

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

August 17, 2016

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BEFORE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER AUTHORIZING PANEL

AUGUST 17, 2016
8:30 a.m.

A P P E A R A N C E S

PANEL MEMBERS:

MS. DEBORAH COFFMAN	Chairman/Chief of Staff
DR. MARK GOTCHER	Vice Chair/Deputy Commissioner
MS. IVY PFEFFER	Asst. Commissioner - HR/Educator Effectiveness & Licensure
DR. ERIC SAUNDERS	Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal & Administrative Services
MR. GREG ROGERS	Asst. Commissioner - Fiscal & Admin. Services
MS. JENNIFER LIWO	PLSB Attorney
MR. BOBBY LESTER	Director of Federal Programs
MS. STACY SMITH	Interim Asst. Commissioner of Learning Services

ALSO APPEARING:

MS. ALEXANDRA BOYD	Public School Program Coordinator
MS. KELLY McLAUGHLIN	Public School Program Advisor

ADE LEGAL COUNSEL:

MS. JENNIFER DAVIS	ADE Deputy General Counsel
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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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E X H I B I T S

A-1: CLASSICAL ACADEMY

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Good morning. We'll call the meeting to order for the Charter Authorizing Panel meeting of August 17, 2016. I'll ask that everyone in the audience please silence all of your electronic devices.

The Charter Authorizing Panel oversees the authorization, renewal, revision, and revocation of charters. The Arkansas Quality Charter Schools Act of 2013 requires Commissioner Key to appoint ADE staff to the Panel, and that Panel sits before you today. Our goal is to facilitate a fair and responsible hearing, so we will request that each person speaking speak directly into the microphone; state your name and your title for the record. I'll ask that you continue to speak clearly into the microphone for the benefit of the Panel, the audience, the viewing audience. We do have a number of people that watch this via livestreaming and the meeting is recorded, so please speak clearly into the microphone. Our court reporter, Ms. Sharon Hill, will be providing a transcript of the meeting and it will be posted to the ADE website.

CHAIR'S REPORT

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: The first order, item, is

1 the Chair's Report, and I have no report. Does
2 anyone on the Panel have a report?

3 Seeing none, we'll move on to the Consent
4 Agenda.

5 CONSENT AGENDA

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We have the minutes of the
7 May 18th meeting before you. And I'll accept a
8 motion.

9 MS. PFEFFER: Move to approve the minutes.

10 MR. ROGERS: Second.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: A little louder for the --

12 MR. ROGERS: Second.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeiffer has made a
14 motion, seconded by Mr. Rogers to approve the
15 minutes. Any discussion?

16 All those in favor?

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Minutes are approved.

19 A-1: HEARING OF OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
20 APPLICATION: CLASSICAL ACADEMY OF FAYETTEVILLE -- FAYETTEVILLE
21 OR FARMINGTON, ARKANSAS

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Action item 1, Ms. Boyd,
23 you're recognized.

24 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. For our
25 first action item today we have an open-enrollment

1 charter school application to be in either the
2 Fayetteville or the Farmington School District.

3 Before we get started with the application
4 hearing, would you like to hear the procedures?

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes.

6 MS. BOYD: Okay. We'll have Jennifer Davis to
7 go over those for you.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Davis, you're
9 recognized.

10 MS. DAVIS: Hi, good morning; Jennifer Davis,
11 Staff Attorney with the Department. The procedures
12 you're going to follow today will be all persons
13 wishing to provide testimony to you will need to be
14 sworn in, with the exception of attorneys. The open-
15 enrollment charter applicant will have 20 minutes to
16 present its case to you for approval. Parties in
17 opposition will also have 20 minutes, following by 5
18 minutes for the applicant to respond. After that you
19 may begin your question and answer session, and then
20 you can either make your final decision today or take
21 it under advisement. If you make it today, you do
22 have a Google doc that you can record your reasoning
23 for your vote. Also, one thing to remind is that a
24 charter is a contract, so this is going to be a
25 negotiation process and anything that the applicant

1 agrees to today that may differ from any paperwork
2 that they've previously submitted or submitted today
3 will become part of any charter that you do grant.
4 Any questions?

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you, Ms. Davis.

6 Ms. Boyd.

7 MS. BOYD: All right. To start off the
8 presentation for the Fayetteville Classical Academy
9 application we have Dr. Mary Ann Duncan, who serves
10 as the superintendent of ResponsiveEd schools here in
11 the state of Arkansas.

12 DR. DUNCAN: Do I need to be sworn in?

13 MS. BOYD: Are you going to swear them in?

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I was trying to get my
15 phone out for my timer.

16 All right. If all representatives from the
17 Classical Academy of Fayetteville and anyone speaking
18 in opposition will please stand, raise your right
19 hand to receive the oath. Do you swear or affirm
20 that the testimony you're about to give shall be the
21 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

22 (ALL WITNESSES ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY)

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Dr. Duncan,
24 you're recognized.

25 DR. DUNCAN: Thank you. Good morning, Panel.

1 We appreciate your time today, and thank you for
2 consideration of this application. I'd like to
3 introduce the staff that are representing
4 ResponsiveEd today. We have Mr. Ken Harp, director
5 of Finance; Dr. Steve Bourgeois, executive director
6 of Research, Evaluation and Instruction; Steve Gast,
7 executive director of School Operations; Glenda
8 Simons, executive director of Academics; John
9 Thorburn, director of K-12 ELA and Foreign Language;
10 Curtis Shack, Arkansas director of Operations and
11 eSchool Arkansas; Katie Stephens, Arkansas Accounting
12 manager; Rhonda Bradford, Arkansas Federal Finance
13 coordinator; Susan Provenza, headmistress of the
14 Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy; and Marla
15 Pearson, Arkansas Special Populations coordinator.

16 Please go ahead.

17 So in an outline of our presentation today we'll
18 be talking about the need, our mission, the
19 theoretical grounding for classical education, and
20 distinctives of the program itself.

21 In looking at the need, the Fayetteville area is
22 one of the fastest growing cities in Arkansas.
23 Between 2010 and 2015, 12.6% growth was shown both in
24 the city and the district. You can see reflective
25 here that that's also reflective of the sizes of the

1 schools in that area. Though information has
2 previously been included in the application, we're
3 including here today the free and reduced lunch
4 information from Fayetteville, Farmington and
5 contiguous districts for your review. You can see
6 that Fayetteville is at 39, above 39% free and
7 reduced, and Farmington at 38, above 38. Also for
8 your review today, we've included the ethnicity of
9 the contiguous districts to the Fayetteville area.
10 You can see reflective here are the contiguous
11 ethnicities of Fayetteville and Farmington.

12 The mission of Fayetteville Classical Academy is
13 to provide a well-rounded and distinctly 21st century
14 classical education that promotes intellectual
15 curiosity, critical thinking, and virtue, preparing
16 students to make a meaningful contribution in a free
17 society.

18 And at this point in time I'd like to turn the
19 program over to Dr. Steve Bourgeois.

20 DR. BOURGEOIS: Good morning. I'm going to be
21 talking about the theory behind the school initially
22 and then highlight four distinctives of our model.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Bourgeois, if you'll
24 give your name and title.

25 DR. BOURGEOIS: Of course. My name is Steve

1 Bourgeois, director -- I'm sorry -- executive
2 director of Research, Evaluation and Instruction at
3 ResponsiveEd. I forgot the Doctor there.

4 The theory behind our school, the theoretical
5 grounding, we have a motivational approach that is
6 supported by research and I'm citing a study by
7 Godfrey and Godfrey in 1996 that shows that academic
8 motivation decreases from grades 3 through 8, and
9 there's a body of research to support that students
10 lose motivation the longer that they are in school.
11 And the theory that we are using for this model is
12 self-determination theory and it represents a
13 framework for everything that we're doing. And I
14 hope by the end of the presentation you'll see how
15 our program aligns with the theory. It's a
16 metatheory of human motivation applying across
17 domains for all students. It views individuals as
18 naturally inclined to engage and understand their
19 environment, meaning students, and everyone is
20 hardwired to learn; however, social factors, such as
21 schooling and parenting, can either foster or
22 undermine that motivation. The theory has three
23 basic psychological needs that include autonomy,
24 competence, and relatedness -- and at the end of the
25 presentation I'll refer back to those to tie together

1 how our program aligns with those three aspects. To
2 the extent that these needs are met, individuals
3 experience optimal performance and intrinsic
4 motivation. And our approach to this program is that
5 we want to promote autonomous intrinsic motivation
6 and self-regulated learning. We do assess our
7 students in motivation, specifically in self-
8 regulated learning, and in cognitive engagement, and
9 we do that at all of our campuses. And we're
10 interested not only in the motivation of our students
11 but the quality of that motivation. And I'm going to
12 stay on this slide a little longer.

13 There is also research to support that intrinsic
14 motivation aligns with academic achievement.
15 Students who are intrinsically motivated exhibit a
16 desire for challenge, our likely to demonstrate
17 exploration and creativity. They can also sustain
18 attention on tasks which does result in increased
19 academic achievement. At ResponsiveEd we do have
20 students and campuses from low socioeconomic
21 backgrounds who have performed quite well using our
22 classical model that I'll be referencing today.
23 Specifically, I'm citing a campus in south Dallas,
24 called Clay Classical Academy, again, located in
25 south Dallas; approximately 88% economically

1 disadvantaged, 62% African American, 33% Hispanic.
2 And these students, in our most recent state
3 assessment, demonstrated 80% passing for all tests,
4 which is quite extraordinary.

5 Next slide please.

6 I'm going to be talking about four separate
7 distinctives of this program. The first is a 21st
8 century approach to classical education. So we're
9 seeking to balance a classical foundation with a
10 technology friendly environment, and we believe this
11 is a unique combination.

12 First, the 21st century elements, we anticipate
13 having a ratio of 1 to 2 for Chromebooks. So our
14 program will include technology from the beginning.
15 As we do with all of our campuses, we will use the
16 NWEA MAP assessment, which is a computer-adaptive
17 assessment; I'm sure the Panel is familiar with that.
18 We also use MAP as an alternative metric in our goals
19 and we're aware of the ACT Aspire MAP linking study
20 and we have set our goals in relation to state
21 testing results above the state average but also with
22 respect to MAP. And I would say that these were
23 conservative goals in light of this linking study and
24 also in light of the changing of the Arkansas
25 assessment in recent years. However, our primary use

1 of MAP is not to predict accountability but to
2 predict learning and to insure growth of our
3 students. And so we are using MAP not just as a
4 policy decision-maker, but to get to the campuses and
5 inform instruction.

6 We have blended learning elements. It says up
7 there "options," but they're really elements to our
8 program that are embedded. It is a teacher-centered
9 approach; it is not a mastery-based approach.
10 However, we have supplemental online curriculum,
11 particularly in the area of math, and we've used
12 programs such as Math Buddies and DreamBox and we're
13 always evaluating the effect of these programs.

14 I'll be talking later and more specifically
15 about our high school program, but we do have a STEM
16 track in addition to humanities for our high school
17 students.

18 Project-based learning will be embedded, again,
19 in the program, particularly in the middle years, in
20 science and then across subjects in high school. And
21 I'm going to stay on this slide for a little bit
22 more.

23 We do have classical elements as well, combined
24 with these 21st century ideas. Latin is foundational
25 to our program. In the elementary level we will

1 offer English from the roots up; middle school, an
2 exploratory course called Lively Latin, grades 6
3 through 8; and then in high school students may
4 continue Latin or we'll offer modern languages as
5 well. And we're citing research to show that
6 students who study Latin, particularly for four
7 years, tend to do better than other groups on the SAT
8 assessment.

9 We take a historical approach to our subjects.
10 We take pains to be interdisciplinary by design. For
11 example, in science, we teach science historically;
12 we examine how theory, hypothesis, empirical
13 investigation lead to refined findings, new theory
14 and subsequent investigation. So that is a
15 historical process that would transcend disciplines.

16 We require humanities in 6th and 7th grade; it's
17 really a core course for us, not by Arkansas
18 standards but it is one of our central courses that
19 all students will take. And we anticipate creating a
20 parallel course at the high school level, and we will
21 offer logic to 9th graders.

22 Next slide please.

23 The second distinctive is our integrated
24 language arts program. Many elements are traditional
25 classical elements, including explicit phonics, a

1 classical canon which consists of unabridged works
2 recognized and of established value. Students will
3 be doing transcriptions, narration, recitation from
4 seminal works such as the Preamble to the U.S.
5 constitution. We teach grammar in context. And a
6 little bit more detail on this middle school
7 humanities course -- we've identified seven strands
8 of humanities through which students study different
9 historical periods, including philosophy, literature,
10 art, music, architecture, religion and technology,
11 and this approach goes throughout these historical
12 units. And, finally, in the center is the Socratic
13 method; that is not a freestanding course but it's a
14 methodology that we use throughout the program.

15 Next slide please.

16 The third distinctive relates to our high school
17 program. And as I mentioned earlier, we anticipate
18 two tracks for our high school students, including
19 STEM and humanities; so the 9th graders would make
20 this choice. We will offer a range of advanced
21 placement courses, and I know we have detailed those
22 in our response. We will offer early college
23 courses, anticipate using the Arkansas Virtual and
24 also other options for these dual enrollment courses.
25 Our seniors in high school will take part in a

1 project or a thesis comparable to the Capstone
2 program of the College Board, though in the 12th
3 grade rather than the 10th or 11th, which is the
4 College Board's policy, which is an excellent
5 program. You must take at least two advanced
6 placement courses and then you do a project that ties
7 them together.

8 Regarding our application and outstanding
9 issues, I thought this would be a good moment to
10 mention for the record that we will be seeking course
11 approval for all that are listed, including AP
12 English, composition, AP literature, logic, and
13 Acting I, and computer science has been selected as
14 the additional needed math course.

15 Next slide please.

16 Our fourth and final distinctive is a smaller
17 public school environment. In year one we anticipate
18 a capacity of 264 students, and our vision is that
19 eventually parents would be able to drop off all of
20 their students at a single school from K through 12
21 rather than splitting families at multiple campuses.
22 Our motto is "small by design. And so our students
23 will not fall through the cracks, our high-performing
24 and low-performing we will be able to monitor them.
25 And it's an environment where teachers and

1 administrators know students and parents. And we
2 feel that this small environment is conducive to
3 meeting the needs of academically gifted students,
4 artistically gifted students, and also struggling
5 students.

6 Next slide please.

7 We talk a lot about teaching character and I
8 think character is embedded in our program. I do
9 like the quote in the box by McNeil, "Measurable
10 outcomes may be the least significant results of
11 learning," and another way to put that is that many
12 aspects of our program resist measurement and cannot
13 be confined to a bubble on a state assessment. And
14 you see listed to the left things that are difficult
15 to measure but these are unstated goals. We want our
16 students to motivate themselves, to appreciate
17 literature, connect the disciplines, develop new
18 interests, develop esthetic understanding, cultivate
19 a sense of wonder, to write well, to substantiate
20 their opinions, build self-confidence, and foster a
21 love of learning.

22 So going back to the theory behind our program
23 and the elements of self-determination theory, which
24 were autonomy, competence and relatedness -- autonomy
25 is supported by a range of choices students have

1 throughout the program. We foster student leadership
2 and a mentor disciplinary approach. So when a
3 student has a course, that material and that time
4 spent is recognized after they shuffle them up and
5 put them in a different classroom. Competence is
6 insured by a range of formative assessments,
7 including the MAP assessment. And our program is
8 rigorous, and optimal challenge is another predictor
9 of intrinsic motivation. And, finally, our small
10 environment would foster relatedness and all together
11 this is a program designed to support intrinsic
12 motivation and a love of learning.

13 I'm going to bring back Dr. Duncan, but I want
14 to give an example of what she's about to talk about
15 in a quote by Martin Buber. I've taught high school
16 for about 25 years; I may not look it. Twenty-five
17 years is a long time and I've had a lot of students
18 right in front of me. And what I thought when I was
19 teaching, when I had a 14-year old, I wondered about
20 them and I thought, I'm actually teaching that 14-
21 year old now and a 30-year old down the road. And so
22 we're taking a long-term approach to these students
23 and I think that would be the distinctive of our
24 program. And I'll bring back Dr. Duncan.

25 DR. DUNCAN: So in piggy-backing off Dr.

1 Bourgeois' statements, you can see that we are
2 looking at the long-term view, which is part of what
3 a classical education provides and is assisting to
4 provide at our northwest Arkansas Classical Academy.
5 "Education worthy of the name is essentially
6 education of character. For genuine -- for the
7 genuine educator does not merely consider individual
8 functions of his pupil, as one intending to teach him
9 only to know or to be capable of certain definite
10 things; but his concern is always the person as a
11 whole, both in the actuality in which he lives before
12 you now and in the possibilities of what he can
13 become." Martin Buber, 1947.

14 You have before you today a list of waivers,
15 some of which we're requesting to be rescinded.
16 You'll find those on the last page of the waiver
17 section. We'll be glad to answer any questions
18 regarding that. But essentially we would like to
19 provide an additional Classical Academy to parents
20 and students within the areas we've requested.

21 And with that, I'd like to turn it back over to
22 the Panel.

23 May I also have Tripp Walter speak at this time
24 to that? He's representing us today for that.

25 MR. WALTER: Morning, Madam Chair, Members of

1 the Panel. Tripp Walter, Staff Attorney, Arkansas
2 Public School Resource Center. I just wanted to
3 follow-up on what Dr. Duncan said about the waiver
4 list, and especially one point at this time. You'll
5 see that there are still a couple of places on that
6 list where there were blanket requests made for all
7 other applicable rules or statutes in a particular
8 area. If you'd please disregard those. So in other
9 words, the only things that are being requested as
10 far as waivers are the things that are stated on the
11 list. Those particular statutes and rules are stated
12 on the list and the blanket so-to-speak waivers are
13 being removed. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Is there anyone here to
15 speak in opposition?

16 MS. BOYD: (Shaking head from side to side.)

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Duncan, you have 5
18 additional minutes and two remaining from your first
19 20.

20 DR. DUNCAN: I know the board has several
21 questions, and so I'll be brief. I understand that
22 you have great concern and you have a great
23 responsibility before you today, and I take that very
24 seriously. But I do want you to know particularly in
25 the last six months since I've come onboard we've

1 worked very, very diligently at forming an Arkansas
2 ResponsiveEd presence. Our new Arkansas ResponsiveEd
3 district office will be open on Hardin Road later
4 this month. We are just awaiting furniture, which is
5 somewhat backlogged at this point in time. You can
6 see on the ground we are definitely gleaning folks
7 that are steeped in Arkansas standards, Arkansas
8 processes, and Arkansas curriculum and expectations,
9 and we will continue to do so. So I just want you to
10 know that we have worked very diligently to support
11 any additional schools that we bring on underneath
12 the ResponsiveEd umbrella.

13 And at this point in time I'll turn it back to
14 the Panel.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you, Dr. Duncan.

16 All right, Panel. Who would like to start? Ms.
17 Smith.

18 MS. SMITH: Okay. I guess my concern today is
19 it wasn't too long ago that this Panel heard from
20 ResponsiveEd pertaining to Quest in Pine Bluff and
21 also Premier-Little Rock, who are ResponsiveEd
22 schools who are struggling. When I pulled up the
23 four ResponsiveEd schools -- are there four?

24 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, ma'am.

25 MS. SMITH: There are four in the state right

1 now. When I pulled up the four ResponsiveEd schools
2 that are currently in the state and just looked at
3 your report card and looked at that -- the graph on
4 the last page where it compares you to students who
5 are like your students' poverty rate, three of the
6 four schools were performing under what other schools
7 that had that same poverty rate were performing. And
8 so I guess my concern today is I know that we allowed
9 you guys to continue with Quest in Pine Bluff and
10 Premier and to continue the work there, and we
11 haven't had a chance to see -- I mean, there hasn't
12 been time yet -- I mean, I don't want to say you
13 haven't done it yet, but there hasn't been time yet;
14 school is just now starting. So I guess my concern
15 right now is opening a fifth school under
16 ResponsiveEd when we have a couple under ResponsiveEd
17 right now that are struggling significantly. And how
18 are we going to support the opening of a new school
19 and support -- I mean, because I was one of the
20 people when you were here before with the Quest, I
21 was excited about the changes that were being made
22 and the vision in which you guys were going and
23 recognizing that there was still a lot of work to be
24 done. And so I guess my concern right now is we have
25 yet to do that work. I mean, you're in the middle of

1 it right now and that work is beginning, and then
2 just the idea of opening another school. So those
3 are my concerns right now.

4 DR. DUNCAN: Okay. If I may speak to that, and
5 then I'll turn it over to Dr. Bourgeois to speak to
6 that also. We have worked very diligently in the
7 last several months since we came here with Pine
8 Bluff. We've done extensive professional
9 development. We have also ordered and received
10 additional technology on campus on the ground level.
11 The internet strength in the facility that we're in
12 currently, in Pine Bluff, was greatly strengthened
13 over the summer to provide additional support for the
14 technology that we ordered. We also have permission
15 and are seeking a curriculum person to work on the
16 ground specifically with that campus full-time to
17 support all areas of the curriculum; not must math,
18 not just reading, but all areas. In addition, our
19 campus director from Clay Academy in Dallas, which
20 works with a very similar population, and has also
21 been very successful with that population in turning
22 that school around, has provided additional
23 professional development on the ground at Quest-Pine
24 Bluff. For Premier, we are working with that
25 population diligently. In the first two years we did

1 have a lot of staff turnover; that has greatly
2 dropped for this coming yet, which we feel is a plus.
3 Premier traditionally has many students that rotate
4 in and out the door on a revolving basis, as we
5 sometimes see with students that come to a different
6 environment, though we work diligently. The campus
7 director there has formed clubs on campus, is working
8 very well with Arkansas Baptist College to utilize
9 areas and spaces to have those club meetings; has
10 been very innovative. We think the support we are
11 now starting to see on the ground level at Premier
12 will make a difference. And we, like every district
13 in the state, are looking at the ACT Aspire scores
14 and looking at the link to MAP, and we'll utilize
15 that and continue to utilize that with all of our
16 schools. We're looking specifically at a classical
17 model because we've had great success with the
18 classical model and there's great interest in that.
19 So that's why we're looking at providing that for
20 that area of the state.

21 Dr. Bourgeois, do you have additional comments?

22 DR. BOURGEOIS: Thank you. Rather than speaking
23 about the data of the four campuses -- and I do think
24 that northwest Arkansas is the closest to this model
25 and that's what we've been preparing. However, as a

1 support from the district, we do have a new structure
2 that's in place where we're looking at specific
3 content areas. So we're hiring content directors
4 from K through 12 in math and language arts and
5 social studies and in science that will be supporting
6 our schools in Texas and Arkansas, and so we have the
7 capacity to look carefully and to get to the campuses
8 with people who are expert in that field. I know
9 it's a big development and very different than what
10 we've had in the past; I think that will bear fruit.
11 It's difficult to predict to the state assessment but
12 I know we're taking all of the steps necessary
13 through formative assessments three times during the
14 year and we're very confident that we're starting to
15 see gains, even on the campuses that you mentioned.

16 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any follow-up?

17 DR. SAUNDERS: I will follow-up on that.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

19 DR. SAUNDERS: Yeah. To follow-up on that one,
20 in particular, I know you referenced the Academy,
21 Clay Classical Academy in south Dallas. Are there
22 any other classical academies under the umbrella?

23 DR. BOURGEOIS: We have seven classical
24 academies, all in north Texas. Well, actually, one
25 in Tyler and the others are in north Texas.

1 DR. DUNCAN: There's about 27.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: Do you have the results of those
3 available on their performance?

4 DR. BOURGEOIS: Across the board, we can grab
5 those, I think.

6 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

7 DR. BOURGEOIS: Yeah.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

9 MS. PFEFFER: Good morning. Dr. Bourgeois, I
10 think this question is for you and I just want to
11 make sure -- when I looked at the summary, if I can
12 find the right -- the number you said -- I think you
13 said 264 for your first year, but that doesn't match
14 what was in the summary. So I just want to go back
15 and verify your enrollment numbers that you would be
16 requesting.

17 DR. DUNCAN: Certainly. So with charters a lot
18 of what guides our enrollment the first, second and
19 contiguous years are the facilities available. When
20 we first submitted the application, the facility that
21 we were looking at diligently at that time, in
22 Fayetteville, was much smaller, and that guides our
23 growth. Because we start small and we grow small, we
24 grow methodically. And so the numbers represented in
25 the additional information that came out of requests

1 from the internal committee are based on the
2 Fayetteville -- excuse me -- on the Farmington
3 location, which is larger than the location we
4 originally found in Fayetteville. It was very
5 difficult to work with the landlords so far in
6 advance with the Fayetteville location. That's
7 something that I'm sure other charters in the state
8 are facing. We submitted an application in April;
9 that's 16 months from when we want to open school in
10 August.

11 MS. PFEFFER: Okay.

12 DR. DUNCAN: And so a lot of what guides the
13 numbers are the facilities available. You also
14 mentioned, Mr. Saunders, about -- Dr. Saunders, about
15 the test scores. Glenda Simons, our educational
16 director, stated that those schools met standard, the
17 classicals you're talking about. And she'll be glad
18 to speak with that, if you'd like further
19 documentation or information.

20 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. But to follow-up on mine,
21 where can I find your requested enrollment? Because
22 the numbers I'm looking at are starting in 17-18, a
23 maximum enrollment of 147 in grades K-5, then moving
24 to K-6-7, and in 21-22 a maximum enrollment of 247.
25 Have you sent an update on your enrollment request?

1 Because I can't find it in my packet.

2 DR. DUNCAN: So the maximum for the school is
3 688. That maximum has never changed. What guides
4 the growth for and towards that maximum is the
5 facilities issue. What we did submit is with the
6 amended budget with the facilities. We also
7 submitted the first two amended student numbers. So
8 for budget -- for the budget for year-one for the
9 Farmington facility, it's listed as 264 under that
10 budget; for year-two, it's 318. So you can see that
11 we did submit an update per that facility. We have
12 never changed our maximum request of 688 at the max
13 K-12; however, that will not occur until well into
14 our renewal. So that will be well down the road for
15 us.

16 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. Can I go ahead and ask a
17 couple more?

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: (Nodding head up and
19 down.)

20 MS. PFEFFER: All right. So, and if somebody on
21 the Panel can point me to that so I can look at the
22 numbers, I'm just not seeing that.

23 MS. BOYD: Ms. Pfeffer, it's in the original
24 application on the first page.

25 MS. PFEFFER: Okay.

1 MS. BOYD: Yes. Sorry about that.

2 MS. PFEFFER: I'll look at that in a minute. So
3 a couple of other questions I have, one had to do
4 with some information regarding your career ed.
5 courses. And I want to be mindful that as we review
6 applications and make decisions that we try to
7 involve Career Ed., so I had asked Ms. Boyd to see if
8 Career Ed. could be here. But on your -- let me find
9 which document it's in. In one of your documents --
10 I think it was where you list out your schedule --
11 you talk about exploring resources available to
12 curate a comprehensive program for future
13 ResponsiveEd students. So I was wondering what kind
14 of progress towards these comprehensive pathways that
15 you've made. And you indicate that you'll offer the
16 required pathways, so I was just going to get some
17 information on what those would look like and then
18 see if Career Ed. had any concerns that we might need
19 to consider.

20 DR. BOURGEOIS: This is a situation where we're
21 growing into the grades where it would be applicable,
22 but certainly we want to coordinate with the
23 community and find out the resources available at
24 that time, particularly for internships. And we've
25 modeled that elsewhere, but we need to look at the

1 community and the resources available.

2 MS. PFEFFER: So at this -- and I understand
3 that you will be implementing grades.

4 DR. BOURGEOIS: Right.

5 MS. PFEFFER: So, you know, looking at -- I'm
6 not sure now on your timeline of what grades you're
7 implementing and when. But, you know, it would be
8 two or three years before you would have --

9 DR. BOURGEOIS: Exactly.

10 MS. PFEFFER: -- the high school grades where
11 you would have these courses. But I think for me
12 it's still important to know now what your plans are
13 in terms of what kind of career pathways would be
14 considered. And so -- but you've not determined
15 those yet?

16 DR. BOURGEOIS: No. I would suggest that they
17 would parallel our high school tracks so that the
18 STEM -- it would be STEM heavy. And then also in the
19 arts, probably digital aspects of the arts would make
20 sense. We're going to make it tie-in to our academic
21 program.

22 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. So, Ms. Boyd, did you say
23 someone from Career Ed. is here?

24 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am. Kathy Turner is here.

25 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. So maybe my next question

1 might be for Ms. Turner.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Turner, were you sworn
3 in?

4 MS. TURNER: No.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: If you'll raise your right
6 hand and let me find my notes. Do you swear or
7 affirm that the testimony you're about to give shall
8 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
9 truth?

10 MS. TURNER: I do.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

12 MS. PFEFFER: Good morning.

13 MS. TURNER: Good morning.

14 MS. PFEFFER: So just in looking at this, I
15 don't know whether or not you all have had an
16 opportunity to work with this proposed school or --
17 and if you've not, what are maybe some thoughts or
18 considerations that might need to be put out there or
19 concerns that might need to be addressed in thinking
20 of a school that would open and implement things in
21 the next few years.

22 MS. TURNER: We have not had the opportunity to
23 even look at this. I wasn't aware until late
24 yesterday afternoon, and I apologize for that;
25 perhaps I should've been. I do have concerns as long

1 as -- because of the general field that we're in in
2 Arkansas now and how we want to be sure that
3 everything we provide students leads to some type of
4 career pathway for students to be able to reach their
5 goals, we all want to plan and prepare for jobs in
6 the future. So I've just not had time to look at
7 this, and I apologize for that.

8 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. And I just think my concern
9 was whether or not you all were even aware of this,
10 so -- and I guess just a general comment, I think I'm
11 always concerned when there's a proposal and in the
12 proposal -- you know -- yes, you do say that you will
13 comply with Arkansas standards associated with CTE,
14 so I know that that promise is there. But without
15 having a concerted plan I just worry will we have to
16 come back in the future and check to see are things
17 being done and where are we going to be, and the fact
18 that maybe conversations hadn't started yet with such
19 a focus now on making sure students are prepared for
20 a career pathway. I see so many opportunities here
21 and I just -- it would -- I would feel much better if
22 the school had already reached out to Career Ed. and
23 already initiated conversations so that today we felt
24 more comfortable that a partnership had already been
25 formed and over the next few years there were going

1 to be some really great things evolve for these kids
2 in addition to the current vision that's there. So
3 that's -- I'll just stop there with my comments.

4 MS. SMITH: Well, and we may want ResponsiveEd
5 to just kind of jump up here for a second. Because
6 on page 9 -- well, my page 9, when the question was
7 asked to the charter, "Explain how the charter will
8 provide career education courses," it says in a
9 response from ResponsiveEd, "The director of CTE is
10 currently in the process of exploring ACE resources
11 in an effort to curate a comprehensive program for
12 future ResponsiveEd students." So that, to me,
13 sounds like there has been collaboration. And so has
14 there been or has there not been? I guess I'm
15 confused there.

16 DR. DUNCAN: So we've looked at exploring
17 internally. We have not reached out to the career
18 technical department, but we'll be more than glad to
19 do that. You know, a lot that drives is the
20 location, where we'll be located, and what students
21 are interested in that area and what's available for
22 internships and what's available for workforce
23 readiness. But we will be more than, you know, happy
24 to work collaboratively to provide that. That's at
25 least five years down the road.

1 MS. SMITH: Okay. And so when I was saying the
2 director of CTE, that was your director?

3 DR. DUNCAN: It was our internal director.

4 MS. SMITH: Okay.

5 DR. DUNCAN: Correct. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So, Dr. Duncan, before you
7 leave the microphone, just to clarify, you have or
8 have not secured a facility in Farmington?

9 DR. DUNCAN: Today, we have a facility in
10 Farmington.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay.

12 DR. DUNCAN: That is what we have before you
13 today, because that is an actuality. Trying to tie
14 up the lease in finality in Fayetteville that far out
15 was a great struggle with the original facility we
16 submitted.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And fell through?

18 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, ma'am. Making that work would
19 be very difficult at this point in time.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Some on this side,
21 any questions?

22 DR. GOTCHER: I do.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

24 DR. GOTCHER: Good morning. I think, Dr.
25 Bourgeois, you might be best to, since this was part

1 of your presentation. One of the things I look at as
2 a panel member is just the expansive opportunities
3 for pupils and parents when we review any kind of
4 application. And recognizing that northwest Arkansas
5 has wonderful opportunities in public education for a
6 vast array of opportunities for students, I was very
7 appreciative -- great presentation, by the way -- and
8 I was very impressed that you created the
9 distinctiveness because that was something that --
10 when I looked at the slides earlier, that was
11 something that I was drawn to because I wanted to see
12 how you are demonstrating an expansive opportunity
13 for students in that area.

14 So the two things that really I want to get a
15 couple more thoughts on -- I was intrigued by Latin
16 as the foundational element for the academic program,
17 so I'd like to learn a little more about that. And
18 the other intriguing thing was the historical
19 approach to all subjects. I think specifically
20 science was mentioned and how that science will be
21 taught in the historical approach. So, if you could
22 explain the strength of teaching Latin as a
23 foundation and then describe a little more about the
24 historical approach of teaching the subject -- so
25 those were things that were intriguing and I'm still

1 processing through, and I'm sure that you'll be able
2 to help me understand deeper.

3 DR. BOURGEOIS: Well, I'm glad to. And I'll
4 talk about the historical approach, and I think I
5 have a Latin teacher in the audience who will give a
6 little more depth there than I could.

7 DR. GOTCHER: Love to hear. Love to hear.

8 DR. BOURGEOIS: But our humanities course I
9 think is central and the vision is that a faculty
10 collaborates on that course. It's not just a single
11 teacher who's using a textbook, but there's a
12 structure in place for collaboration throughout the
13 year. And the course has been developed in an
14 interesting way by a music teacher, by a history
15 teacher, so the teachers bring in their expertise.
16 And the structure of having these cycles, fields of
17 history would be brilliant because it insures that it
18 is interdisciplinary from the start rather than
19 teaching a period of history and names and dates.
20 And we're trying to get away from that type of
21 learning to get to a higher level where students are
22 able to make those connections. I envision a student
23 being able to speak, to stand up and talk about
24 strands of history, talk about art history, music
25 history, history of architecture. And that really is

1 not part of the typical system, particularly at the
2 middle school level, and even in the high school.
3 And I've looked at state tests in history and they
4 tend to ask for discrete points, but this historical
5 approach really will foster thinking and writing, and
6 not just college readiness but students who are
7 successful in college.

8 And if I can bring in Dr. Thorburn to talk a
9 little bit more in detail about Latin, I'd be
10 delighted.

11 DR. GOTCHER: Madam Chair, is that all right?

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Absolutely.

13 DR. GOTCHER: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: State your name and title
15 please.

16 DR. THORBURN: My name is John Thorburn and I'm
17 the director of Language Arts and Foreign Language
18 for ResponsiveEd.

19 DR. GOTCHER: And going back to my -- I think
20 the question, help me understand the function of
21 Latin as a foundational approach to all the academic
22 -- for the academic program. I found that very
23 intriguing and would like to know more how that fits
24 in the structure of the academic program.

25 DR. THORBURN: Okay. In grades 3 through 5 --

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Sir, if you'll speak into
2 the microphone.

3 DR. THORBURN: Sorry. In grades 3 through 5,
4 our students work through a program called English
5 from the Roots Up. This consists of 200 word roots
6 from Latin and Greek. So in grade 3 they do the
7 first 50 roots; grade 4, the next 50; and in grade 5,
8 they do the second volume. And so preparation --
9 learning these roots will help prepare them for the
10 actual Latin coursework that they'll do in grades 6
11 through 8. In grades 6 through 8 we have what's
12 called a Lively Latin program and this program takes
13 students essentially through the first half of Latin
14 grammar. It includes exercises in etymology, word
15 power, includes study of mythology, includes study of
16 famous episodes from Roman history. And so by the
17 time that -- by the time that our kids have completed
18 this program in grade 8, then they essentially will
19 have completed the first half of Latin grammar and
20 what would be the equivalent of one semester of
21 college Latin. And so one of the reasons why we feel
22 that Latin is important is because it helps basically
23 sort of teach students to take apart English,
24 ironically, from a very rudimentary level. And so I
25 like to use the analogy of the automobile, and so we

1 teach kids not only how to sell the car but we teach
2 kids how to take the car apart and put it back
3 together. And when one studies Latin you really get
4 down into the nuts and bolts of English grammar, and
5 so our students can -- should be able to explain the
6 difference between active voice verbs and passive
7 voice verbs in not only Latin but also English. And
8 our students should be able to know the difference
9 between who and whom because the foundation for that
10 can actually be found in Latin. And so what we've
11 discovered and what has been known for a long time by
12 classicists is that studying this language, which
13 provides us with more than 50% of our own vocabulary,
14 will help students in especially achievement scores
15 and those assessments. Ironically, also Latin seems
16 to be really conducive to the study of math. In my
17 own experience, taking the SAT and the GRE tests I
18 always scored higher in math than in verbal, even
19 though I hadn't had a math class in several years.
20 And so there's just something about Latin -- there's
21 a real logic to the language and this is conducive, I
22 think, to a lot of disciplines. And because Latin
23 touches so many different disciplines -- it touches
24 religion, art, architecture, philosophy, and language
25 -- it really permeates a curriculum. And so that's

1 one of the reasons why we feel that it's so
2 important. One of our distinctives -- one of our
3 goals is to help students make connections across
4 disciplines. And so Latin reaches out and touches a
5 lot of different areas.

6 DR. GOTCHER: Thank you. Is it Mr. Thorburn?
7 Is that right?

8 DR. THORBURN: Yes.

9 DR. GOTCHER: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate
10 that. And that helps -- helped me understand and I
11 appreciate that.

12 And if I could go back to Dr. Duncan, you had
13 made a comment just before you left the podium and I
14 was just curious. You said there was great interest
15 in the classical model based upon -- I'm not sure,
16 was that through -- how did you find that there was a
17 great interest in the classical model of education
18 and for a classical model in the academic approach?
19 Anyway, go ahead.

20 DR. DUNCAN: Well, I think, first of all, it's
21 evidenced by the school up at northwest Arkansas,
22 which is located in Bentonville, which is a classical
23 academy. That school has shown great growth and is
24 in, I believe, the top 5% of the scale for test
25 scores. We have Ms. Susan Provenza here who is the

1 headmistress at Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy
2 and I'd be glad to have her address with you the
3 classical thoughts that parents are voicing from that
4 school alone.

5 DR. GOTCHER: Yes, ma'am. I would appreciate
6 that.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Were you sworn in?

8 MS. PROVENZA: Yes, ma'am. Good morning. I'm
9 Susan Provenza; I'm headmaster at Northwest Arkansas
10 Classical Academy. What we are finding is we
11 continue to have a fairly long waitlist. This is our
12 fourth year this year and we are grades K through 11.
13 And so, you know, recent estimations -- we're only
14 in, gosh, day three of school this year, but our
15 recent estimations are we're well over 500 students
16 still on our waiting list, waiting to get in. Our
17 families appreciate the classical approach because
18 they feel like it's a very all-encompassing approach;
19 it is very interdisciplinary. I like to say it's
20 kind of interesting -- you know, we don't do life in
21 subjects, so it's interesting that we do education in
22 subjects. And what classical education does is it
23 takes all of those subjects and it helps put it
24 together so that, you know, when you are learning
25 about languages you're learning about the history of

1 those languages. When you're reading books you're
2 learning the history that's connected with those
3 books. It's important to know why William Golding
4 wrote Lord of the Flies, what was going on in history
5 when he wrote that. And so those are kind of some of
6 the discussions that we're able to have with our
7 students simply because of the way that that model
8 fits together.

9 DR. GOTCHER: Thank you very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other questions? Mr.
11 Rogers.

12 MR. ROGERS: You just said there is a waiting
13 list at Northwest Classical? Is that what you just
14 said, there is a waiting list?

15 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, there is.

16 MR. ROGERS: And then also back to Fayetteville
17 Classical, I have a couple of questions. The
18 \$250,000 special grant that's listed on the budget, I
19 was just trying to figure out what that is.

20 MR. HARP: Ken Harp, director of Finance for
21 out-of-state operations for ResponsiveEd. That
22 \$250,000 for the first two years is an anticipated
23 grant from the Walton Family Foundation to help get
24 the school started in an appropriate manner.

25 MR. ROGERS: "Anticipated" or already received?

1 MR. HARP: Not already received; anticipated.
2 And that's based on our history with the Walton
3 Family Foundation in our other Arkansas school
4 starting.

5 MR. ROGERS: But you have a commitment letter
6 from them?

7 MR. HARP: Pardon me?

8 MR. ROGERS: Do you have a commitment letter
9 from them?

10 DR. DUNCAN: We do.

11 MR. HARP: Yes. It should be a part of your
12 packet. It indicates their strong desire to continue
13 to support our schools.

14 MR. ROGERS: And then also I have a question
15 about the lease agreement. On the budget it's listed
16 a lease agreement of \$290,000. But then also
17 included in the budget is another close to \$30,000
18 for maintenance of the building. So does the lease
19 agreement just cover using the space? It doesn't
20 cover building upkeep or anything like that?

21 MR. HARP: Does it cover -- it covers usage of
22 the space. Did you ask if it covers building out the
23 space?

24 MR. ROGERS: Well, as you've got in your budget
25 that you're going to have building repair and upkeep

1 on it.

2 MR. HARP: Well, that is a standard formula we
3 use in all of our school operating budgets for any
4 unanticipated items that may not be covered under the
5 terms of the lease agreement. In other words, there
6 may be some building repairs and maintenance that
7 would be our responsibility as opposed to the
8 landlords. And so we typically place about, oh,
9 \$25,000 or \$30,000 in each of our schools' operating
10 budgets to cover unanticipated building repairs and
11 maintenance.

12 MR. ROGERS: And then what is the Classical
13 Academy getting for the \$266,000 management
14 agreement?

15 MR. HARP: Okay. I can be happy to answer that
16 question. There's a vast array of services that the
17 administrative fee covers. First of all, we provide
18 legal services to all the schools under the
19 ResponsiveEd umbrella, including any litigation the
20 schools may be subject to, as well as any employee
21 disputes. There is a lot of school operational
22 support that is provided by ResponsiveEd. A regional
23 director of operations and academics is assigned to
24 each of our campuses to provide operational support
25 and academic support; that also insures it adheres to

1 our quality control standards. So there are site
2 visits by ResponsiveEd quality control personnel to
3 insure that all our procedures and policies are being
4 adhered to on that campus. There's development of
5 parent and student handbooks under the school
6 operational and academic supports. Our information
7 technology department provides all the infrastructure
8 updates and maintenance for all technology at all of
9 our campuses, as well as technicians who troubleshoot
10 on a daily basis. They also provide the computer lab
11 set-up and support. Our marketing department, which
12 is responsible for recruiting students across all
13 demographic lines, does mail-outs to all the Zip
14 Codes in surrounding communities, including
15 translation of the languages, and other media
16 advertising that may attract specific demographics;
17 that includes print advertising, radio and television
18 advertising, social media, and they also oversee
19 parent interest meetings prior to the opening of the
20 school. Our curriculum department provides knowledge
21 units that are developed in-house at ResponsiveEd to
22 supplant some of the other curriculum resources that
23 are available on campus, as well as providing
24 educational computer programs. Our health services
25 department provides training of all school nurses,

1 oversees all student health screenings, provides CPR
2 and defibrillator training, and do campus site visits
3 to make sure that all state and federal health
4 service mandates are being met of those campuses.
5 Our child nutrition department provides all mandated
6 training and certifications for CNP personnel on the
7 campus, all state and federal reporting, all vendor
8 feeding processes are outside suppliers of our food
9 services. Our facilities and real estate department
10 do all lease negotiations, building purchases,
11 building maintenance contracts that are necessary,
12 janitorial service contracts that are necessary, as
13 well as other special building issues to insure
14 compliance with ADA. Our finance department provides
15 all the necessary items that go into APSCN and soon-
16 to-be eFinance, all the payroll functions, all the
17 disbursements and purchasing functions, oversight of
18 the federal programs, budgeting for each of our
19 schools, general accounting, overseeing the spending
20 of categorical state funds as well as federal funds,
21 oversight of the annual audit for each of our
22 campuses, and regular financial statements for our
23 in-house management. Our human resources department
24 provides all the employee benefit administration, all
25 employee recruiting, all employee in-boarding and on-

1 boarding, all employee management, as well as
2 employee handbooks. So as you can see, there's a
3 vast array of back office services that our central
4 offices provide. And as Dr. Duncan previously
5 mentioned, we are pleased to now have instate, in
6 Little Rock, an Arkansas administrative office that
7 will provide significant portions of those services
8 here instate with Arkansas personnel.

9 MR. ROGERS: Okay. But you still didn't tell me
10 what they're getting for \$260,000.

11 MR. HARP: Pardon me?

12 MR. ROGERS: You went -- you brought it,
13 everything -- like all your people are getting all
14 this, but all I'm concerned about is there's \$260,000
15 in this budget. And you talked about audit in there
16 but then in the budget for this school they're also
17 paying \$15,000 for their own audit. You talked about
18 maintenance and stuff but as we just went over,
19 there's maintenance in their budget. So I understand
20 that y'all perform this umbrella of all the schools,
21 but really what I'm focused on is the \$266,000 in
22 this budget for this school. I understand that
23 there's a little bit that y'all collect, a membership
24 fee for everybody, but what -- and so everybody gets
25 -- but what is that \$266,000 going to be for this

1 school?

2 MR. HARP: It's going to provide all the
3 services that I just mentioned for this particular
4 school.

5 MR. ROGERS: Okay. And then the last question I
6 have is the community advisory council; is that going
7 to be open to the public when they get that set up?

8 MR. HARP: I'll turn it back to Dr. Duncan.

9 DR. DUNCAN: Generally, community meetings are
10 held at the school and you'll find that our schools
11 are very community-centered. And I believe Susan
12 Provenza can speak to that for her own campus. So,
13 you know, community is what helps to build the school
14 and it's what helps to keep that engagement there.

15 So would you like to hear from Susan Provenza on
16 what we're doing in that area also?

17 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

18 MS. PROVENZA: Sure. So, obviously, community
19 is always important when you're dealing with a school
20 and you're dealing with parents and children; right?
21 And you want to create that good sense of community.
22 We do a lot of community meetings. This year, we are
23 implementing one that's called Profiles, because my
24 last name is Provenza and I'm not overly creative, so
25 -- but they're called the Profiles and at each one of

1 those meetings we have a specific topic that we're
2 going to be discussing with the parents to help them
3 feel more a part of the school, to help them
4 understand what it is their children are doing in the
5 school. We invite community members to come to those
6 things. So I hope that helps with that. That's kind
7 of just a little bit of what we do.

8 MR. ROGERS: So I think what I understand is
9 that the meetings are open to the public, that they
10 are -- the media is told and they are open to the
11 public?

12 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, sir.

13 MR. ROGERS: Okay.

14 DR. DUNCAN: Thank you.

15 MR. ROGERS: It's still morning; I'm slow. And
16 the last thing I have is -- and I'm not trying to
17 step on Dr. Saunders' toes because this is usually
18 his. But the whole waiver thing that we first
19 started with, just still a little confused with that.
20 What -- I got this just today and so I'm a little
21 confused. So we didn't do a blanket one but we've
22 put new ones in there that we just -- that y'all want
23 to just have waivers for?

24 MR. WALTER: Madam Chair, if I may address Mr.
25 Rogers?

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes, please.

2 MR. WALTER: Yes. Let me --

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And are you addressing --
4 Tripp, are you addressing the document we received?

5 MR. WALTER: Yes. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay.

7 MR. WALTER: That was one of the things, and I
8 apologize for not clarifying that earlier. So when I
9 mentioned the initial comments about waivers I was
10 referring to the document that was just passed out
11 this morning. It was an attempt to try and more
12 clearly set forth and articulate exactly what RES was
13 requesting, trying to eliminate some of the
14 duplicity, and trying to line up everything in the
15 categories as it should be. So with that -- with
16 that in mind, that's the general comment.

17 Also, if you'll see on the last piece, the
18 waivers requested to be rescinded, the very last
19 page, the final three items, Ark. Code Annotated 6-
20 17-204, Ark. Code Annotated 6-17-908 - the teacher
21 salary fund, and 6-17 subchapter 23, those are
22 rescinded to the extent that they are listed earlier
23 in the waiver sheet. So that means -- I think there
24 were only a couple of additional things that were
25 added and those were to the listing of items in the

1 school board section, just, again, things that are
2 generally inapplicable to open-enrollment public
3 charter schools. And also I believe that there was
4 6-17-812 that was added to the list as well, and that
5 was having -- that was going along with the class
6 size teaching load waiver. And that statute, as you
7 may know, is a result of legislation passed last year
8 that allows a district to adopt a policy to pay
9 teachers who volunteer either their planning period
10 or other times during the time when they are free to
11 teach extra students -- to teach additional students
12 beyond the standards limit, if such exists. And what
13 we have tried to do is also further clarify and
14 tighten up the rationale in each of the sections for
15 you.

16 MR. ROGERS: Did the charter office or our legal
17 department have this before today, this --

18 MR. WALTER: No, sir. They did not.

19 MR. ROGERS: I'm a little hesitant about it just
20 because I'm still -- I understand what you're saying
21 and it's probably -- it's probably me, not you. And
22 so I'm just -- I'm struggling with looking at a whole
23 new huge list of waivers that I see -- because I
24 understand you were just trying to take out the broad
25 ones and just put those specific ones in there. But

1 without having the charter office or legal having a
2 chance to review it before I got it just kind of
3 makes me a little uneasy. But maybe it's just me.

4 MR. WALTER: No, sir. And I understand. And
5 maybe I can add something here that will be helpful
6 too. I believe -- and Ms. Davis can correct me if
7 I'm wrong -- that what I mentioned are really about
8 the only new things to it. So this list is only new
9 so-to-speak as far as those limited items.
10 Otherwise, it represents everything that was in RES's
11 responses to the Department's internal panel. So
12 it's really, in my opinion -- I will stand corrected
13 if need be -- that it's about 98% or 99% what you had
14 in front of you at that time; just attempt to come in
15 and clean up and make it much more easier for you to
16 follow.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

18 DR. GOTCHER: Thank you. Mr. Walter, I think
19 I'm understanding it better as well. So, basically
20 two things have occurred in this document: you listed
21 the waivers to be rescinded and then you gave an
22 explanation of those that are inapplicable based upon
23 a traditional charter school because of their limited
24 size or facility, et cetera. So not really new
25 information, other than the rescinsion pieces, and

1 then maybe a further explanation; is that what I'm
2 understanding?

3 MR. WALTER: Yes. And if I may add something
4 slightly additional --

5 DR. GOTCHER: Yes.

6 MR. WALTER: -- to that, Dr. Gotcher, we came in
7 later in the process so-to-speak. And when we got in
8 and started talking with RES we had noticed the
9 comments that were made especially by ADE Legal about
10 being hard to follow, needed clarification. And so
11 we were attempting to respond to that with this
12 document and understanding it was hard to follow for
13 them and hard to make meaningful comments. And,
14 obviously, it would be hard for you trying to figure
15 out as well. So that's what led to us putting this
16 together with RES to try and not to try and put new
17 information in front of you at the last minute but
18 hopefully make your job and Ms. Davis' easier in the
19 process.

20 DR. GOTCHER: That makes sense. Thank you, Mr.
21 Walter. I appreciate that.

22 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Tripp, would you clarify
24 one thing for me? I noticed --

25 MR. WALTER: Of course.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: -- in the application it
2 said that on the school year waiver they wanted to
3 follow the local school district calendar, which in
4 the application said Fayetteville, and of course now
5 I'm assuming it would be Farmington, but once the
6 flexibility to adjust based on the needs of students
7 and program -- So does that mean they will go 178
8 days, they will go six hours a day, they will go
9 longer days? What does that really mean?

10 MR. WALTER: Well, if I may break the answer up
11 into two parts, I will give you my understanding and
12 then I will turn it over to Dr. Duncan for specifics.
13 But I believe the flexibility lies in the ability --
14 and this may not come until later years with the
15 internships and other programs that were talked about
16 -- some flexibility around scheduling, some things
17 that would not lend itself to strictly adhering to --
18 in this case, Farmington's schedule. And I'll let
19 her follow-up with any specifics.

20 DR. DUNCAN: So by and large, we do try and
21 mirror the local district's schedule in which we're
22 located for the ease of parents. We have a parent
23 that may want to be interested to send their child to
24 us for elementary and may want to keep their
25 secondary child elsewhere. So for us it's all about

1 the options. Traditionally, we try and mirror the
2 local district. However, based on classical or other
3 idyllic things that are put into place at the school,
4 we may add extra days; we may want to look at doing a
5 Saturday offering. And so those kinds -- not that
6 Saturday school would be mandated for Arkansas, but
7 we just wanted the flexibility to do a little bit
8 more with that than we needed to. And, yes, we will
9 be attending the standard mandated days. When we're
10 looking at a waiver for the school day or school
11 hours, if you'll note, that specifically was
12 secondary and would be specific only to any students
13 that were in internships or in CTE readiness programs
14 that would lend themselves to that based on their
15 learning within the educational environment of the
16 school. So we're trying to keep options open for
17 students, and that's what it's all about.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: What -- Dr. Duncan, if
19 you'll stay -- I have a few questions for you. One,
20 if you would expand on the technical assistance
21 you've had in submitting this application?

22 DR. DUNCAN: And could you clarify that question
23 for me?

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Technical assistance, what
25 technical assistance did you receive in submitting

1 your application?

2 DR. DUNCAN: As far as in-state, out-of-state,
3 just period?

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Just whatever technical
5 assistance you received.

6 DR. DUNCAN: So we look at technical assistance
7 within ResponsiveEd, within our classical academies;
8 technical assistance with regard to marketing as to
9 what parents are looking for; we've reached out to
10 the Arkansas Public School Resource Center as to
11 concerns that the Department may standardly have in
12 this charter time in the state with opening a new
13 charter so that we meet all of those concerns. And,
14 you know, back to the waivers today, as Mr. Walter
15 mentioned, our providing that today is not to confuse
16 at all but to provide clarification based on the need
17 for that. So also looking at and visiting with our
18 campus directors in-state as to what is working in-
19 state with our students, looking at our test scores.
20 You know, we draw a lot off the information that the
21 Department puts on their website for technical
22 assistance in guiding what we're looking at to do
23 within this state.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So as you look at the
25 legal review that's posted on the BoardBook, normally

1 as we go through those we see a lot of greens and
2 this time we saw a lot of reds.

3 DR. DUNCAN: Uh-huh.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So since this would be
5 your fifth application, could you address why there
6 are so many reds, so many areas not clarified fully?

7 DR. DUNCAN: So in looking at what we wanted to
8 do with Northwest, the original thought was to
9 possibly ask for a different -- for additional
10 waivers to provide different flexibility. And, in
11 hindsight, in clarification, particularly based on
12 comments from the Panel it was clear that there was a
13 little bit of angst about some of those, the new
14 things, and so that's why we rescinded some things.
15 We'd like the Department to feel very comfortable.
16 And, again, this is a charter contract. There will
17 be some back-and-forth within Legal and the Legal
18 Department will review everything, and things you
19 don't feel comfortable for [sic] I'm sure we won't be
20 granted, and that's understandable. That's what this
21 is for, is for us to talk and gain information and,
22 you know, be prepared the best we can to do the very
23 best we can for the students that we serve every day.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: One of the things that you
25 just mentioned was determining where the next school

1 might be.

2 DR. DUNCAN: Uh-huh.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So talk me through what
4 precipitated the decision to request a school,
5 another school in the northwest.

6 DR. DUNCAN: So as you know, 49 has a lot of
7 traffic and Bentonville is at the farthest point of
8 that area, and there's still a lot of interest in
9 classical in that area. And so bringing another
10 school in that offers this unique program that is a
11 free and public school that provides a smaller
12 learning environment is something that is, you know,
13 readily accessible to parents and there is interest
14 in. So that's why we looked at the classical model;
15 it seems there's continued interest in it, especially
16 from that area of the state.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And, Dr. Duncan, do you
18 have any board members here today?

19 DR. DUNCAN: I do not but I can give you the
20 local board members' names, if you would like those.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: They're listed.

22 DR. DUNCAN: Ma'am?

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I believe they're listed
24 in the application.

25 DR. DUNCAN: That is the entity board. The

1 local state board, the board for within state, are
2 consisting of Ms. Earlene Collins, she's a retired
3 administrator and educator from Pine Bluff; Jay
4 Richard Cromwell IV, who is out of Bentonville,
5 representing that area where we have local
6 representation with a local arena. He has parents in
7 that area of the state. We have Jennifer Stevens
8 representing Quest West Little Rock, who is a parent
9 and a longtime resident of west Little Rock. Dr.
10 Charity Smith is representing the Little Rock greater
11 area at-large. Our Premier candidate could not be
12 finalized because she is out on leave currently and
13 so holding the last final interview for her for this
14 upcoming school year is still pending, but we do have
15 our candidate at-large for Premier also.

16 So that's another reason why we're building the
17 ResponsiveEd Arkansas in ResponsiveEd -- I mean, in
18 Arkansas, building it up, you know, to build that
19 local representation so parents feel comfortable and
20 they have a local board member. We have an 800-
21 number also that goes directly to corporate. You can
22 get me any time through that and you can get Mr.
23 Gast, who is on the ground in Arkansas with me
24 regularly and is a former superintendent himself.
25 And so we've worked very diligently to provide local

1 in-state and local voice and be reachable.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And if you'll just stay at
3 the microphone -- so my understanding is then the
4 board for this school is also the board for the other
5 schools in-state?

6 DR. DUNCAN: It is the same board, much similar
7 to the structure that KIPP has. So KIPP has the same
8 in-state board. They have a representative from
9 Helena; they have a representative from Blytheville;
10 you know, I believe they also have a representative
11 from Forrest City or are working on this. This is a
12 standard line for growth that's also, I believe,
13 supported by the National Charter School Authorizers
14 Association. When you're looking at an entity that
15 has more than one charter in a state you want to be
16 able to have a local picture of how you're doing and
17 have representation from those areas.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And would you address if
19 there is a superintendent, regional director and
20 campus director at each school or if those are shared
21 positions?

22 DR. DUNCAN: I am the superintendent for each of
23 those schools. Mr. Curtis Shack is the regional
24 director for each of those schools, so he covers
25 four. And then each of those schools has their own

1 campus director.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Which is similar to a
3 principal?

4 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, ma'am.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

6 MS. PFEFFER: I think Dr. Saunders is going to
7 have a couple of questions here in a minute, but my
8 question -- as we look at the waivers, a lot of these
9 categories of waivers involve the personnel, the
10 teachers in your school. I didn't see much in the
11 application and I'd like, you know, just to kind of
12 put it out there and get your feedback on what are
13 your plans for the support and development of
14 teachers? Because many times you have inexperienced
15 teachers in charters, especially if you've got
16 teachers who are there with a waiver from licensure;
17 so inexperienced to the field and also inexperienced
18 with the pedagogy. So could you talk a little bit
19 about what are the specific concerted plans for the
20 support and development of teachers?

21 DR. DUNCAN: I'll be glad to begin that
22 discussion. Ms. Glenda Simons or Ms. Susan Provenza
23 may want to speak further to it. Classical Academy
24 will -- those teachers will naturally go through
25 their own professional development. This is

1 something that's new. And to insure that that goes
2 well, those teachers are going to have to have
3 professional development long before school starts.
4 And, traditionally, we hold that every summer and
5 that's to update and particularly for a new school
6 indoctrinate those teachers within professional
7 development. We offer and our teachers also attend
8 professional development within the state at
9 functions sponsored by APSRC, at functions sponsored
10 by co-ops. So we continually offer professional
11 development. If you'd like to know the particulars
12 of some types of professional development that were
13 offered for Classical Academy for NWACA, they would
14 be very similar; might be somewhat differently,
15 depending on the population we serve and their needs.
16 But I would be glad to have Susan or Glenda Simons
17 speak to that also.

18 MS. PFEFFER: Well, and I guess specifically
19 will your teachers all participate in our state's
20 mentoring program if they're novice teachers?

21 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. PFEFFER: I see heads nodding.

23 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. PFEFFER: Okay.

25 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, ma'am.

1 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. And -- okay. That ends my
2 questions right now.

3 DR. DUNCAN: Thank you, Ma'am.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. I have -- looking at the
6 application -- and I have many concerns. As it
7 stands right now, I do not feel that I could vote in
8 favor of this. I have many questions. I think, in
9 particular, as I was going through the application I
10 got many -- many times I think it was referenced that
11 "we want the flexibility, others have been granted
12 this," but never a justification towards how it would
13 assist the students. And so I wanted to get down to
14 some of the specifics. In particular, if I could
15 just go back to one that you addressed earlier
16 regarding the school calendar -- and I understand the
17 need for flexibility at times and things of that
18 nature. But at the same time, as I look -- and I
19 know that we have a responsibility to look at each
20 individual waiver and make sure that not only do we
21 know what it is that is being asked for but the need
22 and that it's justified. So if we look at the
23 specifics on the school calendar, and you referenced
24 the law, I have a -- I guess I have a question on
25 that one, but I do with many others, on what --

1 specifically what part of the law are you seeking
2 flexibility from, if we look at 6-10-106?

3 DR. DUNCAN: Could you give me that number
4 again, please, sir?

5 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes, 6-10-106.

6 DR. DUNCAN: I'm sorry; it took me a while to
7 find it.

8 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

9 DR. DUNCAN: So that would leave us the
10 flexibility to do an extended year, if student needs
11 dictated additional education down the road; you
12 know, just providing that opportunity for that, if
13 it's needed.

14 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. But I don't see what part
15 of that law restricts you from that.

16 DR. DUNCAN: If -- you know -- standardly, in
17 following the Farmington or the Fayetteville
18 calendar, we would be following those days. But it
19 would allow us more flexibility built into the
20 program if the need arises to do that.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: So would it be to attend school
22 on Memorial Day?

23 DR. DUNCAN: No.

24 MR. WALTER: May I address Dr. Saunders? What
25 you said is obviously correct about the length of the

1 day. My understanding was that RES wanted the
2 flexibility on the start-date for beginning, the
3 school beginning earlier than usual in case they
4 didn't want to be always wedded so-to-speak to the
5 Farmington calendar, the traditional calendar, and be
6 able to start earlier and have an extended year
7 program, if they felt that the educational needs of
8 the students would be met in that manner.

9 DR. SAUNDERS: So it would be specifically
10 addressing the first day of school --

11 MR. WALTER: Yes.

12 DR. SAUNDERS: -- in the (a)(1)(a) section of
13 that --

14 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

15 DR. SAUNDERS: -- part of the law? So it would
16 just be limited to (a)(1)(a) on that waiver; correct?

17 MR. WALTER: Well, I think the whole applies.
18 That is the part, of course, that specifically talks
19 about the start-date. There are other parts in
20 there, as you know, that grant flexibility around
21 other things, make-up days and spring break and all
22 that. But my understanding is the primary concern is
23 the flexibility in the beginning of the school year.

24 DR. SAUNDERS: So it would still -- so still
25 seeking a waiver from that entire section of the

1 code; correct?

2 MR. WALTER: Yes. But with a primary emphasis
3 on the start-date.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: So the spring break would not --
5 for example, I mean, just discussing it, it's --
6 spring break would not be compelled to follow the
7 spring break of the other schools in the state;
8 correct? Have a waiver from that, that's what you're
9 seeking?

10 DR. DUNCAN: Again, that's what we would -- we
11 would like to mirror the spring break of whatever
12 area we're in. You know, we do have weather things
13 that come up; we do have other issues for make-up
14 days that might arise. What we would try and do is
15 mirror what we need to do to better serve the
16 families that we serve, particularly, again, if we
17 have one in one school and another in secondary in
18 another school. I mean, you would want those two
19 children to have the same spring break for family,
20 for time.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: And there are provisions and
22 flexibility of that within the code on the spring
23 break, in particular.

24 MR. WALTER: Right. So I think the bottom line
25 is this: the intent -- and I can -- Dr. Duncan can

1 speak to this as far as NWACA goes -- I believe the
2 intent, as stated, is to follow the local district's
3 calendar. But in the event that the situation arises
4 that there may be a need for variation in that, out
5 of, I believe, an abundance of caution, making the
6 intent clear at the outset this waiver was requested.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Tripp, I think
8 we've danced around this question for an extended
9 amount of time. I think our question is will the
10 students -- will there be 178 teacher/student days?

11 MR. WALTER: Yes, absolutely.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So the reason I think the
13 question is vague is because it's leading me to
14 believe that if there's a snow day it might not be
15 made up.

16 MR. WALTER: No. And I'm sorry; that was not
17 the impression we intended to give, either verbally
18 or in the request for the waiver. No, there's
19 nothing being sought that would change the number of
20 student interaction days, anything to try and
21 diminish that amount.

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: So I think what we're
23 asking for then is we keep leaving it very vague as
24 in if a situation arises. Could you give us a sample
25 situation of -- it sounds to me like a sample

1 situation might be that you might not follow the
2 exact calendar; you might make up your days
3 differently if they were missed or you might start a
4 little earlier, something like that. But a full
5 calendar would be adhered to in some way.

6 MR. WALTER: Absolutely. Yes. There's no
7 intent here to move away from the calendar setup so-
8 to-speak, to have a full and complete academic
9 calendar that would be in full compliance with 6-10-
10 106, except perhaps on occasions for those things
11 that you've just mentioned now. There's nothing --
12 no attempt here to try and abridge or reduce the
13 number of student instructional days; just as with
14 some of the other waivers, on policies and what-have-
15 you, just to have the flexibility to do things a
16 little different way, if necessary.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: That's what we're trying
18 to dig into.

19 MR. WALTER: Yes, ma'am.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: What does flexibility to
21 do some things differently -- we just want to know
22 what the different things are.

23 MR. WALTER: Right. And to my knowledge, unless
24 Dr. Duncan has anything else, those are the possible
25 different things here.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

2 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Mr. Walter, this might be
3 for you. On this list, just to clarify --

4 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

5 DR. SAUNDERS: -- this would replace any other
6 documentation or application that we have regarding
7 what waivers have been asked for; is that correct?

8 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir. That is correct.

9 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. And I may just be confused
10 on this, but if I look at page 1, in particular, and
11 at the bottom of Licensure it says "all other rules
12 required to give effect to this waiver request."
13 Were you striking that?

14 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

15 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

16 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

17 DR. SAUNDERS: If I could --

18 MR. WALTER: Absolutely, yes. And I appreciate
19 you bringing that up. That was one of the things I
20 was going to mention in close -- yes, sir -- that
21 those things -- anything that they're -- any time you
22 see all standards or all rules needed to give effect
23 or words to that effect, those are to be stricken.
24 Yes, sir.

25 DR. SAUNDERS: So would the two previous to that

1 one -- the ADE rules governing educator licensure,
2 are you keeping that one or striking that one?

3 MR. WALTER: Keeping. So in that section the
4 only thing we would be striking is that very last
5 comment box so-to-speak or text box that says "all
6 other rules required to give effect to this waiver
7 request."

8 DR. SAUNDERS: Same thing on the next section;
9 correct?

10 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

11 DR. SAUNDERS: All other rules?

12 MR. WALTER: The very last text box. Yes, sir.

13 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. And if I could just go
14 through here to make sure what all --

15 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir, absolutely.

16 DR. SAUNDERS: Employee compensation, the last
17 two?

18 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

19 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. I don't see any other
20 instances right offhand, unless you noticed any?

21 MR. WALTER: No, sir. Your reading is correct.

22 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. That's all I had for now.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo, do you have
24 questions?

25 MS. LIWO: I'll ask. I don't know who can

1 answer this for me. But just on your table of
2 waivers for the school day, you've listed 6-16-102,
3 6-18-211, and then your rationale is "this waiver
4 request is limited to secondary only to provide
5 flexibility for those students participating in
6 internships and career opportunities." And I didn't
7 see anything in the application that kind of went
8 into how you guys were going to go about providing
9 those internship and career opportunities for your
10 students. Could you tell me a little bit more about
11 that?

12 DR. DUNCAN: Sure. I believe some of that was
13 listed in the response originally from the internal
14 review that was requested for clarification. So,
15 again, in providing internships to our secondary
16 students, those that are interested particularly,
17 when it comes to Workforce, working with Workforce
18 and Career Technical Education Department and working
19 within the community to look at students' interests,
20 providing flexibility so that if those students need
21 to they can attend those things and have that part of
22 their program.

23 MS. LIWO: What I'm hearing you saying is that
24 you don't really have anything concrete right now;
25 you're going to have to wait awhile and see what your

1 students' interests will be and then you'll work from
2 that, from that point on, trying to give them these
3 opportunities?

4 DR. DUNCAN: Well, actually, this opportunity
5 will not come in till well into our charter. We are
6 a slow-growth smaller environment. We will start K-5
7 and grow one grade level a year. So, needless to
8 say, we will not even get into secondary until five
9 years down the road. This is the same process
10 similar to working into secondary with NWACA and
11 looking at the students' interests there. If we have
12 students that would like the flexibility to go ahead
13 and do internships as part of their day, and it's
14 academically built into where that is possible for
15 them, that would be ideal. That builds them as part
16 of the community, builds the interest in together and
17 provides that for those students.

18 MS. LIWO: Okay. I think what I'm having a
19 problem with is there are other ResponsiveEd
20 sponsored charters out there. So this isn't your
21 first time, I guess, in front of the Panel, and your
22 application just -- it's so vague. And I'm wondering
23 if you have all these other charter schools out there
24 why is it -- it seems rushed and it seems like it was
25 prematurely presented to us. I guess what I want to

1 understand is why you don't have something more
2 concrete, more detailed when you have other charters
3 whose structures you can look at and maybe use here?
4 Is my question making any sense or --

5 DR. DUNCAN: So we only have one other classical
6 school in the state and that has yet to grow to 12,
7 but has been a very successful model within the state
8 and has done well academically. That school will be
9 very close in proximity to this school, and I'm sure
10 that campus director, the new one, i.e., headmaster,
11 and Susan Provenza will work very closely together,
12 as well as staff, to kind of mirror some of the
13 things that have been successful with that
14 environment there. In looking at the secondary
15 program, you know, we want to be able to build that
16 out with the students and work with the Career
17 Technical Education Department and provide what needs
18 to be provided for those students to be successful.
19 And, again, if part of that is a student wanting an
20 internship, if part of that is a student wanting to
21 go to a readiness program at a local business that's
22 something they're interested in and helps prepare
23 them down the road, it would be great to be able to
24 provide that opportunity for them.

25 MS. LIWO: Just one last -- so you have one

1 other charter school here that is based on the
2 classical model; the other charters in Texas -- there
3 are two; right? Did I hear that --

4 DR. GOTCHER: Seven.

5 MS. LIWO: Seven?

6 DR. GOTCHER: Seven is what I heard. Is that
7 correct?

8 MS. LIWO: Are those based on the classical
9 model too?

10 DR. DUNCAN: Yes.

11 MS. LIWO: Okay.

12 DR. DUNCAN: I'm sorry; I was listening and
13 listening here. Forgive me. Yes, ma'am.

14 MS. LIWO: That's fine. Thank you.

15 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes, ma'am. Just a couple quick
16 questions. I didn't understand -- I know the request
17 was for a waiver from 6-17-209. Could you tell me
18 why that one is necessary, dealing with the
19 consolidation of school districts?

20 MR. WALTER: That was just making sure -- as
21 part of that 6-17-201 et seq., since it's bee the
22 policy or the practice of the Panel and the Board not
23 to do generally et seq. but to name out specific
24 sections, that was one, for example, like the
25 election ones that are just not applicable to charter

1 schools, and we just, for the sake of completeness,
2 asked for that.

3 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. So is it necessary, I
4 guess?

5 MR. WALTER: No. Again, it's kind of like --
6 it's kind of like the election ones in 6-14-101, it
7 does routinely request it even though they're not
8 applicable.

9 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. And also in regards to --
10 it's under the section of employee contracts, in
11 particular the website postings. Would you also need
12 to include 6-11-129?

13 MR. WALTER: Sure. Yes, the statute that
14 governs the posting, yes -- and, again, as you know,
15 sections four through eight, it's not an attempt to
16 relieve the school of the posting requirements; just
17 again that their policies and their salary schedules,
18 et cetera that are going to be posted are not going
19 to look exactly like a school districts.

20 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. WALTER: Yes, sir.

22 MS. SMITH: Jennifer, I just wanted -- looking
23 at the ResponsiveEd website, there looks like there's
24 about 20 classical academies in Texas.

25 DR. GOTCHER: 20 on the website.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Duncan, could you
2 address that? I think someone had mentioned seven
3 previously.

4 DR. DUNCAN: Ms. Glenda Simons will be
5 clarifying.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Good morning.

7 MS. SIMONS: Good morning. Glenda Simons; I'm
8 the executive director of Academics. And, yes, with
9 the classical academies we have different phases of
10 those classical academies as we roll out different
11 pieces of curriculum and so-forth. So the one that
12 we're looking at -- the seven that we alluded to or
13 that we spoke about, they're the ones that really
14 have farther down the road been using that classical
15 curriculum and these theories and this program the
16 longest. And so we felt like that was -- you know--
17 those were the ones that we could substantiate that,
18 yes, those are the ones that we've been using. All
19 of our schools are moving to that and they've been
20 using different parts of this curriculum, this
21 classical curriculum along the way. But we felt like
22 really stating those seven because they're really
23 using all of those elements.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Are you saying those seven
25 are K-12 fully implemented?

1 MS. SIMONS: No, ma'am. They're not K-12.
2 They're everything from a K-5 to a K-8. And just
3 like Dr. Duncan spoke about, they'll be rolling up
4 each year, you know, different grade levels each
5 year.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Do you have any K-12 fully
7 implemented?

8 MS. SIMONS: We have some of the founders'
9 schools that are K-12 in the Texas area, in the
10 Dallas area.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And are they fully
12 implemented with the classical model?

13 MS. SIMONS: As of right now, they are Hillsdale
14 model schools and so their curriculum is a little bit
15 different than this one is, but they are classical, a
16 form of the classical schools.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

18 DR. SAUNDERS: Yeah, one quick one. On those 21
19 schools, did all of those meet standard? Were all
20 those classified in the same performance category?

21 MS. SIMONS: I think there was -- yes. All of
22 them did. We have a virtual school that's part of
23 that district; they're not really a classical school,
24 I would say, so they did not meet standard. But all
25 of the others, yes, sir. Now we have two new

1 founders school that were brand-new this year that
2 did not, but all of the others that have been using
3 this curriculum, yes, sir, they were.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: Okay. Thank you.

5 DR. DUNCAN: And, again, just to be clear, we're
6 looking at the classical model that has been very
7 successful within Arkansas, within Arkansas
8 standards. And our Bentonville model has been very
9 successful and is K-11 currently and will be K-12
10 next year.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

12 MR. LESTER: Just looking through the
13 application and looking at the questions that were
14 answered, many of them or most of them or all that I
15 can see is some of the questions dealt with assessing
16 or looking at the data at the district that the
17 charter school would be in. All I see is
18 Fayetteville. Am I understanding it's going to be in
19 the Farmington district now? Correct?

20 DR. GOTCHER: I have a question on that, so I'm
21 glad you asked that.

22 MR. LESTER: Has there been any --

23 MS. BOYD: I think I can help.

24 MR. LESTER: Okay.

25 MS. BOYD: So because Fayetteville and

1 Farmington are so close and kind of tight-knit, and,
2 you know, Farmington only has -- it's kind of
3 enclosed, I think, by three districts. So when they
4 notified everyone about wanting to locate a campus in
5 Fayetteville, they notified everyone who needed to be
6 notified should they also want to locate a campus in
7 Farmington. So speaking from a -- excuse me --
8 speaking from a specifically logistics standpoint,
9 they have met the requirements of notification of
10 superintendents, but -- and they would have to agree
11 -- I mean, have to -- I'm so sorry; I don't know
12 what's happening -- they will have to give you any
13 more details on that. But just -- I just want you to
14 know from a logistics standpoint they've met the
15 requirements.

16 MR. LESTER: And I understand that. I'm just
17 looking at the question, to "complete the following
18 chart to include the most recent literacy and math
19 performance assessment data and graduation rates
20 available for the district in which the charter will
21 be located." They're going to be a unique and
22 different district and they all have their data. I'm
23 just -- that's my concern here is that the questions
24 they asked are based upon Fayetteville School
25 District. Is that what I'm --

1 DR. GOTCHER: I think that's right. That's what
2 I'm guessing. Yeah.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Doctor --

4 MR. LESTER: Just one more. I'm sorry.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Oh, Mr. Lester; I'm sorry.
6 Go ahead.

7 MR. LESTER: I did see on the front that you did
8 have the percentage of the free and reduced for both
9 the Fayetteville and the Farmington. Is there a plan
10 to go ahead and seek targeted assisted for your free
11 and reduced students?

12 DR. DUNCAN: Yes. As the student population
13 that comes to our school mandates that, of course.

14 MR. LESTER: Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

16 DR. GOTCHER: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Ms.
17 Provenza, from -- is it NWACA, Northwest Arkansas
18 Classical Academy?

19 MS. PROVENZA: Yes, sir.

20 DR. GOTCHER: I haven't heard that acronym. I
21 wanted to make sure I was pronouncing NWACA
22 correctly.

23 MS. PROVENZA: That's just fine.

24 DR. GOTCHER: One of the things that I tend to
25 look at is the balance of transportation, and I know

1 that in the application -- and I'm asking you from
2 your experience with the Northwest Arkansas Academy.
3 I certainly understand -- let me back-up. The
4 application stated that if transportation was needed
5 they would seek out public transportation. And I
6 know that in Little Rock that is provided for many
7 students and some of the other options that are
8 available. So thinking of your campus in Bentonville
9 -- correct?

10 MS. PROVENZA: Correct.

11 DR. GOTCHER: Are there challenges in getting
12 transportation for students that don't have the
13 readily available access for -- how do you solve the
14 transportation issue should it become an issue for a
15 student that seeks enrollment in your campus?

16 MS. PROVENZA: Sure.

17 DR. GOTCHER: Because I'm not sure that
18 Bentonville has the same kind of public
19 transportation -- anyway, I'll let you explain.
20 Thanks.

21 MS. PROVENZA: No problem. So as of this point,
22 right now, we have not had to cross that bridge. We
23 have not had any issues with parent transportation,
24 the parents being able to transport their children to
25 school. However, we have kind of proactively thought

1 about that scenario, what happens if we do run up
2 against that, and we do have a local Ozark
3 Transportation that would provide public
4 transportation that we would seek out to partner with
5 if we needed to. But we so far have not had to do
6 that.

7 DR. GOTCHER: Thank you. And I think, Dr.
8 Duncan, the only thing I was going to say, I know
9 that the facilities piece is difficult because of
10 it's so far out. But if the campus was in Farmington
11 how would you address a transportation issue that
12 might not be a challenge if the campus was in
13 Fayetteville? So -- and that's not -- anyway, I'll
14 let you explain.

15 DR. DUNCAN: Well, first of all, I think that
16 starts with getting parents interested, getting
17 parents informed, and working with parents on student
18 needs. Generally, at our schools that do not provide
19 transportation we have a lot of carpool parents. We
20 even have parents that will volunteer to help set-up
21 carpool scenarios, work with parents to see what
22 students are located in this area, what students are
23 located in this subdivision, you know, and just be
24 very proactive with those parents. So this would
25 probably start at open house night prior to school

1 starting; you know, working with parents ahead of
2 time, getting that organized to assist with that.

3 DR. GOTCHER: Good. I appreciate that. Thank
4 you.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: My question is for Ms.
6 Provenza. What collaborative relationship do you
7 have with the local school districts?

8 MS. PROVENZA: We actually have a very good
9 collaborative working relationship with the
10 Bentonville Public Schools because that's where --
11 we're in Bentonville. So they're probably the one
12 that I work with most frequently. I was actually a
13 teacher in the Bentonville Public Schools for over
14 eight years, so I have a lot of friends and
15 colleagues who are still in that system who are very
16 helpful to us when we have questions, who partner
17 with us when we need to. We have community events
18 where we are all there together. And so we have a
19 great working relationship with Bentonville.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And do you have
21 coordinated meetings, scheduled meetings with the
22 school district or any type of coordinated events
23 that are planned together?

24 MS. PROVENZA: Occasionally. We have had some
25 coordinated meetings that weren't like public

1 meetings but were coordinated meetings where they
2 wanted to get together with me and we wanted to do
3 those kinds of things, so --

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

5 MS. PROVENZA: Yeah. Yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Duncan, what is the --
7 has there been any outreach to the Farmington School
8 District?

9 DR. DUNCAN: We have not heard any negativity
10 out of the Farmington School District. I have not
11 personally reached out to them. It was well served
12 up in advance. We did put notices in local papers
13 regarding a school, and so they have been well served
14 up that this is a possibility.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I was just wondering if
16 you'd reached out to talk to anyone in the
17 administration?

18 DR. DUNCAN: I have not currently spoken to that
19 superintendent. No, ma'am.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And is there any
21 relationship with the schools and the co-op in that
22 area?

23 DR. DUNCAN: I believe the Northwest Arkansas
24 Co-op has been very user-friendly to our school and
25 our campus at NWACA. Susan, can you clarify?

1 MS. PROVENZA: Yes, ma'am, I can. We have an
2 excellent partnership with them and we go there for
3 many of our trainings to make sure that we're in
4 compliance with everything we're supposed to be in
5 compliance with. They've been terrific, so --

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

7 MS. PROVENZA: Uh-huh.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

9 MS. PFEFFER: So I just -- something that has
10 been kind of nagging at me for the last few minutes,
11 so with the change in location from the school in
12 Fayetteville to in Farmington, I just pulled up the
13 lease agreement again; it was signed on June 23rd of
14 2016. Is -- and I know Ms. Boyd said that the proper
15 notice was given as far as there's a charter
16 application for a school in this area that will
17 impact your districts. But is the Farmington school
18 administration aware that you have a lease for a
19 school in Farmington rather than Fayetteville?

20 DR. DUNCAN: That is information that was
21 submitted to the Department and is public knowledge.
22 And so that's -- I have not served up notice
23 personally to that superintendent, Ma'am.

24 MS. PFEFFER: Okay. And I'm not saying that you
25 did anything wrong --

1 DR. DUNCAN: I understand.

2 MS. PFEFFER: -- with that because, as Ms. Boyd
3 said, technically the requirement has been met. I
4 think just looking at this date, that's the end of
5 June. I mean, I guess my -- just this is -- I'm
6 wondering does Farmington know that this change has
7 been made and, you know, I think the school officials
8 would say the same thing, you know, if they're not
9 aware that they should be checking the -- every
10 agenda that's posted. I'm wondering if Farmington
11 knows. I don't live in either community, but I do
12 think in my mind there is a difference between a
13 larger town like Fayetteville that -- where there are
14 already a lot of different options and a smaller
15 school district like Farmington, if the school is
16 physically located there. I think that that would
17 make a difference for me as a parent and as a
18 community member. So I guess I just -- that's not
19 something I thought about until just the last few
20 minutes.

21 DR. DUNCAN: And I understand those thoughts; I
22 genuinely do. We have worked very long and hard in
23 the Fayetteville School District to find something.
24 Could we find an option in enough time prior to this
25 17-18 school year? That would really be up to this

1 Panel. Going after an additional option at this
2 point in time, we would really want to do that with
3 knowing we're going to be granted a charter to go
4 through even more facility searches. It's a -- like
5 I said, it's very difficult as a landlord to want to
6 look at a charter entity and say, "Sure, we're going
7 to hold this facility for you until the Panel meets."
8 And then once you look at it, the State Board reviews
9 your decision, and if they want to pull it down, then
10 they ask for that. And so that's additional time
11 that often landlords do not understand. And so this
12 is a facility we did literally find in June. It's
13 not that we have not been looking for months; we
14 have. And so that would be an option we would be
15 open to should this Panel, you know, really want us
16 to stick with the Fayetteville School District. I'm
17 not saying that's not something we would not look at,
18 but I am saying that that would require additional
19 time and we would want to know that we would have a
20 charter granted to go ahead and go on down that road.
21 So we have looked at options and continue to every
22 day, even now, really. But the Farmington School
23 District is what we have currently. The Farmington
24 location is currently what is available to us after
25 months of looking.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Are there any additional
2 questions from panel members?

3 MR. ROGERS: I do.

4 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

5 MR. ROGERS: I'm still struggling with the whole
6 new page of waivers. So, Jennifer, if we accept this
7 charter today and this page that they've just given
8 us is in there -- and I know Tripp did a good job
9 trying to explain it; I'm not -- I'm still struggling
10 just getting it today, trying to have the time that I
11 feel comfortable looking at. So if we accepted this
12 today all these become part of their charter; right?

13 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

14 MR. ROGERS: And I guess, what is Legal's
15 concern about that?

16 MS. DAVIS: Like I say, since we did get this --
17 and I think somebody had already asked and they did
18 clarify that this list of waivers completely replaces
19 what was in their document. But this one still has
20 several issues and some of them are, I think, just
21 clarification from the applicant of whether or not --
22 you know, there's a couple of times to where they ask
23 to rescind, but they ask for the waiver more than
24 once. There's a couple that are kind of a blanket
25 waiver that has a little concern for me. There's a

1 waiver of procurement which, you know, up until now I
2 don't believe that you've granted. So there are a
3 couple -- few -- several issues. So, I mean, like I
4 say, if you want, we can go ahead and go through them
5 now or -- how do you want to --

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: What's the will of the
7 Panel?

8 MR. ROGERS: I don't really think that -- yeah,
9 I don't think this is the time to go through each and
10 every waiver that's on there right now. I just --

11 MS. DAVIS: Yeah.

12 MR. ROGERS: But that is a hurdle that I'm
13 having a hard time getting over is this big document
14 dropped on me today before I had a chance to look at
15 it because -- I mean, and some of it is the same.
16 But one of the questions I did have about the
17 waivers, like on school nurses, it says the whole
18 time that they will seek to partner, they will seek
19 for a mental health, they will seek for a nurse. So
20 if we granted this today and they never had a chance
21 to seek that partnership, does that mean we just gave
22 them a waiver from having a nurse on that entire
23 facility?

24 MS. DAVIS: Yeah, unfortunately. And just on
25 this document I have identified 15 areas, issues on

1 specific waivers, but a lot of their rationale is
2 flexibility. And in our initial review, when we
3 first get applications, we always send back for more
4 information, like a plan on how to do it, rather than
5 just we seek flexibility. So I know that's still a
6 lot of their rationale, which is some concern, but
7 there are 15 specific waivers on here that I have
8 marked just from reviewing it since I got it this
9 morning that I have issues. And some of it's simple
10 clarification, but there are some that do cause
11 concern. And specifically -- let me just tell you --
12 under Support Services, they ask for the entire
13 waiver of the ADE rules governing public school
14 student services. That waives guidance counseling;
15 that waives school nurses. And they ask for the
16 entire blanket rather than maybe a specific section
17 that they need for guidance counseling or student
18 services, so that one is of fairly large concern.

19 MR. ROGERS: That's -- I just -- that was my --
20 I just wanted to know that I wasn't the only one
21 concerned with it.

22 MS. DAVIS: No.

23 MR. ROGERS: But that's what I'm having the
24 hardest time overcoming is the waivers and how this
25 new one was brought to us today. That's it. That's

1 all.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

3 MS. PFEFFER: And I guess if I can just make a
4 couple of comments too, for me the concept of the
5 classical academy -- I thought the presentation was
6 very good. I think -- I don't have questions about
7 those components of it. The questions that I have
8 come into -- and I realize the secondary aspect of it
9 is going to be a few years down the road, but just
10 the matter of the openness and the transparency and
11 beginning the conversation so that the plans are more
12 solidly in place I would feel much more comfortable.
13 I don't feel comfortable with the location change. I
14 would feel a lot more comfortable if there is a phone
15 call to Farmington and give Farmington time to
16 respond, that, you know, okay, we know it and maybe
17 we like it and maybe we don't. That's not part of my
18 decision. It's just -- I just feel like there are a
19 lot of surprises here and a lot of uncertainty. And
20 so that's where I'm just feeling uncomfortable today,
21 so --

22 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Anyone else?

23 MS. PFEFFER: Is there -- are there options for
24 tabling and looking at it after there's time for some
25 notification and clarity?

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Davis, would you
2 review our options again?

3 MS. DAVIS: Okay. So you may vote on this
4 today; you make take it under advisement; and you can
5 also send the applicant back for more technical
6 assistance.

7 MS. PFEFFER: And would you -- and I probably
8 should've listened a little more closely earlier.
9 Taking it under advisement, exactly what does that
10 mean?

11 MS. DAVIS: It means that you can vote on it at
12 your next meeting.

13 DR. GOTCHER: Which would be?

14 MS. DAVIS: So if you send them back for
15 technical assistance, than you can take it up at your
16 next meeting.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Which would be?

18 MS. DAVIS: September 16th.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Which then puts them into
20 October State Board and then if they're reviewed,
21 possibly November?

22 MS. DAVIS: That's correct.

23 DR. DUNCAN: And may I ask?

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Sure.

25 DR. DUNCAN: I would be -- we would be more --

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: At the microphone.

2 DR. DUNCAN: We would be more than happy to take
3 additional time to provide whatever is needed to
4 clarify. And so if that's what this committee feels
5 comfortable with, we can certainly do that.

6 MS. SMITH: I think I kind of started with this
7 with my first question. But you've had four charters
8 granted since 2013, and so I'm really looking for an
9 established piece of data to show that we're making
10 progress in those. And the data that I'm looking at
11 right now doesn't show that; it shows -- now it does
12 for Northwest Academy. That actually looks very
13 impressive on paper, the scores there. I mean, lots
14 of things going in the right direction. On the other
15 three, in comparison to the same demographics, they
16 all three have struggling points, especially two of
17 them more so than the one -- one of the ones in
18 Little Rock. But I guess that's what I'm looking
19 for. I'm looking for ResponsiveEd to say, "This is
20 our record in Arkansas; this is what we've done;
21 these are the waivers we've used in Arkansas; this is
22 what's working for us, and we're ready to open a
23 fifth one and do it again." And I'm -- so I'm
24 looking for that. That's what I'm looking for.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

1 DR. GOTCHER: Yes. I agree with some of the
2 comments Ms. Pfeffer made. And while I support this
3 classical model of instruction -- I do believe it
4 provides a unique opportunity for pupils and parents
5 in that region; I just don't feel prepared. I feel
6 that there's more work to be done. So I'd like to
7 move with a motion that we table this application for
8 the September date.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Is there a second to the
10 motion to table?

11 MR. ROGERS: Can we discuss it?

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Absolutely, after it's
13 been seconded, if there is a second.

14 MS. PFEFFER: I'll second the motion.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Now there's
16 discussion.

17 MR. ROGERS: So part of the thing, a reason it
18 was rushed, because of our days to get it done. But
19 also part of I think what I was understanding is
20 until they had a commitment that they were going to
21 get a charter they couldn't secure a facility. So if
22 we just table it, is that really fixing anything?
23 Because they're still going to be looking for a
24 facility but they don't have the secure of the
25 charter. And so I'm just kind of -- while I agree

1 with the waiver thing and everything that's going on,
2 tabling to discuss it would help but is it going to
3 fix anything?

4 DR. GOTCHER: Madam Chair, and I certainly
5 understand the facilities piece and I don't want to
6 prohibit the progress of an applicant for -- I mean,
7 in a perfect world they'd be able to find the proper
8 facility in Fayetteville. But if that doesn't happen
9 then I feel we could -- because of the strength of
10 the model and the strength of some of the pieces that
11 I was encouraged by, if a facility doesn't procure
12 itself then we'll have to address that at another
13 time. Because it would be difficult for anyone to
14 try to ascertain a facility 16 months out and I'd
15 have a different opinion if it was moving to a
16 Farmington campus, especially with the apparent lack
17 of communication with that region. So I just -- I
18 don't want to hold an applicant back for a lack of
19 facility because it's so early.

20 MR. ROGERS: Right.

21 DR. GOTCHER: However, I get what you're saying,
22 Mr. Rogers.

23 MR. ROGERS: Well, it's not only just the lack
24 of a facility but, I mean, we saw their application
25 and we saw, as Deb alluded to, all the red to it.

1 And then they came back to it and we're still having
2 this much discussion, what Stacy was alluding to that
3 they're already here in Arkansas; they already have
4 the southwest classical that is working, that
5 everyone says is working.

6 DR. GOTCHER: Sure.

7 MR. ROGERS: Why was this application not
8 tailored more to that? Why do we still have all
9 these questions? Why do we still have the waivers
10 that were just brought to us today? So there's so --
11 I feel like they already had their chance because we
12 had the technical stuff; we had -- they worked with
13 our charter office and everything. So I'm still
14 struggling with if we table it now what is another
15 month going to do. And that's what I'm having
16 trouble understanding.

17 DR. GOTCHER: Sure.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any additional discussion?
19 Ms. Boyd.

20 MS. BOYD: I would just like to clarify. It
21 won't even be a full month for them to prepare
22 written responses to any additional questions you
23 have. We will need to post those on the 2nd, so
24 essentially it will be a two-week turnaround for
25 written responses.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Boyd, can you give us
2 an idea of how much technical assistance was
3 provided?

4 MS. BOYD: Yes, ma'am. So they sent in the
5 application, like all of the applicants; we review it
6 in the internal review committee, and then we send
7 the questions back out, and then they send responses
8 back in. This particular time I provided one-to-one
9 -- I made myself available for one-to-one discussions
10 with each applicant to work through any questions
11 they may have had where certain questions may have
12 been unclear. So that's what we provided and offered
13 to the applicant.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And did the applicant take
15 advantage of those?

16 MS. BOYD: Not fully.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Thank you.

18 Any further discussion? We have a motion to
19 table and a second. All those in favor?

20 DR. GOTCHER: Madam Chair?

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Yes.

22 DR. GOTCHER: With this new information, do I
23 have -- can I withdraw my motion since there's
24 already been a second, since there's new information,
25 or we have to move forward? We have to move forward.

1 All right.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: I'd better take a roll-
3 call. Ms. Liwo. The motion is to table.

4 MS. LIWO: No.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: No. Mr. Lester.

6 MR. LESTER: No.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

8 MR. ROGERS: No.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

10 DR. SAUNDERS: No.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

12 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

14 MS. SMITH: No.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

16 DR. GOTCHER: Abstain.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Motion fails.

18 Do I have a new motion?

19 DR. SAUNDERS: I'd make a motion to deny the
20 application.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Is there a second?

22 MS. LIWO: Second.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: There is a motion by Dr.
24 Saunders and a second by Ms. Liwo to deny the
25 application. Discussion?

1 DR. GOTCHER: Ms. Boyd, may I ask you a
2 question?

3 MS. BOYD: Of course.

4 DR. GOTCHER: When would be the next opportunity
5 for this applicant to be ready? When would be the
6 next door for their application to be heard if we
7 cannot hear it in September?

8 MS. BOYD: Right. If they want to do a complete
9 application, they have a couple of options because
10 they already have charters in the state. So if they
11 want to do a completely new application, then that
12 application process will start in March of next year
13 with a letter of intent, unless the schedule that
14 we've adopted recently has changed -- and when I say
15 recently, in the past year.

16 DR. GOTCHER: Sure.

17 MS. BOYD: So it will start in March and the
18 school won't open until the 18-19 school year. They
19 could do a license request, especially since they're
20 trying to duplicate the classical academy model.
21 They could do a license request through the charter
22 that they have with the Northwest Arkansas Classical
23 Academy to open a school in another district that's
24 going to be that same model, so --

25 DR. GOTCHER: Under that charter?

1 MS. BOYD: And they can do that at the time of
2 -- when you all hear amendment requests in October or
3 February in any year.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: So is the timeframe in place?
5 Would they be able to do that amendment this October?

6 MS. BOYD: Yes. I think they have to -- it's 35
7 days before your hearing, and I think the due-date
8 for that amendment request, to make the formal
9 request, I believe it's -- I think it's September
10 14th or 19th -- 14th. Thank you. September 14th.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any additional discussion?
12 Motion has been made to deny the application. We'll
13 take a roll-call vote. Ms. Liwo.

14 MS. LIWO: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

16 MR. LESTER: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

18 MR. ROGERS: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

20 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

22 MS. PFEFFER: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

24 MS. SMITH: Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

1 DR. GOTCHER: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: It's unanimous. Motion
3 denied -- or application denied.

4 If you'll take a moment to write your reasons,
5 and I would encourage you to be thorough in your
6 reasons so that the school has an opportunity to
7 learn from it and make revisions.

8 (A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE)

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

10 DR. GOTCHER: My vote was for the denial of the
11 application. While I support the classical model of
12 instruction and it provides a unique opportunity for
13 pupils and parents in that region, I feel there's
14 more preparation required before I can fully support
15 the current application. However, with my new
16 understanding of the time afforded them in regards to
17 the available technical assistance I feel it may be
18 best to apply at the next application cycle.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

20 MR. LESTER: At this time with the questions on
21 waivers and recent change in the location of the
22 charter school I feel as if I can't vote for this
23 application at this time.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo.

25 MS. LIWO: I voted in favor of denying the

1 application. The application to me was just very
2 vague. I had concerns too with their list of waivers
3 and ADE Legal not reviewing them. And I also had
4 concerns with the performance of their other
5 charters.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

7 MS. PFEFFER: I like the classical academy
8 concept, curriculum and vision for the school;
9 however, I was uncomfortable with the location change
10 from the original application and the lack of direct
11 notice to the new school district. While my decision
12 would not be based on the opinion of the Farmington
13 School District's approval or disapproval of the
14 location, I feel that the public knew of the
15 Fayetteville proposal but would be surprised with the
16 location in Farmington. I would feel more
17 comfortable if there were complete transparency.
18 Also, the application alluded to communication and
19 plans already underway with Arkansas Career
20 Education, which is not the case. While high school
21 implementation is in the future, plans need to begin
22 now and communication with ACE to form a partnership
23 to insure there are maximum opportunities for student
24 internships. Also, the legal office submission with
25 waiver concerns is a concern to me and I would like

1 all legal issues to be addressed prior to a hearing.

2 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

3 MR. ROGERS: I voted for the motion because
4 while I believe the classical model is intriguing and
5 can be successful, I just felt like there were too
6 many issues and too many unanswered questions
7 concerning the waivers, facilities, and how the
8 overall school would work. With ResponsiveEd already
9 in northwest Arkansas with Northwest Classical, I
10 would've liked to have seen a cleaner application.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

12 DR. SAUNDERS: Yes. I voted in favor. I
13 thought it was unclear and unspecific as to why the
14 requested waivers were necessary for student
15 achievement, as well as the continuing legal
16 concerns.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

18 MS. SMITH: I'm looking for a record of success
19 with ResponsiveEd's existing charter schools in
20 Arkansas. Two of the four current schools are
21 achieving at a very low level, while a third scores
22 below schools with a similar demographic. I need to
23 see evidence of continued growth within the current
24 approved charters and a proven plan before granting
25 an additional charter school.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Duncan, I hope you
2 will take this as constructive criticism and if -- do
3 you have any final words?

4 DR. DUNCAN: Yes, Madam Chair and Panel. I
5 appreciate your time very much today. I appreciate
6 your thoughts and concerns and consideration of this
7 application. It is clear that there is interest in
8 additional classical education in the northwest part
9 of the state, but it is also clear as an open-
10 enrollment charter we face an uphill battle with
11 facilities that are tied to many things that we are
12 trying to do in preparing to open a school. I very
13 much appreciate your time today, your thoughts, and
14 your concerns.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you.

16 Ms. Boyd, I think you have an announcement
17 before we take a break.

18 MS. BOYD: Yes. I just want to remind everyone
19 that the National Association for Charter School
20 Authorizers is holding a leadership conference in
21 October; it's the last week of October. Kelly and I
22 will be attending, and I don't know if you guys have
23 that on your calendar or if you're interested in
24 attending, but I wanted just to make you aware of
25 that. I know some of you are going to the -- is it

1 the iNACOL conference that same week. So I just
2 wanted to make you aware of that.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And have the --

4 MS. BOYD: Right.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: -- people for the next one
6 --

7 MS. BOYD: The next -- I haven't been able to
8 locate the applicant that's for the next item. So
9 I'm going to put in a call and see if I can get
10 confirmation about where they are.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. We need about a 12-
12 minute break.

13 DR. GOTCHER: Twelve-point-five.

14 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Twelve-point-five, Dr.
15 Gotcher says. Thank you.

16 (BREAK: 10:47 - 11:00 a.m.)

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

18 APPLICATION: LOCKESBURG STEM ACADEMY, LOCKESBURG, ARKANSAS

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Thank you. Ms. Boyd,
20 you're recognized.

21 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have been
22 unable to locate the applicant. I haven't been able
23 to reach the applicant on the phone and I would like
24 to bring Ms. Davis forward to advise us on how to
25 proceed.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Davis, you're
2 recognized.

3 MS. DAVIS: Since the applicant did not
4 officially give notice that they are withdrawing
5 their application, then my suggestion is you proceed
6 with the item. They obviously will not be here to
7 present. You can have the materials that they've
8 previously submitted. Opposition still gets an
9 opportunity, which I know that you did receive an
10 email in opposition. You can ask questions; there's
11 no one here to answer them, but you can ask questions
12 and then you vote. But my recommendation is that you
13 proceed with this since we did not get any kind of
14 official notification that they were withdrawing it.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Sounds great.
16 Thank you, Ms. Davis. Is there anyone here to speak
17 for or in opposition of Lockesburg Stem Academy?

18 MS. BOYD: No one is here presently to do so.

19 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: All right. Then we'll
20 move forward with discussion and questions.

21 MS. SMITH: Well, I do want to make a comment
22 real quick and then I'm going to make a motion to
23 deny. But when reviewing the application in the
24 charter office, they found that several sections of
25 the application were plagiarized, basically taken

1 from applications that can be found online,
2 throughout the application. And the charter office
3 did reach out and make -- tried to contact and we
4 needed to resolve some things. But First Place
5 Scholars out of Seattle in 2014, there's like a page-
6 and-a-half that's completely taken almost verbatim
7 from their application, and that's a problem.

8 And so based on that alone I make a motion to
9 deny the application.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Motion has been made --

11 MR. ROGERS: I second.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And a second. Any
13 discussion?

14 DR. SAUNDERS: I have a concern. I have a
15 concern over the procedures. And I think it's -- I'm
16 in support of the motion but only under the case that
17 I want to make sure that the applicant -- I guess
18 just assuming that there's not any emergency that has
19 prevented them that they may not be able to contact
20 us at the time, that if notification, you know,
21 within today occurs from the applicant that something
22 restricted their attendance that we would have the
23 ability to revisit this.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Davis.

25 MS. DAVIS: You could. But in the event that

1 something did happen, you could tomorrow take up a
2 motion to reconsider or rescind your vote since it
3 would be either -- you could either rescind or
4 reconsider the motion at that time. You could also
5 table this until tomorrow, if you want, or you can
6 just vote on it and then consider it tomorrow if
7 something should arise.

8 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And it will follow the
9 same process of going to the State Board at the next
10 State Board meeting, either way?

11 MS. DAVIS: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay.

13 MS. SUSAN: Well, and just in the application --
14 not only does it reflect and mirror verbatim some
15 sections of the First Place Scholars out of Seattle,
16 within the curriculum alignment part it actually
17 refers to the Texas Essential Knowledge, and so that
18 led me to believe that that section too was also just
19 copied.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Any other discussion?

21 There is a motion and a second to deny the
22 application. Ms. Liwo.

23 MS. LIWO: I vote in favor.

24 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

25 MR. LESTER: I vote in favor.

1 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

2 MR. ROGERS: For.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

4 DR. SAUNDERS: In favor.

5 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

6 MS. PFEFFER: For.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

8 MS. SMITH: For.

9 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Gotcher.

10 DR. GOTCHER: For.

11 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: The vote is unanimous.

12 Motion is -- the application is denied.

13 Are there any issues before -- any additional
14 issues before the Panel today, Ms. Boyd or Ms. Davis?

15 MS. BOYD: Not that I'm aware. If the Panel
16 Members don't have anything else they'd like to
17 discuss, I think we're fine.

18 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And would you look at the
19 agenda with us tomorrow?

20 MS. BOYD: Yes, of course.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: For tomorrow.

22 Before we move -- do we need to read out loud
23 for the transcript the reasons for -- okay, we'll
24 come back and do that.

25 MS. BOYD: All right. So tomorrow the first

1 item is an open-enrollment application from the Paron
2 Charter School -- for the Paron Charter School from
3 the Paron Community Trust. I have contacted them;
4 they'll be here tomorrow, and I also have someone on
5 the phone and Teal will be here to assist us with
6 that.

7 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay.

8 MS. BOYD: Then we have -- the amendment request
9 from Future School of Fort Smith has been withdrawn.
10 And so then we'll also have the Ozark Montessori
11 Academy come forward with an amendment request that's
12 focused on class size.

13 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: And have they been
14 notified that they may be earlier in the day?

15 MS. BOYD: The hearing letter said 8:30, but
16 I'll touch base with them on that.

17 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Okay. Great. Just in
18 case they were kind of time-mapping that they might
19 be later in the morning.

20 MS. BOYD: Uh-huh.

21 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Perfect.

22 MS. BOYD: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: In regard to the reason
24 for your vote, Dr. Gotcher.

25 DR. GOTCHER: I voted for the motion to deny.

1 My reason: too many critical issues unanswered and
2 the applicant is not present to address them.

3 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Lester.

4 MR. LESTER: The applicant was not present to
5 answer critical issues in the application.

6 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Liwo.

7 MS. LIWO: Voted for because the applicant
8 wasn't present today and there are questions about
9 the authenticity of their application.

10 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Pfeffer.

11 MS. PFEFFER: I voted for the motion. The
12 application was weak and new information calls into
13 question the authenticity and viability of the
14 request.

15 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Mr. Rogers.

16 MR. ROGERS: I voted for because the application
17 appears to be copied from other online charter
18 applications and the applicant failed to show up to
19 the hearing.

20 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Dr. Saunders.

21 DR. SAUNDERS: I voted for due to concerns with
22 the clarity and specificity on the application.

23 CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Smith.

24 MS. SMITH: (unintelligible)

25 MS. BOYD: I'm sorry; it's contagious.

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MS. SMITH: I'll try that one more time. Poor application; seems that portions of the applicant's application were copied from other applications found online. Applicant was also not at the hearing.

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Ms. Boyd, any additional comments or questions?

MS. BOYD: No, ma'am. I look forward to seeing you all in the morning.

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: We'll accept a motion to adjourn.

DR. GOTCHER: So moved.

MS. SMITH: Second.

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Motion made by Dr. Gotcher, seconded by Ms. Smith to adjourn. All those in favor?

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRPERSON COFFMAN: Meeting stands adjourned. See you in the morning at 8:30. Thank you all for attending.

(The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.)

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A-1:
EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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