something that was  
6 staged. Ms. Holt's classroom was probably magnified  
7 by just the innovation there and she at least had  
8 five or six students that were learning in a  
9 different environment -- some from the ALE campus,  
10 others that were focused on really being intense and  
11 getting something done and needed to do it. So in  
12 that room was an environment -- five or six different  
13 things going on effectively, and you move from one  
14 place -- I didn't get to see the kid in the hammock,  
15 but I got to see the hammock, kind of the spirit,  
16 that if I needed to go over here, if I needed to put  
17 my feet up in a chair, if I needed to do -- so I was  
18 impressed, and I told Mr. Harrison this, and Ms.  
19 Pinkerton; I got to speak with her. Because I think  
20 we should as -- I'm not an educator, certainly, but  
21 as a social -- a person that's interested in social  
22 change and communities, we need to embrace models  
23 such as this. This wouldn't work everywhere, but for  
24 the Department of Ed. where it can work. It  
25 certainly seems abstract and a little scary to see

1           some people -- but at the same time it's certainly  
2           inspiring. You found your niche in Bauxite and I  
3           commend you on being educators first, but being  
4           flexible enough to adapt. And I saw, as different  
5           stories evolved, just the intentionality of being  
6           able to adapt and not to accept that any young person  
7           could leave your school without having the ultimate  
8           opportunity to flex and bend so that the ultimate  
9           goal of educating was there, above all else. And I  
10          think sometimes we lose that in the rules and the  
11          regimen and the guidelines and all of that. So to  
12          the leader of the school district, I know that you  
13          would have to be leading in that spirit. And I was  
14          very pointed in asking Mr. Harrison about how other  
15          teachers in the other buildings -- because they're  
16          all on one campus -- so there's not, I think, one-  
17          hundred percent buy-in, but there's enough peer  
18          pressure because of the success of students, the  
19          teachers that are, you know, not sure this approach  
20          works. So they're coming along, as I see -- as I  
21          heard on that day. I didn't have a chance to talk to  
22          any of them and that was not something I necessarily  
23          wanted to do either. But to have the -- to have  
24          attitudes change about students and their ability to  
25          be able to do, and it's just a culture of success.



1 And I want to acknowledge it and realizing -- so I  
2 applaud you guys --

3 MR. HARRISON: Thank you.

4 MS. NEWTON: -- for doing the work that you're  
5 doing.

6 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. There's a few at the high  
7 school -- there's a few -- we're always going to have  
8 those few teachers that kind of say, "Well, the kids  
9 are just trying to get out of work." You can ask  
10 those kids; it's rigorous. It's rigorous, and  
11 actually it's on them where that teacher is not  
12 pushing them to do it; they're pushing themselves.  
13 And so a lot of the teachers haven't had a chance to  
14 come down and actually spend time with us, and I  
15 said, "Hey, my doors are always open." My door is  
16 open if any of you guys want to come any day. That's  
17 what our kids do; that's what we do for them every  
18 day. It's different every day. A different day you  
19 come, it's going to be a little different. But, yes,  
20 ma'am, I appreciate you.

21 MS. NEWTON: And I apologize to Ms. Pinkerton  
22 because I went in her office and she said, "Well,  
23 what do you think?" I said, "I'm not impressed. I'm  
24 not impressed at all. I just don't think this is  
25 going to work." And she -- I saw the blood drain

1 from her face. Anyway, congratulations for the job  
2 you guys are doing.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you, Ms. Newton.

4 Do I have questions?

5 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Back to the regimen now,  
6 first of all, it just sounds like an outstanding  
7 program. I went from thinking it was college prep,  
8 when I saw the 80% proficiency goal, to no, maybe  
9 it's an alternative school on one hand. I think I  
10 came to the conclusion that, you know, it's kind of  
11 whatever it takes to meet the needs of the students.

12 Two points: one, how do you think the students  
13 are doing -- I know that due to the change in the  
14 testing and so-forth -- on that 80% proficiency rate  
15 for literacy and math, would be one. And the other,  
16 talk to me a little bit about the diversity of the  
17 district --

18 MR. HARRISON: Okay.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: -- because I think it's  
20 reflective of a school.

21 MR. HARRISON: I know -- and Ms. Pinkerton can  
22 speak a lot more as far as testing goes; she does a  
23 lot of our testing. But I know if our students --  
24 especially when we're talking about our standardized  
25 testing, it is basically 10th grade and below; we

1 have very few of those full-time students that are  
2 10th grade and below. Most of them that we do have  
3 unfortunately are students that are in our ALE. This  
4 year we actually have a group -- and I'm proud to say  
5 my daughter is one of them who chose to come down  
6 here; I did not pressure her to -- and we have quite  
7 a big group of 10th grade pre-AP students. We've  
8 seen growth in those students last year. We're not  
9 happy with those numbers that they are; we have to  
10 figure out how to get them there, and that's one of  
11 the whole ideas behind transition and  
12 individualizing. We actually changed our curriculum  
13 from what we'd been using the last couple of years;  
14 we're using Odysseyware. We had some of our students  
15 actually go in with some of our teachers and try to  
16 determine what is the best method to be able to give  
17 them that online curriculum. Of course, we do have  
18 -- we have full-time certified teachers in the  
19 classroom that actually works with them as well. But  
20 we're like we'll make adjustments if this isn't  
21 working, which I didn't think it was; I said, "Let's  
22 make adjustments; let's figure out what's best for  
23 those guys."

24 And I'll let you speak a little bit more on the  
25 testing part of it as well.

1 MS. PINKERTON: And to answer your question  
2 about the diversity, we are 43% in the district free-  
3 and-reduced lunch; we are 93% Caucasian, I think  
4 about 4% Hispanic, and maybe two-and-a-half percent  
5 African American, and whatever is left is the other.

6 MR. HARRISON: One French kid.

7 MS. PINKERTON: Yeah. So as far as our test  
8 scores, there are accountability scores; they're not  
9 going to be super high because we do have a fluid  
10 population. When you think about high school  
11 accountability -- you know, Miner Academy is grades 6  
12 through 12. Coach Harrison doesn't have very many  
13 6th, 7th or 8th graders; he has a lot of 9th, 10th,  
14 11th and 12th graders, and most of those are 11th and  
15 12th graders. His population is generally juniors  
16 and seniors, with a handful of 9th and 10th graders.  
17 And a lot of those 9th and 10th graders are in the  
18 alternative learning environment; they're in the  
19 behavioral part of the ALE. And so that population  
20 is fluid and it's an at-risk population. So his  
21 scores are going to be based on a handful of 9th and  
22 10th graders who are just not going to always be in  
23 the -- they're not going to showcase the school the  
24 best and they're not really going to show what is  
25 going on there from grades 9 and up. It's hard to

1 base our accountability on the -- for the whole LEA  
2 just on a handful of fluid kids that are in the ALE  
3 usually.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Good answer. That just brings to  
5 mind, is 80% the right number then?

6 MS. PINKERTON: Yes. Now like Coach Harrison  
7 said, we -- everyone here that's representing Bauxite  
8 today, we were not the ones who started this panel.  
9 But as we started doing the renewal we agreed 80% was  
10 probably not the best number, just based on the  
11 population that would be counted for accountability.  
12 We -- that's why he said our goals are evolving. Our  
13 goals have shaped and morphed to actually be about  
14 meeting the needs of every student where they are --  
15 and we actually want 100% proficiency in math and  
16 literacy. But 80% probably was a high goal a few  
17 years ago, just knowing that the population would  
18 also really revolve around our ALE students because  
19 those are your fulltime kids. A lot -- he told you  
20 that a lot of our students come back and forth  
21 between the high school and Miner Academy, but it  
22 really matters where they're coded as far as what LEA  
23 they're coded to. And there's not that many that are  
24 coded full-time to Miner Academy and there's  
25 especially not very many 9th and 10th graders that

1 are coded fulltime to Miner Academy, and the ones  
2 that are, that's what your accountability for his  
3 campus is based on and that accountability, you know,  
4 is lower because of that population. But one thing  
5 about these scores I would like to point out, we do  
6 -- we are using ACT Aspire interim assessments at  
7 Miner Academy and throughout the whole district. And  
8 I actually have looked at the growth between ACT  
9 Aspire interim one that we took around September and  
10 then ACT Aspire interim two that we took in December,  
11 and Miner Academy is actually showing more growth  
12 than the high school is. They've gone up some, as  
13 much as like 6%, between interim assessment one and  
14 interim assessment two.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I think -- I know Dr.  
17 Hernandez is wanting to do a follow-up question. But  
18 I think this is where -- kind of going back to those  
19 goals, if your goals are all based on the summative  
20 assessment, given the unique circumstances of the  
21 population, yes, it is going to be important to look  
22 at what's reported on those summative scores and for  
23 those students who are assigned -- you have that  
24 internal information about the students who may be  
25 coming in and out of your school; that can be an

1 added piece to goals, documentation. And I think  
2 where we look at it is when you come to tell your  
3 story to the Charter Panel of successes you can  
4 differentiate how the data is. Because I think  
5 that's one of the things in our new accountability  
6 system we really want to emphasize; you have big A  
7 accountability and you have little A accountability,  
8 and that little A accountability is where you dig  
9 into really understand the data. And as we do that  
10 we're going to see the other part take care of  
11 itself. So we want to encourage you to be able to  
12 have that larger look, so --

13 MR. HARRISON: And that's why we wanted --  
14 that's why on our renewal we wanted to change what  
15 our goals were, because as Miner Academy has changed  
16 and morphed we're wanting to continue to change --  
17 and change what our focus is. We still -- those are  
18 important, and even Mr. -- or Dr. Williams -- you  
19 know, that being said, I've got a young lady who  
20 probably didn't score so high on her interims, but  
21 her math class she's struggling with. But we can  
22 take MobyMax, for instance, and we started working  
23 her through that, because she was not up to where she  
24 needed to be mathematically when she came to us. So  
25 it's like, okay, let's figure out where you're at and

1 let's figure out how to get you to where you need to  
2 be. So I'm going to have to say we're going to  
3 probably take a hit on her scores, but I'm okay with  
4 that if I can get her -- eventually get her where she  
5 needs to be. But that is why we did change -- on our  
6 renewal we changed what are goals were.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But I do think you are  
8 using spring summative assessments in the wording on  
9 your goal, so there may be a point at which --

10 MR. HARRISON: Yeah.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- you want to modify  
12 that.

13 MR. HARRISON: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

15 DR. HERNANDEZ: I mean I think the concern about  
16 the 80% is being too high. And I don't know that --  
17 you know, looking at last year, you know, you don't  
18 have -- like you said, you don't have a large number  
19 of students that are being tested, in those 9th and  
20 10th grades. So, for example, last year they had I  
21 think two students and they were 100%. So, and then  
22 by the same token, in math they were 50%. So I think  
23 that's something that -- you know, it may not be  
24 realistic as a goal, but they know that for those one  
25 or two kids that they do get they've really got to



1 work to make sure they get them to where they need to  
2 be. And then with the graduation rate, I mean, you  
3 know, having it in the 90s as a graduation rate I  
4 think is very commendable because when you look at  
5 most typical ALEs I mean we're probably talking 25%  
6 graduation rates and very low scoring. So I think  
7 that that's, you know, one, it's a good praise for  
8 them that they are getting such high marks, but that  
9 -- I think my question is probably -- so there's an  
10 ALE, traditional ALE and then there's Miner Academy,  
11 but the ALE kids are or are not assigned to Miner  
12 Academy?

13 MR. HARRISON: They are. They are. They're  
14 actually -- we have an ALE that's embedded within our  
15 Miner Academy. And most of our kids, it's amazing  
16 that most of our kids that start -- that end up in  
17 ALE, we work with them and try to transition them.  
18 So that's our whole goal. It's not "let's hide  
19 them." You know, a lot of people say "I just want  
20 them out of sight, out of mind." We want to start  
21 transitioning them. The first day in we want to  
22 figure out how we're going to transition these kids  
23 eventually, so we try to set up our transition plan.  
24 Because my goal is eventually to get them back to  
25 what's their most conducive learning environment.

1 I've seen a lot of these kids who start off in ALE,  
2 maybe as 9th graders, 10th graders; they -- even some  
3 of them as young as 7th or 8th graders. They're with  
4 us as high school students. They find that maybe  
5 Miner Academy may be the kind of environment that  
6 they need outside of the ALE room. They may have  
7 tried to go back to the high school and it just  
8 hasn't worked for them, and so they end up coming  
9 back to us where we have to really personalize for  
10 them. It's not as intense as far as -- I've got an  
11 instructor making sure we're checking daily minutes  
12 that you're working; we're checking exactly where  
13 you're at all the time. We're giving them a little  
14 bit more freedom at Miner Academy, where ALE is a lot  
15 more structured, as far as trying to get them to  
16 where they need to be. So, yes, sir, the ALE is  
17 within the Miner Academy; they're part of our  
18 students. They are students as well.

19 DR. HERNANDEZ: And I think probably, you know,  
20 as you do start to look at possibly refining the  
21 goals is that, you know, you're going to get that  
22 ESSA index in the future that has some of those  
23 differentiated pieces for high school. And so to  
24 think about, you know, overall ACT scores as opposed  
25 to ACT Aspire, you know, CTE certificates -- just all

1 the different components. That may give you better  
2 things to latch onto as far as setting goals so kids  
3 can every year make sure they're latching onto those  
4 things and seeing those goals --

5 MR. HARRISON: Yes, sir.

6 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- as opposed to -- you know,  
7 for us, we like to see test scores.

8 MR. HARRISON: Yeah.

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: But for kids and community they  
10 want to see, you know, jobs and dollars --

11 MR. HARRISON: Right. Yes, sir.

12 DR. HERNANDEZ: -- and those kinds of things.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Questions?

14 Dr. Owoh.

15 DR. OWOH: Thank you. You referenced that your  
16 students are -- would be considered at-risk and that  
17 you're attempting to meet the variety of needs of  
18 your students. So I have a two-part question. One,  
19 what type of support or training are you providing  
20 your educators in meeting -- so that they are able --  
21 so that they are able to meet the student needs? And  
22 then, two, what type of services are you providing  
23 your students to address those at-risk behaviors so  
24 that they are prepared to return back to a  
25 traditional setting, if they do?

1           MR. HARRISON: One thing that we've looked at --  
2           and we're actually kind of playing with trying to do  
3           our own, we've used Seven Steps -- or, sorry, I went  
4           blank -- Seven Steps of an At-Risk Teen, I believe is  
5           what it's called. We go through a program with our  
6           ALE kids. And now we take that outside -- we've  
7           taken that outside into our CAP, which is our Career  
8           Action Plan. Ms. Holt has a lot of our seniors in  
9           her room. I've got one of my coaches who works with  
10          some of our underclassmen. We actually go through  
11          some different things as far as finances, writing  
12          resumes. We try to work with them on different  
13          things and we have our guidance counselors -- I have  
14          two different guidance counselors -- we have one at  
15          the middle school and at the high school -- that they  
16          buddy with us. So we don't have our own full-time  
17          guidance counselor but I have ones that come in,  
18          through certain grades that come in from -- our  
19          middle school counselor. So they come in and  
20          actually work with our kids as far as some of those  
21          skills. So it's not just my at-risk -- or my ALE  
22          kids. Some of my high school kids are at-risk; some  
23          of my alternative -- I consider alternative ed. And  
24          a lot of it is because of finances at home. A lot of  
25          the kids are like "I have to work;" kids say, "I

1 can't stay this afternoon;" "I can't stay during the  
2 afternoon, I have to work." I've got one young lady  
3 that comes nine hours a week, two to three days a  
4 week; that's it. She has to work. It's her and her  
5 mom. If she doesn't work, they will not pay the  
6 bills. So I have to be okay with her not being  
7 there; I have to be okay -- when she shows up she may  
8 have on tights and have house-shoes on and I have to  
9 be okay with that, because I just need to be all  
10 right -- make sure that she gets what she needs, if  
11 she needs to come in that. So I think it's really  
12 important that my counselors are working with our  
13 kids. We do have -- The Point comes in and so I do  
14 have some of my kids that actually work with one of  
15 our counselors that's in-house; he comes in and pulls  
16 the kids out and then does some group work with them,  
17 as well. But we're continuing to development what we  
18 feel like is best for our age group of kids. Right  
19 now we have a very young group in that ALE and so  
20 it's a little bit different focus than a couple of  
21 years ago where I had -- had to have our Sheriff's  
22 Department bring in and do more of kind of drug  
23 counseling, because we had a different group of kids  
24 a couple of years ago that really more needed that,  
25 needed that focus. Yes, sir.

1 DR. OWOH: And training or support for your  
2 educators?

3 MR. HARRISON: Okay. Yeah.

4 MS. PINKERTON: I just wanted to add, we only  
5 have a handful of full-time Miner Academy teachers  
6 and staff. And last summer we were able to take  
7 three of those Miner Academy teachers to a nationwide  
8 conference, and we try to send them -- we went to  
9 Denver last summer; we try to send them to any  
10 alternative ed. conferences in the state that we can.  
11 So we're always looking for alternative ed.  
12 conferences. Coach Harrison has actually spoken  
13 about innovative schools. And we just want to  
14 provide them any opportunity to go and learn about  
15 alternative ed. wherever they can.

16 MR. HARRISON: And I'm lucky enough to try to  
17 hand-pick folks like Ms. Holt who's an English major,  
18 history minor. You know, we look for people who -- I  
19 had a teacher a couple of years ago who was in the  
20 real estate industry, was in the banking industry,  
21 and I thought she'd be perfect for our CTE piece; she  
22 wasn't certified in CTE. We were able to kind of  
23 work to get her that way and bring her down there,  
24 because she could bring that real-world to some of  
25 our kids. So we try to go out and recruit, so-to-

1 speak, some of those teachers at the high school that  
2 may be a great fit for us. And so we try to do that.  
3 But like you said too, we want to make sure that  
4 we're looking at Handle With Care. I know that was a  
5 big thing. We took some of our teachers to do the  
6 Handle With Care stuff a couple of years ago, the  
7 alternative ed. program, and try to get them in there  
8 to the conference and try to get them to those to  
9 where they can get the training they need. And then  
10 our Sheriff's Department works with our staff as  
11 well.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Any other questions  
13 from Panel Members?

14 Okay. Ms. Turner.

15 MS. TURNER: Thank you. You mentioned about  
16 your CAP program and then that some students are  
17 there half-a-day, that you don't have JAGG. Did you  
18 explore that? You brought up JAGG; so tell me about  
19 your comments about JAGG.

20 MR. HARRISON: We actually looked at the  
21 potential of adding JAGG, which would add another  
22 staff member, is what we looked at. Of course, with  
23 the way the state has changed it may change a little  
24 bit of the face of Miner Academy in the future, as  
25 far as seat waiver time. So they could technically

1 -- before, we had seat waiver time at Miner Academy,  
2 the high school did. So if a student had to do it  
3 they came down and they actually applied, because  
4 they wanted to do half-days and they knew that they  
5 would have to take the majority of their classes with  
6 us. So they had to be willing to come into our  
7 environment and be able to stay on pace and continue  
8 to work and be successful if they wanted to be able  
9 to do half-days. It may change a little bit now that  
10 the state requirement for seat waiver has changed; so  
11 some of the kids may stay at the high school now.  
12 What we had talked about before, that had been voted  
13 on and put into place, was do we want to add JAGG;  
14 because one thing we're doing as a district -- we're  
15 losing some of our funding because our kids are only  
16 there part of the time. Now with the wording -- the  
17 way the wording is, it's changed a little bit of how  
18 -- what we actually need to do for those kids to be  
19 considered full-time. So we're trying to explore  
20 kind of what direction we want to take it in the  
21 future now. But we actually discussed JAGG last  
22 summer because it was something that we could see it  
23 may be beneficial for us, because not only -- we're  
24 helping them get placed in the job corp. Since I'm  
25 putting a lot of letters of recommendation in for



1 kids and putting my neck on the line at places around  
2 Saline County I'd like to kind of make sure they're  
3 doing what they need to do and that they're being  
4 successful; they know Coach Harrison is going to come  
5 check on them.

6 So that's what we talked about, potentially  
7 looking at JAGG. Now we're trying to decide what  
8 this new -- what some of the -- the new  
9 Commissioner's Memos have come out -- what that's  
10 going to look like for us.

11 MS. TURNER: Okay. Thank you.

12 MR. HARRISON: Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Additional questions or  
14 discussion?

15 So it looks like we've gone through our  
16 questions.

17 Ms. Davis, in looking at requests for waivers is  
18 there anything we need to review?

19 MS. DAVIS: No. Their waiver request  
20 rescissions were just to clean-up, like the last  
21 applicant. So I didn't have any other issues.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Well,  
23 we're now at a point where we can make a decision.  
24 So at this time I will entertain a motion regarding  
25 this application.

1 MS. NEWTON: I have a motion. I move that we  
2 approve the renewal application for Miner Academy for  
3 five years.

4 MS. TURNER: Second.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We have a motion  
6 and a second.

7 All those in favor say "aye."

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

10 Okay. Congratulations. Your request has been  
11 approved. And we'll take a minute to record our  
12 responses and provide you with feedback.

13 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And, Mr. Harrison, while  
15 they're recording their responses, I am interested in  
16 -- I know you talked a little bit about the student  
17 success plans and using some of the technology to do  
18 that. So I'm interested in learning a little bit  
19 more about that as we're helping get the state  
20 transitioned --

21 MR. HARRISON: Sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- to all students having  
23 student success plans.

24 MR. HARRISON: Yeah, we'd love to share what we  
25 have with you.

1 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I've love to come visit  
2 and --

3 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. We'll continue to -- Ms.  
4 Pinkerton and I have been working to develop that and  
5 try to do it district-wide. So we'd love to share  
6 whatever we have with you guys.

7 MS. PINKERTON: We actually have two EAST  
8 students who are building that for us, so --

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Go ahead and say  
10 that again; your microphone --

11 MS. PINKERTON: We have two EAST students who  
12 are building that student success plan for us, doing  
13 a lot of the data entry. And so it's kind of a  
14 student-driven thing right now.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: That's great. So, and I  
16 do -- that whole time you presented I really did hear  
17 the student focused aspect to it, which aligns very  
18 well with our state's vision. So we appreciate that.

19 MR. HARRISON: Yes, ma'am. You're welcome any  
20 time.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right.

22 All right. Well, let's go through our votes and  
23 reasons. We'll start with Dr. Hernandez.

24 DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. Miner  
25 Academy fills a role for the district and is able to

1 show high performance in delivering personalized  
2 learning for students in Bauxite.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

4 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion, with the  
5 explanation that the environment of Miner Academy is  
6 conducive to the learning styles of the students that  
7 have different learning styles -- of the students  
8 that have different learning styles and need the  
9 flexibility that this school setting provides.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

11 MS. TURNER: I voted for the motion. This  
12 school is addressing the needs of individual students  
13 to enable them to be successful for adults.

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

15 DR. OWOH: I voted for the motion. I do believe  
16 based on the information that's provided that the  
17 school provides a conducive learning environment for  
18 students who may need an alternative learning  
19 environment for a variety of reasons. However,  
20 during this renewal of five years I do think there  
21 seems to be a need for an intentional plan for  
22 ongoing training and support for educators on how to  
23 address and meet the needs of at-risk students.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: I voted for the motion. The

1 school is addressing the needs of all their students;  
2 the renewal will allow them to continue this work.  
3 It will be interesting to see if this focus can be  
4 maintained if the enrollment increases.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

6 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I too was  
7 impressed with the flexibility that's afforded the  
8 students. And I can't help but appreciate the fact  
9 that Mr. Harrison's -- his style, his work is having  
10 on other teachers in the district. That degree of  
11 competition, I think, is good for students all  
12 around. Thanks.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Panel  
14 Members. Thank you to the school. And I wish you  
15 all a Very Merry Christmas and safe travels back  
16 home, and look forward to learning more about the  
17 work. Thank you.

18 MR. HARRISON: Thank you guys so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I think we need  
20 about five minutes to get everything re-set. If we  
21 could come on back at five-till-eleven, I know that  
22 the Rogers New Tech folks have been here since the  
23 very beginning and we've got some students who are  
24 anxiously awaiting. I think the students have been  
25 promised a good lunch. So I would like to give them

1 an opportunity to go ahead and present before we do  
2 any kind of lunch break. So if we could be back at  
3 five-till-eleven, that way we can go through their  
4 application. So, five minutes for real this time.

5 (BREAK: 10:50 - 10:58 A.M.)

6 A-3: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
7 RENEWAL: ROGERS NEW TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL, ROGERS

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We are ready for  
9 item number three on our agenda, which is a Request  
10 for District Conversion Charter School Renewal for  
11 the Rogers New Technology High School, in Rogers,  
12 Arkansas.

13 Ms. Boyd, you are recognized.

14 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. On January  
15 14, 2013, the Board -- the State Board approved the  
16 application for Rogers New Tech High School. The  
17 charter is approved to serve students in grades 9  
18 through 12 with a maximum enrollment of 900.  
19 Representatives of Rogers New Tech High School are  
20 appearing before the Charter Authorizing Panel to  
21 request a renewal of the charter. This request is  
22 for five years. And Dr. Arbuckle is the principal of  
23 the charter school and he's here to make their  
24 presentation.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will all

1 representatives from Rogers New Tech and anyone  
2 speaking in opposition please stand to receive the  
3 oath, and raise your right hand. Do you swear or  
4 affirm that the testimony you're about to give is the  
5 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

6 (ALL SPEAKERS ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

8 And, Dr. Arbuckle, we'll let you begin. You'll  
9 have 20 minutes.

10 DR. ARBUCKLE: Thank you. We appreciate the  
11 opportunity to get up early this morning. My  
12 learners got up at 3 a.m. this morning to make it  
13 down here on time, and we fought through the rain.  
14 They have a lot of good stuff to share with you, and  
15 so I'm going to kind of move my portion along a  
16 little bit.

17 We start -- at Rogers New Technology High School  
18 everything we do starts with why; that's why do we do  
19 what we do. And so this is - this mission statement  
20 tries to encapsulate our why and I'm just going to  
21 highlight some of the guiding pieces of that mission  
22 statement. You'll notice that that mission statement  
23 refers to both learners and facilitators. In the  
24 last couple of years we've started talking about  
25 student learners and adult learners, because we are

1 all learners in our community. And you'll notice  
2 there that we talk about seeking challenges and  
3 taking risks, valuing growth as much as success.  
4 We've done a lot of work around changing mindsets in  
5 our community, growth mindsets; develop transferrable  
6 skills, knowledge and habits to the world of work,  
7 because that's really what we're doing. You know, we  
8 talk about college and career ready in education, but  
9 truly -- it's really about being career ready because  
10 all of us are going into careers. Some of us use  
11 college as a conduit to get there; some of us don't.  
12 But it's really about being a high-quality productive  
13 citizen. And we want to -- we want both our student  
14 learners and our adult learners to excel in a  
15 rigorous and collaborative environment. We expect  
16 our learners to collaborate; we expect our adults to  
17 collaborate, as well.

18 You'll notice the picture there; that is a  
19 picture of our front entrance. The last time I was  
20 here, in fall of 2015, asking for an increase in our  
21 enrollment -- which this panel did grant us, so I  
22 appreciate that -- we have taken over the entire  
23 facility that we were in. And so we have gone from  
24 our first year of about just under 30,000 square feet  
25 to somewhere around 140,000 square feet in our



1 building. So our building is set up quite nicely for  
2 everything that we want to do going forward.

3 I want to talk a little bit about who Rogers New  
4 Technology High School is currently, and you have  
5 this information in front of you in different places.  
6 Our total enrollment as of December 1 was about 690.  
7 Interestingly enough, we are 50% male, 50% female,  
8 which was something that in our early years we  
9 couldn't say. And so that was really a goal of ours  
10 that we had inside the building, was to make sure  
11 that we were well represented there. We do have  
12 about 35% of our families speaking some language  
13 other than English, and of those families 89% have a  
14 first language of Spanish. I've got numbers there on  
15 the right side, as well. We are about 56% free and  
16 reduced lunch in our building, and we are 11.5%  
17 special ed. and 504 students. I tell you that to say  
18 we teach them all. We work with all learners. We  
19 are -- we represent the demographic of our district,  
20 and so while students do come to us by an application  
21 we -- that application is simply an informational  
22 tool for us to know who's interested in coming to us.  
23 And so we do have all of that.

24 Numbers though only tell you a little bit. We  
25 only give you a little picture. At Rogers New

1 Technology High School I tell them every day --  
2 probably less now than I used to because I don't have  
3 to as much anymore -- that it's not my school; it's  
4 their school. It has to be what they want it to be.  
5 So they tell us what the rules are; they tell us what  
6 clubs they're going to have. It is literally a  
7 school built by learners and inhabited by our  
8 learners. Numbers provide a frame of reference, but  
9 it doesn't really tell you who our learners are. So  
10 I have brought some of our learners to share with you  
11 who they are. We are high school and college  
12 students at the same time; we are athletes; we are  
13 band members; we have -- we run the gamut as far as  
14 kids connected to school.

15 And so the first learner I'm going to share with  
16 you -- I'm going to invite Beautiful Reliford to come  
17 up and share a little bit about her experiences at  
18 New Tech.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And if you'll go ahead and  
20 state your name please.

21 MS. RELIFORD: My name is Beautiful Reliford;  
22 I'm a 10th grader at Rogers New Technology High  
23 School. And I can say that I'm proud of my school  
24 because of what it offers to its learners. It  
25 enables us to take the reins on our education and

1 offers us opportunities to invest in our future. I  
2 have learned to work in a group of strangers or  
3 friends, alike, and produce a good product. I have  
4 presented countless times; I even presented my entire  
5 sophomore class. I am so far out of my comfort zone  
6 that I don't think it even exists anymore.

7 The point is the reason I'm able to stand up  
8 here and tell you about it is because of this school.  
9 This school keeps me challenged and engaged at the  
10 same time. I don't know what all goes into it, but I  
11 know it's because of the facilitators and the staff  
12 that assists us in being able to do this and have  
13 this. It's a more personal learning environment for  
14 us as students and learners to engage. And that is  
15 why I'm proud to be a New Tech learner.

16 DR. ARBUCKLE: The second learner I'd like to  
17 share with you is Taylor Voight. And so I'm going to  
18 invite Taylor to come up and share a few words as  
19 well.

20 MS. VOIGHT: Hello, my name is Taylor Voight;  
21 I'm currently an 11th grader at Rogers New Technology  
22 High School. And as I finish out my first semester  
23 of my third year here at NTHS I began to look at  
24 everything that I've accomplished and realize I would  
25 not be the way that I am without this school. I take

1           tremendous pride in everything that I've learned and  
2           improved upon because of the culture that we hold  
3           dear at New Tech; a culture that lifts up the  
4           importance of peer collaboration and college  
5           preparation; a culture that presents mentor  
6           connections between facilitators and students, rather  
7           than a teacher that just sits in class and gives  
8           lectures; a culture that teaches us through  
9           presentations and oral communication. Without this I  
10          wouldn't even be able to stand in front of you today,  
11          because before I was a Rogers New Technology student  
12          I had lots of trouble with public speaking. It's a  
13          culture that teaches us to do presentations and oral  
14          communication. RNTHS has helped me reach heights  
15          that I would never have imagined and presented me  
16          with opportunities to further my education. Thank  
17          you.

18                 DR. ARBUCKLE: Finally, I've asked Omar Nevarro  
19          to come and share a little bit with you as well.  
20          Omar.

21                 MR. NEVARRO: Hello, my name is Omar Nevarro,  
22          and I'm currently a junior enrolled at RNTHS. What  
23          I'm most proud about RNTHS is the sense of maturity  
24          and confidence that we naturally learn to carry  
25          ourselves through the five standards set at the

1 school. I also have much pride in the culture of New  
2 Tech as it's sort of a melting pot of personalities  
3 and you never see a face around that you can't give a  
4 name to. All in all, RNTHS is more than just a  
5 school; it's a family of intelligent and ambitious  
6 learners that dream big and have determination to  
7 make those dreams into reality. Thank you.

8 DR. ARBUCKLE: If I could I would've brought all  
9 700 with me, I'm that proud of them. So I just -- I  
10 hope that you take from the things that they've  
11 shared, the things that are important that we focus  
12 on. We're going to talk a little bit about the  
13 school-wide learning outcomes that Omar talked about;  
14 the culture -- all three of them talked about culture  
15 and the importance of what that is to our building.  
16 Really Rogers New Technology High School centers  
17 around some big rocks. One of our big rocks is  
18 project based learning. And so I've got some photos  
19 that I want to share with you and I want to point out  
20 a couple of things that I'd like for you to take from  
21 those. On my bottom right, the one with the big red  
22 arrow, that's basically what we call an entry  
23 document. What we do is we have a particular  
24 template or particular style of the way that we  
25 engage learners in the process of learning; it starts

1 with an entry document. And that entry document  
2 doesn't always have to be a document; it can be, as  
3 you see there, a picture that simply engages them in  
4 the process of beginning. You look at that picture  
5 and you'll start wondering, hmmm, I wonder. Okay,  
6 there's a hand, there's a radio; I bet -- I wonder if  
7 we're going to do something with a radio. I see 1928  
8 on there, so probably something with history. And it  
9 begins that process of activating their prior  
10 knowledge right from the beginning. You'll see that  
11 learners at the -- in the middle section there, with  
12 the two young men looking at the racetrack, that's a  
13 physics project that they're working on. You don't  
14 see adult facilitators in there at this point because  
15 it's the learners who do the work. You'll notice  
16 they're writing on desks. We write on desks, we  
17 write on walls, we write on windows, wherever it's  
18 appropriate. Why? Because where does learning  
19 happen? Learning happens where the learner is.  
20 Learning does not necessarily happen with an adult  
21 standing at the front of the room. And so that's why  
22 we do what we -- you'll notice kiddos, four, five of  
23 them, pointing to the same computer screen. Why?  
24 Because they're collaborating and they're looking at  
25 that -- those projects.

1 Right underneath the term project-based  
2 learning, that is a bulletin board of adult learning.  
3 One of the things we do is we put up our projects and  
4 we ask adults to critical friend each other, to give  
5 them feedback so that it is truly corporate planning;  
6 not only among those of us who teach English or those  
7 of us who teach biology but across the entire  
8 building, because we're all trying to do project-  
9 based learning better.

10 We talk a little bit about how we do what we do.  
11 I wanted an opportunity to kind of share with you  
12 some of the folks that we try to engage. I have a --  
13 if it works, I have a little video that -- and if you  
14 follow our school Twitter account you've probably  
15 seen these before. But one of the things that I try  
16 to do is we try to engage our larger community;  
17 members of that larger community are our legislative  
18 members. And so something we've done in the past is  
19 I invite Grant Hodges. Grant is a representative for  
20 a part of our area, and he gave feedback to civics  
21 students on presentations. And they're doing  
22 presentations where they're actually -- they're  
23 actually pitching him bills and then he's providing  
24 them feedback.

25 You can go ahead and play it if you like.

1           He's providing them feedback on things that they  
2           can do differently or how the process really works at  
3           the legislative level.

4           Another video that we have in there is one that  
5           has to do with two of our young ladies who  
6           participated in the National History Day competition.  
7           Each year we participate in the National History Day  
8           competition. Last year the state of Arkansas, for  
9           the first time in 20 years, took first place  
10          nationally. That was three of our young ladies.  
11          They did a video on Arch Bishop Oscar Romero. That  
12          video was actually played at the Smithsonian; that  
13          video was also entered into a New York Young  
14          Filmmakers competition. Those young ladies were also  
15          -- had a commendation from the legislature, as well.

16          The third video -- and if we get to it, that's  
17          great. The third video I wanted to put on there  
18          because it's kids being excited about an idea. They  
19          wanted to paint one of my walls and they were going  
20          to paint my wall because that's what they wanted to  
21          do in AP Human Geography. See, in our building we  
22          are wall-to-wall project-based learning, but we are  
23          also pre-AP and AP level only. So that 11.5% of  
24          special education students and 504 students are  
25          engaged in AP and pre-AP level work. All of our



1 students are engaged in AP and pre-AP level work.

2 Okay. Thank you.

3 We are also one-to-one technology. Now I put  
4 these pictures on here because I want you to notice  
5 how many times those computers are closed. I'd also  
6 like for you to notice that, you know, in one picture  
7 in particular there is no technology visible. Why?  
8 Because the technology is simply a tool; it is a tool  
9 that is a production device. How we look at it, you  
10 have a computer in front of you currently. What do  
11 you use it for? It's a production device. You use  
12 it to produce. You don't do everything on your  
13 computer; neither do we. And so you'll notice that  
14 it is a way to produce but there's also writing on  
15 the desks and there's kids standing around a computer  
16 collaborating together. There are some kids not  
17 using a computer at all. Why? Because it's not --  
18 one-to-one for us does not mean we're doing  
19 everything on the computer; it only means that we're  
20 using that tool appropriately for the items that they  
21 need to use that for.

22 I also wanted to share with you about adult  
23 learning because we do have a strong belief in our  
24 building that if the adults aren't learning the  
25 learners, the student learners are not learning. And

1 so we take very seriously our adult collaborative  
2 time together. You will notice that we do not work  
3 in isolation. At the picture in the middle I see an  
4 English teacher, I see an art teacher, I see a math  
5 teacher, all having conversation around the same  
6 thing. You'll notice they also write on the desks,  
7 write on the windows, write on the walls; they work  
8 outside. Why? Because where does work happen?  
9 Again, learning happens where the learner is. And in  
10 this case the learners are the adult learners.

11 Those are -- some of those photos are from  
12 summer work that our teachers have done. On the  
13 upper left and the middle, those are just during the  
14 school year afternoons that they're working together.  
15 We also have -- the far right is we attend New Tech  
16 every year; that is -- you heard about that earlier  
17 in the Blytheville presentation. It is our summer  
18 conference that we participate with as a member of  
19 the New Tech Network.

20 I wanted to share with you our school-wide  
21 learning outcomes. This is another big rock for us.  
22 This is something that we believe sets us apart. We  
23 have five school-wide learning outcomes. I'm showing  
24 four to you today: oral communication, written  
25 communication, collaboration, and agency. We believe

1 that skills are just as important as knowledge and  
2 thinking. Why do we hold that belief? Because our  
3 community tells us so. When we work with the  
4 Northwest Arkansas Council and their work with what  
5 are employers looking for, I have yet to hear an  
6 employer tell me they're looking for someone who  
7 understand protein synthesis. Now, that's important.  
8 Right? We teach protein synthesis. But what adults  
9 in the community, who are providing jobs and training  
10 for our kids, tell us is they want collaboration,  
11 creativity, problem-solving, the skill-set that  
12 oftentimes takes a backseat to the content. Well, we  
13 put it right at the forefront. I have color-coded  
14 those for you. The color-coding simply means that  
15 what we -- one of the things we talk about is we talk  
16 about a guaranteed viable experience. Right? A lot  
17 of times we talk about guaranteed viable curriculum;  
18 we talk about experience. So one thing that we do in  
19 the 9th grade is we really focus on the demonstration  
20 of understanding energy and tone, and organization,  
21 and oral communication. It's not to say we leave the  
22 others out, but that's our guaranteed experience for  
23 our 9th grade learner. For a 10th grade learner we  
24 come down underneath that to those three; the juniors  
25 are the green; and the seniors are the purple.

1           Written communication is standard across all  
2           four, and so that's why it's a different color. We  
3           focus on written communication in all four grade  
4           levels and we focus in all areas.

5           Agency -- agency is that student taking control  
6           of their own learning. You can see what goes into  
7           that using effort and practice to grow, finding  
8           personal relevance, meeting benchmarks. A lot of  
9           times at the high school we like that one; right? We  
10          like beating benchmarks; "you turn it in when I say  
11          to turn it in." And that is important, but it's only  
12          one of many things that plays into a student's  
13          ability to self-regulate.

14          And then collaboration -- why? Because  
15          collaboration is important. Being able to work in a  
16          group is importation and knowing how to function as a  
17          group.

18          A couple of things that I wanted to just share  
19          with you -- we also focus on early college experience  
20          with our kiddos. We have a grant -- or had a grant  
21          that we started with the Walton Foundation.  
22          Basically what I started doing was I said, "I want  
23          our learners to have a college-going experience," and  
24          I wanted that college-going experience to be on the  
25          college campus. Because when kids see success on the

1 college campus while they're still at home with mom  
2 and dad, sitting around the dinner table and having  
3 those conversations, they understand, hey, I can do  
4 this too. And so we started -- you can see the  
5 growth there; we went from 13 learners in year-one,  
6 50 learners last year. We've got 39 this year. We  
7 are also on track to have 10 of those graduates who  
8 will also have their associates degree when they're  
9 done. So in May, 10 of our high school seniors will  
10 also be college graduates as well.

11 Internships is another vital part of what we do.  
12 We started last year with 17; we've doubled that this  
13 year to 34. We have experiences in Mundo-Tech, which  
14 is a manufacturing company there in town. You can  
15 see the Teen Action Support Center. One of the  
16 things that we have to do is we provide what we call  
17 a personalized and customized educational experience  
18 for kiddos. And so when we offer internships we have  
19 to look at each individual kiddo's schedule and say,  
20 "How do we make this work?" We do whatever it takes.  
21 I mean that's really what I think -- what I hope you  
22 took from some of the comments from our learners  
23 today.

24 Finally, just a couple of things, recognitions  
25 for Rogers New Technology High School. We have been

1 an NWACC -- that's Northwest Arkansas Community  
2 College -- Certified Early College Experience School  
3 for the last two years. Basically, we have enough of  
4 our kiddos going out and taking college classes to  
5 meet that designation. We have been recognized  
6 multiple times by the University of Arkansas Office  
7 of Educational Policy for our work academically with  
8 kids. We are -- last year we became a New Tech  
9 Network National Demonstration site. Basically what  
10 that means is if New Tech Network wants to bring  
11 anybody in to show them how to do the work, they  
12 bring them to us here in the state of Arkansas. We  
13 do have two certified New Tech master teachers. What  
14 that means is they've gone through a rigorous process  
15 to be able to -- it's train-the-trainer in project-  
16 based learning in our model.

17 (TIMER BELL RANG)

18 DR. ARBUCKLE: I told you about the National  
19 History Day information. And then I tried to put  
20 that on there about the Principal of the Year thing,  
21 but we just -- we'll kind of go past that.

22 Basically, our kiddos work hard and are really  
23 -- I wanted to bring them to you because we are so  
24 proud of the work that they do.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Dr. Arbuckle, I

1 think the 20 minutes is up.

2 Ms. Boyd, there's no one here in opposition?

3 MS. BOYD: (shaking head from side to side.)

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So you can have an  
5 additional five minutes, if you'd like to wrap  
6 anything up or if anyone else would like to speak  
7 before we start with questions.

8 DR. ARBUCKLE: I think if I get in their way for  
9 lunch they're going to be mad at me. So I think I'm  
10 good.

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Understood. Understood.  
12 Okay.

13 And I do want to say all three of you did a  
14 great job presenting. It is very, very difficult to  
15 speak in public. I get nervous up here; you can  
16 probably tell because I just start rambling. So I'm  
17 very impressed with you and you need to know you've  
18 done a wonderful job. So, thank you for coming.

19 Okay. So at this time I think we can start with  
20 questions and I'll start down here on the end with  
21 Mr. Wilson.

22 MR. WILSON: Thank you. Dr. Arbuckle, I'm  
23 impressed with the efforts you all made to expose  
24 your kids to early college experiences. Do you have  
25 some feel or a guesstimate as to what fraction of

1 your graduates actually enroll?

2 DR. ARBUCKLE: Yes, sir, I do. I don't have to  
3 -- I'll be honest with you, I don't have to guess.  
4 The Office of Educational Policy at the University of  
5 Arkansas is very good to provide that data to anyone  
6 statewide. And actually our overall college-going  
7 rate is 55%. So in -- let's see; in northwest  
8 Arkansas, that rate places us first in the big --  
9 what we call the big four in our area. In northwest  
10 Arkansas as a whole, when you consider all schools in  
11 northwest Arkansas, that places us tied for seventh  
12 at 55%. So we feel like we're doing a good job. Can  
13 we do better? Certainly. Really my focus and what I  
14 share with our parents when I'm recruiting our  
15 parents is I am interested in getting them to  
16 college. But quite honestly, in northwest Arkansas  
17 we do a fairly decent job when you compare it  
18 nationally to getting kids to college. Our challenge  
19 seems to be getting them to go back for year two and  
20 year three and year four. And so that was one of the  
21 reasons that I was as passionate as I was about  
22 getting kids on the college campus at NWACC.  
23 Certainly, we can do that concurrent credit on our  
24 campus; we could do that. But what I want them to do  
25 is I want them seated in a college classroom, in



1 front of a college facilitator, sitting next to a 34-  
2 year old single mother who had to go back to high --  
3 or go back to college because life happens. See, I  
4 think there's a lot of power in learning from that  
5 experience in and of itself.

6 MS. NEWTON: So what is your retention rate?

7 DR. ARBUCKLE: Our -- in our building our  
8 retention --

9 MS. NEWTON: No, for college enrollment.

10 DR. ARBUCKLE: That is a great question. And  
11 that is something that we have to figure out a good  
12 way of tracking because, quite honestly, I don't have  
13 a systemic way to track that at this point.

14 MS. NEWTON: To my ADE colleagues, is that  
15 something that the Department of Higher Ed. keeps  
16 track of? Because that's a question that's often  
17 asked and that is certainly significant in the  
18 outcome of the number -- or where Arkansas ranks in  
19 terms of the number of college completers, so --

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And that's what I was just  
21 thinking. I think that would be information that we  
22 would -- from a state level we would have to get.  
23 And I think also when you look at our strategic plan  
24 and long-term goals we want to be able for -- one of  
25 the goals is within a year of finishing high school

1 for students to be actively engaged in the workforce  
2 or college, engaged in some type of post-secondary.  
3 So we're -- I think we are working with the  
4 Department of Workforce Services and Higher Education  
5 to be able not only to have that for state level but  
6 for schools to be able to have that for actionable  
7 data, so --

8 MS. NEWTON: Is it possible to consider having a  
9 discussion with maybe Ms. Boyd's shop around getting  
10 that data or having that to be something that the  
11 charters would report on, at least at the juncture of  
12 getting an application for renewal? It would  
13 certainly be helpful for us to be able to know what  
14 impact that the charter or charters are having as it  
15 relates to workforce, entering the workforce,  
16 retaining -- and I see my colleague Ms. Turner  
17 nodding her head. Because that's critical  
18 information I think in economic development from the  
19 standpoint of Arkansas Department of Economic  
20 Development, from education, from Career Ed., and all  
21 the things that education impacts. So we know from a  
22 larger picture what the impact of our schools -- not  
23 just the charters -- are having in addressing the  
24 issues around employment, college retention,  
25 dropouts, and all that.

1                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So, and I know my  
2                   colleague Dr. Eric Saunders is probably listening.  
3                   One of the things that we're always challenged with  
4                   is the timing of data and the timing of the data that  
5                   we need. So, for example, to -- right now we don't  
6                   have the 2016-17 graduation rate data posted, because  
7                   I think yesterday was the final date for that to be  
8                   reviewed by districts and to be corrected if there  
9                   were any issues. So our My School Info page does  
10                  have a statistics linking spot where we have a lot of  
11                  information but sometimes you have to go back two  
12                  academic years in order to get the information,  
13                  because it may not be ready at the time that we need  
14                  it. So that is part of the larger conversation that  
15                  we're having, number one, what data do we need, and  
16                  can we get it in the most -- the quickest manner so  
17                  that we can make it public. I think that we're doing  
18                  -- we do realize that we need to make it more  
19                  accessible. So I think we just want to continue to  
20                  have that conversation, so we might want to at some  
21                  point set up a work session where we bring in our  
22                  data teams, sit down and talk about with Ms. Boyd  
23                  what data do we need that would help us make  
24                  decisions so that could be part of the application or  
25                  just the general process of what we would look at.

1           Okay. Yeah. Well, he doesn't have any  
2           questions. Okay, Dr. Hernandez, go ahead. I'll go  
3           back to questions now.

4           DR. HERNANDEZ: My question is around the goals  
5           again. So on the -- in your goal for reading,  
6           English and writing it talks about -- and all of your  
7           math goals, it says that student growth data  
8           indicates at least average growth for all student  
9           learners in year one; and then it follows into year  
10          two, and then it says all the same things but it says  
11          "trending upwards." So for us -- this may be kind of  
12          a general question for all of us -- what can we  
13          expect to see in the year-five renewal? What do you  
14          think that looks like to you? And then, what should  
15          we be looking for?

16          DR. ARBUCKLE: So we're talking year-five from  
17          now, so the next renewal process. Well, I think in a  
18          perfect work, you know, what I would expect to see is  
19          I'd expect to see that data at a high level. One of  
20          the things that I sort of -- you know, that we sort  
21          of talk through when we're doing the goals is at this  
22          point our data is fairly successful. You know, we're  
23          increasing in writing and reading for two years  
24          running now and that data is already at 76% in  
25          writing. You know, our English data is at 75%

1           currently. And so we feel like the mechanism, the  
2           instructional model that we're using is allowing us  
3           to work with our learners to basically be at a high  
4           level. But what I am looking for -- what I'm going  
5           to look for is I'm going to look for making sure that  
6           we don't have gaps between our -- because we're  
7           teaching everyone. All right. We don't just have  
8           certain select kiddos. So, making sure that those  
9           gaps are low, that we're doing well for all levels --  
10          all learners that we have in front of us. And I  
11          would expect that data to remain and continue to  
12          creep up. I mean, you and I both know that as that  
13          data becomes at the upper end it becomes much more  
14          difficult to continue with those growth goals. But I  
15          think when we start thinking about individual student  
16          growth that's really where our rubber is going to  
17          meet the road; am I helping Omar and Taylor and  
18          Beautiful grow every year, year after year. If we're  
19          doing that, then I think we can say we're being  
20          successful.

21                   CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Before I go on down the  
22                   line for questions, I do have just a question for our  
23                   student representatives. And they can come in any  
24                   order; it's going to be the same question. I was  
25                   just interested in what made you choose New Tech High

1 School? Because you all talked about what a  
2 tremendous impact it's had. So what was the draw and  
3 have you had any thoughts since then?

4 MS. VOIGHT: I chose New Tech -- Rogers New  
5 Technology High School because all my life through  
6 middle school I struggled with sitting in a class and  
7 listening to the teacher talk and making us take  
8 notes. And I knew -- I was told how technology  
9 worked and I got to tour their school and I got to  
10 see these kids who have these laptops out and they  
11 were writing on these windows, and I thought it was  
12 the coolest thing; I was like, oh, my gosh, they're  
13 writing on windows. So that -- all that influence of  
14 doing education differently and how I learn  
15 differently was how I picked New Tech, because I  
16 really wanted to succeed more and I really felt like  
17 New Tech was going to offer that for me. And I knew  
18 that they offered a lot of opportunities, like the  
19 college education experience, all that. And so, I  
20 don't know; I just -- I really wanted to go there  
21 because of all the opportunities and how they were  
22 going to help me grow and be who I am today.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you, Taylor.

24 MS. VOIGHT: Thank you.

25 DR. ARBUCKLE: And she didn't have to give up

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volleyball.

MS. VOIGHT: No. I did continue that too.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Omar.

MR. NEVARRO: At first it was sort of that I wanted to go to my home school and my mom had a lot of influence on me, kind of talking to me about opportunities that would arise if I came to New Tech. And after a while it kind of became my own decision to come to New Tech. And I feel a lot of it came from kind of the freedoms that we were stated that we were going to be -- that was stated that we were going to be given. And we actually do have a lot of freedom and we're treated like mature young adults and everybody is expected to have the same quality of work and to basically carry themselves with confidence and maturity, and that's why we're -- all three of us are even able to talk to you here today. I just see it as a different learning experience. We're not necessarily -- I mean if you go into any other high school class you basically -- if you're in history, okay, you're going to learn about what happened on so-and-so date and what -- who it was about. Here, you actually get to most of the time choose your topic and still kind of incorporate what your facilitators are wanting you to learn -- and

1 that's why we call them facilitators, because they're  
2 not necessarily just giving you information, saying,  
3 "Okay, this is what you need to know." You are given  
4 the information and you get told to make a product  
5 and you make it out of what you want it to be. And I  
6 think that means a lot for us, is preparing us for  
7 the real world, as in having to find solutions to our  
8 own problems and being able to kind of work through  
9 life, not just in college but after as well.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you, Omar.

11 MS. RELIFORD: I'm going to be honest: I didn't  
12 want to come here at all; my mom made me. But then  
13 when I got here I saw the appeal and I just slowly  
14 was like, I like this; it's cool, because we got to  
15 basically do our own thing. They guide us in the  
16 direction and then we took over. We worked in a  
17 group and presented and learned how to do it. Matter  
18 of fact, last week my math teacher stayed with me two  
19 hours after school to help me with my algebra. That  
20 would never happen at Rogers; they'd probably be  
21 like, "You're done, goodbye." But here it's just  
22 different. And I really like it and I'm kind of glad  
23 my mom forced me to be here, so --

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thank you, Beautiful. I'm  
25 proud your mom made you do that too.



1 I appreciate you all letting me ask you that  
2 question.

3 And we'll go ahead and go to Ms. Turner.

4 MS. TURNER: Thank you. I'd like for you to  
5 talk a little bit about the career and technical  
6 programs that you have and how -- or what you're  
7 doing along that. Because your opening statement was  
8 that you're preparing students to be career ready,  
9 and I know all of the skills that they've talked  
10 about are things that are important for careers. But  
11 can you tell me a little bit about your career and  
12 technical programs?

13 DR. ARBUCKLE: I can. And as I get started, I  
14 want to go ahead and clarify: we feel like that our  
15 entire building is readying kids for college and  
16 careers, not just the CTE. But specifically when we  
17 start talking about our CTE programs we have -- we  
18 offer mobile app development, so we offer a series of  
19 three courses on mobile applications and how to  
20 create those. We literally teach our kids how to  
21 make apps for SmartPhones. That course -- those set  
22 of courses are also articulated with Northwest  
23 Arkansas Community College, so kiddos who are in  
24 those courses who choose to go out to NWACC can also  
25 get college credit for those. We are one of a

1 limited number -- the number used to be four; I don't  
2 know if it's still four -- but a limited number of  
3 school districts who are offering that mobile  
4 application development program.

5 Our second one is our digital photography  
6 program. We are the only school in the district  
7 that's offering digital photography, which  
8 interestingly enough in northwest Arkansas is one of  
9 our up-and-coming in-demand job areas, is the digital  
10 photography. And so we offer three courses there.  
11 That program has grown from one teacher to two  
12 teachers over the course of the last five years, kids  
13 who are interested in taking that and are engaged in  
14 that. We also have within that created -- tried to  
15 create some internship type experiences for kiddos to  
16 go out into the community, working with local real  
17 estate agents, working with other folks who have need  
18 of that skill-set.

19 And then our third is our advertising and  
20 graphic design program. That program has also grown  
21 tremendously. Again, that is another one of our up-  
22 and-coming career areas of interest in northwest  
23 Arkansas. And, again, internships in that  
24 experience, working with various folks, small  
25 business owners, things like that, who require those

1 services, who are in need of those services but don't  
2 necessarily have the means or maybe that's sort of an  
3 on-the-back-burner kind of thing, and so they don't  
4 go out and search for someone to do that on a paid  
5 basis. So we provide our kiddos -- since we're  
6 project-based, that becomes a project.

7 Overall, we do offer -- and I mentioned the  
8 internship course. That internship course has  
9 doubled in size over the last year. That internship  
10 course has been a tremendous course to get our kiddos  
11 engaged in the community and in the work. Just last  
12 week -- again, if you follow our Twitter account you  
13 will see that just last week we posted some photos  
14 from our entrepreneurship class where those kiddos  
15 were presenting to Start-up Junkie in Fayetteville.  
16 They were presenting to First Western Bank there in  
17 northwest Arkansas. They were presenting to the  
18 University of Arkansas and various individuals who  
19 came in to provide them feedback on their  
20 entrepreneurial pitches. And so what we're trying to  
21 do is we're trying to engage kids in what we -- some  
22 of our facilitators have sort of adopted that, what  
23 we call "real-real work." Right? So we kind of talk  
24 about there's three different kinds of work: there's  
25 fake-fake work; all right, that kid walks in and we

1 give them a worksheet and say, "Here, do this; turn  
2 it back in at the end of the hour and we'll give you  
3 a grade for it." There's real-fake work where we  
4 might give them a project where, you know, "you're  
5 going to be a city planner and now you're going to  
6 create a city and you're going to lay all this out."  
7 It's real work, but it's not really for anybody.  
8 Right? So the authenticity might not be there. But  
9 we try to engage kids in real-real work where we go  
10 out into our local community and we say, "Do you have  
11 a project" -- we did that with one of our local  
12 businesses; we went in and said, "Do you have a list  
13 of projects?" They said, "Yeah, we've got lists of  
14 projects." I said, "How far do you get?" "Well, we  
15 get to about project four every -- I mean, you know,  
16 four; so we've got a project down here at 10 we're  
17 never going to get to." I said, "What's project 10?"  
18 They said, "Well, every year we have a company  
19 softball game and we want our company -- our teams to  
20 go in and fill out a mobile app to sign up their  
21 team. Right now, we're using a DOS-based program  
22 that one of our employees created in 1982." I said,  
23 "Give me that one." Right? Because if we screw it  
24 up, we -- I mean, they weren't doing anything with it  
25 anyway. They said yeah and they gave me someone to

1 monitor that. And so they monitor it via Skype or  
2 Google Hangout and they get with kids and say, "Hey,  
3 have you thought about this? And tell us what you're  
4 doing." And so we're engaging in these internship  
5 experiences in the way our adults work, which is  
6 sometimes not at work. Right? We have a lot of  
7 people in northwest Arkansas who report to work from  
8 home or report to work from McDonald's -- or Chick-  
9 Fil-A seems to be a big hit in our part of the world.  
10 Right? And so why can't we provide those experiences  
11 to kids? And so that's what we're trying to do, not  
12 only in CTE but also in our -- you know, across the  
13 board. Thank you for asking.

14 MS. TURNER: And could you -- one more question.

15 DR. ARBUCKLE: Yes, ma'am.

16 MS. TURNER: Could you tell me a little bit  
17 about the career development process that you use  
18 with your students in 7-12 -- or 9-12, whichever.

19 DR. ARBUCKLE: And I can. I'm probably not the  
20 most equipped person to share that with you; that  
21 person probably isn't here right now. But basically  
22 in our building we try to create a trajectory for  
23 kids; it starts with a career development course, at  
24 which point -- now I say all that to say I believe in  
25 7th grade or 8th grade our kiddos actually create a

1 plan, a four-year plan where they kind of talk about,  
2 "Well, this is what I want to do and this is how I  
3 have to get there." So we inherit those. But we  
4 work with our kiddos in career development and really  
5 our -- it's project-based again, so we start with  
6 kind of a simple project; what do you want to -- what  
7 do you think you want to do. Right? And most kids  
8 who are early-on in that process, they come to us and  
9 they say, "Well, I want to be a brain surgeon" or "I  
10 want to be a professional skateboarder." Right? And  
11 -- but they have to understand really what does that  
12 mean when I say I want to be a brain surgeon, from  
13 school to investment to time to lifestyle, the whole  
14 thing. And so we start there. And then our -- in a  
15 perfect world we'll connect that kiddo and what they  
16 want to -- what they've figured out what they think  
17 they have an interest in in career development and  
18 extend that into Internship 1 and then Internship 2.  
19 One of the things that we've done this year, just  
20 this semester actually, is in northwest Arkansas --  
21 the Democrat-Gazette ran a story in the newspaper  
22 about regionally, in the big four -- Fayetteville,  
23 Rogers, Bentonville, Springdale -- we have a lack of  
24 individuals wanting to go into the police force. We  
25 have a shortage nationwide of individuals who want to

1 go into the police force. So I thought, we've got a  
2 School Resource Officer sitting in our office; why  
3 can't I help with that? So I went to our School  
4 Resource Officer, I said, "Hey, would Rogers PD be  
5 interested in maybe having -- creating an experience  
6 for kids for an internship?" Because I have four  
7 kiddos in my internship class today, two of them are  
8 18, they're going to be graduated in May, they have  
9 an interest in being a police officer. Well, why  
10 wouldn't I nurture that? Why wouldn't I give them  
11 experiences, along with my School Resource Officer,  
12 to really teach them what does it mean to be a police  
13 officer. One of them knows right now he does not  
14 like accident reports. Right? But that's a huge  
15 learning curve because a lot of times you're taking  
16 accident reports, and so he's either going to get  
17 good at it or he's going to decide "that's maybe not  
18 something I want to do." And so it's really about  
19 developing those relationships with the entities that  
20 you can create those experiences for kids with.

21 MS. TURNER: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes. I'm glad to go last. I  
24 actually did the site visit in the school and so I  
25 was just -- I didn't want to say what I had to say on

1 the front-end; I wanted to hear all the questions and  
2 so-forth.

3 A couple of things -- one, I was impressed with  
4 the fact that the college prep and the career go  
5 equal billing. I could not tell where one ended and  
6 the other one began. The mobile app kids, developing  
7 applications for your mobile phone, and the digital  
8 photography was impressive. The career technical  
9 piece, there was a young man that we met -- one young  
10 man we talked about wanting to go to work for one of  
11 the companies there, manufacturing companies there in  
12 Rogers. They put a plan together for when that young  
13 man graduated he was able to go and be hired at that  
14 company. His family had worked there before; he  
15 wanted to do that, and they put that together.

16 I have to tell you now that the writing on the  
17 tables and the desks and the walls and all of this  
18 and that, you know, that's okay. But what was really  
19 impressive was what they were writing, you know. I  
20 mean, this is -- the teaching and the learning that  
21 was going on in those classrooms are equal to any  
22 community college and some four-year institutions in  
23 the state. Those teachers were good. The physics  
24 teacher, the chemistry teacher, they were -- the kids  
25 were not in your traditional bells-and-cells; they're



1 in different groups, they're engaged and just  
2 figuring things out. I sat at a table with a group  
3 of math students. I'm a math teacher. I just sat  
4 back and listened as they were talking their way  
5 through some geometry problems.

6 Just overall -- I just made another note here --  
7 also I noticed on this the core courses for the  
8 overall school, these are real; there are not soft  
9 courses. Your oral communications, your written  
10 communications, these are very real expectations and  
11 these students were meeting these expectations. So  
12 for me it's about the teaching and the learning.

13 I like your question on the goals because that's  
14 the one that -- where I was reading and it kind of  
15 caught my attention too. I think it was said  
16 something about it will be above the state average,  
17 something along those lines. What impressed me is  
18 that no matter what the students -- we talked about a  
19 couple of students, one particularly that I met; they  
20 came to school not really, let's just say, as focused  
21 as he should be. And -- but before he left -- I  
22 think he was a senior this year --

23 DR. ARBUCKLE: Yes.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: -- he is a sharp student and he's  
25 ready to go either to any four-year institution you

1 can think of or two-year college.

2 So for me it's about the teaching and the  
3 learning that takes place. How you get them there --  
4 we've had different schools talk about today on  
5 different ways of getting students to that point, and  
6 I applaud all of them for looking at doing things  
7 differently. New Tech High, you're doing one of the  
8 better jobs of doing that, and love the kids.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And Dr. Williams mentioned  
10 this, and so did Dr. Hernandez -- and he may have a  
11 follow-up. But on your goals just a couple of  
12 things, you know, even to clarify. On the first goal  
13 where in the goal itself you talk about the  
14 achievement --

15 DR. ARBUCKLE: Yes, ma'am.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- and it's on page 12 of  
17 the application, I believe, in our packet; it might  
18 be a little different in what you printed off, then  
19 the chart. So you talk about that the achievement  
20 levels will exceed Arkansas state averages. And then  
21 over in the performance level, or somewhere I'm  
22 looking here, you seem to indicate that student  
23 growth data will indicate. So I think what I just  
24 want to bring to an awareness -- and I know because  
25 of the -- getting ready to move forward with a new

1           accountability system -- and you all will be getting  
2           a lot of information very soon -- with the ESSA  
3           School Index that has achievement information; it  
4           also has a separate growth calculation that will be  
5           35% of your overall index. I just don't want how you  
6           have this goal stated to become problematic for you  
7           all to figure out, okay, are we meeting this. So,  
8           you know, were we meeting -- in the goal statement  
9           were you indicating that you will see growth in  
10          student achievement in terms of from one year, if you  
11          had X-percent, to a certain percent? So I guess it's  
12          just more of a little bit lack of clarity on what  
13          these benchmarks mean.

14                 And then on number two you talk about insuring  
15          that all students are meeting -- or exceeding  
16          graduation rates. And when you talk about the  
17          targeted achievement gap students, you'll get that  
18          information for all groups of students.

19                 So I think just maybe at some point after you  
20          get that ESSA School Index I think you're going to  
21          see that, hey, we may be missing out on some things  
22          here within our goals. Your ACT composite, I believe  
23          the last reported one was a 21.1, which is good. But  
24          that may be an area where you want to set a goal to  
25          see an increase. Your AP -- students in AP courses

1 or your college-going rate, you talked about that,  
2 that may be an area that you want to include as a  
3 goal to see increase. But I just didn't -- I know  
4 it's kind of difficult right now to be navigating  
5 between the prior system where we had these AMOs, and  
6 I know that's what a lot of this was based on.

7 DR. ARBUCKLE: Sure.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So, and you may --

9 DR. HERNANDEZ: I think that's a good point.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So those are just  
11 some thoughts.

12 DR. ARBUCKLE: Okay. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: But I think we are very  
14 well-aware overall of, you know, academic achievement  
15 and progress from your students.

16 DR. ARBUCKLE: Sure.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So, okay. And sorry, I  
18 just kind of went off on a tangent there. But do we  
19 have other questions from Panel Members?

20 Okay. No questions?

21 So, Ms. Boyd or Ms. Davis.

22 MS. BOYD: I don't have any additional concerns.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And, Ms. Boyd, we  
24 can continue to work and look at ideas for goals in  
25 the future and even some models that might help with

1 these concerns.

2 Ms. Davis, on waivers, was there anything to  
3 discuss?

4 MS. DAVIS: No. They addressed any concerns I  
5 had during the initial review, so I don't have any  
6 other concerns.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Well,  
8 if we don't have any other questions or discussion  
9 I'll entertain a motion.

10 MR. WILSON: So moved --

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Second.

12 MR. WILSON: -- to renew the application.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We have a motion  
14 and a second.

15 All those in favor.

16 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

18 Okay. Congratulations, your application has  
19 been approved for renewal. And we'll give you some  
20 feedback in just a minute.

21 MS. DAVIS: Who was the second?

22 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Second was Dr. Williams.

23 MS. DAVIS: Okay.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, yes.

25 MS. DAVIS: Just making sure.

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CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Sorry.

(A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We'll go through the feedback on the renewal of Rogers New Tech High School application.

Dr. Hernandez.

DR. HERNANDEZ: I voted for the motion. Rogers New Tech has an outstanding program and meets the needs of students. I would encourage the school to revisit their goals after ESSA -- after the ESSA Index is released.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion, with the explanation impressive learning environment that lends itself to being able to adapt to the learning styles and needs of the students. Project-based learning is a definite strength. The insight of students and how the school meets their needs was helpful.

CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

DR. OWOH: I voted for the motion. It is quite evident that the school provides a challenging and engaging learning environment and experience. And that was evident from the evidence or the speeches from the students. So that was really great to hear

1 and to see that student voice really does seem to be  
2 prevalent within the learning environment, so --

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

4 MS. TURNER: I voted for the motion. The school  
5 is addressing the student needs and the success of  
6 student learning is a priority.

7 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Both college prep and career  
9 readiness are the foundation of a strong, yet diverse  
10 learning environment. The school is student-focused,  
11 meeting the needs of a diverse set of students. And  
12 I stopped there but yet, they also have a great food  
13 pantry --

14 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Wow, okay.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: -- at the building that the  
16 students are working with the community on.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Good. Mr. Wilson.

18 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I'm quite  
19 impressed with the performance of the school and I  
20 appreciate the effort to expose the graduates -- or  
21 the students to a challenging experience. I think  
22 that's the most important thing.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. All right. Well,  
24 thank you all very much. And we wish you the best.  
25 Please be safe traveling. And the State Board will

1 review this next month. So have a great holiday.

2 DR. ARBUCKLE: Thank you very much.

3 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And, Ms. Boyd,  
4 should we -- at this time should we take a break?

5 MS. BOYD: It's up to you. A break is not  
6 necessary for communications because there isn't a  
7 PowerPoint for this next one. So that's your call if  
8 you want to break or if you want to push through.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Is lunch available?

10 MS. BOYD: I don't know if it's here yet. It's  
11 supposed to arrive at noon, so it could be here.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: At noon. Okay. What's  
13 the preference of the committee? Would y'all like to  
14 go ahead and take a break for lunch and come back for  
15 the final --

16 MS. NEWTON: We just have one more, so this  
17 gentleman can start back home maybe.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay.

19 MS. NEWTON: That would be my preference.

20 MR. WILSON: Suits me.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Are you all --

22 MS. BOYD: I mean they're box lunches, so it's  
23 not like your food is going to get cold or anything.  
24 But it's up to you; no pressure.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I mean if you all - the



1 group is willing to push on we can.

2 Okay. Well, let's -- do you need a five-minute?

3 Okay. We're going to do a five-minute break --

4 MS. BOYD: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- and then we're going to  
6 continue.

7 (BREAK: 11:54 A.M. - 12:02 P.M.)

8 A-4: REQUEST FOR DISTRICT CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

9 RENEWAL: WASHINGTON ACADEMY, TEXARKANA

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: We're going to move to the  
11 fourth item on our agenda, which is the Request for  
12 District Conversion Public Charter School Renewal for  
13 Washington Academy in Texarkana.

14 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 On January 14, 2013, the State Board approved  
16 the application for Washington Academy. The charter  
17 is approved to serve students in grades 7-12 with a  
18 maximum enrollment of 160. Representatives of  
19 Washington Academy are appearing before the Charter  
20 Authorizing Panel to request a renewal of the current  
21 charter. Their request is for a five-year time  
22 period. And the principal of Washington Academy,  
23 Terry Taylor, is here to present the request.

24 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Will the  
25 representatives from Washington Academy and anyone

1 speaking in opposition please stand; if you'll raise  
2 your right hand. Do you swear or affirm that the  
3 testimony you are about to give shall be the truth,  
4 the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

5 MR. TAYLOR: I do.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So, Mr. Taylor, we  
7 welcome you to the podium. You'll have 20 minutes to  
8 make your presentation.

9 MR. TAYLOR: Again, Terry Taylor from Washington  
10 Academy charter school. We thank you all for  
11 allowing us to be here for this renewal process.  
12 And, again, when we start talking about Washington  
13 Academy charter school one of the things we always  
14 talk about is are we the perfect fit. When we start  
15 having students apply to go to Washington Academy we  
16 tell them this is why we were organized; this is why  
17 we were formed. Number one, we're a district  
18 conversion charter school for the Texarkana, Arkansas  
19 School District. Not only are we a district  
20 conversion charter school, but we also -- we are the  
21 alternative school for the Texarkana, Arkansas School  
22 District. So students come to us for a variety of  
23 reasons, and so that's why we always ask them, "Are  
24 you the perfect fit?" They come if they want to  
25 graduate early. We have early graduation; they can

1 graduate in two -- in three years, instead of four.  
2 So students come for that option. We have the credit  
3 recovery option. Students who did not do well their  
4 9th and 10th grade year now may realize that high  
5 school is real and "I really need to graduate," so  
6 they need credit recovery. So they come for those  
7 reasons for credit recovery. And then we have  
8 students who just don't like the big high school  
9 environment. The high school environment is just not  
10 the right fit for them, so maybe they need a smaller  
11 environment; so they come. Those are some of the  
12 reasons why they come to Washington Academy charter  
13 school.

14 And so when we look at it we are 70% free and  
15 reduced, we're about 87% African American, 12%  
16 Caucasian, and then the other percentage is other.  
17 And so they come there for those particular reasons.  
18 So people always ask, "Is it alternative school like  
19 alternatives?" It's not the typical alternative  
20 school where you are placed there because you get in  
21 trouble; it's alternative school because you need an  
22 alternative way of learning; you do not learn the  
23 traditional way. So what we try to do, we try to  
24 create an environment that's going to be conducive  
25 for the students to be successful. Because most of

1 the students, if not all of them, over 90% of our  
2 students that come are at-risk students. And when  
3 I'm talking about at-risk, at-risk of dropping out of  
4 high school, at-risk of not making it, at-risk of  
5 possibly going to prison, at-risk of life; life has  
6 gotten a hold of them and they need some help to turn  
7 some things around in their life. So what we do when  
8 we're interviewing them, every student must go  
9 through the application process. And the application  
10 process, basically what it is, they're interviewed by  
11 the entire staff; the student and their parents come  
12 in, they sit before a panel, very similar to this.  
13 But the entire staff is there and they interview  
14 them. We ask questions about their academic record,  
15 we ask questions about their social record, and we  
16 ask questions about their future. Because what we  
17 want to do, we want to see can we help you in terms  
18 of being successful as a high school student and then  
19 what are you going to do once you leave high school.  
20 We want to have plans for you when you leave high  
21 school.

22 One thing we do, we have a PEP, which is a  
23 Personal Educational Plan, for every student that  
24 comes to Washington Academy charter school. And what  
25 that Personal Educational Plan is, it looks at their

1 past academic history and it looks at their future  
2 and where they really want to go. And with the  
3 counselor along with teachers, along with their  
4 parents, they decide "this is the best track for you  
5 so that you can be successful here, and not only here  
6 but when you leave here." So every student has a  
7 PEP. That PEP is updated every nine weeks; they're  
8 called in to have a one-on-one meeting with our  
9 counselor and they look at the progress and look at  
10 what they're doing. Now someone always asks, "Can  
11 the student go from the high school, the traditional  
12 high school, back and forth to our place?" Yes.  
13 Every semester they have the opportunity to go back.  
14 In the five years that we've been there I think we've  
15 had two students who came over to Washington Academy  
16 charter school and decided it was not a perfect fit  
17 and they wanted to go back to the traditional high  
18 school. And so when we're asked, we say, "What do we  
19 really need to focus on?" What we really focus on  
20 was at-risk student, students who if they stay in the  
21 traditional high school would not graduate just  
22 because, number one, those who want to graduate in  
23 three years instead of four they got bored because  
24 they're ready to move on to the next phase of life.  
25 So it's not always you're at-risk because you're not

1           doing well academically; you're at-risk because  
2           you're looking for the next phase of your life. So,  
3           we have students who come over who want to go ahead  
4           and get on with the rest of their life. We had one  
5           student -- I told Dr. Hernandez this the other day --  
6           who came over; he made a 36 on the ACT score, he was  
7           missing classes because he said, "Mr. Taylor, I'm not  
8           getting it. I'm already -- I know what they're  
9           trying to teach and I need to go on and move on with  
10          my life." He came over to Washington Academy charter  
11          school, was able to graduate a year early. After he  
12          graduated he took a year and went to Australia, and  
13          then after he went to Australia he went to the  
14          University of Arkansas and he's working on a law  
15          degree right now. But if it had not been for  
16          Washington Academy charter school, as smart as he was  
17          he was at-risk because the traditional high school  
18          was just not the perfect fit for him.

19                 And then we look at the other students who come  
20                 because they need a flexible schedule. "I work; I  
21                 cannot -- I work to support my family, because I may  
22                 have one kid or two kids, and I need a flexible  
23                 schedule. Because I still know the importance of a  
24                 high school diploma, so I need something that's going  
25                 to help me." So we look at the schedule and we try

1 to make it fit for them. We have students who can  
2 continue to -- if they need to go to vocational  
3 school, because we don't have vocational classes at  
4 our place, we run a bus to the vocational school. If  
5 they want to take welding, if they want to take  
6 cosmetology, they want to take auto mechanics, they  
7 do that and then we send a bus and bring them back to  
8 our campus. And also on our campus we have marketing  
9 and DECA. Students who want to be in the marketing  
10 program and the DECA program they have that  
11 opportunity right there on our campus. Students who  
12 want to be in athletics, they have the opportunity in  
13 athletics; we take them over to athletic period at  
14 the traditional high school and then we bring them  
15 back. Anything that we do not have that the  
16 traditional high school has and they really want to  
17 be a part of, we try to make sure that they're a part  
18 of that. We don't want them to miss out just because  
19 they're at Washington Academy charter school. And we  
20 try to make sure that whatever we do is going to be  
21 successful in terms of when they leave there. We  
22 want to focus on them while they're there and then  
23 build them up and make them be successful while  
24 they're there, and also help them. We have  
25 counselors come in, those who need outside

1           counseling, because when you start talking about kids  
2           who are at-risk they're at-risk for a reason, and  
3           sometimes that reason is because of things that  
4           happened in life, whether it was at home, socially,  
5           or the environment they're in. So we have to have  
6           some outside counselors come and make sure that we  
7           are addressing that side of the student as well as  
8           the academic side of the student, as well as trying  
9           to get them to graduate.

10           And so when we look at that, this really is what  
11           I always like to do when I go and speak to people; I  
12           say, "These are some of the things that we offer at  
13           Washington Academy charter school." Do we have  
14           technology? We have a pernthium board in every  
15           classroom; we have one-on-one; we have an iPad for  
16           every student; we have three computer labs that are  
17           fully -- with 15 or 20 computers in each lab. So  
18           students have the opportunity to have technology, to  
19           use technology. But also we have the face-to-face  
20           classes where everything is not just on computers. We  
21           don't put you on a computer and let you just do your  
22           work. They have face-to-face classes, as well as  
23           computer-based classes, as well as project learning  
24           classes. So all of those things are incorporated  
25           into Washington Academy charter school. And I always



1 tell people it's really two schools in one: it's the  
2 school of those that really want to accelerate their  
3 learning and it's the school for those who are  
4 struggling and who need a special touch and they need  
5 a 10- or 12-to-1 ratio that we offer for each one of  
6 those students. So we try to make sure that all of  
7 our students, that we know them by name. And what we  
8 also require is everyone that goes to Washington  
9 Academy charter school, everyone must apply to  
10 college. Whether you intend on going or not, before  
11 you graduate you must apply to college. And, of  
12 course, in Texarkana we have Texarkana College, you  
13 have University of Arkansas in Texarkana, you have  
14 Texas A&M. And so you have to apply -- whether it's  
15 there locally, any college you have to apply before  
16 you graduate. And you will be surprised once they do  
17 that and they receive a letter back that says "you've  
18 been accepted" the mindset begins to change. And  
19 that's what we want to change; we want them to  
20 understand that everybody can be successful, whether  
21 it's college or whether you go to work. And that's  
22 the other thing; we invite them to take part in the  
23 DECA and marketing program. If you're not going to  
24 go to college, you need to apply to technical  
25 college, find you a skill, find you a job; you're

1 going to be a successful individual once you leave  
2 Washington Academy charter school.

3 And so when we started looking at that, we also  
4 want to make sure that they go off to college -- they  
5 go to college and make college visits. But they also  
6 go to the local businesses and they visit them and  
7 see what's going on behind the scenes, not just in  
8 the front office and all of those type things. And  
9 one of the things when we began to organize, because  
10 we interview the students -- I told the  
11 superintendent at that time, "Why don't we interview  
12 the teachers? Why don't we make sure that every  
13 teacher that is there, they want to be there?"  
14 Because before we became Washington Academy charter  
15 school we were Washington -- what they call 4A, and  
16 Washington 4A was alternative school that was a  
17 punitive turn school; they would sit there if you got  
18 in trouble. I said, "I don't want a school if we're  
19 going to be a charter school that you sit there  
20 because you got in trouble. I want everybody that  
21 goes there to come there because they have a  
22 particular reason for going there. And every student  
23 has to apply there; why don't we make the teachers  
24 apply also?" Because I want teachers who want to  
25 work with at-risk students. I don't want teachers

1 who just -- because nobody else wanted them so we  
2 send them to the alternative school. So every  
3 teacher that we have is a teacher who applied to go  
4 there, they sit through an interview, and they want  
5 to be there. And there's nobody on staff that's  
6 still there when I got there the very first year,  
7 because when I got there the very first year it was  
8 an alternative punitive environment and all those  
9 teachers are gone because they were sent there  
10 because the other campuses just didn't want them.  
11 But I needed teachers who wanted to work with at-risk  
12 students and understood it needed to be a different  
13 environment; we needed to be completely separate from  
14 the Arkansas High School. I did not want it to be  
15 Arkansas High East; I wanted it to be Washington  
16 Academy, something that is completely and totally  
17 different than what they had at the traditional high  
18 school. So they applied, and once they got hired we  
19 put them on an extended contract, which gave them  
20 extra pay. And instead of working seven periods a  
21 day they have eight periods a day and we pay them for  
22 their conference period; so therefore, that gives  
23 them a little bit more motivation. But with that I  
24 tell them that "you are at-risk, and at-risk means if  
25 you come to work and you don't do your job we don't

1           need you any longer." So we've got to make sure when  
2           we work with at-risk students we make sure that the  
3           teachers are prepared every single day to do your  
4           work and do your job, not three days on and two days  
5           off. And so also we put in it also with the teacher  
6           aspect of it after five years if you want to stay  
7           here you have to reapply again, because we do not  
8           want complacency. If we're going to make a  
9           difference in the lives of students who are at-risk,  
10          we have to make sure that we do it with the ones who  
11          are facilitating the learning. And if we do it with  
12          the ones that are facilitating the learning, we can  
13          make sure that we have successful students in our  
14          classrooms.

15                 So those are some of the things that we try to  
16                 do at Washington Academy charter school, and I think  
17                 for the most part we've been pretty successful with  
18                 that. In the last five years we've graduated 185  
19                 students. And what we're really looking at, we're  
20                 talking about students -- of those 185 probably 175  
21                 of those students would have never graduated in  
22                 traditional high school. And so what we're looking  
23                 at, are we increasing the graduation rate? Yes. Are  
24                 we lowering the dropout rate? Yes. And then we look  
25                 at the 185 students that graduated, and the last five

1 -- the last four years of those students that  
2 graduated we have -- those students have received  
3 \$850,000 worth of scholarship, whether it's been to  
4 college or whether it's been through the military.  
5 And so what you're really looking at -- you say,  
6 "Well, that's not a whole lot of money." It is a  
7 whole lot of money when you look at the clientele  
8 that we have are all at-risk students. They would  
9 not have made it in the regular high school setting  
10 and so, therefore, they'll be successful. And now,  
11 because they have changed their ways and changed  
12 their attitudes and changed their thoughts, they're  
13 receiving college scholarships, they're receiving  
14 military scholarships. And then we had to look at  
15 where do they go when they leave here, and we're  
16 really going to have to tweak this a little bit  
17 because what we have is every student must give a  
18 statement before they leave. Of course, we have a  
19 fall graduation and we have a spring graduation. But  
20 what they do, they tell us, "When I leave Washington  
21 Academy charter school I'm going to" -- X, Y, Z;  
22 enroll in a technical school, enroll in a two-year  
23 college, enroll in a four-year university, or go into  
24 the workforce. As we look at those numbers of the  
25 185 students, 70% of those students said they're

1 going on to college, whether it's technical school,  
2 whether it's a two-year college, or whether it's a  
3 four-year college. And then about another 17% said  
4 they're going on to the workforce, and then the other  
5 -- about another 9% said they're going into the  
6 military. So at least we know where their plans are,  
7 and so what we've got to do next is try to tweak that  
8 and see how many actually -- when we start talking  
9 about retention, actually stayed in college and  
10 remained in the college and actually received a  
11 degree. And so those are some of the things that  
12 we're really trying to look at; those are some of the  
13 things we're really focusing on. And I know  
14 sometimes we look at what do you say is success; what  
15 is success to you. Success to me is when a student  
16 comes in and they feel like they can never make it  
17 and they've been beaten down by life and then they  
18 become to have more confidence in themselves and see  
19 that I made some mistakes in my life but I can turn  
20 those things around, I can get a high school diploma,  
21 I can go and get a job, I can go and get a college  
22 degree; that is success. I know always we've got to  
23 look at what are we doing in terms of test scores.  
24 When we first went over to Washington Academy charter  
25 school there was no -- the first year there nobody

1 passed any tests; no one passed any standardized  
2 test. It was ground zero. And so now that we're  
3 moving a little bit farther and because of the  
4 population -- because most of the time when you start  
5 looking at alternative ed. students come when they're  
6 a little bit older and testing is done when they're a  
7 little bit younger. And also what has happened with  
8 us, because of our low numbers in especially 9th and  
9 10th grades, there was not really a baseline for  
10 those students because you didn't have but 15 or 20  
11 students that was tested. But we also want to look  
12 at that. Now I can say right now, as we looked at  
13 the first and -- well, actually, the third interim  
14 exam, especially for math, and you take the schools  
15 away, whether it's the traditional high school,  
16 Arkansas High, or Washington Academy, and don't put  
17 names by them, you wouldn't know which school was  
18 which. That's how good our math scores -- or how  
19 they compare to what the traditional school is doing.  
20 And then some of the -- you know, go to the  
21 principals and they're looking and say, "That's  
22 School A and School B" -- and School A and School B  
23 are pretty much the same. Because we really had our  
24 focus on making sure that we really work and making  
25 sure that the test scores are where they need to be.

1 They're not always where they need to be, but we're  
2 really working on those type things. But what we're  
3 really trying to focus on is our two main goals: to  
4 increase the graduation rate and lower the dropout  
5 rate. "Are you doing that, Mr. Taylor?" Yes, we're  
6 doing that because we're having success with the  
7 students who come to Washington Academy charter  
8 school and they're leaving there better than they  
9 were when they first got there. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Mr.  
11 Taylor. Appreciate that.

12 We will go ahead -- is there anybody here for  
13 opposition?

14 MS. BOYD: No.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So if you are  
16 comfortable we can go ahead --

17 MR. TAYLOR: I'm good.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- and proceed with  
19 questions.

20 MR. TAYLOR: Yes, ma'am.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Thank you.

22 All right. I'll start down here with Dr.  
23 Williams this time.

24 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you. A couple of  
25 things: one, you said you're an alternative school



1 for the district, but you're not really a traditional  
2 alternative school at the same time. So what is the  
3 -- where are those students that would have gone to  
4 the older school, the pre-Washington Academy? What's  
5 happened to those students?

6 And my other question is just along the lines of  
7 you have an application process. What's your  
8 acceptance rate?

9 MR. TAYLOR: Number one, students who -- the old  
10 traditional way was a punitive environment that you  
11 would sit there because you got in trouble. They had  
12 what they call ISS, then they have the next level  
13 which is Second Chance, and then they have the next  
14 level which is About Face.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: And those are in the district  
16 school?

17 MR. TAYLOR: Those are another campus. Yes.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Good deal. Good answer.

19 MR. TAYLOR: And then, what was the second  
20 question?

21 DR. WILLIAMS: You have an application process.

22 MR. TAYLOR: Application process. The only  
23 people we do not accept is if you've been expelled  
24 because of a weapon charge or something like that.  
25 Otherwise, everybody is very accepted.

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

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

3 MS. TURNER: Can you tell me a little bit -- you  
4 said that the students go take career and technical  
5 ed. Is that out of the secondary center at  
6 Texarkana?

7 MR. TAYLOR: Yes. At Texarkana Area Vocational  
8 School Center. We bus -- usually we try to work with  
9 them; they have like the first two blocks, first two  
10 periods of the day. So they start out over there and  
11 then we send a bus and pick them up and bring them  
12 back. And then on the other hand, they have some who  
13 have the classes at the end of the day; so we take a  
14 bus and take them over at the end of the day.

15 MS. TURNER: Okay. But you have the marketing  
16 program on campus?

17 MR. TAYLOR: We have marketing and DECA on  
18 campus. Yes.

19 MS. TURNER: Yeah, okay. All right. That's all  
20 I have. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Hernandez.

22 DR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Taylor.  
23 You know, I think you guys have, you know, obviously  
24 a great, great program trying to meet the needs of  
25 kids, and obviously very passionate about what you

1 do, and that came out during the visit. The only  
2 thing that I kind of have some questions on is about  
3 the graduation rate. I know in the response stuff  
4 that was given in your application, or part of it,  
5 there was kind of a response -- or question asked and  
6 it says that in '13-14 it reflects that there was a  
7 100% graduation rate, and then 16-17 that was 77%.  
8 But when I match that over to what the, you know, the  
9 ESEA report it's reflecting that it has gone from 82%  
10 down to 45%; so, one, kind of that -- those  
11 discrepancy numbers. And then, two, you know, kind  
12 of that graduation rate appears to be going down.  
13 And so what are some of the reasons for that, and  
14 what are y'all doing to address that?

15 MR. TAYLOR: Well, I think when you look at the  
16 ESEA report it's probably a little bit off because,  
17 number one, we're just now finishing the first year  
18 for cohort from the 9th grade on, for those students  
19 starting 9th grade. We're in our fifth year now, so  
20 in reality we only have one year of 9th grade cohort  
21 to even have a score for ESEA for a graduation rate.  
22 And so what we look at in terms of -- we went back  
23 and looked at how many students were eligible for  
24 graduation that year, not necessarily a cohort  
25 because we didn't have four years going backwards.

1 And then what we used was how many was eligible and  
2 then how many of those who were eligible actually  
3 graduated.

4 DR. HERNANDEZ: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And I'd had the same  
6 question but I think what you said there, it clicked.  
7 Because with the ESEA we're looking at a cohort of  
8 students that you started with that very first group  
9 who would've been eligible and took it year by year  
10 --

11 MR. TAYLOR: Right.

12 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- rather than where they  
13 would've been in that cohort, I think.

14 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I think that makes sense.

16 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: All right. Thank you.

18 MR. TAYLOR: Yes, ma'am.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

20 DR. OWOH: You mentioned the support that you  
21 provide for students who you consider to be at-risk.  
22 What type of support do you -- what training and  
23 professional development do you provide the educators  
24 so that they're prepared to meet the instructional  
25 needs of the students?

1 MR. TAYLOR: One thing that all of our staff  
2 does -- all of our staff goes to alternative -- the  
3 state alternative ed. conference, and then we have a  
4 group that goes to the national alternative ed.  
5 conference. And then myself and a couple more  
6 teachers go to the juvenile detention center  
7 conference that they have; we go to that because we  
8 want to look at it in terms of what is going on in  
9 terms of not necessarily whether it's psychological,  
10 but whether it may be physical. And then we have a  
11 counselor who's been trained in the psychological  
12 aspect of it. And what I like to do, I like to send  
13 two or three to go to training and then come back and  
14 train everyone else, rather than have to send -- but  
15 the whole staff always goes to the state conference  
16 and then we try to send -- we rotate how many we send  
17 to the national conference. But we always send a  
18 group to whether it's the JBC training or whether  
19 it's the counseling training, in terms of violent  
20 behavior or mental illness, to make sure they come  
21 back and bring it back to the group.

22 DR. OWOH: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton, questions?

24 MS. NEWTON: I certainly appreciate the  
25 information you've given and I'd like to know why

1           you're here today by yourself. You know, in the  
2           broader sense --

3           MR. TAYLOR: Well, number one, our school is our  
4           Friday --

5           MS. NEWTON: Well, wait a minute. Wait. I  
6           understand. But the broader sense I think in the  
7           question is with the level of support you get from  
8           the larger district -- Texarkana --

9           MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

10          MS. NEWTON: -- is a larger district. And I  
11          would've appreciated having some input from a level  
12          of administration to say, "Yes, this is" -- I'm not  
13          questioning your results; I think that you're doing a  
14          great job. But how -- what the impact of the  
15          conversion charter is on the greater population and  
16          whether or not you will view your school as being a  
17          productive entity. And I think that it is, but I'd  
18          like to hear -- I would've liked to have heard from  
19          the district at large, leadership, at some point.  
20          And I know school is out Friday, you know, but --

21          MR. TAYLOR: Yeah. But I think the other thing  
22          that -- I understand what you're saying. The other  
23          thing about that is they trust Terry Taylor.

24          MS. NEWTON: Oh, I could believe that. But, you  
25          know, we don't know Terry Taylor.

1 MR. TAYLOR: I understand that. And they asked,  
2 "Does anybody else need to go?" And I said, "I've  
3 got this."

4 MS. NEWTON: I think next time tell them yes.

5 MR. TAYLOR: So -- but, yeah, I understand what  
6 you're saying. I understand.

7 MS. NEWTON: And I can appreciate that. But  
8 there is a balance --

9 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

10 MS. NEWTON: -- in information that we might  
11 need from another standpoint as it reflects on the  
12 greater population of the Texarkana district and the  
13 impact that your performance or the challenges you  
14 have reflects on the district. So I think we look  
15 at, especially with conversion charters within the  
16 district, what the impact is on the greater  
17 population in the school district. So that would've  
18 been a question I could've asked someone else as  
19 opposed to asking you --

20 MR. TAYLOR: Yes, ma'am.

21 MS. NEWTON: -- and having you answer. So, but  
22 I just -- that's just a personal preference.

23 MR. TAYLOR: Yes, ma'am.

24 MR. WILSON: I take it that the traditional  
25 district, the larger Texarkana district is notified

1 of these proceedings and can appear if they wish, and  
2 silence, I guess, is approval so-to-speak. But it is  
3 interesting and I understand Ms. Newton's point; it  
4 helps when you've got your colleagues from the other  
5 traditional district supporting you.

6 I noticed in the statistical makeup of the  
7 academy there were 45 12th-grade students and one  
8 11th-grade student this year. That struck me as odd.  
9 Is there some quirk in that?

10 MR. TAYLOR: Well, most time those students came  
11 as 9th graders. What happens, in their 11th grade  
12 year basically they become 11th and 12th graders in  
13 the same year, especially those who opt for the  
14 three-year graduation instead of the four-year.  
15 Because what happens, they get double-blocked; they  
16 take 11th grade classes and 12th grade classes, so  
17 they're able to graduate one year earlier.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Other questions?

19 Mr. Taylor, I did want to ask a couple of  
20 questions on the goals that you set; it's on page 14  
21 of your application, in the chart.

22 And in your presentation you did a good job  
23 focusing in on increasing graduation rate, decreasing  
24 dropout rate, improving those assessment results  
25 along the way because that should lead to the



1 improvements all the way through. But I'm looking  
2 and you were -- where you're talking about with your  
3 increase in graduation rate, you identified 30  
4 students graduating each year.

5 MR. TAYLOR: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I'm wondering is that the  
7 -- because you're not going to know for sure how many  
8 students you're going to have. So is that the best  
9 goal to set there? And is it -- you know, could you  
10 -- are you hampering yourself from a year or three  
11 years, five years from now being able to come back  
12 and say "here's how we knew we were successful." So  
13 I guess I'm just --

14 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah. And that's possible because,  
15 for instance, just last -- two weeks ago we had our  
16 fall graduation; we only graduated nine. In the  
17 spring graduation we graduated 36, and 53 for the  
18 year. And so the numbers probably will be -- and you  
19 could be correct because we don't know; we can't  
20 never tell. Two or three years running we ran right  
21 at 125, 140. This year we're running right at 100.  
22 And so -- and of those who are eligible for  
23 graduation, as they possibly leave the high school --

24 Yes?

25 MS. BOYD: I didn't mean to cut you off. But I

1 think those are goals that we addressed in the rubric  
2 and he changed it to a percentage instead of a  
3 number.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Oh, okay.

5 MS. BOYD: I think so.

6 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So --

7 MR. TAYLOR: You're exactly right.

8 MS. BOYD: Yeah, that's what happened.

9 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So if we go to the  
11 application rubric --

12 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Let me go down  
14 here.

15 MS. BOYD: And it should be in red.

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: I see. Yeah, increase by  
17 10% each year.

18 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you there, Ms. Boyd.

19 MS. BOYD: You're welcome.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And then the  
21 decrease in the dropout rate -- all right. Then  
22 that's going to provide a little more flexibility.  
23 And it may be that you do want to revisit it at some  
24 point, but -- okay. I think that's a better deal for  
25 you.

1 MR. TAYLOR: Yes. I think so, too. Yes, ma'am.

2 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Thanks, Ms. Boyd.

3 Okay. And just something else -- and this is a  
4 thought -- you talked about having the -- I think it  
5 was the performance for individual students. What  
6 was it, the PEP, P-E-P?

7 MR. TAYLOR: P-E-P. That's our Personalized  
8 Educational Plan for every student.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: For every student. And I  
10 was just thinking, you talked about every student has  
11 to apply for a post-secondary opportunity.

12 MR. TAYLOR: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: You have students who  
14 work. So I'm assuming those are part of those  
15 updated PEPs --

16 MR. TAYLOR: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: -- since they get updated  
18 very regularly?

19 MR. TAYLOR: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: And, you know, that would  
21 be a good data source for you to be constantly  
22 monitoring and looking at the success rate of, you  
23 know, students who apply and are accepted, if they go  
24 into the military, and being able to follow them. So  
25 I would encourage you to even think more broadly

1 about your goals and really using those things that  
2 are measuring student success. So I would love to  
3 see all that updated and the PEP be brought into that  
4 in the future, because I think that speaks very  
5 loudly for success of all students and especially  
6 those who are choosing a different learning  
7 environment.

8 MR. TAYLOR: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: So, but that's all of the  
10 questions that I have.

11 Are there any other questions or discussion  
12 among Panel Members?

13 Okay. So, Ms. Davis, was there anything for us  
14 to review in terms of the --

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

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No?

17 MS. DAVIS: No.

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: No waiver action. Okay.

19 Ms. Boyd, do you have any --

20 MS. BOYD: No, ma'am.

21 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Nothing additional to  
22 address. Okay.

23 So it looks like at this time we are ready to  
24 accept a motion on this renewal request.

25 DR. HERNANDEZ: I make a motion to approve the

1 renewal of the Washington Academy charter.

2 MR. WILSON: Second.

3 MS. NEWTON: Second.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. I have a motion  
5 from Dr. Hernandez and a second -- I think maybe Mr.  
6 Wilson beat Ms. Newton to the punch a little bit  
7 there. So, a motion and a second to approve the  
8 renewal.

9 All those in favor say "aye."

10 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

11 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Any opposed?

12 Okay. Mr. Taylor, congratulations on the  
13 renewal. And I'll ask the Panel Members to complete  
14 our form and we'll give you some feedback in just a  
15 moment.

16 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you all.

17 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

18 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. We're going to go  
19 through our voting reasons here, and we'll start with  
20 Dr. Hernandez.

21 DR. HERNANDEZ: I made the motion. Washington  
22 Academy provides an avenue for a high-performing  
23 instruction for students to obtain personalized  
24 learning.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Newton.

1 MS. NEWTON: I voted for the motion. With the  
2 explanation, this charter meets the needs of a  
3 population that would not successfully complete high  
4 school.

5 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Owoh.

6 DR. OWOH: I voted for the motion. Washington  
7 Academy provides an instructional environment that  
8 addresses both the academic and social needs of a  
9 particular community of students within the school  
10 district. I also noted that it was positive to hear  
11 about the professional learning opportunities  
12 provided to the education staff.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Ms. Turner.

14 MS. TURNER: I voted for the motion. This  
15 school is providing options to students to graduate  
16 from high school and become successful.

17 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Dr. Williams.

18 DR. WILLIAMS: I voted for the motion.  
19 Washington Academy is meeting the needs of students  
20 by developing a personalized education plan for each  
21 student and by offering early graduation and credit  
22 recovery in a small school environment.

23 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Mr. Wilson.

24 MR. WILSON: I voted for the motion. I  
25 appreciate the proven performance of the academy,

1 Washington Academy. And I'm trying to figure out  
2 some way we can clone Mr. Taylor and get some more  
3 principals around like him. Good work.

4 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you, Panel.

5 And, Mr. Taylor, thank you for being here and we  
6 wish you safe travels and a Merry Christmas.

7 And also I do want to say that this is the  
8 second time this week that we've heard good things  
9 from the Texarkana School District. They had the  
10 opportunity I believe on Monday to be in front of the  
11 Joint Education Committee, talking about a grant  
12 their district had received. And so the district  
13 really is committed to looking at how they provide  
14 opportunities for all their students. So I commend  
15 them for their support for your program and we look  
16 forward to hearing more from you and from the  
17 district.

18 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you all.

19 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Thank you.

20 So, Ms. Boyd, do we have any additional things  
21 that we need to consider or discuss today?

22 MS. BOYD: No, ma'am. Not today. We'll meet  
23 again at 8:30 tomorrow for the open-enrollment  
24 renewal applications.

25 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And I do want to

1 say thank you to you and to all of our team who's  
2 here today. It makes a big difference knowing that  
3 you all are here and we appreciate all the work that  
4 gets done in advance. I know I probably don't think  
5 about always saying that, but we do know and  
6 appreciate it. So, thank you all.

7 MS. BOYD: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. And so we're  
9 adjourned until tomorrow morning at 8:30. I guess we  
10 need a motion to adjourn.

11 DR. HERNANDEZ: So moved.

12 DR. OWOH: Second.

13 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. So moved, seconded.  
14 All those in favor?

15 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

16 CHAIRPERSON PFEFFER: Okay. Now we're  
17 adjourned.

18

19

20 (The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.)

21

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25



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

STATE OF ARKANSAS    )  
                                   ) ss.  
 COUNTY OF SALINE     )

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas State Department of Education, Charter Authorizing Panel, in Little Rock, Arkansas, on December 20, 2017, that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

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

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

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: January 5, 2018.

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

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