

**In The Matter Of:**

*DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION*

---

*December 10, 2020*

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## E X H I B I T S

A-9: DAVID PARKMAN WAIVER HEARING

EXHIBIT ONE (1)  
DESE Packet of Exhibits

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P R O C E E D I N G S

ADDITION OF AGENDA ITEM

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. First on the agenda -- we have changes to the agenda; there was one item that needs to be added. So we'll need to take a vote on that, on whether or not to add it to the agenda. Do I see a motion?

MR. SUTTON: So moved.

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: We have a motion by Steve Sutton to add an action item to the agenda.

Do I have a second?

MS. WOODS: Wait. I'm sorry. What action item is it?

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. It was -- let's see --

MS. WOODS: Is this the license issue?

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes, it's the waiver.

MS. WOODS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: The license, yes. Sorry.

MS. WOODS: Okay, I'll second it.

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Right. Okay. Seconded by Ms. Woods.

All in favor say "aye?"

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

1                   Seeing none -- well, at the time when that needs  
2 to be talked about we'll hand that over to Taylor  
3 Dugan.

4                   MS. NEWTON: Is he going to have a hardcopy for  
5 us?

6                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I believe he said he did.

7                   MS. NEWTON: Okay.

8                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes. Okay, yes.

9   (OFF THE RECORD)

10   (BACK ON THE RECORD)

11 A-1: NOMINATIONS FOR SBE VICE CHAIR

12                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: So we'll get into the action  
13 agenda, and first up we have nominations for State  
14 Board of Education Vice Chair. As you might have  
15 noticed, we're missing one vital part of our team.  
16 Mr. Brett Williamson has decided to step down from  
17 his position on the State Board to focus more on his  
18 family and work that's going on right now. So we  
19 will definitely miss his presence and his point of  
20 view and perspective that he brings to the Board.  
21 But we have other members that are on the board that  
22 are available.

23                   So I will open the floor for nominations for  
24 Vice Chair.

25                   MS. WOODS: Out of curiosity, because I don't

1 know -- are there requirements, like a time on the  
2 Board, being on subcommittees? I don't know.

3 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: As far as I know, I don't  
4 believe there is any sort of requirement as far as  
5 length of time on the Board or anything of that sort.

6 SECRETARY KEY: I'm not sure for vice chair. I  
7 don't think so. I don't think there's --

8 MS. WINDLE: We changed that in the operating  
9 procedures.

10 MS. WOODS: We changed that in the operating  
11 procedures. Okay. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay.

13 DR. MOORE: I would like to nominate Ms. Newton  
14 to be vice chair.

15 DR. HILL: And I second.

16 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. So we have a  
17 nomination from Dr. Moore -- I don't -- for Ms. Ouida  
18 Newton to become our vice chair. And it was seconded  
19 by Dr. Fitz Hill.

20 All in favor say "aye."

21 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

23 Seeing none, motion passes.

24 Congratulations, Ms. Newton. It's a pleasure to  
25 have you as our Vice Chair. We know the experience

1 and knowledge and in-depth study that you bring to  
2 the table. So, congratulations and we look forward  
3 to you serving as Vice Chair.

4 MS. NEWTON: Thank you, Board, for your  
5 confidence. I'll do my best to support our Chair and  
6 support you in any way that I can. So thank you very  
7 much. Appreciate it.

8 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you.

9 SECRETARY KEY: Madam Chair, if I may, I just  
10 want to say something about Mr. Williamson before we  
11 move on.

12 The beauty of this board is if you look through  
13 the history of the Board it has always had a very  
14 strong cross-section of people from education or  
15 people from business, people from the community, you  
16 know, representing the diversity of the State of  
17 Arkansas. You know, when you can have somebody that  
18 is as highly qualified -- former Teacher of the Year  
19 -- I never should say former Teacher of the Year --  
20 for every Teacher of the Year, like Ms. Newton, you  
21 know, somebody that -- who could step into that role  
22 and bring that perspective is fantastic. But I don't  
23 want to miss the opportunity to highlight Mr.  
24 Williamson and his role, his contributions to this  
25 board. I really wanted to try to talk him out of it,

1 of resigning. But, you know, in talking to him, I  
2 certainly understand the family demands, the business  
3 demands. It is tough. This is a tough job. Nobody  
4 understands how tough a job this is until you have  
5 actually been in the seat -- and y'all are  
6 experiencing that now. So it's like your brother  
7 moving out-of-country to see Brett not be coming here  
8 anymore. So I'll miss him. I know y'all will too.  
9 But I just want to say how much I appreciate his  
10 service.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Definitely. He will be  
12 missed.

13 Okay. Any other comments?

14 A-2: CONSIDERATION OF 1240 WAIVER REQUEST - ATKINS SCHOOL  
15 DISTRICT

16 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Then we will move on  
17 to the next item on the agenda, which is the  
18 Consideration of 1240 Waiver Request for Atkins  
19 School District. And Ms. Tracy Webb will be  
20 presenting.

21 MS. WEBB: Good morning. The Atkins School  
22 District has requested a 1240 waiver for  
23 Superintendent Licensure. Right after school started  
24 this year their superintendent passed away from  
25 Covid, so they appointed someone that was already on

1 staff. He does not have a license. Mr. Darrell Webb  
2 -- I think he should be on the Zoom, if you have any  
3 questions. I think they've already hired another  
4 licensed superintendent for the next school year, so  
5 they just need the waiver for this school year.

6 MS. WOODS: Ms. Webb, are they also requesting a  
7 waiver for the 187 -- 178 days?

8 MS. WEBB: I'm so sorry. Yes, they are.

9 MS. WOODS: And -- okay.

10 MS. WEBB: Yes.

11 MS. WOODS: Okay. So my only question is, is  
12 that just for the day that they took off to honor  
13 him?

14 MS. WEBB: Yes, ma'am.

15 MS. WOODS: That's what I thought. Okay.

16 MS. NEWTON: First, I want to express my  
17 sympathy to the District. I know this has been a  
18 very difficult time and a very difficult season for  
19 them. And I just, you know, express my sympathy for  
20 them and appreciation for their hard work -- and to  
21 you, Mr. Webb, for stepping in like you have. I know  
22 it's been an abnormally hard season and this has made  
23 it even more difficult.

24 So I move that we grant both waivers.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: We have a motion by Ms.

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Newton.

Do I have a second?

MR. SUTTON: Second.

DR. MOORE: Second.

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Mr. Sutton.

Was that you?

MR. SUTTON: (nodding head up and down.)

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. By Mr. Sutton.

All in favor say "aye."

(UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

Seeing none, motion passes.

I too want to echo that sentiment. My condolences go out to the Atkins School District community and the families and to everyone that is experiencing this loss. And thank you, Mr. Webb, for stepping in and taking those responsibilities, along with everything that's going on right now. So we're praying for your strength and praying for the Atkins School District and community, and I'm hoping it all goes well for you.

MR. WEBB: Thank you. Thank you very much. And I would like to say I've had tremendous support from Commissioner Key and everyone in that department, on down to our local co-op on this position and -- along

1 with area superintendents. I just want to thank  
2 everyone for the support that I've received and the  
3 condolences that this community has received in this  
4 time. It has been a tough time but we have endured.  
5 We'll get through it and we'll manage and we'll do  
6 the best we can. And I would just like to thank  
7 Commissioner Key and Ms. Pfeffer and everyone on the  
8 Board and with the State Department for their  
9 tremendous help that I have received during this  
10 time.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you.

12 A-3: CONSIDERATION OF 1240 WAIVER REQUEST EXTENSION - MOUNTAIN  
13 PINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

14 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. Ms. Webb,  
15 Consideration of Mountain Pine School District is  
16 next.

17 MS. WEBB: The Mountain Pine School District  
18 currently has a waiver for the high school Library  
19 Media Specialist that expires on March 8, 2020 [sic].  
20 They would -- they're asking that that waiver be  
21 extended through the end of the school year. They  
22 have someone who is on staff that is working as  
23 Library Media Specialist that will be licensed by  
24 July 1 to fill that position. And so they only need  
25 the waiver for the remainder of this school year.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Do we have any  
2 questions or comments?

3 Dr. Moore.

4 DR. MOORE: Yes. Tracy, I have a question for  
5 you. Why is it that we don't approve the waivers  
6 throughout the term of the school year initially?

7 MS. WEBB: I'm not sure. I think that waiver  
8 was several years old, so I'm not sure why that was  
9 done that way. It might depend on when they come to  
10 the Board and request the waiver, if something  
11 happened at that time, if their Library Media  
12 Specialist left or something and that's when they  
13 needed it, and so then it was good for year.

14 DR. MOORE: Okay. But this one will only be  
15 good through --

16 MS. WEBB: June 30, 2021.

17 DR. MOORE: Okay. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Do we have any other  
19 questions or comments?

20 If not, then I'll look for a motion.

21 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll move to grant the waiver.

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. We have a motion  
23 by Ms. McFetridge to grant the waiver.

24 Do I have a second?

25 DR. MOORE: I'll second.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Ms. Woods.

2 All in favor say "aye."

3 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

4 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

5 Seeing none, motion passes.

6 MS. WOODS: I think Dr. Moore actually seconded.

7 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Oh. Was that you?

8 DR. MOORE: It was. Yeah.

9 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I'm sorry.

10 MS. WOODS: I was going to, but she beat me to  
11 it.

12 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I just heard from that  
13 direction.

14 So let's correct that in the record. I have a  
15 motion by Ms. McFetridge, seconded by Dr. Moore. And  
16 motion passes. Okay.

17 A-4: STATE BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2021-2022

18 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: So, all right, we have our  
19 State Board Meeting Dates for next year. Did  
20 everyone get an opportunity to look at those dates  
21 and see if they work for everyone?

22 So if we have no issues with those dates, then  
23 I'll look for a motion.

24 DR. HILL: So moved.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. A motion by Dr. Hill

1 to approve the dates for the 2021-22 school year --  
2 I'm sorry -- calendar year.

3 And do we have a second?

4 DR. MOORE: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Dr. Moore.

6 Seconded by Dr. Moore.

7 All in favor?

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

10 Seeing none, motion passes.

11 It's hard to see who said what with masks on and  
12 trying to see on the -- on Zoom as well.

13 Okay. So let me get back to that.

14 MS. WOODS: Well, I will just say that I'll be  
15 mistaken for Dr. Moore any day.

16 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: You will? Okay.

17 A-5: CONSIDERATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL  
18 LICENSURE STANDARDS BOARD TO WAIVE THE APPLICATION FEE FOR  
19 FIRST-TIME FIVE-YEAR STANDARD EDUCATOR'S LICENSE (INCLUDING BY  
20 RECIPROCITY)

21 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Next we have our  
22 Consideration of Recommendation of the Professional  
23 Licensure Standards Board to Waive the Application  
24 Fee for First-Time Five-Year Standard Educator's  
25 License. And we have our presenter, Dr. Ivy Pfeffer.

1 Good morning.

2 DR. PFEFFER: Good morning. Ivy Pfeffer,  
3 Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.  
4 Thank you.

5 As you know, we regularly report out on school  
6 district modifications and we know that every week we  
7 have different scenarios where different numbers of  
8 school districts have had to pivot to some type of  
9 remote or digital learning. Sometimes it's a  
10 classroom, sometimes it's a grade level, sometimes  
11 it's a school district level.

12 I want to brag on Arijit Sarkar for how he  
13 continues to update and modify our inside reporting  
14 tool that districts use in communication with us as  
15 they're making those adjustments to their onsite  
16 schedules. We're able to see more clearly all the  
17 time what the real impact is, and it's really easy as  
18 these closures of classrooms or grade levels or  
19 schools -- it's really easy to just feel like, you  
20 know, that learning is really just stopping. But I  
21 think when we can really sit back and look at the  
22 data we really can understand that the majority of  
23 our students are able to be onsite every day in our  
24 schools, unless they or their parents have chosen for  
25 them to have a true virtual option. And right now

1 our data show that over 70% of our districts have not  
2 had to make a modification, a district-wide  
3 modification. And 70 -- I think it's over 75% of our  
4 schools have not had to do a school-wide  
5 modification. So I think that is just something we  
6 have to continue to celebrate and encourage our  
7 schools, because they really are doing a good job to  
8 be targeted, to keep students safe, to work with  
9 their staff -- but, most importantly, to keep the  
10 option for students to be at school whenever  
11 possible. So I wanted to kind of preface this ask in  
12 those terms. But we do know that the quarantines and  
13 the -- by and large the quarantines of adults really  
14 are the driver in districts having to make those  
15 modifications or adjustments to onsite learning, and  
16 it is oftentimes difficult to find teachers who can  
17 step in to fill in when those long-term gaps are in  
18 place. We have heard from school districts that  
19 they're expecting some earlier retirements in mid-  
20 year this year. And so in looking at things that we  
21 could do to maybe just give districts another tool in  
22 their toolbox to be able to get people in classes  
23 more quickly would be to waive the \$75 licensure  
24 application fee, and the PLSB is in agreement. And  
25 we wanted to bring that consideration to you all to

1 approve, because we do feel like this would expedite  
2 the licensing of new graduates and also candidates  
3 who are coming in to the state for licensure by  
4 reciprocity. So this would apply to any first-time  
5 licensure applicant.

6 So we would ask for you to approve this request.

7 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Dr. Pfeffer.

8 Do we have any questions or comments?

9 If not, then I would look for a motion.

10 MS. WOODS: I move to approve.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I have a motion to approve by  
12 Ms. Woods.

13 MR. SUTTON: Second.

14 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Mr. Sutton.

15 All in favor say "aye."

16 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

17 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

18 Seeing none, motion passes.

19 A-6: COMPUTER SCIENCE AND COMPUTING INITIATIVE UPDATE AND  
20 CONSIDERATION OF THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION OF COMMITMENT TO  
21 ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Next on the agenda is  
23 Computer Science and Computing Initiative Update and  
24 Consideration of the Adoption of a Resolution of  
25 Commitment to Elementary and Secondary Computer

1 Science Education. And we have Mr. Anthony Owen back  
2 with us again today. So welcome, Mr. Owen.

3 MR. OWEN: Good morning. Anthony Owen, Arkansas  
4 Department of Education, Office of Computer Science.  
5 Thank y'all for giving me some time today. I notice  
6 that I was the last person before lunch. I will do  
7 my best not to fill up an hour and 10 minutes though,  
8 so -- but I do want to say welcome to the new Teacher  
9 of the Year, who actually has a CS connection, if you  
10 were not aware of that. She was the CS Coordinator  
11 for her district. And I also want to say  
12 congratulations to Ms. Stacy Smith, long-time friend,  
13 and well-deserved position. So congratulations.

14 Before we get into this, I'd like to take a  
15 point of personal privilege and then share a video.  
16 I sent an email last week -- and I won't go in-depth  
17 on the context of that email. But I want to thank  
18 the Board Members, as a husband of an individual who  
19 teaches in a K-5 institution -- public school  
20 institution and has two children enrolled in a public  
21 school institution for this Board's, the Governor's,  
22 Secretary Key's, and Dr. Pfeffer's commitment to  
23 insuring that our schools still offer face-to-face  
24 options to our students. It is very important to my  
25 family and it's very important to families across the

1 state -- and I know y'all take a lot of grief for  
2 that. But as someone in the public who has family  
3 members that's taking advantage of that I want to say  
4 thank y'all for taking that ire and that grief.

5 That said, we have a message from Governor  
6 Hutchinson for you all.

7 [VIDEO, AS FOLLOWS]

8 GOVERNOR HUTCHINSON: Hi. I'm Asa Hutchinson,  
9 Governor of the state, with the best teachers in the  
10 country. As you wrap up the 2020 Computer Science  
11 Education Week, I can think of no better way to pave  
12 the way for our schools over the next four years than  
13 to celebrate the adoption of the new Computer Science  
14 and Computing standards and courses presented to you  
15 today. They are the result of thousands of hours of  
16 work by educators, industry representatives, and  
17 members of our state CS for Arkansas team. As we  
18 continue to find ways to close the gender gap in  
19 Computer Science, we must also encourage younger  
20 students to consider Computer Science. I hope the  
21 Arkansas State Board of Education will adopt the  
22 National Computer Science Resolution that the Office  
23 of Computer Science developed in partnership with  
24 other states. Thank you, Members of the State Board  
25 of Education, the Department, industry leaders, and

1 the hundreds of Arkansas educators for your work in  
2 making and keeping Arkansas in the lead in Computer  
3 Science and Computing education.

4 [END OF VIDEO]

5 MR. OWEN: So I want to say thank you to the  
6 Governor's office and his videography team for  
7 putting that together for us. I don't know that that  
8 was a very traditional request, but if y'all haven't  
9 learned anything about me yet I'm not very  
10 traditional in the way that I approach this  
11 initiative.

12 That said, I would like to share a little bit of  
13 information. I'm going to give Dan -- I'm going to  
14 talk a little bit while Dan is preparing the slide  
15 deck. To each of y'all I provided our current slides  
16 of all of our announcements through CS Education  
17 Week. It's just a brief synopsis of the different  
18 announcements that we've made so far this week. If  
19 you want more information, we have a page dedicated  
20 to it out on our CS website -- but a lot of great,  
21 great things coming out.

22 Today's announcements, I'll -- today's  
23 announcement, I'll talk a little bit about it. We're  
24 expanding our curriculum options as we see a need to  
25 support schools and teachers more. We're going to

1 continue providing curriculum resources to them  
2 through Virtual Arkansas. We are currently working  
3 on expanding our UpSkills program through A-State and  
4 in partnership with the Arkansas Public School  
5 Resource Center. That announcement was not ready to  
6 make today that it has been finalized, but I wanted  
7 y'all to know that we have a lot of great partners  
8 out there across the state that is helping us help  
9 teachers in the classroom in this initiative.

10 That said, I'm going to roll through some  
11 highlights in the report. Y'all have it. I'm not  
12 going to go through the entire thing, but I'm happy  
13 to answer any questions on it. We were sweating the  
14 numbers this year. Every year we've been able to  
15 show an increase in this initiative of enrollment at  
16 a high school level. I actually got the numbers one  
17 day about two hours before I was to show up at the  
18 Governor's Mansion to help him with another project  
19 and I was able to deliver this news to him in person.  
20 And we both had huge smiles on our face -- I'll say  
21 it that way -- because we were really worried with  
22 the Covid situation of whether we would be able to  
23 show an increase this year or not. We were able to  
24 show an increase to 10,450 individual students taking  
25 a Computer Science course at the high school level.

1 That's an increase of over 9,800 last year. And if  
2 you remember, it was 1100 the year before we started  
3 this initiative. There's a lot of information there.  
4 I will hit that we still have a gap issue with  
5 gender. We're aware of that; we're trying to focus  
6 efforts on those. We are partnering with different  
7 entities to help us develop best practices to try to  
8 close that gap. But I can proudly say that this is  
9 the first year in our initiative's history that we do  
10 not have an under-representation by minority  
11 students. We're actually over-represented in CS  
12 enrollment at the high school level by minority  
13 students, so we are extremely proud of that. That  
14 shows that our efforts in broadening participation is  
15 working. Now if we can just look at how we can close  
16 that gender gap.

17 So with that said, the information is there.  
18 And I give credit back to the teachers on this  
19 particular issue. We have grown our teacher pool  
20 across the state from a little over 20 when this  
21 initiative began, that we could identify, to over 500  
22 current teachers that are certified in CS at some  
23 level to teach at a high school -- in the high  
24 school.

25 So that said, I'm open to any questions about

1 the report, the enrollment report first, and then  
2 we'd like to move on to the consideration of the  
3 resolution.

4 Hearing none, I'll move on.

5 The CS Resolution is actually a -- I want to  
6 first thank y'all for adopting the CS Education Week  
7 Resolution last board meeting. We do have that; we  
8 have posted that. This is a different resolution.  
9 This resolution is actually the product of our office  
10 working with about -- well, now I think it's about 11  
11 different states. There are national entities that  
12 are looking at picking this up to start pushing it  
13 out amongst other states. But whenever I called and  
14 spoke with individuals along -- you know, I was part  
15 of kind of a team of four that started this work. I  
16 called and spoke to the other three and said, you  
17 know, "Arkansas loves to be first. Can I go ahead  
18 and jump out of the -- you know, jump out ahead and  
19 put this in front of our state board for  
20 consideration?" And they loved the idea. Basically  
21 what this resolution does is it says we are committed  
22 to Computer Science Education, not only at a high  
23 school level but at the earlier grade levels also --  
24 and specifically at the earlier grade levels because  
25 that is where the stigma around STEM subjects is

1 developed. So we have to do all we can to erase that  
2 negative stigma that this is not for everyone; same  
3 thing as math and science, you know, and different  
4 areas. But we want to take a conscientious focus on  
5 this as a state in Computer Science, and we want to  
6 also encourage our school districts to adopt this  
7 resolution once we put it out in template form.

8 So with that said, I don't -- unless the  
9 Chairwoman would like me to read the resolution --  
10 I'm happy to.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes.

12 MR. OWEN: Let me make sure I get the copy from  
13 Secretary Key there so I read what y'all have.

14 Arkansas State Board of Education Resolution:

15 Whereas, Arkansas is committed to preparing all  
16 our children for high-tech future they face; and

17 Whereas, it is vital to all our communities'  
18 economic security and future that K-12 graduates  
19 possess increasingly strong coding, computer science,  
20 and computational thinking skills to prepare them for  
21 the modern workforce; and

22 Whereas, to provide this vital knowledge to all  
23 of our children, research and experience shows middle  
24 school can be too late to build this computer science  
25 literacy and self-belief, especially for girls, color

1 -- children of color, and children from rural, low-  
2 income, and underserved communities; and

3 Whereas, in the elementary school years, when  
4 children build skills and self-beliefs that last a  
5 lifetime, they overwhelmingly enjoy computer science  
6 learning, and uniquely benefit from family  
7 encouragement that can shape confidence and interest  
8 in computer science; and

9 Whereas, with a such -- with such a foundation  
10 of basic computer science literacy, middle and high  
11 school computer -- middle and high school students  
12 are prepared to excel in this defining field to  
13 become successful, economically secure citizens,  
14 employees, and entrepreneurs; and

15 Whereas, Arkansas has developed grade specific  
16 Kindergarten through Grade 8 standards and supporting  
17 programs including the K-8 Computer Science Lead  
18 Teacher Program to increasingly address this vital  
19 educational imperative;

20 Now therefore be it resolved that

21 Arkansas State Board of Education urges each  
22 school to employ available resources to teach all  
23 possible children age-appropriate skills and literacy  
24 in computer science, coding, and related fields;

25 Support families to encourage their children's

1 computer science learning; and

2 Seek to create increasingly ambitious plans and  
3 goals to reach all possible children and families  
4 with this essential learning.

5 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I'm open to a motion to adopt  
6 this resolution.

7 DR. MOORE: Move to approve.

8 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: We have a motion from Dr.  
9 Moore.

10 DR. HILL: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Dr. Hill.

12 All in favor say "aye."

13 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

14 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

15 Motion passes.

16 Thank you, Dr. Owen. This is a really important  
17 move for Arkansas, another step toward making  
18 Arkansas a place to look toward for other states, to  
19 be an example of innovation and inclusion. I love to  
20 hear that there -- we are over-represented when it  
21 comes to minorities and I'm looking forward to seeing  
22 that gender gap filled in. We're seeing more and  
23 more girls in science and girls in coding and things  
24 of that sort. So I'm looking forward to the work  
25 that will be done there to close that gap and just to

1 expand the horizons of all of our students here in  
2 Arkansas and move us forward in the future.

3 So thank you so much for your work, Dr. Owen --  
4 or Mr. Owen.

5 MR. OWEN: Thank you so much.

6 MS. WOODS: Can I just make a comment?

7 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Sure.

8 MS. WOODS: I just wanted to thank you for the  
9 passion that you clearly evidence in putting this  
10 forward. My dad was -- he knew a little bit about  
11 something -- about computers in the 80s, before  
12 anybody knew anything. And he had a very long 30-  
13 year career at a very large company in their IT  
14 department because he took the time and effort to  
15 invest in this. And so he actually (inaudible, mic  
16 not on) applying for colleges. And so having a four-  
17 year old daughter now and just kind of seeing how she  
18 is viewing the world. I just really appreciate  
19 (inaudible) and giving this opportunity, because it  
20 is very important.

21 MR. OWEN: Thank you so much.

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any other comments?

23 Okay. All right. Thank you, Dr. -- Mr. Owen.

24 MR. OWEN: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: And with that -- let's see --

1 standards. Oh, sorry.

2 A-7: CONSIDERATION OF THE ADOPTION OF THE ARKANSAS COMPUTER  
3 SCIENCE AND COMPUTING STANDARDS AND COURSES FOR HIGH SCHOOL

4 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Consideration of the Adoption  
5 of the Arkansas Computer Science and Computing  
6 Standards and Courses for High School.

7 MR. OWEN: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

8 And before we get into this, I do want to also  
9 mention the Computer Science and Cyber Security  
10 Taskforce report that is out there and the work of  
11 that team. That has led to a lot of great things  
12 that are going to take place in our state over the  
13 next four to five years and really is visionary in  
14 the work that we as a state will undertake. And I  
15 want to thank specifically Mr. Bill Gossage for  
16 chairing that and his leadership on that taskforce.  
17 If you have not read that report -- I actually was  
18 preparing for a national call yesterday on a webinar  
19 and an individual -- I won't say who they were,  
20 because they didn't give me permission to -- but  
21 pretty high-up individual from another state said  
22 that was absolutely the best educational report that  
23 they had ever read as far as actionable items and the  
24 amount of information that is there that other states  
25 can take and implement as suggestions within their

1 own state. So we're very proud of that work and I  
2 wanted to share that.

3 Regarding the standards, it feels like I was  
4 just up here yesterday but it's been four years.  
5 This is a content area in which that we said early on  
6 we would have a quicker revision cycle than other  
7 content areas because of the unique nature. If you  
8 remember, we do a four-year overhaul complete  
9 revision and a two-year micro revision. So I guess  
10 it's actually been two years since I brought y'all  
11 the micro revision standards. But I do want to say  
12 thank you to the 48 industry specialists and  
13 educational leaders from across Arkansas that  
14 participate on that committee. And I want to give a  
15 special call-out to my team -- Kelly Griffin, who's  
16 Lead CS Specialist for our state; our statewide  
17 specialist, Zach Spink, Tammy Glass, John Hart,  
18 Leslie Savell, Lori Kagebein, Jim Furniss, Eli McRae,  
19 and Alex Moller. And I also want to give a call-out  
20 to my two internal team members Morgan Warbington --  
21 some of y'all know her as Morgan Aldridge -- and  
22 Emily Torres. That committee -- I gave y'all a  
23 briefing on it, but that committee spent thousands of  
24 hours -- combined hours working on these standards.  
25 And then our internal team went back and spent, you

1 know, another thousand-plus hours on them, working to  
2 make sure that they were quality, make sure that they  
3 would meet the needs of industry well into the  
4 future, and that they were relevant to our students.  
5 Once we adopt -- hopefully y'all adopt the standards;  
6 but once they're adopted, really all work then begins  
7 anew. We're going to create ancillary supporting  
8 documents to go with these standards to support  
9 teachers; we're going to continue looking at  
10 curriculum options for teachers; and we have to do  
11 our main focus which is providing professional  
12 development to our Arkansas educators on how to teach  
13 these standards properly to our students. You see  
14 the list in front of you. We were very happy this  
15 year to add data science -- well, one, we were very  
16 happy to create true pathways for all of these areas.  
17 In the past we had had similar standards for the  
18 first two years and then diverged for the third year  
19 advance. We did create three-year pathways for each  
20 of these areas. We have added computer engineering  
21 and data science this year, two completely new  
22 pathways. And we are currently completing -- working  
23 on completing an artificial intelligence and machine  
24 learning set of standards.

25 That said, if anybody out there has industry

1 experience or wants to be part of that committee it's  
2 a very small group of individuals working on that.  
3 So we would appreciate the help. That's not a big  
4 field that's out there, so please contact our office.

5 But that said, we have two recommended motions  
6 in front of you all. The first one is regarding the  
7 adoption of the standards. I think y'all have those  
8 motions, so I won't read them. And the second I will  
9 talk to if the first one passes or if you want me to  
10 now.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Do we have any  
12 questions?

13 Dr. Moore.

14 DR. MOORE: I do. Yes.

15 Could you -- on the four-year cycle, can you  
16 kind of go through what were the -- were there any  
17 very big changes in any of these courses? And if so,  
18 what were they?

19 MR. OWEN: So the big changes are, one, we did  
20 keep the initial year standards the same across all  
21 pathways. In past years it had been the first two  
22 years, but this year we kept the initial year the  
23 same. They start diverging uniquely to each of the  
24 pathways in year-two. The reason we did that is  
25 because one of the -- we were aware that the

1 taskforce had made the recommendation of every  
2 student in Arkansas needing a computer science course  
3 or, you know, that is a credit requirement. We know  
4 that there's legislation that's going before the  
5 General Assembly to make that a requirement. So we  
6 wanted to keep that first year the same across the  
7 board in light of that, because it allows our  
8 teachers to provide -- be provided with professional  
9 development that aids them in curriculum, that aids  
10 them in instruction. Now, if they're a networking  
11 teacher most of those first-year standards can be  
12 taught through a networking lens, and they will be;  
13 same thing with mobile app development, same thing  
14 with traditional programming.

15 The other big difference -- and this was  
16 actually -- I want to thank Dr. Schubert from U of A  
17 on this and Elizabeth Parker from Dillard's who was  
18 on our standards committee -- we have added a story-  
19 telling section to our standards. What we were  
20 hearing repetitively from industry is that our  
21 students are coming out of our high schools and out  
22 of our four-year institutions and two-year  
23 institutions very technical, but they don't know how  
24 to talk to non-technical people about that; they  
25 can't relate that information. And so we have built

1 in a story-telling strand that we are very proud of  
2 across all the content areas, and we think that that  
3 -- this will assist our students in learning how to  
4 communicate information, that technical information  
5 to non-technical audiences in a more appropriate  
6 fashion.

7 DR. MOORE: That's great. And that actually  
8 answered part of my next question about if -- I've  
9 seen the Governor's recommendation for the high  
10 school graduation requirement. Are these -- would  
11 all these courses qualify for that? Are they all  
12 four-year courses or are they --

13 MR. OWEN: So what we did this year on the  
14 formatting of our standards, we still provide a  
15 course code for each semester, so for each half  
16 credit for any of these. However, we wrote the  
17 standards to be year-long standards and this was a  
18 reflective of feedback that we received from  
19 educators across the field the past four years. What  
20 we had done, when we tried to separate the standards  
21 by semester there were very minute changes. And what  
22 we were hearing back from educators was "because this  
23 is in both semesters with very minor changes I feel  
24 like I have to go back and teach it again in second  
25 semester with this minute change instead of just

1 doing it all at once, whenever it makes the most  
2 sense." So we made the standards to be year-long.  
3 We still provide semester course codes, but the  
4 standards are written in a way to be year-long. And,  
5 yes, because I'm asking these to be adopted with no  
6 prerequisites on them as part of the motion, any  
7 course -- what our recommendation -- whenever we  
8 bring rules to promulgate based on legislation, if  
9 the legislation passed, is that any 465 coded or 465  
10 coded course would meet that graduation requirement.  
11 So it wouldn't matter if it was the first year. If  
12 it was an advanced student taking an upper-level  
13 course, an AP course, and that was the only CS they  
14 ever took, that would meet that graduation  
15 requirement.

16 DR. MOORE: Okay.

17 MR. OWEN: That's going to be our  
18 recommendation, but it's subject to legislation and  
19 obviously y'all's approval on the rules.

20 DR. MOORE: Certainly. And that is certainly  
21 going to be a challenge for some districts in that  
22 they're offering it but don't have as many students  
23 taking it. And so I'm excited to see where that  
24 goes, if that legislation goes through, knowing that  
25 there are a lot of challenges along the way.

1           Along those lines, what sort of professional  
2           development are y'all offering? Because I imagine a  
3           lot of these courses don't have teachers with prior  
4           experience in these areas.

5           MR. OWEN: Correct. So we're going to continue  
6           to focus on the high school level getting certified  
7           teachers and directing teachers to resources that are  
8           specific to these different content areas. We will  
9           be developing some additional resources as we go  
10          along, specifically data sciences and some others.  
11          But we're working with partners on a lot of that  
12          already, especially some of those more obscure areas,  
13          and just identifying resources for teachers. Our  
14          main focus as a group over the next two years really  
15          has to be getting teachers certified and ready to  
16          teach that introductory course, which is another  
17          reason that we kept those standards pretty common  
18          across that first year.

19          CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Secretary Key.

20          SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Owen, just to clarify -- so,  
21          but a full credit does not necessarily mean a full  
22          year?

23          MR. OWEN: It would not necessarily have to be a  
24          full year; it does have to be one credit. But I  
25          think of options like our A-State UpSkills option

1 that a student -- because it's a concurrent credit  
2 option a student could actually get that full credit  
3 in nine weeks.

4 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. McFetridge.

5 MS. McFETRIDGE: Can I ask a question, Mr. Owen?

6 MR. OWEN: Yes.

7 MS. McFETRIDGE: This is Kathy.

8 I noticed that in the computer science and  
9 computing standards for grades K-8 that you're not  
10 going to require any formal assessment of the  
11 standards. Can you talk to that and maybe explain  
12 that?

13 MR. OWEN: Yes, ma'am, with the Chair's  
14 permission.

15 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes.

16 MR. OWEN: That's actually the next item, but  
17 I'll go ahead and speak to that some.

18 I have not supported an assessment system around  
19 computer science since the beginning of this  
20 initiative -- and I talk about this nationally.  
21 Reason being is though we are leading the nation in  
22 computer science education this is still a fledgling  
23 area of academia, of education, especially in our K-  
24 12 arena. A lot of the teachers that are choosing to  
25 teach, computer science teaching, they communicate to

1 me that they're choosing to teach it because they can  
2 get back to enjoying teaching and not worrying about  
3 an assessment. And, you know, if the State decides  
4 to go with an assessment our team will work to make  
5 sure that it is a good assessment and that it  
6 represents what we want to look for in computer  
7 science education. But from an office perspective we  
8 at this point don't necessarily support assessment  
9 because of the diversity in the quality of  
10 instruction across the state, which I know that's one  
11 reason you do assess. But I'm afraid that we would  
12 teach -- run some of those teachers that are  
13 interested in it away. Because they're then not only  
14 learning a new content area, but they're worried that  
15 their employment criteria and their reflection on  
16 their reports of how well they do their job will be  
17 negatively affected because they're trying something  
18 new and trying to learn something new and trying to  
19 expand these opportunities for our students.

20 I've said nationally and I've said I think in  
21 this room before that assessments on CS will come at  
22 some point. But I think we have to get a full  
23 generation of students through the programs before  
24 that is, in my opinion, a viable option.

25 MS. MCFETRIDGE: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Owen.

2 Do we have any further questions?

3 Mr. Lookadoo.

4 MR. LOOKADOO: I've got a question.

5 So with the computer science, the flex credit  
6 where students can take a computer science course  
7 that substitutes for their fourth math credit -- is  
8 that right -- and third science credit, do we have  
9 any data on how many students are taking that as an  
10 option and going ahead and saying, "I want that  
11 course rather than math or science?"

12 And then I guess a follow-up to that would be do  
13 we have any data saying how those students are doing,  
14 as far as is there any, you know, data or college-  
15 bound ACT score data that we can say, hey, these  
16 students are choosing the flex credit and how is that  
17 impacting kind of the academic scope?

18 MR. OWEN: And great question. And I did not  
19 bring the information on the number of students that  
20 are using the computer science flex credit in place  
21 of either the third-year math or fourth-year --  
22 fourth-year math or third-year science. We can  
23 definitely pull that information and provide it.

24 Regarding the -- how it translates in the  
25 postsecondary -- and this was a recurring theme of

1           consternation and frustration amongst the taskforce,  
2           and I know the State is working -- and I invite  
3           anyone who is more knowledgeable to this than I am --  
4           I know the State is working on a longitudinal data  
5           system that would help us in that. We see an  
6           increase in computer science majors at the post-  
7           secondary level since this program has going through  
8           -- been going through. But as far as the ability to  
9           look at individual students and saying did that  
10          positively or negatively affect them whenever they go  
11          into a post-secondary -- one, I don't know that our  
12          initiative is old enough to have a sample size large  
13          enough to draw any causation. Maybe there's some  
14          correlations, but I definitely don't think there's a  
15          large enough one for causation statements. And I  
16          don't know that our data system at this point has the  
17          capability of pulling that data, but I will turn that  
18          to someone who's much more knowledgeable than me, if  
19          he has any input.

20                 SECRETARY KEY: I remember sitting in one of the  
21          taskforce meetings and that was a topic of  
22          discussion. I think they brought up that -- you  
23          know, and it isn't capable of doing that at this  
24          point. We have a very robust K-12 -- what we're  
25          working on now is linking that pre-K through career

1 data system. So we submitted a grant proposal to the  
2 federal government a couple of years ago, didn't get  
3 approved. There's work going on -- it's joint work,  
4 but it's not a very large-scale effort at this point.  
5 We're trying to get the building blocks for what  
6 you're talking about and what the taskforce had asked  
7 for. So it's in the process, working with DIS,  
8 working with Workforce Services, Higher Ed. This is  
9 one of those areas where transformation should help  
10 us get there quicker than what we were going to be  
11 facing before. But it's -- it is in the process of  
12 being developed.

13 MR. OWEN: And I just want to echo something  
14 that the Secretary did say. Having a lot of  
15 partnerships nationally, with other entities in  
16 similar positions, and leadership within Code.org and  
17 ECEP, they brag so much on our data system and how  
18 clean and how desegregated the data can -- we can  
19 provide them. That is not the norm around this  
20 nation, if you're not aware of that. We have if not  
21 one of -- we have the best K-12 data system in the  
22 nation. I confidently can say that because I see  
23 what some of my colleagues around the nation struggle  
24 with and they don't have near the ability that I do  
25 in providing information.

1 MS. NEWTON: One of the things that I'm  
2 visualizing -- and I don't know if it's true or not  
3 -- but when students come out of this 9-12 program at  
4 this level of rigor I can see them choosing to --  
5 instead of going directly into higher ed., being in  
6 such demand for a career that they choose to go  
7 career first, and then the higher ed. is kind of an  
8 afterthought because of their demand, because of the  
9 low numbers that are available for different careers.  
10 And are you seeing that happening as students are  
11 coming out of high school?

12 MR. OWEN: Well, we wrote that specifically in  
13 mind and that's part of the reason that we brought  
14 industry leaders into the room to make sure that we  
15 were preparing these students to step out of high  
16 school. And, you know, we use this nomenclature in  
17 education all the time -- but we really looked at  
18 what are our -- what do our industries across  
19 Arkansas need for entry-level computer science and  
20 computing jobs; what skills do they have to have.  
21 That was part of the reason that we added that story-  
22 telling section, because that is going to be so  
23 crucial whenever our students stand in front of  
24 interviewees, you know, stand in front of those  
25 different CEOs that are looking for that quality

1 candidate -- if our students can get up and tell  
2 their story in a way that relates to the consumer,  
3 relates to the stockholders, relates to that CEO,  
4 then they're going to be heads and tails above our  
5 others. The technical stuff is the easy part to  
6 teach so-to-speak.

7 MS. NEWTON: Yeah.

8 MR. OWEN: It's all those other parts.

9 And that was another issue -- and, Dr. Moore,  
10 I'm sorry I didn't mention this earlier, but we  
11 revamped our practices this year. We put some good  
12 thought into that. I don't know if any of y'all  
13 noticed but our three main categories -- you know, we  
14 like acronyms -- CPU, communications -- and now I'm  
15 going to get up here and can't think of it -- but  
16 CPU. And we tied that in that the CPU is the brain  
17 and everything has to run through it. So all these  
18 technical standards and the instruction and the  
19 theory and the technical education has to run through  
20 these practices, which the practices are what the  
21 industry and what the consumers are looking for.

22 MS. CHAMBERS: Anthony, I just wanted to really  
23 commend your story-telling. That is a career-long  
24 segment (unintelligible) problem. So if you can make  
25 some inroads there it'll go a long way for a lot of

1 opportunities out there.

2 Something -- a suggestion and a question:

3 The suggestion is seeing an increasing need for  
4 ethics classes and training tied into not just can  
5 you code this -- should you code this or the  
6 implications of code; so that may already be embedded  
7 in some of our coursework -- and if so, great; if  
8 not, something to think about.

9 The ask is this area of life is changing so very  
10 rapidly. How do you stay current? How often do you  
11 refresh and where do you take your content from?

12 MR. OWEN: So to the issue of the ethics -- and  
13 I didn't mention this, but we actually added also  
14 this year a cyber security content cluster and we do  
15 get into a lot of the ethical implications of not can  
16 you but should you and what are the ramifications if  
17 you do, both positive and negative. Also we put that  
18 in the professionalism strands; you'll see that K-8.  
19 We had a lot of discussions about the infusion of  
20 social media and online activity of our kids and  
21 really thinking about having them think about what  
22 that means on a long-term basis. And everybody  
23 understands -- or at least I hope everybody  
24 understands in this day and age if you post a picture  
25 online it's there forever, regardless of whether you

1 delete it. But what we want our kids to start  
2 thinking about is what are the social interactions  
3 doing to you and what are they telling you that  
4 you're not aware of; do these algorithms that are on  
5 these social media companies -- do they create echo  
6 chambers around our students and are students  
7 recognizing that fact, are they missing the counter-  
8 narrative to what their thought processes are. So we  
9 have really thought about that. We tried to  
10 integrate this within our standards across the board  
11 as far as that ethical impact. But it's not just the  
12 ethical impact of what our students do, but it's the  
13 ethical impact of what our students are consuming and  
14 when they create these systems in the future thinking  
15 about that ethical impact. So that was one thing.

16 And by the way, it came to me the P in CPU was  
17 problem-solving, not -- I can't believe I forgot that  
18 -- and understanding. But anyway --

19 And then, Dr. Chambers, the second part of your  
20 question? I'm sorry.

21 MS. CHAMBERS: You just elevated me. No Doctor.

22 But the second part of my question is this field  
23 is changing so very rapidly. How do you stay on top  
24 of what's going to be most important for our students  
25 to learn? How often do you refresh and where do you

1 take that content from?

2 MR. OWEN: So our refresh is -- our major  
3 revision, like I said earlier, is every four years;  
4 however, we do a micro revision plan every two years.  
5 That is actually part of -- part and parcel of the  
6 reason I'm asking for the second motion on each of  
7 these sets of standards; that allows us to make  
8 grammatical and technical changes to the standards  
9 without necessarily bringing them back to y'all. We  
10 do not see any wholesale changes, but as technology  
11 changes we want to be able to be reflective. Yes,  
12 we're going to create ancillary supporting documents  
13 that have additional explanations of the standards.  
14 But you go back four years ago and I doubt very  
15 seriously any of us would have thought Blockchain  
16 would be where it is today. That was a very new  
17 emergent -- still an emergent in technology. So  
18 think where we're going to be in two years even.

19 So that is part of the reason for the second  
20 motion is a request for some flexibility on making  
21 changes as we see industry -- and I know this has not  
22 been -- I say this all the time in front of y'all --  
23 I know this is not traditional, I know it's not done  
24 in other content areas, but that's part of the reason  
25 we're ahead in CS in this -- in the nation is because

1 we do things that are not traditional.

2 MS. CHAMBERS: That's great.

3 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Mr. Owen. Do we  
4 have any other questions?

5 Mr. Sutton.

6 MR. SUTTON: Just one other question. As  
7 wonderful as this is -- I again commend you for your  
8 compassion and passion to this study. Is this --  
9 does this create any additional cost to districts?  
10 And if so, where does that funding come from?

11 MR. OWEN: So I don't know that I'm in a posi-  
12 -- I will say yes, it will create additional cost. I  
13 do not want to step outside my realm of what I'm  
14 allowed to speak to, so I'll see if Secretary Key  
15 wants to speak to the other.

16 SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Sutton, that's a good  
17 question. And, you know, when the Governor made the  
18 decision that he wanted to see some type of  
19 requirement with respect to a graduation requirement  
20 for students and requiring districts to have  
21 certified computer science teachers then he turned it  
22 over to us to say how do we make this happen. And  
23 one of the elements of that is being aware of the  
24 cost impact on school districts. So if -- and I'm  
25 going to give a more complete review of our

1 legislative package and will include the details --  
2 more details of the Governor's education legislation  
3 next month. But we have -- in our draft of the  
4 legislation we have set the implementation dates in  
5 advance, in sufficient time so that the Adequacy  
6 Committee would meet -- in meeting over the next two  
7 years would incorporate recommendations for funding  
8 into their next set of recommendations.

9 So, all that to say there will not be a  
10 requirement for a teacher until there is a funding  
11 stream for that requirement.

12 Now what we've been doing so far -- and Mr. Owen  
13 can speak to this -- the Governor has put a  
14 significant investment of dollars -- I mean when you  
15 compare what the Governor has put forward with other  
16 states it's very significant. And Mr. Owen and his  
17 team have been doing a good job of facilitating and  
18 incentivizing districts to take this on for teachers  
19 to go get the training and that sort of thing, to  
20 offset some of that added cost that they would  
21 encounter. When it becomes a requirement it becomes  
22 the State's responsibility; so you'll see budget  
23 adjustments that make that happen.

24 MR. OWEN: If five years in this position has  
25 taught me nothing it's when not to answer a question.

1                   So thank you, Secretary Key.

2                   But that said, yes, we do see those. And as far  
3 as the commitment that the State has made, we do have  
4 -- we can no longer say we have the largest  
5 commitment to CS education, because states like New  
6 York -- we still have the largest per capita  
7 commitment to CS education of any state in this  
8 nation, and it's not even close. I was on a call the  
9 other day with a lot of my cohorts across the nation  
10 and most of them their budgets were killed this year  
11 because of the Covid pandemic. And we were -- I  
12 think I can share this, Secretary Key -- we've  
13 actually enjoyed the recommendation from the Governor  
14 to have a budget increase for next fiscal year.

15                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Glad to hear that.

16                   Do we have any more questions or comments for  
17 Mr. Owen?

18                   Okay. Well, with that I will look for a motion  
19 concerning the standards and courses.

20                   MS. NEWTON: Move that we adopt the Arkansas  
21 Computer Science and Computing Standards and Courses  
22 for High School.

23                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. I have a motion  
24 from Ms. Ouida Newton.

25                   Do I have a second?

1 MS. CHAMBERS: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I'm sorry. Who seconded  
3 that?

4 MS. CHAMBERS: (raised her hand)

5 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Ms. Chambers.

6 Seconded by Ms. Chambers.

7 All in favor say "aye."

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

10 Seeing none, motion passes.

11 All right. And then we're on to --

12 MR. OWEN: We do have a second motion there, if  
13 y'all --

14 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay.

15 MR. OWEN: -- will consider it please --

16 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I'm sorry.

17 MR. OWEN: -- on the high school. And that's  
18 for those -- allowance for technical changes.

19 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. We have the second  
20 motion for technical changes for high school.

21 MS. CHAMBERS: Move to approve.

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. I have a motion  
23 by Ms. Chambers to approve.

24 DR. MOORE: I'm confused. What are we --

25 MR. OWEN: So the first motion was adoption of

1 the CS standards. And in the recommended motions I  
2 had a second recommended motion. I wanted to  
3 separate it out to give y'all the -- not that y'all  
4 needed my permission, but the mechanism to cleanly  
5 separate them if you didn't adopt the second one or  
6 feel comfortable on the second one because it is not  
7 traditional. But basically what the second one would  
8 do, it would allow us to make grammatical and  
9 technical changes to the standards without  
10 necessarily bringing them back to you all each time.

11 DR. MOORE: So for four years you won't bring it  
12 back to the Board?

13 MR. OWEN: No, ma'am, we will bring back in two  
14 years and we will bring back in four years. But  
15 along -- from now until our mid-term revision in two  
16 years, if we see grammatical errors or technology  
17 changes significantly or we see something emerging  
18 that we felt that would be a benefit to add or change  
19 within the standards this would give us the  
20 wherewithal to do that without necessarily bringing  
21 the standards back to the Board for wholesale  
22 adoption again.

23 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: So, I'm sorry, do we have a  
24 second? I don't think we did.

25 MS. NEWTON: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. I have a second by Ms.  
2 Newton.

3 Do we have any other questions?

4 The motion by -- was by Ms. Chambers. So we  
5 have a motion by Ms. Chambers, seconded by Ms.  
6 Newton.

7 All in favor?

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?  
10 Seeing none, motion passes.

11 MR. OWEN: Thank you.

12 A-8: CONSIDERATION OF THE ADOPTION OF THE ARKANSAS COMPUTER  
13 SCIENCE AND COMPUTING STANDARDS AND COURSES FOR GRADES K-8 AND  
14 CODING BLOCK FOR GRADES 7 AND 8

15 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Now we're ready for the --

16 MR. OWEN: K-8.

17 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: -- K-8. K-8.

18 MR. OWEN: And the K-8 standards, what we did  
19 this year, one, we incorporated those new areas of  
20 cyber security and story-telling as appropriate  
21 within them. We also worked to revise and clarify  
22 some of the standards. When we wrote these early on  
23 we were -- I mean, honestly, we were still learning.  
24 We're still learning now. But we have such a better  
25 grasp of what our elementary teachers are able to do

1 within their classrooms. Our students have a better  
2 grasp of technology. I mean think a year ago if we  
3 would've thought how many students are using Zoom on  
4 a daily basis across our state, the computers across  
5 our state. So we really tried to update these  
6 standards in a way that's reflective to our current  
7 students' knowledge, our teachers' knowledge, and our  
8 ability as a state to employ across school districts.

9 There are still embedded standards other than  
10 the coding blocks. The coding block does have to be  
11 a discrete amount of time the way it's presented.  
12 The other standards can be embedded. We are having  
13 discussions about what those -- what technology looks  
14 like in our K-8 environment moving forward. But  
15 right now the considerations are these embedded CS  
16 standards.

17 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Do we have any questions or  
18 comments?

19 DR. MOORE: Do you have any middle schools that  
20 offer a full course in computer science?

21 MR. OWEN: So we actually have a couple of  
22 schools that have requested waivers to -- not  
23 waivers, but approval -- because I know waivers has a  
24 different connotation -- but approval to teach a high  
25 school computer science course at the middle school

1 level. We actually have a couple of schools that are  
2 already requiring all their 8th grade students to  
3 take that. We do have other schools that are  
4 teaching courses at those middle school grade levels.  
5 We don't necessarily track those because we don't  
6 have credits associated to them. What they have --  
7 what they're -- what the regulatory mandate is is  
8 that they embed -- that they teach the standards that  
9 we've adopted at each grade level within that course  
10 somewhere.

11 But to your question, yes, there are schools  
12 that are teaching full courses of CS at those school  
13 levels.

14 DR. MOORE: And what type courses is the  
15 standalone block typically taught with?

16 MR. OWEN: Standalone block can really be taught  
17 in any course. You know, CTE had written key code  
18 for us whenever keyboarding was still a requirement.  
19 That course is going to remain around, be updated  
20 with these standards for schools that still want to  
21 teach keyboarding at that level. Honestly, I think  
22 our office is trying to help push those standards  
23 down into lower grade levels with these. But as a --  
24 whenever I was teaching 8th grade mathematics, 8th  
25 grade Algebra I, I would've loved to have these

1 coding block standards to teach during my school year  
2 because they're so complimentary to the algorithm,  
3 the thought processes and computational thinking that  
4 I was trying to expose my students to within that  
5 classroom. It really can be any class.

6 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Mr. Lookadoo.

8 MR. LOOKADOO: Yeah. On that coding block, when  
9 it's saying that it's got to be a minimum of four  
10 weeks continuous time is that set every day? You  
11 know, if I have this class, you know, 45 minutes  
12 every day is that saying for those four weeks it's  
13 got to be continuous then or can it be once a week  
14 during a certain block for four weeks? How does that  
15 work?

16 MR. OWEN: What we -- really there is a lot of  
17 flexibility for schools in how they implement this.  
18 We feel like that for this block to be done justice,  
19 it would take a 45-minute period per day for four  
20 weeks to do the standards justice. Now, because we  
21 don't necessarily go out and -- I can't be in every  
22 classroom where this is integrated; so, we put the  
23 standards out there and the standards are adopted and  
24 the superintendents attest that they will insure that  
25 the standards are taught in a -- with validity.

1           But, yes, it is -- we envision it being four  
2 weeks, 45 minutes a day to meet the rigor of the  
3 standards that's written. We really -- what -- the  
4 reason we say continuous block is because early on we  
5 had a lot of schools that kind of came back to us and  
6 said, "Well, we think we might do a Friday coding  
7 activity and meet these standards throughout the  
8 year," by just every Friday they have a coding class.  
9 And the problem with that is there's no continuity.  
10 And that's what we got feedback from the first  
11 taskforce that that's really going to turn into just  
12 another study hall and place that they're going to do  
13 their PowerPoint. There has to be some continuity in  
14 that instruction from day-to-day.

15           CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Mr. Sutton, do you have any  
16 questions?

17           MR. SUTTON: Huh-uh.

18           CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Dr. Hill?

19           DR. HILL: No.

20           CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. Chambers? Ms.  
21 McFetridge? Ms. Newton? Ms. Woods?

22           No more questions, okay.

23           Well, with that we'll look for a -- I'm looking  
24 for a motion to approve this K-8 coding block  
25 standard of courses.

1 MS. McFETRIDGE: I'll make the motion to approve  
2 the standards for K-8.

3 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. I have a motion by Ms.  
4 Kathy McFetridge.

5 MS. WOODS: I'll second.

6 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Ms. Woods.

7 All in favor say "aye."

8 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

9 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?  
10 Seeing none, motion passes.

11 MR. OWEN: And we have the same secondary motion  
12 on this one regarding the technical changes.

13 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. I'm sorry, explain  
14 that again. Say that again.

15 MR. OWEN: The same secondary motion on this,  
16 request for the technical changes --

17 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay.

18 MR. OWEN: -- as we did on the high school.

19 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. So we're looking  
20 for a motion for the technical changes, same motion.

21 MR. SUTTON: So moved.

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. We have a motion by  
23 Mr. Sutton.

24 MS. WOODS: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Ms. Woods.

1 All in favor say "aye."

2 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

3 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

4 Seeing none, motion passes.

5 Okay.

6 MR. OWEN: And, Chairwoman, I do have one final  
7 request. That was our last motion and --

8 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay.

9 MR. OWEN: -- last thing on the agenda. But I  
10 do have one last thing I would like to share with the  
11 Board. It will take about three minutes, if that's  
12 possible.

13 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Please do.

14 MR. OWEN: Dan, do you have that cued up?

15 By the way, I want to say thank you to Dan for  
16 his work.

17 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Dan.

18 (VIDEO WAS SHOWN, AS FOLLOWS:)

19 SPEAKER #1: As technology continues to advance,  
20 so should our children's education. That's why in  
21 2015 the Arkansas Computer Science Initiative was  
22 created -- an initiative to provide better access to  
23 a variety of computer science related resources and  
24 ultimately to use their skills and creativity to make  
25 a difference in the world -- and it's all happening

1 right here in Arkansas. Because of this initiative,  
2 more and more schools have added coding, cyber  
3 security, networking, robotics, and game design into  
4 their curriculum. And more and more students are  
5 getting the real-world experience and training they  
6 need to succeed.

7 STUDENT #1: The Arkansas Computer Science  
8 Initiative prepared me for my eventual career path by  
9 giving me the opportunity to meet with other people  
10 that are currently in the industry. Because I had my  
11 first internship through this initiative, I am now --  
12 I've almost got two years of interning with J.B. Hunt  
13 while still going through college, and it's because I  
14 had a little bit of experience and knowledge. And  
15 technology and the passion is the reason why I am  
16 where I am today.

17 SPEAKER #1: Since the initiative's launch  
18 Arkansas has become a national leader in computer  
19 science and computing education, with many states  
20 following our lead.

21 NEWS REPORTER: Inside the state of Arkansas,  
22 you all have done something fascinating with just a  
23 mandate computer science in your classrooms and  
24 you've seen incredible numbers of students go up in  
25 coding, especially with women, especially with

1 minorities. Why did you all think that was so  
2 important?

3 GOVERNOR HUTCHINSON: Whenever you look  
4 nationally, only one out of ten high schools in  
5 America offer and teach computer coding. We mandated  
6 in every high school that we could produce 6,000  
7 students a year into our economy that know how to  
8 write software.

9 SPEAKER #1: The study of computer science and  
10 related computing areas opens more economic  
11 opportunity for more people than almost any other  
12 area of study. And this skill-set is in demand not  
13 only in the tech sector, but in banking,  
14 entertainment, medicine, and virtually every area.  
15 So whether your child wants to be a farmer, doctor,  
16 teacher, or entrepreneur, they will greatly benefit  
17 from the creativity and problem-solving skills that  
18 are the essence of creating computer software. And  
19 no matter the state of our economy, computer science  
20 related jobs will remain and continue to thrive.

21 COLLEGE RECRUITER: The computer science skills  
22 that I gained in Arkansas really allowed me to work  
23 around the world. Even now as a college recruiter  
24 for my company, only a few candidates have high  
25 school computer science experience. I would

1 encourage anyone who is interested in this skill to  
2 really start early and seize every opportunity to  
3 grow their knowledge in computer science.

4 SPEAKER #1: From its pathways to higher  
5 education, internships, and careers, to its  
6 passionate and knowledgeable educators and industry-  
7 approved curriculum, the Arkansas Computer Science  
8 Initiative continues to transform students' lives,  
9 both in and outside school walls, and it's never been  
10 easier to join in the fun. Join the future and  
11 enroll your child in these fun and innovative courses  
12 and support the Arkansas Computer Science Initiative  
13 today.

14 (END OF VIDEO)

15 MR. OWEN: With that, I want to say thank you,  
16 State Board. Thank you, Leadership. Thank you,  
17 Arkansas Educators and Arkansas Students.

18 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you. Appreciate you.  
19 Appreciate your work.

20 And with that, I think we'll take a 10-minute  
21 break before we head to the next item on the agenda.  
22 So that means we'll be back at -- I don't know which  
23 one is right, but --

24 SECRETARY KEY: Lunch is here.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Well, we can -- yeah,

1           that's fine. We'll just push forward and lunch is  
2           here and --

3           MR. DUGAN: I appreciate that. Thank you so  
4           much.

5   A-9:   EDUCATOR LICENSURE WAIVER REQUEST - DAVID PARKMAN

6           MR. DUGAN: Thank you, State Board, for hearing  
7           this and adding this to the agenda for Mr. Parkman so  
8           he can get some resolution today.

9           Just a real quick housekeeping matter -- I sent  
10          this packet on the secure server, so it should be  
11          with the PLSB items. However, I did make hard-copies  
12          and so I'm going to go ahead and pass those out  
13          before I get started.

14          (WHEREUPON, Exhibit One (1), consisting of DESE  
15          Exhibits 1 through 8, was marked for identification  
16          and entered into evidence.)

17          MR. DUGAN: And, Madam Chair, Taylor Dugan with  
18          the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

19          Just real briefly if I may go over the  
20          procedures for these types of hearings, this is a  
21          hearing dealing with the disqualifying offense -- so  
22          an offense that appeared on Mr. Parkman's background  
23          check. Each party will have 5 minutes for an opening  
24          statement, starting with the Division. The State  
25          Board can ask questions at any time. Then there will

1 be 15 minutes for presentation of the cases, starting  
2 with the Division. And then, finally, there will be  
3 5-minute closing, starting with the Division and  
4 finishing off with the Educator.

5 The State Board after hearing this case has a  
6 number of options that they can do. The Department  
7 is requesting a waiver, just a flat-out waiver for  
8 Mr. Parkman. However, the things that the Board may  
9 do I've put on their exhibit packet, which is labeled  
10 DESE Exhibit One (1), page 1 of 3, and that has the  
11 information of what the Board may do as far as their  
12 options. As I stated earlier, the Division is  
13 recommending that he be granted a waiver.

14 If there's any questions about the procedure,  
15 I'd love to answer them. If not, then I would start  
16 with my opening statement.

17 And I forgot, Madam Chair, Mr. Parkman is here  
18 and Jake is here also, if we could have them sworn  
19 in.

20 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. All right. If you'll  
21 raise your right hand -- do you swear or affirm that  
22 the testimony you're about to give shall be the  
23 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

24 MR. PARKMAN: I do.

25 MR. ALLEN: I do.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. Thank you.

2 MR. DUGAN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: You're welcome.

4 MR. DUGAN: What I have marked as DESE Exhibit  
5 Two (2) is -- and I just want to brag on the folks  
6 over at PLSB that put this together; it's an  
7 excellent timeline of this case that gives why we're  
8 here and what this case is about. I think that's  
9 probably -- if there's a document to focus on, it  
10 would be that one.

11 And so back in May of 2007, Mr. Parkman was  
12 notified that there was a disqualifying offense on  
13 his background. He came before the Board in that  
14 year and he was granted a waiver of that offense.  
15 And then in -- and he went on and he completed the  
16 probation and the terms of that waiver, had no  
17 problems with that, and got his teaching license and  
18 has been teaching since. And then, in 2012, a new  
19 offense had popped up; however, it was from 1996.  
20 Now Mr. Parkman had this offense expunged from his  
21 record -- and a lot of times we see stuff like that;  
22 we see offenses that come later that were not on  
23 other background checks. And I think it's because  
24 just the FBI and State Police is just getting better  
25 as far as updating records and courts updating

1 records and those types of things. But it appeared  
2 in 2012 Mr. Parkman was able to get his license,  
3 because the staff at that time when they saw it --  
4 they saw he had a waiver from the State Board from  
5 2007, but that was for a different offense; that was  
6 for an Assault, and this one here is a Battery Second  
7 Degree, which is also a disqualifying offense. When  
8 Mr. Parkman went to renew his license again --

9 I believe it was in 2015, Mr. Parkman?

10 MR. PARKMAN: Yes.

11 MR. DUGAN: -- it was still there, was still  
12 approved because of that prior waiver. And then when  
13 PLSB was reviewing it this last time it rolled around  
14 Ms. Douglas noticed that that waiver was for the  
15 assault from 1994, not for this Battery that was from  
16 1996. So, therefore, it is a disqualifying offense  
17 and it would be the Board's authority to waive that  
18 offense.

19 Mr. Parkman has submitted numbers of letters of  
20 recommendation from his superintendent, from his  
21 principal, from former students, parents. I'll let  
22 him talk more about that. But if there's no  
23 questions, that's why we're here -- and I've spoken  
24 with Educator Effectiveness -- and it's recommending  
25 a waiver for Mr. Parkman.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Dugan.  
2 Mr. Parkman.

3 MR. DUGAN: Come on up.

4 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Welcome.

5 MR. PARKMAN: I've been teaching now at Eureka  
6 Springs, my ninth year; my twelfth year overall as a  
7 teacher. Teaching for me is my passion, it's what I  
8 do. I teach ALE. My first teaching job out of  
9 college at UALR was in Hamburg School District, the  
10 Ashley County Learning Academy. When I was told I  
11 was being hired for an ALE position, I said, "Well,  
12 what's ALE?" And they don't teach that in  
13 traditional education courses. I got in there and I  
14 realized this is where I'm meant to be.

15 I did not grow up in a standard household. I  
16 had two households: one was abusive, violent, and  
17 malicious; the other one was neglectful, absent, and  
18 drug addicted. By the time I was 13 years old it was  
19 common practice in one household to smoke pot, drink,  
20 whatever I wanted to do. By the time I was 15 I was  
21 already addicted to hard drugs. I'd witnessed two  
22 murders by then; by the time I was 18 I had witnessed  
23 five. My first daughter was born when I was 17. I  
24 had dropped out of school at 16 and moved out of my  
25 home. Continued to go back into school and dropped

1 out again in a couple of years. I grew up in a very  
2 violent place, a very bad place. Back then we knew  
3 nothing of trauma-informed schools; we knew nothing  
4 about mental health practices associated with that.  
5 As a teacher, now I recognize that I had a lot of  
6 issues. As an adult I was diagnosed with ADHD. So  
7 if you combine all that, I'm lucky to have made it  
8 through where I did.

9 In '94, I was involved in an assault. The other  
10 party who was involved in it with me is now a Pulaski  
11 County deputy sheriff and has been for about 20  
12 years. And my drug addiction continued. In '95, I  
13 was homeless, jobless, carless, and with no options.  
14 I did not see myself living to be 21. I was involved  
15 in a fight at a bar not far from here and the fight  
16 escalated. I used a box-cutter and the other  
17 gentleman was hurt severely, and I went to jail.  
18 After getting out of jail I went to court. A Judge  
19 here in Little Rock told me at the hearing -- I  
20 attempted to plead guilty to it flat-out before  
21 getting up to circuit court; and he asked me why, and  
22 I said, "Why not." The judge called me up and said,  
23 "I tell you what, you're going to go to rehab and  
24 we'll have your hearing in six months in circuit  
25 court." It got kicked up to the Judge there; I

1 believe it was Barry Sims. And I talked to the  
2 Prosecutor and so they gave me three years probation  
3 with an Act 346. I had no idea what that meant at  
4 the time; I just knew that, hey, I'm not going to  
5 prison, which was good. During that three years I  
6 earned my GED. I learned a trade, being screen-  
7 printing, and I learned another trade, being a  
8 bartender -- not the greatest trade but it did pay  
9 the bills. Over the next few years I continued to  
10 work two and three jobs, not really knowing what I  
11 wanted to do. I completed my probation in '99, got  
12 my record expunged. Sometime after that I met a man  
13 named Johnny Dollar, former professor at Pulaski  
14 Tech, who has since passed, and he again encouraged  
15 me to go to college. So I began Pulaski Tech; I  
16 earned my associates degree, graduated with honors,  
17 went on to UALR. And Professor Williams there, if  
18 y'all know him or not, he encouraged me to not just  
19 get a history degree but go into teaching. By this  
20 time I was a single father raising two daughters on  
21 my own.

22 And so you know what, I have something to give  
23 back. I learned a lot about myself. I had a lot of  
24 self-exploration. I had sought therapy. I had seen  
25 in my life that I had value and I could make a

1 difference in people's lives. I had reconnected with  
2 my daughter from when I was 17 and became a good  
3 father to her. I continued through, graduated from  
4 UALR with honors, and was hired, as I said, at Ashley  
5 County Learning Academy. It was there that I  
6 realized I'm meant to be doing ALE. I identify with  
7 these kids. I was these kids. In doing so, Ashley  
8 County Learning Academy went through one of those  
9 split-ups. It was a consortium between Crossett and  
10 Hamburg, and you know how those things go sometimes  
11 -- and being there three years, I got reduction-in-  
12 force. And I landed at Eureka Springs in 2012 and  
13 was told that I was now going to be the director of  
14 ALE. Being a teacher of ALE and a director of ALE  
15 are two very different things. Jake Allen here and I  
16 met, and I said, "What does a director do?" "I don't  
17 know." And it was later on that I was informed,  
18 "You're supposed to have paperwork." I said, "Oh,  
19 okay, that's probably a good thing." And so I kind  
20 of learned and built the program, sort of a reboot of  
21 the program from go. Well, nine years now we're  
22 doing very well. In the nine years this program has  
23 seen a lot of successes. I've had kids come through  
24 that had no hope. They were dropping out, "school  
25 sucks" -- I'm sure you've all heard that; they hate

1 school, they want out. Some of these kids come in  
2 9th grade, 16, 17 years old, they're done. I've been  
3 able to connect with a lot of these kids. I have a  
4 student right now who has completed four years of  
5 high school in three years. He came in two years  
6 behind. He's going to graduate this year. Another  
7 student is going to do the same thing next year. But  
8 four years ago I had a student who was homeless -- he  
9 wasn't homeless but his home had no electricity, no  
10 running water, and his parent was absent. And my  
11 solution to it was, "Well, you're going to live with  
12 me." In doing so, he went from being a kid who was  
13 not going to make it through high school -- he just  
14 completed graduating basic this summer and is now  
15 finishing up his senior year of high school.

16 I see this. I see these kids that I make an  
17 impact on. I know I do, I make a difference this  
18 time -- well, the whole time, of course -- raising my  
19 two daughters on my own, coaching cross-country,  
20 coaching track, starting up and coaching our mock  
21 trial program. And I feel that if I'm not granted  
22 another license there's going to be a hole left in  
23 the community of Eureka Springs. I'm sure all of  
24 y'all have been there on vacation. It's a great  
25 place to go visit. But what you see on vacation and

1           what you don't see is two different things. Our  
2           community is very diverse, it's very different. A  
3           lot of kids there just don't have the supports;  
4           they're like me. In their home it's okay to do  
5           drugs; in their home it's okay to smoke weed. They  
6           sit through the Red Ribbon Week presentations and  
7           they roll their eyes, like I did, because who is some  
8           person up here who's never been through what you've  
9           been through to tell you that, hey, your parents are  
10          terrible people. That's the way they look at it.  
11          It's the way I looked at it. And to have that  
12          connection with someone that says, "Hey, I understand  
13          what you're going through, I get it; here's what  
14          happened to me," and present my story to them -- most  
15          of my students have heard my story, more in detail  
16          than what I've given here because there's very short  
17          time, and they're able to identify and say, "Hey,  
18          here's Mr. Parkman; you know, he grew up with the way  
19          I did. He's been through the abuse. He's been  
20          through getting in trouble with the law. He's been  
21          in trouble, you know, with family and not living at  
22          home. He did drop out, but he got it." And I offer  
23          something like -- I do offer that to my students.

24                   I love what I do. I love ALE. It is my  
25          passion. I love working with my kids. I maintain

1 contact with many of them after they graduate. Some  
2 of them still show up to ask for guidance and, you  
3 know, just references and everything else. I still  
4 have some of them that will call out of the blue,  
5 "Hey, I have a problem. What should I do?" And I'm  
6 there for them -- and I'll continue to be there for  
7 them, regardless of the Board's decision today. This  
8 is what I do. This is my career. This is how I take  
9 care of my children. This is what I give back to my  
10 community. And for part of me, I'm trying to make up  
11 for the things that I did that harmed not just the  
12 state of Arkansas, but this area. This is where I'm  
13 from. I grew up here in Little Rock, Pulaski County,  
14 specifically Sylvan Hills, North Little Rock --  
15 Lakewood Junior High, back then Northeast High  
16 School. And as many of you may remember, the 80s and  
17 90s were not a good time for Little Rock. Banging in  
18 Little Rock was a thing. And I'm -- the reason I'm  
19 not on that is because I didn't sign a waiver. I had  
20 friends that were. I was in a bad place at the time.  
21 And I give back to my students now and I tell them,  
22 "Look, don't get involved with these things. You  
23 have an option. You have people that care. Reach  
24 out to someone." And I'm there for them. And I'm  
25 giving back for what I -- for what I took from people

1 and for what I did to people. This is my way. I was  
2 -- I don't -- you know, it's how I feel about it.  
3 It's not something that I'm happy about. It was --  
4 it's what happened. And if you read in the letters  
5 there, a couple there from parents, a couple from  
6 teachers, my administrators, several former students.  
7 And I asked a couple of them and they began asking  
8 each other and -- for letters. They even started a  
9 social media campaign, that I did not ask them to do,  
10 and that I got asked about when one of our board  
11 members of the school was like, "Why is Mr. Parkman  
12 doing this?" I was like, "No, no, no, no, not me. A  
13 former student did that." And so that I had to kind  
14 of explain real quick.

15 I know I've had an impact on my community and I  
16 want to continue to. And I'd appreciate if the Board  
17 would allow me to do that and allow my children to  
18 continue to be able to be there with me and stay in  
19 this community that I'm in and keep the career that  
20 I've got. I've got at least -- I'm 45; I've got  
21 another 20 years left at least, to get to 65. At  
22 that point my daughters will be forcing me to retire  
23 to probably take care of grandkids or, you know, my  
24 wife by then will force me to retire to drive her  
25 around the country.

1 I appreciate your time. Thank you for this  
2 opportunity. If there are any questions --

3 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Mr. Parkman.

4 Do we have any questions for Mr. Parkman? Why  
5 don't I start with Dr. Hill; questions or comments?

6 DR. HILL: I just appreciate your transparency.  
7 And, you know, it's my belief, you know, God doesn't  
8 waste an experience.

9 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: That's right.

10 DR. HILL: And you have an experience that you  
11 could help others.

12 MR. PARKMAN: I think he put me where I was  
13 supposed to be.

14 DR. HILL: Absolutely. And I just want to  
15 encourage you to, you know, keep striving forward and  
16 keep helping the least of these. We just heard our  
17 Teacher of the Year come in and talk about empathy,  
18 and that's exactly what we're talking about. Because  
19 the number one predictor for academic success is not  
20 test scores; it's relationship with the teacher in  
21 the classroom.

22 MR. PARKMAN: Yes, sir.

23 DR. HILL: And that's what you have with you,  
24 and you have my full support.

25 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you, sir.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. Ouida Newton?

2 MS. NEWTON: I echo what Dr. Hill said. You  
3 definitely relate with your students and you're  
4 needed and I know your students appreciate you.  
5 You're a walking miracle, I hope you realize that.

6 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you, ma'am. Yes.

7 MS. NEWTON: And so -- but I appreciate your  
8 willingness to give back to your students and just  
9 hope that you'll continue doing that.

10 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. McFetridge.

12 Okay. Ms. Chambers?

13 MS. CHAMBERS: Eureka Springs is lucky to have  
14 you. I hope you'll keep telling that story.

15 MR. PARKMAN: Yes, ma'am.

16 MS. CHAMBERS: It makes you so authentic and it  
17 will definitely continue to give kids a sense that  
18 whatever has happened they still can -- they can  
19 still go forward and reach their full potential.  
20 Thank you.

21 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you, ma'am.

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. Woods. Dr. Moore. Mr.  
23 Lookadoo.

24 MR. LOOKADOO: You know, we heard in the  
25 computer science standards the addition of story-

1 telling and the power of your story is incredible.  
2 But not only the power of your story, the power of  
3 the stories from the parents and the students who  
4 wrote these letters. It is clear to see the impact  
5 you're making and I just want to say thank you.  
6 Thank you for your work --

7 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you.

8 MR. LOOKADOO: -- and the impact that you're  
9 having.

10 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Mr. Sutton.

11 MR. SUTTON: I would just comment that I would  
12 hope before I die that I have as many people write  
13 such nice things about me.

14 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you, sir.

15 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Absolutely. I echo  
16 everything that my colleagues have said. You are a  
17 walking miracle. Your testimony is powerful.

18 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you, ma'am.

19 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: You are an example of  
20 redemption and being able to -- restoration and the  
21 power of speaking our truth and sharing our life  
22 stories and our testimony. I know there's a writing  
23 that says we overcome by the word of our testimony.  
24 And your testimony has not only helped you to  
25 overcome, but it has helped so many others in your

1 community to overcome.

2 I wanted to point out one that really struck me  
3 when I was reading it, and it hit a place in my heart  
4 so much that I just wanted to just point it out. It  
5 was a student of yours that was a sophomore that was  
6 -- I'm just going to skim through it.

7 MR. PARKMAN: This may make me tear up. I know  
8 the one you're talking about.

9 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: It made me tear up, which is  
10 why I want to read it. I just want to just kind of  
11 highlight this. We had a stack of letters of support  
12 for this man, and one of them was one of his students  
13 who'd had as a freshman in high school "a background  
14 of abuse, trauma, which manifested in mistrust of  
15 adults, lashing out at peers and teachers, sleeping  
16 through tests, failing classes, substance abuse, in  
17 and out of behavioral health institutions, and did  
18 not plan on living very long, let along going to  
19 college and pursuing" -- I can't make it through --  
20 "and pursuing any kind of success. By my sophomore  
21 year I had run away from home and I still had not  
22 found any effective coping skills to manage the hand  
23 I was dealt." I'll skip through. One day in class,  
24 you -- she reacted and stormed out and came back to  
25 retrieve her backpack that she left behind. She said

1           you didn't scold her, you didn't hand her a detention  
2           slip; you said, "Hey, stop, just listen to me for a  
3           second." And you proceeded to teach her the very  
4           first coping skill that she'd ever found to be useful  
5           to her and one that she still uses today in coping  
6           with her PTSD. You said, "Tell me five things you  
7           can see, four things you can touch, three things you  
8           can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you  
9           can taste." And that was a grounding exercise used  
10          in moments of heightened anxiety to prevent or calm  
11          panic attacks. And after that day, when she had a  
12          panic attack in class she walked to your classroom  
13          and she would knock on your door and you would coach  
14          her through this exercise until she was able to do it  
15          by herself. And that was pivotal in her development.  
16          You became the very first adult that she trusted  
17          after a childhood of turbulence. And you saw the  
18          challenges she was facing and you recommended that  
19          she be enrolled in the ALE program; she did. And  
20          after making A's in her junior year -- this is  
21          someone who didn't think they would even live very  
22          long -- started believing that David was right about  
23          her and that maybe she should go to college. And so  
24          next semester she will be starting her junior year in  
25          the Honors College at a local university, majoring in

1 Biology and minoring in Honors Interdisciplinary  
2 Study.

3 And now this is the last thing I'll read: "I am  
4 not exaggerating by any means when I say that David  
5 Parkman is THE reason I decided to pursue higher  
6 education. He is the person who made me believe I  
7 could do it. This man hugged me and cried at my  
8 graduation. He advocated and fought for me in a way  
9 that no other adult around me was willing to do.  
10 Thank you."

11 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Can we give him a hand?

13 [APPLAUSE]

14 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: This is the impact that a  
15 teacher who cares and who empathizes and who can  
16 relate -- this is the impact that teachers have.  
17 Teachers have such an important role, a vital role in  
18 a child's development, and this is a perfect example  
19 of why we need people like you in our classrooms.

20 So with all that said, Mr. Allen -- I'm sorry --  
21 I didn't give you an opportunity to speak. So I'll  
22 let you have an opportunity to speak, and then we'll  
23 move forward with the procedure. I just wanted to  
24 point that out.

25 MR. ALLEN: Okay. Well, that's a tough act to

1 follow. I wish we'd talked more on the drive down  
2 about what we were going to talk about, because he  
3 stole every single one of my points that I was going  
4 to make and I was ready to, you know, pull out my Al  
5 Pacino impression.

6           Anyway, I'm Jake Allen. I teach in the  
7 Huntsville (St. Paul) School District. But David and  
8 I started at -- or I was at Eureka Springs; he  
9 started there in 2012. We hit it off right away. We  
10 have kids the same age. I was just starting teaching  
11 English; I'd switched over from math the year before.  
12 So, that year I was teaching English and math both in  
13 high school, and so I had a whole group of freshmen  
14 that were -- that I would see twice a day in English  
15 and math. And pretty quickly there were three of  
16 them who became -- they had just kind of started the  
17 real ALE program there. I'll just use their first  
18 names -- Billy, Jacob, and Ryland -- and those three  
19 boys were destined to drop out. They may not have  
20 made it to the end of that year. I know they were  
21 struggling in my class. So they switched them to  
22 ALE. And Billy especially, you know -- this kid --  
23 long stringy hair, didn't give a crap about anything  
24 -- sorry, pardon my language -- you know, had -- the  
25 previous year had told the principal in no uncertain

1 terms where she could go and what she should do. I  
2 mean this kid was rough. And, you know, David worked  
3 with him for four years, got him to graduate, worked  
4 with him after high school. Billy wanted to go into  
5 the military but it took him a couple of years to get  
6 in, and now that young man is serving in Japan in the  
7 Air Force, he's married, he's stable, he's just --  
8 you know, it's a hundred-percent thanks to David  
9 Parkman's influence.

10 You guys weren't supposed to be so enthusiastic.  
11 I was supposed to come in and convince y'all. It's  
12 okay, I'm glad I made the drive.

13 The whole reason I came is because this man  
14 needed his story told, and he's under-appreciated,  
15 he's underpaid, all those things. I wanted to make  
16 sure that you guys knew what this man has done for  
17 kids in Arkansas. So I'm going to end it there, but  
18 thanks for letting me bend your ear for a minute.  
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
21 Allen.

22 Any closing --

23 MR. DUGAN: And we don't have anything further,  
24 Madam Chair.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay.

1 MR. DUGAN: Yeah.

2 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay.

3 MR. DUGAN: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. Well, with that  
5 I'll look for a motion to grant or not to grant the  
6 waiver.

7 MS. WOODS: It's my honor to move to grant the  
8 waiver.

9 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. We have a motion by  
10 Ms. Woods.

11 Do I have a second?

12 DR. HILL: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Dr. Hill.

14 All in favor say "aye."

15 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

16 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

17 Seeing none, motion passes.

18 Congratulations, Mr. Parkman.

19 MR. PARKMAN: Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you. We appreciate you  
21 and your work.

22 DR. HILL: Can I say something?

23 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Go ahead, yes.

24 DR. HILL: I just want to say one thing. I  
25 think it's just so important, you know, as governing

1 bodies for education, that we resonate exactly what  
2 has happened here. Because so many times when you  
3 take a student in the middle school and for some  
4 reason they're not testing well and they're not doing  
5 well, and you disengage with them -- the relationship  
6 of engagement is so critically important to be the  
7 uplifting for that student. Because sometimes when  
8 we look at tests and when we look at all the  
9 information, all the data, you know, to make  
10 decisions, and realizing the thing that changes that  
11 data is the teacher and the relationship is what  
12 moves me, you know, in building that relationship --  
13 from fatherless homes, from abuse, all of those type  
14 of things.

15 And, once again, I just -- you know, everything  
16 a teacher is about is -- your picture should be  
17 sitting beside it, because that's what we're all  
18 called to do. And I just want to commend you again  
19 and I'm proud of you. And any way I can help you or  
20 any of your kids, you call me; I'll be there. Okay?

21 MR. PARKMAN: All right.

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: All right. Thank you.

23 All right. And on that happy note, lunch is  
24 ready in Room 201-A. We'll be adjourned until 1:00.

25 (LUNCH BREAK: 12:10 - 1:02 P.M.)

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. We'll be -- can we get  
2 back in session so we can get back on our action  
3 agenda for the 1:00 agenda? Let me pull it up again;  
4 I lost it. One moment, bear with me; I lost my  
5 place.

6 Okay, here we are.

7 B-1: ARKANSAS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY RFP RECOMMENDATIONS

8 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Arkansas Leadership Academy  
9 RFP Recommendations, we'll have Dr. Ivy Pfeffer to  
10 present.

11 DR. PFEFFER: All right. Good afternoon. Thank  
12 you, Madam Chair.

13 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Good afternoon.

14 DR. PFEFFER: As you know, a couple of months  
15 ago we came to you and you approved a proposal to  
16 have an RFP to allow for participants to apply to be  
17 an operator for the Arkansas Leadership Academy, and  
18 the components of the new structure for ALA were  
19 outlined, as well as other pieces of information that  
20 were included in the Request for Proposals. And that  
21 was conducted according to the state's RFP guidelines  
22 and Ms. Judy Free led the efforts of the Department  
23 of Ed. in working with the subcommittee that you all  
24 established to go through the review of the  
25 proposals, the scoring of the proposals, and then

1 additional conversations around which one of the  
2 proposals best aligned with the goals for the  
3 Leadership Academy in the future.

4 And so I'm going to turn it over to the Chair of  
5 that subcommittee, Dr. Sarah Moore, to talk to you  
6 all a little bit more and to share the subcommittee's  
7 recommendation and guide discussion.

8 DR. MOORE: Thank you. I realize I'm not on  
9 Zoom. Sorry.

10 [DR. MOORE'S MICROPHONE SCREECHES]

11 DR. MOORE: That better? Okay. Thank you.

12 [DR. MOORE'S MICROPHONE SCREECHES AGAIN]

13 DR. MOORE: What am I doing wrong?

14 Okay. Is that better?

15 Okay. Thank you.

16 I first appreciate the work of the Department  
17 and those on our committee -- Ms. Chambers and Ms.  
18 Newton -- as this was a long and very difficult  
19 process and that required a lot of thought and  
20 wisdom. Both of my committee members have a lot of  
21 that, so I appreciate their work on that.

22 As Ivy stated, this was a Request for Proposal  
23 for a five-year contract with an annual review, and  
24 eight vendors submitted proposals; one was  
25 disqualified, so we reviewed -- thoroughly reviewed

1 seven applications. And then our committee met after  
2 independently reviewing applications and making the  
3 (inaudible) rubric. We compared our rubrics and from  
4 that the two top-rated vendors were -- we had two  
5 top-rated vendors. We submitted questions to those  
6 vendors and they submitted back videos to us. There  
7 was no process for interview in this because that was  
8 not written into RFP, but we were able to get some  
9 feedback and some clarifications on their  
10 applications. Those two applications were sent to  
11 you all to review. And today it's my understanding  
12 that they are here, if we have questions in this  
13 process.

14 Like I said, the applications were excellent.  
15 They -- from all the vendors, particularly our top  
16 ones really showed the commitment to learning in our  
17 state, and we're very impressed with that. After all  
18 this we -- our committee met again this morning with  
19 our recommendation. Today we're going to provide the  
20 recommendation and then open it up to discussion and  
21 questions from either us or the vendors.

22 That being said, our recommendation is to move  
23 forward with the Arkansas Public School Resource  
24 Center proposal for the Arkansas Leadership Academy.  
25 We felt that this proposal presents a personalized

1 approach to teacher and principal development. With  
2 our vision for the state being student-focused, we  
3 feel that the proposal moves towards that way and  
4 will directly impact student learning and growth. We  
5 felt that the proposal is acceptable for more  
6 teachers and principals across the state, as one of  
7 the components of it is an ALA Reach program where  
8 they will provide development for many teachers  
9 across the state. Additionally, it creates an  
10 opportunity for school teams to work together  
11 throughout the process to really effectuate growth  
12 when all teachers, principals, superintendents, and  
13 school board members are working together. We were  
14 impressed with that approach and the different  
15 pathways for each of those individuals along there.  
16 We were also struck by the approach to include  
17 schools of all levels and focus on diversity across  
18 the state.

19 So I think those were -- and Ms. Newton might  
20 want to chime in, but those were our major points we  
21 pulled out this morning. But do now want to open up  
22 the floor for discussion and questions.

23 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: We'll begin with Mr. Sutton.

24 MR. SUTTON: No questions.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: No questions. Mr. Lookadoo?

1 MR. LOOKADOO: And this may be -- I don't know  
2 who this question should go to. But like in that --  
3 you mentioned ALA Reach; it talked a lot about the  
4 use of virtual webinars as part of that. And like  
5 how much are they considering it to be virtual and  
6 online? And just the quality, I guess I -- I'm not  
7 concerned about the quality of that, but I guess  
8 maybe a little bit just because, you know, we know  
9 that learning is tough virtually, you know, whether  
10 that's students or adults. And so how much of that  
11 are they planning to do virtually?

12 MS. NEWTON: The groups of vendors are here, so  
13 it might be better for them to answer these specific  
14 kinds of questions --

15 MR. LOOKADOO: Okay.

16 MS. NEWTON: -- rather than us, I think.

17 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I believe they are here in a  
18 room. So if you have questions for anyone  
19 specifically --

20 MS. NEWTON: Well, I think, you know, we've got  
21 the gist of the application. But when you go into  
22 specifics --

23 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Right.

24 MS. NEWTON: -- like that I think that it might  
25 be better for them to give their vision, rather than

1 us trying to speak for them.

2 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I would agree. So, yeah.

3 MR. LOOKADOO: We can wait on that or --

4 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay.

5 MR. LOOKADOO: -- whatever. That's fine.

6 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. All right.

7 [VENDORS ENTER THE ROOM]

8 MS. WHITE: Thank you, Madam Chair, Members of  
9 the Board, Secretary Key. I'm Carrie White. I am  
10 speaking today on behalf of the application from  
11 APSRC and our partnership with Arkansas State  
12 University and University of Oklahoma.

13 So I believe the question, as we were walking  
14 down, is about the percentage of time being virtual  
15 versus face-to-face. And you are correct, virtual  
16 learning can be a challenge. However, I want to  
17 commend you for as a board demonstrating how that can  
18 be done well. We all, all three partners, have  
19 extensive experience doing virtual learning,  
20 particularly in the adult learning space, in a way  
21 that really capitalizes on adult learning principals  
22 while also personalizing instruction.

23 So what we submitted is we estimate that at  
24 least somewhere around 40% face-to-face, 60% virtual.  
25 However, each of the programs and initiatives,

1 including the different offerings through ALA Reach,  
2 will vary, based most importantly on the content  
3 being delivered but also on the individuals who are  
4 participating, where they're located, what their  
5 schedules are like, and then on their personal goals  
6 and desires for being a part of the program.

7 MR. LOOKADOO: Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you. Any further  
9 questions, Mr. Lookadoo?

10 MR. LOOKADOO: No, I don't think so.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Dr. Moore?

12 DR. MOORE: Yeah, I do. I think our committee  
13 did have some questions that we would like here  
14 answered.

15 So as we were looking at the programs,  
16 particularly the master principal program, we noticed  
17 that your plan is to do a phase approach where  
18 there's three different phases. Is there a timeline  
19 for that approach? What does that look like, if  
20 y'all could go into more detail there?

21 MS. WHITE: Yeah, great question. So, again,  
22 with the focus being on personalization of  
23 instruction, as I'm sure you're all aware, in  
24 personalized learning mastery of content is the  
25 constant and time is the variable. And so we know

1           that the participants will vary in how much time it  
2           takes them to master that content. We estimate that  
3           for the majority it will somewhere -- it'll be  
4           somewhere in that nine months to a year per phase.  
5           But I almost hate to say that out-loud because as  
6           soon as I do someone is going to show up on the first  
7           day being able to demonstrate mastery in a whole  
8           bunch of information and be able to pop right into  
9           another piece of the process.

10           DR. MOORE: Okay. With that, will members still  
11           be in some sort of cohort? There's a trade-off when  
12           you're doing that in the learning.

13           MS. WHITE: Yeah, great question. So, yes, the  
14           intent is to begin each cohort at the same time with  
15           approximately 40 participants on-boarding every time  
16           we bring in a new cohort; so about one cohort a year.  
17           Again, knowing that they may have some things that  
18           they'll differ in their timing, there are some things  
19           that are core content that they all need to learn and  
20           they're going to learn best in collaboration with one  
21           another, not being siloed. And so there will be some  
22           activities that will be what all of them do as part  
23           of a cohort, particularly in those early days in  
24           building trust and putting that culture in place so  
25           that they can learn together well.

1 DR. MOORE: As a part of that, we notice that  
2 y'all relied on research from High Reliability  
3 schools and some of that training will be embedded.  
4 Will they be getting a certification through that?

5 MS. WHITE: Depending on the goals of the  
6 individuals --

7 DR. MOORE: Okay.

8 MS. WHITE: -- or teams. So master principal  
9 would be individuals, but some of the other projects  
10 could be team-based. So it would depend on what  
11 their goals are and what they want to do, what they  
12 want to pursue and to the degree they want to pursue  
13 it. But they will all be demonstrating mastery. In  
14 order to get that master principal program  
15 designation they will have to demonstrate mastery in  
16 being able to lead a professional learning community  
17 that's based on the tenants of High Reliability  
18 schools.

19 DR. MOORE: I think one thing that -- I can  
20 speak for the committee -- we were all very invested  
21 in superintendent and school board training and  
22 wanted to hear a little bit more in-depth of that  
23 part and what that will look like from you all.

24 MS. WHITE: Sure. We believe that one of the  
25 keys to high-quality systemic change is that no one

1 is learning in isolation. So we don't want to do a  
2 superintendent workshop that's separate from how the  
3 superintendent is learning and doing with other  
4 members of a district team, including building level  
5 leaders and teacher leaders. So our desire is to  
6 have some offerings that would be very targeted for  
7 superintendents or other district leaders, some  
8 offerings that would be very targeted to school board  
9 members, but that that would be within the context of  
10 a larger program that they're in where they're  
11 learning alongside others who can bring different  
12 perspectives into that learning environment. So just  
13 like everyone who is a part of either ALA Reach or  
14 ALA Collaborative, we would -- they would be learning  
15 along with others. So I think that's probably from  
16 an experiential point one of the things that will be  
17 unique. So they will be learning along with others  
18 from all of those different perspectives, but then  
19 having opportunities where superintendents  
20 collaborate with other superintendents and school  
21 board members collaborate with other school board  
22 members, because that role-alike learning is also  
23 important. So as they travel that kind of  
24 personalized learning journey with us they'll have  
25 opportunities to be both in a diverse cohort as well

1 as with others that have similar responsibilities.

2 DR. MOORE: Thank you. Those were the main  
3 questions I have, but I want to open it up to Ouida  
4 too as a part of our committee.

5 MS. NEWTON: I think you covered all the  
6 questions that we had this morning, other than --  
7 going back to the certification piece, we -- you  
8 talked about the High Reliability school. Is the  
9 High Reliability teacher also -- certification also  
10 part of that, or not?

11 MS. WHITE: We would be more than happy to  
12 pursue that. We have not at the moment made  
13 arrangements for that certification --

14 MS. NEWTON: Okay.

15 MS. WHITE: -- separate from the option for  
16 teachers to become lead professionals. That's where  
17 we had focused our attention for teacher leaders.  
18 But very open to pursuing that possibility. We want  
19 to work with you as a board, with the DESE staff to  
20 make sure that the final product that we put forward  
21 is one that's designed in collaboration.

22 MS. NEWTON: Okay. And then going back to the  
23 HRS school, I know that there is a cost involved for  
24 the schools. If the principal or the district as a  
25 team is -- that's their goal, is the school

1 responsible for that cost or is that part of -- going  
2 to be part of ALA?

3 MS. WHITE: I am going to have to defer to the  
4 team. And seeing looks on their faces, that may be  
5 something that we need to come back to you on. While  
6 -- because, again, it's personalized, we don't want  
7 to make the determination for the school. Budgets  
8 have been set in such a way that we can help support  
9 districts or schools or individuals in their goals,  
10 but I don't know that we've put a specific dollar  
11 value in for a specific number of schools or  
12 individuals to pursue High Reliability certification.

13 MR. SCOTT SMITH: The only thing I would add --  
14 Scott Smith with APSRC -- is we did leave some  
15 amounts in the budget to work with organizations like  
16 High Reliability. And so there is some money  
17 available in those programs. We can look and see how  
18 we may be able to direct some of those dollars. So  
19 we did anticipate working maybe with some other  
20 parties. And then in addition to that we may have  
21 the ability to request additional support, if  
22 necessary, to provide additional resources.

23 MS. NEWTON: Okay. I just realized that that's  
24 a pretty big expense for a school or a district, and,  
25 you know, I think each phase, if I'm not mistaken, is

1           \$2,000. So that would be, you know, a big expense if  
2           --

3           MR. SMITH: Yeah. I don't know that we planned  
4           it directly as you're thinking. But, again, there's  
5           a limit what's there.

6           MS. NEWTON: Sure.

7           MR. SMITH: But that's something we certainly  
8           would be willing to look at.

9           MS. NEWTON: Okay.

10          CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. Woods.

11          MS. WOODS: I guess my question would be  
12          directed more towards -- was it under -- "C" I think  
13          was the other option. Was there a distinguishing  
14          factor between the two that really just set one apart  
15          from the other, or was it a multitude of things?

16          MS. NEWTON: Do you want to answer it?

17          DR. MOORE: You can.

18          MS. NEWTON: Okay. They were both excellent.  
19          Does that -- and the -- we would go back and forth,  
20          this is good in this one and this is good in that  
21          one. And so, you know, Dr. Moore brought out it  
22          wasn't an easy decision; it was a very difficult  
23          decision.

24                 I think one of the things that we -- that helped  
25                 us move more toward this particular program was that

1           it seemed that the focus was on the learning. And  
2           just like, you know, in Arkansas we've made a big  
3           effort toward making sure that all of our things that  
4           we're doing is student-focused. And this proposal  
5           really seemed to be educator-focused, where the other  
6           one seemed a little bit more like it was getting that  
7           certificate focus, if that makes sense; and so, you  
8           know, the personalization, different teachers being  
9           able to go different routes, and then also the  
10          accessibility. Just in the Reach program, you know,  
11          I don't think it would be intimidating for any  
12          teacher to go into that. But the teacher program  
13          over here with the other -- Vendor C was going to  
14          require a three-year commitment and that might've  
15          been a little bit intimidating for some teachers.

16                 And so that was another factor that we talked  
17          about, that it felt more accessible for just a  
18          teacher that might be in a district that might be  
19          struggling and needed help maybe in one particular  
20          area, and then say, "Well, I can go into -- I don't  
21          -- I can go and do this; you know, I won't feel like  
22          that I'm out of place." You know, sometimes when we  
23          need help we don't want anybody else to know we need  
24          help. Does that make sense? And so they would feel  
25          like, you know, I can do that. And then maybe when

1 they get in there and say, "Well, I did that; maybe I  
2 can go on and do Tier 2," and, you know -- and that's  
3 that growth process.

4 And so that was -- I think that was my thinking.  
5 I don't want to speak for the group, but that was my  
6 thinking behind it.

7 DR. MOORE: I think, second, I think that adds a  
8 lot of detail into what -- how I opened up our  
9 recommendation. I would say too because it's a  
10 difficult decision, this is over a million dollars a  
11 year program. And so we did take into account number  
12 of teachers and principals, as we recognize there's a  
13 trade-off between, you know, quantity and quality in  
14 having that. But we want to see how the state can  
15 further their reach and we felt this proposal would  
16 be able to do so without sacrificing quality in doing  
17 that.

18 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. Chambers, did you have  
19 anything to add to that? Do you have any comments or  
20 questions?

21 MS. CHAMBERS: My fellow committee members said  
22 it beautifully. I really can't add to it. I very  
23 much support what they've said and the conclusion  
24 that was reached.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Thank you.

1 Ms. McFetridge, did you have any questions or  
2 comments?

3 MS. McFETRIDGE: I think I have a question. I  
4 know many of us are involved in these focus groups,  
5 having our brand-new teachers day-one ready. Is  
6 there any training available for those brand-new  
7 teachers or is that something the principals will  
8 know to do and then train those brand-new teachers  
9 themselves? This seems to be a real concern that the  
10 teachers may not be ready on day-one.

11 MS. WHITE: Again, Carrie White. Thank you for  
12 the question.

13 So the focus generally of the ALA as we proposed  
14 it would not be on first-year teachers. However, we  
15 see leadership potential in every educator and we  
16 want to find ways to plug in even first-year teachers  
17 on day-one so that they feel confident and have that  
18 opportunity, as Ms. Newton was talking about, to grow  
19 over time. And so the ALA Reach is designed to be  
20 very accessible. We would love teachers on day-one,  
21 we would love pre-service teachers, those who are  
22 considering becoming teachers to participate in ALA  
23 Reach.

24 The second part of the question is how do you  
25 administrators support new teachers. One of the key

1 components of our approach is collective efficacy,  
2 what is the role of a leader in building the  
3 collective belief of all adults in the building that  
4 they can make significant instructional change that  
5 will have significant impact on students. So we will  
6 be providing very direct opportunities for principals  
7 to learn how to support brand-new teachers, as well  
8 as teachers who maybe have been around awhile but  
9 need some new support, need another -- I started to  
10 say shot in the arm and then I just thought vaccines  
11 -- another encouragement of what it -- I can make a  
12 difference in the lives of kids and how do I do that  
13 through good, high-quality instructional practices.  
14 And so all of that will very much be a part of the  
15 instruction provided for administrators.

16 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. --

17 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes, thank you for that. I  
18 appreciate that.

19 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Dr. Hill?

20 DR. HILL: No questions.

21 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Well, with that we  
22 just need a vote.

23 MR. LOOKADOO: Can I ask another question real  
24 quick?

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Sure.

1 MR. LOOKADOO: And as far as like the timeline  
2 for all of this to occur, like what does that  
3 timeline look like? What does it look like for  
4 teachers or leaders currently in the middle of some  
5 of these programs? Like what is that?

6 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Dr. Moore?

7 DR. MOORE: From the committee's standpoint, so  
8 within each application there was a plan for  
9 transition. The transition will be effective July --  
10 correct?

11 MS. NEWTON: (nodding head up and down)

12 DR. MOORE: -- July of this year -- of next  
13 year, 2021. And within that there is a transition  
14 plan for moving from there. As we all know, with  
15 change comes challenges. So there will certainly be  
16 challenges and I expect the Department to work  
17 alongside as those come up to insure that this is as  
18 smooth as possible. And like I said to begin with,  
19 this is a five-year RFP but there is an annual  
20 contract renewal, and so there will be points to  
21 revisit those. And as we talked about earlier, I'm  
22 not sure who will be best -- and we can talk later,  
23 but I think it will be great to have someone from our  
24 board a more direct liaison over the years so that  
25 throughout we have -- our board has a better

1 understanding of what's going on with the program.

2 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Dr. Moore.

3 SECRETARY KEY: Just I was asking Dr. Pfeffer,  
4 you know -- we have made this a very board-centric  
5 process with the committee. So I'll just let you  
6 know we will read the proposals -- or the proposal  
7 and -- of the winning vendor, work with them to make  
8 sure that anybody that's in the pipeline currently,  
9 you know, that we do what we need to do to help that  
10 transition into the new system.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Well, if we --

12 MS. McFETRIDGE: Can I ask one more question?

13 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes.

14 MS. McFETRIDGE: Where are the trainings going  
15 to be? Is this a central area of the state or do  
16 they do it all over the state?

17 MS. WHITE: For those that are not virtual the  
18 trainings will be provided as close to the  
19 participants as possible. So with our partnership  
20 with APSRC and Arkansas State University already we  
21 have access to many locations spread across the  
22 state, not just central Arkansas but in all parts of  
23 the state. But we are looking forward to the  
24 opportunity to partner with others -- educational  
25 cooperatives, school districts, other post-secondary

1 institutions, other educational organizations -- so  
2 that we can make sure that we get the services as  
3 close to those who choose to participate as possible,  
4 knowing that that has not always been the case, and  
5 that it is really hard for some educators to leave  
6 both work and families in order to participate in  
7 training opportunities. So we are thinking both  
8 about the length of time of training as well as  
9 location to make sure that everyone is able to  
10 participate regardless of other commitments.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you.

12 Well, with that in mind, any more questions, any  
13 more discussion?

14 Okay. First, before we even take a vote I just  
15 want to take the time to thank our board members --  
16 Dr. Moore, Ms. Newton, and Ms. Chambers, thank you  
17 for the time and dedication and the expertise that  
18 you've brought to the committee and making this  
19 decision -- I mean bringing recommendations. We  
20 appreciate all of your expertise and wisdom that you  
21 brought. And as Ms. -- as Dr. Moore said, I realize  
22 it was a difficult process and we appreciate you  
23 doing what you did and the possible changes and  
24 improvements that may be brought to the next process.  
25 We definitely appreciate your feedback from this

1 process, so I want to thank each one of you  
2 individually.

3 And with that I am ready for a motion to accept  
4 the recommendations from our committee, for the  
5 Arkansas Leadership Academy RFP.

6 DR. MOORE: Can I make the motion?

7 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Sure, I don't see why not.

8 DR. MOORE: Okay. I move to move forward with  
9 the RFP recommendation of the Arkansas Public School  
10 Resource Center.

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Do I have a --

12 DR. HILL: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. I have a motion by Dr.  
14 Moore to accept the recommendation, seconded by Dr.  
15 Hill.

16 All in favor say "aye."

17 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

18 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

19 Seeing none, motion passes.

20 Thank you all for your work. Dr. Pfeffer, thank  
21 you as well. APSRC, thank you as well. Thank you  
22 all for joining us.

23 B-2: CONSIDERATION OF STATE BOARD ACTION UNDER THE ARKANSAS  
24 EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY - DOLLARWAY SCHOOL  
25 DISTRICT

1                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. And then we move --  
2 we're moving on to item number 2, Consideration of  
3 State Board Action Under the Arkansas Educational  
4 Support and Accountability Act et seq., and that's  
5 dealing with Dollarway School District. We're going  
6 to start with Ms. Lori Freno.

7                   MS. FRENO: Thank you, Ms. Cooksey. Lori Freno,  
8 Arkansas Department of Education.

9                   Under the Arkansas Educational Support and  
10 Accountability Act, if a school district is  
11 classified by the State Board as being in need of  
12 Level 5 Intensive Support and is placed under state  
13 authority, and has not demonstrated within a five-  
14 year period that it has met the exit criteria to exit  
15 the Level 5 Intensive Support, by operational law the  
16 school district must be annexed, consolidated, or  
17 reconstituted.

18                   On December 10, 2015, the State Board classified  
19 the Dollarway School District and assumed authority  
20 over the District. So today, five years from that  
21 date, the State Board and Division are to consider  
22 whether the District met the criteria to exit Level 5  
23 Intensive Support -- and if not, whether the District  
24 should be annexed, consolidated, or reconstituted.

25                   And if there are no questions, I will turn the

1 floor over to Secretary Key.

2 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Secretary Key.

3 SECRETARY KEY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 I'm coming up here so that everyone can see me,  
5 and it's a little better when I'm up here rather than  
6 just being on the Zoom. I do have a statement that  
7 encompasses some background and ultimately the  
8 recommendation that we would give to you today.

9 Today, the Dollarway School District has reached  
10 the end of the five-year period that the Arkansas  
11 General Assembly had originally established in  
12 statute for the District to resolve the conditions  
13 that resulted in, under the old ACTAAP system,  
14 Academic Distress. While that term is no longer  
15 relevant, the five-year limit still applies and this  
16 board is required to take action.

17 On top of the deficiencies in the academic  
18 system that were prevalent in 2015, Dollarway also  
19 suffered from severe financial issues which  
20 manifested themselves in audit findings, a declining  
21 fund balance, and ultimately the classification of  
22 the District as being in Fiscal Distress.

23 One thing we must not forget is that 2015 was  
24 not the first time this board had to take action  
25 regarding Dollarway. And we must realize that

1 multiple cycles of improper fiscal management or  
2 failure to meet academic standards, state enforcement  
3 action to remove local control, and a period of state  
4 control, and the subsequent return of local control  
5 is not in the best interest of the students of any  
6 district. The Division has recognized this and we  
7 have taken significant steps to address this through  
8 legislative changes and by restructuring and  
9 strengthening our supports for struggling districts.

10 Another critical difference today compared with  
11 the previous periods of state action is the budding  
12 renaissance that is occurring in Pine Bluff. Civic  
13 and community leaders in Pine Bluff are working  
14 harder than ever to revitalize the city. Significant  
15 economic investment is occurring from the public and  
16 private sectors. After years of divestment and  
17 decline, there's a new sense of hope and optimism in  
18 the city, and we have the opportunity to help spread  
19 that hope and optimism into the education realm.

20 Under the leadership of Barbara Warren,  
21 Dollarway has made great strides. The District has  
22 made significant progress, both fiscally and  
23 academically. Dollarway now has stronger financial  
24 management policies, practices, and procedures.  
25 Teachers have benefitted from an improved salary

1 schedule. Dollarway has right-sized its campus  
2 footprint to serve its student community better. The  
3 development of the professional learning community  
4 process in Dollarway has initiated the transformation  
5 of teaching and learning. And I confidently believe  
6 we would've seen the results of this progress in the  
7 ACT Aspire assessment last spring if the  
8 administration of ACT Aspire had not been canceled  
9 due to Covid-19.

10 Despite the improvements that have been made,  
11 significant challenges remain. There are strong  
12 headwinds that face Dollarway if it continues to  
13 exist as an independent school district. One of the  
14 most significant is the ongoing declining enrollment  
15 which directly impacts the fiscal condition of the  
16 District. The pandemic has only exacerbated this  
17 situation, and the impact of Covid-19 going into the  
18 next school year is very uncertain.

19 In consideration of the current fiscal data and  
20 in acknowledgement of these challenges ahead, I'm  
21 unable to certify to you that the conditions that  
22 created fiscal distress have been resolved.

23 Over the last several weeks you have heard --  
24 you have read reports and heard presentations on the  
25 academic system and a thorough analysis of the exit

1 criteria. Those reports indicate a district that is  
2 improving but not yet at a sustainable level of  
3 implementation of the elements necessary for long-  
4 term student success. More time and support is  
5 needed. The Division is committed to providing the  
6 support, but under the current statute we don't have  
7 a mechanism to extend the time for Dollarway. I  
8 therefore cannot certify to you that Dollarway has  
9 met the exit criteria to -- excuse me -- has met the  
10 criteria to exit Level 5 support under the Arkansas  
11 Educational Support and Accountability Act.

12 As I have told this body before when you have  
13 faced difficult decisions regarding school district  
14 -- school districts, my obligation is to provide you  
15 with a recommendation that offers the best  
16 opportunity for long-term success of students.

17 Today, my recommendation is for the annexation  
18 of the Dollarway School District into the Pine Bluff  
19 School District, effective July 1, 2021. As a  
20 unified district, the consolidation of operations  
21 will generate substantial financial savings as has  
22 been presented to you in the work sessions. The  
23 academic improvement support provided by the Division  
24 and the Office of Coordinated Support and Service can  
25 and will continue seamlessly, and I believe there

1 will be a greater synergy in this work by having the  
2 education professionals from all campuses operating  
3 as one team.

4 Based on your discussions in previous meetings,  
5 we would also propose specific elements for this  
6 process to address some of the concerns raised by  
7 stakeholders:

8 We propose that during the remaining time of  
9 state authority over the Pine Bluff School District  
10 no campuses of the combined district would be closed  
11 without express approval of the State Board. This  
12 means the family atmosphere we saw mentioned  
13 repeatedly would not be removed, and next year the  
14 Cardinals and the Zebras will still exist and compete  
15 in sports and participate in interscholastic  
16 activities;

17 We also propose the creation of a transition  
18 committee, consisting of teachers and support staff  
19 from Dollarway and Pine Bluff, to provide the staff  
20 and teacher voice to the process as we work with Mrs.  
21 Warren to align policies, salary schedules, staffing,  
22 and other vital components of district operation.

23 I mentioned earlier the renaissance occurring in  
24 Pine Bluff. Not too many years ago, Jefferson County  
25 was a thriving center of education, banking,

1 commerce, and agriculture. Pine Bluff was the second  
2 largest city in the state of Arkansas, and the  
3 education system was stellar. Sadly, that has not  
4 been the story of Pine Bluff and Jefferson County  
5 over the last two decades. Much of the foundation of  
6 the past preeminence is still there today, but we  
7 have been unable to see it. Like a person restoring  
8 an old home-place where weeds, vines, and dirt have  
9 hidden what was once a great dwelling, Jefferson  
10 County has many dedicated individuals and groups  
11 working night and day, cutting back the weeds and  
12 vines, digging away the dirt, and solidifying the  
13 foundation of this once and future great community.  
14 Much attention is given to Saracen Casino and no one  
15 can deny the impact that it will have on the  
16 community. But we must not ignore the steadfast  
17 contributions of UAPB and Southeast Arkansas College,  
18 the examples of public investment, like the new  
19 library and the aquatic center, and the frequent  
20 announcements of private investments in economic  
21 development. This unified district will result from  
22 the annexation -- excuse me -- the unified district  
23 that will result from the annexation of Dollarway  
24 into the Pine Bluff School District can and will be a  
25 cornerstone of this revitalized foundation of the

1 community.

2 If you approve this action today, I commit to  
3 you the ongoing dedicated support of the Arkansas  
4 Department of Education for the success of this  
5 district, but most importantly, set the success of  
6 its students.

7 Stacy is here to answer any questions; Mrs.  
8 Warren has joined us to answer any questions; and  
9 obviously I would be happy to answer any questions  
10 that you have as well.

11 Madam Chair, that concludes my statement.

12 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Secretary Key. We  
13 appreciate the -- all of the work that the Department  
14 has done to support Dollarway, support Ms. Warren and  
15 Pine Bluff, and we appreciate the recommendations  
16 that you've offered.

17 I want to welcome Ms. Warren.

18 And with that, we have Ms. Smith to answer any  
19 questions. So we'll start with Mr. Sutton.

20 Actually -- I'm sorry -- before we do that, we  
21 have people that would like to comment from the  
22 Dollarway community. And so we need to vote to  
23 accept public comment for those who had not signed up  
24 before. So I'm ready for a motion to accept --

25 MS. NEWTON: So moved.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. We have a motion from  
2 Ms. Newton.

3 Do I have a second?

4 DR. MOORE: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Dr. Moore.

6 All in favor say "aye."

7 (UNANIMOUS CHORUS OF AYES)

8 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Any opposed?

9 Seeing none, motion passes.

10 So Ms. Freno went to go get Dollarway community  
11 members that have come to give public comment. And  
12 while we're waiting on them I just wanted to say I  
13 enjoyed my visit to Dollarway, enjoyed speaking with  
14 administrators and teachers and community members.  
15 They definitely have that culture of family; that's  
16 what resonated with me as I visited -- and just such  
17 a relaxed environment and people who care about their  
18 community. A lot of the people that I met, I kept  
19 hearing "well, I actually grew up here and I came  
20 back," and that's one thing that I loved, "here is  
21 home." It's people who love their community, went  
22 out, got education, and then came back home to --  
23 like you said, to weed-whack and to pull those weeds  
24 and work on that foundation. So I was glad to see so  
25 many people that are homegrown and members of the

1 Dollarway and Pine Bluff community that have come  
2 back to put the work in to get things where they need  
3 to be.

4 So thanks to Ms. Warren's leadership to allowing  
5 her -- for building leaders to have the freedom to  
6 put the work in like they needed to and bring in  
7 teachers that brought in a fresh perspective. I saw  
8 new teachers that were two years old -- two years  
9 into being there at Dollarway with teachers that have  
10 been there for 30 years in the community. So it was  
11 great to see that synergy of that institutional  
12 knowledge and that fresh new perspective coming in.  
13 And I think with that, we've got a great combination  
14 for progress to be made.

15 So with that, I see that we have our public  
16 comment members here. So, the first one that I have  
17 here is Ryan Watley from the Go Forward Pine Bluff.

18 DR. WATLEY: Good afternoon, State Board  
19 Members.

20 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Good afternoon.

21 DR. WATLEY: Thank you for allowing me to speak  
22 today. As Chairwoman said, I'm Ryan Watley; I'm CEO  
23 of Go Forward Pine Bluff. And you will recall that  
24 Go Forward Pine Bluff was asked by the Pine Bluff  
25 NAACP to conduct a study concerning school

1 consolidation. One of the main questions posed to  
2 the community and the internal committee was if the  
3 school districts could continue to operate  
4 independently and provide a quality competitive  
5 education. Some of the responses that we received  
6 align with the research that vehemently said they  
7 cannot. Subsequently, comprehensive research-based  
8 action items are being presented to address the  
9 inadequacies and deficiencies and, more importantly,  
10 the inequalities in the school system across Pine  
11 Bluff. The inequalities stunt the academic and  
12 social growth of students each day -- for example,  
13 the data shows 62%, 32%, and 13% of uncertified  
14 teachers in Pine -- I mean Dollarway, Pine Bluff, and  
15 Watson Chapel, respectively. The conditions of many  
16 facilities are deplorable. When you compare our  
17 facilities with those across the state, then you will  
18 begin to understand immediately what I mean.

19 Further, Coach Hill, Dollarway does not have a  
20 track, a baseball field, or an indoor facility.  
21 Meantime, just across the block Pine Bluff has an  
22 indoor facility, plays in a semi-pro baseball  
23 stadium; Watson Chapel has an indoor football field  
24 and turf football and soccer fields.

25 One may think the answer is to close Dollarway;

1           however, that would result in grave economic and  
2           social consequences. Many of the action items to  
3           address some of the inequalities were suggested in  
4           our preliminary report and are being advanced through  
5           the community.

6           Also, there seems to be a misnomer that there  
7           are -- there's no one interested or be able to serve  
8           on an advisory board or that people need to be  
9           trained. While I understand the actions of past  
10          school board members have contributed to some of the  
11          decline, I refute that idea because our community is  
12          filled with professionals, corporate leaders in  
13          education, finance, government, healthcare, and we  
14          have two institutions of higher education, as  
15          Commissioner Key mentioned. The fact that WestEd's  
16          participation sessions were subpar is evidence that  
17          there needs to be a local advisory transition team,  
18          again as Commissioner Key mentioned.

19          I ask you today to make unapologetic decisions  
20          as if your child or grandchild was attending school  
21          in Pine Bluff. I urge you to provide intentional  
22          direction that gives students the best opportunity to  
23          be successful in life. The conditions are severe in  
24          all three districts in Pine Bluff. We need you to  
25          establish a team of local innovative leadership --

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[TIMER BELLS RINGS]

DR. WATLEY: -- to rebrand the education system, whereby providing for those who cannot choose other districts, and be the choice of parents that can, with ultimate reforms that are organic to the needs and desires of the community. This cannot be accomplished without community voices and a team of dedicated implementation of those changes.

Lastly -- if I may, Chairwoman?

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: (nodding head up and down)

DR. WATLEY: Everything that Pine Bluff is doing hinges on the progression of our schools. We cannot afford to come back in this room three years later and talk about consolidation and annexation of Pine Bluff. We must make the tough decisions today, and that takes a team. Annexation, period, should be what's on the table today. But I ask you to consider many other research-based reforms being advanced through the community. Annexation, consolidation, and reconstitution does not work without a plan. GFPB and many community leaders stand ready to work with you. Thank you -- unless you had any questions?

CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Do we have any questions for Mr. Watley?

DR. WATLEY: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you.

2 All right. Next we have Martavius Proctor, DSD  
3 alumni, graduate of Dollarway School District.  
4 Welcome, Mr. Proctor.

5 MR. PROCTOR: Sorry. Good afternoon, Board.

6 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: I'm sorry; you have 3  
7 minutes. I did not state that earlier. You do have  
8 3 minutes.

9 MR. PROCTOR: Yes, ma'am.

10 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you.

11 MR. PROCTOR: All right. Good afternoon. My  
12 name is Martavius Proctor. Please bear with me; this  
13 is my first time doing anything like this. I am a  
14 2019 graduate of Dollarway High School.

15 How you doing, Ms. Warren?

16 Commissioner. Madam Chair.

17 I need to remind the Board when making the  
18 decision that Dollarway has been through so much in  
19 the past, not only bad but, however, good as it  
20 relates to history. I'm going to remind everyone of  
21 Dove versus Parham. If you don't know what that is,  
22 it was a desegregation -- a federal desegregation  
23 lawsuit filed in 1959 on behalf of three African  
24 American students that wanted to transfer to  
25 Dollarway High School. Mr. Dove, he filed that

1 lawsuit several times, because it was denied in  
2 court. However, that last time, in 1960, it was  
3 approved, not only for those three students but it  
4 was approved for the desegregation and the act of  
5 basically combining black and white -- for blacks to  
6 attend Dollarway High School. In 2004, Arkansas  
7 lawmakers forced consolidation on small districts,  
8 pledging to merge administrative functions but keep  
9 schools open, which I believe is one of the options  
10 here. According to the Arkansas Rural Community  
11 Alliance, in 2015, 98 schools had been closed.  
12 Closing those schools leads to not only a decrease in  
13 population but also a decline in professional jobs in  
14 that area.

15 As you may know, Pine Bluff is a -- it has a  
16 high crime rate. There's a lot of gang activity at  
17 any school that you may visit across the state, but  
18 Pine Bluff and Dollarway just happen to be two of  
19 those schools. There's a lot of bullying. In recent  
20 years students brought guns to school, which is a  
21 major safety issue. Am I correct? And I believe  
22 that consolidation or annexation of the Dollarway  
23 School District into the Pine Bluff School District  
24 would better their chance of it being the fuel for  
25 rival gangs. Currently, the Pine Bluff School

1 District is -- there's a student there under  
2 investigation for raping. Who's to say that one of  
3 the children from the Dollarway School District, if  
4 consolidated, would be the next victim? So, you  
5 know, we just want to prevent that.

6 And that's all I have, unless you guys have any  
7 questions.

8 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Mr. Proctor.

9 Do we have any questions?

10 Okay.

11 MR. PROCTOR: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you so much for your  
13 time.

14 And, last, we have Ms. Joni Alexander with the  
15 City of Pine Bluff. Welcome. You have 3 minutes.

16 MS. ALEXANDER: Hi, everyone. Thank you for  
17 allowing me to speak. My name is Council Member Joni  
18 Alexander with the City of Pine Bluff. And, you  
19 know, our positions have a bunch of similarities. We  
20 have to make tough decisions and we don't have the  
21 luxury of a boardroom where you could have private  
22 conversations; it's open to the public. And that's  
23 why I rely very heavy on data. I'm very data-driven  
24 because it allows me to separate my emotions and  
25 personal affiliations, and it's measurable when you

1 have the numbers. But the difference between our  
2 positions is that you're making a decision on  
3 districts that your children do not attend, in a city  
4 that you do not live in. And it has its pros and  
5 cons, because on one side you don't have to live in  
6 the aftermath of your decisions. But sometimes  
7 people are too close to the situation to make the  
8 best decisions, and that's why it's good to have an  
9 outside body to help you make the hard decisions.

10 And so I want to get a better understanding on a  
11 few things, one being that since Dollarway has been  
12 under State control after the five years it has not  
13 progressed to the standard to be out of State  
14 control. Why would you allow that same  
15 administration to be over the Pine Bluff School  
16 District as well? I think both districts need hands-  
17 on people there to give attention to what's going on.  
18 And we all know that if you really get to the bottom  
19 of any problem it's due to the lack of funding. I  
20 would ask that you all revisit the District boundary  
21 lines for the Dollarway School District to justify  
22 the tax dollars from the industrial park, which is  
23 located in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, that all of its  
24 money goes to White Hall School District, which is a  
25 city with a population of 5,000 versus Pine Bluff's

1 population of 40-plus thousand.

2 I know a lot of you were not in this position  
3 when all of the things started with Dollarway School  
4 District. And if I had to give you any advice I  
5 would say don't be soft on us, make the tough  
6 decisions, because the decisions you make today will  
7 have an impact on our greater -- on our greatest  
8 natural resource, which is our youth, and that is for  
9 better or for worse. And I look forward to  
10 collaborating with you all so that we can have more  
11 community collaboration. And I thank you all for  
12 giving us this time to voice our concerns and speak.

13 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Ms. Alexander.

14 MR. PROCTOR: Madam Chair, can I say one more  
15 thing?

16 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Sure.

17 MR. PROCTOR: (inaudible, not at mic)

18 CHAIRMAN COOKEY: Come to the podium, please.

19 MR. PROCTOR: Sorry about that. I have also  
20 created a petition. I saw the survey that you guys  
21 sent out, but one of the concerns that I had about  
22 the survey -- not everyone -- as a witness, as I've  
23 been in the Dollarway District all my life, not all  
24 families have access to internet. And I feel as if  
25 the survey should have been communicated with the

1 Dollarway community better than what it had been.  
2 And I've created a petition, which it was online as  
3 well, and I emailed the link to Commissioner Key,  
4 Madam Chair, and a few other board members. And I  
5 would just ask that you view that petition.

6 Okay, thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you all for your public  
8 comment. We appreciate your time and your advocacy  
9 for your community.

10 DR. WATLEY: Can we stay?

11 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes, you're welcome to be  
12 excused.

13 DR. WATLEY: I don't want to, but do we have to?

14 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Oh, no, absolutely not.  
15 You're welcome to stay. You're welcome to stay.

16 DR. WATLEY: I want to hear how you vote.

17 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. So we also had -- I  
18 think we had some emails that came in. I'm sure  
19 everyone was able to read those public comments. And  
20 like I said before, Dollarway advocates for its  
21 community. So we're glad to see that family and  
22 community engagement and glad to see so many people  
23 from the city and glad to see Mr. Watley from Go  
24 Forward as well, and a student -- former student of  
25 Dollarway. So we appreciate your advocacy.

1                   With that, I'm just going to go around and see  
2 if there are any questions or comments or discussion.  
3 So I'll start with Mr. Sutton.

4                   MR. SUTTON: No.

5                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Mr. Lookadoo? No?  
6 Dr. Moore?

7                   MR. LOOKADOO: Well --

8                   DR. MOORE: Oh, I'm sorry.

9                   MR. LOOKADOO: -- the only thing I would say,  
10 you know, thank you, Superintendent Warren, for  
11 allowing me to come and visit; and to Stacy Smith,  
12 you know, the work that they're doing; and Ms. Sheila  
13 Whitlow and Brent Miller. And you could just really  
14 see kind of -- Madam Chair, what you're saying, just  
15 that family atmosphere, you could feel that.

16                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Uh-huh.

17                   MR. LOOKADOO: And you could also see it in the  
18 relationships that Ms. Whitlow and Mr. Miller had  
19 built with the teachers and administrators there.  
20 And I thought that was just a fantastic thing to see  
21 and witness --

22                   CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Uh-huh.

23                   MR. LOOKADOO: -- and some of the good work that  
24 is happening. So I just wanted to say that. So,  
25 thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Mr. Lookadoo.

2 Dr. Moore.

3 DR. MOORE: Yes, I do have a few questions.

4 So if this annexation were to move forward, I  
5 know that Dollarway is under fiscal distress. Pine  
6 Bluff, under what category did we -- is it fiscal or  
7 --

8 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. Smith, Ms. Stacy Smith.

9 MS. SMITH: So Pine Bluff is also under Level 5  
10 and they're also classified in fiscal distress --

11 DR. MOORE: Okay.

12 MS. SMITH: -- as well.

13 DR. MOORE: Okay. So that -- I was thinking  
14 they were only academic. So that fiscal --

15 MS. SMITH: Right.

16 DR. MOORE: -- support will continue?

17 MS. SMITH: Yes, ma'am.

18 DR. MOORE: Okay. I was glad to hear of the  
19 formation of a transition committee, if this were to  
20 move forward. Commissioner Key, can you share a  
21 little bit more about that? And will community  
22 members be involved? I think as we -- I talked about  
23 last time is the importance of communication with  
24 families, as this decision is made today and moving  
25 forward.

1           SECRETARY KEY: I'll take a stab, because --  
2           there'll be some people that are going to be very  
3           upset when I say this, but I want to say it anyway.  
4           You know, the -- when we did this with Little Rock  
5           that -- there was an advisory panel that existed.  
6           And, you know, there was some good things and good  
7           recommendations that came from that, but there was  
8           also a lot of effort to continue to un-do. And what  
9           we saw was an effort to un-do the action of the State  
10          Board for nearly five whole years. We need to make  
11          sure that this is a productive process, that this  
12          committee that we're envisioning here is -- so that  
13          from teacher voice and staff voice -- so that as we  
14          merge the two sets of policies, salary schedules, all  
15          of those types of things, that -- from two separate  
16          districts into one district that all of those  
17          potential issues are considered so that no one feels  
18          like that they're being overrun by the other. Okay.  
19          And so that's the primary purpose of this.

20                 Now as it relates to a broader community, you  
21                 know, Mrs. Warren has talked to us and was very frank  
22                 with us in the work session about, you know, what she  
23                 would envision. And I would say that while we might  
24                 not immediately -- and I would not recommend we  
25                 immediately create a formal type of group, whether it

1 be an appointed board or advisory board or anything  
2 like that. But I think there are -- as Mr. -- Dr.  
3 Watley, you know, has raised -- Mayor Washington has  
4 talked to me several times about this -- there is a  
5 desire for community input in the process. There  
6 will be a place for that. But for the sake of the  
7 staff members of both districts the first priority  
8 has to be getting it right -- if y'all move forward  
9 with this, getting right the internal policies and  
10 procedures, rules, regs, all of those things that a  
11 district needs to move forward. When we get that  
12 right, then we can start talking about the broader  
13 picture of community involvement, what the Pine Bluff  
14 District looks like moving forward, the governance  
15 issues surrounding that.

16 And so that's kind of a little bit from my  
17 perspective -- an explanation of what we are  
18 recommending -- is that it simply focuses right now  
19 on the operations of the school district.

20 DR. MOORE: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Ms. Woods.

22 MS. WOODS: My one question would be  
23 for -- I'm sorry -- Ms. Warren. From our working  
24 group session on December 1st, have you gotten any  
25 other feedback from the community, either Pine Bluff

1 as the receiving district or Dollarway?

2 SUPT. WARREN: Hello, all. No other formal. I  
3 have heard from different persons in the community  
4 that they do feel they didn't get as much of an  
5 opportunity to hear information and to share, and  
6 that has been something that I definitely look back  
7 on and think. But aside from anecdotal information,  
8 I don't have anything formal. It's been kind of a  
9 variety of different things. There is an  
10 expectation, of course, that something is going to  
11 happen. There's been a lot of encouragement that  
12 "whatever does happen we're here for you." And so we  
13 hear a lot of very positive -- positive things when  
14 people get the opportunity to embrace the District.  
15 We're hearing that whatever -- come what may, we're  
16 going to do that.

17 I want to say something, if it's okay, just in  
18 case I'm not asked to be back up. So Martavius is an  
19 example of a product of the Dollarway School  
20 District. And he is not just active today; I mean  
21 he's just always been active. And we've communicated  
22 on some different occasions, and if -- he has some  
23 thoughts or opinions he's going to share, you know,  
24 from the Alzheimer community. He's a representative  
25 of the type of young people that we have in the

1 greater Pine Bluff community at-large.

2 And so I'm just proud of you, really happy that  
3 you're here. Should've expected it, of course. But  
4 just in case I didn't get to say that I honor you for  
5 -- because you're actually speaking a whole lot  
6 louder than any other efforts and anything else we've  
7 been able to put on paper.

8 So thank you. I hope that answered your  
9 question.

10 MS. WOODS: And I don't want to -- I definitely  
11 don't want to leave this conversation today with  
12 anybody without saying, you know, my mother-in-law  
13 and her five siblings are all graduates of Dollarway  
14 High School, in the 60s and 70s. And I didn't know  
15 that until very, very recently. So it hit home for  
16 me in a special way.

17 SUPT. WARREN: Thank you for sharing.

18 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Ms. Chambers, do you  
19 have any questions or comments?

20 MS. CHAMBERS: Just an observation. I certainly  
21 appreciate Secretary Key's opening comments and his  
22 response to Dr. Moore's questions. Without a doubt,  
23 this is hard. If you look at the facts, at least my  
24 own opinion is annexation is the right answer. The  
25 thing that I would ask of the communities, as human-

1 beings we all -- whether you're talking about teams  
2 that you pick or children that you raise or  
3 communities you live in, we all believe our children  
4 are the most beautiful. It's a good instinct; it's  
5 the thing that makes a kid feel like they belong and  
6 that they could be their best. And I would just ask  
7 as we go through this, whatever the solution is, is  
8 that we just cast a wider net in how we define our  
9 children so that we're looking out for the best. And  
10 I do think so much of everything that's been said is  
11 about that, and it's just how do we go about it.

12 And so, Secretary Key, I do think -- as you've  
13 said repeatedly, I think it'll be so important how we  
14 bring the communities together on these topics so  
15 that they can bring their voice and their knowledge  
16 about what's best for their kids and their community,  
17 because that's how we'll -- that's how we'll land on  
18 the right solution, the one that's best for  
19 everybody.

20 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Ms. Chambers.  
21 Ms. McFetridge.

22 MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes, ma'am. I can't thank Dr.  
23 Warren enough for all of her work, all of her  
24 efforts, all the love that we see that she has for  
25 these beautiful children.

1 I just want to make sure that you have all the  
2 support and help from Ms. Smith, and I have great  
3 confidence in Ms. Smith in helping bring the district  
4 forward.

5 I also believe that annexation is the best,  
6 because I really do believe it's going to bring all  
7 children more opportunities. And I appreciate that  
8 so much because that is -- that's what we're looking  
9 at, children's education and their opportunities for  
10 them to be successful. And I believe that annexation  
11 is the best answer at this point.

12 So, again, thank you, Dr. Warren. I do  
13 appreciate all of your work.

14 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Ms. McFetridge.  
15 Ms. Newton.

16 MS. NEWTON: This is another decision that's  
17 been difficult to make because -- you know, I think  
18 most of you know that my heart is always with small  
19 schools and staff and students and teachers. But I  
20 want to express, first, my appreciation to Ms. Warren  
21 and the staff at Dollarway, and then also to the  
22 people here at the Department. Because even though  
23 this was a difficult process, you have provided, as  
24 you said while ago, data that helps us make the  
25 decision. And hopefully we are making a wise

1 decision, and I really feel that we are taking  
2 everything into account. But I think most of all  
3 what we're trying to do is to make the best decision  
4 for the students of Dollarway. And when we put them  
5 at the center of any decision that we make we are --  
6 you know, there are going to be some hard times;  
7 transition is always hard, change is always hard.  
8 But I think this decision that we are talking about  
9 today is going to bring some positive opportunities  
10 for the students in that area. And, you know, we're  
11 talking about decisions that are going to impact them  
12 for a lifetime, you know, and can make a lifetime  
13 difference for a child. Just as we heard earlier  
14 today how one teacher made a difference in the lives  
15 of so many students, this same decision I think can  
16 impact students in the same way and provide for them  
17 opportunities that right now they may not even dream  
18 are possible. But I think this decision will make  
19 that possible.

20 And, again, I offer my support to you, Ms.  
21 Warren, and to the staff and students of Dollarway  
22 and Pine Bluff. If there's anything that I can ever  
23 do to support you, I'm willing to do what you need.

24 And when you're ready, Madam Chair, I do have a  
25 motion.

1 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. Thank you.

2 All right. Dr. Hill.

3 DR. HILL: Yeah. I just want to commend the  
4 young man. What was his name? What was his name  
5 again?

6 MR. PROCTOR: Martavius.

7 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Martavius.

8 DR. HILL: Yeah. I appreciate you coming up and  
9 speaking your heart and being a product of the  
10 community. And I think any time that you're trying  
11 to elevate a community, you know, at the core of it  
12 is education. You talked about the crime. You know,  
13 drop-out will drop-in somewhere, and we're seeing --  
14 you know, we think of it as out-of-sight out-of-mind.  
15 And I think as of Sunday there was 24 homicides in  
16 Pine Bluff. And talking about being safe in  
17 education and equity, there's a huge part of that.  
18 And as you mentioned, extracurricular activities to  
19 make sure that everybody has equal opportunity to  
20 pursue themselves is at the heart of the decisions.  
21 But I also know when you elevate the bottom everybody  
22 rises. And I'm excited to know that that's where  
23 we're targeting, to make sure that everybody is  
24 uplifted and nobody is left out. And I think with  
25 that, maybe 25 years from now we can come back and

1 we'll see this as a strategic decision which was  
2 transformational in the educational process to help  
3 those have opportunity, what the United States of  
4 America is supposed to be.

5 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Dr. Hill.

6 If we have no further questions or comments, I'd  
7 just like to just add something. I echo what all of  
8 my colleagues have said as far as what our focus is  
9 here on this board, and our focus is insuring that  
10 the students of Dollarway and Pine Bluff get the  
11 opportunities to be the best that they can be. And  
12 that means we have to make hard decisions. But  
13 thankfully, because of the Department -- and we  
14 appreciate WestEd coming in as a third-party and  
15 offering us even more data, objective data, we can  
16 make those -- that decision for what's best for our  
17 students in Dollarway.

18 There were a couple of things that I wanted to  
19 just highlight that I believe Ms. Alexander pointed  
20 out. And if someone can speak to that, I'd  
21 appreciate it. But I think it would be -- I think  
22 it's wise to point these things out and just kind of  
23 address them. One was the administration that's  
24 there in Pine Bluff and Dollarway right now and  
25 insuring that they have support and not to be, you

1 know, just left on their own to pick up the pieces  
2 and put things back where they need to be. Can you  
3 kind of elaborate on the support that will be  
4 received -- if the Board votes for annexation, what  
5 that looks like in the future what that support --  
6 not just as far as staff and knowledge, but even  
7 financially what that will look like, please?

8 MS. SMITH: Yes, ma'am. So, Stacy Smith.

9 One thing that's real important is the OCSS team  
10 has a dedicated staff that is dedicated to Pine Bluff  
11 and Dollarway at this point. So Ms. Sheila Whitlow,  
12 who is our Assistant State Superintendent, is  
13 assigned to those districts. She is on campus at  
14 least three days a week directly supporting  
15 administration, including Ms. Warren, within the  
16 district. She -- when I -- and I remember when Ms.  
17 Warren said, "What's she going to do here for three  
18 days?" She was asking me that. And I said, "Ms.  
19 Warren, I need you to look at Sheila Whitlow as she  
20 is an extension of your arms." There are lots of  
21 things that are in system failure within the District  
22 -- and you kind of addressed some of those earlier,  
23 the things that have to be addressed, and there's  
24 only so many people to be able to do those. So  
25 Sheila is an extension of that. We have principal

1 leadership staff; so Brent Miller and Rocci Malone  
2 both are experienced and recognized former  
3 administrators. They're in the District working  
4 directly with the principals of both districts. We  
5 have Dr. Watson, who is also on our staff, who is a  
6 behavioral specialist, who is working directly within  
7 the schools on creating positive behavioral  
8 intervention supports. We have Julie Amstutz who is  
9 our special education director for the state, who is  
10 also working directly in the District. She will play  
11 a key role in trying to consolidate the services of  
12 special education and dyslexia services and making  
13 sure those needs are met. Jennifer Barbaree is  
14 another Assistant State Superintendent; she also  
15 works in the District. She's about -- there about  
16 once a week, and she's focusing more on the  
17 curriculum aspects. I'm sure I'm leaving somebody  
18 out. We have our financial office who is also  
19 working on-site. Donna is on-site probably two days  
20 a week, I know at least a day in Dollarway and a day  
21 at Pine Bluff. We'll bring that -- instead of having  
22 two different financial offices, we're going to start  
23 bringing them together.

24 So this next six months that transition  
25 committee is so important and key to making sure that

1 all those decision points are made.

2 When we were talking about who -- one of you  
3 asked about who would be on that committee; Dr.  
4 Moore, I think that might've been you. Earlier this  
5 week I got to Zoom with AEA members from Pine Bluff  
6 and Dollarway, and there were about 22 on the Zoom,  
7 and I appreciate AEA setting that up. And that idea  
8 of communication and the fear on jobs and what's  
9 going to happen, that's why it's so important for  
10 that transition committee to be made up of members  
11 from both those districts, including members from  
12 their PPC, so that they have a voice; but then they  
13 also take a leadership role in communicating it back  
14 out to their peers. So that's an important aspect of  
15 it.

16 So the OCSS team will be there. The co-op has  
17 already reached out directly to say, "hey, how can we  
18 support." But I think the bigger conversation that I  
19 want to -- I think both of these speakers actually  
20 kind of addressed, it's what happens after six  
21 months.

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes.

23 MS. SMITH: We can't stop after six months. And  
24 it's not just about keeping the Pine Bluff School  
25 District at status quo so that we're not back here in

1 two years talking about what's next. What we do  
2 after six months and the plan that we make with the  
3 community --

4 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Right.

5 MS. SMITH: -- that's where these two speakers  
6 today are -- what they're talking about is what's  
7 next and how does that pull all those folks together  
8 with the school. And that to me is the most exciting  
9 time. We want -- we don't want -- we want the  
10 Dollarway schools to remain open and vibrant and  
11 folks to learn. We want the things that Pine Bluff  
12 has for Dollarway students to have access to and the  
13 things that Pine Bluff has -- or vice-versa. I know  
14 I just messed that up. I was going good too. Man.  
15 Anyway, there is support.

16 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes.

17 MS. SMITH: But the real action, in my opinion,  
18 we've got to get the six -- first six months right.

19 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Uh-huh.

20 MS. SMITH: And then after that, it's what are  
21 we working towards.

22 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Yes. Absolutely. Thank you  
23 so much --

24 MS. SMITH: Yeah.

25 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: -- Ms. Smith, for that. And

1 that's really where my heart is, is the people that  
2 live there, the community -- Ms. Alexander, Watley,  
3 Mr. Proctor -- the people that live in this  
4 community, as well the parents. We -- I implore the  
5 community, I implore the parents to be as involved as  
6 possible in this process and moving Pine Bluff and  
7 Dollarway forward. Mr. Proctor is a prime example of  
8 what we need. We need students. We need that  
9 student voice. We need alumni I guess in this case,  
10 because you've graduated. But we need that student  
11 voice as well. We need the parents to be as engaged  
12 as possible. We need innovative ideas and ways for  
13 our parents and our community members to be involved  
14 if they can't be involved in, like you mentioned, as  
15 far as connectivity as far as computers and  
16 technology. Let's think of some ideas how we can get  
17 our members there and involved who don't have access  
18 to technology. Maybe there's a place or a way that  
19 we can get them connected. But the thing it's going  
20 to be is it's got to be teamwork; it's got to be all  
21 of us working together, definitely our parents and  
22 our community leaders, our faith leaders. We need  
23 all-hands-on-deck in this situation to bring  
24 Dollarway and Pine Bluff to the full potential that  
25 we know is possible.

1           One more thing that I wanted to just touch on  
2 briefly that I heard that was mentioned was visiting  
3 -- revisiting the boundary lines. We've talked about  
4 that before. And that is something that we should be  
5 looking for too in the near future, if I'm not  
6 mistaken.

7           SECRETARY KEY: (shaking head from side to  
8 side.)

9           CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: No, we're not. Okay.

10          SECRETARY KEY: I'll report on the boundary  
11 lines. In looking at the history, it shows clearly  
12 that these boundary lines that are -- that exist  
13 today were not impacted by, you know, any -- they  
14 existed before the --

15          CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Right.

16          SECRETARY KEY: -- industrial park was ever  
17 created. And so the boundaries of Watson Chapel,  
18 Dollarway, Pine Bluff, and White Hall, there have  
19 been modifications but those modifications go all the  
20 way back to where there were -- the districts were  
21 classified by numbers. And so you had unnamed  
22 districts and those old districts were apportioned  
23 out even before the industrial park.

24          So we've thoroughly vetted the history of that  
25 with Arkansas Geographic Information Systems; they

1 provided several maps; we went back and looked. So  
2 we don't have any plans to bring anything like that  
3 to you.

4 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Okay. All right. Thank you  
5 for addressing that issue.

6 So with that, we have the recommendation of the  
7 Department. We've heard from board members, we've  
8 heard from community members. And if there's no  
9 other discussion or questions, then we'll move  
10 forward with a motion. And I believe Ms. Newton has  
11 a motion already ready.

12 MS. NEWTON: I move that, effective July 1,  
13 2021, the Dollarway School District will be annexed  
14 to the Pine Bluff School District and the Dollarway  
15 School District will be dissolved, because the  
16 conditions for annexation have been met, including  
17 the annexation is in the best interest of the  
18 Dollarway School District based upon the District's  
19 failure to meet the requirements to exit Level 5  
20 Intensive Support pursuant to the Arkansas  
21 Educational Support and Accountability Act. The  
22 annexation is in the best interest of the Dollarway  
23 School District based upon the District's failure to  
24 meet fiscal distress requirements pursuant to the  
25 Arkansas Fiscal Assessment and Accountability

1 Program. And the annexation will not hamper, delay,  
2 or in any way negatively affect the desegregation  
3 efforts of a school district or districts in the  
4 state of Arkansas.

5 Additionally, the name of the receiving district  
6 will remain the Pine Bluff School District.

7 The district will have one superintendent.

8 The closure of any school within the district  
9 boundary of either the affected Dollarway School  
10 District or receiving Pine Bluff School District must  
11 be approved by this board for the duration of the  
12 time that the Pine Bluff School District remains  
13 under State authority.

14 And the Division will create a transition  
15 committee with personnel from both the receiving Pine  
16 Bluff School District and affected Dollarway School  
17 District that will provide feedback and assist in the  
18 communication efforts to the District employees and  
19 the community.

20 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Thank you, Ms. Newton.

21 With that, do we have a second?

22 MR. SUTTON: Second.

23 CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seconded by Mr. Sutton.

24 And so we are going to do a roll-call, if I'm  
25 not mistaken, on this one.

1           SECRETARY KEY: I have to get the new voting  
2 sheets with our new vice chair properly designated on  
3 here.

4           All right. On the motion, calling roll:

5           Dr. Moore.

6           DR. MOORE: Yes.

7           SECRETARY KEY: Mr. Sutton.

8           MR. SUTTON: Yes.

9           SECRETARY KEY: Ms. McFetridge.

10          MS. McFETRIDGE: Yes.

11          SECRETARY KEY: Ms. Woods.

12          MS. WOODS: Yes.

13          SECRETARY KEY: Ms. Chambers.

14          MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

15          SECRETARY KEY: Dr. Hill.

16          DR. HILL: Yes.

17          SECRETARY KEY: Ms. Newton.

18          MS. NEWTON: Yes.

19          SECRETARY KEY: Seven yea's, zero nay's.

20          CHAIRMAN COOKSEY: Seven yea's, zero nay's, the  
21 mash -- the motion passes unanimously.

22                 So with this decision, as Commissioner Key and  
23 the Department have laid-out, this is sort of like  
24 triage right now. We're just going to focus on the  
25 necessities, the areas that need the most attention

1 right now, and that's going to be our teachers, our  
2 administrators, just getting things internally in  
3 order.

4 I -- as I said earlier, I encourage our  
5 students, the students of Dollarway and Pine Bluff,  
6 the parents, community members, faith leaders to stay  
7 engaged in this process. This is only the beginning  
8 of a new change, and with change comes challenges but  
9 also comes opportunities. So I just ask everyone to  
10 keep their eyes and ears open and think of new  
11 innovative ideas. And Ms. Warren has some great  
12 ideas and plans. And if there's anyone else that has  
13 input that can help the community, please feel free  
14 to bring that information. But just remember that  
15 this is a team effort and we're in it all together.  
16 And if there's anything that we can do, we'll  
17 definitely -- I'll definitely be back to the Pine  
18 Bluff and Dollarway community. I enjoyed my visit  
19 and I definitely would like to do it again.

20 So with that, I don't think we have any other  
21 comments. Do we have any other comments or questions  
22 or discussion?

23 Okay. So we will pause and I will allow --  
24 allow you to get your mics. I'm having a moment.

25 So let's just take a 5-minute break. Let's take

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a 5-minute break. Thank you all for coming. Thank  
you for your input. And thanks, everyone, for  
helping out.

(The Action Agenda was concluded at 2:26 p.m.)

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EXHIBIT ONE (1)

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